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**APPROACH USED BY THE MCK IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AMONG  
CHILDREN OF KAWANGWARE, KIBERA, AND EMBAKASI SLUMS**

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**Abstract**

Poverty has been a significant problem worldwide which has contributed to child mortality as a result of hunger, malnutrition and lack of safe drinking water. Children are impacted by poverty more severely than adults. The church has a role to play in addressing poverty, especially among the children. It is against this background that this study examined approach used by the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) in poverty alleviation among children of Kawangware, Embakasi and Kibera slums in Nairobi Kenya. This study sought to examine the historical development of *Karibuni* Trust in Kenya and establish the methods and channels used by *Karibuni* Trust to deal with child poverty in MCK's Nairobi Synod. Three methods were used to collect information; survey, interview and archival sources. Content analysis was used to process qualitative data. The results have shown that *Karibuni* Trust has used education to alleviate poverty among poor children from households in the slum areas. It has enlightened and counselled children and parents, fed children with a balanced diet, facilitated health of the children through treatment and medical care and gave or improved housing or shelter of the children. The Trust also assists parents of needy children to improve their livelihoods through training, workshops, and seminars. The MCK and *Karibuni* Trust have created a critical partnership in alleviating child poverty in Kenya. The study recommends that that, for effective control of levels of child poverty in the slums, there is a need for increased funding and workforce. Professionals in project management should be increased as they play a central role in running the program to ensure funds are used more effectively. Additionally, there should be a formal system for follow up of children such as alumni. Other faith-based organisations can emulate MCK and *Karibuni* Trust partnership in addressing child poverty in the slums. Keywords: children, poverty, education, livelihood, learning, health, food, church, theology, project, *Karibuni*, Methodist, liberation.

## Introduction

Africa is known for enormous issues that affect her population and among them is poverty. While poverty reduction has become a central feature of the international development agenda, the 21<sup>st</sup> century starts with large asymmetries regarding income, access to food, water, health, education, housing and employment for families. Half of the world's children are below the international poverty line of 2 US dollars a day and suffer from multiple deprivations and violations of fundamental human rights. More than eight million children die each year, and most of their deaths are preventable. Hunger, malnutrition, and lack of safe drinking water contribute to at least half of child mortality (UNICEF, 2012).

Children experience poverty differently from adults; they have specific and different needs. While an adult may fall into poverty temporarily, falling into poverty in childhood can last a lifetime – rarely does a child get a second chance at an education or a healthy start in life. Even short periods of food deprivation can affect children's long-term development. If children do not receive adequate nutrition, they become stunted, and their intellectual capacity is negatively affected. Child poverty, therefore, threatens not only individual children but also future generations hence entrenching and even exacerbating inequality in society.

The Church has a vital role to play in tackling global poverty and hunger. Indeed, the church has over the years been at the forefront of giving freely to the poor, caring for widows, and taking in destitute orphans, visiting the sick, and caring for the dying. The call to fight poverty and hunger may not be a new thing to the Church (Soso, 2011) because the Bible has a lot to say about that. Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard (Proverbs 21: 13); but whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? (1 John 3:17).

At the very heart of the Christian faith is caring for the poor and the needy and seeking justice for the oppressed. In the Scriptures, there is fundamental solidarity with the poor and a concern to transform the situations of poverty and inequality. Christians have to exhibit special care for the poor, the sick, the elderly, the widow, the orphan, the resident alien, and the oppressed. Those who address poverty and the struggles of the poor cannot afford to ignore the centrality of the home, the family, and the Church, in addition to other economic factors (Kaiser, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Methodist Church in Kenya, upon its establishment, sought to marshal up resources to facilitate the Christian mission with a clear purpose of expanding the Christian outreach for the good of humanity. To pursue this purpose, the MCK engaged in some activities: preaching the Gospel, establishing, and expanding Christian outreach, grounding members in firm Christian living, and developing and promoting the socio-economic well-being of the community (MCK Strategic Plan, 2009:17).

Among the concerns of MCK are to evaluate the progress of the church's work with emphasis to the financing and sustainability of church projects and undertakings (MCK Strategic Plan, 2009:18). Part of the church's mission is to address poverty among communities. In its 2010-2015 strategic plan dubbed, *Beginning Well*, the church posed a fundamental question that underscores its concern for the less fortunate: who is responsible for poverty? The victims or the leaders? Through its strategic plan, the MCK seeks to understand the causes, effects, and prevention of poverty (MCK Strategic Plan, 2010:X). To this endeavour, the MCK undertakes to develop a community or congregations committed to deal with poverty, disease, ignorance, and all forms of human suffering alongside cultivating spiritual well-being of members. The church executes these objectives through community development and social welfare contribution (MCK Strategic Plan, 2009:18).

*Karibuni* Trust is a crucial arm the MCK uses to achieve the objective of poverty alleviation (*Karibuni* Newsletter, 2013). So far, no known study has sought to establish either the contribution of *Karibuni* Trust or even the entire Kenyan Methodism in alleviating poverty in Kenyan slums. It is with this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the approach used by MCK in poverty alleviation among children of Kawangware, Embakasi, and Kibera slums in Nairobi Kenya.

### **Objective**

This study sought to establish the channels used by *Karibuni* Trust to deal with child poverty in MCK's Nairobi Synod.

## Literature Review

Various initiatives in the East African region indicate a renewed interest in the role of religious organisations in alleviating poverty, especially among children. A good example was in 2012 where a global interfaith initiative to end child poverty was launched at the Fourth Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), held from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with the theme: Ending Poverty, Enriching Children (The Global Network of Religions for Children, 2012).

In Uganda, Mutebi (2003) argued that the church has to help the young people out of poverty, but some churches also side with oppressors. Instead of seeing poverty at a negative angle, they tend to perceive it in a positive light. They have the belief that poverty keeps the youth humble before God. The desire to develop is not a blessing but known as sin. The message helped many young, poor people in Uganda to accept their conditions as God-given and renewed their hope for a better life in the world to come and not this (current) world. Therefore, the poor young men and women cease to desire and lose motivation to progress. They feel happy and worthy because theirs is the kingdom of God.

According to Okidi (2000), the motives for 'spiritualising' approach to poverty are open to suspicion. It promotes a form of Christianity full of the 'comfortable hymn singing', which supports the status quo and carefully avoids the issues of justice and socioeconomic change. Secondly, other churches in Uganda have a positive attitude towards material poverty. They reinforce the idea that, besides being symbolical, culturally and materially poor, young people (Christians) must consider themselves rich. They tell their young people that they are blessed (and not cursed) by God to affirm their faith and give them dignity (Mutebi, 2003). The Christian brethren start to confess the Word of God and prophecy that they will get blessings because they trust that God is with them and everything is part of God's purpose, and there is hope for the future. While some churches in Uganda are encouraging poverty amongst their poor young people; others are alleviating poverty among their brothers and sisters (Mutebi, 2003).

Mutebi (2003) gives a third type of teaching that is the bringing of good news to the poor with the sense of liberating them from poverty and injustice. God identifies with the poor to such an extent that to mock them is to mock him. The fourth type is holistic, which looks at the right relationships

between God and man. It stresses that the good news of the Gospel is about both spiritual and material liberation. It emphasises that the church preach the gospel and simultaneously bring development to the community. However, too little of this realizes the church in Uganda. Therefore, the church must explore a better methodology to render poverty powerless; otherwise, poverty has become disastrous among young people in Uganda (Mutebi, 2003).

Christianity has had a concern for the poor. The Wesleyan Movement (18<sup>th</sup> century) called attention to Christ's teachings and actions model for ministry to the deprived in the contemporary society. Wesley encouraged the early Methodist preachers to live among the poor to maintain solidarity with them. He and his brother, Charles, sometimes acted as arbiters between the poor abused by the early industrial revolution and civil authorities. The Methodism heritage from its roots has been sensitive to particular issues related to the poor as evident in the United Methodism Bishop's initiative, 'Children and Poverty' (Heitzenrater, 2002).

According to Emmanuel Ogbunwezeh (2005), African poverty is not a natural phenomenon, but a tragic failure of human solidarity. It is an engineered situation with interpenetration of humanmade factors conspiring with bio-geographic factors to cause poverty. He argues that the major problem remains that people have not tried to eradicate poverty and failed, but people have failed to try despite the everyday campaigning against poverty.

Mwangi (2009) examined the efforts of the Catholic Church in Archdiocese of Nairobi in addressing poverty. He noted that the church has a role in addressing poverty. However, the church in Kenya faces infrastructural and financial challenges. Mwangi (2009) recommends that the project managers, local community, financial institutions, and the government should work together.

Currently, the Methodist Church in Kenya has a host of community development initiatives like schools, clinics and health Centers (M'Impwi, 2012:79). Dr Stephen Kanyaru (Former Methodist Presiding Bishop), speaking at the Fay of the African Child at the All Africa Conference of churches in Nairobi on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2007 said, "The church in many instances has been the sanctuary of hope for Africa. As such, we must not ignore the challenges that our children are facing...."

Gutierrez developed a new spirituality based on solidarity with the poor and called on the church to help change existing social and economic institutions to promote social justice (Gutierrez,

2007). Poverty, for Gutierrez, is the result of unjust and sinful social structures. Gutierrez believes that Christianity, rooted in Biblical sources, thinks regarding history. In this history, injustice and oppression, division and confrontations exist. However, the hope of liberation is also present. Gutierrez's liberation theology leads to fundamental questions of concern: How are Kenya Methodists doing this today in their lives? How can the church side with the poor? How can church support struggle for social justice and better lives for the poor? Gutierrez prescribed liberation theology theory as the most appropriate in search of the answers to the above questions.

### **Methodology**

This is an exploratory study on how the Methodist Church has responded to the needs of poor children in Embakasi, Kawangware, and Kibera, the researcher considered descriptive survey method to be a suitable method for this investigation. Previous research has established that the survey method is an appropriate one when investigating phenomena with what and how questions (Venkatesh and Brown, 2001).

This study used three methods to collect data for the study. These methods include survey (using semi-structured questionnaires), interviews (using open-ended interview guide) and archival sources. The researcher used survey questionnaires to collect primary data for analysis. The researcher used a purposive sampling approach to identify 48 beneficiaries (16 from each project). The researcher collected data from eight girls and eight boys of the age bracket 10-18years who are beneficiaries of the projects. The second method the study used to collect data for the study is the interview method of data collection. The study conducted face-to-face interviews with three clergies (1 from each project), three social workers (1 from each project), 1 Bishop in charge of Nairobi Synod where the three projects are located, six parents/guardians (2 from each project), and the chairperson of the *Karibuni* Trust. The study utilised archival data from reports, budgets, and minutes of the *Karibuni* Trust projects on the aids given to children such as food, education, health, and clothing. MCK archives also enriched the understanding of church statements and policies on poverty and social justice.

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages with the aid of a statistical software tool for analysis called SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Qualitative data from the interviews and open-ended questions were analysed through content

analysis. The aim was to attain a concise and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis was concepts or categories describing the phenomenon.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section covers the approach that MCK has used in poverty alleviation among children in the slums. This will look into the methods and channels employed by *Karibuni* trust, a partner of MCK in implementing poverty alleviation projects in Kawangware, Embakasi and Kibera slums.

### **MCK Approach to Poverty Alleviation among Children in the Slums**

Four types of documents regarding child poverty by MCK shed light on this issue. They focused on education and social responsibility of the church. These documents comprised of (1) the MCK Strategic plan 2014-2018, (2) the MCK Annual Conference minutes for 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2014, (3) Annual Nairobi Synod minutes for 2014 and (4) the three projects' reports for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

The MCK's Strategic plan for 2014-2018 states its strategic goal: "To strengthen church systems and resources to bridge spiritual and social gaps for church growth" (MCK's Strategic Plan, 2014-2018). The MCK Church goal is to mobilise resources and enhance its systems to bring spiritual and social transformation in Kenya. Although the MCK's strategic plan has set up goals of transforming its congregation and society in general spiritually and socially, the blueprint neither shows the place of partners to achieve these goals nor the practical implementation measures to alleviate poverty. MCK's vision 'Witnessing for Christ in Transforming Lives' as stated in the Strategic plan captures the MCK's desire for transformation more vividly. However, the proclamations in its blueprint wrongly assume that transformation of lives will alleviate poverty.

In its strategic objectives, MCK has a vision for the young people and children and even seeks to "encourage Young Preachers Club to support those with interest in public speaking and preaching" MCK's Strategic plan, 2014-2018. According to its strategic plan, MCK also seeks to "provide opportunities and inspire its members to get involved in Christian community service and community building activities" MCK's Strategic plan, 2014-2018. MCK strategic plan recognises the essence of community outreach programme for serving needy children in the community as it spread the Methodist Ministry to develop programs that equip members for servant leadership. The MCK anticipates that no children will be left behind or remain destitute in the areas where it

is present. To achieve this, MCK in its strategic plan targets quarterly communities outreach programmes focusing on needy children. The fourth strategic objective deals with this in length. Despite its focus on education, MCK's strategic framework lacks an elaborate implementation framework to guide project execution.

The MCK Annual Conference minutes show that it is a proactive and a key player in education. In the MCK Annual Conference minutes of 2010, reports for education institutions in each Synod were presented to the education and scholarship committee. Among the nine Synods that reported, there was Nairobi Synod where the three projects under the focus of the study are located. However, reporting was dismal not only on the three projects but also on education and scholarship in Nairobi Synod (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2010). According to the MCK Annual Conference minutes of 2010, "the education and scholarship committee noted that Nairobi Synod needed to monitor, coordinate and supervise decisions passed by Synod education committee" (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2010). The superintendent ministers were also advised to ensure that there are education committees in the local churches as guided by MCK standing orders. The education and scholarship committee saw it prudent for the needs of school leavers and dropouts to be addressed by the churches. It also noted that there was a need for a chaplain in Nairobi Synod (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2010). Although it is essential for decisions to be made at the Synod level, there lacks a clear guideline on decision making at the project level. The project managers who are MCK clergy lack guidance on the implementation of projects.

In the MCK Annual Conference minutes of 2011, resolutions 1-14 in agenda 32 (Education and scholarship committee) was dedicated to education. Notable was Resolution 6/2011 where churches were requested to identify needy children and provide scholarships for their education (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2011). The MCK Annual Conference minutes of 2013 were no different and stressed an active role of the church in addressing the education needs of children and taking care of the needy children. Resolution 6/2013 resolved that Synod should identify some of MCK schools that can be model high schools at least one in every Synod (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2013). The education and scholarship committee also resolved that Synods should support the chosen schools in line with Education Act 2013. It also called on the sponsors to make a significant impact in schools they sponsor. Resolution 9/2013 of the education and scholarship committee directed that every Church, Circuit, and Synod should introduce a bursary



fund to assist the bright and needy children. Resolution 12/2013 directed the formation of functional education and scholarship committee at all levels of the Church (congregational, circuit and synod) (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2013).

The MCK Annual Conference minutes of 2014 noted that MCK has approximately 600 schools which include primary, secondary and tertiary colleges like polytechnics, hospitals and agricultural centres (minutes 5/2014) (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2014). The minutes also indicated that the church initially established schools but today the community plays a significant role in school establishment regarding infrastructure (minutes 6/2014). Minutes 7/2014 noted that the new Education Act 2013 did not recognise the role and right of the sponsor during its establishment (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2014). The education and scholarship committee as such expect a very negative impact on church-sponsored schools concerning management and governance. The education and scholarship committee reported that the Methodist Church and other mainstream churches were consulting with the government for the amendment of the sections of the education act that affect the sponsor.

The education and scholarship committee in minute 8/2014 outlined strategies in place for addressing illiteracy, transition rate, vocational training, and unemployment among school leavers (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2014). They included opening more learning institutions, developing a bursary fund, and encouraging school leavers to venture in entrepreneurship activities. The education and scholarship committee noted that it was necessary to develop, for school leavers, career guidelines tailored to practical work. They directed chaplains to team up with other bodies to motivate and direct school leavers to Christian living. From the minutes of MCK conferences, education and caring for the needy children takes an essential place of church activities. An education and scholarship committee runs these activities from the top to the community level. Although education and scholarship committees were only at the Synod level in 2013 and later in the Circuits and congregations, education matters and scholarship has been at the heart of MCK from the beginning (MCK Annual Conference minutes, 2014).

The Annual Nairobi Synod Minutes for 2014 indicated that the Synod was setting up structures for mainstreaming Methodist system for MCK schools (Annual Nairobi Synod Minutes, 2014). The education and scholarship committee in the Synod also saw the need for developing innovative strategies to raise bursary funds for education in the Synod. The committee resolved that model

saving to be developed by the Synod Education Committee. In addition, Christian Social Responsibility Committee of Nairobi Synod resolved to address issues in the society that affect the Church mission such as poverty, land issues, governance and family issues. Again based on the Annual Synod Minutes for Nairobi Synod, there is dismal reporting on the education and scholarship activities in Nairobi Synod where the three projects under focus in this study have not featured despite being in operation for long (Annual Nairobi Synod Minutes, 2014).

The three projects prepare reports of their activities individually. The project managers are responsible for the preparation of these reports. According to the reports reviewed (2011-2013), there is no formal reporting structure for the projects, which makes it difficult to comprehend the presented reports. The emphasis of the project reports is on the number of children recruited and performance of the sponsored children rather than being verifiable documentation of goals, objectives, people responsible for specific tasks, resources allocated and achieved results. Financial reports may feature, depending on which project manager prepares the report. Some reports are elaborate while others have insufficient information regarding the projects. Similarly, some reports have audited financial accounts while others do not.

Vital information on project activities was missing from the reports. The advertisement and application process by needy children for sponsorship is not in the reports. Most reports start with the recruitment of needy children. In addition, the background information of the needy children is not documented. This is not to cast doubts on the level of need of the recruited children, but it would have painted a clearer picture of the children and their situation for further adequate help if the need arises.

A review of project reports depicts a sharp contrast between the aspirations of MCK and actual implementation of the projects. This could be partly attributed to a lack of elaborate documentation on how MCK church should work with like-minded partners to implement projects. The strategic plan and annual conference minutes wrongly assume that MCK will finance and implement projects to transform the lives of its congregation and society in general. In addition, rules and regulations on how such projects should be implemented are not available. This leaves the success or failure of great projects on the hands of clergy who may not have the requisite knowledge and experience.

### **Historical Development of *Karibuni* Trust in Kenya**

*Karibuni* Trust is a United Kingdom (UK) registered charity organisation that aims to raise awareness on the plight of children living on the streets and in the slums areas in Kenya. *Karibuni* Trust also raises money to support projects to meet the children needs. *Karibuni* Trust started with Corinne Murphy, a member of Aylesbury Methodist Church, opening a bank account with £2.56 in 1995. She had been inspired to do something about the children she had seen living in the slums and on the streets of Kenya. She has participated in numerous fund drives, and donations call to fund *Karibuni* Trust's programs. Since 1995, *Karibuni* has given realistic hope to hundreds of needy children, supporting projects, which operate where the need is greatest. Corinne aimed to give more children the chance to fulfil their potential. Within the UK, a group of volunteers, who combine their different skills and experience in running the charity, publicising the needs in Kenya, and raising funds, runs *Karibuni*. The MCK warmly received and appreciated her vision and commitment to child poverty alleviation and, as a result, decided to collaborate with her Trust. As a result, *Karibuni* has grown year by year, and it now has a base of loyal supporters spread throughout the UK and further afield (*Karibuni* Newsletter, 2013).

The support provided in Kenya goes beyond money. For years, *Karibuni* volunteers work alongside Kenyan partners, which include the MCK, in the building, renovating, and decorating classrooms. *Karibuni* partners in Kenya (mainly the MCK) value the help, which gives *Karibuni* volunteers an invaluable insight into the challenges the schools face. *Karibuni* Trust objective is to help the poorest of the poor to fulfil their potential. Each year, there are excellent results achieved by children living in the most challenging of circumstances. With the support, *Karibuni* and MCK's projects provide for children who go on to become independent, productive citizens that make positive contributions to their country (*Karibuni* Newsletter, 2013).

*Karibuni* Trust has sponsored poor children to get an education in the slums. The aim has been to break the cycle of poverty for the households where the poor children come from. *Karibuni* Trust approach of sponsoring poor children has a unique approach to recruiting poor children based on the level of need. The children get support through the programme until they get a livelihood. *Karibuni* Trust has three schools in the slums: Embakasi, Kibera, and Kawangware. These schools entail preschool and grade 1-3. *Karibuni* Trust sponsors its students to join other nearby schools once they graduate from grade 3. Some *Karibuni* Trust's children have achieved higher education

levels; some are in high schools, colleges, and universities. Through the programme, pupils and students under the programme receive support based on their level and need to continue with education. A number of the children who have gone through the whole education system under this programme are making a difference not only in their households but also in the communities where they come from (*Karibuni* Newsletter, 2013).

### **Approaches of *Karibuni* Trust in Alleviating Poverty**

This section examines the channels used by *Karibuni* Trust in poverty alleviation. It also looks into *Karibuni* Trust focus areas in alleviating poverty among children in the slums of Nairobi.

### **Channels used by *Karibuni* Trust to Achieve Goals**

Peter, a father to one of the *Karibuni* Trust scholarship funding beneficiaries, cited channels and organisations used by *Karibuni* Trust to achieve its missions in the community as the Methodist Church of Kenya, Embakasi MCK Academy, MCK Kibera, and MCK Kawangware. On what *Karibuni* Trust can do better to be useful in their work, Mercy, a guardian to one of the *Karibuni* Trust scholarship funding beneficiaries recommended adding exercise books, P.E. kits, and textbooks and indicated that *Karibuni* Trust can also provide children with balls for playing. Naomi, one of the *Karibuni* Trust scholarship funding beneficiaries said that *Karibuni* Trust can be more effective in their work by engaging more children from the slums whose parents may be sick or they are orphans. She further added that “*Karibuni* Trust could hold more seminars for the separated children and guiding them to grow mentally, spiritually and physically” (Naomi, interview 2014). A possibility of starting projects that would exploit the children’s talents can be an improvement in *Karibuni* Trust’s work. Commending the current situation Simon, one of the *Karibuni* Trust scholarship funding beneficiaries indicated that *Karibuni* Trust should continue in the same spirit. He also called for more mentorship, seminars and workshops especially during school holidays to impart children with knowledge, encourage them to work hard and help them acquire life skills.

### **Education, Nutrition and Learning Materials**

Three *Karibuni* Trust Trustees responded to an online interview together. They included one *Karibuni* member, the chairperson, and treasurer who together with others form the *Karibuni*

Trustees. According to *Karibuni* Trustees, this program has been in place for approximately 19 years. They confirmed that they pay school fees every term for sponsored children.

The Trustees noted that they rely on local MCK projects to identify the poorest of the poor. According to the Trustees, the support that *Karibuni* Trust gives is through feeding programmes, providing uniforms and paying fees towards the cost of education. *Karibuni* Trust makes funds available for the salaries of full-time or part-time social workers and some health issues. According to the Trustees, the level of support varies with each project. According to the Trustees, approximately 1000 children received help in one way or the other by this program covering the three projects.

The Trustees indicated that *Karibuni* provides educational resources. These educational resources include posters, charts, pencils, crayons, and pens. *Karibuni* also buys textbooks for some projects as well as laptops and printers for university students. *Karibuni* Trustees pointed out that they do not provide spiritual support to the sponsored children but the local Methodist Church do this, and it is not something that *Karibuni* Trust funds. This is because all the projects are part of the local Methodist Church outreach programmes.

### ***Karibuni* Trust Social Support**

On social support, some *Karibuni* Trustees agreed that a sense of social work by the project reflects in social workers that *Karibuni* pays salaries. The project people who run Saturday provide support of social interaction and holiday programmes for the children particularly at Kibera. *Karibuni* Trustees believe that they have some role in the eradication of poverty in their areas of work. They argue that children who would have otherwise been living off the streets or even living on the streets get nourishing food and the opportunities they need to have such as education. According to the Trustees, *Karibuni* enables these children to grow into healthy young adults and reach their potential. Some beneficiaries are already making a difference in their families and their communities by helping others; for example, through the *Karibuni* Alumni based at Kibera. *Karibuni* Trust's contribution to the reduction of child poverty is significant. A Trustee said, "What we do know is that for those who complete their education either academically or through vocational training, we make a meaningful reduction in child poverty."

### **Sanitation**

Commenting on the factors that are likely to lead to a satisfactory reduction in child poverty, *Karibuni* Trustees gave an example of the United Kingdom where philanthropists and government addressed the problem of child poverty in the slums effectively. *Karibuni* Trustees said, “In the UK the breakthrough that started the significant and dramatic reduction in child poverty was the provision of a massive program of community health measures taken by philanthropists and later by the government” (*Karibuni* Trustees interview, 2014). They further added that change started with “first the provision of a sanitary drainage system, which cut down on the high rates of infection from raw sewage followed by the Sunday school movement, which provided the ‘poor schools’ and primary education for needy children. Before this, education was for the rich only” (Ibid). *Karibuni* Trustees compared the situation in the UK with that in Kenya. They noted that in Kenya, various nongovernmental organisations and the government avail education. However, unsanitary living conditions continue causing preventable chronic ill health and deaths. The *Karibuni* Trustees noted that Kenya does not seem to produce philanthropic movement that revolutionised life in the slums in Britain. Nongovernmental organisations alone cannot do this work. More financial, physical, and human resources are necessary.

### **Partnerships**

*Karibuni* Trustees indicated that projects under study are MCK projects and *Karibuni* is primarily supporting them. They also indicated that MCK support for the projects is ‘mixed’. Explaining MCK support to the projects, *Karibuni* Trustees noted, “Where there are strong management committees, as in these three projects, we have found that the support we enjoy is good and helpful.”

The Trustees indicated that all the projects that *Karibuni* supports are within the Methodist Church in Kenya and MCK remain their prime networking source in Kenya. *Karibuni* collaborates with other NGOs and borrows heavily from their experiences and share with them. According to the Trustees, *Karibuni* was in partnership for some time with the Kenyan Children Foundation (KCF).

## Conclusion

From the methods used by *Karibuni* Trust to eradicate child poverty, the children have experienced an impact regarding decent nutrition, improved health, and ability to learn. The children had accessed education and reached their potential and ultimately get work. *Karibuni* Trust started as a charity organisation registered in the UK. It has working partners in Kenya such as The Methodist Church. The organisation, in partnership with the MCK, has many projects that focus on helping poor children. Some of these projects include the Embakasi Methodist Academy, Kawangware Academy, Tusaidie Watoto Nursery, and Kibera Primary School. These projects have supported poor children and have changed households and livelihoods for the better. The projects have partly alleviated poverty, especially among the beneficiaries.

*Karibuni* Trust has used education to alleviate poverty among poor children from households in the slum areas. The Trust has enlightened and counselled children and parents, fed children with a balanced diet, facilitated health of the children through treatment and medical care and gave or improved housing or shelter of the children. The Trust also assists parents of needy children to improve their livelihoods through training, workshops, and seminars.

*Karibuni* Trust has had challenges that include weak management committees and lax commitment on the part of members and staff in Kenya. The waning commitment of the Board of Trustees and inability to raise funds in the UK also hamper the Trust's programs and interventions. The MCK and *Karibuni* Trust have been critical partners in alleviating child poverty in Kenya. The MCK prioritise on education and concern for the poor in its programs as evidenced in the various available documents such as strategic plans, conference minutes, and books authored by MCK leaders and cohorts.

## Recommendations

The study recommends that that, for effective control of levels of child poverty in the slums, there is a need for increased funding and workforce. Professionals in project management should be increased as they play a central role in running the program to ensure funds are used more effectively. Additionally, there should be a formal system for follow up of children such as alumni. For other faith-based organisations, working towards the eradication of child poverty, proper investigation and research before investing in a program is critical. Other faith-based organisations

can emulate MCK and *Karibuni* Trust partnership in addressing child poverty in the slums. Having family meetings and addressing family matters are essential in dealing with child poverty in the slums. It is evident that one organisation cannot be able to deal with the problem of child poverty alone and called for others to join in. Other organisations with programs on eradication of child poverty should educate the caregivers of children. Young people should accept that vocational training is an acceptable and positive way forward for less academic children. Many parents and guardians want their children to have expensive secondary school and college education that they cannot afford. They should change such attitude for the children to get necessary help that can change their livelihoods.



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