

The Influence of Funding Mission Work on Enhancing Youth Participation in Mission Work of Protestant Churches in Kiserian Town, Kenya

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Abstract

Despite the undeniable youth contribution to God's mission, youth involvement in mission work, particularly in Protestant churches, has been waning in recent years. The purpose of the study was to examine how funding influences youth participation in mission work of Protestant churches in Kiserian town. The study used a descriptive survey design, targeting youth and church leaders. A population of 653, consisting of 600 youth and 53 church leaders, was identified for the study. Stratified random sampling selected a sample size of 136 respondents, comprising 120 youth and 16 church leaders. Data were collected from youth using questionnaires, while interviews were conducted with church leaders. Validity and reliability of the data collection tools were pilot-tested at Anglican Church of Kenya, St. Stephen's Church, and the Kenya Assemblies of God, Matasia. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS version 27. Qualitative data analysis used a thematic approach. Descriptive results revealed that Protestant churches in the study area considered funding mission work critical, though funding sources were inadequate and unsustainable. Additionally, inadequate funds hampered youth participation in mission work among Protestant churches. There was evidence of lack of youth awareness of guidelines for allocating funds to mission work. Based on the study findings, the study concluded that funding mission work significantly influenced youth participation in Protestant churches' mission work. However, funding mission work was hampered by a lack of diversified funding sources, and there is a need for prudent utilization of available funds. This study recommends enhanced youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches; mission work be adequately funded by church leadership through partnerships with corporate institutions and other religious organizations. Availability and adequate allocation of funds will enhance youth outreach, while diversified funding sources will build sustainable resource bases in churches to finance the mission.

Keywords: *Funding mission work, Youth participation, Protestant Churches, Kiserian Town, Kenya*

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1.0 Introduction

Funding mission work is a resource support strategy that helps churches fund programs to advance the gospel. Well-resourced mission programs in churches are pathways for the spread of the gospel in a missional context. Therefore, funding mission work is vital for fulfilling the church's mission mandate (Alawade, 2020). Like any other human endeavor, the success of a mission depends on available funds, and such programs cannot be implemented when resources are insufficient. Churches that embrace diverse funding sources, such as donor funding, targeted fundraising, and mission-focused budgets, enhance youth engagement in mission work (Getui et al., 2023). Hence, funding mission work stands out as a way to motivate youth and empower the younger generation. Osuka (2015) laments that youth are discouraged from mission work due to a lack of transportation, accommodation, and material supplies. Hence, churches that finance youth mission trips indicate their readiness to engage them in mission work.

On the other hand, prudent use of financial resources is a priority, and guidelines are critical for equitable distribution. Guidelines help churches prioritize mission needs, assess risks, and encourage equity in mission financing. This is supported by Shumbambiri (2024) who, remarked that adhering to ethical financing promotes transparency. Deniswara et al. (2023) further reiterate that when churches adopt standards and guidelines, it shows how funds are acquired and utilized. These views align with Keely (2010) who, reiterates that youth involvement in mission is a clear indication of how well-funded the mission is. However, targeted funding is considered a dependable and indispensable approach to facilitating mission work in a resource-stricken environment.

Statement of the Problem

Mission work is meant to grow the church and, apparently, to transform the world for Christ by spreading the good news. Hence, youth involvement in mission work in Protestant churches in Kiserian town is crucial and should be vibrant, lively, and transformative. According to Fida (2022), youth involvement in mission work is grounded in Christ's command to believers to make disciples of all nations. Nevertheless, youth at all levels of ministry life have notably exerted unprecedented influence in the mission work of churches (Msebi, 2021). By so doing, churches not only fulfill their mission mandate but also ensure that the gospel is spread effectively locally and globally.

Despite the undeniable youth contribution to God's mission, youth involvement in mission work, particularly in Protestant churches, is waning more than in recent years (Williams, 2019). Christians, particularly the youth, no longer view mission as relevant to their lives and are less enthusiastic about outreach work. While some churches have initiated mission programs in Kiserian town, many are hampered by low participation due to inadequate training, limited funding, and limited activities that promote mission programming.

Purpose of the Study

To examine the influence of funding on enhancing youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches in Kiserian town.

Research Question

What is the influence of funding mission work on enhancing youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches in Kiserian town?

Theoretical Review

The incarnational mission theory of Newbigin (1984), Langmead (2002) and Bosch (1991) among other contributors, has its origins in Christian theological discourse. The theory has been shaped over centuries and was formally presented as a missiological framework in the 20th century. It also draws strength from the theological interpretation of the doctrine of the incarnation in John 1:1-4. Therefore, the incarnational doctrine highlights God's presence among people in the person of Christ. Just as Christ was fully human and dwelt among people, Christians in God's service should immerse themselves among lost humanity and preach the word of God. As Rah (2012) reiterates, the incarnational mission theory recognizes the presence of youth and seeks to synergize them to participate in God's redemptive work in a missional context.

Empirical Review

Morrison (2021) articulated strategies to raise funds for mission work in the Protestant Children's Family Project in Britain. The study notes that while fundraising initiatives for mission are ideal, participation in mission work is motivated by philanthropy and monetized leisure activities. A comprehensive and analytical framework helped explore the dimensions of Protestant children's movements. Findings underscored the recognition of children's ministry in shaping their missional experience. However, Morrison (2021) focused on children in Britain and ignored youth contributions to mission from a funding perspective.

However, mission funding in Protestant churches in Africa presents an evolving picture of a financial resource landscape prone to access and distribution disparities. The situation calls for

interrogation of priorities in mobilization, allocation, and sustainability. Amoako and Eshuna's (2025) study offers a perspective on an emerging mission-funding dilemma in churches. The authors suggested congregation education as an approach to financial stewardship and a way to bridge funding gaps in mission work.

“Based on the study findings, funding for mission work significantly influenced youth participation in mission work within Protestant churches. Documentation”

Subsequently, funding mission programs for youth in Kenyan Protestant churches, as elsewhere, depends on available funds and access to them. The need to secure mission funding is significant for activating mission work in churches. This was articulated by Nyamongo et al. (2023) who focused on diverse financial sources to sustain Adventist programs in the South Eastern Kenya Field. The author notes that churches have long depended on traditional funding sources that proved insufficient. A descriptive survey design was used to gather data from 355 respondents through interviews and questionnaires. Findings showed that, despite Adventist churches instituting robust financial systems, financial resources in the South Eastern Kenya Field remained low. The recommendations encouraged Adventist churches in the South Eastern Kenya Field to diversify their financial sources by investing in business units such as SACCOS, trust funds, and share trading.

2.0 Material and Methods

The study used a descriptive survey design, targeting youth and church leaders. A population of 653, consisting of 600 youth and 53 church leaders, was identified for study. Purposive and stratified sampling were used to identify participants. Stratified random sampling selected 136 respondents, comprising 120 youth and 16 church leaders. Data were collected from youth via questionnaires, while interviews were conducted with church leaders. The validity and reliability of the data collection tools were pilot-tested at the Anglican Church of St. Stephen and at the Kenya Assemblies of God Matasia. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in IBM SPSS version 27. Qualitative data analysis used a thematic approach. The study adhered to ethical standards, with authorization from authorities and respondents appropriately sought. The Ethics and Review Committee at Kenya Methodist University issued a letter introducing the researcher to the respondents and the

authorization agencies. The researcher obtained permits from NACOSTI and the Kajiado County government. Consent from participants was sought, assuring them of confidentiality and ensuring that the collected data were for academic purposes only. Participants were given consent forms outlining the study aim, respect for their rights, and the use of their data. For anonymity, respondents were not to write their names or phone numbers on data collection tools. They were asked to complete the forms and hand them to their respective leaders, who later handed them to the researcher for safe storage.

3.0 Results and Discussion

Response Rate

Determining the response rate assesses the accuracy of data collection in line with the objectives. A low response rate undermines the representativeness of the data and exposes the study to non-response bias (Zhao & Fils-Aime, 2022). The response rate is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Response Rate (%)
Returned	104	86.7.0
Unreturned	16	13.3
Spoilt	0	00.0
Total	120	100
Leaders Interviewed	16	94.1
Leaders not interviewed	0	5.9
Total	16	100

In Table 1, 120 questionnaires were distributed to youth in Protestant churches, and 16 interview schedules were booked with church leaders in face-to-face meetings. A total of 104 questionnaires were returned fully completed, yielding an 86.7% response rate. Similarly, 16 questionnaire forms were not returned,

accounting for a 13.3% non-response rate. In addition, all 16 church leaders were accessible and available for interviews, yielding a 100% response rate. Cooper and Schindler (2023) state that a response rate between 70% and 80% is ‘Very Good’, while above 80% is ‘excellent’. The response rate among youth at 104 (86.7%) was

excellent and acceptable, supporting the reliability, representativeness, and generalizability of the investigation.

Reliability Results

Data collection tools were pilot-tested at ACK St. Stephen Church and KAG Matasia, and Table 2 presents the reliability results.

Table 2
Reliability Results

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Comment
Funding Mission Work	7	0.804	Appropriate
Ministerial Training	6	0.834	Appropriate
Access to Outreach Programs	6	0.808	Appropriate
Youth Participation in Mission Work	8	0.803	Appropriate
Overall Value	27	0.813	

Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was used to assess reliability, with a cut-off of 0.7 for consistency. A Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of 0.6–0.7 is acceptable, while a value above 0.8 indicates the tool’s reliability is appropriate. The overall Alpha value for the study was 0.813, which was acceptable and appropriate.

Youth Participation in Mission Work

The dependent variable in the study was “Youth Participation in Mission Work.” Therefore, it was paramount to examine the extent to which youth participate in mission work in Protestant churches

by interrogating the factors that influence involvement or its absence. The state of youth participation in mission work was measured using eight statements, on which respondents indicated agreement or disagreement on a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale questionnaire captured data from youth because Protestant churches in the study had mission work programs in place. The researcher used interview schedules to ascertain church leaders’ opinions regarding youth participation in mission work in their churches. Results from the questionnaires are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Respondents' Views on Youth Participation

Statement	SD	D	Unsure	A	SA	Mean	S.D.
A good number of youths in my church regularly go on mission work	28.8%	52.9%	1.0%	10.6%	6.7%	2.1	1.1
I am actively involved in mission activities planned by the church	30.8%	53.8%	0.0%	12.5%	2.9%	2.0	1.0
The church allocates sufficient funds for youth to go on mission trips	51.0%	37.5%	4.8%	0.0%	6.7%	1.7	1.1
The church has enough programs to involve youth in mission work	47.1%	43.3%	2.9%	2.9%	3.8%	1.7	0.9
A good number of youths in my church are trained for mission work	50.0%	42.3%	1.0%	2.9%	3.8%	1.7	0.9
The church regularly communicates mission work opportunities to the youth	46.2%	43.3%	3.8%	1.0%	5.8%	1.8	1.0

A good number of youths in the church regularly volunteer for mission work	45.2%	43.3%	3.8%	2.9%	4.8%	1.8	1.0
Youth in the church have adequate access to outreach programs	33.7%	48.1%	4.8%	7.7%	5.8%	2.0	1.1
Youth Participation Aggregate Score	41.6%	40.2%	2.8%	4.7%	5.0%	1.9	1.0

In Table 3, respondents were asked to share their views on youth participation in mission work by responding to narrations. Regarding the item “A good number of youths in my church are actively involved in mission work,” the majority, 55 (52.9%), disagreed, 30 (28.8%) strongly disagreed, 11 (10.6%) agreed, 7 (6.7%) strongly agreed, and 1 (1.0%) was unsure. The statement was grounded in the expectation that, like other church groups, youth would participate in church programs, particularly mission work. Respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that youth in Protestant churches in the study area are not active in mission work. This is consistent with Miller (2020) who, reiterated that inadequate participation in mission work demoralizes youth. This is drawn from the fact that the inability to raise funds for mission work is a challenge for missionaries, who often have to serve as the fundraising lead (Betha, 2024). This implies that Protestant churches in the study area have not done much to anchor the youth in outreach programs.

Regarding the statement, “I am regularly involved in mission activities planned by my church,” respondents were 56 (53.8%) who disagreed, 32 (30.8%) who strongly disagreed, 13 (12.5%) who agreed, and 3 (2.9%) who strongly agreed, with no respondents recording “unsure.” Respondents also disagreed with the statement, “I am actively involved in mission activities planned by my church.” This suggests that youth in Protestant churches in the study area are not actively involved in mission work. This is inconsistent with Falk et al. (2023) who, argue that youth engagement in mission has exposed them to diverse contexts and helped them reach the unreached with the gospel.

In another statement, “The church allocates sufficient funds for youth to go on mission trips,” a majority, 53 (51.0%), strongly disagreed, 39 (37.5%) disagreed, 7 (6.7%) strongly agreed, 5 (4.8%) were unsure, while “agreed” recorded no responses. Respondents disagreed with the statement, “The church allocates sufficient funds for youth to go on mission trips.” This suggests that youth in Protestant churches in the study area are not adequately funded to participate in mission activities, such as mission trips and excursions. This is consistent with Alawode’s (2020) view, which emphasizes churches providing adequate funding to support mission work worldwide.

Respondents were asked whether the church has enough to involve youth in mission work. Of the 103 respondents, 49 (47.1%) strongly disagreed, 45 (43.3%) disagreed, 4 (3.8%) strongly agreed, 3 (2.9%) agreed, and 3 (2.9%) were unsure. They disagreed with the statement, ‘The church has enough and active programs to involve youth in mission work. This suggests that Protestant churches in the study area have limited programs to involve youth in mission work. This is consistent with Nanthambwe’s (2024) view that sufficient outreach mission programs in churches play a vital role in community growth, well-being, and spiritual development.

In the survey’s open-ended questions, respondents were asked to indicate the state of youth participation in mission work programs in Protestant churches. Respondents at 79 (76.4%) indicated that youth are not well informed about mission programs in their churches. About 11 (10.2%) felt that their churches had mission programs running, while 14 (13.4%) were unsure of the availability of such programs. They used words such as ‘aware’, ‘unaware’, and ‘unsure’ to

respond to the statement. A youth in one church lamented that;

“There are no programs to engage youth in mission work in our church,” (Youth, aged 24 years).

This response indicates that youth in Protestant churches, particularly in the study area, are unaware of their churches' mission work. They also do not view the absence of mission programs as a concern. Interviews with church leaders reinforced these views to assess youth knowledge of mission programs in Protestant churches. Some interviewees remarked that;

“In many cases, the youth keep away from planned outreach activities such as Street Evangelism” (Church Leader, S007).

“Youth in church today are just lazy,” “They are not interested in programs planned by the church.” (Church Leader, S014).

The qualitative feedback from respondents notes the absence of youth in church programs, such as mission work. This suggests that, while youth participation in mission work in Protestant churches has existed, current participation is inadequate. This is consistent with proponents of mission work, such as Jones (2020) who, claim that mission work in Protestant churches has lost impetus on a credible scale.

Funding and Youth Participation in Mission Work

The first specific objective was to examine the influence of funding on enhancing youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches in Kiserian Town. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with 7 items on a five-point Likert scale, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Respondents' Views Regarding Funding Mission

Statements	SD	D	Unsure	A	SA	Mean	S.D.
The church considers funding essential for youth to participate in mission work	11.5%	41.3%	1.9%	34.6%	10.6%	2.9	1.3
Sources of funds to facilitate mission work are diverse and adequate	28.8%	37.5%	5.8%	26.0%	1.9%	2.3	1.2
Inadequate funds in the church prevent youth from doing mission work	1.9%	18.3%	10.6%	26.0%	43.3%	3.9	1.2
There are guidelines for fund allocation to facilitate the mission work of the Church	17.3%	44.2%	17.3%	21.2%	0.0%	2.4	1.0
The church adheres to guidelines set when allocating funds for mission work	15.4%	45.2%	23.1%	16.3%	0.0%	2.4	0.9
The church has identified youth-led fundraising activities to finance mission Work	20.2%	37.5%	28.8%	12.5%	1.0	2.4	1.0
The Church identifies with youth-led fundraising activities to support mission work	25.0%	43.3%	6.7%	25.0%	0.0%	2.3	1.1
Funding mission work’s aggregate score	17.2%	38.2%	13.5%	23.1%	8.1%	2.8	1.1

In Table 4, respondents were asked to comment on statements about the influence of funding on mission work, with a focus on enhancing youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches. Regarding the statement, “The church

considers funding as essential for youth participation in mission work,” 43 (41.3%) disagreed, 36 (34.6%) agreed, 12 (11.5%) strongly disagreed, 11 (10.6%) strongly agreed, and 2 (1.9%) were unsure. This suggests that Protestant

churches in the study area have not prioritized financing youth who aspire to do mission work. This is inconsistent with Monson's (2020) remarks, which note that throughout American history, Protestant churches have demonstrated a commitment to mission by funding youth for local and global missions. This inconsistency indicates that Protestant churches in the study area are not well-endowed to fund youth for mission work.

Regarding the statement, "Sources of funds to facilitate mission work are diverse and adequate," respondents were divided, with 39 (37.8%) disagreeing and 30 (28.8%) strongly disagreeing. 27 (26.0%) agreed, 6 (5.8%) were unsure, and 2 (1.9%) strongly agreed. Therefore, respondents disagreed with the assertion that sources of funds to facilitate youth in mission work are diverse and adequate. This is consistent with the findings of Nyamongo et al. (2023) who, noted that for a long time, Adventist churches in the Southern East Kenya Field Conference relied on traditional funding sources that were insufficient and unsustainable. The findings support the respondents' view that sources of funding in Protestant churches are not diverse or adequate to sustain mission work.

Regarding the statement, "Inadequate funds prevent youth from doing mission work," respondents were 45 (43.3%) who strongly agreed, 27 (26.0%) who agreed, 19 (18.3%) who disagreed, 11 (10.6%) who were unsure, and 2 (1.9%) who strongly disagreed. Therefore, respondents claimed that insufficient funds prevent many church youths from participating in mission work activities. These results indicate that inadequate funding for mission work hinders young people. This is consistent with Keely (2010) who, found that youth involvement in local mission depends on the adequacy of funding for mission work by mission-practicing churches.

In the survey's open-ended questions, respondents were asked to comment on the sufficiency of funding for youth mission work in their churches. The majority of respondents, 80 (76.7%), indicated that youth are rarely funded to engage in mission work. About 13 (12.6%) felt that youth are supported in their churches' mission work, while 11 (10.7%) were unsure. They used terms such as sufficient, not sufficient, and unsure when responding to the open-ended question about the sufficiency of funds. For example, some youth respondents exclusively stated:

"Our church has insufficient funds to support youth for mission work" (Youth, 21 years and 24 years).

These responses indicate that youth in Protestant churches, particularly in the study area, are not well funded for church programs, such as mission work. Funding sources are insufficient and unsustainable to meet the youth mission needs in the churches. Interviews with church leaders in Protestant churches in the study area reinforce these views. Interviewees stated that;

"Youth miss out on mission opportunities because the church has no funds to support mission activities such as trips and excursions" (Church Leader, S006).

"Funds are not available, even when young people have the desire to go out on mission work," (Church Leader, S009).

Hence, the qualitative views of youth and church leaders in Protestant churches confirm that financial scarcity is a major factor in declining youth engagement in mission work. This indicates that while there may be efforts to secure funds to support youth going on mission work, the sufficiency and sustainability of funding remain challenges. This is consistent with Shumbambiri (2024) who singled out shrinking financial

support and a lack of sustainable funding sources as notable obstacles to mission work in Protestant churches. However, there are examples of churches, such as American Protestant churches, that have for decades supported youth in local and international missions (Monson, 2020). This indicates that funding missions in churches is Christ's foremost priority to empower followers in the spread of the gospel.

Summary of the Findings

Descriptive analysis results reveal that Protestant churches in the study area consider funding mission work critical, though funding sources are inadequate and unsustainable. Additionally, inadequate funding hinders youth participation in mission work within Protestant churches. It is also evident that there is a lack of youth awareness of guidelines for allocating funds to mission work. Furthermore, adherence to such guidelines when allocating funds is lacking. However, Protestant churches in the study area have not adequately identified youth-led fundraising activities to mobilize funds for mission work. Equally, Protestant churches in the study area have not provided adequate support for youth-led fundraising initiatives to mobilize funds for mission work. Therefore, respondents gave a 56% score out of 100% to the influence of funding on enhancing youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches.

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the study findings, funding for mission work significantly influenced youth participation

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in mission work within Protestant churches. However, funding for mission work was hampered by a lack of diversified funding sources, and there is a need for prudent use of funds. This concern should be adequately addressed to motivate youth more to engage in mission work in Protestant churches.

5.0 Recommendations

The study recommends that church leadership adequately fund mission work to enhance youth participation in the mission work of Protestant churches by partnering with corporate institutions and other religious organizations. The availability and adequate allocation of funds will enhance youth outreach, while diversified funding sources will build sustainable resource bases in churches to finance the mission.

Value of the Study

The study's results show that funding allocations in Protestant churches are inadequate due to limited resources. Therefore, the availability and adequate allocation of funds will enhance youth outreach, while diversified funding sources will build sustainable resource bases in churches for mission work.

Implication

Diversifying funding sources and ensuring adequate allocation will not only empower youth engagement but also establish a sustainable foundation for ongoing mission activities.

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