

# Managing Climate Change: The Role of Religion in Selected Church Sponsored Secondary Schools in Tigania West Sub-County in Meru County- Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of religion in mitigating climate change within selected church-sponsored Secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County in Meru County- Kenya. The objectives of this study were: to assess how environmental education is integrated into the curricula of church-sponsored Secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County of Kenya, explore the influence of religious teachings on attitudes and actions toward climate change, examine community engagement in environmental initiatives, and identify both the barriers and opportunities for promoting environmental sustainability within these institutions. Specifically, the study seeks to examine how religious teachings, values, and practices influence environmental stewardship and promote sustainable behaviors in these schools. By exploring the intersection of faith and environmental responsibility, the study aims to uncover the potential contributions of religious institutions in addressing climate change challenges at the community level. Religion plays a crucial role in shaping the beliefs, values, and behaviors of individuals towards their environment. However, the role of church sponsored secondary schools in training individuals on environmental care is not well documented. The study was conducted in 3 selected church sponsored Secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County in Meru County of Kenya. It adopted a descriptive survey design where a total of 25 respondents constituting of 19 teachers, 3 principals and 3 sponsors of selected secondary schools were targeted. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted where questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The findings showed that the church played a great role in instilling moral values on students. However, little is known about their role in climate change mitigation. Therefore, this study highlights a potential gap in the education. This study recommends the need for religious institutions to rethink their educational priorities and consider incorporating teachings on climate change mitigation into their curriculum. This will play a vital role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of students towards environmental stewardship and fostering a sense of responsibility towards environment. Religion plays a vital role in addressing climate change by inspiring action, advocacy, and providing a moral foundation for decision-making. This influence can foster positive societal change. Integration of climate change education into the curriculum, so as to enable schools to shape students' attitudes and behaviors toward sustainability. Implementation of sustainable practices, such as reducing waste and conserving energy, while engaging the school community in environmental initiatives like workshops and campaigns, and partnering with environmental experts to encourage stewardship of the planet.

**Keywords:** church, climate change, mitigation, religion, schools, sponsored, environmental education

## INTRODUCTION

In the face of unprecedented environmental challenges, the discourse on climate change has transcended scientific realms and permeated various surfaces of society, including religion and education. Across the globe, religious institutions and educational entities have increasingly recognized their pivotal roles in addressing climate change and promoting sustainability. This recognition stems from the acknowledgment of the intrinsic connections between environmental stewardship, moral responsibility, and spiritual values.

In Tigania West Sub-County that is situated at the core of Kenya, the intersection of religion, education, and environmental conservation unfolds within the context of church-sponsored secondary schools. These educational institutions, often deeply rooted in local communities and guided by religious principles, serve as crucial arenas where attitudes, behaviors, and practices towards the environment are shaped and nurtured among the youth.

This study aimed to explore and analyze the role of religion in selected church-sponsored secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County in managing climate change. By investigating the perspectives, initiatives, and challenges encountered within these institutions, a deeper understanding of the interplay between religious beliefs, educational frameworks, and environmental action was gathered. Therefore, valuable insights were garnered not only for the local context but also for broader discussions on the potential contributions of religious institutions and educational settings in mitigating climate change impacts. As such, this study sought to contribute to the growing body of literature on religion, education, and environmental sustainability while providing practical recommendations for fostering a more harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world.

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective**

This study aimed at investigating the role of religion in mitigating climate change in three selected church sponsored schools in Tigania West Sub-County.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. To assess the integration of environmental education in school curricula in church-sponsored schools in Tigania West Sub-County of Kenya
2. To explore the role of religious teachings in shaping attitudes and actions towards climate change
3. To Examine Community Engagement and Environmental Initiatives
4. To Identify Barriers and Opportunities for Promoting Environmental Sustainability

### **Statement of the Problem**

Climate change poses a significant threat to the sustainability of ecosystems, livelihoods, and communities worldwide. In Tigania West Sub-County, where church-sponsored schools play a pivotal role in shaping educational and social dynamics, the impact of climate change is particularly pronounced. However, despite the recognized importance of religious institutions in promoting environmental stewardship, there remains a gap in understanding the specific contributions and challenges faced by these schools in mitigating climate change. This is in terms of curriculum integration, community engagement, the influence of religious teachings on environmental awareness, and the practical implementation of sustainable practices. This gap highlights the need for deeper exploration into how these schools can effectively contribute to climate action. In addition, religion plays a crucial role in shaping the beliefs, values, and behaviors of individuals towards their environment. However, the role of church sponsored schools in training future community leaders on climate change mitigation is not well documented.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The intersection of religion, education, and environmental conservation has garnered increasing attention in both academic discourse and practical initiatives. Environmental education in Kenya is introduced to learners primarily through the formal school curriculum, starting at the primary school level. The concept is integrated into subjects such as science, social studies, and geography, with a focus on fostering awareness of environmental issues, conservation, and sustainability. Environmental education is reinforced through co-curricular activities like environmental clubs, tree planting initiatives, and eco-awareness campaigns. While there are systematic

manuals and guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education, much of the content is embedded in general teaching materials across subjects. For instance, language teaching materials often incorporate themes of environmental stewardship through reading passages and discussions. However, UNESCO (2021) highlights the need for further structured and specialized resources focusing explicitly on environmental education, aiming to make it a core curriculum component by 2025. This emphasis is aligned with global educational frameworks like the Incheon Declaration, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. Within this framework, the role of religion in mitigating climate change within educational settings, particularly church-sponsored schools, has emerged as a topic of considerable interest. This literature review synthesizes key findings and perspectives from relevant studies, focusing on four main themes: integration of environmental education, influence of religious teachings, community engagement and environmental initiatives, and barriers and opportunities for promoting environmental sustainability.

### **Integration of Environmental Education**

According to Davies (2013) and UNESCO (2017), environmental education is recognized as a crucial component of efforts to address climate change within educational institutions. However, research specific to church-sponsored schools in Tigania West Sub-County is limited. While some church-sponsored Secondary schools may incorporate environmental education into their curricula, the extent and effectiveness of these initiatives vary globally (Hart & Nolan, 2012; Chawla et al., 2018). Furthermore, challenges such as curriculum constraints, lack of resources, and competing educational priorities may hinder the integration of environmental education in these schools (Ogden & Heimlich, 2009).

In church-sponsored secondary schools therefore, traditional teaching methods such as lectures, textbook-based learning, and moral instruction are commonly adopted. While these methods can provide foundational knowledge, they may not always emphasize active engagement or critical thinking, which are essential for effectively teaching climate change. The reliance on didactic teaching and moral framing could potentially hinder the initiation of climate change courses by limiting students' participation in experiential learning, problem-solving, and real-world applications.

However, methods from non-religious schools, such as project-based learning, experiential activities like field trips or environmental projects and interactive digital tools, could enhance the teaching of climate change from a religious perspective. These approaches encourage hands-on involvement and critical reflection, which can be aligned with religious values of stewardship and care for creation. By integrating more dynamic teaching strategies with religious principles, church-sponsored secondary schools could foster a deeper understanding of climate change and inspire actionable change among students.

### **Influence of Religious Teachings**

Religious teachings and beliefs play a significant role in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards the environment (Grim & Tucker, 2014). Thus, many religious traditions espouse principles of stewardship, reverence for nature, and responsibility towards future generations, which are closely aligned with environmental conservation (Gottlieb, 2006). Within the context of church-sponsored Secondary schools, religious teachings may serve as a powerful catalyst for promoting environmental stewardship and climate action among students (Wheeler et al., 2019). However, the extent to which religious teachings influence attitudes and actions towards climate change in Tigania West Sub-County remains underexplored. Research indicates that while religious teachings can inspire environmental activism, they may also be interpreted in ways that prioritize human dominion over nature, potentially hindering conservation efforts (Taylor, 2018). Thus, further investigation was needed to understand the nuanced interplay between religious beliefs and environmental attitudes within church-sponsored schools.

### **Community Engagement and Environmental Initiatives**

According to Robottom and Hart (1993), church-sponsored schools are often deeply embedded within local communities, providing opportunities for collaborative environmental initiatives. Community engagement can enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of environmental education programs while fostering a sense of collective responsibility for environmental stewardship (Pretty et al., 2003). In Tigania West Sub-

County, community involvement in environmental initiatives within church-sponsored schools vary depending on factors such as cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and institutional partnerships. Literature suggests that successful community engagement requires participatory approaches that prioritize local knowledge, values, and priorities (Reed, 2008). However, challenges such as power imbalances, lack of trust, and limited resources may impede effective community collaboration (Arnstein, 1969). Therefore, exploring community dynamics and identifying strategies for fostering meaningful engagement were essential for promoting environmental sustainability within church-sponsored schools.

In church-sponsored Secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County, environmental problems of local concern are likely to resonate more with learners than global issues. Local climate change-driven problems, such as droughts, water scarcity, deforestation, soil erosion, and agricultural challenges, can form the core of teaching. These issues are particularly relevant as they directly affect students' families and communities, making the subject matter more engaging and relatable.

Therefore, focusing on local problems provides opportunities for practical learning and community-based solutions, such as water conservation projects, tree planting, and sustainable farming practices. In addition, teaching about these issues can connect religious teachings on stewardship with real-world actions, creating a sense of responsibility for protecting the environment. Further, global issues like rising sea levels, carbon emissions, and climate justice are important, addressing local environmental challenges first could help students understand the tangible impacts of climate change and the role they can play in mitigating them.

### **Barriers and Opportunities for Promoting Environmental Sustainability**

Lackey and Lackey (2013) posited that despite the potential synergies between religion, education, and environmental conservation, various barriers may hinder efforts to mitigate climate change within church-sponsored schools. These barriers may include institutional constraints, competing priorities, inadequate resources, and lack of awareness or commitment among stakeholders. Additionally, cultural and social factors, such as traditional beliefs, gender norms, and economic disparities, can influence attitudes and behaviors towards the environment (Fien, 2003). However, within these challenges lie opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and transformative change (Sterling, 2010). By leveraging existing resources, forging partnerships, and mobilizing collective action, church-sponsored schools will overcome barriers and effectively promote environmental sustainability (Bodzin et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the literature highlights the importance of integrating environmental education, using religious teachings, fostering community engagement, and addressing barriers to promote climate change mitigation within church-sponsored schools. However, further research was needed to contextualize these findings within the specific socio-cultural and educational landscape of Tigania West Sub-County, thereby informing targeted interventions and policy recommendations for enhancing environmental sustainability within these institutions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This was used to gather information about the characteristics, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, or opinions of the population. The study was conducted in Tigania West Sub-County in Meru County: Kenya. Only three church sponsored schools were selected because they offered a representative sample for a focused and manageable study within the constraints of available resources. These schools were chosen due to their distinct characteristics or levels of engagement in environmental education, which allowed for an in-depth examination of their practices and challenges. This targeted approach enabled a thorough analysis of the integration of environmental education and community involvement, providing valuable insights while ensuring that the study remained feasible and resource-efficient. This formed 30% of the total population of the church sponsored schools in Tigania West. Thus, the findings were generalized to the broader population of church sponsored schools in the region. The target population comprised of 3 principals (St. Claire=1, Kunene=1 and St. Lukes=1), 19 teachers (St. Claire=4, Kunene=5 and St. Lukes=10) and three sponsors (St. Claire=1, Kunene=1 and St. Lukes=1). The learners were omitted from the study because the focus was on understanding the perspectives and practices of school administrators, teachers, and sponsors in integrating environmental education and fostering community engagement. By targeting principals, teachers,

and sponsors, the study aimed to gather insights on the implementation and challenges of environmental initiatives from those directly involved in decision-making and program development. Including learners may have added complexity and required additional resources, potentially diluting the specific focus on institutional and organizational factors influencing environmental education. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews.

**Description and Interpretation of Results**

A total of 25 respondents were targeted by the study (constituting, 19 teachers, 3 principals and 3 sponsors). In the context of schools, principals and sponsors are typically considered part of the administrative staff. Principals are directly involved in the management and administration of the school, while sponsors often provide support and oversight, especially in church-sponsored schools. However, teachers are generally considered instructional staff or educators, responsible for delivering curriculum and facilitating learning. The response rate was 100%. This indicates that all individuals in the target population (comprising the three principals, 19 teachers, and three sponsors) completed and returned the questionnaire. A 100% response rate ensured comprehensive data collection and strengthens the reliability and validity of the study's findings, as every participant's perspective was included in the analysis.

**Instrument**

The study employed a structured questionnaire and interview guides designed to collect comprehensive data on the characteristics, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions of the principals, teachers, and sponsors of St. Claire, St. Lukes and Kunene Secondary schools regarding environmental education in church-sponsored schools. The questionnaire and interview guides gathered basic demographic information about respondents, including their roles, experience, and school affiliation. They examined how environmental education is integrated into the curriculum, exploring specific subjects and teaching methods. The survey assessed community engagement by looking at the nature and extent of local involvement in environmental initiatives. They also explored respondents' beliefs and attitudes toward the importance and impact of environmental education. Finally, the questionnaire and interview guides identified challenges and barriers encountered in implementing environmental education programs.

**Distribution of Respondents by subject area**

The respondents indicated their subject areas. These are presented as shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents by subject area

<b>Teachers</b>		
<b>combinations</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Bio/agriculture	3	15.7
Math/chemistry	4	21
Geo/business	3	15.7
Kiswahili	6	31.5
History/CRE	3	15.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 shows that 3(15.7%) of the teacher respondents were bio/agriculture, 4(21%) mathematics/chemistry, 3(15.7%) geo/business studies, 6(31.5%) Kiswahili and 3(15.7%) history/CRE. It is clear that most of the teachers taught Kiswahili. This distribution suggests that environmental education might not be a primary focus



in the curriculum of most teachers. This highlights a potential gap in integrating environmental education across various subjects, particularly in those areas where teachers have less direct engagement with environmental topics. Therefore, there may be a need to enhance the inclusion of environmental education within the Kiswahili curriculum or to encourage cross-curricular approaches to ensure that all subjects contribute to environmental awareness and sustainability.

The teachers were asked to indicate their teaching experience. These are as presented in figure 1

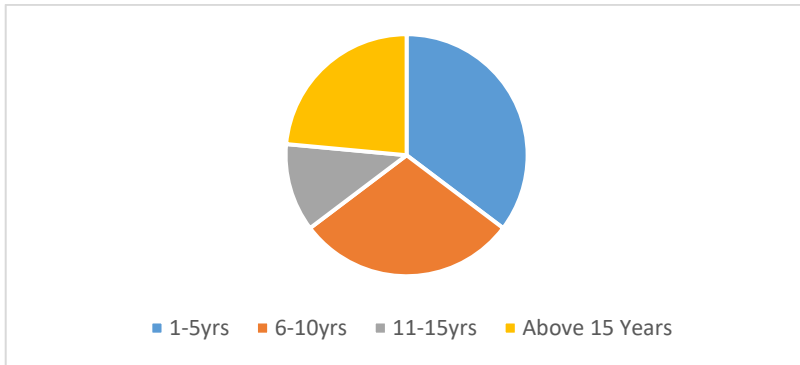


Figure 1. Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Experience

As shown in figure 1, 4 (10%) of the teachers had served for a period between 11-15 years, 5 (30%) between 6-10 years, 4 (20%) more than 15 years and 6 (40%) were between 1-5 years. It is evident that most of the teachers had taught for a long period of time and therefore the researchers considered them to have information on the role of religion in managing climate change.

### Current Status of Climate Change in Tigania-West Secondary Schools

The first objective of the study focused on the status of climate change in Tigania-West Sub-County. This section is organized as follows:

#### Degree of Awareness of Climate Change and its Implications for the Environment

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate whether they are aware of climate change and its implications for the environment. The findings of the study were as presented in Figure 2.

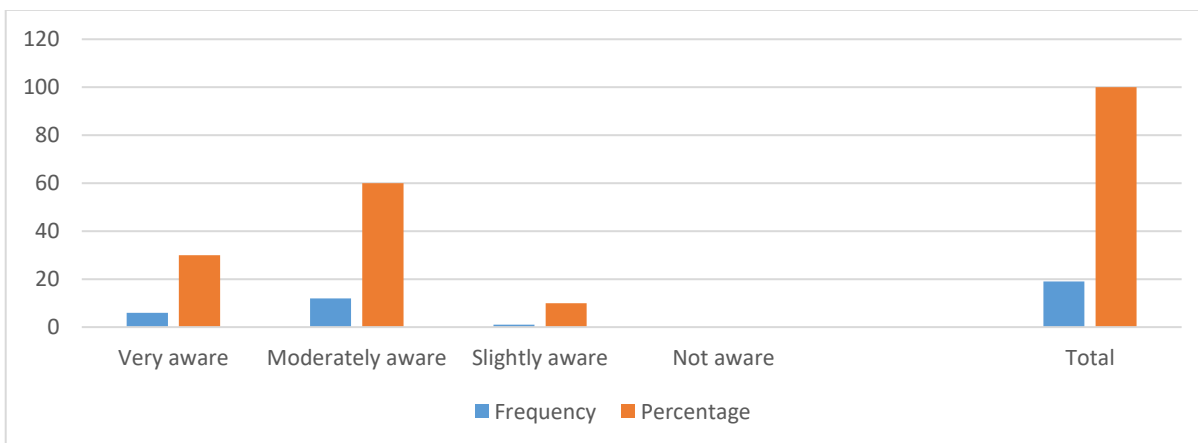


Figure 2. Degree of Awareness on Climate Change and its Implications for the Environment

Figure 2 shows that most of the respondents 12 (60%) indicated that they are moderately aware of climate change and its implications on environment. This indicates a general level of awareness among the respondents but also highlights that there may be a significant opportunity to deepen their understanding of climate change. While respondents have some awareness, the moderate level suggests that further education and training could enhance their knowledge and enable them to more effectively integrate climate change topics into their teaching or

administrative practices. This gap presents an opportunity for targeted professional development focused on climate change to improve overall environmental education efforts.

The interview conducted with the sponsors and principals revealed varying levels of awareness about climate change. The principals reported being moderately aware of climate change and its implications, with one principal demonstrating a higher level of understanding by providing a clear definition and examples, such as global warming, drought, and floods. In contrast, two out of three sponsors indicated a high level of awareness, with one Catholic sponsor describing climate change as "the modification in the prevailing weather conditions that always have negative impacts such as drought, famine." Another sponsor highlighted that "climate change has been a concern in third world countries since time immemorial." This indicates that while awareness levels vary among the respondents, there is a general understanding of climate change and its impacts, particularly among the sponsors. The higher awareness among some sponsors suggests that they might be more prepared to support and advocate for climate change initiatives within their institutions.

### **Incorporation of Climate Change Topics in the School Curriculum and Lesson Plan**

The teachers were asked to indicate whether they incorporate climate change topics in school curriculum or lesson plan. The findings were as presented in Table 5.

Table 2. Responses of Teachers on Incorporation of Climate Change Topics in School Curriculum and Lesson Plan

<b>How often</b>	<b>St. Lukes Boys' Secondary School</b>	<b>Kunene Mixed Day Secondary School</b>	<b>St. Clare Girls' Secondary School</b>
Frequently	4	1	2
Occasionally	4	1	1
Rarely	2	2	2
Never	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Table 2 shows that most secondary school teachers (7 out of 19) in Tigania-West constituency have frequently incorporated climate change topics in school curriculum and lesson plans. This has been an initiative driven by the teachers themselves, demonstrating their commitment to addressing climate change through their teaching practices. Their proactive approach highlights the role of individual educators in enhancing environmental education, even in the absence of formal directives from the administration or sponsors. This teacher-led initiative underscores the potential for grassroots efforts to make significant contributions to climate change education. This therefore, means that a significant portion of teachers is actively engaging with climate change education, suggesting a positive integration of environmental topics into their teaching practices. However, with 12 teachers not frequently incorporating these topics, there remains an opportunity to expand and standardize the inclusion of climate change education across all subjects. This could help ensure that all students receive comprehensive and consistent information about climate change and its impacts.

The interview explored the extent to which the selected schools have incorporated climate change education into their programs. Two out of three principals reported that their schools have indeed included climate change education in their curricula. One principal elaborated, saying, "Yes, my school has included climate change education in the curriculum; here we teach the causes of climate change, its impacts on the environment, and mitigation measures." He further noted that the school board has supported this initiative by purchasing adequate teaching and learning materials to ensure students gain sufficient knowledge on mitigating climate change. This means that some schools are actively integrating climate change education into their programs and are taking concrete steps to provide the necessary resources for effective teaching. This commitment reflects a proactive approach to environmental education and highlights the role of school leadership in fostering climate awareness and action.

### Involvement in school initiatives related to climate change mitigation

Teachers were asked to indicate whether they have involved in any of the following school initiatives (recycling programs, energy conservation projects, sustainable clubs) related to climate change mitigation. The findings were as presented in Figure 3.

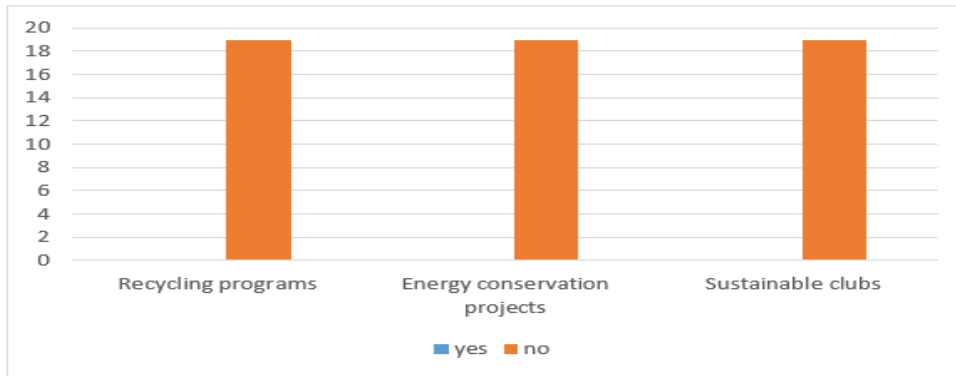


Figure 3 Involvement in School Initiatives Related to Climate Change Mitigation

Figure 3 shows that 100% of the respondents have not been involved in any school initiative programs for mitigating climate change. It is therefore clear that the majority of schools in Tigania West Constituency are rarely concerned about climate change. This finding is consistent with the results of a study by Apori, Zinnah, and Anor (2019) in Ghana, which also found that most schools lacked awareness of climate mitigation measures. This indicates a significant gap in active engagement and institutional commitment to climate change initiatives within the schools, highlighting the need for increased awareness and the development of targeted programs to address climate issues more effectively.

The interviews revealed that 100% of the sponsors reported they have not engaged with the schools regarding climate change initiatives. One sponsor mentioned that his lack of involvement is due to being consistently busy with church work but expressed a willingness to find time to participate in the future. On the other hand, 100% of the principals confirmed that they have actively involved both teachers and students in climate change programs. One principal highlighted the rationale behind this involvement, stating, "We have involved teachers and students at large in this program," and further explained that "students and teachers are the main stakeholders and active members of the school activities." This indicates a clear distinction between the levels of engagement from sponsors and the proactive efforts of principals to include the entire school community in climate change education.

### Actions taken to reduce carbon footprint within the school environment at personal level

The study sought to get teachers actions at personal level towards reducing carbon footprint within the school environment. The findings of the study were as presented in Figure 4.

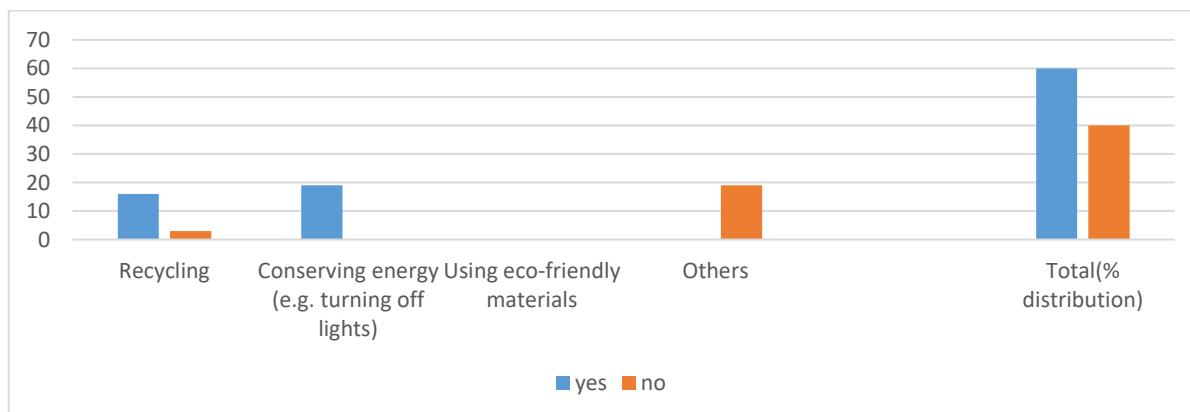


Figure 4. Actions to Reduce Carbon Footprint within the School Environment



Figure 4 shows that 60% of the respondents indicated that they have taken some actions to reduce their carbon footprint, such as conserving energy by switching off lights when not in use, while 40% have not. From these findings, it can be concluded that most teachers in Tigania West secondary schools have engaged in significant actions towards reducing their carbon footprint within the school environment. Therefore, there is a positive trend of individual environmental responsibility among the teachers, suggesting that while institutional programs may be lacking, personal initiatives are contributing to sustainability efforts. This highlights the potential for building on these individual actions to ensure a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to environmental sustainability in schools.

### Engagement of Students in Discussions or Activities Related to Climate Change

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate whether they have engaged students in discussions or activities related to climate change. The findings of the study were as presented in Table 3

Table 3. Engagement of Students in Discussions or Activities Related to Climate Change

Activities	yes	no
Classroom discussions	16	3
Assignments and projects	10	9
Guest speakers or field trips Others	16	3
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 3 shows that (70%) of the respondents indicated that they involve learners in discussions and activities related to climate change while (30%) indicated that they don't involve learners in discussions. From the findings of the study, it can be said that most teachers in secondary schools in Tigania-west constituency engage learners in discussions and activities related to climate change. Therefore, there is a significant effort to incorporate climate change education into the learning experience, which suggests a positive approach to raising awareness and fostering student involvement in environmental issues. This engagement indicates that climate change is being addressed within the classroom, contributing to students' understanding and potentially encouraging further action on environmental sustainability.

In the interviews conducted, principals and sponsors highlighted several key aspects of their involvement in climate change mitigation:

1. **Involvement of the Local Community:** All principals reported engaging the local community in climate change efforts through activities such as community clean-up events, tree planting days, and educational workshops. One principal noted that these activities have been effective because they foster community participation, particularly in tree planting.
2. **Partnership Programs and Collaborations:** Most sponsors mentioned collaborating with organizations like NEMA to address climate change, including campaigns to raise awareness and encourage recycling of non-biodegradable materials, such as plastic bottles.
3. **Waste Management and Recycling:** Principals outlined various waste management strategies, including recycling, composting programs, reducing single-use plastics, and overall waste reduction initiatives.
4. **Sponsor Church Support:** All principals indicated that the sponsor church supports climate change mitigation by sending members to participate in tree planting and ensuring proper waste composting.
5. **Student Participation:** Sponsors encourage students to engage in climate change-related activities during sermons, emphasizing the importance of environmental cleanliness and tree planting.

6. **Incorporation in Religious Teachings:** Many principals integrate climate change mitigation into religious teachings through sermons, prayers, CRE lessons, and discussions in church-related groups such as CU and YCS.

It is therefore clear that both principals and sponsors are actively involved in various aspects of climate change mitigation. They utilize community engagement, partnerships, waste management practices, and educational initiatives to address environmental issues. This comprehensive approach reflects a commitment to integrating climate change awareness into both educational and community contexts.

**Perception of challenges in incorporating climate change education in teaching**

To establish the challenges facing incorporation of climate change education in teaching, teacher respondents were asked to indicate their perception of the biggest challenges in incorporating climate change in education in teaching. The findings are as presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4. Perception of Biggest Challenges

Challenges	St. Lukes Boys' Secondary School	Kunene Mixed Day Secondary School	St. Clare Girls' Secondary School	Percentage (%)
Lack of resources	7	9	6	60
Time constraints	1	3	5	10
Curriculum constraints	3	3	4	15
Resistance from students or colleagues	3	5	3	15
others	0	0	0	0

Results in Table 4 show that the biggest problem identified is a lack of resources, with 60% of respondents citing this issue. This indicates that insufficient resources are a significant barrier to effectively implementing climate change education and related initiatives in schools. The lack of resources may include limited access to teaching materials, funding for environmental programs, or infrastructure needed for sustainability projects. Addressing this resource gap is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of climate change education and enabling schools to carry out impactful environmental initiatives.

**Ways in which the school administration could better support teachers in their efforts to mitigate climate change within school.**

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate the appropriate ways in which the school administration could help teachers in mitigating climate change. The findings of the study were as presented in Figure 5.

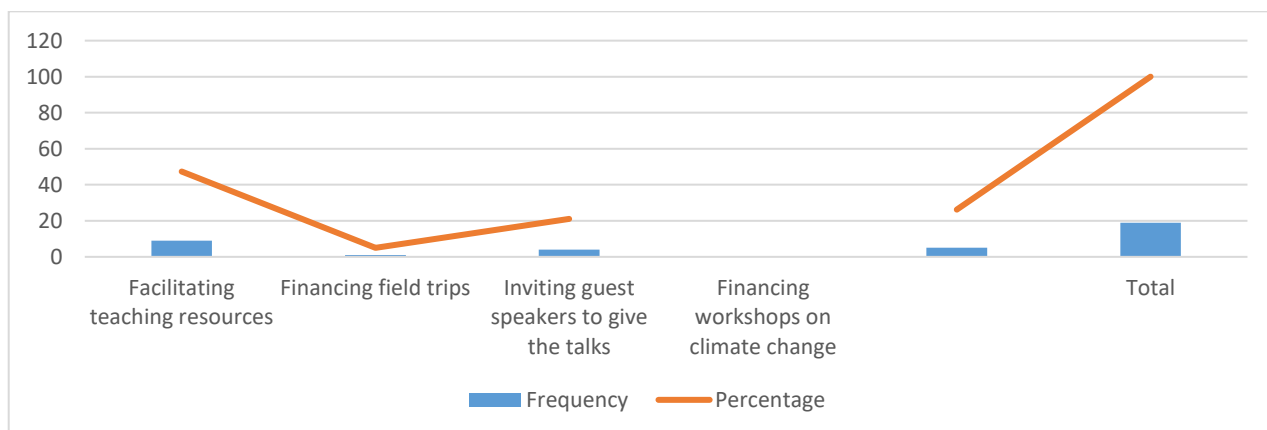


Figure 5. Ways in which the School Administration Could Support in Mitigating Climate Change

Figure 5 shows that most of the respondents (9 or 47.3%) indicated that providing teaching and learning resources is one of the best ways the school administration can support teachers in mitigating climate change. This indicates that the provision of adequate resources, such as educational materials and tools, is seen as the most effective support administrators can offer to enhance teachers' efforts in climate change education. Therefore, investing in and supplying these resources is crucial for empowering teachers and facilitating more effective climate change education within schools in Tigania West Constituency.

In the interviews with sponsors and principals, most sponsors outlined various methods they use to advocate for climate change awareness and action within the school. One sponsor mentioned, "Here we provide educational materials, sponsor workshops, and enhance public sustainability through marketing channels." Another sponsor suggested, "The school can engage the sponsors in its activities to support climate change efforts. For example, by inviting the church sponsors to attend tree planting days at the school." This indicates that sponsors are proactive in supporting climate change initiatives and are open to further collaboration with schools to enhance their environmental efforts. Engaging sponsors in school activities not only leverages their resources and expertise but also strengthens the partnership between the schools and the sponsoring organizations, fostering a more integrated approach to climate change mitigation.

**Perception on how the Sponsor church can Better Support the School to Mitigate Climate Change within the School**

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate possible ways among the following ways on how the sponsor church can help in mitigating climate change in the school. The findings of the study are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. ways in which the sponsor church can help the school in mitigating climate change in the school environment

Ways	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Donating land for tree planting	10	55
Facilitating church seminars on mitigating climate change	9	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows that 10 respondents (55%) indicated that the sponsor church should donate land for tree planting activities, while 9 respondents (45%) suggested that facilitating church seminars is the best way to support climate change initiatives. This indicates a preference for tangible, practical support, such as providing land for tree planting, as a significant way for the sponsor church to contribute to environmental efforts. However, there is also recognition of the value of educational and awareness-raising activities through seminars. Therefore, both types of support (practical resources and educational opportunities) are seen as valuable contributions to enhancing climate change mitigation efforts within the community.

**Data Interpretation**

The study reveals a mixed but generally positive picture of climate change awareness and mitigation efforts within Tigania-West Secondary Schools. While teachers and students are moderately aware and active in incorporating climate change topics into education, there is a notable lack of organized school initiatives directly targeting climate change mitigation. The main challenges faced include resource constraints and curriculum limitations. To enhance climate change education and action, it is crucial for school administrations and sponsors to collaborate more effectively, providing necessary resources, facilitating educational programs, and actively engaging the community.

**Application of the Study**

Religion can play a crucial role in addressing climate change by promoting stewardship, inspiring action and

advocacy, and providing a moral and ethical framework for decision-making. Thus, the findings of this study, have several significant applications that can contribute to both academic discourse and practical strategies in climate change management within educational and religious contexts. These applications are outlined as follows: The study's insights can inform the integration of climate change education into the curriculum of church-sponsored schools; Policymakers in the education and environment sectors can use the study's findings to develop policies that encourage the active participation of religious institutions in climate change initiatives; the potential of church-sponsored schools to act as centers for raising awareness about climate change; religious leaders and educators can use the study to develop sermons, educational materials, and activities that emphasize the religious and ethical imperatives for caring for the environment; training programs for teachers and school administrators can be designed based on the study's findings.

The study also adds to the body of knowledge on the intersection of religion and environmental education; it can serve as a reference for further academic research on the role of religious institutions in addressing climate change, encouraging more studies in diverse geographical and cultural contexts. Additionally, by aligning the study's recommendations with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 4 (Quality Education), church-sponsored schools can contribute to global efforts in achieving these targets through localized, faith-based initiatives. The findings can empower church-sponsored schools to become advocates for environmental protection within their communities.

The study can help church-sponsored schools identify and mobilize resources for climate change projects. This includes securing funding, partnerships, and volunteer support from religious organizations, NGOs, and government agencies committed to environmental sustainability. By embedding climate change awareness and sustainable practices in their operations and teachings, church-sponsored schools can contribute to long-term climate resilience. This approach ensures that future generations are better equipped to handle the challenges posed by climate change. Therefore, this study highlights the pivotal role that religious institutions, particularly church-sponsored schools, can play in climate change management. By applying the study's findings, stakeholders can harness the power of faith-based education to foster a more sustainable and resilient society.

## CONCLUSION

The role of religion is significant in fostering environmental awareness, education, and action towards mitigating climate change. Thus, schools have the potential to shape the attitudes and behaviors of their students towards a more sustainable and environmentally conscious future. Therefore, the role of religion in mitigating climate change within church-sponsored schools in Tigania West Sub-County holds significant promise for fostering environmental stewardship and promoting sustainable practices. Through an exploration of the integration of environmental education, the influence of religious teachings, community engagement and environmental initiatives, and barriers and opportunities for promoting environmental sustainability, this study has highlighted the multifaceted dynamics at play within these educational institutions.

The findings emphasize the importance of integrating environmental education into school curricula, leveraging religious teachings to inspire environmental stewardship, fostering community engagement, and addressing barriers to environmental sustainability. By prioritizing these recommendations, church-sponsored schools can emerge as influential hubs for climate action, empowering students to become agents of change within their communities and beyond.

Moreover, this study emphasizes the interconnectedness of religion, education, and environmental conservation in addressing one of the most pressing challenges of our time. By recognizing and harnessing the synergies between these domains, church-sponsored schools have the potential to catalyze transformative change and contribute to a more sustainable future for generations to come.

As we look ahead, it is imperative that stakeholders, including educators, religious leaders, policymakers, and community members, continue to collaborate and innovate in their efforts to mitigate climate change and promote environmental sustainability within church-sponsored schools. By working together towards a common vision of environmental stewardship rooted in religious values and educational principles, we can build a more resilient and equitable world for all.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the face of escalating climate change challenges, church-sponsored schools in Tigania West Sub-County have a unique opportunity to lead the way in environmental education and stewardship. By integrating climate change education into their curricula, these institutions can cultivate a generation of environmentally conscious citizens. This initiative not only emphasizes the importance of sustainable practices within the school community—such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and eco-friendly transportation—but also fosters active engagement with local communities and environmental organizations. Through collaborative efforts, hands-on learning experiences, and open discussions about the ethical dimensions of environmental stewardship, church-sponsored schools can inspire students to embody their religious values in the context of environmental responsibility. By prioritizing resource allocation and addressing potential barriers, these schools can effectively enhance their role in mitigating climate change and promoting a sustainable future.

1. **Comprehensive Curriculum Integration-** church-sponsored secondary schools should prioritize the incorporation of climate change education across all subjects and grade levels. This approach should focus on hands-on learning experiences and real-world applications, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental issues and promoting a sense of responsibility among students.
2. **Community Engagement and Collaboration-** active engagement with local communities, religious institutions, and environmental organizations is essential. Schools can organize initiatives such as clean-up drives, tree planting campaigns, and workshops to raise awareness about climate action. These collaborative efforts will help instill a culture of environmental stewardship within the broader community.
3. **Support and Resource Allocation-** school administrators and policymakers must allocate resources to support environmental initiatives. This includes investing in waste management infrastructure, creating green spaces, and providing professional development for teachers. Identifying and addressing barriers to effective climate education will enable schools to create a conducive environment for promoting sustainability.

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