

**INCLUSIVE CHURCH-BASED EVANGELISM AMONG DEAF
PERSONS**

In Kampala Diocese, A Case Study of Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda

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DECLARATION

I, Kobusingye Annette Patience, declare that this thesis is my own work, and that all sources used have been acknowledged. This work has not been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for any academic award.

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis has been prepared under my supervision and is now ready for submission with my approval.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Inclusivity: In this study, inclusivity means the deliberate removal of communication, attitudinal, structural and liturgical barriers so that deaf persons can participate fully in worship, fellowship, discipleship and evangelism. It goes beyond attendance and includes belonging, dignity, mutual care and shared ministry.

Evangelism: Evangelism refers to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others, such that, they hear, know, understand, and respond to it through confession and forgiveness of sins, by God and believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. In this study, evangelism includes verbal, visual, signed and relational communication among the deaf persons.

Deaf persons: Deaf persons refer to people with severe or profound hearing loss whose ordinary communication may depend on Ugandan Sign Language, visual communication, captions, interpreters or other accessible methods. The term also acknowledges Deaf identity as a cultural and linguistic community.

Hearing impairment or hearing loss: Hearing impairment or hearing loss is used as the broader category that includes persons who are hard of hearing, severely deaf or profoundly deaf. The study focuses on deaf persons within this broader category.

Missioners: Missioners is a term that was coined to mean members of a mission team, involved in active evangelistic out reach.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how church-based evangelism among deaf persons can be made more inclusive, using Silent Church at St. Luke's, Ntinda, in the Diocese of Kampala, as a qualitative case study. Framed theologically by the *imago Dei* and the Pauline image of the Body of Christ, the study responded to the concern that, despite the Church's theological commitment to proclaiming the Gospel to all people, deaf persons continue to experience marginalization within ecclesial life, worship, discipleship and evangelistic outreach. It was guided by three objectives: to examine the barriers that limit effective evangelistic outreach to deaf persons; to assess how clergy, deaf congregants, teachers, parents and missionary groups are engaged as human resources in inclusive evangelism; and to identify practical strategies for strengthening the participation of deaf persons in the Church's Gospel ministry. Data were collected from sixty-one purposively selected participants, nine clergy, thirteen deaf congregants, five teachers, twenty-nine missionaries and five parents through individual interviews and focus group discussions, and were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that deaf-inclusive evangelism is hindered not merely by inadequate sign-language interpretation, but by deeper cultural, theological and attitudinal barriers that devalue deaf persons and restrict their participation. Human resources for inclusive ministry existed but were insufficiently trained, poorly coordinated and not formally commissioned. Meaningful inclusion became possible where accessible communication, intentional resourcing, congregational sensitization, attitudinal transformation and the empowerment of deaf persons as active witnesses are deliberately pursued. The study concludes that deaf-inclusive evangelism is a theological and missional imperative, not a peripheral welfare concern, and recommends systematic sign-language training, the establishment of a dedicated deaf-ministry structure, the commissioning of deaf evangelists, and sustained congregational formation within the Diocese of Kampala.

Keywords: deaf ministry, inclusive evangelism, disability theology, sign language interpretation, *imago Dei*, Kampala Diocese.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 General Introduction

This chapter presents the study on inclusive church-based evangelism within the diocese of Kampala using the Silent church as a case study. It introduces the background, defines the key terms, states the research problem, sets out the objectives and research questions, and explains the significance and scope of the study. The chapter therefore establishes the rationale for examining how the Church can make the Gospel accessible to deaf persons in ways that respect their language, dignity, culture, and participation in Christian community.

1.1 Background of the Study

Hearing loss is a broad condition that ranges from mild difficulty in hearing speech to profound deafness. The World Health Organization explains that hearing loss may be mild, moderate, severe or profound, may affect one or both ears, and may limit a person's ability to hear conversational speech or loud sounds (World Health Organization [WHO], 2026). Hard of hearing persons commonly communicate through spoken language with support such as hearing aids, cochlear implants or captions, while many deaf persons have profound hearing loss and may communicate through sign language (WHO, 2026). In this study, the phrase deaf persons is used to refer to persons whose hearing loss significantly limits ordinary spoken communication and who may rely on Ugandan Sign Language or other visual forms of communication.

This clarification is important because the study shifted from the broad phrase hearing impairment to the more specific phrase deaf persons. Hearing impairment or hearing loss is the wider medical and social category, while deaf persons refer to the specific community whose participation in worship and evangelism is most affected by lack of sign language interpretation, visual communication and inclusive pastoral practice. The study is, therefore, still under area of concern on hearing loss, but concern was given with deaf persons and the Deaf community, at the Silent Church Ntinda, St. Luke's as empirical considerations.

But hearing impairment is a major obstacle to inclusion at a world-wide level. According to WHO, over 430 million people need rehabilitation for disabling HHL and by 2050, over 700 million will

be affected with DHHL (World Health Organization, 2026). Untreated or untreated children will face communication difficulties, social isolation, stigma, depression, and difficulties with access to education, employment and community. Without the support, children with hearing impairment may experience impairment of speech development and language skills as well as their social development (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2024). The following are all realities that deafness is not just a medical problem, but has social, cultural, educational and spiritual implications.

In Christian mission, persons who are deaf are a group to whom the Church is obligated. People who speak different languages and lack social and institutional barriers to participation are all part of the biblical call for us to make disciples of all nations. Inclusive evangelism will mean more than coming into church. It demands communication access, the theological recognition, pastoral sensitivity, and active participation of the deaf person in worship, fellowship and mission.

In the African context, factors of poverty, lack of AT, stigma, lack of education and trained personnel can combine to create disability and/or deafness. Definitions of disability may also be culturally colored by spiritual and/or negative understandings, and this can increase the marginalization experienced. Disability in African religious contexts: Studies have highlighted that, although churches want to be inclusive in principle, they can be lacking in practical ability in respect to running inclusive and accessible worship, trained interpreters and leadership, and disability awareness and inclusive discipleship pathways.

These challenges faced by deaf persons in Uganda involve limited access to interpreters, lack of formal education and its access level, limited access to assistive technologies and social stigma. According to the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2020, disability is defined as a significant functional limitation resulting from a physical, mental or sensory impairment or from a combination of impairments which interferes with a person's ability to interact with the environment. This rights-lens is crucial for the Church as it brings a change of focus from treating deaf persons as intended recipients of charity, to viewing them as a person of the church who are entitled to participate fully.

For this Study the context provided by the Diocese of Kampala is provided. Serving mostly an urban Anglican faith community, it continues to face significant challenges in providing access to sign language-interpretation, visual aids for teaching, pastors that facilitate access to a Deaf

community, discipleship resources that are accessible to Deaf people. Initial Diocesan and Parish level data indicates that few ecclesial communities have formal support for deaf people or regular sign language interpreting services. In the process, a great number of hearing children and youth may be present at worship services and do not receive the sermons, liturgy, notices, Bible teaching, or evangelistic teaching. As a result, many Deaf children and youth can attend the worship service without hearing sermons, liturgy, notices, Bible teaching or evangelistic instruction.

The case of Silent Church at St. Luke's Ntinda is therefore of significance in that it is one of the few examples of the creation of ministry to the deaf, deliberately offered, in the Diocese of Kampala. The investigation of this congregation can enable one to both review the work already done, and to be aware of work still needed. Insights gained from the case can add to ongoing efforts for the strengthening of inclusive evangelism within St. Luke's Ntinda and contribute to other parishes looking to reach deaf persons more effectively.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Church is called to be a community in which all members have a "dignified place" and a community that proclaims the Gospel to all people. However, in reality, the deaf are excluded from the center of worship and evangelism as messages in the sermons, worship, and Bible reading are typically spoken. In practice, however, the deaf person is often excluded from the main stream of worship and evangelism, as the praising of the Lord, liturgy, Bible explanation and learning, discipleship and pastoral communication, are all typically geared towards speaking. Absence of any sign language interpretation, visual communication and disability-aware leadership can mean that that a person with a hearing disability is physically present but they are spiritually and socially excluded.

There are signs of emerging activities in the Diocese of Kampala that allow for persons with disabilities to be incorporated, such as Ministries that interpret Sign Language and care for the Deaf. However, progress on these points is not happening consistently and across congregations. There is some early evidence of engagement at a parish level, which suggests that access to regular sign language interpreter services is low in the majority of congregations and support is not a structured element. Many deaf people continue to face communication difficulties and not have much access to Christian messages and little opportunity to engage in active evangelism.

The knowledge gap arises from the lack of the following kinds of empirical studies which have examined: What is the actual practice of inclusive evangelism among deaf people in the context of an Anglican parish in Uganda; What seem to be the barriers that still exist; How human resources among clergy and lay people are being engaged; What strategies actually seem to be contextually realistic. Whilst there are theological perspectives and models found in the literature on the Deaf Church, very little concern has been given to the particular context of the Diocese of Kampala, Sign Language users or the context of Anglican parish ministry which is further challenged the constraints of limited resources. The study aims, therefore, to generate evidence that can be used to inform inclusive church-based evangelism for deaf in Kampala diocese and the wider church

1.3 Main Objective

To assess how effectively the Church is advancing inclusive, accessible Gospel ministry for deaf persons in the Diocese of Kampala, and to identify how that ministry can be strengthened.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- i. To identify the barriers that hinder effective evangelistic outreach to deaf persons in the church.
- ii. To examine how clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, volunteers and deaf members are engaged as human resources in promoting inclusive evangelism.
- iii. To explore practical strategies that can strengthen the inclusion of deaf persons in the Church's Gospel ministry.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What barriers limit effective evangelistic outreach to deaf persons in the church?
- ii. How are clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, volunteers and deaf members engaged as human resources in promoting inclusive evangelism?
- iii. What strategies can the Church adopt to strengthen the inclusion of deaf persons in Gospel ministry within St. Luke's Ntinda and the wider Diocese of Kampala?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study offers practical insights into the current practice of inclusive evangelism and ways to enhance it for the Church of Uganda and the Diocese of Kampala. It assists church leaders if they

need to identify potential communication barriers, potential training needs or potential ministry structures which may impact on the well-being and participation of the deaf person.

For deaf persons and their families, the study adds to the accessibility of worship, teaching, fellowship and in evangelistic involvement. It states deaf persons as not only beneficiaries of ministry, but as participants who can minister to others, serve and support the ministry and share the Gospel message.

The study contributes to missiology and to the fields of disability studies and practical theology by exploring some of the issues of inclusive evangelism in a Ugandan Anglican context. It is an area that lacked coverage in the literature and presents from a case-based perspective ministry as done by Deaf people in the Diocese of Kampala.

1.7 Geographical Scope

The study took place in the Diocese of Kampala and specifically in Silent Church at St. Luke's colony Ntinda. This site was purposefully chosen due to its status as one of the very few congregations within the diocese that has an established ministry among deaf persons and uses sign language in worship regularly.

This was suitable for a single case focus as the site was rich and revealing in information. It enabled the researcher to dig deeper into the experiences of inclusive evangelism, its leadership, communication and ministry patterns. The results of the study are not meant to be statistically generalized to the rest of the Diocese of Kampala as a single case study. However, these too can offer some helpful and contextually appropriate insights for other Anglican communities to use as they plan or continue to grow in the area of inclusive evangelism among people who are deaf.

1.8 Content Scope

This study was devoted to Evangelism through the church among the Deaf. Addressed challenges to outreach, involvement of human resources including clergy, lay readers, interpreters and Deaf persons, and practice solutions for supporting inclusive practice. Theological discussions of disability, access to communication and participation in Anglican ministry were also explored.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature on inclusive church-based evangelism among deaf persons and deliberately organized the review around the three specific objectives of the study: barriers to evangelistic outreach, engagement of church human resources, and practical strategies for strengthening inclusion. The review drew on disability theology, Deaf ministry, missiology, African ecclesiology, Ugandan contextual scholarship and current global evidence on hearing loss and sign-language access. The purpose was not merely to summarize sources, but to show how existing scholarship informed the empirical investigation at Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda, and where gaps remained for this Master of Divinity study.

2.1 Barriers to Effective Evangelistic Outreach to Deaf Persons

A major barrier in the literature is the communication gap between Deaf communities and hearing-led church structures. WHO's current evidence continues to show that hearing loss is a major global inclusion concern, with more than 430 million people requiring rehabilitation for disabling hearing loss and with the majority of people with disabling hearing loss living in low- and middle-income countries. For a church context, this means that evangelism cannot be reduced to spoken preaching alone; the Gospel must be communicated through accessible linguistic, visual and relational forms. Silent Word Ministries (2023) similarly emphasizes that Deaf ministry requires sign-language competence, trained workers, culturally sensitive approaches and intentional church structures. Their contribution is useful for local ministry planning, although both write largely from well-resourced North American evangelical contexts and therefore require contextual adaptation for Uganda. One of the key elements to any such adaptation is to accept the fact that Deaf people are not deaf individuals who simply lack the ability to hear but a community whose life of language, culture and meaning is distinct. In a southern African study, Hatolo Hlayisi and Sekoto (2023) demonstrate that the concept of deaf identity is not built around the hearing loss as a deficit, but around Sign Language and shared visual experiences that Deaf people have. The latter's findings have implications for how the Church will preach the Gospel. Taking the theological corollary, the Barrier-Free Belonging guidance from the Church of England surfaces, that worship and proclamation should be based on story, sign and visual access, not translated into them after the event and that Deaf culture is visual, immediate and narrative. (Church of England, 2024).

African and Ugandan studies sharpen this point by showing that deaf inclusion is shaped not only by communication technique but also by stigma, poverty, institutional neglect and power relations. Modern (2025), in a Uganda-based study of deaf-hearing communication in a market setting, demonstrates that Ugandan Sign Language and other visual communication practices create social belonging when they are used as ordinary community languages rather than as exceptional accommodations. Tagwirei (2025), writing on disabling and enabling church spaces in Zimbabwe, argues that churches have often limited the access, presence and participation of deaf people in *Missio Dei* and *Missio Ecclesiae*, partly because theological reflection on Deaf evangelism in Africa remains thin. These studies are directly relevant to the Diocese of Kampala because they locate the communication barrier within wider systems of exclusion.

The literature also identifies spiritualized and cultural stigma as a major barrier. Tagwirei (2024) shows that religious communities have sometimes interpreted disability and deafness through moral, charitable or deficit-based lenses. Tagwirei (2024) notes that Christian responses to deafness have moved between paternalism, exclusion and affirmation, and this typology helps interpret the attitudes identified in this study. Within African Christian contexts, Tagwirei (2024) argues for an ecclesiology that enables the abilities of persons with disabilities rather than defining them by impairment. This is important for Silent Church because the data showed that deafness was sometimes interpreted as curse, misfortune or burden, thereby weakening participation in worship, discipleship and evangelism. Recent African scholarship strengthens this reading. In a Ugandan hermeneutical review, Masiga and Nkabala (2025) show how biblical texts on disability have been interpreted in ways that shape and frequently distort how religious communities in Uganda regard deaf and disabled persons. Nanthambwe (2025) argues at a regional level that churches across sub-Saharan Africa often perpetuate exclusion through cultural and theological interpretations, even as they retain the capacity to become agents of inclusion. Tagwirei (2025) similarly examines how church spaces themselves can disable rather than include, calling congregations to align their physical and liturgical practice with their professed theology of belonging.

These attitudinal barriers have been placed in a larger context of structural patterns of exclusion in recent scholarship. In reference to the sub-Saharan African context Sande (2026) points out that practices in the church consistently and subtly neglect to invest in sign language resources, and

deaf worshippers are physically and symbolically out of the habit of participating, as church practices focus on spoken language for preaching and for leadership and other role functions. It is not just that people are prejudiced but that the general routine of church (sermon, liturgy, notice, mid-week fellowship) is designed around sound, with the accommodation of the deaf person almost entirely being theirs to bear. In the African region, most states have accepted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD 2006) yet a century of state constitutions has failed to successfully transfer commitments made in the convention policy into law. Petri Kaula and Sati 2025 survey sign-language interpreters and the deaf community find a general consensus that domestication and implementation of these commitments remain weak. In Uganda, this translates to the mere recognition of USL at the national level is not sufficient to ensure USL access to worship at the congregational level; a policy–practice gap that requires to be addressed week by week at the parish level by selected clergy and lay leaders.

Another thread of literature challenges the theological mindset of churches on deafness. McMahon-Panther and Bornman (2025), in a scoping review of persons with disabilities in the Christian church, propose to distinguish between expressions of compassion and expressions of justice: where inclusion is only presented as an expression of compassion, deaf and disabled persons are presented as objects of charity, whereas inclusion presented as justice, acknowledges them as rights-bearing members of the body of Christ. This distinction helps to reveal one such barrier which is perhaps not emphasized sufficiently, since it is presented in a benevolent guise: it is easy to get a good feeling about a congregation's deaf people and to act towards them with sensitivity without having any obligation towards them; accepting their presence is an optional convenience rather than an entitlement. A regional perspective is added by Kgatle (2024) who investigates the way disability is understood in African neo-Pentecostalism where the dominant theology can contribute to the understanding of deafness as a deficiency to be overcome, or as a difference to be embraced. These studies suggest that the interpretive lens that a church uses towards deafness is a barrier or an enabler on its own, before taking interpreters or seating into consideration, the way the church interprets deafness itself is a barrier or an enabler. These studies show that before considering interpreters or seating, the church's interpretive lens on deafness is a barrier or enabler to entry.

Past the findings, there is an extreme push back on the Church as to how it perceives reaching 'the deaf'. As discovered by Hlayisi and Sekoto (2023) and Modern (2025), deaf identity is not about the lack of hearing, but one of a community's unique visual language and shared community experience. Such a kind of evangelism will thus misunderstand its audience right away. Pity that deafness is a lack and not the presence of God's Word, humour, memory and the ways of knowing God. Its implication for outreach is great – the Gospel should not just be translated as a sign at the time of the outreach but should be thought of very much as a visual, narrative and relational text – as also the Church of England's (2024) guidance on Deaf spirituality states. A barrier remains anywhere ministry continues to think of the worshipper who doesn't hear as the worshipper who does hear.

The author Jacobson (2024) corrects and refutes this historical perspective, demonstrating a strong historical link between gesture and signed communication with preaching and religious instruction. Her research question is that Jesus' words were heard, but not in a language that most people would consider the legitimate language of proclamation for the church. Over at Gospel history, Jacobson (2024) offers a theological interpretation that could go the other way, however, that deaf persons are treated with dignity and that communication is not closed down, but is opened up. The literature therefore indicates that only logistical barriers are not a problem of Deaf evangelism; but rather theological, cultural, communicative and institutional barriers.

2.2 Engagement of Human Resources in Promoting Inclusive Evangelism

The second goal relates to the use of clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, volunteers and deaf church members as human resources for inclusive evangelism. There are clear and consistent messages in the literature about the importance of depending on persons rather than programmes for inclusion. Pastoral support, trained workers, organised ministry teams are mentioned in Silent Word Ministries (2023) as key aspects to support and sustain Deaf ministry. The models in use in Churches: Jacobson (2024); Silent Word Ministries (2023) demonstrate that a Deaf Christians' church service can be offered, whether through the interpretation of the service, through lay-led, or missionary-at-large arrangement or through the use of a human resources model, such as Deaf people in the church or by the provision of a captioned service, they all rely on competent and accountable human resources.

In the practical theology, is the question whether the deaf people are treated as charity, or as co-workers in the Gospel? Using participant rather than recipient language, Tagwirei (2024) and Tagwirei (2024) contend that deaf and disability Christians should be empowered to be participants in mission and leadership and not just accommodated as recipients. There is a significant reinforcement from the experiences of disabled Christians who wanted to be allowed, belong, unite and recognise gifts in the Church brought forward by Stahl, Escobar and Carter (2025). This literature directly addressed the study's second objective because it questions clergy, interpreters, lay leaders and volunteers and deaf members in terms of shared ministry, not blessed assistance.

The involvement of interpreters is unique. Stahl, Escobar and Carter (2025) focus on easy liturgy, sign language, deaf farmer training and the active role of the deaf person in the life of a church. While the document is produced in a Catholic setting, the need for trained interpreters and pastoral formation is readily transferable to the Anglican parish pew. The role of the interpreter in Uganda, where availability and training are still limited, should not be viewed as a secondary role, but as key evangelistic and pastoral mediator. Concurrently, the literature cautions that a single interpreter should not be the sole means of inclusion; the family members, young people, Sunday school teachers, religious leaders, lay readers, and Deaf people themselves also need to have a good understanding of sign language and Deaf culture.

Theological roots to the question: "Why is every member important? Barclay suggests that the community of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 12 is not made up of the self-sufficient strongest members, but rests on the interdependence of its members and the necessity of one part for the other, the weaker parts are the essential parts of the whole. Applicably to the ministry, this implies that the clergy, interpreters, the greatest lay speakers or the deaf are not a chain of able givers and needy receivers anymore, but a team of co-workers who are mutually essential. It is a theological grounding for the missed step being made from a charity to participation model of Deaf ministry as outlined by Tagwirei (2024) and Stahl, Escobar and Carter (2025), and provides a more substantial argument for the involvement of deaf people in ministry rather than serving them.

The literature is surprisingly also focused on the "real fragility" of interpreter provision. Kaula and Sati (2025), reported on the great lack of trained and professionalized trainers in Africa (with little avenues for their training, accreditation and pay). This fragility is particularly fierce in a parish context, where goodwill is one of the few pillars (or posts) on which the ministry relies, where

when that goodwill disappears so does much of the ministry, and where the fidelity of interpretation, especially of vocabulary in theology, is seldom guaranteed. The reviewed scholarship has warned against using one interpreter as a pledge of a church that is inclusive. Rather, it is a requirement that everyone in the congregation as a whole must share competence. Individuals working in sign languages such as clergy, family members, teachers, youth workers and deaf people would need to become competent in sign language and learn about the Deaf culture. This collective capacity ensures that the ministry is not so procured reliant on any one person and that it can still function if someone is not available or has left.

It appears that the ability can be developed intentionally. New initiatives have been implemented across the continent in dioceses and congregations which allow for the training of baptized clergy in sign language, the development of some theological training for deaf clergy and some congregations have seen the recognition of an individual who speaks sign language as a clergy member. Reflecting practices of the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Baloyi (2024) writes about the formal recognition and authorization of persons with disabilities as full members of the church, bringing to life an illustration of how formulating an authorization for ministry, often referred to as commissioning, is a defining feature of sustainable inclusion, as it distinguishes it from episodic kindness. Silent Church draws from a range of questions: things like this, are the HR encouraged and trained and formally commissioned in diocesan structures or is it the initiative and commitment of a few individuals that would bring it to an end?

Less talked about in the literature is how these human resources are orchestrated. A high-living congregation in the West, and an idealized one, are usually assumed, with little reference to the mundane difficulties involved in scheduling, supervision, funding and continuity, which shape the life of a ministry in an African parish. This study seeks to bring to the question of people, not just that they were available at Silent Church, but that they were organized, resourced and accountable enough in the context to sustain the ministry over time.

In this literature, another gap can also be identified. Very little writing on ideal models of Deaf ministry and very little which considers how human resource are actually mobilized in a low resource of an African Anglican parish. This study, therefore contributes by looking at whether human resources in Silent Church were trained, supported and commissioned systematically or if its inclusion was still dependent on the individual efforts.

2.3 Practical Strategies for Strengthening the Inclusion of Deaf Persons

The third goal was for literature on practical strategies. The three strategic pathways that the reviewed scholarship explores are communication access, attitudinal change and deaf-led involvement. Communication access involves code-switching and interpreters, visual teaching aids, accessible materials for Bible study, captions (where appropriate), seating where visibility and access are dealt with and liturgical practices that ensure that deaf persons can follow and respond meaningfully. Accessible devotional materials are important as demonstrated in Silent Word Ministries (2023) but there was need for caution due to the differences in English literacy among deaf and the Ugandan Sign Language may be more accessible for most.

Attitudinal transformation is equally necessary. Tagwirei (2024), Tagwirei (2024), Tagwirei (2024) and Stahl et al. (2025) all indicate that inclusion fails when disability is framed through pity, curse, incapacity or tokenism. For Silent Church and the wider Diocese of Kampala, this points to congregational sensitization, biblical teaching on the image of God, preaching that challenges stigma, and parish conversations that normalize Deaf presence as part of the body of Christ. Sensitization should therefore not be a one-off event but an ongoing process of discipleship and pastoral formation.

A third strategy is empowerment of deaf persons themselves. Contemporary disability theology increasingly insists on the principle that ministry should be conducted with deaf persons and not merely for deaf persons. This includes training deaf believers as evangelists, Bible-study facilitators, ushers, peer mentors, prayer leaders and members of ministry committees. Modern's (2025) Uganda-based study supports this principle because it shows that deaf spaces become strong where Deaf persons actively shape communication and social belonging. Tagwirei (2024) similarly points towards Deaf participation in mission as part of the Church's calling. This perspective is exemplified by the African context, with Silent Church providing recent models of how commissioning a person with deafness is about them as active agents and not just recipients of the church's ministry: see for example Baloyi (2024) "The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, persons with disabilities and their recognition".

Practical strategies are ones that would be achievable in the context of the Diocese of Kampala. These can start with low cost but high impact activity such as regular interpretation classes for both clergy and lay leaders, a diocesan register of interpreters, visual sermon notes, Deaf-culture

awareness for ministry teams, budget lines for interpretation, the inclusion of deaf members on the planning team, and purposeful ministry to Deaf people and their families. Within larger long-term approaches may be seen working in partnership with schools for the deaf, Deaf associations, theological colleges and diocesan training programs.

The research into practical strategy has focused more now on the physical and liturgical setup as in the past, than on communication technique. Order of space and materiality in worship sends messages about who is meant to be present: it does not matter to Gosbell if the space and material are incidental or a part of the liturgy but rather have theological implications about whose participation is expected. The evidence collected by Stahl, Escobar and Carter (2025) also supports a more holistic understanding of the examples of disabled Christians who are included in or excluded from the service, where many of these are a combination of how the service is communicated, the service itself, the attitudes of the congregation as well as its sense of community. Providing an interpreter is a necessary but not enough component of the lesson where there is a deaf congregation for the sightlines, pace of the lesson, visual supports continue to assume a hearing norm and the disposition of the congregation.

But with communication must come continued attitudinal change. Studies that were reviewed agree and state that the failure to meaningfully include persons with disabilities is present wherever disability is perceived as pity, suffering, lack of ability, disability or disability tokenism (Tagwirei, 2024; Stahl et al., 2025; McMahon-Panther & Bornman, 2025). It is good not to try to "reverse" such framings in one awareness event, but to continuously be shaped by that awareness – via the work of the word in the Bible every day, via the work of word proclaimed daily, via the normalisation of Deaf presence and Deaf language as a natural part of parish life and not an exceptional accommodation. The Ugandan study by Modern (2025) illustrates this; it demonstrates that a common language of sign is not an act of provision for a specific time and place, but rather the achievement of 'realness' when people use it as a true part of the community.

The third, and most transformative strategy, is the ability of deaf individuals to be active partners to ministry instead of simply objects of pastoral care and evangelism. Theology which is contemporary calls for a paradigm change from doing ministry for or to any deaf actors to doing ministry with and by any deaf actor. In reality, churches need to identify, train and support deaf believers who provide the facilitation of Bible study, provide Catechesis support, peer mentoring

and as a member of church decision making groups. This position is supported by Baloyi (2024), who emphasizes the contribution of those who are disabled as spiritual workers and Tagwirei (2024) who calls for the recognition and development of the ability of Christians with disabilities. By empowering deaf persons in this way, the sustainability of ministry is also strengthened. If the other person is a deaf person taking responsibility for outreach and leadership, the ministry need not rely on someone to be hearing to continue to do outreach or to assume leadership within the ministry.

Finally, they identify these types of congregational activities in the context of the church's wider public mission. Nanthambwe and Magezi (2025) argue that rather than focusing only on providing care to the individual, Disability inclusive development in Africa calls for this individual to be cared for by the church, as an agent of Disability inclusive development, and not as a welfare provider. Within the context of the study's own communion, that is, the Church of Uganda, there is precedent in that the church, with its ecumenical partners, has made deliberate efforts to actively include persons with disabilities (PWD), especially deaf, in its livelihoods and empowerment programs (World Council of Churches, 2025). This indicates that the strategies recommended in this review, communication access, attitudinal change, and leadership of the Deaf, are not "others" translated from other countries, but can be accomplished in the context of the existing Anglican structures.

2.4 Conducting Evangelism among Deaf Persons

The literature on "inclusive evangelism" needs to no longer list these barriers, but instead focus on how the gospel can be communicated in a way that is comprehensible, is available for evaluation and response to the Deaf person himself. It is not just a hearing-centered sermon translated after the fact which should be considered as evangelism for deaf persons. Instead, it is a culturally and linguistically accessible means of conveying the message of Jesus Christ utilizing sign language, visual teaching, trusted relationships and dialogue opportunities. The aim is not to force on deaf persons, assurances to accept Christ but that no communication barrier should stop them from understanding the message and making a free choice about Christian faith. In this paper, Jacobson (2024) reminds us that ministry with deaf people demands a solid theological base, as well as a theology-specific strategy to their linguistic, cultural, and social realities.

The first is to be able to communicate in the language most understood by the intended audience. This will normally take the form of Ugandan Sign Language (USL) in the context of Uganda, but the evangelist will need to work out what language and literacy level specific individuals prefer, as a deaf person may sign in one way while another signs in the same manner. Sign languages are full languages with sign grammars, facing and body postures and conventions of culture. Therefore, if a sermon is preached in English, a word-for-word interpretation of an English sermon may repeat words in a manner that fails to adequately convey the theological message of the sermon. Research on sign-language Bible translation shows that written bible texts may not be available to every individual who is deaf. The signed presentation of Scripture is a unique linguistic and interpretive process and has specific requirements to be both fluent in sign language and possess knowledge and understanding of Deaf culture and biblical interpretation (Penner, 2021). Therefore, Evangelistic preaching should be prepared in collaboration with the preacher, a competent USL interpreter and preferably a deaf Christian who can confirm the clearness of linguistic and cultural dimensions of the message.

There has to be a way to show and tell the gospel also. Sign storytelling, drama, role play, pictures, illustrated timelines, objects and sign language videos can be used to bring biblical teachings to life. The message of the evangelistic presentation is not to be confined to a superficial and entertaining presentation of the message in picture form but it should include and carry in it the central point. Writing constructive New Testament Hebrew signs, Claudio notes (2024), should be documented and validated for biblical explanations of the concepts that need to be communicated using religious terminology. Not every sign is just as important in conveying meaning as to merely work. Things like sin, grace, conversion, forgiveness, salvation etc. don't always have to be understood when the interpreter draws the corresponding sign. Sharing such information through the context of stories drawn from Scripture, familiar stories or examples, and short and connected teaching units. The participants then can be asked to deliver the message in their own sign and/or express their understanding of the message in their own signs. It is a respectful way to come to know if the message has been heard, but not an examination or a "showing up".

What the evangelistic message contains must remain on the center on the basic doctrine of the Christian gospel. This means God's plan for loving the people of the world, sinners, sin and separation from God, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, forgiveness and reconciliation

and the call to repentance and faith. These teachings should be delivered using images, experiences and narratives that are significant to Deaf culture however. For example, instead of using abstract words in speech, salvation could be explained in terms of biblical understandings of restoration, belonging and reconciliation would be used. Extra care in dealing with instances of deafness and healing in the Bible is also warranted. This should not convey the message to a deaf person that he is required to become hearing first before belonging to God and being able to participate fully in the Church. The Gospel message must assert not only their dignity as persons created in the likeness of God, but present salvation as reconciliation with God through faith in Christ and not as the eradication of deafness.

Divine calling in evangelism with people with disabilities of the hearing category is also relational. Doherty and Nuzum (2023) stress the importance of ministry with deaf people's involvement with sign language, facial grammar and visual cues; and attentiveness to the relationship skills that will help build trust. So, churches are able to do more than just preach and hold large meetings of the public, but can (and should) also create opportunities for small group Bible discussions, fellowship, peer testimonies, and personal relationships, that all involve reaching out to people in their homes. Through the Christocentric model of relationship-based evangelism, a deaf person can ask questions, see the lives of believers and talk about Jesus over a period of time. It also minimizes the chance that the evangelism effort will be one sided, implying that the deaf person must take in information without being able to communicate in return.

Deaf Christian evangelists will be key to this process as they share in the language and day to day experiences of the people being evangelized. The views of Broesterhuizen (2005) suggest that deaf Christians should be at the heart of the Church, and that the Christian faith be presented through Deaf culture, not primarily through hearing culture. Evangelistic acts through sign language, whereby the message is passed on to others without use of an interpreter, can help to achieve belonging, credibility and identification which is often difficult to do through an interpreter. Therefore, it is important for churches to identify and train by the grace of God, those who are deaf, to serve as evangelists, Bible study facilitators, catechists, peer mentors, and prayer leaders. Evangelists and interpreters are still needed, but not in all circumstances, but with the participation of the Deaf Christians.

The physical layout of an evangelistic situation also plays a role in whether something can be communicated or not. To ensure the Deaf participants can see the preacher, interpreter, visual materials and each other, they need adequate lighting and a view of the hallway and the rest of the classroom. The preacher must maintain his presence in view, use a slow enough speed and have enough pauses for accurate interpretation. The preacher should also not talk as the displays are read by members of the group as this will not give deaf persons the opportunity to read another visual resource and watch the reading of the displays at the same time. Small group evangelism can be done in a circular or semicircular set up, which can be beneficial for visual interaction. Although there is some general guidance on background action, decoration and lighting, these are minimised in points of conflict to allow more focus on the images. These arrangements are workable, and permit the presentation of the message as a continuous rather than a fragmented sequence.

The invitation to respond to the gospel must be as accessible and also as dialogical as was the presentation of the gospel itself. The evangelist should then explain about Jesus Christ, the person and work, followed by providing opportunities for questions, clarifying difficult concepts and confidential conversations. A person with hearing loss should not be assumed to have understood or to have been converted by his or her nod, smile or showing up to a place of worship. People who desire to profess faith should be given the opportunity to do this in sign language, pray with a trusted Christian or deaf ministry worker, and to articulate in an accessible way their decision. It has been suggested, therefore, that the word "acceptance of Christ" must not be interpreted as an "answer that is given" by an interpreter; rather it is an answer which is acted upon by the individual in response to a sense of comprehension, conviction and freedom.

2.5 Synthesis of Literature Gaps and Research Contribution

The literature reviewed above aligns well with the study objectives but also reveals clear gaps. First, much Deaf ministry literature is generated in North America and Europe and assumes resources that may not be available in Ugandan parish settings. Second, African theological scholarship on Deaf evangelism is growing, particularly through Zimbabwean studies, but Uganda-specific Anglican research remains limited. In addition, the recent disability and religion research scholarship produced by Africa, which looks at disability in general and at the

intersections of disability and faith, such as Ringson and Sande (2025), who examined "traditional-religious constructions of disability" or Masiga and Nkabala (2025), who explored "biblical disability hermeneutics in Uganda", tends to not focus specifically on Deaf evangelicism within the Anglican context. Third, much writing is theological or prescriptive rather than empirical. Fourth, little literature examines the relationship between barriers, human-resource engagement and practical strategies within one parish case. Fifth, existing strategy models often do not specify how Ugandan Sign Language users, parish clergy, interpreters, volunteers, parents and deaf members can work together in inclusive evangelism.

This latest review of scholarships alleviates, but does not fill, these gaps. The problem is live, structural and continent-wide, as evidenced in the structural exclusion of Deaf people in African churches (Sande, 2026), the policy-practice gap in accessibility of African sign language (Kaula & Sati, 2025), the theological approaches to disability (McMahon-Panther & Bornman, 2025; Kgatle, 2024), and the focus on disability-inclusive development in African churches (Nanthambwe & Magezi, 2025). Nevertheless, there can be found surprisingly little literature which discusses Deaf ministry at a deeper level, generally at the level of disability inclusion or technical accessibility and rarely that which focuses on a single Anglican parish's response to its people, theology and worship in reaching its Deaf population with the Gospel. It is this parish level, deaf-centered space, at the heart of the Ugandan Anglican church, which the current study addresses.

This study addressed these gaps by focusing on Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda, as an information-rich Anglican case within the Diocese of Kampala. The study examined barriers to outreach, assessed the mobilization of human resources and identified practical strategies for strengthening Gospel ministry among deaf persons. Chapter Two therefore provided the scholarly foundation for the empirical analysis in Chapters Four and Five and ensured that each research objective was grounded in current and relevant literature

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative approach because it sought to understand experiences, meanings, perceptions and ministry practices rather than to measure numerical relationships. A qualitative approach was appropriate for the purposes of exploring the understanding of deaf persons, clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, volunteers and parents as regards inclusion and evangelism in the particular ministry context of Silent Church St. Luke's Ntinda.

3.1 Research Design

The design of the study was exploratory single case study design using Silent Church at St. Luke's Ntinda as the case. The design was appropriate as the research involved an in-depth exploration of a realistic ministry setting in which church, communication, Deaf culture and pastoral relationships were all intricately linked. Using the single-case design, detailed evidence was generated from interviews, focus group discussions and observation for analysis and the results from these three data collection techniques were analysed thematically instead of statistically analyzed. These three specific objectives were prespecified: to trace barriers to inclusive evangelism to the deaf (Objective One), continuing with the human resources available to address these barriers (Objective Two), and finally with actions to strengthen inclusive evangelism (Objective Three). Objectives Two and Three continued to emerge and were exploratory, participant-generated directions in an emerging ministry context; they are therefore not reported as findings in analysis.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda in Diocese of Kampala. It was the specific site for a purposive reason; it's because it has an existing ministry for the deaf community and the site provided information rich context for the examination of inclusive evangelism. All lessons drawn from the case were understood as context specific findings that may be useful in other Anglican congregational contexts without being generalized across the case.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population comprised stakeholders involved in or affected by evangelistic ministry among deaf persons within the Diocese of Kampala. These included clergy, lay readers,

interpreters, deaf congregants, family members, caregivers, missionaries, teachers and other church workers. The accessible population comprised those directly connected to Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda and those who could realistically be reached during the fieldwork period.

The study participants therefore included clergy serving at or connected to Silent Church, lay readers, interpreters, volunteers and ministry workers, deaf congregants participating in church life, and parents or caregivers who supported deaf persons' participation. The estimate of approximately 61 individuals was treated as a working diocesan and parish-level estimate of persons connected to deaf ministry networks rather than as a statistically enumerated population.

3.4 Sampling and Selection

The study used purposive sampling to select participants who could provide rich information relevant to the research questions. Stratification was used to ensure the inclusion of clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, deaf congregants, parents, missionaries and teachers. The final evidence base comprised sixty-one participants drawn from six categories — clergy, deaf congregants, teachers, parents and two missionary groups — engaged through individual interviews and focus group discussions, as summarized in Table 3.1. This size was adequate for a qualitative case study because the aim was depth, triangulation and thematic saturation rather than numerical representation.

Table 3.1*Sample Composition by Participant Category*

Category	N
Clergy	9
Deaf persons	13
Teachers in the school- School for the deaf at Ntinda	5
Missioners – Kakumba Chapel	14
Missioners group – St. Luke	15
Parents of the deaf children	5
Total	61

Note. N = 61 participants across the six categories sampled.

3.5 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Participants were included if they were 18 years or older, had participated in church activities in the Diocese of Kampala for at least one year, were willing to participate voluntarily and could communicate in English, Luganda, Ugandan Sign Language or through an interpreter. Individuals were excluded if they were unable to provide informed consent, were temporary visitors with no meaningful connection to the ministry, or were involved in circumstances that could compromise voluntary participation.

3.6 Sources of Information

Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation of church-related activities. Secondary data were obtained from government policies, academic literature and relevant reports on disability, hearing loss and ministry among deaf persons.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher obtained the necessary institutional authorization and sought permission from relevant church authorities before engaging participants. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality, possible risks and the right to withdraw. Written or signed consent was obtained before interviews, focus group discussions and

observation. Data collection was conducted in communication modes accessible to participants, including English, Luganda and Ugandan Sign Language through competent interpretation where necessary.

Interviews and focus group discussions were documented through recordings and detailed notes, with consent. Observation focused on communication practices, participation patterns and accessibility arrangements during worship and ministry activities. The process was designed to protect participants' dignity while generating data that could speak directly to the three research objectives.

3.8 Data Collection Methods and Instrumentation

The instruments used in principle were semi-structured interview guides, focus group discussion guides and observation checklist. Semi-structured guides were suitable as they would give the interview unit consistency but still incorporate the ability to follow up questions and dig deeper into lived experiences. Independent guides were facilitated for church leaders and clergy and for parents/caregivers and the Deaf congregation.

The interviews focused on barriers to inclusion, human-resource engagement, and current ministry practices and suggested options. Shared learning from missionaries, teachers and other actors in ministry were captured in focus group discussions. The researcher noted the related topics of inclusion in the praxis of worship-action. Observation enabled the researcher to visualize how inclusion was experienced in practice within real worship-action contexts.

3.9 Strategy for Data Processing and Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive approach. The interviews and the focus group discussions were audio recorded and where required translated into English from Luganda or Ugandan Sign Language. The researcher read through the transcripts several times to get familiar with the data, code meaningful parts of the data, record the sub-themes and themes, and convene and compare the themes with the research questions. Themes were developed and coded in the free and open source Taguette qualitative data analysis software that enabled systematic tagging of extracts of transcriptions, and retrieval of coded material within each of the participant groups. Participants' voices were then selected and the findings were also presented with selected quotations to maintain participants' voices.

Narrative attention captured the lived experiences of the participants and their families. Cautious documentation of analytic decisions further bolstered the trustworthiness, along with the use of direct quotations and triangulation for different participant groups.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Relevant Research Ethics Committee approved the study in advance of data collection (see Appendix 6). The study was carried out based on informed consent, confidentiality, respect, dignity, voluntary participation and right to withdraw. Participants' names and identifying aspects were anonymized to protect their anonymity in transcripts, notes and reporting. The researcher used appropriate and respectful modes of communication with deaf participants and refrained from demeaning and paternalistic language. All sources used in the research were credited for their contribution to the research while maintaining intellectual integrity.

3.11 Limitations of the Study

Because the study was a single case, the findings cannot be statistically generalized to all parishes in the Diocese of Kampala. However, they provide analytical insights for similar church contexts. Several practical constraints also shaped the evidence. First, some deaf participants had limited formal education, which affected how fully they could engage with certain questions, so that a few items were not explored as deeply as intended. Second, qualified sign-language interpreters were in short supply during fieldwork, which limited the number of deaf persons who could be reached and lengthened the data-collection period. Third, because the researcher is not fluent in sign language, all exchanges with deaf participants were mediated by interpreters, introducing a risk that meaning was altered in translation. Fourth, parents and caregivers of deaf children were difficult to access, as much of the fieldwork took place at the school for the deaf rather than in participants' homes, which restricted the depth of household-level data. Finally, the time and cost involved in scheduling and remunerating interpreters limited the number of field visits that could be undertaken. The researcher mitigated these limitations through purposive sampling, careful scheduling, use of competent interpreters, clarification during interviews and transparent reporting of the strength and limits of the evidence.

3.12 Delimitations of the Study

This study was deliberately bounded in several respects. Geographically, it was confined to a few purposively selected parishes connected to Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda, rather than the whole of the Diocese of Kampala, in order to allow an in-depth case study rather than a broad survey. In terms of participants, it focused on those directly involved in or affected by evangelistic ministry among deaf persons namely, clergy, deaf congregants, parents, teachers and missionaries and did not extend to the wider hearing congregation or to other dioceses. Methodologically, it adopted a qualitative case-study design aimed at depth, triangulation and thematic saturation rather than statistical representation. These boundaries were set to keep the study focused and feasible within the available time and resources, and they define the limits within which the findings should be interpreted.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

In this Chapter the result of the study on how the persons with disability are included in gospel communication to the deaf, basing on the Silent Church, St. Luke's Church in Ntinda, Kampala Diocese, is presented, analyzed and interpreted. The results address the three aims of the study: **(1)**What are the barriers to effective evangelistic engagement with deaf individuals? **(2)** How are key human resources being used effectively in the promotion of inclusive evangelism strategies: clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, volunteers and deaf members? **(3)** What are the strategies the Church can use to encourage the inclusion of deaf persons in the work of evangelism? In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to collect data, which was then thematically analyzed using six-stage process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022). Eighty-five (85) coded data extracts were summarized into eleven sub-themes and six main themes, mapped to the three themes respectively and are summarized in the Sub-themes and themes. Verbatim quotations are shown throughout to reflect the participants' voices and using codes for the various individuals (such as Clergy 01, Deaf 02, Parent 03).

To ensure the ease of presentation, the interpretive discussion and representative quotations are presented in the main text and the detailed frequency charts, the matrices of participants' groups, and the case-coverage displays are included in Appendix A. The charts are not intended as a statistical test, but as a qualitative evidence map to indicate the closest extents where the evidence is solid and where findings should be critically assessed.

4.1 Profile of the Participants

A total of sixty-one (61) participants took part in the study; comprised of 9 members of the clergy, 13 deaf members of the congregation, 5 teachers, 29 missionaries (14 at Kakumba Chapel and 15 at St. Luke's) and 5 parents of deaf children as indicated in the case meta data table. This composition was meaningful since it brought together the voices of those who offered ministry (clergy, missionaries, teachers) for the people to whom inclusive evangelism is offered (deaf members) and, the parents who are the foundation of both the domestic and spiritual lives of the deaf persons.

Some of the themes outlined below emerged from the various voices; often were given additional support when concerns voiced by clergy were echoed by the participants who are deaf and in the words of the parents.

Appendix Figure A3 is not therefore a sampling frame for statistical generalisation, but a profile of sources of evidence. It reflects that clergy were the biggest category in application of codes, but that the voice of the Deaf person and parents is still vital both from direct experience of exclusion and from that of church/family reception.

4.2 Objective One: Barriers Limiting Effective Evangelistic Outreach to Deaf Persons

The first was on finding out the factors limiting evangelistic work with the deaf people at St Luke's, Ntinda. Barriers formed a single data set, for which 81 of the 85 extracted data were coded, and grouped into three themes: spiritual and cultural stigmatisation, devaluation of deaf capability and communicative and institutional exclusion. These themes do not stand alone but rather serve to reinforce one another; attitudinal beliefs give the green light for structural neglect, which is reciprocated by the deaf persons' marginal status to the worshipping community.

The detailed visual support for this distribution is found in Appendix Figures A1, A2, A6 and A7. They serve primarily a role of confirmation that Objective One forms the evidential centre of the chapter, with the overwhelming majority of coded support being found in the barrier themes, especially the strategy and the human resource themes are emergent directions for action.

4.2.1 Spiritual and Cultural Stigmatisation

The most widespread was the pervasive cultural and theological notion of deafness as a curse/ill fortune/disaster from God. Many participants mentioned that deafness is considered a moral-spiritual affliction in the community, and that this has a direct impact on how deaf people are taken into regards when attending church services. One of the participants noted:

“In some families and communities, people still believe that having a Deaf child is a curse. Such beliefs affect how these children are treated and can make them feel like they do not belong.” (Parent 05)

A deaf congregant described the same belief from the receiving end:

“...the community looks at the deaf people with negativity and think that they were born cursed by God. This has created stigma; deaf persons feel out of place.” (Deaf 02)

What gives this theme its analytical weight, is the convergence of the curse narrative across every category of participant, clergy, deaf congregants, parents and teachers alike which indicates that it functions less as a distinctive opinion than a shared cultural script into which deaf persons are involuntarily scripted. Clergy themselves named the belief plainly:

“Other people believe that the deaf are a curse or are being punished by God. They ask themselves, ‘Why were they created like so?’” (Clergy 09)

Another priest put it bluntly:

“The community is biased about the deaf people, [and] sees them as cursed people.” (Clergy 06)

The stigma is not merely abstract; it is encoded in everyday language. Participants repeatedly identified the derogatory label “Bakasilu” as the vehicle through which the community communicates the supposed worthlessness of deaf persons:

“[The] community looks at them as an abuse; that is why they call them ‘Bakasilu’ ... meaning they are of no importance to the community.” (Clergy 04)

A deaf member felt the sting of that same label:

“Unwelcoming language for example, the community calling us ‘Bakasilu’, meaning unintelligent people... makes the deaf congregants feel as if they have been offended or disrespected when they are called such unpleasant words.” (Deaf 06)

Crucially, participants traced a direct spiritual cost. When deafness is cast as divine punishment, the very God proclaimed in evangelism is experienced as the author of the affliction, alienating deaf persons from the faith into which the Church seeks to draw them:

“Negative attitudes, such as deafness being seen as a punishment or curse from God, make them hate God, and you find that children are not interested in church things.” (Focus Group: Teachers)

A deaf participant testified to that estrangement directly:

“Cultural misunderstanding about deafness has excluded me from attending church, [leaving me] feeling spiritually disconnected due to stigmatisation.” (Deaf 03)

Critically, this externally imposed stigma was shown to be internalised by deaf persons themselves as an inferiority complex, so that the community’s devaluation is absorbed as diminished self-worth:

“Inferiority complex affects many Deaf children because of the way some people look at or treat them. This lowers their confidence and discourages them from actively participating in church evangelism.” (Parent 03)

This internalisation was corroborated by deaf participants in their own words, who described withdrawal driven by diminished confidence and the fear of being judged:

“Some hearing members ... assume Deaf people cannot understand the Bible well or lead in ministry. This causes us to be left out ... Such attitudes lower our confidence and make it harder to share the gospel.” (Deaf 11)

Another deaf member tied that lost confidence to withdrawal:

“Fear and shyness because of being a deaf person make us not mingle so well in the hearing community, therefore missing opportunities of accessing the gospel and participating in church activities.” (Deaf 13)

Parents observed the same erosion of self-worth from the outside, noting that rejection within the home compounds that of the wider community:

“Even some parents do not believe in their own Deaf children and see them as useless. When a child grows up feeling that their parents do not see their worth, it affects their confidence and makes them withdraw from church.” (Parent 04)

The theme therefore operates as a self-reinforcing cycle: cultural beliefs about deafness produce social rejection, which deaf persons internalise as unworthiness, prompting withdrawal that the community then reads as confirmation of incapacity. Theologically, this framing stands in tension with the doctrine of the imago Dei and the inclusive thrust of the Great Commission, a dissonance

the Church must confront if outreach is to be effective. The dominance of this theme (48 of 85 extracts) indicates that attitudinal-spiritual stigma, rather than mere logistics, is the foundational barrier to deaf evangelism in the church.

This disagreement has a precise scriptural focus: the curse motif finds a direct response in Jesus' response to the disciples' question about the man born blind. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned" as it is elaborated by John the apostle (John 9:3) and this serves as the assumed link between disability and divine punishment. The catechetical nature of the Church's task is shown in the fact that the worshipping community at St. Luke's continues to interpret deafness in terms that are called into question by the gospel. This barrier is not only one of access, interpretation or programme design, but a discipleship one. The real opportunity for individuals involved in outreach practice to change is for the theological imagination of the congregations to be renewed to not view the deaf person as an object of the ministry, but as a full participant in the life and mission of the Church.

4.2.2 Devaluation of Deaf Capability

Flowing from this stigma was a pragmatic devaluation of deaf persons' capability. Deaf members were widely assumed to be unproductive, incapable of leadership or evangelism, and a financial and logistical burden upon the church and the family.

This flagging took two distinct but mutually reinforcing forms. The first was intellectual, the assumption that deaf persons are simply incapable of the cognitive and spiritual work of discipleship, leadership or evangelism:

"Low expectations, where the hearing people assume Deaf individuals can't become leaders, evangelists or active church members." (Clergy 09)

A parent voiced the same low expectation:

"The community underestimate the abilities of Deaf children and assume they cannot learn the Bible or become future church leaders, hindering their right of worship." (Parent 01)

The teachers' group generalised the point:

“The church often assumes the deaf are unable, so they are not included in church activities.” (Focus Group: Teachers)

A parent extended the same saying that:

“Even some parents do not believe in their own Deaf children and see them as useless... it affects their confidence and makes them withdraw from church and other activities.” (Parent 04)

Others reduced the matter to bare worth:

“They are considered insignificant, so they are not worth investing in spiritually; therefore [they are] ignored, making it [difficult] for inclusion in evangelism activities.” (Clergy 05)

Another priest itemised the costs saying that:

“They look at them as a burden since it’s difficult to communicate with them ... [a] burden in taking care of them; they are expensive in terms of education, that is, paying teachers.” (Clergy 06)

A further priest summed up the sentiment:

“The community see them as a disturbance, so they are not considered in church activities.” (Clergy 08)

Whereas the first theme concerns belief, this theme concerns judgement of worth and ability, and it is the mechanism by which attitude translates into the denial of opportunity. The recurrent framing of deaf ministry as an ‘expense’ or ‘burden’ reveals an implicit cost-benefit logic that positions deaf persons as a liability rather than a mission field, thereby rationalizing their exclusion from teaching, leadership and outreach.

Set against the New Testament vision of the Church as a body in which “those parts ... that seem to be weaker are indispensable” (1 Corinthians 12:22), this cost-benefit calculus is exposed as a theological inversion: it measures belonging by economic utility where the Gospel measures it by grace. The devaluation of deaf capability therefore does more than exclude individuals; it quietly rewrites the congregation’s working doctrine of the body of Christ, and with it the logic of who may be entrusted to carry the Gospel.

4.2.3 Communicative and Institutional Exclusion

In addition to attitudes, communicative and structural difficulties were recognised as obstacles. The communication barrier was mentioned by far the most often and emphatically. Whereas, with regard to every group of participants, clergy, deaf participants, parents, teachers and missionaries, the lack of Sign Language was highlighted as the greatest barrier to reaching deaf persons with the Gospel, directly impacting the medium and modality by which the Gospel must be communicated. As one of the participants pointed out:

"Lack of sign language education among the majority of the church members in the parish... [they] are unable to communicate with the deaf people in the parish and during outreaches." (Clergy 09)

This barrier had an impact on all the groups of participants. Limited knowledge of sign language hindered communication of the gospel to the Deaf in the church, it was reported by clergy. They also described how, when there was an interpreter available, having one was not enough due to physical and mental fatigue involved with long sessions of interpretation (Clergy 02). Other clergy recognized they were not trained with sign language and as a result were not able to communicate and establish connections with the deaf people in their congregations (Clergy 04).

Deaf participants located the barrier at the very point of outreach, explaining that:

"Evangelism programs at [the] parish are planned and conducted in spoken language without sign language interpretation, meaning the deaf cannot be part of the mission team" (Deaf 02),

And that:

"Hearing people do not accompany the deaf persons during outreach ... because the hearing people don't know sign language" (Deaf 07).

Parents reported the same deficit close to home, noting that:

"Most of the priests, lay leaders, and choir do not know sign language" (Parent 01),

The missionaries' focus group also put it in a single sentence:

"[There is] Language barrier [and] we can't talk to them" (Focus Group: Missioners, Kakumba).

The five groups all arrive at the same block- and the communication barrier is the top concern when it comes to the challenges that prevent the deaf from being fully engaged in evangelism.

The missiological severity of this gap is considerable. Paul writes in Romans that, "faith comes from hearing the gospel" (Romans 10:17). If this is his argument, then for a deaf congregation the message must be made visible. A church without sign language capacity is affected since it has no channel through which to preach the gospel. The barrier is therefore not peripheral but strikes at the central evangelistic act itself when it comes to the proclamation of the Word and helps explain why even well-intentioned outreach repeatedly fails to reach the deaf persons.

The communicative barrier is not just the lack of signers, but also the content of the message. Responses from participants with groups all showed that parts of scripture are difficult to interpret in sign language. A deaf person explained to us that:

Difficult English grammar misleads them from getting the word of God. Some English words in the bible are hard to understand in sign language. The deaf community fails to understand such hard words during outreaches therefore missing out the gospel." (Deaf 09).

Another observed that:

"Some biblical scriptures contain hard messages to read and so become hard to interpret to the deaf people during evangelism and mission" (Deaf 04),

while a parent noted that:

"The Bible is not interpreted in sign language and it is too wordy with some difficult words for children to understand in sign language." (Parent 01).

But there was another layer, based on theological vocabulary, no sign of which is prescribed:

"Terms used during pulpit evangelism have no signs, for example, 'I am the salt of the earth' ... [and] 'Lamb of God,' especially for the profoundly deaf" (Focus Group: Teachers).

The problem is, not only is there a lack of signers, but so far it hasn't been possible for the Church to develop the translational resources to make the message accessible to those without the ability to sign, which would include the use of text that is simplified but uses agreed signs for key theological vocabulary, together with visual teaching tools.

This communicative deficit was compounded by institutional neglect and absence of intentional planning, dedicated programs and appropriate structures for deaf worship. This is further brought to light through one of the participants who stated that:

"Lack of intentionality as a church... Most of the programs are planned for hearing people, and Deaf people are often forgotten or considered later." (Clergy 01)

The institutional neglect starts with a very elementary blockage: The church does not know where is its deaf neighbour. As one of the clergies admitted,

"... the church does not know where to find the deaf people so as to take the gospel of Christ to them" (Clergy 01).

Another pressed the point into a single question:

"How can we promote inclusive evangelism, when there is no structure on the ground, no plans for them, no inclusive budget or even know their whereabouts?" (Clergy 05).

Compounding this invisibility, clergy observed that:

"... the deaf persons have no advocates within their community. If they had advocates, then they would engage the church which would give an ear to the deaf persons' spiritual needs" (Clergy 04).

The unmapped and unrepresented community cannot be "reached": the deaf thus remain, in effect, an unlocated mission field. This is an institutional exclusion on the inside of the church, rather than simply prejudice against them, because the church does not know and plan for the deaf or speak for them. This neglect was echoed by the missionaries themselves, one of whom observed that:

"The church looks at it as an extra expense on the deaf community, so there is neglect; they never think about them." (Focus Group: Missioners, Kakumba)

This neglect was visible not only in planning but in the physical and programmatic fabric of church life which one of the participants related to the simple absence of dedicated provision saying that:

“As a church, it believes that the deaf people are not productive at all, therefore [they] are not included in church programs and plans.” (Clergy 04)

The same concern surfaced over worship space itself as stated by one of the participants that:

“As a church, [it] lacks structures or buildings that are specifically designed for the deaf to comfortably worship God, because they are not thought about ... [being] a minority.” (Clergy 01)

In terms of these structures, participants provided this with tangible physical detail and made it a concern in every participant group. Clergy conceded that:

“Many communities have built their church structures only to cater for the hearing members. There [is] no special church building dedicated to the deaf persons for example buildings with ramps since some have got multiple disabilities, enough light, toilets for the ones in wheel chairs etc.” (Clergy 09).

Deaf participants confirmed the same from experience:

“... lack of accessibility, for example ramps and toilets designed specifically for the deaf persons with multiple disabilities. Small church and has poor lighting. When the lighting is poor, this makes it hard to clearly see sign language” (Deaf 12).

Seating and sight-lines carried particular weight because deaf worship is visual: participants stressed that deaf members

“... need good sitting arrangements, e.g. sitting in the middle pews where they are able to see directly the preacher, the interpreter and the screen” (Clergy 01).

In addition, teachers reported that the listening setting should be such that cameras and other obstacles are not interfering with the teacher's ability to see the interpreter by the deaf students. The building is, therefore, a gatekeeper for the deaf and particularly for the multiple handicapped, without a single word being signed, without the provision of ramps, without light or sight lines and without sanitation.

One more institutional lacuna was identified by parents as a crucial gap: there was no Sunday school for deaf children. One parent shared, there's one parent that has shared

"no Sunday school, no trained teachers in sign language specifically for Sunday school and no learning materials for Deaf children, making it difficult to learn the word of God [and] participate in church activities, making them lose interest for church as they grow" (Parent 01).

Deaf participants made the same connection between childhood formation and the future of the church, urging the

"... opening up [of] Sunday school for deaf children such that children grow up knowing God and also participating in other church activities. Sunday school is the future of the big church" (Deaf 08).

Where there is no deaf kids' ministry, the Church is foreclosing the 'normal' route through which the next generation of believers is formed; and they are being excluded from that process from the beginning.

All these narratives demonstrate that communicative and institutional barriers exist, irrespective of a specific good will of others. Where members of the hearing community have a positive attitude to the deaf, the absence of sign and the absence of dedicated programmes continue to exclude the deaf community from the everyday practices of life in the church; and where there is no good will, the absence of sign or dedicated programmes becomes entrenched and deep-rooted in institutional practice. Therefore, the barrier cannot be broken simply through attitude improvement and it is a mistake to focus all efforts on improving attitudes. Once outreach becomes a reality, it is a process that requires intentional resourcing: Sign language training and dedicated provision for deaf ministry.

The fact that these are structural absences is not a neutral omission but is rather the made thing of the attitudes aforementioned. The lack of deaf programmes from a calendar, the deaf-free worship space, and the lack of services prepared by deaf people in conjunction with an interpreter paper to convey a group dynamic where the deaf are, and are not, to be found. Communicative and institutional exclusion is thus not a problem in isolation but as its tangible form of devaluation and stigma: the belief is followed by the structure and the structure reinforced in turn by the [very]

marginality from which the belief began. The same argument applies to the fourth and most important obstacle, the lack of a concrete budget, which will now be discussed.

4.2.4 Financial Exclusion: The Absence of an Intentional Budget

The lack of any intentional budgetary allocation for deaf ministry was mentioned by all of the participant groups and it's a theme in its own right; a fourth barrier. The issue was put forth straightforward by clergy:

"... the church lacks resources, especially financial resources, to cater for the deaf persons since they are not budgeted for in church programs" (Clergy 05).

Even where mission work in general was funded, the allocation was described as inadequate:

"... the budget allocations for the mission department during budgeting seasons is very small [and] cannot cater for evangelism activities at its best. Mission is always allocated very little money" (Clergy 08).

From the parish's earliest planning decisions, deaf ministry is therefore excluded at the level of resource allocation, before any question of attitude or skill arises.

The financial barrier was equally visible from the deaf side. One deaf participant linked underfunding directly to unreached communities:

"... the church does not have enough funds to organize outreach missions to the deaf churches and communities. As a result, many deaf people remain unreached with the gospel" (Deaf 04).

Clergy likewise admitted that:

"... as a church it is constrained financially to train these people and sustain them in ministry, thus becoming a struggle and a burden to maintain them" (Clergy 01)

A representation of the way a lack of funding for deaf ministry compounds the perception of deaf ministry as a cost; if there is no planning for the needs of deaf people, it appears on the balance sheet as a spontaneous extra expense, and this only reinforces the perception of the needs of deaf persons as being a cost.

Hence, financial exclusion acts as the matter ground, or physical foundation of the other three barriers. However compassionate individual attitudes are, an unbudgeted ministry can't get training for interpreters, adapt buildings, have access materials made and yet train deaf evangelists. Correspondingly under Objective Three, participants, across the groups, identified an inclusive budget as a precondition for all of the other reforms identified.

4.3 Objective Two: Engagement of Human Resources in Inclusive Evangelism

The second objective examined how the Church's human resources, that is to say, the clergy, lay leaders, interpreters, volunteers and deaf members were engaged in promoting inclusive evangelism. Evidence of deliberate, organized engagement was notably sparse outside the case-study parish, and this scarcity is itself a substantive finding. During the study, human-resource capacity functioned more as a site of the problem than as a medium for its solution.

Where actors were discussed, the dominant note was one of disengagement. Missioners openly acknowledged perpetuating the very neglect observed in the wider church and this is noted from one of the participants who stated that:

“As missioners, we neglect them, seeing them as a burden.” (Focus Group: Missioners, Kakumba)

The interpreting function that is central to deaf inclusion, was reported as unreliable and under-supported. Participants in the teachers' focus group observed that “even some people working with children are not willing to support them (e.g., interpreting or aiding)”, while clergy attributed this partly to a parish-wide deficit in sign-language competence as stated by Clergy 09. Deaf members themselves were largely positioned as recipients rather than agents of evangelism, a posture consistent with the devaluation identified under Objective One.

Such a broad lack of expectation, though, was offset very strongly at the case-study parish. The testimony offered by the numbers of the participants for the clergy, artists and deaf group, and teachers give the deaf ministry at St. Luke's, Ntinda a true and faithful account of what can be done when carefully and intentionally the human capital is utilized. Clergy reported that:

"... at silent church, St Luke's Ntinda, there is ongoing preaching to the deaf persons both on Sunday and mid-week service" (Clergy 06).

It was also reported that one of the locally ordained clergy who had been trained to use sign language has now replaced the fully paid clergy who had been assigned to the parish as a trained sign-language user to lead the church which consists of the deaf supporters. Participants at the diocesan (archdiocesan) level also remembered a historic moment when the Most Rev. Archbishop Kaziimba Mugalu baptized and confirmed children with multiple disabilities and deaf children, called "one of a kind". Teachers confirmed that:

"... the archbishop has introduced a program for free confirmation for all persons with disabilities, including the deaf, to access the Good News" (Focus Group: Teachers).

The teachers' focus group catalogued further parish-level provision:

"St. Luke has provided a silent church within its premises for the deaf"; outreach programs to the School for the Deaf, including Bible study and cell ministry; donations of scholastic materials and staff support; and deaf-accessible programs such as online services at 10:00 a.m., together with confirmation and baptism (Focus Group: Teachers).

Deaf members corroborated this support from their own experience, one noting that

"The church facilitates us with some finances for evangelism once every month" (Deaf 03),

while a parent observed that deaf children are allowed to join the English service and that

"The Vicar at St. Luke's normally recognizes Deaf children during main services, and this makes them feel valued and more willing to take part in church activities" (Parent 05).

Deaf participants, in an honest and fruitful frankness, were able to give a balanced judgment about the ministry in St. Luke's, dropping in praise where it was good and offering further insights where it could be better. They were enthusiastic about being recognised and included and said that:

"Many deaf preachers have included me in church activities and this has made me feel that I can also contribute in building the kingdom of God" (Deaf 11).

But they also mentioned a lack of commitment to evangelism. Another deaf person explained that:

"The deaf mission team is like [of] five people and [only] one is facilitated to go to the field for outreach. This hinders effective and inclusive evangelism. Little work is done; most of the deaf people don't get access to the gospel" (Deaf 03)

Additionally, another observed that:

"The interpreters who are available do not accompany us in the field simply because of limited transport costs ... [so] we go few and without interpreters [and] end up covering few people" (Deaf 07).

They also requested to be integrated into the ministries of the church: in leadership, in planning and in evangelism and urged that the church integrates deaf people into leadership and evangelism teams, the ministry of evangelism growing on the basis that being the one who understands the ministry of a deaf person best. These concerns and the strategies that the deaf wish to address them are raised under Objective Three.

However, in other parishes “clergymen and lay people involvement in Deaf ministry” was described as very low, beyond the case study parish. They said that no adequate provision had been made to include deaf people in church programs and that few, if any, individuals were specifically assigned or trained to deal with the needs of deaf people in church. The finding goes beyond mere feelings of absent human-resource engagement. It reveals that the model of deaf ministry is largely isolated, poorly resourced and not replicated in the other significant churches investigated around the Diocese and is rooted in the silence church at St. Luke's, Ntinda.

This is an easily overlooked element of significance. The problem is that the Church's human resources are underused and that the one place where they have been mobilised, the silent church at St. Luke's is alone. A working model is in place but lacks the necessary resources and hasn't been replicated elsewhere, thus only benefiting a small number of deaf people within reach of one parish.

Theologically, this disengagement represents a failure to enact one of the Church's most basic convictions about ministry. The principle of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9) and the Pauline vision of leaders given “to equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:11–12) together imply that every member, deaf as well as hearing is both a recipient and an agent of the Gospel. The information indicates that St. Luke's has a partial expression of this ecclesial

conviction. Human resources are known as hearing clergy and volunteers ministering to the deaf individual, but not as the collective responsibility of the church. The vocation of every member of Christ's church, where the task of the deaf individual is to be equipped, commissioned and released as an active agent in evangelism to serve within their own congregation. On this reading the interpreter is not a peripheral convenience but the hinge on which every-member ministry turns, where interpretation is unreliable, the priesthood of the deaf believer simply cannot be exercised.

Generally, the results showed that the five categories of human resources exist in theory but are not mobilized and implemented in practice. No member of the clergy has sign language skills, interpreters and volunteers are insufficiently supported and trained, lay leadership rarely extends to deaf ministry, and deaf members are seldom commissioned as evangelists to their own community. Because this theme rests on a limited number of explicit extracts, the finding is reported as emergent. It is revisited in the recommendations as a priority both for further data collection and for targeted capacity-building.

The significance of this finding lies precisely in its sparseness. Whereas the barriers of Objective One were richly and repeatedly evidenced, the near-total silence on organized human-resource engagement beyond the silent-church initiative at St. Luke's is itself diagnostic. From this study it was revealed that, no settled structures existed for clergy formation in sign language, for the recruitment and support of interpreters, or for the identification and discipling of deaf evangelists. This corroborates the emphasis in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two on the interpreter as the cornerstone of deaf inclusion, while also extending it. The present case suggests that interpretation alone is insufficient unless it is embedded in a deliberate strategy that simultaneously forms clergy and commissions deaf members. The under-mobilization of the Church's human resources thus emerges as the single most actionable gap identified by this study, and it is revisited on that basis in the recommendations.

The charts in the appendices' section help explain why this section is shorter than the barrier analysis. Figure A1 shows only one coded extract under missionary and volunteer engagement, and Figure A5 shows that the evidence is case-specific. This does not make the finding trivial but rather it means the claim should be framed as a critical gap in current practice and a priority for implementation, not as a fully saturated theme.

4.4 Objective Three: Strategies to Strengthen the Inclusion of Deaf Persons

The third objective sought strategies the Church might adopt to strengthen deaf inclusion in Gospel ministry at St. Luke's and across the wider Diocese of Kampala. The participants' ideas fell into five complementary areas: of developing attitudes in the hearing community; of enabling deaf people themselves; of making the deaf community visible in terms of advocacy and identification; of making worship physically and communicatively accessible; and of making the Church institutionally visible through inclusive budgeting and partnerships. It is notable that these strategies directly reflect the nature of the barriers, i.e. external stigma, internalized inferiority as well as aims to tackle communicative, structural, and financial exclusion highlighted under Objective One.

The visual evidence in Appendix Figures A1 and A2 also clarifies the status of the strategy findings. Attitudinal transformation and empowerment are analytically coherent because they mirror the main barriers, but their low frequency means they should be presented as participant-endorsed strategic directions rather than as extensively evidenced programmed outcomes.

4.4.1 Attitudinal Transformation through Sensitization and Deaf-Culture

Participants located the remedy at the same point as the problem of belief and attitude, calling for deliberate sensitization of the congregation and education about deaf culture to dismantle the curse narrative. One of the participants stated that:

“Most cultures are against Deaf culture, thinking it is due to misfortune. This makes most [people] think deaf people are cursed, yet it is not true.” (Deaf 09)

This points to a program of congregational sensitization, biblically grounded teaching on the equal worth of persons with disabilities, and the clarification of deafness as a cultural-spiritual condition. By targeting the root belief, such education addresses the foundational barrier rather than its symptoms.

In theological terms, the strategy participants describe is nothing less than the renewal of the congregational mind (Romans 12:2).

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

A sustained catechesis that replaces the inherited curse narrative with a biblical anthropology in which every person bears the image of God. Such transformation is prophetic since it confronts a settled cultural orthodoxy, and pastoral since it must be taught patiently and embodied in the worship language and how the congregation welcomes it rather than how it is proclaimed. Its sparse evidential base notwithstanding, the proposed strategy is robust precisely because it targets the documented root of exclusion rather than its symptoms. The low frequency of the code reflects how rarely such intentional teaching is presently attempted and not a weakness in the logic of the strategy itself.

4.4.2 Empowerment of Deaf Persons

The complementary strategy was to rebuild the agency, identity and confidence of deaf persons so that inclusion is achieved not only by changing hearing attitudes but by strengthening deaf participation from within. One participant stated that:

“Restore their identity/self-image; this makes the deaf persons gain confidence. Their self-esteem is built when they know that the hearing people see them as equal and also human beings.” (Clergy 03)

Empowerment through leadership training, discipleship and the affirmation of deaf identity directly counters the internalized inferiority identified earlier and repositions deaf persons from objects of charity to agents of evangelism within their own community. As with Objective Two, the evidential base for these strategies is modest. The proposals are therefore presented as participant-endorsed directions whose efficacy warrants testing through implementation and further research.

Theologically, empowerment names the restoration of an identity that the stigma had damaged. To tell deaf persons that they are made in the image of God and gifted for service is to reverse especially at the level of self-understanding where the curse narrative was documented under Objective One. This resonates with a liberative reading of the Gospel in which Christ's ministry

restores the dignity and agency of those the community had written off, and it carries a concrete ecclesial implication that the goal is not deaf persons cared for by a hearing church but deaf persons leading, preaching and discipling within it. Empowerment and attitudinal transformation are thus two movements of a single conversion: the hearing community unlearns its devaluation as deaf believers unlearn their inferiority, and durable inclusion is achieved only when both occur together. However, the present evidence points clearly towards a deaf-led, rather than merely deaf-friendly, model of ministry as the horizon of genuine inclusion.

4.4.3 Advocacy, Identification and Visibility of the Deaf Community

The third strategic cluster is the direct answer to a problem identified in Objective One, which is: The church doesn't always know where deaf people are in the community. These two connected moves that make oneself visible for deaf people who continue to remain invisible, and make sense of those who are silent in silent. These are so the two connected moves that “to seek out” the invisible deaf person and give “voice” to the silent persons. Participants instituted the concept of advocacy within the deaf community itself: As one deaf person commented:

"We should have an advocate within us who will take our needs to the main hearing church for the inclusion, promoting awareness and understanding within [the] congregation and also knowing the needs concerning evangelism activities" (Deaf 04).

Clergy converged on the same remedy from the other direction, proposing that it would help

"To have a Deaf person advocate for the Deaf community within the church [as] this gives them a voice and helps raise awareness about their needs" (Clergy 01)

And that they could be given a special person to represent the deaf church in their community which means the assigned clergy can now represent the deaf church within their community, highlighted by another clergy member.

Participants also recommended proactive steps taken to increase the number of deaf individuals in the church identified and visible, amongst others by advocating for this. They stressed the importance of the church making a conscious effort to find out where deaf people live, what their needs are and how they should reach them. Also, participants highlighted necessary measures of creation of community awareness and advocacy campaigns to disseminate the information of the needs and experiences of the deaf congregation to the broader community. They also recommended

that the hidden nature of the Silent Church and the activities of its programs be made more known to the public through plain and easy public communication – roadside signs and outreach, among other things. All of these proposals directly tackle the problem of an unlocated mission field in that they involve representing deaf people within the church buildings as well as combating the information gap between church and the deaf community.

4.4.4 Accessible Worship: Structures, Seating and Child-Focused Provision

The fourth round of strategies is related to the physical and programmatic nature of worship. Participants requested specifically designed church buildings for deaf people, and buildings supporting the needs of those with multiple disabilities: a building that...

"well-spaced, properly ventilated, with functioning projectors, ramps put in place for people with multiple disabilities and toilets suitable for them" (Deaf 13),

Another participant stressed that:

"... improvement in accessibility whereby the church premises are with ramps and toilets specifically for the deaf with multiple disabilities" (Deaf 05).

Seating strategy recurred across groups:

"... position the deaf centrally where they can clearly see the preacher, choir, displayed messages, and interpreter" (Focus Group: Teachers),

echoing the clergy's proposal of

"... sitting in the middle pews where they are able to see directly the preacher, the interpreter and the screen" (Clergy 01).

Adequate lighting was named as a precondition of signed worship, since

"... when the lighting is poor, this makes it hard to clearly see sign language" (Deaf 12).

Practical solutions to the problems of communication were also suggested by the participants, such as the easier and visually aided presentation of third person texts from the Bible, text to be projected in the presentation of the Bible, and the preparation of more written Gospel material to be distributed in the context of the outreach. These measures would be useful in dignifying the difficult language of the bible into more understandable and easier to communicate in sign

language. It was also strongly expressed to them that it was essential to have a Sunday School for children with disabilities, particularly deaf children, to enable them to learn about God and to be fully involved in church activities early in their life. They suggested that Sunday School teachers should be sign language trained and learning materials suitable to deaf children should be provided. Moreover, the training of ushers, Sunday school teachers and youth leaders in sign language will see deaf ministry incorporated into the normal parish life and not just delegated to a handful of professionals.

4.4.5 Institutional Commitment: Inclusive Budgeting and Partnerships

The last strategic cluster covered financial exclusion found in [Section 4.2.4](#). The issue of meaningful inclusion for deaf persons was discussed, with participants agreeing that this should be reflected in the financial planning and budgeting of the parish. A participant proposed

“drawing a budget for them (an inclusive budget)” and “encouraging the congregants to support them materially, physically, financially, and socially.” Clergy 06

Similarly, another participant stated that deaf ministry should

“be included in the church budget for equipment [and] different ministries, most especially children[s] ministry for the deaf and mission and evangelism.” Clergy 05

These attitudes illustrate that people considered financial support to be a vital part of provision that is effective and sustainable for Deaf ministry. The participants also highlighted the importance of appropriate funding for ministry work as well as training and development of human resources. As one of the clergies explained that:

“[the church should] allocate enough funds for the deaf church [and] train more ministers in sign language.” Clergy 07

Important to note too, was that an inclusive budget was not recognized as just a gift, but as the essential ministry infrastructure. Another observed that:

“... an inclusive budget for Deaf ministry is important because it can support training, outreach activities, and other programs that encourage their involvement.” Clergy 01

All these answers point to the increased training, outreach, children's ministry, mission and evangelism, and decreased reliance on unplanned and Welch fundraising that might come with the inclusion of deaf ministry in the regular parish budget. The participants used the method of partnership and mobilization strategies side by side with budgeting (because the resources in the parish are limited): This was raised by one of the clergies:

"... partnership with other organizations that deal with deaf people so that the church can get to know more about this special group of people and also help in fundraising money for the deaf church" (Clergy 02),

and engagement of parish governance so that

"... the council can be challenged to come up with programs ... and ensure that the finance committee meet the programs so decided" (Clergy 07).

These proposals transform the most material of obstacles into the most tangible of changes: a line item in the parish budget for a deaf-ministry, which stands as the result of partnerships, and will be driven by the decisions made by the parish's own decision-making organizations.

4.4.6 Capacity Building through Training in Sign Language

A strategy that showed up in all the participant groups, and that straddled in every case across all the clusters listed above was a deliberate training of people in sign language. If the foremost barrier to communicating with deaf persons is the lack of communication ([Section 4.2.3](#)), then the foremost way to facilitate communication with deaf persons is to build sign-language skills ([Section 4.2.4](#)). The participants found this training at two levels (diocesan and parish) and aimed it at several audiences simultaneously: clergy, interpreters, lay leaders, hearing congregants, parents and deaf people themselves.

The need for the training of ministers was underlined by clergy and teachers. One clergy member only called for the minimum amount of.

Clergy and teachers stressed the training of ministers. One clergy urged simply that

"Church clergy should learn sign language in order to minister to them, so as to bridge the gap" (Clergy 09).

while the teachers' focus group insisted that

"Each diocese should intentionally train clergy in sign language" (Focus Group: Teachers).

Participants also called for this to be institutionalised rather than left to chance. One proposed that

"The Diocesan council should make a policy/canon regarding annual ... enrolment for training, that is, identifying persons to train as both clergy and sign language interpreters ... facilitated either by [the] Diocese or [the] parish" (Clergy 09).

while another asked that the Diocese

"Offer specialised training programs for clergy and lay leaders ... through organised basic sign language training" (Clergy 06).

In addition to the clergy there was a need to build up a wider cadre of sign languages trained in the community, this was acknowledged by participants. There was feedback from Deaf participants that the Church should ensure more sign language interpreters were trained so that evangelistic efforts using sign language can be more effective, and that the possibility of recruiting more members in the community who have an interest in sign language should be considered to enable the Gospel to be more widely communicated within that community (Deaf 09; Deaf 13). They suggested that those involved in this training should be ushers, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, and other church members. Members more strongly agreed that Silent Church activities should be available in other parishes and that this would improve access for more people to speak with someone in the Diocese (Deaf 12) who can communicate with deaf members of their parish. Parents were also a key target group identified for training as their proficiency in the use of sign language would facilitate effective communication and support of deaf children at home (Parent 04).

Participants also believed that sign-language training for people who use sign language should be undertaken within the church to provide opportunities for children who are hard of hearing or are deaf, which had not been in a formal school, to develop skills in sign language as well as being spiritually nurtured. These proposals, combined together, put the training of sign language at the centre as a basic need instead of an intervention. For the successful implementation of

sensitisation, empowerment, advocacy and accessible worship, and inclusive budgeting, participants stated that adequately trained persons need to be available at local parish and the diocese levels to communicate the gospel to deaf people in the language he/she understands and uses.

4.5 Summary of Findings

Findings are clear and coherent. The most common barriers to reaching deaf people at St. Luke's, Ntinda under Objective One were communicative barrier, primarily due to an absence of sign language in clergy and potential deaf beneficiaries; spiritual and cultural stigma, which allied with the lack of sign language, devaluated the capability of the deaf; institutional neglect, when this was combined with the absence of intentional funding for deaf ministry, and the lack of sign language. The Church's human resources are poorly mobilised in the other parishes mentioned, with participants insisting that the ongoing dialogue and preaching in the silent church at St. Luke's should be sustained and motivated by a deaf ordinand and diocesan support, which it is but this seems to be insufficient on its own to overcome the inertia of others.

Objective Three saw them embark upon a series of coherent, interconnected strategies: Transforming hearing attitudes through sensitization, deaf culture education, empowering deaf people through restored identity, leadership development, advocacy for and the visibility and presence, of deaf people. Accessible worship that included but not limited to; accessibility policy, accessible structures, child-focused provision and access to worship. In addition, adapted services, training in sign language, worship planning and implementation for clergy, interpreters, lay leaders, hearing members, parents and deaf people. At the diocesan and parish level, making sure there is an institutional focus of evidence-based building capacity through training, sign language training, training for clergy, lay leaders, for hearing members, training for parents and deaf members. The data on human resources and strategies is comparatively thin, and this is recognised explicitly and is reflected in the recommendations suggested in the following chapter, albeit these findings are well supported.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four in relation to the existing body of literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the theoretical framework undergirding the study. The discussion is organized around the three research objectives: (i) barriers limiting evangelistic outreach to deaf persons; (ii) the engagement of human resources in inclusive evangelism; and (iii) strategies the Church can use to encourage the inclusion of deaf persons in the work of evangelism. Where the findings converge with or diverge from existing literature, the implications for theory and practice are noted. The chapter concludes by reflecting on this study's specific contribution to the gap in empirical, Anglican, and African-contextualized knowledge on deaf inclusive evangelism.

5.1 Objective One: Barriers Limiting Evangelistic Outreach to Deaf Persons

The most pervasive barrier identified in this study was a deeply entrenched cultural and theological stigmatization of deafness which was the attribution of deafness to divine punishment, curse, or misfortune. This finding is strongly corroborated by the literature. Jacobson (2024) specifically identifies the tendency to view deaf individuals as spiritually overlooked or divinely punished and argues, on the basis of Exodus 4:11 and Mark 7:31–37, that such readings fundamentally misrepresent God's character and purpose. Jacobson (2024) similarly demonstrates through exegetical analysis that Jesus' healing acts in the Gospels were a deliberate challenge to the cultural stigmas of his day that associated deafness with impurity. The Diocese of Kampala findings confirm that these stigmas persist with remarkable tenacity in a sub-Saharan African urban church, a context the existing literature has only recently begun to examine. More recent African scholarship now speaks directly to this gap. Masiga and Nkabala (2025) show that biblical texts on disability have long been read in Uganda in ways that cast deafness and disability as moral or spiritual deficit, while Ringson and Sande (2025) trace the curse-and-punishment motif to deep-seated constructions of disability in African traditional religion that persist beneath nominally Christian belief. In comparison with findings from the present data, these studies suggest that the

stigma documented at St. Luke's is not characteristic but the local expression of a regional theological-cultural pattern.

The strength of this finding in the present data should not be understated. Of the eighty-five coded extracts generated across the study, eighty-one related to barriers, and stigmatization alone accounted for forty-eight of them making it, by a wide margin, the single most heavily evidenced theme in Chapter Four (see Appendix Figure A1). The sub-theme analysis sharpens the picture further: the two strongest sub-themes, the framing of deafness as a curse or punishment and the internalization of that framing as an inferiority complex, each attracted twenty-four coded highlights (Appendix Figure A2). This near-symmetry is itself revealing, for it shows that the cultural verdict pronounced upon deaf persons from outside is absorbed almost exactly as diminished self-worth from within. Participants articulated both poles plainly, a parent observed that in some families and communities, people still believe that having a Deaf child is a curse.

Another participant (a deaf congregant) reported that the community thinks that the deaf were born cursed by God and this makes the deaf persons feel out of place. A parent added to this internalized counterpart that was captured in the observation supplementing to it that inferiority complex lowers their confidence and discourages them from actively participating in church evangelism.

The reviewed literature anticipates the external judgement whereas the findings from the Diocese of Kampala data supply the empirically documented internalization that completes the cycle. Hlayisi and Sekoto's (2023) account of deaf identity construction helps explain this internalization, where the surrounding culture defines deafness as deficit rather than difference, deaf persons are liable to absorb that verdict into their own self-concept which the present participants precisely described.

Tagwirei's (2024) attitudinal typology describes how churches shift between paternalism, exclusion, and affirmation. With the superiority/inferiority dynamic revealed in the present data, this typology offers a particularly useful lens for interpreting the first three themes of this study. The theme of Devaluation of Deaf Capability corresponds directly to the interventionism and superiority/inferiority categories. Deaf persons in the community were widely regarded as incapable of meaningful spiritual contribution, unworthy of investment, and better served by passive charity than active inclusion. Stahl et al. (2025) echo this critique from a contemporary North American context, finding that disabled Christians consistently desire movement beyond

charity towards genuine mutual exchange and recognition of their gifts. The present study confirms that the same desire exists among deaf congregants in Kampala, but that church structures have not yet responded to it.

Chapter Four lends this interpretation concrete evidential weight. The Devaluation of Deaf Capability theme was the second most supported in the study, drawing twenty-two coded extracts, and its language consistently betrayed an implicit cost–benefit calculus in which deaf members figure as a liability rather than a mission field. Clergy described deaf congregants as people who want attention, need an interpreter, a specific place where to sit; all this is seen as a burden and more starkly as insignificant, so they are not worth investing in spiritually. Additionally, a parent admitted that some families do not believe in their own Deaf children and see them as useless.

These extracts illustrate precisely the paternalism and superiority/inferiority dynamic that Tagwirei (2024) describes, and they show how an attitude of belief (Theme One) hardens into a judgement of worth that rationalizes the withholding of teaching, leadership and outreach opportunities. That clergy and parents reach independently for the same vocabulary of burden and uselessness is what gives the theme its cross-group credibility (Appendix Figure A4).

The third theme, Communicative and Institutional Exclusion, is also well anticipated by the literature. Jacobson (2024) and the Vatican's Ephphatha document (2010) both emphasize sign language as a fully valid linguistic system, and identify its absence from church settings as a primary access barrier. Tagwirei (2024) takes this further, arguing for the active "*domestication*" of sign language within church settings. The present findings confirm that the sign-language deficit at St. Luke's and other parishes was not incidental but structural, arising from the absence of intentional planning, inadequate budgetary allocation, and a failure to include deaf persons in decision-making bodies. This institutional dimension is less developed in the literature, which tends to focus on attitudinal and communicative barriers. Findings from the few parishes with in the Diocese of Kampala data make clear that even where attitudinal goodwill is present, the absence of structural intentionality will reproduce exclusion. Tagwirei's (2025) analysis of how church spaces themselves can disable rather than include names exactly this dynamic, arguing that congregations often fail to align their physical and programmatic arrangements with their professed theology of welcome.

Communicative and Institutional Exclusion structurally was the most decisive in the data presented in Chapter Four, although it had the fewest number of extracts being coded (twenty-two out of forty-eight and eleven) from all three barrier themes. The communicative deficit was put simply that lack of sign language education among the majority of the church members it is challenging if not hard to reach the deaf in the parish and in outreaches. Most importantly, it was acknowledged that this is largely a problem of missing institutional intent, as reported by participants, with many programs planned for hearing others and deaf people only being taken into consideration. Among a few responses captured, participants said that there is an attitude of "an extra expense on the deaf community, so there is neglect".

In this institutional dimension, the data clarify that there are two aspects that stand out and need to be viewed separately: structures and, above all, finances which was also highlighted as a fourth barrier in Chapter Four. Because there never was a budget specifically for deaf ministry in the rest of the parishes apart from St Luke's' church which is also small, "they are not budgeted for in church programs and mission was always allocated very little money. The issue of exclusion is reiterated each year during budget time, regardless of the amount of goodwill being expressed by the participants in (section 4.2.4). In the literature, attention is mainly given to attitudinal and communicative barriers without considering the funding base of institutions, whereas the context of the Kampala data shows that the funding basis of institutions is absent: all the recommended changes will first have to struggle with an empty funding line. In fact, the physical results confirmed the same point namely, that no church should be accessed without upgrades, not enough lighting, and not enough sanitation and that seating should not obstruct sight-lines through which signed worship takes place. Tagwirei (2025) distinguishes as disabling. Both components are institutional, in the sense that they are determined in the budget meetings and the vestries, and not by each individuals' heart, and are among the most malleable ones to reform.

This study makes a significant contribution in that it shows that these four types of barriers do not occur in isolation of one another but rather are a self-reinforcing loop. Low expectations about the capacity of deaf persons depress capacity; low capacity depresses the institutional investment in the capacity of deaf persons; low investment (e.g. no institutional budget line for support for deaf ministry) depresses the capacity of deaf persons; and low capacity further depresses the institutional expectation that the capacity of the deaf person is of peripheral interest to the church.

The root of these three barriers is financial exclusion as it cannot train interpreters, adapt buildings or commission deaf evangelists (section 4.2.4). This cycle is not systematically modelled in literature in relation to the Anglican context in Africa and in this regard the present study light is shone on the dynamic relationship between the barriers.

The presence of the evidence in so many places is evidence that this is no aberration of a few assertive individuals. Themes of barriers from clergy, deaf congregants, and parents, and focus-group participants are represented across each other in Chapter Four; to be sure, the barrier themes populating a participant-group analysis (Appendix Figure A4) are all noticeable across the three groups of participants. Similarly, code-category displays (Appendix Figure A6) group the theme of burden-perception, low expectations, internalized inferiority, and stigma as a single dominant evidential barriers block across all three participant groups. It is only because of this specifically because of these voices converging on the similar issues of stigma, devaluation and exclusion that one could be permitted to talk of the three issues operating as one system and not as three issues. Theologically, Chapter Four took this arrangement to be in opposition to the *imago Dei* teaching in the Bible and the scope of the Great Commission, which is directly opposite and thus the real subject of any corrective action.

5.2 Objective Two: Engagement of Human Resources in Inclusive Evangelism

The most honest statements were made by missionaries who admitted to perpetuating the **practices** of exclusion through viewing deaf people as a “burden” instead of co-evangelists. This is a very poignant remark given Tagwirei's (2021) differentiation of deaf persons from "objects of charity" to "active participants with spiritual gifts. In the context Kampala diocese, the missionary focus group information indicates that the "old way" remains prevalent and continues to be the way of the church even in spite of the theological argument for the "new way". African practical theology confirms that position; Nanthambwe and Magezi (2025) state the churches in Africa are merely including persons with disabilities when they view them as fully included and are seen under a framework of justice; Baloyi (2024) can point to a real-life example in which people with disabilities were recognized and utilized as spiritual workers instead of objects of care.

Shortage of Interpreters identified as an acute problem. This reiterates the demand of the Ephphatha document (2010) for trained and competent interpreters as an essential part of accessible liturgy, which is also reflected in the Kenyan congregations written about by Maina (2025), where sustained interpretation is used to enable the participation of the deaf at liturgical services. But Kampala's context, which does not feature extensively in these largely western-sourced texts, is that of the interpreter: difficulties arising from fatigue. The challenge of maintaining a full service (and without the delusion of an outreach) on any single person as an interpreter is underscored by this finding, especially if we accept the premise that most literature also makes and assumes. Stahl et al.'s (2025) respondents wanted "growth in church space and membership", which implies managing and growing the accessible and supported ministry. The Kampala data guided this aspiration by focusing on the specifically grounding human-resource constraints that need to be addressed to make such aspirations a reality.

However, the absence recorded in this picture needs to be understood in conjunction with the important exception recorded in the case-study parish of Chapter Four. St. Luke's, Ntinda has successfully started a "silent church" on its ground with continued Sunday and mid-week worship, a deaf Ordinand in leadership, monthly facilitation for deaf evangelism, attendance to the School for the Deaf and a public affirmation by the Archbishop of the Deaf children and child with multiple disabilities. Independent of this, participants from clergy groups, deaf groups and teacher groups also mentioned this provision, even though they pointed out that the worship space is small, the one ordinand and one interpreter comprise the diocesan training pipeline and that engagement in the other parishes studied is 'zero' or 'nearly zero'. The contrast reinforces rather than mitigates this analysis: it is quite possible to be inclusive when engaging human resources within the means afforded by the Diocese; it is also evident that there is currently no means by which to replicate the work of St. Luke's outside its walls. The issue just isn't that it really is not feasible to engage, however that it is considered this way.

It has been recognized in Chapter Four that the extent of evidence supporting Objective Two is quite minimal, a substantive finding given the lack of evidence. It (the church) has been silent on the issue of engagement of human resources from amongst the clergy and lay leadership, beyond the fact that they are not included, implying the church's human resources have not been consciously conceptualized in relation to clients' deafness. This mirrors Jacobson's (2024)

comment that deaf ministry is not viewed as a specialized thread of the community of faith but instead as a peripheral area of concern, by and for the church. The burden of inclusion has been de facto handed over to the limited group of interpreters and a few engaged deaf leaders and not spread in the whole number of human resources that any church has. The numbers confirm this in the Diocese of Kampala.

Only four of the eighty-five coded extracts went beyond the barrier themes, and human resource engagement was the lowest of all with just one coded extract. Appendix Figure A1 shows but a single coded extract related to missionary and volunteer engagement while Appendix Figure A5 shows engagement with this theme is case-specific rather than widespread. The most forthright revelation was in the missionaries' own focus group where members came out with a bold example of those who must go out specifically missionaries who stated their own failure to do so. Missionaries and teachers suggested a similar lack of willingness, with the teachers' focus group noting that even some people working with children are not willing to support children with an interpreter, for example, by offering to assist them. Clergy reported on the same parish-wide lack of support for children that they observe under Objective one. The present discussion is based on the interpretation of the thematic findings that were rightfully reported in Chapter Four, and on which very few extracts stand.

5.3 Objective Three: Strategies to Strengthen Inclusion of Deaf Persons

The strategy-related findings are smaller in number than barrier-related findings but the theological and practical significance is great. The formal coding stepped forward two themes: attitudinal change in the process of sensitization and deaf culture education; and empowerment of the deaf. These were augmented by three additional themes from the sifting of the transcripts endorsed by the participants (sections 4.4.3—4.4.5). There is adequate literature support of these themes but for the first time in the context of this study, they are grounded in an empirical experience in an Anglican context in Uganda.

These strategy themes were the lowest in the study, in strictly evidential terms: Attitudinal Transformation through Sensitization and Deaf-Culture Education were based on two coded extracts while Empowerment of Deaf Persons was based on one extract (Appendix Figures A1 and A2). The sensitization theme, which took up the externalized theme of Theme One, the curses that the majority of cultures are against Deaf culture and referred to as a result of misfortune deals with

the display of that externalized theme. The empowerment theme deals with the cultural inferiority complex which urges to restore their identity/self-image, the belief that their self-esteem is built when they know that the hearing people see them as equal. The remedies that participants mentioned are therefore the exact opposite of the dual-pole stigma cycle created by Objective One. Sensitization will attack the self-rejection from without while empowerment will tackle the rejection within. Their low frequency doesn't mean that they are not very logical as it is due to the data available to them at the present stage.

The advocacy for sensitization and deaf culture education agrees with what Tagwirei (2024) claimed in teaching to break down stereotypes of paternalism and superiority requires informed and theologically rooted educations. It is also a reflection of the theme of 'two-way access' espoused by Stahl et al. (2025), emphasizing that access is not simply 'physical access' or 'communicative access', but 'attitudinal access' and 'social or cultural access' are required as well. The Ephphatha document (2010) supports this call to educate priests and catechists in Deaf culture as a key precondition to being authentic. The participants of the present study are on the same page and coming from an Anglican context in Uganda, they stand before us again independently to conclude that when there are changes in structures, there must also be changes in minds. This convergence is reflected in contemporary sub-Saharan scholarship of Nanthambwe (2025) who sees this attitudinal and educational shift as a component of a public pastoral care that will bring the Church from being an “excluder” to an “includer.”

The empowerment theme directly resonates with Tagwirei (2021) who argues for the deaf people to be active spiritual agents and not passive objects. The quotation of the participants, "Restore their identity/self-image; this makes the deaf persons gain in confidence" is a possible paraphrase of the theoretical work of Tagwirei. The focus here is also on proactive strategies and solutions for empowering communities to overcome issues which come from within rather than paternalism. This reflects Jakobson's (2024) emphasis on "alternative strategies and solutions" as methods for empowerment over paternalism. It comes as a contemporary application of the gospel's very own "Ephphatha" which means “be opened.” (Mark 7:34) The EPHphatha document (2010), which focused upon ‘deaf ministry’ had this to say: The church at St. Luke's is placed before the challenge of being opened, not only in its modes of communication, but in the identity and agency of the gifted deaf members. The Kenyan initiatives of Maina (2025) and the recent African work of

Baloyi (2024) provide a template for access-to-agency in a nearby space in East Africa: one case of disabled people serving as recognized spiritual workers, and one of deaf members of church worshipping under a deaf pastor.

In addition to the two formal strategy themes, re-exploring the transcripts revealed more and a greater strategic repertoire than the formal coding managed to isolate (sections 4.4.3–4.4.5). Participants have suggested the development and encouragement of advocacy by people in the deaf community and the active identification of the setting and location of deaf people; accessible church building, seating arrangements and teaching positions; good lighting for the church; provision for those with other disabilities; a deaf-led Sunday school for deaf children with experienced sign-language teachers; simplified production with visual support of the Scripture readings; and most insistently an inclusive budget with partnerships and church governance. There are two aspects of this repertoire which stand out. First, it's a barrier matched proposal, where every proposal is addressing some documented barrier, whether it's to an unlocated mission field or a ministry that's not fundable. Secondly, most of it is not resource-dependent, it's governance-dependent: seats aren't resources, signs are, sight-line decisions are, lines of identification, budget lines and decisions made but not necessarily donations. This is the second observation when looking at the solution-imagination and we are telling that the data exists, the solution-imagination is there already, but there's a missing institutional channel that could take it.

These two ideas are worth pointing out since they were discussed at all the meeting participant groups. The first is systematic training of individuals in sign language, of the clergy, interpreters, lay leaders, hearing members, of parents and deaf themselves, which all participants across the study have regarded as a practical prerequisite for each of the other reforms: without trained signers, sensitization, empowerment and accessible worship cannot reach the hearing deaf. The second is a planned and proactive approach to budget – participants repeatedly highlighted that meaningful inclusion must be reflected in the financial planning of the parish and not be expected to happen spontaneously through occasional charitable outgoings such as training, interpretation, outreach and children's ministry as an added extra to the budgets. These two themes, capacity and resourcing, combine to provide the very institutional channel on whose deficient nature the previous paragraph points to.

Findings focused more on 'what does not work for people with a deaf to be included' than 'what does work'. This indicates the congregation has grown an awareness of their problem without developing a clear solution-imagining. There are some explanations in the literature for this split. Much of what is available is strategy models that make the assumption that there are trained interpreters available, an abundance of funding for seminary programs, and a robust set of resources to offer in sign-language. This is something that the Diocese of Kampala does not yet have. The Church is therefore interested in the possible collaboration and "praxis-theology" in the service context of the Anglican churches in the Kingdom of Uganda, for which the models have to be adapted.

5.4 Theological Reflection

This work calls for ongoing consideration of the Church's inclusion of Deaf people. The Bible is clear about the equal position we all share as human beings before God, regardless of our disability or ability. Although all peoples are important before God, the study has revealed that persons with disabilities and the Deaf, in particular, have been excluded from the life of the Church and its ministry, evangelism. This brings up a legitimate question, namely, can it be claimed that the Church, the Body of Christ, can be said to be "making disciples of all the nations of the world" in the presence of some or all of the Deaf, unless the latter are included?

Fulfilling the biblical mandate, each human person is made in the image of God. Then God said let us make man in our own image, in our likeness...so God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:26-27) That all people, both young and old, male and female, physically handicapped and physically fit, regardless of social or ethnic status, are imago Dei and are therefore valuable, worthy and important to God. Being deaf does not mean that they have no value or are second in God's kingdom but are equal in the family of God and therefore should be treated equally, respected, welcomed and included into ministry by the church. Because they are all created by God, they deserve a chance to hear the gospel, understand it very well in their own languages and receive it.

God has made us all different, with different abilities, demonstrating great richness and diversity. The Church should tap into the special gifts and talents that God has bestowed upon the Deaf,

allowing them to support the expansion of the Church. So, if the church fails to see, hear, or calls out the deaf people then it has failed the great commission and the foundation truth of the Bible. This is well summarized by Brock (2021):

Disability should be limited to not being "a human defect," but being a diversity within the Body of Christ. All have an image of God and all have a place in the assembly of the faithful based on physical ability.

Some believe that being Deaf is a disability preventing people from being able to be a part of church life. However, Exodus 4:11 points to God's sovereignty over all the abilities and conditions of all mankind since he is the one who created all people. Who gave man his mouth? "Who made man his mouth?" the Lord asked him. Who makes them make them mute or deaf? Who sees them and who makes them not to be? But am I not the Lord?" Moses said that he couldn't speak, but God told Moses that He is the one who gave people their mouths to speak, their eyes to see and even people that are deaf and mute. This passage does not consider a deaf person a mistake, but instead it demonstrates that God made them for his own purpose and He has a plan that includes them. The Church is therefore challenged to be able to look at the Deaf person in a different way as able, of value and worthy of God's eyesight as all other persons, rather than as a problem or troublesome burden.

God did not complain about the inability of Moses to speak; Moses did; rather, God concentrated upon what He felt He wanted to do for the Israelites in Egypt through Moses through this inability of Moses to speak. As this would place a greater focus on the gifts/talents/calling of the person with a hearing impairment which is possible and often part of the Church's mission. Yong (2014) believes that "those who are profoundly disabled also embody ministry" and that "work with people with disabilities and make them a part of the ministry, rather than a passive."

In Leviticus 19:14 is a clear principle that God "commands His people not to curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind". There is no doubt that this verse clearly shows that God cares and is concerned about disabled persons. Although it was to the Israelites by then, it still reflects God's concern for the vulnerable people to be valued, know their worth and also be protected both in the community and by the church rather than excluding them. These "stumbling blocks" to Deaf people in the present context may be physical barriers including the absence of interpreters, inaccessible communication, negative attitude and not participating/being included in the ministry.

Like God commanded his people not to lay traps, the Church should also do so, to prevent any disability individuals, even the deaf, from being an impediment to the full participation in church activities. This forces the contemporary church to reflect seriously about what equals 'disability exclusion' (whether intentional or otherwise) in their worship and involvement of the deaf persons in their Ministry and to implement strategies that can lead to inclusive evangelism. The admonition at the end of this scripture is very serious: “fear your God”. We express reverence to God through how we treat the disabled people so that it is not only our social responsibility to include the disabled among us, it is an obedience to God.

Jesus is the example of evangelizing in an inclusive manner. In Mark 7:31–37, Jesus intentionally travelled through the Decapolis so that he would pay attention to the needs of the deaf man, teaching the church today that it has to intentionally include marginalized people into evangelistic ministry who are many times overlooked or forgotten. Prior to his healing Jesus speaks to the man in a way to which he understands through taking the man aside and touching his ear and tongue. This indicates that Jesus was not prepared to say, "fit" into the individuals, instead, He created a way by which the man could be "renewed". It comes to today's church by teaching the need for communication that will be accessible and meaningful to Deaf persons if an effective evangelism is to be achieved. Like Jesus, the Church must be prepared to communicate the Good News in the language the deaf understand.

By removing the man from the mob, we gain insight into the sensitivity and respect for the dignity of the man who was deaf, and we need to follow the example of the churches today and honor those with disabilities as well for they are created in the image of God. Jesus' extension of his ministry to the Gentiles and how God extends grace to all individuals despite their differences or conditions. The church then needs to receive the good news in a manner accessible to all, particularly the deaf population; including all groups and allowing everyone to respond to the Good news.

Contemporary scholars like Alamu and Olagoke (2023) argue:

The treatment of the deaf man by Jesus witnesses to Dignity, Personhood and Inclusion. The command of Jesus Christ to the man who couldn't hear or speak but was suffering with a demon, "Ephphatha" ("Be opened"), offers a guide to churches wishing to eliminate

obstacles that may impede full involvement in the life of society and/or religious communities for people with disabilities.

Similarly, Sorenson (2020) states “It's time that churches learn to minister to Deaf people in their own language and culture, not altering how they speak or act to suit that which hearing people can understand”.

Isaiah 35:5–6 teaches us that He will bring a new kingdom in which all people shall find salvation and restoration in His power. When time comes, the prophet says, ‘The ears of the deaf will be opened, the ears will be unstopped and the lame will leap like a deer’. While highlighting to our attention God's future restoration, it also reminds us that God cares about the people who were afflicted in the physical, healing them. Isaiah brings out the picture of inclusion, Restoration, that is people with disabilities are not forgotten in God's plan of restoring them.

Therefore, the Church should reflect these same values and vision in its ministry and mission by making sure that the deaf people and others with multiple disabilities should be recognized and integrated into the life of the Church by giving an opportunity to everyone to receive salvation and grow as disciples. The Kingdom of God, Taylor & Francis (2021) state, should be seen as “place of belonging: persons with disability are welcomed as full partners, not passive recipients of care”.

The personification of Isaiah's eyes being opened and ears unstopped represents the elimination of the obstacles which prevent God's people from enjoying Blessed Salvation. Similarly, the church is expected to tackle every possible obstacle in the way that might prevent the deaf from taking part in worship and church life, or other people who might have more than one disability. When Isaiah can say that the “mute tongue will shout for joy”, he is telling the excluded ones that they can join in worship. Finally, when the deaf join the fold, they are made active members in the Church, sharing the gospel with the community.

Jesus' teaching in Luke 14:13–24 about the parable of the great banquet, teaches about the invitation of the crippled, the lame and the blind who were often overlooked. But when you give a feast, be sure to invite the poor, the crippled and the lame, the blind and the lame-blessed” Luke 14:13. The inclusion of the disabled people that were normally outcasts from society and religious life demonstrates that inclusion in God's Kingdom is deliberate not automatic. Churches must also

have a deliberate strategy, intention and action to reach out to Deaf people and people with other forms of disadvantage that are not found in their structures “just happen” to be there.

He says to the servants himself,

“... Go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind” (Luke 14:21-23)

Everything would otherwise have been held for them, because they would not be part of the banquet. This challenges the Church not to be passive but show deliberate effort and actively create opportunities for people with disabilities especially the deaf to be part of ministry and making sure that the church identifies and removes all kinds of barriers that prevent the deaf people from understanding and receiving the gospel. Consider this parable as pointing out that God makes no distinctions between some of the "unimportant," or "unworthy," people in the community, and able-bodied and worthy people. God's Kingdom is open to all people regardless of their disabilities or abilities because God invites them, thus affirming that the deaf can be whole citizens of the kingdom of God.

Paul's statement “you are the body of Christ...and each of you is a member of the body” (1 Corinthians 12:27) implies that every part of the body is important when he says that there are different parts of the body that do different things, and the same is true of the church; there are many members, and each member contributes in a many different way, and there is no member who is of less value or not of value whatsoever. This conflicts with people's attitude regarding Deaf people that sees them as not involved in ministry, but me. This contradicts people's attitude that they see Deaf people as not participating in ministry but me are! Rather, they are active contributors, possessing gifts and talents which enhance and enrich the entire body of Christ, and by this we should justly recognize them for what they are the body of Christ.

It is not possible for the eye to say to the hand; I don't need you! 1 Cor. 12:21 – This means that as they rely on one another and work together for the good of the Church, it too will be better. He continues to make emphasis in verses 22-24, that members of the body who seem weak should not be looked at as inferior but to ensure that they are not neglected, are cared for and honored, reflecting biblical care even for all members of the body of Christ including the deaf persons.

Brock (2021) argues:

Paul's conception of the Body of Christ reminds communities that so-called "weak" members are vital, not dispensable. All members are important to the overall health of the body. Paul purposely places women who may be considered the losers in social circumstances in a superior light so that everyone can see that they are equally valuable and everyone depends on each other in the Christian community.

Romans 10:14-17 emphasizes the vital part of the Gospel proclamation in God's programme of salvation. According to Paul, people need to hear the message about Christ in order to believe in Him, and to hear the message requires someone to tell them the message. Within the field of inclusive evangelism for Deaf people this passage reveals that the Church should ensure that the Good News is communicated in accessible means or Formats. While Paul says that he hears, his focus is on being able to receive and to act upon the message of Christ and not in the sense of hearing auditory sound. The Gospel can be transmitted and received through sign language, visual language and other ways that are accessible to Deaf people. Thus, Romans 10:14-17 gives the challenge to the Church to break down communication barriers and adopt inclusive evangelistic practices in approaching Deaf communities. The Church's mission to make the Gospel available to all people is realized when it trains sign language interpreters, when it teaches sign language skills to members of the clergy, and when it empowers Deaf believers to join the ministry so that they can hear, believe and respond to the saving message of Jesus Christ. He says to the Romans that:

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)

Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ" said Paul in the book of Galatians that states that all believers are equal in Christ because they have been united through faith in Christ. There are many differences between people, but these should not be used to exclude people from other people who

are a part of the church. Therefore, within the context of Christ all believers have the same dignity and belonging-meaning that the deaf people have as well.

Galatians 3:28 describes how the kingdom of God is to appear: a community, 'citizens', made up of a variety of ethnic groups united around one Lord, Christ. The church is reminded that the equality and unity described in Galatians 3:28 supersedes human differences of which they should not become grounds for exclusion but calling for integration, belonging and full participation of the disabled people especially the deaf into ministry since God's redemptive work is universal.

Lastly, the Great Commission to make disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...." Jesus did not exclude any group of people, putting the Church to task, to take the Gospel to all people. There should be intentionality exuded when Jesus said "go" in relation to actively seeking out the deaf persons and others who have multiple disabilities for the church to include in ministry.

The command "to make disciples of all nations" does not exclude Deaf persons but rather they are included in God's redemptive plan, to hear the gospel, accept and receive salvation, study the word and grow in faith as Jesus commanded. This command cannot allow for any deaf to be excluded from church life. A significant group that was not reached is an incomplete evangelism. Accessibility is a crucial aspect of preaching the good news about Jesus among Deaf communities" is the claim made by Sorenson (2020).

Jesus gave the instructions to his disciples to teach, and message from the word of God must be conveyed to the deaf people particularly in sign language and other sign systems such as visual communication that will enable the deaf to grasp the word of God and apply it in their everyday lives. In Jesus' commands to his disciples to "Baptize them in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit", there is an indication that once we are baptized that we are members of God's family including people with disabilities, particularly the deaf. Finally, he said that he would be with them "until the end of the age". This gives the church a tinge of encouragement to step out boldly, to accept and include the disabled persons into church life with the assurance that everywhere the church goes, where ever her task is, the Lord will accompany her and strengthen her.

This study and reflecting on these lessons of Scripture have caused me to understand that inclusive evangelism amongst Deaf people is not just a social responsibility but an act of goodwill. It is based on the challenge of the Bible to Jesus to represent God who loves all, the example of Jesus, who reached out to the disabled people during his life and ministry, and the Church's mission. We face a challenge today as a Church on how to properly integrate the Deaf persons into the life and mission of the Church. In so doing the Church will be an authentic exemplar of that Kingdom and its mission to make disciples of all people.

5.5 This Study's Contribution to Knowledge

Chapter Two outlined five gaps in the literature, geographic gap, resource-assumption gap, empirical gap, denominational gap, and strategy gap. This present study deals with all five but to different extent.

The geographic gap is the first empirically based exploration into deaf inclusive evangelism in the context of an Anglican parish in Uganda, to this researcher's best knowledge. The material presented here on barrier patterns is particularly African and Anglican, and is missing from the literature.

Regarding the resource-assumption gap, the findings highlight particular areas where Western models of ministry for the Deaf are problematic on context as seen in Kampala's world, such as assumptions about the ability of interpreters to work constantly, the limited resources available for financial support, and limited training infrastructure available in the Diocese. The lessons to be learned from future strategy models for similar situations must be created for resource limited realities not retrofitted from well-resourced settings.

For the empirical gap, participant testimony is presented verbatim in the findings while eight to eighty-five coded extracts, eleven sub-themes and six overarching themes were produced from sixty-one participants from across five participant groups (clergy, deaf congregants, parents, missionaries, and teachers), which were cross classified with the three objectives (Appendix Figures A1–A7). This work goes beyond the more prescriptive, historical or theological literature surveyed to date and into the realm of realized and assessed practice.

As for what the strategies look like, the study, which remains relatively light on strategies, suggests that there must be a context-appropriate, clinically themed plan: attitudinal change through

sensitizations in the congregation; deaf culture education based on biblical theology; and empowerment based on restored identity and leadership opportunity; deliberate training in sign language at both diocesan and parish level; and an intentional, inclusive budget for deaf ministry. These are approaches that can be taken by small and medium-size institutions without much resources, and therefore suitable entry points for parishes including St. Luke's Ntinda.

5.6 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that the results of this research are in good dialogue with the previous literature, and it also has been expanded to a degree that the previous literature could not. Patterns found elsewhere can be confirmed from the durability of stigma, capability devaluation, lack of sign language and institutional exclusion in a modern parish of an Anglican church in Uganda, but also shown to be self-reinforcing and self-generating in ways not previously illustrated by the literature. Low level of human-resource engagement is a global problem of shifting from charity to co-participation and a particular problem of having limited resources in an impoverished African diocese. Where there were fewer strategy findings, they indicate a biblically-based and practically realistic route: the change of mind via education and the newfound identity via empowerment. As a conclusion, the Gospel call of Ephphatha, "be opened", is still as pressing as ever in Mark 7:31–37; and the points of barriers blocking the church and the first outlines of what it would look like to have the church opened in Kampala have been documented in this study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The study was able to identify three interrelated realities which influence inclusive evangelism among deaf persons in Silent church, St. Luke's, Ntinda and other parishes. Barriers in outreach are not only due to non-existence of sign-language interpretation, but due to cultural and theological stigma that values deaf persons less, institutional exclusion of deaf ministry from church structure, and most basically, lack of any budget for deaf ministry that secures the other three. Second, the human resources of the Church exist but are not well trained, coordinated or commissioned for Deaf inclusive evangelism. Thirdly, some practical improvement is possible where the Church learns to blend attitudinal transformation, communication that is accessible to the deaf, intentional resourcing and empowerment of deaf individuals to become active witnesses to the Gospel.

6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations below build on the findings; those relating to engagement of human resources and strategies for inclusion (Objectives Two and Three), based on a leaner evidential base, are provided as directions for action and further enquiry.

6.2.1 Recommendations to the Diocese of Kampala

The Diocese of Kampala is recommended to use the following key actions for operation: To extend the current single ordinand and one interpreter by sponsoring theological colleges to offer more deaf ordinands and more sign-language modules in theological colleges for example at Bishop Tucker school of theology, and to offer more interpreter-training placements.

The Diocese should pay special attention to deaf children who have additional intellectual, visual, physical, developmental or communication disabilities who may find themselves facing multiple barriers to evangelism, worship and Christian education. Instead of describing them as having “multiple handicaps” the Diocese must acknowledge them for what they are: a deaf child who has other disabilities, and their equal spiritual dignity, capacity and the right to be part of Church life. This commitment should be made formal by the Archbishop and diocese through a pastoral directive or by a diocesan policy of inclusion which mandates that every parish identify and make welcome such children; together with families, form individualized ways of pastoral caring and

Christian education ministry for such children. This should involve the use of Ugandan Sign Language and adapted and/or demonstrative sign language (if necessary), simplified and pictorial bible materials, storytelling using the visual approach, simple catechism and confirmation teaching, accessibility of seating and lighting, access to mobility and adequate support for a sensory-sensitive worship service, and the provision of ministry assistants trained to support signing. Continued training and / or update needs to be provided for clergy, catechists, Sunday-school teachers, interpreters and safeguarding personnel covering Deaf culture, disabilities and child protection and respectful communication. Research has shown that the accessibility of worship is relational and compound, encompassing aspects of communication, attitude, architecture, technology, social interactions, understanding and transport sign-language interpretation is not enough to make worship accessible to children who have other needs, in addition to deafness (Carter et al., 2023). The Diocese should therefore arrange a Register of children needing extra provision, designate a person to be a focus for disability inclusion and ensure a specific annual budget is allocated and review periodically whether children with additional provision are going to worship, receiving good Christian teaching, participating fully in the life of the Church and being given opportunities to use their gifts. They should also be placed permanently and appropriately within the regular worship of the diocese, but not substitute for their regular participation in worship in a parish community. So, "deaf" children with other disabilities would be recognised, not only for being cared for, but also for being valued members of the body of Christ, through these measures.

The Diocese should also find ways to imitate the silent-church principle used at St. Luke's, Ntinda but used by very few in other parishes, and look for connections with any Schools of the Deaf, Deaf associations, theological colleges and interpreter training programs to broaden the community of people and promote fundraising for deaf ministry.

The Diocesan council should make a policy/canon regarding annual inclusion for the enrollment for training. That is identifying persons to train as both clergy and sign language interpreters. And these should be facilitated either by Diocese or parish.

6.2.2 Recommendations to St. Luke's Parish and the Clergy

A careful and clear Deaf ministry structure should be the aim of the parish, with a clear, focused coordinator, a specific budget line and a clear reporting mechanism, with inclusive evangelism

becoming part of the parish's planning and not an improvised activity or an added cost to parish finances which the council and/or finance committee approve.

Clergy and lay readers, missionaries, Sunday school teachers and youth leaders and volunteers should all receive regular Deaf culture and basic Ugandan Sign Language training which would help to minimize the number of interpreters required and enhance the direct relationship between the Deaf and the pastoral staff.

The parish should boost the physical accessibility of worship, including ramps, access toilets, good lighting for signed communication, projectors and seating arrangements (which are particularly important for deaf worshippers who have multiple disabilities) with the view of deaf worshippers to the center and to ensure they can see the preacher from the screen and the interpreter, with ample lighting for signed communication.

There should also be an increased effort to make the ministry of the deaf visible, for instance with visible road-side signage now saying 'Signing church is here' and a deliberate effort to pinpoint the location of deaf people in the parish.

On the regular basis always evaluate how the ministry is moving on in the deaf church. Evaluation will help the church to know what has been done, archived and what might need improvement on or even employee better planning for the future.

As a church does make recruitment of employees, a snow balling method can be used in locating the deaf people. Employ a few deaf social workers who are aware of the whereabouts of the deaf the rest of the deaf so that they are located and are made part of the inclusion in the various church activities.

Additionally, sermons prepared by the clergy should be given to the interpreters before the sermon such that they identify the difficult words that are hard to interpret as was mentioned in objective 1 by the teachers, so that simple alternative words can be used and be easily interpreted so that the deaf persons understand the word of God.

Finally, all congregations should maintain the sensitization through sermons, Bible study, workshops and engaging with families, addressing belief that deafness is a curse, misfortune or

incapacity among the people of God and that it is the equal dignity, spiritual giftedness and full belonging of deaf people in the Church that are being affirmed.

6.2.3 Recommendations on Deaf Children and Sunday School

The parish should open a Sunday School for the Deaf Child trained in sign language and have materials for example bibles with pictures which are simplified in terms of reading and visual learning, to enable Deaf children to know God and engage with the Church from an early age. Sunday school, as participants said, is the now of the large church, without Sunday school the exclusion continues from childhood onwards.

6.2.4 Recommendations to Parents and Families

Parents of deaf children should be supported to affirm the worth of their children through workshops on parenting the deaf children: that train parents on how to handle and support their deaf children engage children in church life in the early stages and challenge beliefs that shrouded the condition of deafness in negative thoughts such as it is a curse or a shame/burden to the parents.

Feelings of inferiority can start in the home and should not be addressed in isolation from congregational sensitisation; thus, family engagement programmes should follow the congregation's approach. Parent/care takers should also be involved with the planning as they know what the children prefer to communicate with and what support is needed for their child.

6.2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Schools for the Deaf

Outreach programs in the parish (e.g. Bible study and cell ministry) should be revived and sustained, teachers' knowledge and skills in sign language and deaf pedagogy extended and utilized in producing accessible parish materials (including the ideas from participants on less accessible words or phrases from the Bible). The partnership between the parish and the School for the Deaf should be strengthened so that needs of the deaf children and also for teachers are easily identified by the church

6.2.6 Recommendations to the Deaf Community

Deaf members should be trained and commissioned as evangelists, Bible study facilitators, peer mentors and leaders of the ministries. Their involvement would change the ministry from the charity model to the co-participation model where the deaf people share the Gospel in their own

linguistic and social networks. The community also needs to be supported to provide internal advocacy – those who can take deaf needs to first class hearing places and to the decision-making processes in churches.

6.2.7 Recommendation on Accessible Teaching and Communication

The Church must adopt flexible teaching practices in all of the above such as using visual outline of sermon, providing sign language interpretation including provision of alternative texts that can be produced by signs where possible, and the use of appropriate seating arrangements to promote sight. These would enhance the provision for access to worship, discipleship and evangelistic teaching.

6.3 Areas for Further Research

The following research directions can be considered: comparisons between Deaf-inclusive evangelism in various Anglican parishes in the Diocese of Kampala; the experience of Deaf women and youth in church participation, and evaluation of the impact of the implementation of sign language training and Deaf-led evangelism. Another study in the future may examine the role of digital tools, visual communication and captioning in the communication of the gospel with the deaf in church settings in Uganda.

Lastly, a further study on the hearing-impaired persons can be carried out because during data collection, it was found out that they also face challenges and therefore need to be explored and understood so that the church can see how to also include them in ministry.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THEMATIC ANALYSIS CHARTS AND TABLES

This appendix contains the detailed visual evidence that supports Chapter Four. The displays should be interpreted as thematic evidence maps: they indicate concentration, breadth and caution points in the qualitative data, rather than statistical prevalence in a population.

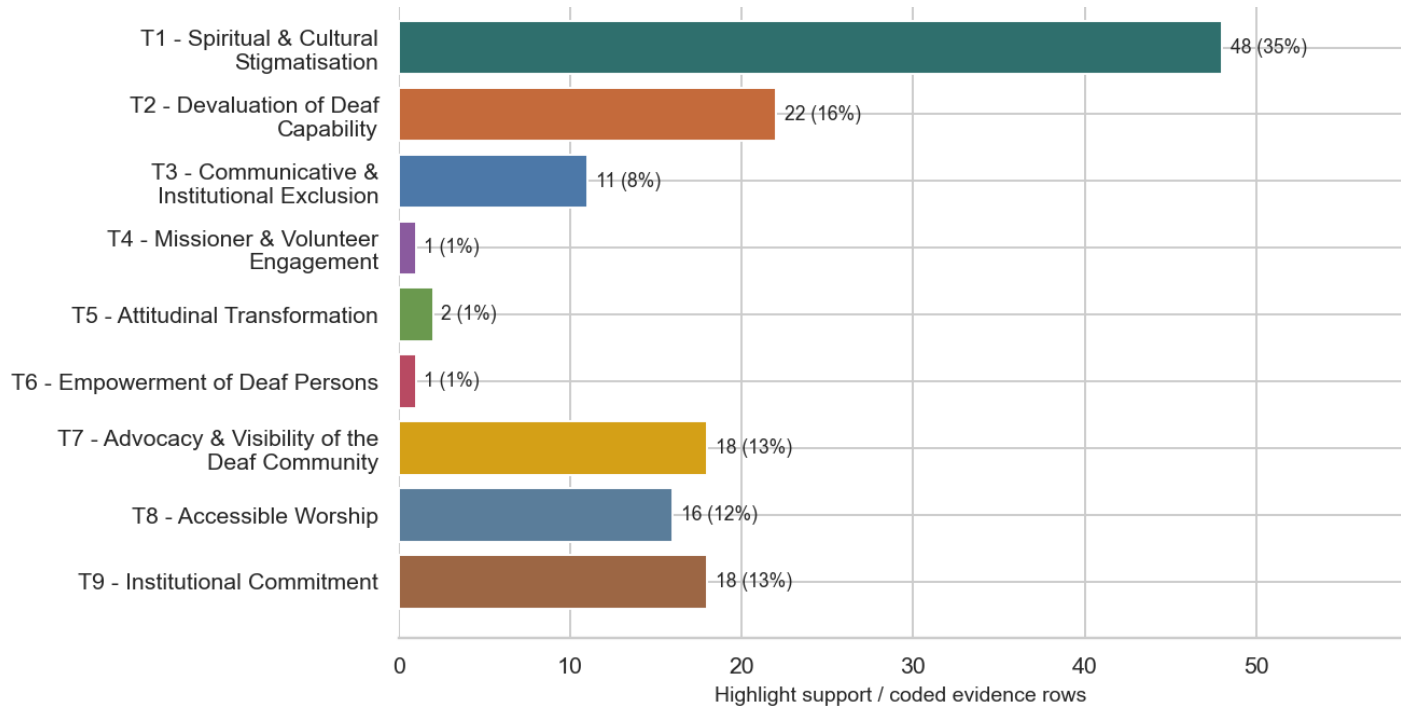


Figure A1. Final theme support across cleaned coded excerpts

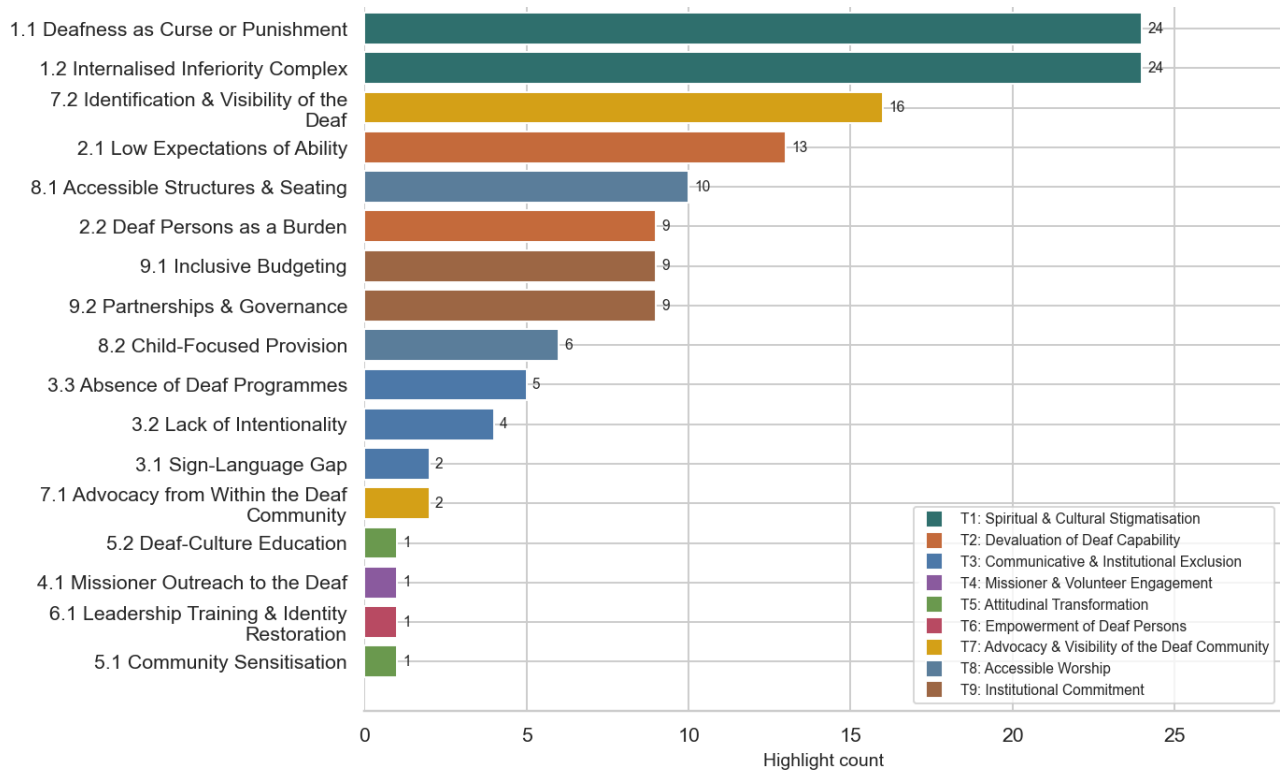


Figure A2. Sub-theme support by final theme

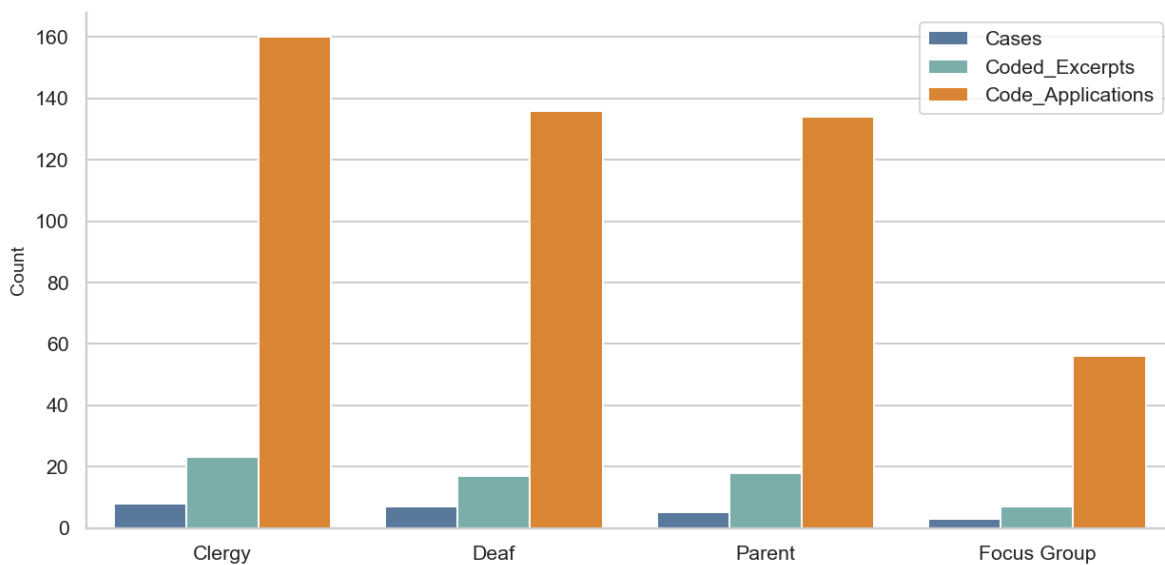


Figure A3. Case metadata by participant group

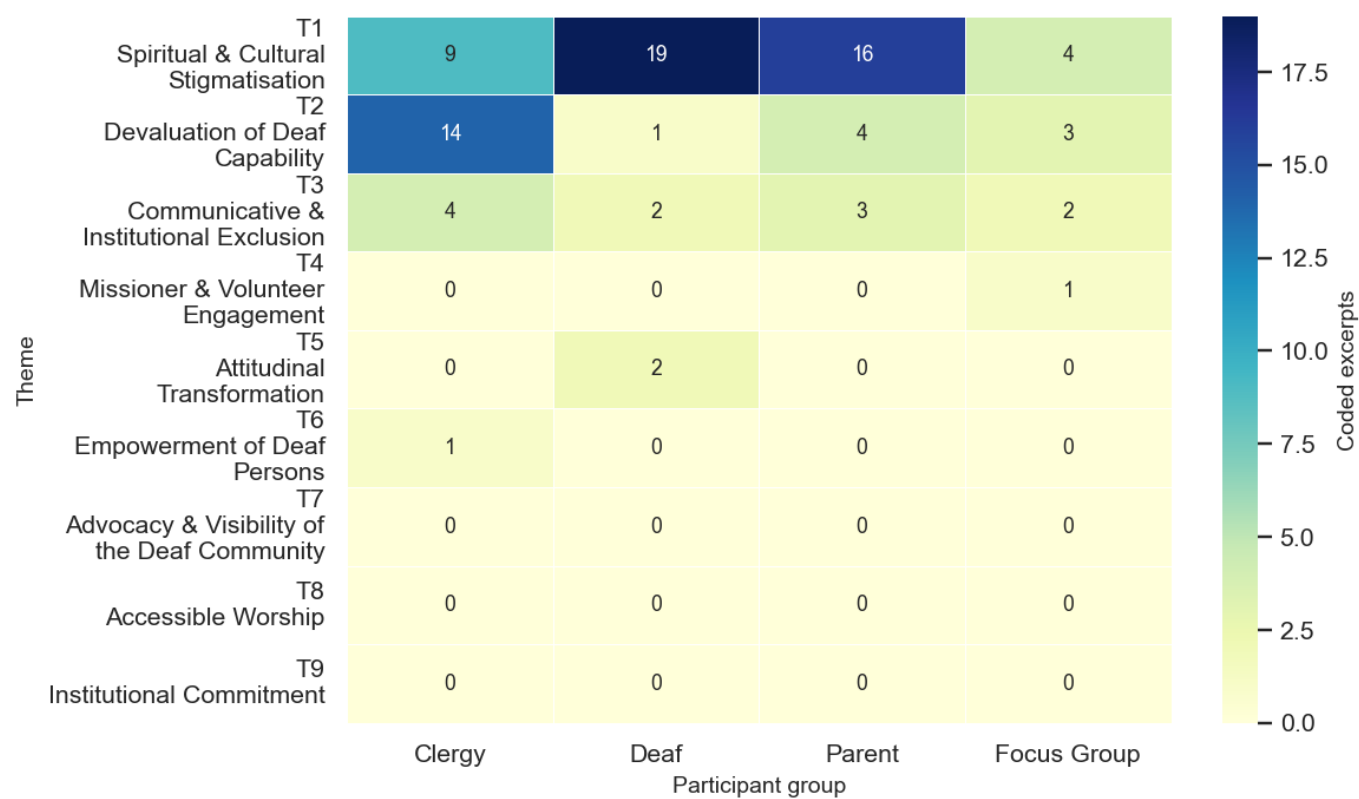


Figure A4. Theme evidence by participant group

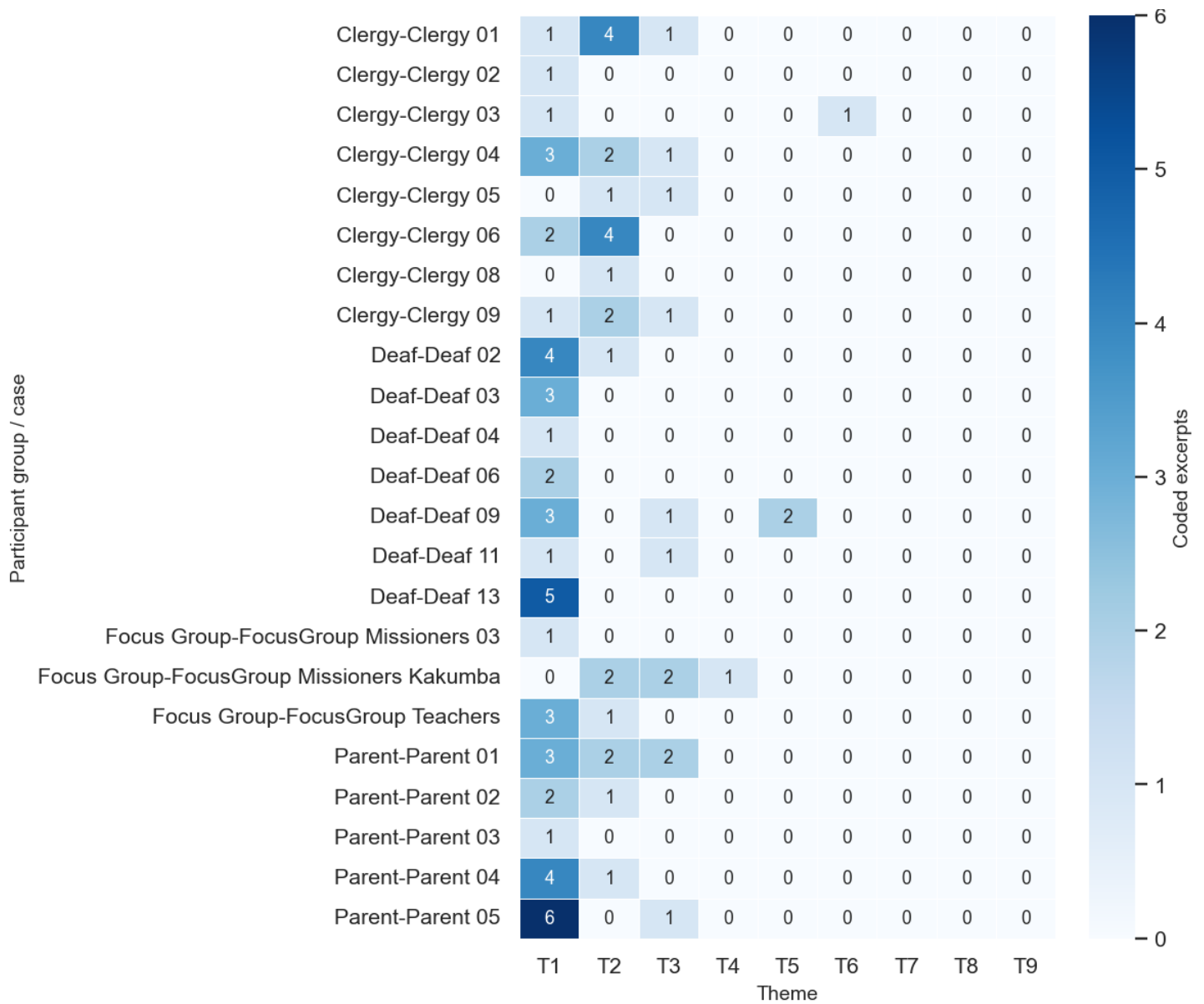


Figure A5. Theme coverage by case

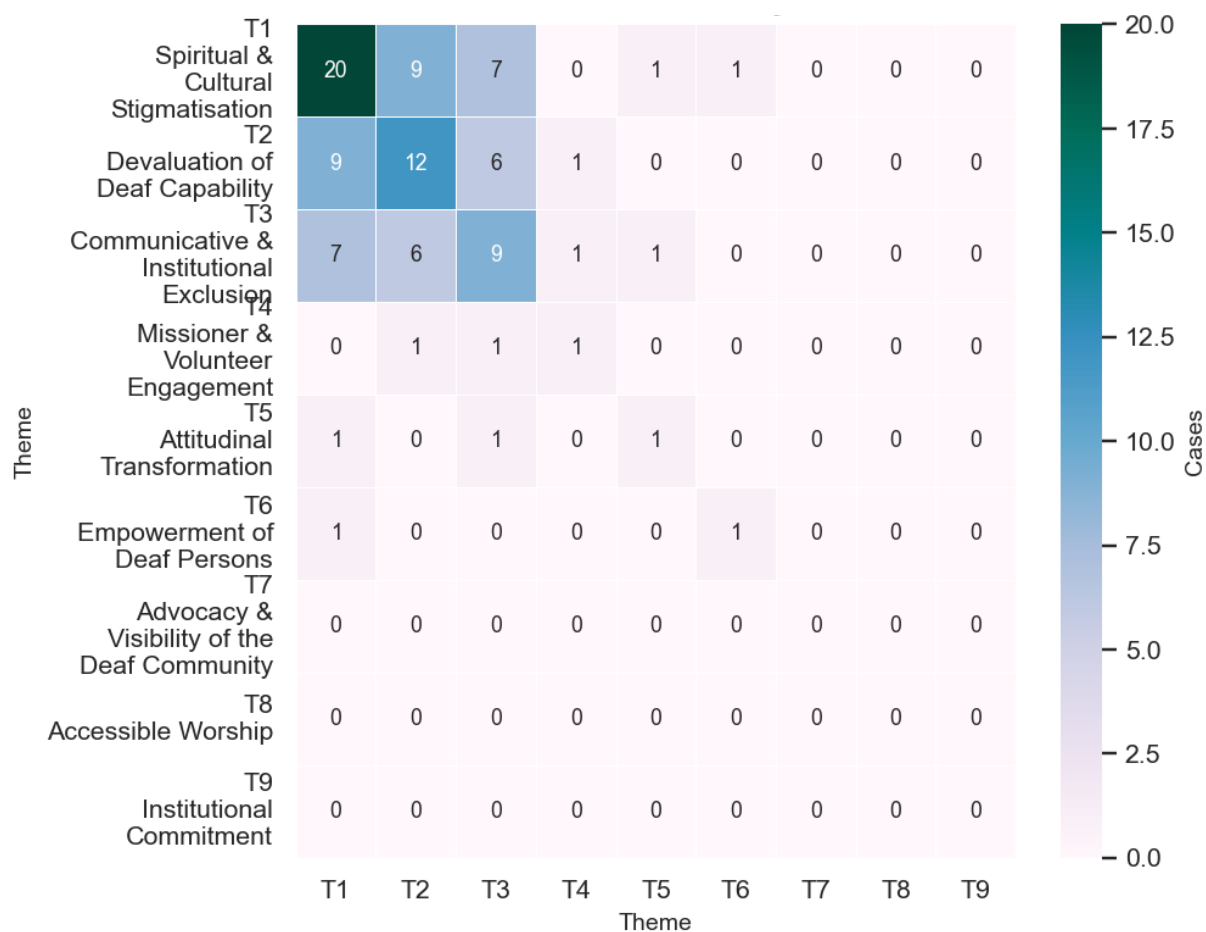


Figure A6. Theme co-occurrence by case

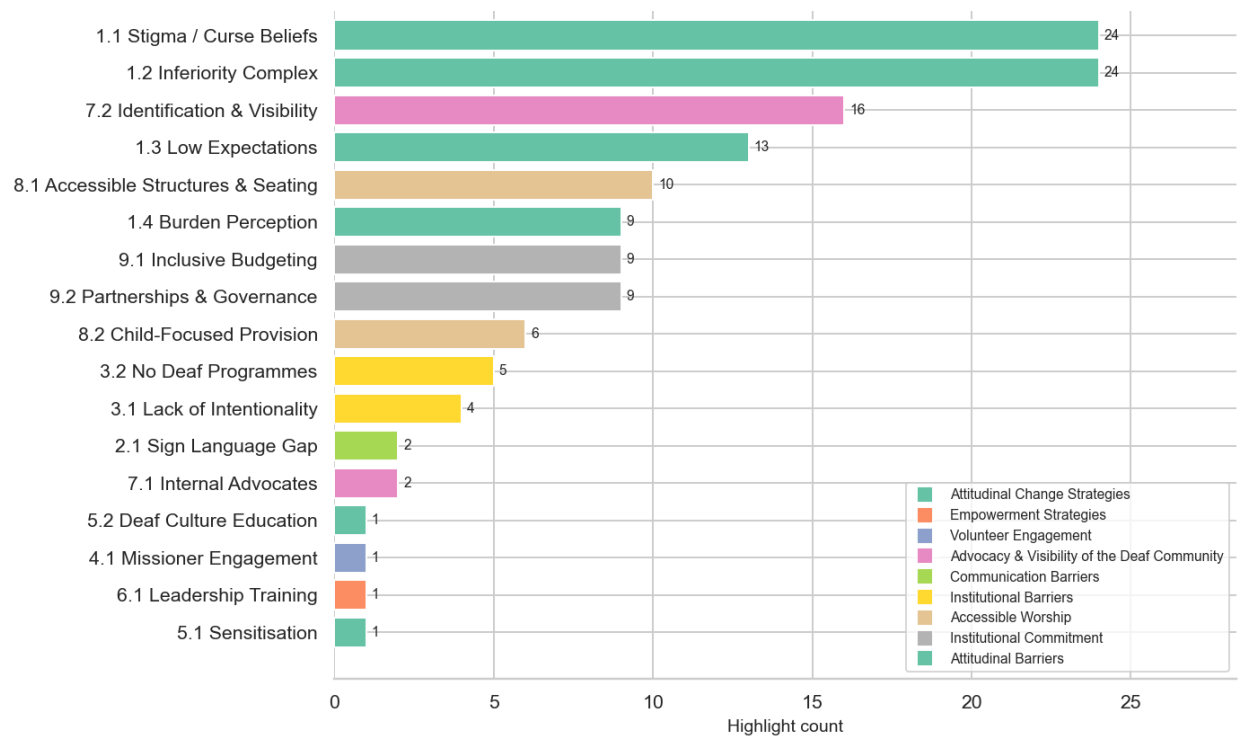


Figure A7. Code-category support across the thematic framework

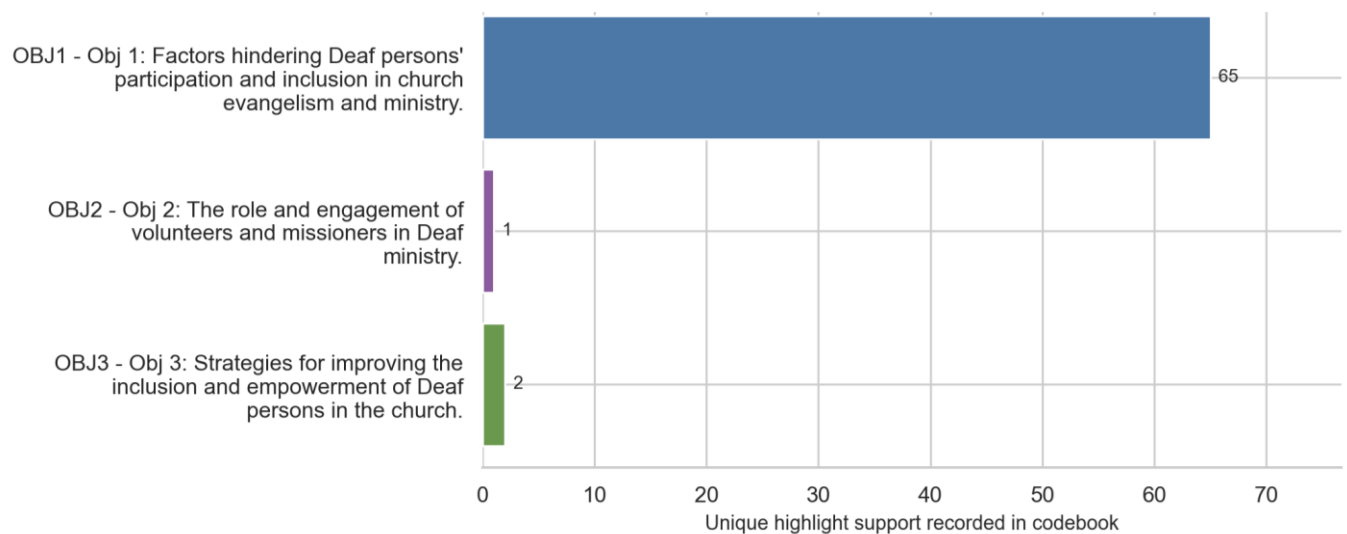


Figure A8. Top-level objective support in the codebook

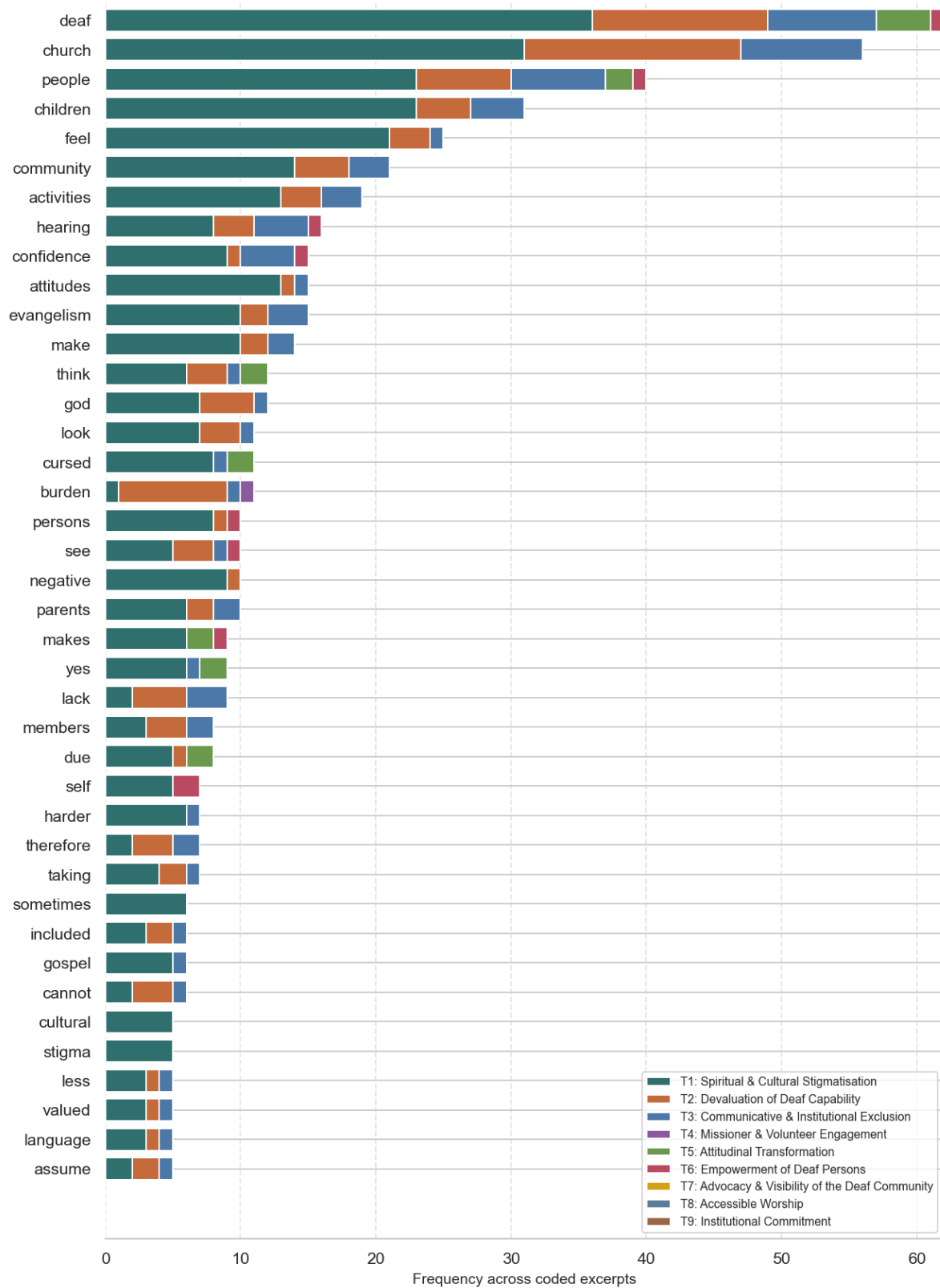


Figure A9. Top 40 words in coded excerpts (stacked by theme)

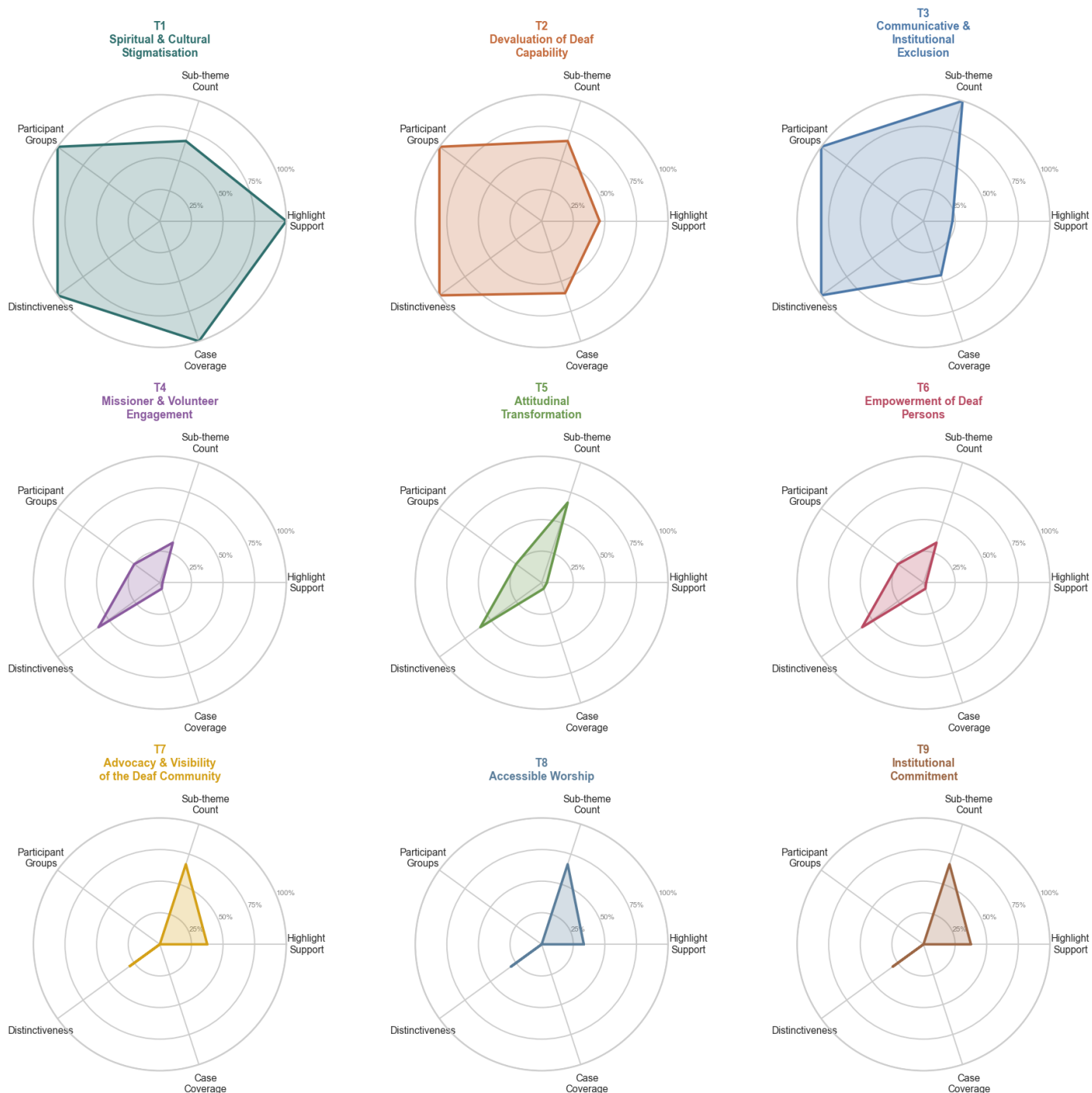


Figure A10. Theme profile radar charts (each axis normalised to the maximum value across themes)

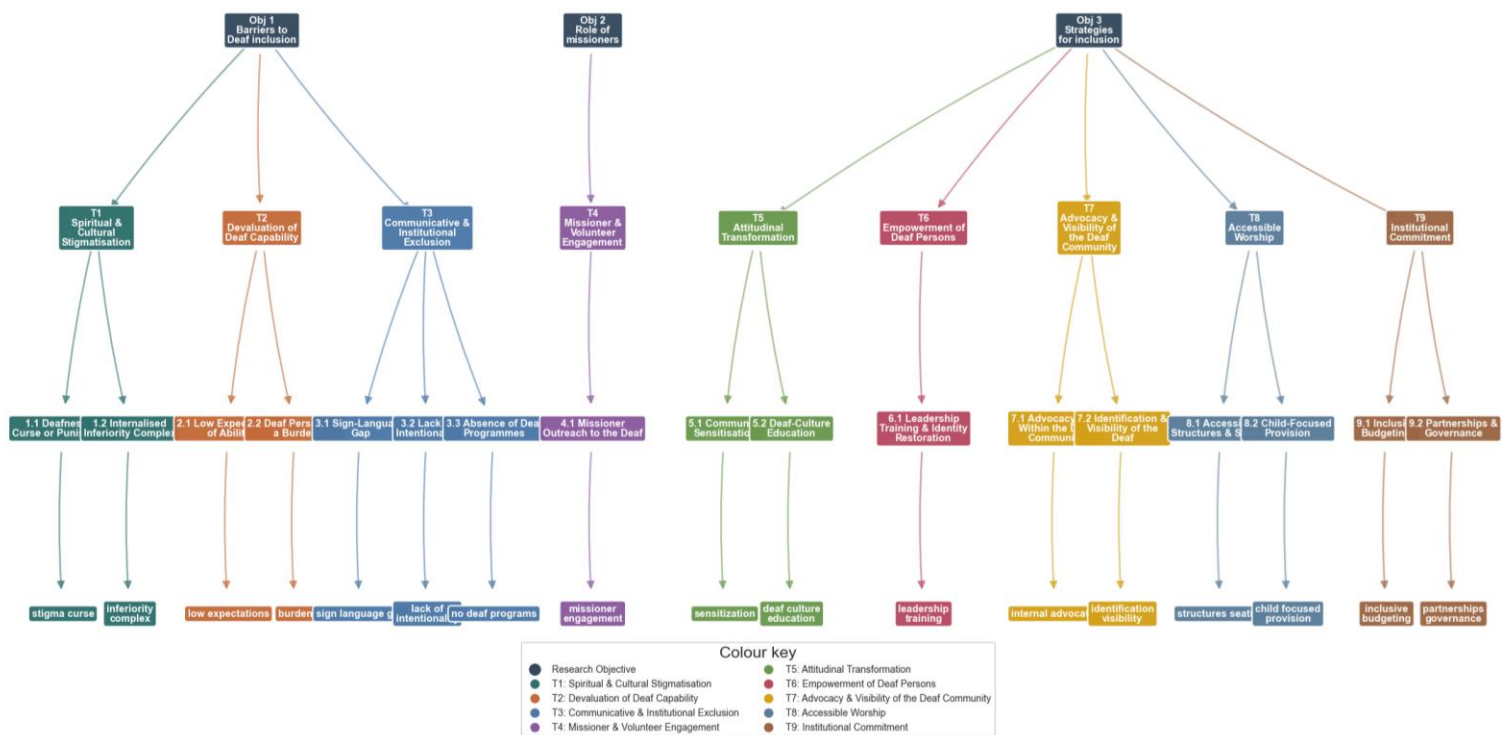


Figure A11. Thematic network: Research Objective - Theme - Sub-theme - Code

Table A1. Themes and Sub-themes Identified in the Thematic Analysis (N = 85 Coded Excerpts)

Research Objective	Theme	Sub-theme	Definition	n
Obj 1: Barriers to Deaf inclusion	T1: Spiritual & Cultural Stigmatisation	1.1 Deafness as Curse or Punishment	Cultural and spiritual beliefs framing deafness as a curse, misfortune, or divine punishment, producing social and spiritual rejection	24
		1.2 Internalised Inferiority Complex	Internalised low self-worth and diminished confidence among Deaf persons arising from how they are perceived and treated, suppressing participation	24

Research Objective	Theme	Sub-theme	Definition	<i>n</i>
Obj 2: Role of missionaries/volunteers	T2: Devaluation of Deaf Capability	2.1 Low Expectations of Ability	The assumption that Deaf persons are incapable of leadership, evangelism, or meaningful ministry, leading to their exclusion	13
		2.2 Deaf Persons as a Burden	The framing of Deaf persons as a financial, logistical, or emotional burden to family and church	9
	T3: Communicative & Institutional Exclusion	3.1 Sign-Language Gap	The absence of sign-language competence among clergy and congregants, blocking communication, teaching, and outreach	2
		3.2 Lack of Intentionality	The church's failure to deliberately plan, prioritise, or allocate attention to Deaf ministry; Deaf people are forgotten or considered last	4
		3.3 Absence of Deaf Programmes	The absence of dedicated programmes, structures, or facilities designed for Deaf worship and inclusion	5
	T4: Missioner & Volunteer Engagement	4.1 Missioner Outreach to the Deaf	The underdeveloped role of missioners and volunteers in reaching and including the Deaf community, including their own replication of neglect	1

Research Objective	Theme	Sub-theme	Definition	<i>n</i>
Obj 3: Strategies for inclusion	T5: Attitudinal Transformation	5.1 Community Sensitisation	Sensitising the congregation and wider community to dismantle stigma and foster acceptance of Deaf persons	1
		5.2 Deaf-Culture Education	Educating the hearing community about Deaf culture and identity to correct the misconceptions underlying stigma	1
	T6: Empowerment of Deaf Persons	6.1 Leadership Training & Identity	Building the capacity, confidence, and self-image of Deaf persons through leadership training and	1
		Restoration	discipleship for active ministry	

Note. *n* = number of coded evidence rows (highlight support) per sub-theme. Counts reflect evidence application frequency, not statistical prevalence of views among participants. T4 and T6 are single-source, emergent themes; analytical claims drawn from these themes should be treated as provisional. Research objectives align with the three objectives framing the study.

Appendix 1: Questions for the Clergy

Objective 1: To identify the barriers that hinder effective evangelistic outreach to the Deaf persons in parishes within the Diocese of Kampala.

Question 1

Based on your experience, what challenges affect the church's efforts to include and minister to Deaf people in your parish?

Question 2.

How do the views and attitudes of people in the church and community influence the way Deaf people are welcomed and involved in evangelism activities?

Question 3.

In your experience, what challenges in the church setting, such as the building, facilities, or available resources, make it difficult for Deaf people to take part fully in church activities and evangelism?

Question 4

Describe any specific instances where deaf individuals felt excluded from church activities? What do you think caused this?

Objective 2. To examine how the Church's human resources are engaged in promoting evangelism for deaf persons

Question 1

How are clergy and lay leaders currently involved in promoting evangelism to deaf persons in your parish?

Question 2

In what ways are the clergy and lay leaders themselves engaged in evangelistic activities concerning the deaf persons?

Question 3

What support does the Diocese provide for human resources involved in inclusive evangelism for Deaf people (e.g., training programs and partnerships)?

Question 4

From your perspective, how effective is the current use of human resources in addressing the needs of deaf congregants?

Question 5

As a deaf person, what has helped you feel more included in church evangelism so far?

Objective 3: To explore practical strategies that could improve the inclusion of deaf persons in the Church's Gospel ministry within selected parishes of the Diocese.

Question 1

What practical strategies can your parish employ to make evangelism more accessible to the deaf people?

Question 2

What additional strategies do you recommend for better including the deaf individuals in Gospel ministry?

Question 3

How might the church empower the deaf people to take active roles in inclusive evangelism (e.g., as leaders or evangelists)?

Appendix 2: Questions for the Deaf

Objective 1: To identify the barriers that hinder effective evangelistic outreach to the Deaf community in a few parishes within the Diocese of Kampala.

Question 1

Based on your experience, what challenges affect the church's efforts to include and minister to Deaf people in your parish?

Question 3

How do the views and attitudes of people in the church and community influence the way Deaf people are welcomed and involved in evangelism activities?

Question 4

In your experience, what challenges in the church setting, such as the building, facilities, or available resources, make it difficult for Deaf people to take part fully in church activities and evangelism?

Question 5

In your view, why do some deaf persons not join or continue in participating in church activities?

Objective 2. To examine how the Church's human resources are engaged in promoting evangelism for deaf persons.

Question 1

How do church leaders (clergy, ordinands and lay readers) currently support deaf persons in evangelism?

Question 3

How could church human resources be better used to include deaf persons in church activities?

Objective 3: To explore practical strategies that could improve the inclusion of the deaf persons in the Church's Gospel ministry within selected parishes of the Diocese.

Question 1

As a deaf person, what has helped you feel more included in church evangelism so far?

Question 2

What new strategies would you suggest to make the Gospel more accessible to the deaf persons in your parish?

Question 3

How can the church better support deaf persons to share the Gospel with others?

Appendix 3: Questions for the Parents

Question 1

Based on your experience as a parent, what challenges affect the church's efforts to include and minister to Deaf children in your parish?

Question 2

In your experience, what challenges in the church setting, such as the building, facilities, or available resources, make it difficult for Deaf children to take part fully in church activities and evangelism?

Question 3

In your experience as a parent, how do people's attitudes towards Deaf children affect their involvement in church and other religious activities?

Question 4

In your experience, what challenges in the church setting, such as the building, facilities, or available resources, make it difficult for Deaf children to take part fully in church activities and evangelism?

Objective 2. To examine how the Church's human resources are engaged in promoting evangelism for deaf persons

Question 2

In your opinion, what more can church leaders, workers, and other church members do to help Deaf people feel included in evangelism and church activities?

Objective 3: To explore practical strategies that could improve the inclusion of the deaf persons in the Church's Gospel ministry within selected parishes of the Diocese.

Question 1

What strategies can the church adopt to improve the inclusion and participation of Deaf children in church activities and Gospel ministry?

Appendix 4: Questions for the Teachers

Question 1

Based on your experience, what challenges affect the church's efforts to include and minister to Deaf people in your parish?

Question 2

How do the views and attitudes of people in the church and community influence the way Deaf people are welcomed and involved in evangelism activities?

Question 3

In your experience, what challenges in the church setting, such as the building, facilities, or available resources, make it difficult for Deaf people to take part fully in church activities and evangelism?

Objective 2. To examine how the Church's human resources are engaged in promoting evangelism for deaf persons

Question:1

How have church leaders supported the inclusion of Deaf children and the Deaf community in evangelism and church activities?

Question:2

In your opinion, what more can church leaders, workers, and other church members do to help Deaf children feel included in evangelism and church activities?

Objective 3: To explore practical strategies that could improve the inclusion of the deaf persons in the Church's Gospel ministry within selected parishes of the Diocese.

Question 1

What strategies have worked well for including children with the deaf persons in church activities?

Question 2

What strategies could the parish adopt to promote more sustainable and inclusive practices for Deaf people?

Appendix 5: Questions for the Missioners

Question 1

Based on your experience, what challenges affect the church's efforts to include and minister to Deaf people in your parish?

Question 2

Can you describe how the children's ministry currently includes Deaf children in evangelism and other church activities in your parish?

Question 3

What practical strategies can your parish employ to make evangelism more accessible to the deaf people?

Appendix 6: REC Approval



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
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Office of the Vice Chancellor
Research Ethics Committee UG-026



19th March, 2026

KOBUSINGYE ANNETTE
Uganda Christian University
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UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Kobusingye Annette; Principal Investigator

Re: UCU-REC Application titled: *'Inclusive Church-Based Evangelism Among Deaf Persons: A Case of Silent Church, St. Luke's Ntinda, Kampala Diocese'*.

Application Number: UCUREC-2026-1884

Version: 4.1

Type of Review:
☐ INITIAL REVIEW
☐ Protocol Amendment
☐ Letter of Amendment
☐ Continuing Review
☐ Material Transfer Agreement
☐ Other, Specify:

I am pleased to inform you that the UG-REC-026; UCUREC under expedited review approved the above referenced application.

Approval of the research is for a period from 19th March, 2026 to 19th March, 2027.

This research is considered minimal risk category.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.



UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
APPROVED
19 MAR 2027
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Research and Ethics

P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda, Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill
Tel: +256 (0) 312 350 885 Fax: +256 (0) 4142 90 800 Email: rec@ucu.ac.ug Web: www.ucu.ac.ug
UCUREC is accredited by Uganda National Council for Science & Technology, FDA, and National Institutes for Health of the United States of America



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Research Ethics Committee UG-026



3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.
4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the above expiration date of 19th March, 2027 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. Your research details have been shared with the Executive secretary of Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and you are **not** required to get clearance since it is for a Master's degree. Refer to UNCST Research registration and clearance Policy and guidelines (July 2016) in Uganda section 6.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by UG-REC _026:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Protocol	English	1.0	2026-03-08
2.	Budget	English	1.0	2026-03-08
3.	Study work plan	English	1.0	2026-03-08
4.	Questionnaires	English	1.0	2026-03-08
5.	Informed Consent form	English	1.0	2026-03-08
8.	Community Engagement plan	English	1.0	2026-03-08
9.	Risk management plan	English	1.0	2026-03-08

Signed and Stamped

Dr. Edward K. Mukooza
UCUREC Chairperson,
ucurec@ucu.ac.ug



Research and Ethics

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UCUREC is accredited by Uganda National Council for Science & Technology, FDA, and National Institutes for Health of the United States of America

Appendix 7: Turnitin Report



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Submission ID trn:old::1:3616121174

Kobusingye Annette

INCLUSIVE CHURCH-BASED EVANGELISM AMONG DEAF PERSONS In Kampala Diocese, A Case Study of Silent Church...

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Appendix 8: AI Report



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Kobusingye Annette

INCLUSIVE CHURCH-BASED EVANGELISM AMONG DEAF PERSONS In Kampala Diocese, A Case Study of Silent Church...

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