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**Title of thesis:** *The Challenges of Strategy Implementation in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania – North Western Diocese*

**Abstract:** The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, North Western Diocese (ELCT/NWD) deliberated to deploy a five year (2015-2019) strategic plan as a tool for effective provision of diaconic services to the community. This was its approach to participate in doing God's mission. The strategy was intended to be effectively implemented at parishes, deaneries and all church administration and program levels. Contrary, during the implementation there was a gap between what was planned, what was implemented, and how it was implemented. The aim of this research was to determine the challenges that limited the implementation of strategy and subsequently propose the needed strategic management interventions for the future effective implementation to enable the church to sustainably continue to participate in doing God's mission.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed in collecting data. These were facilitated by interview, questionnaire, focused group discussions, documentary review and field observation by using guide questions, checklists and questionnaires. The data was analyzed using interpretive phenomenological data analysis (IPA) and narrative data analysis. The quantitative data was subjected to descriptive data analysis. Multiple interpretive frames of resource-based theory, resource dependence theory, agent theory and sustainable livelihood theory were applied to appreciate emerging key determinants in strategic plan implementation such resource use, and stakeholder participation. The study findings revealed improper allocation of financial resources, inadequate implementing knowledge, moderately-supportive working culture, changes in government policies as central informing strategic performance in the implementation of a five-year strategic plan in the ELCT/NWD.

Given that the research was intended to contribute to improved and effective strategy implementation, it proposed interventions and presented them in a two-year strategic plan with an action plan. This was to address the challenges and optimize the implementation of strategic plan objectives in the ELCT/NWD so as to engender sustainable participation in doing God's mission. These included; undertaking the final evaluation of the 2015-2019 strategic plan, establishing an electronic data base and developing a robust monitoring and evaluation system in order to improve control and make informed decisions through the existing structures. The research further proposed for the diocese to integrate training on strategy implementation at all administrative and implementation levels, so as to capacitate implementers with relevant skills and knowledge; to formulate the subsequent strategic plan with action plans and targets; and to improve the working culture and environment to church staff directly involved with strategy implementation. Acknowledging limitations of its scope, it recommends further research on strategy formulation, localization, monitoring, and evaluation in churches.

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2022      **Time:** 10.00am      **Venue:** Smart Room, CHUSS

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