



## Gendered Encounters by Church Missionary Society in Education at Kahuhia Mission Establishment (1922-1950)

Keiro Ann Muthoni\*; Jafred Muyaka\*; Margret Kamara\*

*School of Education University of Eldoret, P.O Box 1125-30100, Eldoret, Kenya*

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\***Corresponding author: Keiro Ann Muthoni;** School of Education University of Eldoret, P.O Box 1125-30100, Eldoret, Kenya; Email: [sonnyann2019@gmail.com](mailto:sonnyann2019@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The paper explores the gendered encounters of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Kahuhia mission establishment in Kenya, back in the year 1922 and their response towards disseminating gender balanced education to the Africans, even those at advanced age. It was guided by the objectives; To examine the influence of the Church Missionary Society in the development of education at Kahuhia; To establish the gendered encounters of the CMS at the Kahuhia schools. The study utilized the Historical Research Design to give a systematic and coherent narrative of the events, as a detailed reconstruction of past events from both primary and secondary sources. Through purposive sampling, participants in the research were selected on the basis of lived experience as missionaries, clergy, teachers and students. Secondary sources like the archives were used for collaboration with the narratives from participants. Findings indicated that the early 1920s period witnessed the introduction of western education at Kahuhia. The community and students in Kahuhia were a bit traditionally conservative, with the culture of inequalities. Women were generally not considered eligible for formal education. This gendered view actually conformed to the type of curriculum with a gender bias, gender-oriented school activities that the students participated in, and which reflected gender disparities. Such gender gaps resulted to girls receiving lower level education than the lads. As the CMS infiltrated this area, they gradually worked on the gendered approaches through a mixture of conformity with boys' education and introduction of girls' education. They introduced primary elementary education, junior secondary and intermediate boys' school, normal teacher training, and female training at

Mambeere girls' school with elevation of T4 training for women. The CMS entrenchment into the community aimed at realizing their goal of basic literacy in order to spread the Gospel which was mostly preferably achieved with training male catechists. However, in line with traditional African attachments these converts required wives and families who would correspond with the missions faith, hence there was need for women and girls training to teach small children, sing hymns, do maternity services and finally get married to the educated and the catechists and raise Christian families. The process of this social evolution in education was evident by CMS aligning a very thorough training course that predominantly was gender based and in line with the traditional roles assigned to both male and female customs in the Kahuhia community. This scenario creates the scenario echoed by Cordelia Fine in *Delusions of Gender*, where covering up the gender gaps led to the creation of new gaps. Domestic related courses were taught to women only to prepare them for the domestic care taking roles.

**Keywords:** Church Missionary Society, gender education, gender encounters, establishment, Traditional Organization

### Introduction

Missionaries played significant roles in exposing Africans to formal education which is historically referred to as western education. Though their basic intention was evangelization, they became excellent vessels in accomplishing education infrastructure and finance through grant –in aids. After the establishment of schools by missionaries, African parents were ready to accept western education curriculum despite

them having received a utilitarian traditional kind of non-formal training. Education was instrumental in social change.

As apparent from scholars like Sifuna (1990) and Adenyika (2002), education is viewed as socialization; as a process of transmitting knowledge, values, skills and attitudes, in the contextual of culture in the society through the generations. In the background of Christian influence, children were generally expected to have freedom to exercise values and cultural activities that were predominantly in line with westernized systems of education as a new cultural encounter. Gendered encounters in the African background aroused the need to design gender sensitive education experience from elementary school level to post primary and secondary institutions at the Kahuhia establishment. Women were culturally discriminated against in African tradition, as their role was generally based on care, except for a few iconic women who became leaders or practiced medicine. Gendered encounters can however be modified by culture in which the concerned generation adapts from the previous depending on political, social and economic changes. Education is often seen as interaction between men and women who have possession of knowledge and skills and children, adolescences and young adults are expected to seek, acquire, modify and develop these ideas to improve their livelihoods. Western mission education introduced household education which covered practical skills in a westernized curriculum with educational efforts aimed to initiate community wide education experience that complemented the school efforts (Fafunwa 1974).

This study was also supported by the Modernization Theory that views different societies as influenced by social trends and which in nature are engaged by human activities (Fragerlind & Saha 1983). The theory pictures traditional societies as evolving from one stage to another to achieve a wealthier, educated, democratic and liberal community. In the background of this theory, the CMS initiated an education model to recreate, reconvert and transplant Christian experience at Kahuhia establishment. The theory illustratively presents a picture of poverty and misery amidst the consciousness of the local people of Kahuhia to educate their girls and boys. As the society progressed the end game of this initiative by CMS impacted certain capitalist and social ideas on some elites who were brave enough to conquer the local mentality and started schools to educate their own people to achieve literacy. Missionaries sought educational intervention as a means of evangelization and enlistment into contemporary modernization that Paulo Friere (1972) could have referred to, as cofounding the idea to westernization and necessity of eradication of indigenous culture and its replacement with western culture. In this case, the school acted as an agent of change in the gendered encounters that required social change. It should be noted however, that as indicated by Freire, nobody can be declared illiterate since man undergoes lifelong experiences amounting to self-education. Society development requires a combined action of

the willingness of the community to educate them in order to gender equity.

### **Methodology**

The Historical research design, as aligned with Weaver Hightower's Historiography was used. The study involved objectively observing and analysing past occurrences with the aim of explaining possible future or current events. The content of the research was descriptive and included oral interviews for participants, observations and content analysis of materials from libraries and archives. The Kahuhia Normal School was studied in depth as a case study, to bring the issues under investigation to light. The study location was Murang'a, one of the Counties in Kenya, where the Christian Mission Centre had been established, and where the Kahuhia Normal School was situated. This research site was chosen through purposive sampling as one of the major educational facilities of the time, due to the emergence of various educational facilities at the centre, in particular the girls school and training facility. The participants were purposively sampled and choice narrowed down to respondents who were deemed to possess the desired attributes. The participants whose age and proximity probably fell between the study periods were given priority as they were vastly informed of the Kahuhia establishment and as a result they were able to identify others who had similar information on the subject under study. The snowball sampling technique was also utilized to repeatedly identify and interview participants sampled out until the information given was deemed sufficient, having reached saturation. The secondary sources from journals and archives were used to collaborate or supplement the gaps in information that were not exhaustibly covered by the primary sources. The information was exposed to internal and external criticism for verification and checking authenticity of the documents and oral information, to ensure credibility, reliability and trustworthiness of collected data. The information was then transcribed, coded and discussed under themes.

### **Boys Education in Primary and Intermediate School**

The findings indicated that the key purpose of early missionary education was to enable a male individual in most 'illiterate' communities embark in variety of occupations without difficulty. This was to enable an individual position himself in society, cultivate good habits and develop his potential to the fullest. Therefore the methods of teaching were skill based and included learning through initiation, imitation, observation and repetition that enabled learners develop values to perform their masculine and feminine roles (KNS/MS/NS/9/43/4). The colonial government had an outstanding contribution to missionary work. In support of the missionaries, the government appointed chiefs and Headmen who were used extensively in recruiting school going children. Some chiefs like Ndegwa of Mutira Location in Murang'a had to support the missionary for his popularity in order to secure his position (Kahuhia normal school 1937-60). With the

introduction of the 1902 and 1903 hut tax, the pioneer adherents of change had embraced the missionaries for the sake of employment (Karanja 1999). Kahuhia elementary school was as a result, started in 1906 and was later called the practicing school as it comprised the first stage of education, offering elementary education to children.

Incidentally, Curriculum by 1920 was restricted to singing, scripture, prayers, reading, spelling, and writing, reciting the catechism and arithmetic. However, the education department stepped in to control this curriculum in order to develop schools for white settlers' children. An age limit for entry to elementary school was set to be between 6-10 years, in primary school (the expected ages were between 11-15 years) and the secondary school at 14-17 years (Sifuna 2006). On completion of the elementary education, a student automatically moved to the primary school level. Elementary school had preparatory classes; a pre-unit A and B before children moved into primary or elementary 1 and 2. On completion of kindergarten, children would move to standard I, II and III. Prior to this, a child had to sit for vernacular examination. Vernacular examination was administered as literacy test, counting numerals and simple arithmetic by this time children were taught geography, hygiene and nature study, simple handwork using clay and carving objects. Kahuhia Elementary school had 400 pupils (KNA/PS/SEC 38/1).

The education department was in-charge of the new syllabuses for primary school. The decision of opening school, staffing and grants paid were done by the local council who were advised by the D.E.O. Special focus was given to geography, an emphasis to African countries. This was based on starting where a child is and extending to wider locality such as Kenya and its neighbouring countries (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/13). Teachers were advised to embrace new methods of teaching and get away from blackboard talk and instil in children observation skills of a particular region or country. The primary composed of three standards IV, V, and VI in which English, Kiswahili, and Carpentry were taught under the handwork instructor Francis Tanu. Later, agricultural training was introduced following up the government policy. The government trained agricultural experts to ensure this was effective. There were two handwork instructors, the agricultural instructor of the primary and normal school set by the missionaries. In Kahuhia, the students were taught to dig, plough and adopt farming practices of preventing soil erosion. The classes IV to VI were referred to as intermediate school by this time (KNA/MS/K6).

The appointment of teachers in primary classes became the committee's responsibility together with financing of school. The District Education Board (DEB) determined posting of primary teachers. According to the Fort hall Annual District Reports 1929 and 1930 in the Kenya Archives, it was the CMS policy to withdraw from the provision of formal educational work and to leave this responsibility to the government. The primary school had eight male certified

teachers, some of whom also taught part time in the primary school. Teachers in these schools were sometimes unqualified or physically handicapped since local teachers were scantily available. Due to inadequacy of staff, it was only fair that these teachers would be divided amongst the other neighbouring districts while the home district was still in dire need for them. The distribution of Kahuhia primary scholars as Mr Watts stated; "*only that 15 scholars lined within 3 miles in their homes, 15 lived more than 3 miles and walked daily to their homes, 20 are in present hostel and 38 were lining in with circumstances of varying undesirability*" (KNS/MS/K5). The prevailing conditions were a danger and menace to the discipline and general education conduct of the schools at kahuhia and affect arrangement for daily prayers and bible classes and for the general fostering of the spiritual growth of those in hostels (KNA/MSS/B.174/11/199).

### Emergence of Girls' Education

In the addition to the expanding education, girls' schools were visibly unavailable. With expansion of education, it was clear that the gendered encounters of education required affirmative action. By 1929 Archdeacon Owen forwarded a proposal of enrolling 100 girls pupils' in Kahuhia only. However, there was not enough room at the site for both girls and boys, an observation confirmed in 1959/1960 that is later validated when girls took over the site, having increased to 750 girls in the 1980s (KNA/MS/K6). A girl's school was established and just like the case of the boys, the girls' school employed four male certified teachers, who presumably also worked part-time in the primary school. In addition, the girls' school employed four male teachers, who were likewise presumed to be teaching in the elementary school and were also employed in the mixed primary school. In preparation of the future, and in the light of the report on teacher training, there was need for some solution out of the predicament into which the place had inevitably fallen of too many departments on one small plot. The original sketch of the primary school as the locals demanded was to be a government or District Education Board (D.E.B) school in 1948 at the proposed plot in Kariciungu part of Kahuhia. This resulted to chief Sila holding a local *kiama* (Council) with Bwana Levi as secretary and the elders of several *muhirigas* (clans) who offered a one acre plot at the Kariciungu, three miles away from Kahuhia (KNA/MS/K7).

The site was within a good water supply, stones on the site, ample flat land for a reasonable size football pitch, agricultural gardens, and buildings. The people wished it to be a site for DEB or Government Boarding primary school. As the education department as indicated by Cyril Hooper, presumably the relocation of the plot was in the end to fulfil the plan to become a secondary school (KNA/MS/1/44/18). However, Scotts Dickson did not like the term Government or DEB School since the tendency amongst missionaries was to have either mission or government schools. The capital expenditure in setting up the facility was difficult as more was to facilitate Teacher Training. Since Scotts Dickson's efforts

was seen CMS training school and CMS boys boarding school in Fort Hall, the primary school had to be run as an independent unit to the body of church schools under the district church education committee under Joeli Mwangi (African staff 1947).

### The New Look of the Schools

The Kahuhia primary school was later moved to Gaitituini east of the new church. It initially had mud and white thatched roofs and later the local community-built stone of a row of classrooms with cement flooring and iron roofing. While in its independent status, it was used when the students of the normal school undertook long periods of practice teaching within out-stations. The building nearer the church which was vacated by the children was taken over by intermediate school, as hostel for boys (HOO 1/5-10). The office of primary school was taken over by Kahuhia Lower Primary Teacher Training Center. After the normal school was upgraded to a girl's school, the boys moved to Kirogo (KNA/MSS/61/389).

Generally, the development of education in Fort Hall was discernable by periods of volatility and sluggishness. As observed by W.H Cantrell, the principal, in his report to the Inspector of Schools in Nyeri, stated that ,the absence of clear regulatory frameworks stalled effective administration and oversight. This deficiency of regulation restricted institutional authority and subsidized to uneven educational progress in the region. There was no regulation to empower LNC to subsidize provident funds for employees in the reserves therefore affected the teachers in DEB aided schools (KNA/MS/B.174/11/39). Furthermore, Kahuhia primary school was seen to be an ill-starred school falling between two schools therefore it did not befit because it is not aided by central fund. Since the necessary legislation had not been introduced, therefore there was no source to tap so as to bring KPS into line with other primary (GAS& Missions) central fund aided schools (KNA MS/K5, letter 60/411). However, this matter as at December 1944 was not sorted and it was up to Fort Hall Local Native Council to be able and willing to help in the matter of arrears of provident fund of 1943-44(KNA/MS/1/44/78). Cantrell further quotes "Fort Hall is badly off for primary educational facilities. The only existing primary school is the one here at Kahuhia through no fault of its own, the last two years have not been easy as regards obtaining the necessary grants for the school." After the Phelps stock report all schools were given grant in aid by the government and this included catholic schools. The money was disbursed to the schools' missions but it came through local native council. The money runs the school and paid the teachers in the same grades for all missions (KNA/PC/NZA/3/10/14)

Due to the increasing population the Fort Hall DEB in January 1945, education department allowed KPS to open a second Std. IV and its further development was left upon CMS secretary and D.E.B since no money or staff or capital expenditure was involved for accommodation and classroom.

This in turn somewhat revolutionary step moved rapidly up to climax and entries for the common entrance were usually and the CMS passes were better than usual. In turn on January the results were overwhelming and even Mr Bull of Kagumo came over and picked 29 of these lads. Mr Ben Ngumba absorbed 32 of these and 60 children were left unplaced, together with other Kagumo rejects. This issue considerably affected Eleanor and Cyril because the reaction among the African communities was notably fervent. The children, in particular, looked with great anticipation toward the catholic mission, which following the October Department of Education Bulletin (DEB) had been granted permission to establish two new Standard IV classes. Only the top four pupils from these classes would advance to Nyeri for Standards V and VI, admission was restricted exclusively for boys. The second VI matter was sorted when Harvey made special trip to see DC in 1945 to agree to back the proposal to ask D.E.B Osborne for second try for second standard IV without prejudice to excessing grants or accommodation or to any future developments (KNA/MS/K6).

D.E.B Ottoway seemed to be welcoming and said unofficially that when the school reverted to central funds, he would support any claim for an additional grant since even Kagumo already had three IVs and three V's, Tumu Tumu already had three standards IV's, two V's, one VI and they both were asking for more (KNA/MS/K5). In 1938, Mr Ottoway the inspector of schools recommended the English language to be used as medium of instruction. Africans earlier could not be taught English and other subjects well as claimed by 1900 Rev Burns, "it would expose immature Africans Christians to oceans of doubtful and vile literature, promote a spirit of self-advancement, pose sexual dangers to European women, bring political dangers to the colonial state and also harm spiritual life of the church."

The African reaction to these progresses was discernible by a combination of anticipation and hindrance, reflecting the wider tensions essential in colonial education policy. African parents and pupils had placed considerable hopes in catholic missions which following authorization by the District Education Board (DEB) in October 1945 was acceptable to launch two additional standard IV classes. Yet, access to higher levels of education remained relentlessly restricted: only the four most academically outstanding pupils who were exclusively boys were selected to advance to Standard V and VI at Nyeri. This selective system not only reinforced gender and social hierarchies but also underscored the limited agency afforded to Africans within the colonial educational framework, highlighting the disparity between local aspirations and rigid structures imposed by the colonial administration.

A student Eliud Mathu of A.I.M for this reason had relocated and enrolled in Kahuhia for a term and the A.M.S reckoned to get a square deal since the DEB was feeling sympathetic and Kahuhia had been mentioned as possible secondary center for Fort Hall in the future development.

According to Harvey to N. Larby from the education department, the Kahuhia Secondary school expenditure at 1947 was 13568.33. Therefore, this would be almost adequate for infrastructure since cost of building a room 28' \* 20' for 35 pupils costed Sh. 12 per sq. ft. A single stream in Kahuhia girls' school consisted of Std. IV in addition to Form I & II (KNA/MS/K6).

The surplus enrolment of students caused overpopulation of students and therefore necessary measures had to be undertaken. As it was noted, the idea of weeding out pupils was disliked; the majority of the children taken in were capable of passing primary examination or certainly befitting from the primary course. Mr Cantrell reported that Ngumba conveyed to the District Education Board that the process of weeding out the pupils would be deemed necessary only in the event that no standard VI existed to which the children might advance. There was three-ways of possibilities for the children as discussed; that the pupils in Kahuhia's second standard IV should be relocated to standard V in the new school at Kandara, however this proved to be difficult since parents were reluctant to agree to; that the pupils to be weeded out and Standard V to be enlarged to hold increased numbers; that a second Standard V to be started in kahuhia. Mr Ottoway the inspector of schools in central province suggested the building cost was 3000 shillings, equipment was to be sourced for standard IV and this money was to be paid by the parents (KNA/MSS/Letter 81/45 of 1/3/45). The available combined girls and boys single stream school was three classes and one more classroom was to be added in secondary school if grants were to be approved by DARA, which was in charge of junior secondary school (KNA/MS/K8 Circular B1735/1948/1& 2420/1/12/59).

The entry to Kahuhia primary school in 1939 was limited to number of vacancies for boys and was in Kahuhia primary school (standard IV) requirements as follows: Candidates for admission will take common entrance examination to be arranged through inspector of schools; No candidate was allowed to enter the examination unless they are able to comply with the regulations for admission; All must be in the age of 11 and 5 years, all must intend to complete the full three years course; All must provide themselves with school uniform and The tuition fees were as follows: Standard IV paid Sh. 5 per term, Standard V to paid Sh. 6 per term and Standard VI paid Sh.7 per term. Each pupil was provided with the stationery out of his fees.

Jeremiah Nyaga, a former teacher in Kahuhia Normal School and a politician chiefly criticized the CMS education that the missionaries provided in the primary school as it was likely to be subordinated to that of the primary teacher training section. Nyaga had stated; *"the school cannot and will not employ every qualified primary teacher in future, a full staff is contemplated and the pupils will suffer no harm provided the amount of practice in teaching is not excessive and it will naturally be the principal's responsibility to see that it is not"* (KNA/MSS/letter 25/5/46). The primary school was entrusted

with the responsibility of seeing that this duty was faithfully discharged (KNA/MSS/letter/25/5/46). The school was to serve as a demonstration school. Teachers in training would stay at other primary schools for their practice teaching and this affected the learning at the school. A well-prepared lesson by a teacher in training would normally be as effective or more than a lesson given by the regular class teacher (KNA/MS/K6, ref letter MS NS/9/45/16, MS/9/45/17).

### Girls' Education at Kahuhia Establishment

At Kahuhia, there existed some suspicion about the value of education for girls since this touched on Kikuyu traditional customs and family life experience. More so, was the girls' circumcision and status of women at home. Any change of the status quall was an aspect of Bell Hooks' *The Will to Change* (2004) on the part of the Africans. The period was dominant masculinity and feminine subjectivity, and getting girls to attend school met with resistance, except for those with the will to change. A Roman Catholic Missionary leader emphasized on the significance of girls' education and women and highlighted that education of women in Africa territories was to be based upon the future role that she will have to exercise in feminine roles of creating a clean and healthy home (Murray 1974). Methods of hygiene and cleanliness could best be taught while the girls were in boarding schools, unlike in the recommended critical pedagogy that claims that teaching should go beyond the chains of gender exclusion (Hooks 2004). In a particular case Ben Ngumba together with Handley Hooper- a CMS member had to go after a girl kidnapped by her be-throne fiancé five miles and an eight-foot corrugated iron sheet fence had to be put around the girls' dormitory to secure the girls.

The acting director of education was concerned that no further training was available for the girls once they concluded classes at Kahuhia. The only available probabilities were for nursing in the city – Nairobi, 100 kilometres away and literally unaffordable. Education was gradually gaining interest from parents especially the Christians. The staffs were assertive that their ladies were capable of undertaking the elementary teacher training for the first two or three years like the boys. John Watt agreed that the girls attend classes in three R's and physical education under Mary Miles who taught Physical Education (P.E) which was basically sports and athletics. This set the start of female training as a separate school in Ukenye area (KNA/MSS/61/382).

During this period, it became increasingly apparent that young women sought some means of escape from the inevitable early bonds of marriage, turning their attention towards employment in the realms of nursing and teaching. Yet positions in general nursing within government hospitals were few, and, in order to preserve occupations traditionally regarded as the province of men, it was deemed proper that these young women should receive instruction for other spheres of service. Accordingly, they were trained to labour in kindergartens, ministering to the care and education of the

youngest children, or to undertake work in out of school establishments where they imparted the arts of sewing, knitting, domestic crafts, or elementary nursing. By such pursuits, women not only secured respectable employment but also rendered themselves useful in the advancement of education and the welfare of the community.

However, there was public opinion that living away from home like in Uganda and Kabare should be under supervision (CSM/637 1910-38). Therefore, the girls would be limited to teacher training and practice in the four out-schools within a two miles radius of residence in addition to sewing and other practical work. The girls in the maternity had several disadvantaged practices as part of their work in communities, circumcising ladies; since Kikuyu culture emphasized on learning tribal customs for their girls. There was however that the acute need of maternal care in reserve in villages as girls was in glamour for more opportunities to learn (KNA/MSS/61/381).

In the early colonial period, growing concern over maternal and infant health led administrators to pay increasing attention to the training and regulation of indigenous birth attendants. Village midwives, in particular came to be seen as vital intermediaries between formal medical institutions and local communities, prompting discussions about their earnings, social position and the need for continued supervision after training. They were trained and then permitted to reside within their own communities and were able to earn a modest meaningful livelihood. For each confinement they attended, they might receive no less than two or three shillings in addition to gifts offered by grateful families. Nevertheless, colonial authorities acknowledged that once these women departed the training home and returned to village life, the question of proper oversight and supervision necessarily arose, lest standards of practice declined or discipline got compromised (KNA/MSS/61/2/131).

As a result, application made to the inspector of schools for the support of D.E.B for the boarding grants and payment for the girls if and when trained. This issue was to be discussed with the inspector of central province as well as the chairman of the D.E.B. The question of payment arose with the girls as well as the other teachers and if the community was to pay the money on it. If the African leaders were to push hard enough and, without some provisions made, educational policy would be a farfetched dream. The girls would then visit sector schools regularly and take classes in domestic science and arrangements to be done for a night or two for distant schools by headmaster (KNA/MSS/61/381). It was deemed important for these teachers to work in cottages attached to boarding school from a view point of supervision and obtaining necessary equipment for demonstration and to have opportunity of gaining regular instruction. They could help with classes at the centre since this scheme was devised to promote the education of favoured girls and women and prove to be of considerable value in addressing the challenge of providing appropriate appointments for senior girls. Girls

residing within a three mile radius were offered specialized training with the aim of preparing them for service in distant and out –schools (KNA/MS/B.1172/62).

The girls would then visit sector schools regularly and take classes in domestic science where arrangements were to be done for a night or two for distant schools by the headmaster. It was important for these teachers to work in cottages attached to boarding schools from a view point of opportunity of gaining regular instruction and practice. They could also help with classes at the centre. This scheme was to help favoured girls and women rendering education an asset in solving their problems and providing suitable post for senior girls (KNA/MSS/61/381).

### Entry and Funding for Girls Training

With the development of girls' education, it became necessary to financially support the endeavour. The workforce was not only the whites but also the growing numbers of the African staff. In the year 1931 a sum of \$ 136 was duly set aside for the training of African women. In preparing the estimates for the grant-in-aid for 1949, the Director of Education addressed Miss Janisch, drawing attention to the efforts of the girls' school and the T4 training centre to employ the services of the available European staff, a measure calculated primarily to advance the instruction and welfare of the girls at Kahuhia. Under the regulations governing grants – in –aids, the Department of Education was entitled to appoint three European women - one to serve at the TTC centre, and two to the secondary school, which was expected to accommodate supervising of girls' teachers and girls' side of primary education as well as teaching school subjects in secondary school.

The European staffs together with adequate African staff in the secondary school was profitable in supervising the girls' teachers and the girl's side of primary education while also teaching school subjects in secondary school. This kind of supervision was necessary because of the following reasons: A good deal of time, energy and money were invested in giving women teacher though much of these efforts were being wasted because the teachers who had been trained were then sent out to day schools and given no help despite the difficult task of adjusting timetables or organizing the teaching of housecraft subjects. Lack of funds made the work difficult for the girls. This is attested in KNA/MSS reference letter B.1772/51 where the inspector of schools in forwarding the application to the secretary of CMS in Nairobi stated that the establishment appeared to be running on rather extravagant lines; that the girls attended the primary or practicing schools for ordinary classwork and therefore the staff allocated to the girl's school seemed unnecessarily large (KNA/MSS reference letter MS/K.5). The CMS secretary attested that the meeting of the Advisory council on African Education justified the training of African women to fit them as wives, agriculturist and similar possibilities of employing women teachers in village centers was considered as part of the long-term policy.

Through this policy, capital expenditure made these initiatives a practical proposition. Later, it became clear that there was a need for a separate type of institution from the existing girls' schools, since entrants for agricultural training would be younger and, in a sense, unsuitable for the type of training recommended for wives, as they were more or less still children.

Basically, it was misconception to regard women supervisors as a mere adjunct or non-essential addition to primary education. This as well did not imply that, instead of having separate schools for boys and girls, the joint schools were organised for equal benefit of both sexes. In practice, when control, teaching, and supervision were organised, the system tended to favour boys over girls. Indeed, another gendered approach was in the offing. Notably, it was an observable fact, that when the control, instruction and supervision of schools are vested exclusively in men, such arrangements are prone to be organised almost entirely for the advantage of boys, the attendance of girls being permitted only under very special conditions. Were this indeed an inescapable consequence of co-education, it would doubtless be preferable to establish a distinct system of schools for girls, complete with an independent supervisory apparatus, as is the practice in many other territories. In order to ascertain the validity of the foregoing proposition, the Department of Education, in the course of an experimental measure, appointed female supervisors, namely Miss Janisch and Miss Hettis Comely, so as to ensure the presence of a sufficient number of women teachers to justify the arrangement. Subsequently, provision was made for one European woman and one African primary teacher to replace a second European woman in respect to secondary schools, together with estimates for one European lady to undertake the supervision of female teachers in CMS schools of Embu, Fort Hall and

Kabete Districts.

The experiment was attended with considerable success in the then central province of Kenya, particularly at Kahuhia, where a projection was made of twenty four girls' teachers in 1949, under the instruction of European teachers Miss Ethel Soles, Miss Eleanor Brown and Miss Mary Miles. As Kahuhia was already established as a centre for training of lower primary teachers, it proved an efficient and suitable locality for the undertaking of this course (KNA/MS/K5). It was therefore , anticipated that girls desirous of receiving similar training would attend Kahuhia and the Elizabeth Hooper Girls school was duly prepared to admit such pupils and to undertake the supervision of their practice teaching in domestic subjects.

For some years however, only few girls from the area would be eligible for the lower primary course, the type of instruction offered by the school was such that its benefits were not immediately realized by the local boarding school at least not for a considerable period (KNA/MSS/15/61/386). These developments illustrate the varied gendered nature of educational opportunities in the region during the mid-1940s reflecting both limitations imposed by colonial education policy and the ambitions of local communities to secure

advancement through formal schooling. These girls were to attend all Standard IV classes in domestic subjects, and teach these subjects to the lower standards and to visiting classes from the nearest out schools under supervision, together with training in teaching method, for a year (KNA/MSS reference letter no.B.1401/109; KNA/MSS/61/387). The standard lower grade for elementary teachers was as follow:

- a) That they would attend all standard IV classes in domestic subjects and teach these subjects to the lower classes and to visiting classes from the nearest out-schools for one year.
- b) That by the end of the year if they reach the approved standard of efficiency, they would be given a certificated recognized by government which would allow them to teach these subjects up to and including standard II, preferably in the school nearest their home for a small salary. (KNA/B.1772/56).

This arrangement as recorded in the Murang'a District DC/FH Series sought to provide a judicious balance between the urgent need for teachers and the long term development of suitably trained cadre of female instructors for the district. The scheme was reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with boarder educational objectives and the evolving needs of the community. This included the two types of teacher training, teaching of domestic subjects, parallel management of the boarding school and supervision of girls- teachers working in out-school a task to be adequately done by 2 European teachers. Girls in standard IV & V who had these subjects in the curriculum and would be more focused in concentrating on domestic science rather than going to primary school Should not attempt the primary exam which was difficult and would take teacher examination, which would qualify them (KNA/MSS/61/387).

### **Equity in Employment: Training Teachers for Senior Girls**

In the pursuit of educational development within the district, particular attention was given to the equitable employment of female instructors, especially for instruction of senior girls. Recognizing that provision of trained teachers for higher standards was essential to the advancement of female education and schemes were instituted to prepare young women for such responsibilities. These measures included structured boarding school training, vocational preparation to marriage and the selection of promising pupils from day schools to undergo specialized teacher training. Such initiatives reflected acknowledgement of the importance of gender equity in education and employment, ensuring that senior girls, received instructions from competent, well prepared women, thereby fostering both professional opportunity for teachers and educational advancement for the pupils.

The D.O.E in 1938 showed particular interest for the training of women teachers. Since Kahuhia was already a centre for training of lower primary teachers these girls would have a first exposure along this line, teaching sewing, mother craft, and housewifery in a smart way worth of recognition and assurance (Karanja 1999). The ladies were however not allowed to be taught History and Geography (KNA/MSS/61/387).

The girls were required to teach small children and domestic subjects like scriptures, vernaculars, arithmetic, nature study and handwork for Sub standards A &B, then Physical training for older girls, black board writing and drawing (KNA/PC/NZA 3/0/13). This enabled them to teach a one-year course in each subject. However, the round of the ordinary Elementary Teacher Training (ETT) course would be unsatisfactory and this would include enough domestic teaching to be valuable. As Eleanor Brown insisted in Tumu Tumu the girls were taking the same courses as the boys and

in Kahuhia they needed to do better than that (KNA/MS/K5, CSM/637 1910-38).

The inspector of schools Mr Dolton observed that, the girls sent to Tumu Tumu had same course as the boys and therefore did not get sufficient time for essential subjects which should be undertaken with the girls. He insisted that the success of ETT course would be the supervision of the girls to some extent by a woman from the school. Therefore, the first term and timetables for the elementary school were amended to allow for more domestic teaching for the girls (as a one-year course (KNA/MS/K5). As personally confined to Mr Watts, the girls underwent their teaching practice in domestic science subjects. In one notable instance, a trainee was awarded a distinction by Mr Dolton in physical Education, despite earlier difficulties in conducting examination lessons. This recognition followed Mr Dolton intervention, when he temporarily assumed control of the class to demonstrate, for the benefit of the “lass” the proper method of instruction (KNA/MS letter 16/10/46,162/37).

**Weekly Instruction for Girls Training in 1940**

<b>Std. III elementary</b>	sewing, child welfare, housewifery	5 hours (Githunguri)
<b>Std. II</b>	sewing and child welfare	2 ½ hours
<b>Std. I</b>	sewing	2 hours
<b>Std. B (adult class)</b>	sewing	1 ½ hours
<b>Std. A (adult class)</b>	Sewing	1 ½ hours
<b>Std. IV (elementary)</b>	domestic science	taught by Miles or Soles in practicing school
<b>Std. IV primary</b>	domestic science	taught by Miles or Soles in practicing school
<b>Std. V or II primary (together)</b>	domestic science	taught by Miles or Soles in practicing school

The above timetable was effective with the 40 anticipated senior native girls’ teachers, Rebekkah and Josephine as

instructors while Miss Soles supervised them in sewing and material utilization (KNA/MSS/ref letter B.1772/51).



The village girls sewing class; seated fourth left is Mariamu Gachanja



The group of girls in sewing class with tunic uniforms in 1925

Although it was officially stated that no departmental certificates would be issued, girls who completed the course were nonetheless to be recognised as eligible for DEB grants under local salary scales. Ms Brown defended the principle of “*no karatathi*” (no certificate), maintaining that certification would expose the course being labelled as inferior. From a local perspective, however, the absence of formal certification effectively limited the social and professional mobility of the girls., reinforcing existing hierarchies of knowledge and training in which African women’s education was acknowledged in practice but denied symbolic legitimacy. As it was hoped, the course was to be at least equivalent in value to the usual elementary teachers’ course and some of the girls would have had a year’s training in it. In addition, it would be mere satisfactory if they pass to be given some sort of certificates indicating that those with certificates would be paid Sh. 20 with an increment of Sh. 1/50 up to Sh. 35. In Kahuhia the grant was Sh. 5670 quarterly for European staff, Sh. 1116 for African teachers and Sh. 2950 for out -schools (KNA/MSS/11/61/382). In 1932 salary scales indicate how teachers were paid: grade V – elementary teacher certificate got 30-50 per month, grade IV-lower primary teacher certificate got Sh... 50-100, grade III -primary teacher certificate got Sh... 100-150, grade II -junior secondary teacher certificate got 150 -200, grade I -senior certificate got Sh. 200-250(KNA/MS/NS.9/43/4, ref ED/61).

A Jeanne’s school trained teacher got Sh. 10 more than an ordinary teacher if they were in the same grade. The Jeanne’s teachers like James Munano were accepted to act as supervisors in out-schools (KNA/MSS/61/39, MS/K5) He would even beat an errant teacher physically. European teachers received higher remuneration, with a male graduate teacher earning approximately Sh. 1000, while a female teacher received a substantially lower salary of about Sh. 590.This salary was under reviews like the case of Jeanne’s teacher Ezra Mwenjwa records of 1933 and 1934 that indicated that Perminas Githendu received quarterly salary of

Sh. 375, Stanely Njindo Sh. 255, Aran Muhari Sh. 240 Tiras Mute Sh. 165, Aram Ndari Sh. 180 Silas Kabugi Sh. 90. European teachers had other allowances such as travel, leave and child allowance which formed part of the official welfare provisions for salaried staff, designed to support officers with dependent children. The principal Leonard Beecher was paid Sh. 2000, Cantrell Sh. 1600 and Ethel Soles and Barnes Sh. 1045. These salaries covered a period of three months (KNA, PC/NZA/RVP.6A/12/3). Teachers who were able to beat this threshold were Leah Wairimu, Marta Paulo; ex Makerere , Josephine Macaria Perpetua wa Ngunjiri teaching on a half-time basis including Jane Joseph. These African lady teachers together with European ladies like Eleanor Brown, Ethel Soles, Miss Wiseman, Miss Utley and Unna Dodge also benefitted (KNA/ PC 30/7/37/5, MS/ED/61).

### Gender and Development of religious life

Though the control and development of Kahuhia mission was under the missionaries, the school also made a great contribution in the school and the community. The missionaries, in the girl’s school and the normal school prepared gospel services for young people at the chapel as Strayer (1978) noted. Among some first African teachers were Obadiah Kariuki 1929-42 ,1946-48; Buxton, 1923-40 and Elijah Gachanja in 1945-60 who had two years secondary education at Alliance School 1927- 1928 and at St Paul divinity school. Gachanja was stationed at divinity school as an important centre of revival movement established among the students. Teacher training was separated from evangelistic training due to increased government involvement in African education, the school trained evangelists, lay readers and quasi pastors (Minutes of Kahuhia pastorate, 1944-1960). The centre conducted de-fresher courses in regular and methodical teaching for all African leaders such as the one held in 1940 in the normal school buildings (HOO 1/5-10).

Since the church was not ready to spend money on evangelist activities, divinity school was created to train African pastors (KNA/PC/NZA/3/6/8). The husbands in evangelist families could accompany their wives and reside in the facilities and they too could be taught how to look after their homes and be real helpmates. At the end of the year evangelical students returned to their homes to do practical work in their districts. This training took almost 10 years between training and ordination. The training was based on assumption that Africans brains tire so first and it gave missionaries time to weed out those who could not qualify for the training. In some cases, errant adherents who also served as teachers were subjected to excommunication such as Mr Aram Ndimu who was reported by Ben Ngumba through a letter to the District Officer attesting that Aram was a bigamist. Since the CMS did not allow this, his work was terminated and Ngumba preferred (KNS/MSS/B/387/11/276).

However, this method was abolished in 1945. The education in the African reserves was dependent not only on the educational side but on moral and spiritual leadership. In order to utilize the teachers available on evangelist missions, Ben Livai was taken for a course in special training at Limuru Divinity School and was later joined by Josiah Magu from Kabete who was a teacher in Kahuhia (KNA/MS/K6 ref NS.9/43/22). The two men were viewed as 'first class men' and since the supply of Europeans was limited, these were utilized to secure an intensive and practical training to take over some of the administration of the mission areas (KNA/MS/K6).

The core curriculum in an evangelical course included, 8 subjects old, and New Testament studies; doctrine, church history, ethics, pastoral, liturgics and homiletics. Practical work included Sunday services and evangelistic work during the weekend. the method of evaluation included oral and written examination. These testing methods had different challenges since students from upcountry were handicap in using Swahili which was foreign, as the medium of instruction. There existed two grades of the clergy, village clergy who instructed through vernacular and worked in rural parishes and graduate clergy who instructed by English (Divinity school 1937-60). Overall, evangelism was masculine oriented

## Conclusion

African indigenous education history has established itself as a respectable academic discipline as it entails varied and diverse units that sustained the possibility of missionary establishment in Africa, more so in Kenya. Education received by girls and boys seemingly reflected destabilizing effects on gender balance at Kahuhia establishment. While the impact of CMS lives to the day, their efforts at changing the gender arena to achieve equity encountered great challenges. As they took girls and women to school to eliminate exclusion, new gender gaps emerged in the eligibility of the same to courses, evangelism and professionalism. Seemingly, this puts to test

societal attitude; whether black or white, on *The Will to Change* in the realms of the *Delusions of Gender* that are endemic in the cultural context of any community. A balance should be between traditional and modern education in to complement and supplement each other to mutually reinforce gender sensitive education.

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