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Christian Missions, Government and Local Councils Partnership in Educational Development: The Case of Western Kenya, 1911 – 1938.

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Abstract

For Christian missionaries, education was a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit new ideas which would ultimately lead to the transformation of the Luhyia society. The main aim of missionary education was to teach Africans how to read the Bible and serve as teacher-evangelists. Missionary education was, however, generally of low quality; heavily religious in tone and purpose and under the direction of teachers with minimal training. And as Education became an important drawing card in the emerging colonial order, African began to demand for more and relevant education from the mission schools. It was thus the general weakness of missionary education and the demands by Africans that forced the colonial government to move to direct and show the missionaries how education should be run. The government, decided to steer a course of action which, while largely meeting the aspirations of Africans, was not to be repulsive to the missionaries.

A colonial government effort in streamlining African education was witnessed in the establishment of various commissions, the Department of Education and Education Ordinances. These bodies outlined various policies in the education sector. In turn these policies led to an increased interaction between Christian missions, the colonial government and the Local Native Councils in the provision of education in western Kenya. Indeed, the ability of Africans to translate threats into actions enabled them to exercise real and effective leverage within the government and Christian mission educational system.

Introduction

In the period before the 1920s, Christian missionaries had established various mission stations among the Luhyia of western Kenya. These missions included Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Friends Africa Mission (FAM), the Mill Hill order of the Roman Catholic Church

(MHM) and Consolata Catholic Mission (CCM). Others were Gospel Mission Society (GMS), Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), Church of God (COG), African Inland mission (AIM), Church of Scotland Mission (CSM), the Pentecostal East African Mission (PEAM) and the Salvation Army (SA). With the establishment of these stations the missionary began to woo the Luhya to Christianity. The pioneer missionaries, however, quickly realized that the entire pattern of African society had to first be altered before Africans would accept Christianity. It must be pointed out that before the coming of the colonial rule and Christianity, the Luhya - like most pre-colonial societies in Kenya - lived in a tradition-directed society. The strength of such a society lay in the cohesive, integrated and self-sufficient system that sanctioned behaviour and in which everything had its prescribed place. It was, therefore, through this strength that the Luhya sub-groups were able to repel the efforts of the early missionaries because to accept Christianity was to reject one's whole way of life. It was this realization that influenced the pioneer missionaries to think of formulating an educational policy.

For Christian Missionaries, a very close relation existed between evangelistic and educational policy. Missionaries felt that converts needed literacy to read the Bible and to serve as teacher-evangelists. Consequently, education was inseparable from Church membership and reading, writing and arithmetic were perceived as necessary tools in the propagation of the faith, the administration of a self-supporting church and the desired transformation of the African society. In the initial period, however, the the number of Christian converts remained low due to the strength of the traditional society. However, in the face of new ways of viewing the world, the traditional ways of life began to be slowly undermined. The impact made by the colonial situation, such as the introduction of wage labour, money, urban centres, production for export, individual enterprise and colonial laws – which the Luhya had witnessed for nearly two decades - were too much for traditional society or religion to counter. Consequently, the walls of traditional society began to crack. Some of the Luhya then began to accept the western culture, including Christianity and education ideals, as means for adapting to the new situation. The Luhya, thus, not only began to demand for more educational opportunities (from the missions and the colonial government alike), but were also willing to tax themselves in order to finance mission-affiliated schools in their areas. And in the process of meeting the Luhya's educational demands, a close interaction developed between the Africans, missions and the colonial government. It was such interaction that led to the establishment by the British government, of the 1911, Commission on Education in the East Africa Protectorate and the Department of Education; the 1919, East African Protectorate Education Commission, the 1924, Phelps-Stokes Commission; and the passage of the colony's first Education Ordinance in 1924. These commissions and the education ordinance had far reaching impact on educational policy and on the Luhya of western Kenya.

African Demand for Education

Prior to 1911, all African education in colonial Kenya was entirely in the hands of the Christian missionaries. This was because the British government had insisted that the colonies pay for themselves and was more interested in broad economic and political affairs. Reluctant to take part in any education venture, the government had supported the various missions in their educational endeavours. On their part missionaries had initiated their mission work in western Kenya, with little more than a rough idea about providing literacy and manual training for its future Christian community. For the Christian Missionaries, a very close relation existed between evangelistic and educational policy. Education was inseparable from Church membership and reading, writing and arithmetic were perceived as necessary tools in the propagation of the faith, the administration of a self-supporting church and the desired transformation of the African society. Consequently, missionary schools were generally of low quality; heavily religious in tone and purpose and under the direction of teachers with minimal training. For instance, the minimum requirement set by the colonial government for teaching in the village school was four or five years of education, but missionary schools were not providing more than two years of literacy education at that time (Kay, 1973:99). But as education became an important drawing card in the emerging colonial structure, African convert began to demand for relevant education.

The inadequacy of literacy content of the same education had sharpened Africans' mental appetites to seek more secular education. Africans, after some experience of missionary education, now wanted non-denominational education, sponsored either by the government or themselves and in schools where the kind of education they wanted could be offered. Indeed, the rising expenses incurred in employing expensive Asian labour on government projects, forced the colonial administrators to think of giving Africans technical education. Technical education was to produce cheap African skilled and subservient labour. It was largely due to such meagreness of missionary education and the corresponding African agitation that precipitated the government's increasing involvement in African education (Bogonko, 1992:23).

The 1911 Commission on Education in the East Africa Protectorate

The first step towards this intervention was the establishment by the government of the 1911 Commission on Education in the East Africa Protectorate. Chaired by Professor J. Nelson Frazer, it was commissioned to recommend a structure of education in the East African Protectorate. However, among Frazer's terms of reference was the explicit instruction 'not to put forward plans for literary education of the Africans, but to consider the possibilities of developing industries among Africans (Sifuna and Otiende, 2006: 193).

In his report, Frazer recommended to the colonial administration an industrial apprenticeship scheme, through indentures. He argued that missions and the government might, through such a scheme, begin a fruitful cooperation in training educated labour in the form of masons, carpenters and recorders, who both the government and the settlers needed. In proposing an industrial formula, Frazer believed that such an educational system would not only be producing artisans but would also be crucial in making an assault on undesirable qualities like self-conceit

and insolence, which were assumed to follow from giving Africans a literary education. On government-missionary co-operation, Frazer's stand was that it was desirable that educational facilities for Africans be provided by mission societies, on the grounds that African education of any kind, industrial or technical, was mischievous if imparted without morality and should, therefore, be accompanied by definite Christian instruction. He also recommended the establishment of a Department of Education and the appointment of a Director of Education. Finally Frazer recommended that education should be on racial lines, with the Europeans getting an academic type of education, Asian children a mixture of academic and industrial training, while Africans were to receive purely industrial education (Sifuna and Otiende, 2006: 193). The colonial Education Board approved Frazer's proposals. The Department of Education, with James R. Orr as its first director, was established in 1911. And government's grants-in-aid were given to eight missions, FAM, CMS, AIM, GMS, CCM, MHM, SDA and COG, to make them capable of offering trade training. By 1912, industrial training in basic skills - such as smithing, carpentry, agriculture and even typing - was successfully underway. The better the results in technical education examination, the higher the amount of aid a mission school received from the government. However, even with the introduction of industrial learning, religious education was still deemed more important above anything else in the mission schools. In many instances this practice, together with industrial education, led parents to take their children out of schools [Kenya National Archives (KNA), MSS/54/63, 1912: 2].

In 1913, for example, boys at the MHM School in Mumias went on strike, rejecting religious and industrial education. They claimed that as sons of chiefs, they warranted better treatment that would prepare them for leadership and get them formal employment. This strike had an effect on other missions' pupils. For instance, in the same year, Musa Akhonya and Daniel Chagona, former FAM teacher-evangelists, both of whom had the experience of working in Kisumu and Eldoret as carpenters and who had backslidden by marrying second wives, advised students at the Kaimosi station to follow the MHM pupils' example. They advised FAM pupils to demand for a functional, academic education that would equip them with the necessary working skills and enable them to earn money to be expended on taxes and other material needs. Subsequently, pupils at Kaimosi and Vihiga stations also began to agitate for a more secular education taught in English (KNA, NZA/12/13, 1928: 2).

At the same time, some government officials like John Ainsworth, the PC of Nyanza, were advocating the establishment of Government schools on non-sectarian lines. He wrote "I would not exclude religious teachings from such schools. I would, however, have selected men appointed to be in-charge of the schools and leave the matter of instruction in their hands" (KNA, PC/NZA/1/8, 1913:1). Further, the PC observed that many of the Luhyia people were more adaptable to European innovations and that they should be brought up in the way the provincial administrators desired; that is, the "improvement and not the exploitation" of the Africans through education, so as "to develop one of the richest assets we have in the protectorate - labour" (KNA, PC/NZA/1/8, 1913:1). The outbreak of the First World War in

1914, however, diverted energies and resources away from any further reform agenda in the education sector. But still, despite the poor standard evinced in schools, the missions had laid the foundation for future educational development among the Luhya of western Kenya. And largely due to their efforts, education was on its way to transforming these groups.

The First World War and Increased Demands for Education

Before the war of 1914, Christian missionaries had mainly relied on pioneer teacher-evangelists and/or appointed headmen and chiefs to establish and sustain out-schools, or village schools which generally offered between two to five years of education. However, as the advantages of Christian mission education became apparent after the war, an increasing number among the Luhya began to demand more access to education opportunities. For instance, provincial reports indicated that, Out of a population of 1.25 million, 5 % are children of school age - from 6 to 16 years - giving a total of 250,000. There are 80,837 African children on the roll of all African schools in the province – 32% of the children are receiving some form of instruction. If we take the proportion on the roll of the elementary and sub-elementary schools to the total number of children of age for elementary education- 6 to 10 years, we get a more encouraging figure of 63% (KNA, PC/NZA/1/38, 1938: 1). Reports further suggested that, “the pressure of desire for entry to primary school is greater than ever, and is resulting in a flood of demand for Day Primary schools”(KNA, PC/NZA/1/38, 1938: 1).

Several reasons can explain this increased demand. The first was the experience that Africans had acquired from their participation in the First World War. This war had shown that Africans could only compete effectively in the colonial situation if they acquired western religion and hence, education. The returning soldiers spread this new gospel, leading to an increasing number of the Luhya who desired a share in the white man’s civilization (KNA, PC/ NZA/3/6/131, 1933:1) These demands for education were further crystallized by the introduction of the special labour circular which made Africans, particularly Christian converts, to demand for an education that was functional and which would equip them with working skills, like being a teacher, a clerk to the local chief or court clerk; jobs that were well paying and prestigious in the village standing, rather than doing manual labour on European farms. In early 1920s, for instance, clerks could earn as high as Shs. 17/- per month, while farm labourers were earning only Shs.3/- per month (KNA, PC/NZA/3/33/8/9, 1930: 1). To the Africans, such well paying jobs would enable them to earn money to pay taxes and satisfy their other material needs that had accompanied capitalist development in Kenya. Since education provided the most important avenue in the acquisition of better paying jobs, the Luhya therefore increasingly joined mission schools. Their desire was further heightened by the examples set by pioneer teacher-evangelists. These were an envied lot, “because of their knowledge of the White man’s world” and the material acquisitions, like bicycles and better houses that pioneer converts possessed (KNA, PC/NZA/3/33/8/9, 1930: 1).

Inevitably, the Luhya demand for more education and the corresponding inability by Christian missions to provide qualified teachers resulted in general disenchantment and political agitation among Luhya converts. For instance, reports of 1922 indicated that,

There are underway in Kavirondo, a very important movement in the direction of race consciousness. For better or worse, the native is beginning to express himself in no uncertain way. The native of this land is born with agitation. These are useful traits if tempered by wisdom, and are capable of much mischief if out of bounds. This movement has already taken a secure hold on Maragoli and is beginning to influence considerably the course of affairs, in and out of the church. Several of the leading boys of the district have been drawn into the Young Kavirondo Association, which is dominated by Church Missionary Society influences [East African Yearly Meeting (EAYM), 1925: 1].

The Young Kavirondo Association (YKA) was formed in 1921, by former students of CMS Maseno mission. Its chairman was Jonathan Okwirri, while Benjamin Owour and Simeon Nyande were secretary and treasurer, respectively. The objectives of the association included withdrawal of the labour circulars, reduction of hut and poll taxes, introduction of land title deeds and the provision of functional, formal and secular education that was relevant to the emerging labour requirements (KNA, NZA/12/13, 19281).

It was such agitation - among the Luhya and elsewhere in the colony - that forced the colonial government to step in deeper and more forcefully into mission educational matters, on the assumption that mission schools had become centres of African opposition to colonial rule. Indeed, colonial officials in North Kavirondo district had complained that they could not “find a trace of single right school in the district, since the general curriculum is two hours a day of religious instruction”(KNA, DC/NN/1/8, 1927: 1).

The 1919 East African Protectorate Education Commission

Government involvement was also provoked by the missionaries’ disregard for the standards that had been set for teacher qualification in 1916. Reports indicate that, Schools under the care of mission societies were supposed to be staffed by teachers who had certificates provided by the Kavirondo Mission Council, an organization set up by the missions in the area. Minimum qualifications were not mentioned but five years later [1921], the requirement for teaching in village schools was four years of education (EAYM, 1922:1)

Missions, however, continued to train their teachers for only two years, in total disregard of the above requirement. However, the First World War soon absorbed most of the territory’s energies and resources. Consequently, it was not until 1919 that African education would again receive the government’s attention. In that year, at James R. Orr’s urging, the governor appointed the East African Protectorate Education Commission to examine the state of education of all the races in the protectorate (Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1919: 169). In its report, the commission urged the government to play a larger role in African education, but allow the

missions to continue running most schools because of the importance of building character through religious training. The commission recommended that the cooperation between government and the missions be based on the establishment of a grants-in-aid scheme. Following this recommendation, in 1922 the Education Department officially established a grants-in-aid scheme. In this scheme, all mission schools were to be registered and subsidized according to the level of education offered. Teachers were to be graded through qualifying examinations and their salaries were to be subsidized by the government. Further, in 1923 the British government appointed an Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa. This Advisory Committee was important in the appointment of the Phelps-Stokes Commission. This Commission toured East Africa in 1924 (Jones, 1929:10).

The 1924 Phelps-Stokes Commission

Under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, the Phelps-Stokes Commission helped to inaugurate a partnership between the government and the mission societies in African education. The commission welcomed the development of the grant-in-aid scheme and focused its attention on the dismal state of education for Africans. Indeed, the commission helped to resolve the general impasse that had developed in Kenya, between major interest groups – government officials, settlers' representatives, the missionaries and the Africans. The dispute was on what the focus of African education should be. On one hand, there were suggestions for rudimentary primary education, providing bare literacy, religious tutelage, simple agricultural instruction directed at the mass of peasants in the reserves and technical and vocational training for skilled artisans. The opposing view was for 'literary' education on British lines, to provide clerical staff and teachers, with explicit potential for the development of full secondary and even post-secondary education. All these interest groups felt that a definite need existed for a new education policy. However, until the appearance of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, no compromise that could produce an effective change had been reached. Behind the concern, too, lay the growing African challenge to the colonial system and in the eyes of government officials, mission-provided literacy education was to blame for these challenges (Berman, 1990:225).

The Commission made a number of recommendations. First, it emphasised the need for greater cooperation between the government and missions in African education, and recommended that the government should provide and shoulder more responsibilities in teacher-training centres. The Commission also recommended that focus be put on training in agriculture, industry and the adaptation of education to the local needs. In this way, the Commission was proposing drastic departures from the few years of literacy and vocational training then found in most mission schools. It urged colonial educators to change their focus, by adapting schools to serve the welfare of African communities. Adaptation, in this sense, meant using schools as instruments for directing rural social change. The Commission argued that Africans were virtually destined to live in rural areas and, therefore, ought to be educated in and for such a life. In view of this, it proposed that the five primary objectives of education should be; character development, improvement of health, imparting agricultural and handicraft skills, bettering family life, and

providing sound and healthful recreation (Lewis, 1954: 13). The Phelps-Stokes Commission further urged an even greater shift of emphasis in African education from a literacy to a more practical bias with expressly utilitarian purposes, and hence the necessity of establishing the Jeanes Schools and the Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD).

The Jeanes movement, after which the Jeanes schools were named, took its name from Ann Jeanes, a philanthropy from Philadelphia, who had supported Negro education in the USA in the early 1900s. The first Jeanes School in Africa was started at Kabete, Kenya in 1925 as a direct result of the Phelps-Stokes Commission Report, coupled with financial assistance from the Carnegie Co-operation of New York. In Africa, foundation funds from the USA supplemented government grants, wherever the Jeanes Schools were established. The essence of adopting the Jeanes movement's idea came from the realization that formal education could only reach a small segment of African society and that grass-roots efforts at the village level, were required to reach the mass of the population. With two years of practical training, the Jeanes teachers were therefore expected to instruct rural Africans in health and sanitation, child care, general home economics and agricultural development. Meanwhile, the NITD, a trade training institution designed to provide the fourth and fifth years of instruction to mission apprentices, would supply the semi-skilled labour needed on settler farms and in government departments. Under settler pressure, NITDs were to receive far greater funds than the Jeanes scheme, though both systems still represented deliberate attempts to steer African education along narrow utilitarian lines (Sheffield, 1973:23).

Thirdly, the Commission recommended access to higher education for Africans, through the establishment of a college at Kikuyu, as proposed by the Alliance of Protestant Missions, where English was to be a medium of instruction in the upper forms. Lastly, the Commission recommended the expansion of girls' education. The Commission's reasoning and recommendations were not lost on government officials and missionaries, who had both been searching for the means by which to blunt African discontent. Consequently, both missions' representatives and government officials unanimously endorsed Jones' call for an educational partnership between them. For the missions, the partnership was to avail the needed funds into mission programmes. But before opening up its purse, the government was to gain the powers of inspection, registration (of all schools and teachers) and control of the education syllabus. The terms in which the Commission promoted its ideas on educational adaptation also seemed to ensure the development of a peaceful, Christian and non-political rural peasantry, rather than a discontented urban proletariat - with its concomitant problems of political agitation and urban unrest. Such a prospect, with its obvious appeal to colonial officials, also won favour among Kenya's settlers, who desired cheap labour, not economic rivalry or meddlesome African politicians (Sifuna and Otiende, 2006: 199).

The 1924 Education Ordinance

In the immediate following months, the government squarely stepped into African education with the passage of the colony's first Education Ordinance in 1924. Under the Ordinance, all schools and teachers were to be registered and the Director of Education was empowered to inspect all schools. The Mission school system in Kenya was standardized into three categories: namely, sub- elementary (grade 1 and 2), elementary (grade 3 and 4) and higher schools. The higher two categories were to be aided by the government, through the grants-in-aid system. Sub-elementary, or "Bush" schools, were not accredited and were, therefore, not subsidized. The Education Ordinance thus provided a system of reciprocal relationships between the mission schools, the colonial government and the Africans. It gave Africans the responsibility to finance some of the school expenses through the Local Native Councils (LNCs), which had powers to vote levies and set up new schools (EAYM, 1924: 1).

Using their membership in the LNC, mission educated councillors campaigned for funds to build schools in their areas. In 1926, for instance, the LNC voted Shs. 20,000 towards education. The Funds were expended as follows; CMS which had the largest network of out-schools received Sh. 8,860, followed by FAM, which received Sh. 5,360, while MHM and the COG, received Sh. 4,335 and Sh. 1,445, respectively. By the 1930s, the councils were spending thousands of shillings a year, especially on supporting government schools and to some degree, those run by missions operating in the districts. And by 1938, the LNCs were providing some £17,937, or 22.3 per cent of the total public expenditure of £80,284 on African education in Kenya. In other words, North Nyanza LNC gave 81 Luhyia councillors a legal forum through which they could promote the educational aspirations of their communities, among other things (KNA, DC/NN/1/7, 1926:2)

Impact of Colonial Education Policy

The government's increasing role in the provision of African education meant that it would dictate the terms under which mission schools operated. For instance, the Education Ordinance of 1924 and the establishment of a grants-in-aid scheme empowered the education department to regulate schools, curricula examinations and the licensing of teachers, all previously a domain of missionaries. The Education Ordinance also offered compliant missionary societies the promise of a greatly expanded grants-in-aid scheme to ease their financial burden. Indeed, on its visit to western Kenya, the Phelps-Stokes commission had found great future promise in the missions' diversified rural-oriented programme, but was concerned that "as yet little real progress had been made" (EAYM, 1925:1).

Adaptation versus Academic Education

Thomas Jesse Jones, the Commission's chairman, strongly urged the Christian missions to seek government funds which could help them rectify their educational short-comings. He particularly wanted them to improve the educational quality of their sub-elementary. These would then feed better prepared pupils to the elementary schools. From these elementary schools, the best pupils

would then be sent onwards for advanced programmes in literary subjects and vocational training. However, the increased government role in education produced two critical challenges. The first was how to comply with government regulations, and the second was how to organize their schools system efficiently, to make it serve the original goal of evangelization. However, under heavy pressure - from Africans - to provide more and better equipped schools, the missionaries decided that compliance with the new law and co-operation with the government, offered the only workable solution for sustaining their educational work. Consequently, after the passage of the Educational Ordinance, missions began to adopt the government's guidelines for school curriculum and also began to prepare teachers for the government's vernacular teachers' examination. Missions also agreed to buy into Jesse Jones' adaptation type of education. Under this policy, apprentices gained skills required to improve rural living conditions; the mission profited in both equipment and services, while industrial operations and Churches both gained permanent buildings and skilled, salaried members. In the late 1920s, missions' efforts in implementing government policies began to pay dividends. For instance, the colonial government permitted FAM to be the only mission in Kenya to provide a full five-year industrial course, instead of sending students to the NITD to complete their training. Consequently, boosted by government grants-in-aid, LNC's funding and the African willingness to pay school fees for their children, the educational component of the missions' activity expanded to dimensions that had been inconceivable before (Rowe, 1958: 161).

With the enactment of the Education Ordinance, the colonial government and the missions increasingly turned to the adaptationist method of education, which prepared youth for Christian rural living. In the inter-war period, for instance, FAM Educational Secretary, Everett Kellum, favoured a manual training bias in the curriculum, still clinging to the belief that low level mass education was most desirable for Africans and that higher education should be only for the few most able students. He also sought to instil in pupils ideas about community service, to combat what he deemed their growing concern with personal gain.

To achieve the goals set by the adaptation philosophy, the missions sent some of their teacher-evangelists to the Jeanes School at Kabete for further training. These were the first Jeanes teachers to emerge from Kabete in the late 1920s. They were essentially trained as community development agents with some knowledge of health, agriculture and village industries and were expected to work partly through the school, but not to become school-oriented. Indeed, many among Luhyia viewed the Jeanes teachers as the ones who "brought light" to the village through teaching hygiene, skills for building modern and improved houses, improved planting and spacing of maize, as well as giving encouragement in planting groundnuts and vegetables. Ironically, while the first Jeanes teachers supported and even reinforced the community spirit, they would later form the cadre of the first educated elite, who were to become vocal in questioning the usefulness of community-centred training in the colonial situation and actively opposed any attempt to inject greater rural bias into schools (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/114, 1929:4). A shift was occurring in what the Jeanes educated members demanded of the missions'

schools. An earlier generation had generally accepted trade training and apprenticeships because they had seemed to offer Africans the opportunity to master European technical expertise. Skilled labourers had also enjoyed economic benefits from missions' training in the early years of the missionary work. However, with the reorganization of labour systems and the highlighting of recruitment after the First World War, African gradually began to perceive that manual training and agricultural education could only lead to manual employment, and hence subordinate and low paying positions in the emerging colonial order. And as the 1920s depression and colonial policies that discriminated against African participation in commerce drastically reduced available trade positions, demand accelerated for an academic type of education, which would lead to higher paying jobs, like clerks, school supervisors and inspectors. For instance, in the 1930s, teachers in particular were earning an income that made them stand out as a special group in the village.

Teachers with a Makerere school masters' qualification, earned Sh.80/- per month; those with a Junior Secondary school certification from Alliance High School, earned Sh.60/- per month; while supervisor of schools, earned up to Sh.75/- per month. At the same time, most unskilled labourers earned as little as Sh. 5/- per month (KNA, PC/NZA/2/11/12, 1939:1). The higher income of the elite then meant that they were financially able to send their children to superior schools, where they received the highest education then available for Africans. Consequently, as education became an important tool for economic betterment, many more parents began sending their children to school in the hope that they would benefit from the expanding colonial opportunities, like the pioneer teachers and/or clerks. For instance, Provincial reports indicated that, The present policy would appear to be that we welcome pupils at approximately, 6 years of age, and if they progress normally they will complete their elementary and primary education at age of 12 or 15. Their first tendency on leaving school at this age is to drift to towns and seek employment as clerks. It is apparent that every African father looks upon his payment of school fees as an investment, and expect a quick return by way of wages as soon as education is complete (KNA, PC/ NZA/1/38, 1938:2)

Further, the PC Nyanza Province noted that, All the embarrassing demands at present made by the Africans are connected with education. It's very evident that they have no sort of appreciation of the costs. A Local Native Councillor will rise in council and quite empathetically declare that so many more day primary schools are needed in his area (KNA, PC/ NZA/1/40, 1945:1).

Teaching of English

The right to be taught English also became an important determinant in the relationship between the Luhya and Christian missions. English had become the mark of an educated man in the Luhya society. It conveyed multiple notions and aspirations of equality with the European elite. Indeed, Luhya accounts indicate that, "when they went looking for work, they would be asked if they knew English." (Gilpin, 1976: 165). The Luhya had become one of the colony's major

labour pools and those taught in vernacular were thus experiencing disappointment and humiliation outside the reserve for not knowing English. Most Luhya converts felt that despite their willingness to share in the “white man’s” religion, they were being excluded from sharing his knowledge by most Christian missions. These Christian missions gave various explanations for refusing to teach English. Some of these were that it was too difficult for Africans to learn, that the government did not allow them to teach English, or that true understanding and spiritual insight could come only through the mother tongue of a convert. The Luhya converts particularly those who had been educated at CMS Maseno School for their higher primary school studies and former Jeanes School students (some of whom had been introduced to instruction in English) were not convinced. They felt that missionaries feared that Africans who had acquired knowledge of English would get jobs in the neighbouring towns, thus decreasing church membership. The Luhya converts also felt that missionaries were “selfish and they were deliberately refusing to share the White man’s secrets by making it impossible for Africans to communicate in English and not through the missionary interpreters” (EAYM, 1935:2). The missionaries’ reluctance to abandon the emphasis on teaching in the vernacular, consequently, led many among the Luhya converts, to feel cheated since they already knew the language.

The visit of Phelps-Stokes Commission to Kenya, gave many Africans graphic proof of what academic education, particularly the teaching of English, could help them accomplish. This was made by the membership of Dr. James E.K. Aggrey, the USA University-educated West African representative (Jacobs, 1996: 2) Dr. Aggrey appeared as a symbol of African progress, and the immeasurable possibilities for those who acquired the knowledge. For instance, he addressed Luhya converts at Kaimosi, where he publicly expressed surprise and disappointment over the fact that most of the Luhya present did not understand English and that he could only communicate to them through a missionary interpreter. He told them that Africans had brains equal to Europeans, that they should open bank accounts to promote economic development and that they should demand more advanced education. Aggrey also warned the Commission about African dissatisfaction with the state of education, in general, and the mission’s control of schools, in particular. Dr. Aggrey’s speech invigorated Luhya awareness of the practical advantages of English in the new occupational structure. An almost immediate consequence of this development was that after 1924, there was a renewed demand by the Luhya leaders - LNC councillors and the missions’ education committee - for more advanced schools, particularly those teaching English and trained teachers who could teach it, from the missions and government. For instance, reports of 1928 stated that, Interest in higher education continues to increase. The latest request is for a secondary school in this province. At present the colony has 2 secondary schools; one manned by the Alliance of Protestant missions and one by the Catholic Mission. There has been no time that this part of the colony has had their share of the pupils in Alliance High school (EAYM, 1928:2).

This was a clear challenge to the adaptation movement, with its emphasis on vernacular language, agriculture, rural living, handicrafts and the preservation of certain aspects of

traditional culture. For instance, even when the missions complied with the government's new primary school syllabus in 1935, which required agriculture and manual training to be on an equal footing with literacy subjects, pupils in mission schools still continued to aspire to higher academic studies and clerical employment. Indeed, the teachers and supervisors of mission schools reported that agriculture was among the least popular subjects, with English being the most popular. Further in 1937, the education department acknowledged that its efforts to make handicrafts and agriculture central to elementary and primary school were failing to keep the "vast majority of school graduates in the rural areas earning a living in trade or from the soil"(EAYM, 192: 2). Consequently, the insistence by the missions' on adaptation education and the Luhya counter demand for academic education increasingly became the source of friction between Luhya, on the one hand, and the missionaries and the government, on the other.

Advanced Schools

The Luhya demanded more advanced schools, at a pace that neither the government nor the missionaries could match. But in their demands and threats to establish independent schools, the Luhya could not do without the support of both Christian missions the colonial government. Two reasons account for this. First, there were political and economic difficulties mitigating against the establishment of independent schools, since the government was channelling all educational grants- in-aid through the missions. Secondly, the Luhya also enjoyed considerable leverages in the process through which the mission schools developed. Schools' curriculum and education policy were not simply imposed on an amenable people. In practice, they developed and grew as the result of a bargaining process between all parties concerned. Issues like the role of the Luhya educational committee members in advancement of education, LNC education resolutions and initiatives, threats of desertion to other missions, requests for funds and financial leverage all contributed to the evolution of mission and government educational policies. Consequently, throughout 1930s, the Luhya continued to push for more educational advancement within the missions, so that on the eve of the Second World War, the missions could report 1,131, schools catering for over 76,618 pupils, as shown by the table below (KNA, MSS/ 54/67, 1938:2).

In spite of their numbers, African educational committee members, alongside LNC educated councillors, continued to issue new educational demands, such as teacher training, more English instruction and more advanced education. Africans' ability to translate threats into actions also enabled them to exercise real and effective leverage within the mission educational system.

Conclusion

Prior to 1911, the provision of education in western Kenya was a preserve of Christian missionaries. As education became relevance and part of a new value system less identified with transmitting Christian community values and beliefs, and more with providing access to new occupational and social status, the Luhya slowly, but increasingly, embraced Christianity and

began to demand for more educational opportunities from the Christian missions. It was these demands that led to an increased interaction between Christian missions, the colonial government and the Luhyia in matters of education. Indeed, it was these demands that forced the colonial government to develop an educational policy that was to meet the aspirations of Africans and the demands of missionaries. Consequently, the the colonial government, established, the 1911, Commission on Education in the East Africa Protectorate and the Department of Education; the 1919, East African Protectorate Education Commission, the 1924, Phelps-Stokes Commission; and the passage of the colony's first Education Ordinance in 1924.

Through these bodies the government undertook to adapt African education to the needs of the rural areas, through an emphasis on agricultural and industrial/technical training, rather than academic education. The government, further, initiated an industrial training programme for Africans, through the Jeanes School and the Native Industrial Training Depot, which were meant to provide semi-skilled labour that could be deployed as an agent of change in the rural areas, or be directly used on the settlers' farms. Further, in return for control over missionary education, the government established a grants- in-aid scheme whereby mission schools were partly to be financed by the government and by African taxes, through the LNCs.

The government and missions' emphasis on the adaptation type of schooling and a corresponding failure to provide academic education, including the teaching of English, was, however, a major cause of discontent among Luhyia converts. Subsequent African protests led to an injection of more academic education in mission schools and a close partnership among the main players in the provision of African education. Such partnership between the government, Christian missions and local councils may provide solutions to the current transition crisis (primary to secondary education) in Kenya today. Indeed, Christian mission agricultural and industrial/technical training and importance of building character through religious training, may provide solution to the unemployment among standard eight and form four leavers.

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