



# Contribution of Women Missionaries in Education in Kenya

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## 9.1 Introduction

In an attempt to highlight the contribution of women missionaries in education in Kenya, the following issues are addressed: a working definition of a missionary, education in pre-colonial Africa, selected women missionaries of various mainstream Christian denominations, and their contribution to education, and a conclusion. The chapter is anchored on Emile Durkheim's functionalist theory. It captures some useful insights garnered from the contribution of women missionaries in education in Kenya that are valuable for the education sector and the wider Kenyan society today.

## 9.2 Who Is a Missionary?

The Vatican II the Conciliar and Post Conciliar documents present missionaries as “Those people who are endowed with the proper natural temperament, have necessary qualities and outlook, are ready to undertake missionary work, and have a special vocation, whether they are natives of the place or foreigners, priests, religious, or lay people” (Flannery, 1975, p.755). This definition is adopted in this article to refer to all the women who have been given special grace and vocation to

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take upon themselves the missionary task of molding the people they encounter. Thus, the women missionaries include pastors, religious sisters, teachers, single lay-women, or spouses of missionaries regardless of their religious affiliation.

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### 9.3 Education in Pre-Colonial Africa

Before colonization, Africans went through informal education which was passed from one generation to another. This type of education was technical and practical whereby children accompanied their parents in daily work as preparation for the young ones to take up responsibilities and help their parents feed the family and protect their society. The young ones were also taught social norms, culture, and sexual matters by their grandparents, uncles, and aunts through the word of mouth. Boys accompanied their fathers in hunting, building houses, and workshops where they learned to make tools and furniture. Girls accompanied their mothers to fetch firewood and water, attend to gardening, grazing, and house chores. In essence, this education system was complete as it helped the younger generation to live a relatively decent life (Goodale, 1989) with their well-defined duties. Every child grew up knowing what was expected of them and the transition to adulthood was easy.

What were the goals of indigenous education? Sifuna (1990) advances that indigenous education was to prepare people for life, more attention was paid to values and skills needed for social life. He opined that such education emphasized “Social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, and spiritual and moral values” (p. 5). The content of indigenous education included learning from the physical environment such as weather, landscape, plants, and animals. The children were taught how to farm, hunt, fish, prepare food, build houses, and generally run a home. They were also exposed to how to express their feelings and ideas appropriately. The children were to live in the community following the accepted manners, customs, laws, avoidance of taboos, and a rigorous code of morality.

The educators (often the adults) during this period ensured that respective children (boys and girls) learned how to live in harmony with others in society. The outcome of such sessions was reflected in the type of activities that they respectively engaged in (Sifuna, 1990). The emphasis of some of the cultural practices that provided a forum for informal education was the initiation ceremonies that marked the transition from childhood to adulthood. These ceremonies were the epicenter of education on family life issues, relationships, and responsible citizenship. During initiation, the initiates were taken into seclusion for a period where they were taught the social values and norms of their society as they healed from the initiation. It was believed that by the time they came out of seclusion, they were brave and confident to face the hardships of adulthood that awaited them.

As will be noted later in the chapter, women missionaries, while engaging in evangelization through formal education, also taught non-formal skills which enabled women to earn some income for themselves. This was a great way to evangelize to them, thus most converts to Christianity were women.

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## 9.4 Missionaries and Indigenous Education

Schools had a primary position in all missionary endeavors in Africa. The missionaries hoped that they would be able to convert the children to Christianity while instilling Western education in the classroom. They desired that the non-European people would be able to read the Bible for themselves and to others, and education was the only means. Almost all schools that were established by missionaries first taught reading and writing, and a few handiwork skills. The Europeans believed that the indigenous people especially in Africa were not civilized, and this inspired them to bring transformation from non-civilized to civilized citizens through education. The ultimate aim was to assimilate the indigenous communities into European society. However, this journey was not without challenges. In Kenya specifically, these endeavors were greatly affected by patriarchy and male chauvinism. Little research has been done on gender and missionary education but the few scholars who have endeavored in the subject have shown that gender was such an issue in missionary work in Kenya.

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## 9.5 Theoretical Underpinning

The chapter is anchored on functionalist theory on education advanced by Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) and Talcott C. Parsons (1902–1979). The theory stems from functionalism which is described as a “system of interconnected parts that work together to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the universe” (Majumdar, 2021, p. 1). These interrelated parts work together for the good of the whole (Applerouth & Edles, 2016, p. 26). In the analysis of the theory, it is clear that the emphasis is on the “systems within the system” for example, a family is considered as system, a unit but it is also part of the society. A religious system is a unit that provides individual with the core values and sense of meaning, while it is also within the larger society. Strawn (2009) and Applerouth and Edles (2016) explain that functionalists believe that just as the body is a system with specific parts for proper functioning, so is the society as system with specific parts necessary for survival.

Functionalists look at education as one of the most important social institutions. In this perspective, education has two main functions: manifest and latent. The manifest function of education relates to transmission of knowledge and skills to society’s youth (Majumdar, 2021). Emile Durkheim (1898) posited that schools are “socialization agencies that teach children to get along with others and prepare them for economic roles,” thus the socialization function of education. Manifest functions are open and have well-defined goals. The latent functions are usually not intended, not commonly recognized, and hidden but they too matter in the life of an individual (Majumdar). For example, through interactions between children in school, they are able to work with others in small groups, expand their social networks that are very instrumental for their social well-being.

Functionalists appreciate that the schools educate and enculturate students with respective academic knowledge and societal rules, norms, and values such as team work, honoring the group, patriotism, commitment to society, hard work, and social solidarity (Dipholo & Biao, 2013). For Strawn (2009), the school in society has a role to pass on to children skills, knowledge, and values so they may take their place in society as adults who continue a healthy functioning of society.

The two functions of education from the functionalist theory certainly influenced women missionaries to provide education in Kenya as presented in the next section of the chapter. We argue that the women missionaries in Kenya, having realized that they are part and parcel of a society, identified the need to partner in the provision of education and so their involvement at various levels and mission stations/schools. Some of the questions that the chapter raises are as follows: Who set the norms and values instilled in the learners in the education provided by women missionaries? Are the values that the women missionaries envision to instill in the young enshrined in the national education curriculum implemented in the formal schools? Are the aforementioned values found in all the said schools? Do we not find some graduates of the said schools wanting in terms of fitting in the society?

The next section covers the role of women missionaries in Education in Kenya which cuts across the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. These women are categorized according to their religious (missionary groups) affiliations throughout the indicated period. It is worth noting that different missionary churches came to Kenya at different times and to different places which makes it difficult to follow a chronological order for when the women missionaries were featured in ministry.

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## 9.6 Missionary Churches in Kenya

In Kenya, missionary churches occupied specific regions of the country. This was an agreement reached in a 1918 roundtable meeting to arrest competition for souls. The geographical distribution of some of these denominations is as follows. The Roman Catholic Church occupies the Coastal region, Central Kenya (Kiambu, Limuru, Nyeri, and Meru), and Nyanza region (St. Mary's Yala) (Sifuna & Otiende, 2009). The Church Mission Society (Anglican) occupied Central Kenya and Nairobi, the African Inland Mission Church went to Kijabe and Kamba Land, while Friends Church occupied Western Kenya. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church settled in Luo land and Kisii (Getui, 1985), while the Church of Scotland Missions (Presbyterian Church of East Africa) occupied Nyeri, Thogoto, and Maasai land. Today, there are more missionary churches throughout the country. Each of these mission groups planted schools, churches, hospitals, and rescue homes in their respective regions of initial occupation to attract converts. However, with time, their presence has spread to other parts of the country.

## 9.7 Women Missionaries and Their Role in Education

In this section, we highlight the efforts of selected women missionaries of various denominations in the education sector in Kenya, covering various historical spaces: the Roman Catholic Missionaries, Church Mission Society (Anglican), African Inland Church, Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Methodist and Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

### 9.7.1 The Roman Catholic Missionaries

Black and white women missionaries in Kenya have provided both formal and non-formal education intending to bring up boys and girls who are responsible in society apart from achieving academic excellence. This is reflected by the numerous early childhood centers, primary and secondary schools, teachers' training colleges, and technical and secretarial colleges in different parts of the country that are led serviced by women. Njoroge and Wamuyu (2016) underscore the presence of over 150 Women's Religious Congregations whose contribution to education in both formal and non-formal institutions is immense. Some among the many include Precious Blood Sisters, Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Loreto Sisters), Assumption Sisters of Nairobi and Eldoret, Mary Immaculate Sisters of Nyeri, Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph, Franciscan Sisters of St. Ann, Little Sisters of St. Francis, and Evangelizing Sisters of Mary. Most of these sisters work in institutions of learning as teachers, secretaries, and administrators. Kinyanjui (2015) observes that in Precious Blood Sisters' school in Riruta, the sisters ensure that students are taught religious education to enable them to determine and develop their personality so that they become good citizens for the church and society.

The founder of Loreto Sisters—Mary Ward believed that women would do much if only they went through education (Loreto Sisters Eastern Africa, 2016). She is highly recognized for her contribution to education in Kenya and worldwide. Though she did not visit Kenya in person, Mary Ward founded the Sisters of Loreto group which has penetrated deep across the world offering assistance to the poor, establishing hospitals, homes, and schools. Six of the Loreto sisters came to Kenya and established Loreto Sisters East African Province. The six, Dolores Stafford, Raphael Gordon, Borgia O'Shaughnessy, Catherine Beauvais, Francis Teresa Murphy, and Sixtus Naughton, planted girls' schools in Kiambu, Mombasa, and Nairobi, which have impacted greatly female education in Kenya (Loreto Sisters Eastern Africa, 2016).

On 23 January 2021, during the 100th commemoration of Loreto East African Province, the President of Kenya, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta commended the organization for its selflessness and generosity and asked Kenyans to emulate it. He noted that its ministerial services had changed the lives of many and inspired Kenya to become a better place. He also authorized the opening of another school at Kilifi to accommodate a total of 500 girls. A total of six schools were started by the Loreto

Sisters East African Province—five of them in Kenya, and one in Tanzania (PSCU, 2021).

The schools, among them Loreto Convent Msongari, Loreto High school Limuru, Loreto Convent Mombasa, Loreto Convent Valley Road, and Loreto Kiambu High School, are among the most disciplined Catholic-sponsored schools which have mentored great leaders in Kenya Loreto Sisters Eastern Africa (2016). Wangari Maathai, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and environmentalist, Educationist Eddah Gachukia, Lady Justice Njoki Ndungu, Lady Justice Joyce Aluoch, consultant Tina Njonjo, and Journalist Julie Gichuru are some of those who passed through the hands of the Loreto Sisters (PSCU, 2021). The schools are also praised for their exemplary performance and exceptional leadership. Inspired by the spirit of their founder, Loreto institutions have welcomed girls from poor backgrounds irrespective of their race or tribe offering them a standard education, Christian principles, and shelter. Their charity also extends to the homeless and the disabled. Had it not been for the efforts made by the female missionaries who believed the “women for women effort,” many talented girls that have contributed greatly to family life, the private and public sector in Kenya and beyond would not have scaled the heights Loreto Sisters Eastern Africa (2016).

Remarkably, Sr. Ephigenia Gachiri a Loreto sister will forever be remembered for her fight against FGM. Sr. Ephigenia is the founder of Termination of Female Genital Mutilation, an organization that fights against the cruelty of female genital mutilation. She acknowledged that there is nothing wrong with wanting to belong to a community and that it was everyone’s obligation to adhere to the cultures and norms of their community. However, she detested the brutal practice that was done to young girls in the name of culture. Sr. Ephigenia had the privileged to visit initiators in their villages and watched how the ceremony was done. She believed that she could not fight against the practice if she did not know exactly what those young girls went through. The scene was not only disgusting, but it was also breathtaking. In an interview with Jo Piazza in 2015, Sr. Ephigenia expressed her agony and dilemma of wanting to change the situation and the rebellion she faced from the local leaders.

After a long 20 years of deliberation, Sr. Ephigenia considered some good practices from the community and came up with a better, practice that did not involve pain or mutilation of the genitals. She explained to Jo that the new rite included education to girls on how they were expected to behave as grown-up women, mothers, and wives. The rite made use of proverbs and songs, singing and dancing to make the young girls feel they belong to a group. She then compiled the procedures in the new rite into a book-*Christian Initiation for Girls*. The book was published by Paulines Publications Africa in 2006 in Nairobi (Gachiri 2006). The book has since been embraced by religious leaders and pastors and Sr. Ephigenia continues to spread the gospel of Christian initiation to more than 900 children a year. The book is very instrumental in the fight against the FGM. Ephigenia believes that FGM disables women sexually which inspired her campaign to stop it by creating awareness to children, the traditional circumcisers, high ranking members of the community, and parents (Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace and World affairs, 2015).

The legacy of legendary St. Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the founder of the Congregation of Sisters of Charity is manifest in Kenya. This legacy will last through ages and across the globe. Several homes have been set up in her honor to assist the poor, orphans, and disabled to enjoy their basic needs, receive education, and feel loved. Even after her death, through the members of her congregation, her impact has continued to spread with more people volunteering to help the vulnerable in the community from her inspiration. Two of the known homes started by the Sisters of Charity of Mother Theresa of Calcutta are in Huruma and Otiende, in Nairobi, Kenya. The homes were established by Missionaries of Charity which was founded by Mother Teresa in 1950 to take care of the vulnerable, the sick, the abandoned, and mentally challenged children and adults. The residents of the homes need special and some critical care which is offered by the trained and passionate sisters. The homes also host schools that offer education for street and abandoned children, and soup kitchens for the needy in the community. The schools are taught by volunteers, some of whom are sisters in the order.

There are very many other individual religious missionaries who belong to the various Catholic congregations who play special roles in the education sector. However, this chapter mentioned only a few to represent the many unheard but gallant religious women who have contributed exponentially to the success witnessed in the Kenyan education sector in many of the Catholic-sponsored schools. The critical analysis done on these few women missionaries shows that they mainly concentrated on girls' education especially at secondary schools. Perhaps this was to empower women who from the pre-colonial period were left out in the basic education agenda. These women are challenged to venture more on the provision of education in coeducational secondary schools to form both boys and girls for the twenty-first century.

### **9.7.2 Church Mission Society (Anglican)**

Women missionaries who participated in the establishment of Anglican churches in Kenya also played a great role in women's and girls' education. Ludwig Krapf and his wife Rosine Krapf were the first Anglican missionaries to arrive in Kenya. They arrived in Mombasa in 1844 (Pirouet, 1981). Rosina is recognized for the influence she had on her husband's missionary commitment. Though she died shortly after birth to her daughter who also died a few days later, her death inspired her husband to dedicate his whole life to ministry. As Ludwig narrates, his wife's life had always been one full of sacrifice for God's glory. He believed that his wife's grave could be a sermon to the passersby, so she was buried in the mainland as her wish had been. Ludwig wrote to CMS informing them of a lonely grave connected to them that would act as a sign of the beginning of the great mission of uniting Kenyans to Christ (Onyango, 2016). This humble beginning can be likened to the mustard seed, for without the vision, sacrifice, and commitment of the likes of Rosine, evangelization and the accompanying education, more so for the girls would have been in vain.



Empowering women and girls was Henry Venn's (CMS secretary) main focus in Kenya. To reach out to more women in the community, CMS decided to use African agents to evangelize to their people. This was mainly because they would be more acceptable to them than the missionaries. Besides, the local agents would communicate in the same language. The people of Mumbai, India, who had been freed from slavery were sent to Rabai to work with Johannes Rebmann after being trained in Saharanpur. Among them were four female pioneers whose husbands worked with the missionaries. Jemima Jones, Priscilla David, Grace Semler, and Polly Nyondo taught women and girls at Frere-town. Frere-town was established in 1874 to train church and society leaders (Lilechi et al., 2020). The girls were taught literacy in the morning and home science-sewing and crafting in the afternoon. The team was later joined by the first single woman Missionary, Miss Harvey in 1886, and Miss Downess who was made in charge of the girls. Later, a divinity school was established there in 1903 (Onyango, 2016). Again, the efforts of these pioneer missionary women deserve accolades.

By 1909, education for women had not gained roots in Western Kenya. A joint missionary conference was held in Kenya that resolved that girls' education should be given more emphasis. Again, the best agents who could propel this agenda were the women missionaries. Edith Hill is remembered for her great efforts toward girls' education in Maseno. She, with the help of Bishop Willis of Uganda, started the first Bible and sewing class in Maseno which became a boarding school. Miss Hill walked from one village to another recruiting girls into the school to train them into middle-class women who would eventually be married by church leaders. The ten girls she started with became the pioneers of the now-famous Maseno School (Onyango, 2016). Later on, in 1921, Miss Fanny Moller of Australia came to Maseno where she could work with the Luo women. She was requested by the then Archdeacon of Kavirondo to start a class at her home in Maseno. Miss Moller extended her passion for girls' education to the Ng'iya Mission Station where she led to the founding of Ng'iya Girls School. Mrs. Pleydell was also very instrumental in Moller's work at Ng'iya. She was the wife of the first missionary in Ng'iya, Canon Pleydell who later became Hon Canon before retiring in 1934 (Omachar, 2015, 371). At Ng'iya, the missionaries were joined by other women missionaries including Miss L. A Dodge who served from 1952, and Miss Humphrey who served from 1955. Ms. Cole who accompanied Canon to Ng'iya worked as a teacher and missionary at Ng'iya girls which was started by Miss Moller. Esta Lala was also very instrumental in Miss Moller's mission as she assisted in administrative work and stood in for her when she was away. Esta also worked in the mission as a teacher in a variety of lessons including handwork, sewing, and bible lessons (Walaba, 2009, 61).

Miss Moller is recognized for her great interest in girls' education which she fulfilled by establishing the Ng'iya girls' school, which has grown to become one of the best Girls' National schools in the region. She was more successful because at Maseno she had learned the Luo language and had mingled with the blacks. Besides, she was sociable which made her more acceptable among the people (Omachar, 2015, 372). She became the first principal of Ng'iya Girls' and served between 1923



and 1952. Miss Moller was commended by the education secretary in 1951, the C.M.S. Archdeacon, and Sir Philip Mitchell for her dedication and selfless service for God at Ng'inya. Besides the Girls' school, Miss Moller initiated the establishment of a boys' school and a teachers' training college (Barasa, 2013).

Mrs. Olive Owen also joined the team at Ng'inya where she taught and counseled senior girls in the boarding school. She continued the work of *Buch Mikayi* because the founders, Moller and Pleydell, were occupied with other responsibilities. *Buch Mikayi* was a senior wives' forum that offered young girls empowerment and mentorship for leadership. *The forum* played a great role in empowering women and liberating them from cultural oppressions like early marriages and widow inheritance. The young girls were taught sex education which gave them the power to resist sexual abuse, guarded them against unwanted pregnancy, and protected them from polygamous and early marriages. It was a platform in which women expressed their grievances, their experiences, and complaints, and the right action was taken. The women leaders in this platform presented the issues affecting them to the church and suggested appropriate action, thus they became part of the decision-making in the church. The platform also encouraged women to respect their marriages and contributed funds for charity (Onyango, 2016, 20). From *Buch Mikayi*, the beneficiaries would be commissioned to go and educate other girls and also induct their younger sisters into the organization and pay for their education.

Another missionary, Jane Elizabeth Chadwick started a class in Butere where she taught writing, reading, bible lessons, sewing, and catechism. The first students and catechumens became agents of mission and through them, many girls joined the school. These girls were later employed as teaching assistants and peer evangelists. The school has grown from a mere day school to a boarding school, to secondary school, and ultimately to a national school from 2012. The school is now famously known as Butere Girls' High school, one of the best performing schools and the mother of great women in Kenya including Amina Mohamed, Grace Ogot, and Joyce Aluoch (Omulokoli, 2011).

Other Anglican women missionaries also trained teachers and leaders who also worked as evangelists, for example, Mary Leakey and Alice Higginbotham who established girls' education in Kabete. The mission also acted as a rescue center for women who were oppressed in their society. Phyllis Wambui was the first convert in the mission and she became Mary's assistant. Also, Nora Norman worked with McGregor in Weithaga along with other local women leaders—Esther Njeri, Grace Njoki, Elizabeth Mbatia, Edith Nyambura, Kezia Nyambura, and Esther Wangari (Onyango, 2016).

Gladys Beecher, Harry Leakey's daughter married Dr. Leonard Beecher—the Anglican Bishop of Mombasa and became the first female National Vice President of the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA). She and her husband wrote an English-Kikuyu dictionary. She greatly influenced the work of the Mother's union whose main focus was vocational training for those who did not complete school and adults who had not been to school (Onyango, 2016). The mothers' Union is a household name in contemporary Kenya. Their influence goes beyond the confines of the Anglican Church.

Celebrate author, Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye another of the Anglican missionaries is remembered for her great contribution to Kenyan education and literature. She was known as the “mother of literature” for her prowess in poetry and literary works (Ilieva & Odiemo-Munara, 2015). She was a missionary, a novelist, and a poet. She came to Kenya as a bookseller after independence and shortly started pursuing her career as an author. She was married to a Doctor from Nyanza known as Daniel Oludhe Macgoye. Marjorie won many awards for the majority of her works with the most notable being “Coming to Birth.” In her novels, Marjorie depicts the life of Kenyan women living in her time (Ilieva & Odiemo-Munara, 2015). Macgoye has made a great contribution to the literary scene. Some of her books have been recommended for set books in secondary schools; hence, her influence has been immense for both girls and boys in education.

Some of her works include *Coming to Birth*, *Growing Up at Lina School*, *The Present Moment*, *Murder in Majengo*, *Homing in*, *Street Life*, *Victoria and Murder in Majengo*, *Chira*, *Song of Nyarloka and Other Poems*, and *A Farm called Kishinev*. Her literary works aimed to inspire the Kenyan woman to go out and shine in education, family, and leadership. She has insisted that women have a great role to play in society and that they ought to be involved in the decision-making and development of society. To her, women are very intelligent and if this intelligence would be used in problem-solving in society, a great impact could be realized in the economy.

The few Church Mission Society women missionaries highlighted above took different approaches to contribute to education in Kenya. These ranged from starting formal schools, coming up with a mothers’ union that aimed at vocational training, to the writing of books to educate the community against oppressive culture. These women took advantage of their positions or gifts to contribute to education in the country and that is why their efforts need to be made known to motivate the present missionaries not to tire in the noble task of providing quality education. Their contribution in essence helps Kenya work toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals especially goal number four (4) of quality of education. Consequently, the visible and hidden functions of education as advanced by functionalist theorists are still propagated. The only question that remains unanswered is: Are the young adequately prepared on how to use media social networks that is increasingly challenging them?

### **9.7.3 African Inland Church (AIC)**

Female Circumcision was a rampant practice among the Kikuyu community. Notably, all girls were required to be circumcised between the age of 12 and 15 to be accepted into adulthood. This practice was highly treasured by both men and women in society. However, the white people perceived it as a threat to the advancement of their mission work and despised it greatly. The fight against the ritual was not taken lightly by the Kikuyu community who saw it as a scheme to overturn their culture. In 1930, a missionary woman of AIC, Huldah Jane Stumpf was murdered at her home near the African Inland Mission station in Kijabe. Stumpf, an American

Christian Missionary, had been working in Kijabe Girls' Home and Training School as a secretary and administrator from 1908 to 1930. Some historians say that she was killed due to her firm stand against Female Circumcision in the missionary school (Karanja, 2009).

Kijabe Girls' Home and Training School acted as a rescue Centre for girls who refused to be circumcised and Stumpf taught them literacy skills, sewing, agriculture, and Bible lessons. The African Inland Church had prohibited Female Circumcision and threatened to excommunicate African converts who continued to adhere to the practice. Stumpf also took a stand against Female Circumcision at the school, expelling girls whose parents still held to the culture. To the missionaries, it was sinful to support female circumcision which resulted in thorough punishment or expulsion. At around 1924, Muchai, a teacher at Kijabe Girls', was permanently excommunicated from teaching and was required to confess the sin and sign the oath of loyalty against the practice. Five years later, four teachers were arrested for joining the community in protests against the abolition of female circumcision through *Muthirigu*. *Muthirigu* was a dancing song lead by Kikuyu leaders to ridicule the missionaries and uncircumcised girls. The Kikuyu leaders (Kirore revolt) mobilized the locals to dance outside the Kijabe mission station in 1929 to protest against a loyalty oath that was being administered by AIM. Even teachers and church members who had rejected the female circumcision did not support this oath and they joined the *Muthirigu*. This led to the arrest of the four teachers, while 90 percent of the teachers refused to sign the oath (Young, 2017).

As if withdrawing was not enough, on January 3, 1930, Stumpf was found dead in her house by Kakoi her servant. It was alleged that Stumpf had been raped and mutilated, but Helen Virginia Blakeslee a fellow missionary disputed it stating that she had visited and examined her as the second witness and found out that she had been brutalized strangled on the neck, but there were no signs of rape or mutilation of her private parts. Besides, no evidence was presented to guarantee that the murder was over her stand against Female Circumcision. Helen Virginia Blakeslee was an Osteopath and is remembered for her books—"Beyond the Kikuyu Curtain (1956)" and "Conflict with Darkness: A story of God's love among the MAU (1957)." The books present the history of Kenya in and before the colonial period, with an emphasis on the Kikuyu community (Karanja, 2009).

The AIM loyalty oath led to great resistance by the Kikuyu community. Most girls resumed their homes while others joined other missionary homes. When the government realized that it would be difficult if not impossible to ban Female Circumcision, they decided to regularize it by exerting a new policy to reduce its severity (Young, 2017). The new policy required that the practice be carried out in missionary hospitals, and only part of the clitoris be cut under anesthesia. British Women Members of Parliament, Duchess of Atholl, and Eleanor Rathbone campaigned against Female Circumcision, stating that the torture against female sexuality was a sign of gender inequality and that it was discriminatory. By controlling Female Circumcision, they believed, more women would attain education and be empowered to participate in the development of the country (Anderson, 2018). Other women missionaries decided to impact the lives of girls by introducing

schools where more and more girls who were willing to be saved from Female Circumcision and early marriage could receive formal education and become self-reliant. Perhaps these women missionaries without knowing were confirming the functionalist theory that schools ought to play a role of tooling the young with academic knowledge and values to prepare them for economic roles in the society.

Could it ought to be appreciated that Female Circumcision was not just the cut? The ritual included deep wide socialization which was well-meaning and with good intention, which was overlooked and lost with the abolition of the practice. It ought to be appreciated that Female Circumcision, though controversial, is one actual practice that propelled to lift the status of African women, and through it, some critical remedial measures through formal and non-formal education were taken for the good of the women.

#### **9.7.4 Church of Scotland Mission (Presbyterian Church of East Africa)**

Marion Scott Stevenson, a Scottish Missionary with the Church of Scotland Mission, now known as the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, is the founder of Tumutumu Girls' High School in Karatina. She worked with Kikuyu Mission at Thogoto and later for the Tumutumu mission in Karatina. The school is today among the best performing national schools in Central Kenya. At the school, she taught knitting, sewing, and hygiene. She also trained teachers and worked in the missionary hospital. She also helped to translate the Bible to Kikuyu. Stevenson worked in Kenya from 1907 to 1929 and died in 1930 in Glasgow, United Kingdom (Scott, 1932). Before her death, she taught Raheli Warigia (the mother of Gakaara wa Wanjau a Kikuyu writer) who came together with other women from the Tumutumu area to form the "Shield of Young Girls," an organization that protected girls from Female Circumcision and ensured that they got an education. The group advocated that one should be allowed to choose her way whether to go through circumcision or not without dictation on her own body.

The first institution for higher secondary education for African girls was Alliance Girls' High School. The school was founded in 1948 by the Alliance of Protestant Missions, of which the Presbyterian Church was a key member. The school is known for its academic excellence and remains to be one of the most eyed national schools in Kenya. It was first headed by women missionaries as principals before Joan Waithaka took over as the first African principal. Jean Wilkinson and Mary Bruce laid a strong foundation for academic excellence between 1948 and 1968 which has been maintained by succeeding principals. The school mothered great women leaders in Kenya including Lucy Kibaki, Sally Kosgei, and Charity Ngilu among others (Alliance Girls High School Prospectus, 2011).

Missionary work has continued to this day in Kenya with many women missionaries coming either as independent missionaries or accompanying their missionary husbands. An example of the latter is Linda Ross, the wife of Stu Ross. Stu and Linda Ross joined the Outreach Foundation's East African in 2001 where they

worked tirelessly with the Presbyterian Church to promote education and fight against female circumcision. The two assisted in setting up big and medium Presbyterian churches, orphanages, and water projects with the help of other visiting missionaries. The Presbyterian Church believes in educating children to make a better tomorrow. As a result, the structures they put up acted as schools during the week and churches on Sundays (The Outreach Foundation, 2012). The Ross family encouraged the churches to start establishing schools by building two classes for each completed church. The churches were required to get some land where the classrooms could be built, then the couple, with the help of other missionaries would help build the two classrooms, and the church would progressively build the rest. An example is Karai orphanage and primary school, and Kimuka Girls' School. Kimuka Girls' school was started in 2008 and the first class graduated in 2012 (The Outreach Foundation, 2012).

The Ross realized that circumcision of girls continued long after the colonial times in some parts of the country. Girls were still married off at tender ages and to polygamous men. Many girls had to leave school as soon as a suitor was identified for them. Linda Ross was in the front line to fight against Female Circumcision. With her husband, they started rescue centers, schools, and water projects to enable the girls to go through school. Currently, Stu Ross is the Outreach Foundation's East Africa Mission Consultant. He partners with the Mission Projects Committee of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) to strengthen the church's mission. He has managed to save hundreds of girls, planted more than 300 churches, and 250 schools. Recently, libraries were added to some of these schools in the memory of his wife Linda Ross (The Outreach Foundation, 2016).

Like other missionaries, education has been the key target of many missionary groups because through education, the missionaries have been able to instill their values to the young ones and convert them to Christianity. Throughout history, women have been in the front line and specially to ensure that girls acquire education and are protected from the oppressing practices of their society. The above-mentioned examples show vividly that women missionaries in the history of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) have played a great role in education and will continue to partner with the Ministry of Education to provide quality education in their sponsored or owned schools.

### **9.7.5 Kenya Methodists**

The first Women Methodist Missionaries also played a great role in the development of women and girls' education in Meru. They led to the establishment of Kaaga Girls' High schools through the supervision of Bertha Jones. The women missionaries went door to door seeking to recruit girls in the school and liberating them from the oppressive cultures of early marriage, circumcision, and male domination (Mugo, 2012). It was quite necessary to have a door-to-door campaign to ensure that girls at the time were offered education. Perhaps, the missionaries were guided by the saying: If you educate a woman, you educate a nation.

Notably, Miss Violet Taylor played a great role in the establishment of bush schools and model schools in Igembe. Taylor, a missionary and educationist, was appointed by the Foreign Missionary Committee to come to Kaaga where she could help in establishing and organizing girls' education. She established a strong foundation for the Methodist Mission in Meru. Miss Taylor worked closely with W. H. Laughton who was appointed to coordinate education in Meru. Their work spread so first and most villages had a bush school. Kaaga Boys' and Kaaga Girls' were started under their coordination as model schools, of which the bush schools were to emulate. In the model schools, students were taught to disregard their traditional beliefs and embrace the Western religion, dress code, eating habits, and conduct. The missionaries visited the bush schools so often to ensure that they were adhering to the requirements of the curriculum that dictated that students should be taught the four pillars adopted by Methodist missionaries, academics, health, artisan, and evangelical training.

To be remembered also is Mrs. John Houghton a missionary who was murdered with her husband during a raid of the Methodist Mission Station at Golbanti. Despite the challenges, they faced with the Maasai warriors and Muslims, and the death of the two missionaries, the Methodist mission went ahead to establish a successful mission school at Ngao. Many girls' schools have been established by Methodist Church in Kenya but, unfortunately, the role of women in education has not been adequately recognized. Very little is recorded of the contribution of women in education.

### 9.7.6 Seventh-Day Adventist Church

The Seventh-Day Adventist Missionaries in Kenya first settled in Gendia Hill, Rusinga Island, Kisii, and Kamagambo. Most of the missionaries were men, but like with other missionary groups, women accompanied their missionary husbands and acted as a helping hand in the missionary work. An example is Helen Bruce Thomson who accompanied her husband in the establishment of the first missionary station-Gendia Mission station in 1907. Later, they opened other colleges and institutions including Kamagambo Teachers' College and Nyanchwa Technical College (Getui, 1985). Fredrick. E. Schlehuber was the principal of Kamagambo Teacher's College after Rex Pearson and was also assisted by his wife in teaching typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping courses in the college (Amayo, 1973).

Mildred Oakes was the wife of Warren W. Oakes who succeeded Fredrick E. Schlehuber. She was a nurse by profession and assisted in the college dispensary, which was a great contribution to student learning. Mrs. Grace Robinson was the wife of the late Virgil Robinson who served as a principal from 1948 to 1958 at Kamagambo and she taught at the school until 1969. She was appointed the head of the teachers' training section after the mission established primary and secondary school sections. Kisii land was well-favored in missionary education and that catalyzed the spread of Adventism (Owino et al., 2017). There were also single women missionaries who worked in the institutions. An example is Miss Vera M. Lauderdale

who succeeded Miss Schuil as the director of Kamagambo Teachers' College and served from 1951 to 1961 (Amayo, 1973).

Lois Folkenberg and Beverly Pottle (n.d) are credited for compiling Missionary Manna, a cookbook adapted to East Africa. The book contains recipes provided by a host of missionary women with the hope that it would bring enjoyable, balanced, and nutritious meals to their tables. This undated book is popular among Seventh-Day Adventists and non-Seventh-Day Adventists recipe enthusiasts. The publisher, Africa Herald Publishing House has indicated under Acknowledgment that "... There has been a growing demand since it (Missionary Manna) was first produced and this publishing house has agreed to reprint and stock it as long as it is required."

This effort of the Seventh-Day Adventist missionaries has a bearing on nutrition, diet, and health which are closely related to and linked to education, in the sense that education opens the individual to new ideas. The table of content has appetizers and beverages; bread; breakfast cereal and fruit; desserts; entrees; jellies, pickles and relish; preserving; salads and dressings; savory sauces soups and sandwiches; vegetables; miscellaneous; abbreviations; glossary of terms used in East Africa; weights and measures; approximate oven temperature guide; useful hints; cooking substitutions; hints for preserving cut flowers; herbs and spices; glossary of cooking methods and terms; and index.

The book also contains Recipe for a Happy Missionary:

*1 cup consideration*

*1 cup courtesy*

*2 cups flattery, carefully concealed*

*2 cups of milk of human kindness*

*1-gallon faith in God and others*

*2 cups praise*

*1 pinch visitors*

*1 reasonable helpmate (optional)*

*A generous dash of cooperation*

*3 teaspoons pure extract of "I am sorry"*

*1 cup contentment*

*1 cup each: confidence, encouragement, helpfulness, and interest in others*

*1 large or several small hobbies*

*1 cup blindness to others' faults*

*1 trustworthy servant (optional)*

Looking keenly at the recipe, we observe qualities and values that educate us on how to live lives of harmony. Happiness is brought about by forgiveness, accepting one's mistakes, showing interest in others, being kind to others based on faith in God. Such education makes one fit in a society where they become trustworthy servants.

Another aspect of the recipe of happiness is "Flavor with frequent portions of recreation and a dash of happy memories. Stir well and remove any specks of jealousy, temper, or criticism. Sweeten well with generous portions of love and keep warm with a steady flame of devotion. Never serve with a cold shoulder or hot tongue."



This recipe for a happy missionary applies to all human relationship situations; hence, the beneficiaries are myriad. It is noteworthy that the recipe takes cognition of the single because many of the women missionaries were single by choice or circumstance. Indeed, the recipe is educative, not just for the missionary but for all people, the principles therein are timeless. The recipe may also be used in hospitality classes to train people on healthy cooking.

Again, the recipe book, the nursing, and women being there for their husbands as they carried out their missionary work in schools, churches, hospitals, and other facilities show that the work of a missionary woman was not limited. Whether directly or indirectly, the impact of missionary women's work cannot be understated because through their support, the missionary efforts have yielded great success as is evidenced by the great transformations wrought by educated women.

From the previous sections of the chapter, it is clear that education is a system within a system as advanced by functionalist theory. Women missionaries too, being part of the society, have played their part in the provision of education to propagate the manifest and hidden functions of education. The socialization carried out in the formal schools and the inculcating of societal values and norms such as team work, social solidarity, hospitality, hard work, and patriotism are manifested in the graduates of the schools. Although the formal schools followed common curriculum, the schools linked to women missionaries endeavored to set norms that were expected of the young to subscribe to and were specific to their respective schools or non-formal centers.

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## 9.8 Conclusion

From the discussion above, it is apparent that women missionaries have been and are major contributors to the informal, non-formal, and formal sectors of education, which in essence means that generally, they have broadly contributed to all the key sectors of society, directly and indirectly. Each of these three arms of education is important and each should be accorded due significance. Indeed, the three can be likened to the African hearth of three cooking stones. They support each other, and no meal will be forthcoming if the three stones are not in sync.

For various reasons such as cultural patriarchy, the contribution of women in education and other sectors of society has not been highly publicized. This article is an effort to indicate that many behind-the-scenes silent movers ought to be acknowledged, recognized, and celebrated. Publicity of positive contribution is an eye-opener, a motivator, an encourager, and setting the record straight as it were.

The behind-the-scenes and silent mover role goes with sacrifice, vision, commitment, and compassion. These are invaluable human virtues that need to be cultivated and nurtured for the good of the individual and the wider community.

The women missionaries have not only focused on the education of the girl child but generally the education of the community, including that of the boy child. An example is the establishment of Ng'iya Boys' and Kaaga Boys' Schools which women contributed greatly. Education should thus be all-inclusive, catering to every individual's needs regardless of gender.

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