

Pioneer Friends *Harambee* Schools in Western Kenya: The Case of Mable and Chavakali Schools

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Abstract

Friends African Mission (FAM) set forth an education department to train corps of African teachers- evangelists. The pioneer teacher-evangelists formed the basis of a new Luhyia elite that helped transform Luhyia society. And as education became more relevant in the emerging colonial structure, African Christians began to demand for more schools, learning in English and higher education, at a pace that neither the government nor the missionaries could match. Consequently, African Christians began thinking of establishing government and missionary supported independent schools. The case of the proposed Mbale School and the successive establishment of Chavakali day secondary school illustrate this point. The influence of the Chavakali experiment on secondary education in Kenya was deep and lasting, because it revealed what local self-help could achieve.

1.1 Introduction

The Friends African Mission (FAM) was the first Christian mission to establish a station in western Kenya, at Kaimosi, in 1902. By 1918, FAM had expanded its area of operation by establishing new Christian stations at Vihiga among the Maragoli, Lirhandanda among the Isukha and Idakho, Lugulu among the Bukusu and Tachoni and Malava, among the Kabras. It was from these five stations that the FAM missionaries hoped to transform Luhyia culture, and make converts for Christ. According to the FAM missionaries, Christianity was the best method of “civilization”; it was assumed that that the western Christian world represented the highest form of civilization and therefore the missionaries considered it their responsibility to extend this high civilization to the peoples who had none or very low ones. Evangelization and civilization were, therefore, considered inseparable and conversion to Christianity would involve not only an acceptance of the gospel, but also the adoption of western culture. The converts were expected to abandon their traditional ways of life and pattern their new Christian existence in accordance with norms which they would learn from the mission station (EAYM, 1904:2).

In order to achieve the above ideals the FAM missionaries came with the idea of an industrial mission. The importance of the industrial mission, by pioneer FAM missionaries was the recognition that the religious goal of conversion must be accompanied by secular efforts to “improve” African standards of living. In other words, the FAM missionaries believed that a secular policy would complement spiritual work. Consequently, the missionaries established four secular departments as an enticement to conversion. These departments included education and the establishment of schools, the focus of this article.

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1.2 FAM Education Policy

Since its inception, the FAM had set forth the provision of education as one of its major responsibilities. 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 (Hotchkiss, 1902:148).

For the FAM missionaries, “a very close relation can be seen between evangelistic and educational work”. FAM reports of 1904 indicated that,

While educating the native does not Christianize him, yet it is mostly through teaching that opportunity is afforded of making a direct and effective appeal to the native, to leave his old life and live for Christ (EAYM, 1904: 1)

FAM Missionaries thus felt converts needed “literacy to read the Bible and to serve as teacher-evangelists” (Kay, 1973:89).

FAM’s educational system heavily borrowed from the American Negro education philosophy of Booker T. Washington. At his Tuskegee College, Washington had taught his black students skills and attitudes that he thought would help them succeed in an environment of increasing racial violence and discrimination. He prepared his black students for “productive, profitable work” that focused on the everyday practical needs of life. His education was thus aimed at making them succeed in those occupations that the dominant white people needed them to fill, in the process hopefully winning white acceptance (Kay, 1973: 90). This Tuskegee philosophy fitted very well into the FAM’s idea about training Africans to transform their own society, apolitically and from the bottom up at a slow, evolutionary pace .

The FAM missionaries were chiefly concerned with reaching the youth, although they always consented to educate everyone who showed an interest in learning. The emphasis on the youth was due to the belief that young people were less entrenched in traditional beliefs and activities and, therefore, more open to persuasion and new ideas. Initially, though, FAM missionaries were forced to start working with the people who were close at hand, for example, the workers at Kaimosi station (EAYM, 1905:2).

The initial growth of school facilities was not spectacular. But by 1912, Kaimosi, Vihiga, Lirhanda and Lugulu mission stations had established one school each and were providing daily classes. By 1919, however, reports 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”(Kay, 1973:99). FAM was by this time trying to manage a rapidly expanding school network of educational programme consisting of 54 schools and nearly 4,000 pupils. These FAM 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, 1973:100).

This expansion can be explained by several factors. First, was the work of chiefs and headmen; between 1902 and the end of the First World War, local chiefs and headmen were put under government orders to assist the missionaries and in compliance with this directive, the new local leaders proved friendly and helpful to the Friends missionaries in the recruitment of pupils. Second, was the influence of teacher – evangelists; these pioneer Christians established Christian villages, which they used not only to house the increasing number of converts, but also as centres of new innovations, particularly the development of education. Third, was the First World War; the war had shown that Africans could only compete effectively in the colonial situation if they acquired western religion and hence, education. And fourth, was the development of Christian villages in the 1920s; when these communities of converts were formed, they immediately began to organize schools, only relying on local headmen for permission to occupy land. Consequently, the 1920s onwards witnessed Luhyia Friends demands for more schools, at a pace that neither the government nor the missionaries could match. But in their demands and threats to establish independent schools, the Luhyia could not do without the support of both FAM and the colonial government.

Two reasons account for this. First, there were political and economic difficulties militating against the establishment of independent schools, since the government was channelling all educational grants-in-aid through the missions. Secondly, the Luhyia Friends also enjoyed considerable leverages in the process through which the FAM 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 Luhyia FAM educational committee members in advancement of education, Local Native Councils (LNC) education resolutions and initiatives, threats of desertion to other missions, requests for funds and financial leverage all contributed to the evolution of FAM and government educational policies. Consequently, throughout 1930s, Luhyia Friends continued to push for more educational advancement within the FAM, so that on the eve of the Second World War, the mission could report 316 schools catering for over 20, 402 pupils, by far the largest system of mass education in North Nyanza (KNA, MSS/ 54/67 1938:1).

In spite of their numbers, African FAM educational committee members, alongside LNC Friends councillors, continued to issue new educational demands, such as teacher training, English instruction and more advanced education. Africans' ability to translate threats into actions also enabled them to exercise real and effective leverage within the FAM educational system. Two case studies namely, the Mbale and Chavakali Schools, among the Maragoli, illustrate this point.

1.3 The Mbale School

The proposal to establish a school at Mbale deserves to be ranked as the most striking example of educational initiative in Luhyialand, in the inter-war period. Reports indicated that this proposal,

Was initiated in 1926, with the intention of providing elementary day school, where literary work shall be given up to the standard of vernacular examination or standard IV(KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/9, 1927:1).

The project was sponsored by the Mbale Quarterly Meeting (established in 1923) and although signifying dissatisfaction with mission control, it welcomed FAM support and included religious instruction in its

curriculum. At this time, African Christians still exercised initiative along denominational lines and the Friends could not easily conceive of a school entirely separate from the church. In February 1927, a 13 member Maragoli delegation led by two of the chiefs of Maragoli locations, William Mnubi and Paulo Agoi, presented their vision before Ernest Webb, the government inspector of schools and H. O. Weller, the government supervisor of technical education at Vihiga. The Maragoli delegation proposed to build and run a school with technical instruction and suggested teaching agriculture, carpentry, shoe-making and tailoring. Weller was impressed with this proposal and suggested that the Maragoli should be given the school, first, due to the high population of the area, and secondly, as evidence of their economic prosperity and religious enthusiasm. He proposed that this request be handled fast, noting that, "I should not be associated with refusal of the demand or even with delay in complying with it" (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/9, 1927:1).

Encouraged by this reaction, Maragoli Friends selected a school site at Mbale, and raised Sh. 2,000 to start off the project. However, A.E Charrier, the acting North Kavirondo DC, did not share the same enthusiasm with his educational officers. He opposed the plan, on several grounds. First, the DC argued that,

The LNC had not been consulted. If a precedent is made in the establishment of such a school it is probable that the Maragoli Natives will wish to use the education rate for their own location thus there is a danger of the whole of the finance of the LNC being upset (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/9, 1927:1).

The DC argued that since the LNC had not been consulted the decision to allow the Mbale School would undermine the authority of the LNC and would create an undesirable precedent, splitting the LNC into a series of camps, each wanting to spend money on its own location.

Secondly, the DC argued that this was a sectarian move by the FAM adherents, which the FAM mission did not support. He noted that,

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the promoters are all Friends African mission adherents and Mr Chilson is not aware of the proposed financial side of the scheme. I have mentioned to him that you estimate it at £5,000 and he told me that the maximum amount which would be raised voluntarily would not exceed £2,000 (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/9, 1927:1).

Besides, FAM missionaries opposed the development of a school which would not be under European supervision. Chilson, therefore, incited other North Kavirondo councillors to oppose it, in return for his support for an LNC funded school for all the Luhya (EAYM, 1928:1).

Thirdly, the DC further argued that the Mbale School scheme would be detrimental to the proposed central school at Kakamega. He noted that,

This school was put before the School Area Committee after it had discussed and approved the scheme for the Central School. Consequently, it's easy to follow why Paul Agoi opposed the resolution in the LNC meeting to raise £10,000 for the central school at Kakamega (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/9, 1927:1).

Further, the DC argued that,

To raise £10,000 it's necessary to introduce a Shs. 3 rate over the whole of North Kavirondo. In this scheme Maragoli are presumably expected to raise £5,000 by the so called voluntary subscription (KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/1/9, 1927:1).

In 1925, the North Nyanza LNC had requested that a central primary school be built at Kakamega. This school was opened in 1932, with a technical bias and with a graduated system of schooling that was selective and competitive, rather than community-sponsored mass education. The school increased the chances of Africans to acquire better education, as English and mathematics were taught. As such, Kakamega School threatened the existence of mission schools among the Luhya. This was a clear warning to the FAM that Africans could do without missionary schools.

The refusal by the government and the FAM to support the Maragoli proposal spelt doom for the project. Instead, the government established a 'B' school at Mbale in Maragoli, to provide both literary and technical training. This was a compromise solution simultaneously meeting the principal educational demands of the Maragoli Friends, along with those of the colonial administrators and the missionaries (Amatsimbi, 2009:53).

1.4 The Chavakali School

It should be noted that in the decade preceding independence, African Friends' key educational concern was the creation of greater opportunities for post-primary education. Once the Beecher Report had assured a large primary and intermediate school system, and with the Africans' manipulation of its guidelines into near universal primary education, the scene of the battle then shifted to secondary education. By 1953, for instance, FAM was either directly or indirectly involved in the education of 40,000 pupils. There were 92 aided primary schools, 20 aided intermediate schools, an embryo secondary school at Kaimosi and two teacher training centres. In addition, there existed between 200 and 300 unaided primary schools, all started by African Friends (Amatsimbi, 2009: 237).

The emerging picture, therefore, was that there was a large number of primary schools contributing pupils to a smaller number of intermediate schools which, in turn, contributed pupils to a smaller number of secondary schools. It was this situation that forced the Luhya Friends to demand for more secondary schools, from both the government and the mission. However, problems arose from the fact that Africans clearly wanted more secondary schools than the Beecher Report had recommended. Educational officers argued that African leaders had little regard for the economic consequences of creating more schools. The escalating educational expenses of the African District Councils (ADCs) confirmed this fear. Furthermore, after 1953 funds for secondary school expansion became limited, largely due to the government's diversion of funds to combating the Mau Mau.

The Mau Mau insurgency, seen as a Kikuyu revolt against the colonial government, was specifically blamed on Kikuyu independent schools, which were widely believed to have become centres of sedition. Consequently, during the emergency many independent schools were closed. But on the other hand, there were political implications to consider. Although the colonial government argued that uncontrolled and unsupervised expansion might breed a similar upheaval elsewhere in the country, it would be equally dangerous for the administration to appear to be deliberately blocking African educational progress (Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1953: 26).

Government officials were thus willing to lend a cautious ear to the proposals to establish new schools and even encouraged some independent schools to open, if they promised to avoid the alleged extremes of the Kikuyu independent schools, and if they desisted from asking for additional funding from the government. Government officials further encouraged missions to tame political activism of the Mau Mau type, through instilling Christian spiritual development into the Africans' education. The Department of Education, for instance, asked FAM to reconsider establishing a technical school at Kaimosi, ostensibly to help counteract the undesirable effects that academic studies were alleged to produce in Africans (EAYM, 1954: 2)

Meanwhile, the southern Luhyia, particularly the Maragoli and the Tiriki, had their own thoughts about secondary education. Fred Kamidi, for instance, argued that,

Parents were willing to sacrifice all, in order to provide education for their children.

Many boys and girls who complete standard 8 cannot all secure admission to secondary schools, because of the limited number of places available. In the whole of North Nyanza there is only one secondary school to cater for 50 intermediate schools (KNA, MSS/54/150, 1957: 1).

Indeed, the decision to transfer Kaimosi Boys' secondary school to Kamusinga - about 100 kilometres away - increased the scarcity of secondary school places in the southern locations "if and when admissions to the secondary schools are zoned". For instance, there were a total of 15 intermediate schools in Maragoli, Tiriki and Nyang'ori locations, which alone produced "600 pupils. If half the places in Kakamega Government African School were to be made available, only 30 pupils from these schools could expect admissions" (KNA, MSS/54/150, 1957: 1). There was, therefore, a strong case for the establishment of a secondary school for this area. Although FAM had boys attending Kakamega Secondary School and both Alliance and Maseno High Schools - through an agreement among the members of the Christian Council of Kenya, an umbrella body formed by protestant missions to promote Christian education and training, among other objectives - by 1955, there were still far more FAM intermediate school leavers who could not find a place in a secondary school. For example, of the pupils in the lower classes at Kaimosi's Secondary School - before it was moved in 1957 - two-thirds could not find a seat in a senior secondary school class. Consequently, the southern Luhyia, particularly the Maragoli, under the leadership of their chief Matthew Mwenesi, began to look for ways of establishing new secondary schools. One of these schools was the Chavakali Friends Boys' Secondary School (KNA, MSS/54/150, 1957: 1).

The Chavakali School was the culmination of Maragoli attempts, since the 1920s, to establish their own advanced school. A change in leadership had brought the Maragoli a new chief, who led the drive for the establishment of a secondary school that would exclusively serve his area. Matthew Mwenesi was appointed the chief of North Maragoli location in 1956, when Chief Paul Agoi retired. At this time, the combined Maragoli Location was divided into two locations because government officials felt that its population of over 100,000 was far too large for one administrator. A former Friends teacher and Maragoli Education Board (MEB) Chairman, Mwenesi became the first Makerere College - trained teacher to be appointed a chief among the Luhyia. He came to the job feeling that because he was well educated, he had to prove to both the colonial government and his constituency that he could do something more with his education. First, the new chief tried to encourage agricultural improvements, but when this proved unrewarding, due to small land holdings, he turned his effort to education. In 1957, Mwenesi initiated among the Maragoli the idea of establishing a day secondary school to serve their area - since the one at Kaimosi had been moved. His idea was picked up by the Maragoli Location Advisory Council, which resolved to build a day secondary school. But Mwenesi, realizing that many independent school initiatives had failed in the past, sought the co-operation of the FAM (KNA, MSS/54/150, 1957:2).

At first, the colonial officials in Nyanza and Nairobi gave the proposal lukewarm support. The acting Senior Education Officer for Nyanza Province, A.F Bull, felt that the Maragoli could not possibly raise the large sum of Sh. 100,000 needed to start off the school, though he was impressed by their ambition. Although EAYM and FAM officials strongly lobbied for the idea, perhaps the most interesting tactic originated from Chief Mwenesi himself. While the governor of the colony was touring North Nyanza District, Mwenesi arranged to have all the Maragoli pupils in primary schools line up along the governor's route, and as the governor passed by, the pupils would shout "we want a secondary school". Whether as a direct result of this display or not, the proposal soon won approval in Nairobi and was next forwarded to the Colonial Office in London (Kay, 1973: 276).

However, while Whitehall deliberated, the Maragoli acted. Chief Mwenesi first sought assistance from the North Nyanza ADC, but this body balked at providing funds for what they deemed to be a purely Maragoli venture, arguing that if the school was to be a day school, only the Maragoli children in its vicinity would be able to attend. Mwenesi then sought and gained permission from the ADC to levy an annual tax of Sh.12.50 from each family in Maragoli for four years, to raise a total of Sh 100,000. Chief William Shivachi, whose neighbouring Idakho location bordered North Maragoli, also agreed to have part of his location taxed to support the day secondary school (KNA, MSS/54/150, 1957: 2).

It was in this setting that the Friends Chavakali School began. Indeed, FAM missionaries were "conscious of the limited number of Africans who found their way to secondary schools and were doubtful about the strictly academic curriculum which these schools had adopted" (Stabler, 1969:120). Earlier, in 1956 Fred Reeve (FAM missionary) while on home leave had talked to Friends at Earlham College - a Quaker College in Richmond, Indiana, United States of America (USA) - about the need for technical and agricultural education in Kenya, rather than pure academic learning. Though interested, Earlham officials had neither the funds nor the staff to undertake an independent assistance programme. Consequently, Tom Jones, Earlham's President, approached the International Cooperation Administration (ICA) to secure funding for the Chavakali project (EAYM, 1960:1)

ICA had been formed in 1953 by the USA government, as an independent government agency to consolidate the country's economic and technical assistance on a world-wide basis. The ICA administered aid for economic, political and social development purposes through the Development Loan Fund (DLF), which acted as its (ICA) lending arm. The DLF's primary function was to extend loans for financing capital projects and technical assistance. Tom Jones also conferred with officials of the British Embassy in Washington and USA State Department, about funding of the Chavakali project.

In July 1958, Landrum Bolling, the new president of Earlham College, visited Kenya, "for on- the-spot discussion with the British, the Africans and members of FAM". During his visit, Bolling conferred with FAM, EAYM and chief Agoi, about American assistance in African education. Bolling and Reeve then submitted a memorandum to the officials at Ministry of Education of their intention to set up a day secondary school. The plan, to establish the colony's first day secondary school in Maragoli, would blend features of the traditional secondary schools with those from American rural high schools. Specifically, the new school would teach agriculture and industrial arts, with emphasis placed on application and demonstration, rather than on theory. The school would, therefore, be geared to training boys for a livelihood in the rural areas, rather than urban careers (EAYM, 1960:2).

The government of Kenya approved the proposal and forwarded it to the Colonial Office in London. A contract between Earlham and ICA was signed in the middle of February 1959. The terms of the contract provided that Earlham College would provide a headmaster, two teachers, each for technical and agricultural subjects, and

facilities and equipment to conduct the practical course. Consequently, with the availability of funding, Chavakali School was thus, opened as the first ever Day Secondary School in Kenya (EAYM, 1959: 3).

Earlham College charged with the task to administer the school sent Rodney Morris to be the headmaster in 1960. Chavakali struggled along during its first year and managed to recruit a second class in 1960 by borrowing staff from FAM. Finally, after receiving Colonial Office approval for the original proposal, in February 1960, the ICA signed a contract, granting Earlham College Sh. 2,174,795 to set up the pilot project in Kenya, which was designed to create a new pattern in African secondary education. Since admission to Chavakali was initially restricted “for children in the area whose parents had subscribed towards the school fund”, the Maragoli had - in a real sense - earned a secondary school almost exclusively for themselves (Amatsimbi, 2009: 244).

1.5 Impact of Chavakali School on the Community

With the establishment of the Chavakali School, FAM missionaries believed that such a secondary school would not only successfully teach practical skills to the students, but would also be a medium for promoting economic development in the community. In their view, the school would prepare students for careers in agriculture and local industries, and was to be linked to a village adult education programme (Amatsimbi, 2009: 244).

The foundation of the agricultural programme was designed and laid out by Robert Maxwell, an Iowa Friends farmer and a teacher of agriculture. On his arrival, he at once entered into the life of the community, visited Maragoli farmers, and learned the ways of local agriculture. He sought the support of district officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and commercial firms that distributed agricultural machinery. Within a few months, he had removed stumps and planted an acre of maize as a demonstration plot. When he had a firmer grasp of community needs, his plans took shape in form of a school farm that would serve the dual purpose of a demonstration area for the community and a laboratory for students in agricultural courses. His objective was to teach and demonstrate to boys and their parents techniques of intensive cultivation, the use of improved varieties of maize, and upbreeding of farm animals (Stabler, 1969:124).

During Maxwell’s time, Chavakali was a day school and boys walked varying distances, some up to 16 kilometres each way, every day. With seed supplied by the school, they started demonstration plots on their home *shambas* and practised the crop husbandry and farm management methods that were now a part of the agricultural course. The result was often impressive enough to persuade parents to change over to hybrid seeds and more modern methods. To supplement the course work, Maxwell also took his boys on field trips to well-run farms in other districts and agricultural centres, like the Bukura Agricultural College. During vacation, he also arranged to have some of the boys employed by Europeans farmers. Indeed, in 1962, the Cambridge syndicate approved the Chavakali agriculture syllabus, and in November 1963, Chavakali students sat for the first examination in agricultural principles and practices (Stabler, 1969:124). Further, in 1964, the Kenya government requested the expansion of agricultural teaching to other secondary schools. In all these ways, he made an impact on the boys and the community. Maxwell left Chavakali School and the country in 1962, but came back two years later to head a USAID mission and to continue on a national scale the work he had begun at Chavakali (Amatsimbi, 2009: 246).

The influence of the Chavakali experiment on secondary education in Kenya was deep and lasting, because it revealed what local self-help could achieve. For instance, by the early 1960s, the day-school aspect of the Chavakali idea had quickly bred imitators. Local communities throughout North Nyanza and elsewhere besieged

officials for day secondary schools of their own. Faced with the growing need to provide more African secondary schools, the government adopted the day secondary school idea for future development plans, in the hope that it would reduce costs. Significantly, the impetus for this change had originated within an African community - the Maragoli- collaborating with the FAM mission, and it was neither a Nairobi Legislative decree, nor a London decision.

At the same time, the colonial government began using the day-school idea, in an effort to immediately provide facilities needed to meet both African demands and the government's own manpower requirements. With independence on the horizon, British officials wanted; first, an educated citizenry for an independent nation and secondly, educated Africans to replace colonial administrators and expatriate members of the civil service, which had been opened to Africans for the first time in 1955. Thus, both the government and Africans began the push to expand post-primary education as quickly as was possible. For example, in 1961 the Maragoli further requested for a second secondary school to be based at the Vihiga FAM intermediate school, a request that the government assented to. Consequently, J.B Mujumba, an FAM educated teacher, on behalf of the South Maragoli *ad hoc* committee wrote that "the permission to open a secondary school at Vihiga has been received with great pleasure by the people of Maragoli and we request FAM to help" (KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/8, 1962:3). In the same year, the Tiriki, in a memorandum presented to the Provincial Education Officer - by the Tiriki Location Education Board members, led by FAM educated, John Khadambi and Japheth Ludenyo, Chairman and Secretary of the committee, respectively, also expressed their desire to build a secondary school (KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/8, 1962:3).

It can be observed that the clamour for secondary schools was made in a sub-ethnic context. The early 1960s, therefore, witnessed increasing competition among communities, manifested in efforts over the establishment of secondary schools in their locations. This competition meant that over a three-year period, the government had added 52 new secondary schools to its grant-in-aid list, so that by time of Kenya's independence in 1963, the total stood at 85. In addition, higher school certificate classes (Forms 5 and 6) were started, for the first time, at fourteen African schools. The EAYM, too, shared in these developments. Three more mission schools, including the FAM's Girls' School at Kaimosi and the Friends' secondary school at Kamusinga, began to offer higher school certificate classes. But this progress did not come rapidly enough for many Africans, whose children still could not find a place in a secondary school (Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1963:22).

The thirst for secondary school places consequently led to the dramatic development of independent secondary schools. Communities, through ADC councillors and church leaders, showed their determination in providing educational facilities beyond those which the government and missions could support. District reports of 1956, for example, indicated that "the demand for all type of schooling is loud and insistent. The lack of trained teachers rather than buildings or funds, is the limiting factor in extending facilities" (KNA, PC/NZA/4/4/93, 1956: 3). But by adopting the new slogan for pulling together, "*Harambee*", self-help schools became a vital addition to Kenya's secondary school system. For example, by the 1960s Friends among the Luhyia had established 11 such *Harambee* schools under Friends' sponsorship, including three in Maragoli, two in Bukusu and Tiriki, and one each in Idakho, Isukha and Kabras. In the 1960s, the demand for more secondary schools would again witness the establishment of secondary schools at a pace faster than what the government had anticipated (Amatsimbi, 2009: 248).

The Chavakali education system made a major break- through in curriculum reforms. At the local level, it became widely accepted in the community. Its boys were providing leadership in the local Friends Meetings, apart from also engaging in community service projects. While it remained under FAM management, the school had

demonstrated not only the strength of community self-help, but also the possibility of continued school participation in the life of the community.

1.6 Conclusion

The early FAM schools were never intended to provide formal academic education. They were but one part of an integrated learning system, whose purpose was to socialize and educate the Christians in a new way of life, for a new existence, dedicated to teaching and evangelizing others. During the inter-war period Education became 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. Education became increasingly valued for its cash returns and pupils were encouraged to study hard so that “they would buy big cars, build permanent houses” and generally become rich and influential in the new society. Education thus became an important drawing card for the church and economic advancement. It is the perceived importance of education that made Friends converts to begin to issue new educational demands, such as teacher training, English instruction and more advanced education. Africans’ ability to translate threats into actions also enabled them to exercise real and effective leverage within the FAM educational system. The proposal in 1926, by the Maragoli Friends converts to establish Mbale School, illustrates this point. Although the proposal to establish a school at Mbale was blocked by the North Nyanza district administration and FAM missionaries, the bodies recognised the growing educational demands among the Luhya Friends converts. Indeed, it was such continued demands and lesson learned from the Mbale proposal that led to the establishment of Chavakali School.

Chavakali day School was a consequence of the increased demand for secondary education among the Luhya in the 1950s. The school was established by the Maragoli due the failure by the government and FAM to provide enough secondary school places for primary school leavers. The school showed what *Harambee* efforts with the support of the government and missionaries could achieve in the country. The Chavakali success story quickly bred imitators throughout the district. Local communities throughout North Nyanza and elsewhere began to demand for day secondary schools of their own. Consequently, demands for day secondary schools began to be made along sub-ethnic lines. This led to competition among the Luhya sub-groups for the establishment of secondary schools in their areas. Such demands pointed to the importance of secondary education in Kenya.

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