

## Contributions of Africa Inland Mission to the Development of Western Education in terms of Curriculum in Kericho District Kenya, 1919 to 1963

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### Cite this article in APA

Kiplangat, B., Makori, G. & Ayub, M. (2025). Contributions of Africa Inland Mission to the development of Western Education in terms of Curriculum in Kericho District Kenya, 1919 to 1963. *Journal of education and learning*, 4(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.51317/jel.v4i1.694>



A publication of Editon Consortium Publishing (online)

### Article history

Received: 17.01.2025

Accepted: 13.02.2025

Published: 14.03.2025

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess the contributions of the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) to the development of Western education in Kericho District, Kenya, from 1919 to 1963. When AIM arrived in the interior part of Kenya, they built mission stations and schools where African converts were taught Western education. They arrived in the Kericho District and established schools in 1919. The study used historical research design. The study's target population were all retired teachers, community elders and retired education officers. The study used purposive and snowballing techniques of sampling. Primary data was collected using Interview schedules, while secondary and archival data was collected using documentary analysis. The study established that AIM in their curriculum taught subjects which attracted many students to attend their schools. Ex-students of carpentry and brickmaking worked together with AIM Missionaries by constructing enough classes in all AIM schools. The availability of constructed classes made Western education to be well in AIM schools. AIM Missionaries taught curriculum which produced trained labour. Carpenters, teachers, tailors, agricultural farmers and officers employed by the colonial government majority were ex-students of AIM. The findings further indicated that AIM Missionaries developed a curriculum in the Kericho District which taught various subjects, which led to the acquisition of industrial and technical skills. AIM provided industrial and technical education skills, which prepared Kericho District residents for self-reliance. The government should also promote vocational training that prepares students to be self-employed. Through this, the problem of unemployment will be reduced.

**Key terms:** Colonial, curriculum, development, mission, Western education.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is crucial for the development of any country in the world. When AIM arrived in the interior part of Kenya, they built mission stations and schools where African converts were taught Western education. They arrived in the Kericho District and established schools in 1919. Many colonial studies about AIM on the history, social and transformation of AIM in the Districts of Bomet, Narok, and Kajiado have tended to refer to Kericho District as the starting point of AIM without showing their contributions to the development of Western education in terms of curriculum which filled the gap for this study. Therefore, the contributions of AIM to the development of Western education in the Kericho District during the colonial period remain less known, hence leaving the gap that would be filled by this study.

In the United States of America, Africa Inland Mission (AIM), known as the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA), contributed to the development of education by building schools and developing suitable curricula in Texas, California, Florida, Montana and Illinois (Ustorf, 2011). CMA education curriculum supported and monitored children's physical and psychological well-being, including social, cognitive and emotional development. It consisted of kindergarten, elementary, secondary, vocational, college and university levels of education (Gehman, 2013).

African Inland Mission (AIM) Missionaries brought Western education into Africa as their part of evangelism. African Inland Mission arrived in Tanganyika in 1909, Congo in 1912, Uganda in 1918 and French Equatorial Africa in 1924 (Kibor, 2005). In Congo, by 1935, AIM had built the first elementary and intermediate schools in Kinshasa, Maniema, Kivu, and Katanga provinces. AIM curriculum developed agricultural courses such as general agriculture and improved methods of agriculture in their mission centres, which made them to get employment in settler farms and colonial government (James, 2013). This employment gave Congo residents improved standards of living, which attracted more citizens to attend the mission classes, enabling AIM missionaries to establish schools that taught Western education in

different places in the Congo (Kolakowski, 2001). In East Africa, the AIM curriculum provided practical skills such as carpentry, plumbing, building and construction, which enabled the learners to get income. This increased the number of learners in schools, which enabled AIM to build more schools and hire staff (Karanja, 2007).

In 1895, AIM arrived in Mombasa, Kenya led by Peter Cameron Scott. They started the first schools in Kikai, Kilungu and Kangundo in 1898 (Muia, 2018). AIM was assisted by its mission staff in providing building materials and land for constructing schools (Lionel, 2017). In the year 1900, AIM, under Charles Hurlburt's leadership, started a mission school in Kijabe (James, 2013). In 1925, AIM started the first mission school at Kapsabet, Nandi District. The curriculum started by AIM, and the employment of first converts as teachers motivated more Africans to attend the mission classes. This made AIM missionaries establish more schools; for example, in 1950, Kapsabet Girls which admitted first girls (Kiprop & Changach, 2016). In 1960, AIM further started the first girls' school, Kessup Girls, in Keiyo and Kabartonjo Girls in Baringo. These schools developed successfully because of financial support received from the Local Native Council (LNC) and foreign aid (Kosgey, 1995).

Kericho District was the first entry point of AIM before arriving at Bomet, Narok, and Kajiado Districts (Rono & Sang, 2017). Many studies that have focused on the social, history and transformation of AIM in the South Rift region refer to Kericho district as the starting point of AIM without showing their contributions to the development of Western education in terms of curriculum during the colonial period. Since there has been little attempt to examine AIM contributions to the development of Western education in terms of the curriculum in Kericho District from 1919 to 1963, the study sought to contribute towards filling that gap.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of the United States, Baker (2009) examined on mission curriculum and development of Western education. The quantitative type of research approach was employed to obtain the data. It was revealed from the study that all Christian Missionaries

in the USA, including Christian Missionary Alliance (AIM name outside Africa), had well-structured curricula that emphasised liberal arts, which included a wide range of subjects from humanities, social science, natural science and arts. The study further revealed that all mission schools' curricula intended to create well-rounded individuals who are specialists in their chosen fields, possessing a diverse knowledge base and the ability to connect different ideas. Kliebard (2005) noted that the curriculum in public schools emphasised more academics while the CMA curriculum focused on academics, extracurricular activities and community involvement, which helped to develop social and leadership skills. The study further noted that many students with talents attended CMA schools in Montana, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and California, and later, after 20 years, CMA Western education was developed in all States of America. The reviewed study revealed the CMA's contribution to the development of Western education based in the USA. This presented a contextual gap in the current study.

In Europe, Sherrington (2002) analysed the history of Western mission education using quantitative research. Closed-ended questionnaires with respondents were administered to gather the information. Findings from the study showed that the CMA curriculum aimed at shaping moral character and intellectual ability, focusing on the ideals of truth and goodness, which was embraced by European citizens and many schools were developed in Poland, Sweden and Ireland, which provided Western education. The findings further revealed that the CMA curriculum met the demands of industrial society by training practical and vocational skills, which created employment in European countries. The reviewed study examined CMA's contribution to the development of Western education in terms of curriculum in Europe; this presented a conceptual gap to the current study.

In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, Abagi (2005) carried out a study on the Christian Missionaries' development of Western education in Congo. To achieve its objectives, the study used a quantitative research approach. The results of the study revealed that the AIM curriculum included music, which

attracted many Africans to the mission classes. The results further revealed that music made AIM's mission to admit many students. AIM built schools in different places which accommodated all the students. The reviewed study did not triangulate its study results to enhance the validity of the results. This study filled that methodological gap through data triangulation by sourcing data through various instrumentation methods, namely interview schedules, archival data, and secondary sources.

In Uganda, Grey (2001) undertook a study on Missionary and the development of Western education. The study used stratified random sampling to collect data. The study further revealed that the AIM curriculum prepared the students for higher education, which was Bible Training College, where religious teachings were taught in Bunyore. Those who joined the AIM Bible Training College became teachers in AIM schools and their status quo changed. They motivated others to join AIM schools, leading to an increase in enrollment in AIM schools. The reviewed study did not use purposive and snowballing sampling techniques of non-probability strategy in data collection; this study employed purposive and snowballing.

Muia (2018) and Maiyo (2019) carried out their studies on AIM's contribution to the development of Western education in Machakos and Nandi District, respectively. Both studies highlighted that the AIM curriculum provided basic education, Bible study, technical education and singing that brought social transformation that spread to the neighbouring districts of Machakos and Nandi. Both studies added that the AIM curriculum produced new elites, which made the neighbouring Districts realise the goodness of Western education, and many accepted their children to be taught. Both studies further recommended that more documentation about AIM's contribution to the development of Western education in terms of curriculum in other needs to be done. This study, therefore, filled that gap by identifying Africa Inland Mission's contribution to the development of Western education in terms of curriculum in Kericho District from 1919 to 1963.

## Theoretical Review

This study was guided by dialectics of development. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel (1818-1895) were the founders of this theory. The theory explained colonialism and education in Africa during the colonial era (Rodney, 1982). Karl Marx noted that colonialism was formulated in Indian society during the colonial era. He showed how missionaries from England laid the foundation through the development of Western education which decreased the influence of Indian indigenous education and the British destabilising through uprooting the industries from local communities (Maiyo, 2019). This was also applicable to this study, which documented how AIM missionaries in Kericho District contributed to the development of Western education, which decreased the influence of indigenous education during the colonial period from 1919 to 1963.

Marx and Engel stated that Missionaries contributed to the development of western education in India successfully as part of evangelisation. It resulted in the spread of literacy and the establishment of various educational institutions (Maiyo, 2019). This theory explained how the Western education system emerged successfully during the colonial period. The missionary aim of spreading Christianity and civilisation made Western education develop successfully in India (Kolakowski, 2001). This was also applicable to this study, which identified the

contributions of the African Inland Mission to the development of Western education in terms of staffing, curriculum, funding and infrastructure from 1919 to 1963.

## Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by a conceptual model showing the interaction of the independent and dependent variables, as discussed in Figure 1. The independent variable was the African Inland Mission, which arrived in Kericho District and built schools in 1919. AIM developed Western education, which benefited Kericho District residents politically, economically, religiously and socially. African Inland Mission indicators included curriculum, infrastructure, staffing and financing. Western education, which was developed, was dependent variable. Western education indicators were social, political, economic and religious benefits. Intervening Variables was the government policy of developing African schools, which made AIM students shift to those schools and resistance from the community when missionaries undermined their culture. Kericho district residents communicated using their own Kipsigis language, while AIM missionaries used the English language. They could not understand each other. This led to the language barrier. The misunderstanding between Kericho district residents and AIM missionaries affected AIM education activities.

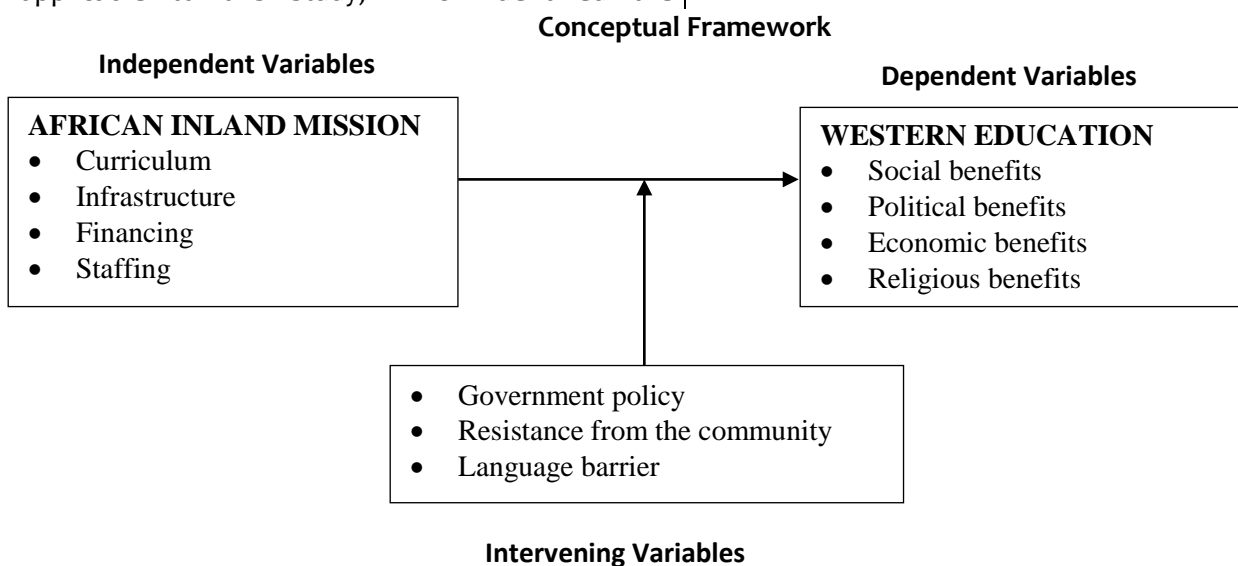


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



## METHODOLOGY

The study used historical research design. The study's target population were all retired teachers, community elders and retired education officers in Kericho County and were 21,741 in total. The accessible population were only retired teachers, community elders and retired education officers who were above 70 years old and were 276 in total. The study used purposive and snowballing techniques of non-probability sampling. Almalki et al. (2016) recommended that 20 per cent of the population size be used in qualitative research. This study, therefore, used a sample size of 20 per cent of the population size, and this resulted in a sample size of 55 from 276, the total number. Primary data was collected using Interview schedules, while secondary and archival data was collected using documentary analysis. Data were also obtained from archives and secondary sources. Qualitative data were analysed using Nvivo software version 12. Archival data and secondary sources were described, interpreted, and classified into themes based on research questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### African Inland Mission Contribution to the Development of Western Education In Terms of the Curriculum in Kericho District from 1919 to 1963

The first objective was to identify the African Inland Mission's contribution to the development of Western education in terms of the curriculum in Kericho District from 1919 to 1963. Most respondents, through oral interviews, indicated that AIM mission schools taught subjects that were embraced because of proper mannerisms and etiquette, such as not using abusive language and behaving well in gatherings; this made the development of Western education to be popular in various Divisions of Kericho District (Chepkwony, O.I., 4/11/2024; Mosonik, O.I., 11/11/2024; Kattam, O.I., 14/10/2024; Keino, O.I., 14/10/2024; Keter, O.I.,

1/11/2024 & Ngetich, O.I., 26/10/2024). This concurred with an annual report, which indicated that AIM schools in Kericho District by 1927, AIM taught special courses such as hygiene, homemaking, industrial education, trading skills such as tailoring, carpentry, handcraft such as Basketry, weaving and brick making were taught. This made AIM development of western education in Kericho District grow rapidly (EDAR, 1931 & KNA, PC/NZA/3/10/4, 1930).

Birir (O.I., 25/10/2024), one of the retired teachers, revealed that AIM mission schools had a curriculum which attracted many students, for example, the teaching of agriculture. Birir (O.I., 25/10/2024) and Bett (O.I., 6/11/2024) further revealed that AIM Central School Litein had several farm tools used on the farm, which students had never seen. Cheptarus (O.I., 26/10/2024) retired teacher and one of the rescued girls in the Litein Central school, added by illustrating in her words in which she said:

*"Mr and Mrs Anderson brought farm tools such as: spade, pruning shears, sickle, rake and grape hoe, we were taught farming using the tools, we were very happy while using in the farm, many of my fellow students who attended the mission classes from their home informed their villagers about farm tools. Many students came to study in AIM Central school Litein because everyone wanted to see the farm tools and how was used in the garden. Majority of the students in their homes used sticks to plant in farms. In the year 1920 and 1923, AIM Litein witnessed the increase number of students".*

This aligned with the AIM annual report (1923) and EDAR (1928), which showed that AIM taught agricultural tools and their uses which were attracting many students to their mission schools. The summary on the number of girls and boys from 1920 to 1923 is shown as follows in Table 1.

**Table 1: Number of AIM Students from 1920 to 1923**

| Year | No of Boys | No of Girls | Total |
|------|------------|-------------|-------|
| 1920 | 133        | 16          | 149   |
| 1921 | 147        | 18          | 165   |
| 1922 | 262        | 23          | 285   |

|              |            |           |            |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1923         | 339        | 30        | 369        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>881</b> | <b>87</b> | <b>968</b> |

Source: (EDAR, 1923 & KNA, DC/KER/1/1, 1923).

Table 1 shows that more boys were attending AIM classes compared to girls. There was some progress, but the number of girls remained low because female circumcision and early marriages were highly practised. Few girls who were sneaking into the mission due to fear of circumcision were welcome and taught Western education. By 1923, the total number of boys was 881, while the number of girls was 87.

Maina (O.I., 10/11/2024) and Chelogoi (O.I., 2/11/2024) also echoed the same through oral interviews that the first students to be taught brick making in Litein Central school worked together with AIM missionaries in making enough bricks which were used in the construction of classes in Kericho District. Maina (O.I., 10/11/2024) and Chelogoi (O.I., 2/11/2024) further added that AIM Missionaries, together with ex-students like Jeremiah Arap Maiwa of Kapkatet, Musa Arap Seron of Chemoiben and Bernabas Arap Lesan of Cheplanget made bricks which were used for constructing classes in the out-stations located in Bureti Division. They made bricks together with AIM missionaries using clay in Litein from 1923. By 1924, AIM missionaries and ex-students had completed making bricks for the out-station schools of the Bureti Division, namely Boito, Chebwagan, Cheborgei, Litein, and Sosit and distributed them equally to these schools in the same year. Between 1925 and 1927, AIM missionaries and the same ex-students prepared other bricks which were used for building classes in the out-stations schools of Roret, Belgut, Kericho Township and Kipkelion-Chilchila Divisions.

Most respondents, through oral interviews in this study, added AIM Missionaries and ex-students of

carpentry-built classes in all AIM schools before 1930. Together with AIM missionaries, Francis Arap Kilel of Reresik in Roret Division built a class in Kabartegan and Kaminjeiywa in 1929. Pius Arap Sinei of Kipchimchim took two classes in Kipkewa and Kericho in 1930. Augustine Arap Mutai of Kiptere in Belgut Division constructed classes in Kiptere and Sitotwet in 1928. Anthony Arap Chirchir of Chesinende in Kipkelion Division built a class in Kipkewa in 1930. Linus Arap Rotich of Kapsurer in Belgut Division built a class in Musaria in 1928. Richard Arap Sigei of Litein in the Bureti Division built a class in Boito, Chebwagan and Sosit in 1928. Josiah Arap Ngok of Chemamul in Belgut Division constructed a class in Kiowalelach and Chemamul in 1930 (Mutai, O.I., 28/10/2024; Kemei, O.I., 29/10/2024; Belion, O.I., 4/11/2024; Kotut, O.I., 23/10/2024 & Maina, O.I., 24/10/2024). The annual report further confirmed that AIM missionaries and more than six students who were taught carpentry in Litein Central school built classes in all out-stations in Kericho District (AIM Mission Annual Report, 1932).

Maina (O.I., 10/11/2024) and Barchock (O.I., 19/10/2024) further expressed that AIM Missionaries, together with Jeremiah Arap Maiwa, Musa Arap Seron and Bernabas Arap Lesan, continue with the construction of additional classes in all the out-stations from 1942 to 1944. This was also confirmed by EDAR (1946) and AIM Annual Report (1949) which highlighted AIM missionaries and their ex-students together built additional classes in all the out-stations schools and completed before 1950. The two reports further indicated that AIM schools had around 243 students in 1946. The number of students in AIM schools in 1946, is shown as follows in table 7.

**Table 2: Number of AIM Students in the Out-Stations Schools in 1946**

| Out-station | No of Boys | No of Girls (who were the only boarders) | Total |
|-------------|------------|--|-------|
| Boito       | 10         | 9  | 19    |
| Chebwagan   | 17         | 5  | 22    |
| Chemamul    | 11         | 3  | 14    |

|                  |            |           |            |
|------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Kabartegan       | 13         | 2         | 15         |
| Kaminjeiywa      | 15         | 8         | 23         |
| Kiowalelach      | 9          | 5         | 14         |
| Kiptere          | 13         | 7         | 20         |
| Kericho Township | 20         | 11        | 31         |
| Kipkewa          | 8          | 4         | 12         |
| Sitotwet         | 14         | 4         | 18         |
| Musaria          | 17         | 4         | 21         |
| Sosit            | 24         | 10        | 34         |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>171</b> | <b>72</b> | <b>243</b> |

Source: (AIM Report, 1947; EDAR, 1946 & KNA/DC/KER/1/22, 1949).

The study established that in 1946 AIM schools had more boys attending their schools compared to girls because majority of them were married early. Kericho Township School had a higher number of boys and girls. Kipkewa and Kabartegan had a lower number of boys and girls, respectively.

The annual report noted that AIM missionaries introduced the policy of preparing gardens where students were taught how to prepare tree nurseries in Litein Central school in 1934 (KNA/DC/KER/1/19,1946). AIM missionaries and ex-students of 1939 prepared many tree nurseries. In 1941, AIM missionaries planted together with the students in Litein Central school and by 1943, it was planted in nearly all the out-station schools. These trees, which were planted by AIM missionaries, enabled them to be used in repairing furniture, producing timbers for building additional classes and roofing furniture in 1959 (KNA/DC/KER/1/25, 1959). This corresponded with Kitur (O.I.,5/11/2024) and Kositany (O.I., 7/11/2024), who expressed through an oral interview that :

*" AIM Missionaries planted before 1945 in all their out-stations. The planted trees were used to produced timbers for building more classes, repairing desks, doors and chairs before 1960 in all schools".*

According to Kimengich (O.I., 3/11/2024) and Simatei (O.I., 27/10/2024), AIM Missionaries introduced the issuing of seed policy. Every student was given the seeds of peas, beans, green onions, potatoes, vegetables and cash crops such as wheat to take their homes. Parents began to realise the importance of sending their children to AIM mission classes. Parents who benefited from agricultural seeds, in return, send

their children to AIM schools. By 1928, AIM missionaries taught an elementary level of education in nearly all the out-stations. Kimengich (O.I., 3/11/2024) and Simatei (O.I., 27/10/2024) also added AIM missionaries in Litein emphasised more on imparting practical skills. Students were taught how chairs, desks, tables, windows and doors were made. They were being examined by the AIM missionaries. Good chairs, desks, tables, windows, and doors made using timbers were used in AIM schools.

Kimetto (O.I., 15/10/2024) and Korir (O.I., 12/11/2024) further informed that some of the prepared tables, desks and chairs were distributed to all classes in Litein Central school and the remaining were taken to the out-station schools by Mr Anderson. AIM schools had adequate desks and tables that were used in classes. This aligned with the AIM Annual report (1931), which also pointed out that AIM missionaries and first carpentry students, namely Kitur Arap Kositany, Ezekiel Arap Cherungas and William Arap Terer, made good furniture, which was used in all AIM schools while teaching Western education.

Karanja (2007) and Onwoga (2013) revealed that memorisation and singing were methods that were used in AIM schools, which made students easily understand reading, writing and arithmetic. AIM missionaries gave gifts to students who sang and memorised well the vowel sounds. Students were rewarded gifts such as a watch, sweets and biscuits by AIM missionaries. Those who were given these gifts took to their home, and AIM witnessed another high enrollment in 1954. This policy of issuing gifts to students made AIM have many students attending

classes in their schools (AIM, 1955). This indeed agrees with Mibei (O.I., 9/11/2024), who illustrated in his words by saying:

*"When I started schooling in Kericho Township, singing of religious hymns and memorialising Bible scriptures was mainly taught. I was given sweets after knowing how to sing and memorised well. Many children within the tea estates were also attending the mission due to giving of gifts".*

Bengat (O.I., 8/11/2024) also added by illustrating that: *"In Chemamul AIM school, we were given gifts such as watch, sweets, bread and biscuits after memorising and singing vowels. This strategy of issuing gifts made many students within the out-station to attend mission classes. We had never seen or ate bread, biscuits, sweets and even wore the watch. The bread, biscuits and watch given as rewards I took home. The day after my brothers, sisters and friends within the village followed me to the mission for classes".*

Sang (O.I., 5/11/2024), on the other hand, revealed that: *"Girls were not allowed to attend mission classes because it was preventing them from being married. After sneaking to AIM class in Kabartegan, I was given two breads, watch and biscuits. The idea of AIM rewarding made many students to attend mission classes. This made the development of western education by AIM to spread. Many children Kaminjeiwa and Kabartegan villages attended AIM classes".*

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Conclusion:** The study established that AIM in their curriculum taught subjects such as Christian teachings, hygiene, homemaking, writing, reading, arithmetic, Basketry, weaving, sewing, knitting, carpentry, tailoring, brick making, agricultural training and good housing practice. AIM Missionaries taught curriculum which produced trained labour for the colonial government in Kericho District. Carpenters, teachers, tailors, agricultural farmers and officers employed by the colonial government majority were ex-students of AIM. AIM Missionaries developed a curriculum in Kericho District, which taught various subjects, which led to the acquisition of industrial and technical skills.

**Recommendations:** AIM provided industrial and technical education skills, which prepared Kericho District residents for self-reliance. The government should also promote vocational training that prepares students to be self-employed. Through this, the problem of unemployment will be reduced. Parents should also be encouraged and support their graduate children to enrol on technical courses that would make them self-employed. The government should allow enough funds to all the Vocational and Technical Colleges so that many youths can learn industrial skills. The government should seek public participation from elites and technical and Vocation students before introducing any policies. The government should come up with policies which support and promote Technical and Vocation education programmes.

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