



# Tambach, Economic Change and Keiyo Struggle for the School, 1902-1939

Isaac Kipsang Tarus

Department of Philosophy, History and Religious Studies Egerton University, PO Box 536, Egerton

Email: Isktarus@gmail.com

## Abstract

The establishment of African Government School, Tambach in 1927, epitomised Keiyo and Marakwet struggle for what they considered a valuable asset to their society. Missionary enterprise had neither converted the two communities to Christianity nor created a school for them, as was the case in other parts of Kenya. Responsibility fell on the Local Native Council (LNC), which had become operational in 1925. The LNC wanted a secular education geared towards literacy for the Keiyo and Marakwet as opposed to the government and missionary type of education which was technical oriented and evangelical. While missionaries viewed western education as a vehicle for spreading the gospel, the colonial state demanded that African education meet the needs of the Uasin Gishu settler labour market. Both, however, were desperately handicapped by lack of resources and each Keiyo adult and Marakwet had to contribute two shillings each in the form of taxes to construct Tambach School. The colonial government reluctantly facilitated the infrastructural and curriculum development as part of their control and domination strategy. This essay builds on 'the struggle for school' paradigm elaborated by John Anderson that Africans in Kenya played a major role in the early development and control of schools in Kenya. But for a start, such a history cannot be complete without a brief narrative of colonial economic change and of Tambach enclave as a hill station that was scenic and exotic, situated at mountain range of the picturesque Elgeyo escarpment.

## Introduction

During the period between 1902 and 1939, Keiyo society was transformed. This transformation was gradual which still left the casual and even the scholarly observer with the impression of changelessness. Inhabitants of the Kerio Valley still clung to their age-old mode of subsistence and traditional values. The Keiyo in the highlands still looked to their clansmen in the Kerio Valley for traditional guidance particularly on land, initiation ceremonies and appeasement of the spirits. Yet behind this superficial continuity, a rural society had undergone change. This change emerged as a result of the adoption of market economy and the growth of Tambach as a frontier and educational 'Boma' town. The mechanism of this change was the individualization of land ownership in the highlands as opposed to communal ownership still common in the lower ledges of the Elgeyo escarpment. Second, migrant labour acted as a spur to accumulation of wealth which led to diversification from a wholly livestock economy to trade and business. At the level of the village, social and economic differentiation became increasingly polarized between the rich and the many poor. The concept of Mogorio (wealthy man) changed from the ownership of large herds of livestock to ownership of large-scale farms, investment in new market centres and as businessmen. Tambach and Chepkorio were the centres of this transformation.

## Framework of Analysis

At the theoretical level, a number of propositions help us to distinguish and demarcate different factors of change. First, the main pre-occupation of the colonial state was not to bring about increased African production and profits but primarily to control and facilitate settler production. Second, in the early stages, the colonial state itself was ill-equipped financially and understaffed to transform. Finally, Britain's colonial economic policy involved a bold reorganization of land, labour and capital resources which overtime drastically changed people's daily lives (Wolff, 1970, 132-139). According to E.W. Soja, (168, 3-4) colonialism had the effect of creating a new and stronger pattern of circulation within larger units of organization. It involved profound changes in individual and group behaviour and these he considered to be the most important concomitants of the whole colonial process. Thus, within this colonial situation, individual Keiyo responded in different ways depending on the advantages and disadvantages of participating in the process of structural change of the economy, politics and education.

In retrospect, by 1939 various social and economic changes in kinship relationships, land ownership, age-set responsibilities and the division of labour had taken place in Keiyo society. This further led to changes in entrepreneurship, agriculture, political structure and a demand for formal education. Part of the Keiyo's success in re-shaping their institutions was due to the fact that they were able to borrow new concepts without compromising their traditional values. Actual change for the Keiyo was realized through the presence of Indian and Somali traders who brought out new commodities and concept of trade which made several Keiyo enter the market economy as traders. These required a level of

elementary education in the “Three Rs” of Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. Secondly, new crops and agricultural policies brought changes of great magnitude to cultivation and livestock production. Thirdly, a transport network was created that exposed the Keiyo to markets among European farmers and Indian traders. And finally, the chiefs and members of the Local Native Council were the first to adopt these changes and particularly the establishment of Tambach School where their children pioneered education among the Keiyo. That those Keiyo who had some elementary form of education from Tambach and its related ‘bush schools’ are the ones who engineered Keiyo transformation in trade, agriculture, entrepreneurship and the emergence of Keiyo Asomi. Walter Rodney provided a perfect theoretical underpinning that colonial education was the strongest instrument of change and crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of its members and the maintenance of its social structure.

## Trade, Markets and Keiyo Entrepreneurs

Vigorous attempts to integrate the Keiyo into a colonial economy began in the southern part of the district within Mosop, Metkei and Irong regions. These areas were from the 1920s important migrant labour suppliers to the settler farms in Uasin Gishu plateau. As a result of exposure through migrant labour, were able to pioneer in trade and production of goods for exchange. Among the earlier Keiyo migrant labourers who became successful traders were, Kiptoo Chirchir, Salim Chepkeitany, Kibiab Sawe and Kite Tiren. The centre of their trade was in stock trading, particularly in cattle and sheep. Kiptoo Chirchir stated that they were greatly influenced by the activities of Somalis who were active stock traders. The money that was accumulated was later invested in other businesses particularly in butcheries, shop keeping, maize milling, ploughing and transportation. By the 1930s they had emerged as progressive cash crop farmers competing unfavourably with the settlers. Pyrethrum, maize, wheat and potatoes were the most important cash crop. All these were made possible by the introduction of the Rupee in 1901 as a medium of exchange. This was followed by the establishment of periodical markets and colonial administrative centres which later became the focal points for commodity exchange.

What factors made it possible for the Keiyo to accumulate a surplus and the resultant participant in business and large-scale agricultural production? What was the reaction of the colonial state and the settlers to the emergence of Keiyo traders and cash crop farmers? In order to appreciate the salient features of the above questions, it is important to diagnose the intentions involved. The alienation of land by Grogan and other European farmers led to a shift of economic activities from livestock production to migrant labour and trade. Other factors that characterized the period after 1923 were a severe depression, increased taxation and low wages. Under the circumstances, the Keiyo were left with few options. They had to organize themselves in a way that despite a shortage of grazing land, they had to produce sustainable food for local use and at the same time a surplus for exchange to purchase other consumer goods.

Kiptoo Chirchir, (popularly known as Kipsirimbi) has been described by Elspeth Huxley as, “a large loose-limbed, punchy man with an air of confident prosperity who would be quite at home dining at the Institute of Directors (Huxley 1961: 56-57). Chief Chirchir had a thriving farm with a flock of English sheep, a herd of cows, pyrethrum and potato crops, and labour force of

fifteen men” (Huxley: Ibid) Kiptoo Chirchir was unique among other emerging Keiyo traders. He left wage labour at Van Hey Den’s farm in 1927 and joined Tambach School. In 1934 he left Tambach for employment as a clerk in the Local Native Council and later the African District Council. He states that his major aim was to understand the workings of the colonial system so that he could actively participate in the struggle for the return of the Grogan Concession. In addition, he claims that he wanted to establish a typical farm like the settler’s so that his people (the Keiyo) would emulate. He fenced his land and reared grade cattle which included a Corriedale sheep. It was, however, common for other Keiyo wage-labourers to accumulate savings to be used to purchase move livestock, pay bride wealth, or to enter into petty trade of selling hides and skins to Kikuyu forest squatters at Kaptagat and Kipkabus (Kipchamasis Tireito and Kiptoo Chirchir).

This was evidenced with the establishment of market centres. The four prominent trading centres established by the colonial government among the Keiyo were Kamariny, Tambach, Chepkorio and Ainabkoi. The 1919 Elgeyo-Marakwet handing over report traces the growth Kamariny. It did not take long for the Keiyo to enter into competitive trade. With the shifting of the colonial administration’s station from Kamariny to Tambach in 1926, the way was paved for enterprising Keiyo to challenge foreign traders. Tambach favoured the Keiyo traders in three main ways. First, the Local Native Council (LNC) which had been established in 1926 encouraged the Keiyo to diversify their economic activities to include trade. Second, since the LNC had become responsible for the allocation of plots, Keiyo traders had no problem obtaining plots. Finally, Tambach was far from the settler community being located in the middle zone of the Kerio Valley and hence no interference from settlers who detested independent African traders. And whatever, individual circumstances that characterized the origins of these early traders, the most important factor was the availability of capital saved from wage-labour. Salim Chepkeitany and Kite Tiren owe their success in trading due to the skills obtained while in wage-labour employment among the European farmers.

To this end, Tambach provided an opportunity for commercial entrepreneurship to open business concerns besides, the Indians and Somali. The decision to shift administrative headquarters to Tambach was not, however, smooth. Various correspondences were exchanged between the colonial administration at Tambach and the Provincial Commissioner. The latter felt that the distance involved would not provide conducive supervision of the Keiyo and Marakwet. He was, however, prevailed upon and the decision to shift to Tambach was taken. Tambach, it was argued had sufficient and clean water. It was also argued that the area was conducive to European settlement. And with the decision to construct a road linking Kabarnet and Eldoret, accessibility to Tambach by wheeled transport was assured. It was felt that Tambach was centrally placed to serve the Keiyo reserve.

Following the move to Tambach, Kamariny gradually lost its status as a trading centre with most traders investing at Tambach. The emergence of Tambach as both administrative, commercial and educational centre is exemplified by the divergence of the population resident by 1927. To understand the major role Tambach played in educating the Keiyo; we must learn to appreciate the many ways that led to the emergence of Tambach as a colonial enclave with a school, a hospital, a prison, shopping centre and more importantly, a colonial edifice of administering the Keiyo and Marakwet people. Tambach has a unique geographical landscape. Tambach represents a particular history of the Keiyo people. The site acts as a repository of memory, heritage and ethnic

diversity. Tambach constitutes a heritage destination, colonial architecture and a picturesque urban landscape. Tambach represents early colonial intrusion among the Keiyo, cosmopolitanism and modernity. In short, we cannot understand the emergence of Tambach school without appreciating the distinctive pattern of urban morphology and emerging cosmopolitanism by 1927 (KNA/DC/ELGM/1/1/1927-1929. Elgeyo-Marakwet Annual Report).

**Table Showing Non-Keiyo Populations at Tambach in 1927**

Serial Number	Non Keiyo Communities	Population
1	Europeans	3
2	Goans	4
3	Indians	1
4	Somali	6
6	Kikuyu	16
7	Luo	26
8	Maasai	4
9	Nandi	6
10	Kipsigis	3
11	Sebei	6
12	Kisii	4
13	Mtende	1
14	Nyamwezi	14
15	Kamba	17
16	Mganda	3
17	Wagishu	4
18	Wanubi	1
19	Tugen	1
20	Pokot	1
21	Turkana	1
22	Myassa	2
23	Msugua	9
24	Unknown	134
	<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>

Several of the above non-Keiyo people were labourers in the road construction, government servants, those involved in the construction of Tambach School and hospital and employees of the newly established businesses like shop keeping, butcheries, maize milling and trading in livestock. Chepkeitany was later appointed chief in the 1940s after serving the Local Native Council and African District Council. There was a general consensus among early traders to be independent. Many traders had become literate through learning privately at settler farms (or attending Tambach School, after 1927). Some never attended school but were taught by those who were literate. Kiptoo Chirchir and Chemaiyo Sawe attended school at Tambach up to standard eight and were able not only to communicate in English but also to write effectively.

## The Path to the Making of Tambach School

The entrenchment of colonialism affected the Keiyo in a very profound manner. In 1902 the area of the Keiyo was brought under the administration of the East Africa Protectorate. By impinging on Keiyo social and economic institutions, the colonial administration subjected the Keiyo to specific demands. These included the alienation of land, taxation, migrant labour and the institution of chiefship. The Keiyo responded by active participation in trade, business and cash crop farming. In addition, through their own initiative, the African government school, Tambach was

established (Tarus 1994). This study examines the origin and growth of Tambach School and how it impacted on colonial Keiyo society. The name Keiyo has been used to describe the collection of central Kalenjin communities inhabiting parts of the eastern Uasin Gishu Plateau, the Elgeyo Escarpment and the Tambach Shelf (Distefano, 1985: 148). They are known in ethnographic circles as the 'Cliff-Dwellers of Kenya'. The term is, however, a misnomer and J.A. Massam who coined the expression was inimical and pejorative (1927). For the purposes of this essay, the name Keiyo rather than Elgeyo is used. This is not only aimed at consistency but also an attempt to adhere to the current usage of the people themselves. It is also important to note that the Keiyo are one of the Kalenjin clusters of peoples. While Tambach Government School was meant to serve both the Keiyo and Marakwet communities, this study deals primarily with the struggle by the Keiyo people to have access to formal and institutional based western education.

The colonial state founded the Department of Education in 1911 in an attempt to control the advent of mission supported schools and to fulfil their charge of creating a compliant cadre of individuals who could serve the colony's economic and political needs (Raju, 1973: 1-11). For the Keiyo, however, the 1919 Elgeyo-Marakwet District annual report, state that there were no literate Keiyo (KNA, DC/ELGM/1/1). This must have agitated the Keiyo who later realised that education had been provided to their neighbours, the Kipsigis (Kabianga) in 1924, the Nandi (Kapsabet) in 1925 and the Tugen (Kabarnet) in 1926). Consequently, the Keiyo demanded the same for their people. And faced with the unresponsive nature of the colonial administration, the Keiyo turned to the Local Native Council to spearhead the establishment of a school for their children. This became the first challenge to the LNC, whose membership mainly included chiefs and other district representatives.

One of the greatest stumbling blocks to the achievement of their goal was the negative attitude of the Director of Education based in Nairobi and even the district officials at Tambach who did not consider education as a priority for the Keiyo at the time (Mutua, 1975: 37-67, KNA/DC/ELGM/1/2, 1926: 13). Colonial prejudice towards the Keiyo as 'cliff-dwellers' and being described as people simply prone to cattle raids, famine and drought did little to convince the colonial government that education for the Keiyo was a priority. A glimpse into aspects of pre-colonial Keiyo education will help to show how western education impacted upon their traditional structures and patterns of change and continuity.

## Pre-colonial Keiyo Education

Prior to the introduction of a western type of education, it has been argued that East African societies socialised and educated new generations without schools in the modern western sense. Education functioned primarily to sustain knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and aspirations within a given society (Gulliver, 1969: 148). Informal education for the Keiyo was a life-long process of being educated by older members of the society. Among the Marakwet who share a common affinity with the Keiyo, Kipkorir (1977: 44-47) state that:

Within the framework of the larger society the individual is born and develops in a polygamous (virilocal) family. This is the focus, which meet the lines of the unseen powers, the clan and the age-set to model such individual differences as are permitted in a homogenous society.

Keiyo elders concur with Kipkorir's assertion (oral information, Kipchamasis Tireito, 16 November 1989). The basic requirement of every member of the community was to go through various vigorous rites of passage. The most important being initiation into manhood or womanhood by circumcision or clitoridectomy.

These socialisation processes among the Keiyo were centred on the family, lineage, clan and age-set. The age- groups for practical purposes traversed the family, lineage and clan boundaries. Social functions and control depended on the above variables assisted by taboos and individual sanctions as the sole guides of one's conduct and behaviour. Unlike western education that was programmed by a day to day timetable, Keiyo education was a lifetime process in which an individual progressed through pre-determined stages of graduation from birth. Ritual transformation from child to adult went through various ceremonies that included, naming of the child, extraction of two incisor teeth, circumcision and wedding among others. In these rites of passage, education was aimed at children as they grew into adolescence and then adults. Children played an important part in perpetuating society and their education was given the seriousness it deserved. In addition, children played an important role in economic activities like sowing, weeding and harvesting. Herding and domestic duties played an even greater part, which may partially explain the reason why most Keiyo were reluctant to send their children to school (ibid.).

Keiyo activities, social, economic and political encompassed the whole society. More than any other institution, the age-set reinforced values of responsibility, co-operation and defence. Periodically, all the people of the same age-set were initiated into a single set and remained members of that for life. The age set and remained members of that for life. The age set gave every man a chance of participating in decisions at one level or another. As a result close relationships with others outside the Kinship group were established. At a certain stage, there was a transitional handing over ceremony called *saket ab eito* to handover over responsibility from one generation to another (Massam, 1927 and Chesang, 1973). For example in 1925 the *saket ab eito* ceremony was held which elevated the Maina age-set to warriors while the Nyongi became elders in place of Kipnyikew who retired from active participation in society's affairs (ibid.). Two years later, Tambach School was opened which fundamentally demanded a re-organisation of pre-colonial education needs.

## Genesis and growth of Tambach School, 1927-1939

The establishment of Tambach School in 1927 presents us with an example of a people's determination to manifest what they felt was to be a valuable asset for their society. At that early stage, missionary enterprise had failed to convert the Keiyo to Christianity and even construct a school for them, as was the case in other parts of Kenya. Among the Keiyo, the LNC only witnessed numerous letters from various mission societies requesting for land only to fizzle out when the same was granted. For instance in 1919, the African Inland Mission (AIM) established a mission station at Tambach but managed only five converts who later backslide and the mission was abandoned in 1926 (KNA/ELGM/1/1, 1919-1926).

In 1927, Kiptoo Kisabei, Kipteimet Chesanga, chief Kiburur, chief Cheserem Kimoning, Arap Bartai and Cheptorus arap Lenja among other prominent Local Native Council members voted 2,500 pounds for the establishment of a school at Tambach for the

children of the Keiyo and Marakwet (KNA, Native Affairs Department, Report, 1925 and KNA, DC/ELGM/1/2 Elgeyo Marakwet District Annual Report, 1927-1922, 2-5). The LNC had two sources of revenue namely; a local rate at sh. 1 per hut was set. But more rewarding was the royalties accruing from the Elgeyo Saw Mills which were left by the colonial officials at Tambach at the disposal of the LNC. Despite the indifference of the colonial administration, Tambach School was set-up, ignoring the flat refusal by the Director of Education that a school was "very obviously beyond the means of the tribe... whose demand for school has come from the small boys who forced the elders to agree to it" (ibid). By 1927, however, the Director accepted the Keiyo petition for a school arguing that "there appear to have been some misunderstanding" and "now quite ready and anxious to assist in obtaining this" (ibid). In March 1927 the acting Director of Education Mr Biss visited Tambach and approved the site proposed and the scheme submitted. He promised that a technical adviser would "shortly" be sent to make a start with the buildings. Nothing more was heard from the department until 22 November 1927 when they sent pound 150. Of the total sum, pound 100 was retained in Nairobi for the purchase of materials. Consequently, this sum not being sufficient, the LNC enthusiastically voted in pound 2500, which saw progress in the construction of the necessary facilities. By the end of 1927 sufficient sun-dried bricks had been made for a teacher house and a classroom. This was the foundation of what was to become the oldest academic institution in Keiyo and Marakwet district. It was officially launched in 1928 and named the Government African School, Tambach. The first headmaster was G.A Berriage. But R. H., Howitt who was at the helm from 1930 to 1939 with only a short break in 1936, laid down the school's real foundation (ibid.).

At its inception the school under G.A. Berriage was intended to achieve various objectives. First, the school was to provide technical education for thirty Keiyo and Marakwet students a year. Second, reading and writing had to be looked on as necessary evils and the "natives" to be educated with a view of not being learned clerks capable of signing work tickets but artisans useful both in their own reserves and to the colony in general. And finally, it was proposed that the school should try to use and improve first the materials and methods existing in the reserve. For instance, it was proposed that since the Keiyo kept bees, it was hoped to introduce through the school better and more economic beehives to foster the beeswax industry and to introduce for sale some good honey. According to John Chebbet, a former student at the school, the situation was like this:

I went to school when I was 14 years old. Our curriculum comprised of carpentry, tailoring, masonry and joinery. These went hand in hand with reading and writing. Chief Cheptarus Lenja took me to school from my home despite protestations from my father. We were fed, housed, clothed and given free tuition. After graduation I did not want to be a mason. I wanted to be a teacher. I joined Kapsabet where I qualified as a teacher. I taught in so many schools until 1960 when I was appointed a District Officer in Nyeri. Kiptoo Chirchir was my classmate and the first African President of African District Council (ADC).

In essence, the colonial administration, unlike for example among the Kikuyu did not attempt to train the Keiyo for careers as clerks and teachers. Basically, they were trained in what was termed as industrial work, in carpentry, tailoring, masonry and joinery. The lack or casual teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic concepts did not please the LNC who felt betrayed by the school's administration. The government following LNC pressure realised too that the objective of merely training the Keiyo



to serve the colony could not succeed without the ability to read, write and understand simple arithmetic. By 1939 the three subjects had become part and parcel of the curriculum but the main emphasis remained on vocational training.

Initially Tambach had thirty pupils mostly sons of LNC members, chiefs and headmen, and two African teachers. The teachers were housed in brick and corrugated iron-sheet houses while the students stayed in thatched houses with enough space for eight boys each. According to Kiptoo Chirchir the boys were quite old ranging from twelve to twenty-five years old. Water was conveyed by a pipeline to the school using a nearby stream, emanating from the Elgeyo-escarpment using the force of gravity.

The LNC had acquiesced to the colonial education officials that their objectives would not be fulfilled without a qualified administrator and made plans to engage a European headmaster with experience. The new headmaster arrived in July 19 1927 and according to the annual report, "under his energetic direction building operations have ahead in a manner distinctly gratifying, "his salary was partly paid by the LNC and partly by the government". By 1930 the school was offering a five-year course in masonry and carpentry. The final year being spent at the Native Industrial Training Depot (NIDP) Kabete. From only thirty students in 1928 the numbers had risen to a hundred in 1930 the colonial government provided Sh. 19, 886/= while the LNC provided sh. 22, 400/= towards capital and recurrent expenditure. The average cost of each pupil worked out at sh. 58/= per tuition and sh. 172/= for boarding and lodging totalling sh. 230/= per annum. At the end of 1931 three of the senior boys were transferred to Kapsabet and twelve transferred to N.I.T.D. Kabete for advanced training. In 1933 out of 28 students who sat for the elementary examination, two qualified as carpenters while eleven obtained certificates. According to Kiptoo Chirchir, all these changed in 1933 with the posting of James Mbotela, as head teacher while Howitt remained Principal. As he himself recalls;

James Mbotela really motivated the Keiyo on the importance of education. "He could address the members of the LNC on the need to send children to school as was happening among the Giriama in the coast. The growing of maize, bananas, beans, pineapples, cabbages and onions took secondary importance. He impressed upon us the importance of cleanliness, punctuality and hard work. More important, he encouraged all the students to report back with at least one student from our villages after vacation".

The 1934 annual report began to assess the contribution of the school saying that; "That school at Tambach has become a prominent and popular local institution. It makes a useful contribution to the progress of this district under the control of Mr. Howitt. Howitt has won the confidence of this conservative people to the extent that applications for admission are considerably in excess of the number of vacancies. The AIM had by 1934 established a school at Kapsowar for girls while the Mill Hill Catholic Mission had also began construction at Kamariny and Tambach thus breaking the L.N.C. and government monopoly for the provision of education among the Keiyo and Marakwet. The LNC was reluctant to vote some of its funds. According to Joel Oloibe, the LNC distrusted mission schools because they discouraged circumcision and demanded the renunciation of some of the society's traditional values like offering sacrifices, taking beer and participation in traditional ceremonies like dances, and feasts. In addition, the LNC were not eager to educate girls since their roles were at variance with western education since in traditional society women were subordinate to men. In fact in 1936, the Mill Hill Catholic Mission at Tambach and Kabarnet had been abandoned with no progress at all.

In 1937 the school would boast of twenty-two successful former students who had completed Tambach School. Of these eleven were at N.I.T.D. Kabete, six carpenters, three masons and two blacksmiths. The school was, however, greatly hampered by a shortage of qualified teachers. In 1938 there were reported to be eight-four boys at the school with forty in primary school, forty-four in elementary section, four attending an elementary teacher's course at Kapsabet, one at Bukura Agricultural School and two were apprenticed to the Nakuru Tannery.

In spite of making such progress the school continued to be handicapped by various problems. The first standard eight classes sat for Kenya African Preliminary Examination (KAPE) in 1939 and it was reported that none of the students passed the Primary examination. This was attributed to a lack of foundation being made in the "bush" schools, which acted as feeder centre for Tambach School. Another problem arose because most of those attending school were too advanced in age. Most parents were unwilling to release their young children and most insisted that they could do so only after "herding hours". In addition, AIM schools had failed to hold ground, mainly because the LNC distrusted schools under their management mainly due to their anti-circumcision attitude adopted by the AIM, a view no Keiyo could agree with.

During the twelve years under review from 1927 to 1939 the foundation was laid for future Keiyo educational requirements. The graduates of the school became respected individuals. Kiptoo Chirchir one of the early pupils had vivid memories of the school. In 1926 Chirchir was a gardener on the farm of a settler Van Hey Den, popularly known as Kipukan. His main duties on the farm included being a loader and slasher-harvester for wheat. He was also in charge of the bullocks, which ploughed most of the land. Recrimination by Van Hey Den made him desert and join Tambach School as a student where he studied as far as standard eight. Kendagor Bett, also a former student of Tambach informed Dr Kipkorir in an interview that he went to Tambach School on his own in order to learn to weigh pyrethrum flowers and thus get employment on neighbouring European farms.

The case of the government African School Tambach shows that the emphasis on education was the work of the Keiyo themselves. In a letter to the Provincial Commissioner Nzoia, the District Commissioner Tambach states that the education department reported favourably about the school's progress. In particular the students from the school had already made their mark at the N.I.T.D. Kabete. Howitt who was headmaster of the school for ten years from 1930 to 1939 deserve a special place in the establishment of a successful academic institution among the Keiyo and Marakwet. Other headmasters of the school up to 1967 included.

Government African School, Tambach - former Headmasters

Name	Period
G.A Berrige	1928- 1929
R. H. Howitt	1930-1936
R. C. Wilson	1936-1936
R.C. Howitt	1936-1939
W.H. Oglemy	1939-1940
J. Macmunn	1940-1944
H.T. Woodhouse	1944-1946
M. Loveland	1946-1946
M. de Lainy	1946-1949
A.J. Baymer	1950-1954
J. Mellin	1954-1954
J.L. Crawford	1955-1957
H.P. Smith	1957-1959
J. Flockhart	1961-1964
M.A. Jade	1965-1965
N. Oloo	1965-1967

For those who knew Howitt, he was regarded as a strict disciplinarian who encouraged agricultural and vocational training which saw the school registering students for the Kenya African Preliminary Examination (K.A.P.E.) in 1939. He was, however, biased towards agriculture introducing a wide range of crops like cassava, onions, coffee, tomatoes, pineapple, groundnuts, oranges, lemons, papaws, maize and other vegetables. This emphasis meant that instead of the Keiyo sending their children to schools like Alliance, they were to contend with N.I.T.D. Kabete, where agricultural and industrial vocations were preferred.

**The growth of the school can be exemplified for instance in 1933 when the school had managed to attract eight African teachers and instructors. These were:**

1. Mathura Nthonswa	Head teacher - ex-Machakos
2. Musyoki Mkola	ex-Machakos
3. Kigen arap Cheptum	(The local mail runner's son) an old boy of Kapsabet
4. Onyango Onyudi	Mason instructor, ex-N.I.T.D.
5. Juspinion Kiharu	Blacksmith
6. Alfred Ogola	Carpenter Instructor - ex- N.I.T.D.
7. Kibina arap Birech	A Nandi - ex- AIM
8. Abdul - Kipsigis	Tailor Instructor - ex - N.I.T.D.

**Together with Howitt, they drew up a timetable, which the boys had to follow to the letter. A day's timetable could be as follows:**

6.45	Drill and cleaning
7.30	Breakfast
8.30 - 10.30	Reading and Writing
10.30 -12.30	Shamba (farm) work
12.30	Lunch
2.30-5.00	Masonry, Tailoring and Carpentry
5.00 -6.00	Football

Such organisation drew praise from the acting supervisor of technical education, Mr. G.J. Stroud in 1933. He described the students as "clean and smart at class work, technical work and drill. The boys were evidently cheerful and contented." Stroud, however, failed to appreciate Keiyo dislike of a wholly technical education. Small boys who would be gracefully herding their father's livestock were made to contend with heavy machinery while ploughing. Several of them deserted the school as a result. The school's administration would not let in and described their mission

as being to "produce sound peasant farmers... and to produce artisans capable of carrying out simple carpentry or building either in their own homes or in employment on the neighbouring European farms". On the other hand, education administrators were also quick to appreciate the importance of a literary education. H.O Weller, the supervisor of technical education described Mr. Kigen arap cheptum a former student of the school and of Kapsabet AS A "very good teacher indeed. His teaching manners were excellent... He was clean and neat in appearance. His teaching was good tampered.

There was indeed a divergence between the aspirations of the LNC members and the majority of the Keiyo towards the educational spectrum. By 1939 facilities for girls' education was virtually non-existent. According to informants, the only objective of the existing AIM mission stations at Kessup and Kapsowar was it was argued to provide wives for Christian husbands rather than literary education for the girls.

Following the establishment of Tambach School, led by 1940 towards the establishment of other schools which were attended by both boys and girls. Among these early feeder schools were Kamariny, Kapteren, Chebororwa, Kaptarakwa and Muskut. In retrospect, upto 1939 few Keiyo save for children of LNC members and chiefs had begun to appreciate the benefits to be gained by sending children to school. Most were content to let their children attend to livestock herding and domestic chores. Some distrusted the L.N.C.'s taxing of an extra shilling from them just as the colonial administration at Tambach was doing. Others resisted because the children who attended school had the habit of shaving their hair clean. For the Keiyo this was customarily unacceptable. Hair was only shaved following the death of a relative or during initiation period. On the other hand, instead of appreciating the Keiyo dilemma, the colonial administration described the Keiyo as a "stay at home people" In spite of all this, the establishment of Tambach as a learning institution saw the beginning of a gradual transformation of the Keiyo into a literate society.

## Conclusion

Keiyo gradual success in reshaping their institutions, including types of informal education was due to the fact they were able to circumvent colonial restrictions and to borrow new concepts in education without compromising their traditional values. Despite Colonial administration's reluctance to establish a school for the Keiyo and Marakwet, the Local Native Council was resourceful enough to establish Tambach African government school. This saw the beginning of a gradual transformation of the Keiyo into a literate society. But societal constraints were many. Up to 1939 few Keiyo bothered to take their children to school, save for the children of LNC members and the chiefs had who begun to appreciate the benefits to be gained by sending their children to school. Most remained content to let their children attend to livestock herding and domestic chores. A number distrusted the LNC's taxing of an extra shilling from them just as the colonial administration at Tambach was doing. Others resisted because the children who attended school had the habit of shaving their hair clean. For the Keiyo, this was a taboo and an unacceptable. Hair was only shaved following the death of a relative or during initiation. On the other hand, instead of appreciating the Keiyo dilemma, the colonial administration described the Keiyo as a "stay at home people". From the 1950s, however, the Keiyo accepted the reality of education being a major catalyst for the change. The Second World War had exposed the veterans to the value of a

western education. A most vivid analysis of Tambach School must, however, emanate from Ben Kipkorir, in his book, *Descent from Cherangany Hills: Memoirs of a Reluctant Academic* (2009, 89-113). As an Alumnus of Tambach School, the renowned Cambridge trained academic, has given a best analysis of the origin and development of Tambach School in creating a class of elites from the Keiyo and Marakwet communities.

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