

2007 MKIDA CONFERENCE REPORT

EDITED BY MARCELLUS MAYAKA

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HAVE A VISION FOR YOUR LIFE & DREAM BIG

TABITHA NYABOKE OTIENO, PHD

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Overview

By

Kennedy Gisemba

Chairman MKIDA

It is an humbling experience to stand before you today and give you a brief history on how this project on Gusii Education started. I contemplated in re-assigning this responsibility but I realized you do not get such opportunities often to speak in front of your former Deputy Headmaster and Kiswahili teacher. Mr. Patrick Monyenye thought me in Riokindo and my standing here is a testament of his good work.

Before saying too much, I'd like to take this opportunity in welcoming you to our second Gusii Education Conference. Your presence and participation is a testament of your commitment to addressing this complex issue affecting our community.

To give you an overview and history on how this journey started, I must briefly talk about Minnesota Kenya International Development Association (MKIDA), whose leadership and foresight we are converged here today.

MKIDA was founded with a mission to help Kenyans in Minnesota and elsewhere achieve their basic needs. MKIDA's focus is in Education, Health and Development. MKIDA consists of a group of Kenyan and friends of Kenya coming together to impact the community here and back home. We promote unity among Kenyans through community involvement, activities aimed at strengthening the spirit of collectivism (*harambee*), and providing opportunities for self-betterment.

Rural Development:

Due to the high population density, the most important investment asset our people have is land.

Almost all land in Gusii is put to maximum agricultural use. Land is subdivided within families, and the average farm is only 15,000 m² in area. Intensive farming in hilly regions has increased the rate of soil degradation and erosion. Tea and coffee processing and soda bottling constitute Gusii's manufacturing industry. There are many societies such as Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) concentrated in Kisii Town. The informal sector is involved in repair, metal fabrication, furniture making and the sale of secondhand clothes, while the soapstone which is found in the area of Tabaka provides a reasonable resource for the carving industry. Income is unevenly distributed, with an average income per capita of Ksh. 2000 (approximately £20, US\$30 in 2006. These paints a very grim situation for Gusii.

Health:

MKIDA's Health initiative is focused on rural Kenya. Available data shows that life expectancy in Kenya is now 45.6 years. Diseases such as diabetes, malaria, HIV/AIDs, heart attack, hypertension, typhoid, dysentery, etc are common and people are losing life. It is now believed that 1 in every 18 adults is infected with HIV. Over 70% of AIDS cases are aged 20–49 years, the most economically active age group and also the best educated and skilled Health facilities are inadequate, unevenly distributed and lacking in essential medicines and equipment. There are a number of hospitals - including the government-run facility in Kisii town and Nyamira and the Mission Hospital in Tabaka - but the bed occupancy rate is 160.3%.

Education:

From inception MKIDA realized that education is the most important investment for our people. Our education initiative focuses on the Gusii Child. Individual Kisii pupils do well in schools outside Gusii but Gusii schools are not performing well in national exams. Over the years the number of primary and secondary schools has grown exponentially. In 1993 there were 679 primary schools and 134 secondary schools in Gusii. Today there are over a 1000 primary schools and over 400 secondary schools and enrollment increasing. With the reintroduction of free primary education, most primary schools are overcrowded. Most schools in Gusii lack essential amenities and resources thus reducing the ability of pupils to compete effectively in national exams. Female enrollment in secondary school is at 45%. Because of poverty primary school is the highest level of education open to most children. Private schools and academies have grown in number in Gusii since parents perceive public school teachers do not take their child's future seriously. Renowned schools such as Cardinal Otunga High School, Mosoch, Kisii High School, Nyabururu, Keriri which were marvels in the community are not doing well in national exams.

Because of the above issue we formed MKIDA to attempt and find ways to address these basic needs.

Here in Minnesota we have held graduation galas for our graduands in all levels to celebrate and honor their successes. We are in the process of setting up other programs to enhance our ability to succeed academically and professionally. Currently we are working on an after school program, career development and a mentorship program for our people.

In Gusii, we have only managed to pay first term school fees for some orphaned students join National Schools. The needs in Gusii are taunting and overwhelming. There are requests for

financial support, training materials, supplies, etc which could not be met by one individual or group. What became clear from Dr. Thomas Nyambane's trip was that unless people are prepared to do something the future of Gusii is in a state of waste.

The objectives of MKIDA Education Kenya (Gusii) are:

- To promote the general advancement of good education practices in Gusii including facilitating the exchange of information and otherwise.
- To cooperate with the Government, Teachers Service Commission, Kenya Examination Council, KNUT on matters concerning the quality of education in Gusii.
- To cooperate with universities, other educational Institutions and Public Educational Authorities for furtherance of Education and Training.
- To cooperate with students, parents, teachers and School Boards to improve educational standards in Gusii.
- To promote the sharing of teaching and learning materials and resources.
- To do all other things incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects or any of them.

Alone we could attempt to address this problem but we realized MKIDA would only be successful if we expanded our capacity and partnered with others. In America there are many Kisiis of different abilities, experiences and professional background and we felt a united front would go a long way in tackling this issue This led to the First Gusii Education Conference of last year (July 29th, 2006).

The objectives for this conference were:

1. To sensitize our people of the problem of education in Gusii,

2. To link like minded people to find the root causes of this problem and
3. To seek a way forward in addressing them.

The planning committee decided that the following issues had to be addressed:

- Lack of teaching materials
- Teacher motivation and performance
- The role of parents in the educational process
- Politics and education in Gusii
- Poverty as a factor in poor performance
- Role models and educational performance
- English instruction as an obstacle to better educational performance
- Religion and educational performance
- Academic honesty and education in Gusii
- Student motivation, discipline and performance
- Gender and educational performance: Are girls disadvantaged?

On the July 29th, 2006, conference these issues were addressed and proposals were made. We in MKIDA, compiled a conference report which we disseminated to the wider Gusii Community. To keep focus on this issue a few Abagusii from different parts of the America's were selected to join with MKIDA to move this issue forward. The Members were: Dr. Omari Onyango, California, Dr. Harrison Koroso, Arizona, Dr. Tabitha Otieno, Tennessee, Dr. Meshack Sagini, Oklahoma, Mr. Jared London, Minnesota, Dr. Kefah Otiso and Dr. Joshua Bagaka, both of Ohio and Dr. Justus Ogembo, Pennsylvania. Later Ms Orpha Ongiti, New York and Ms Margaret Obaga, Minnesota, joined the team. We sought geographical balance and gender parity in forming the team.

The terms of reference for the team were:

1. Study the conference report document
2. Deliberate on its findings and make proposals
3. Find a way forward.

It is to this committee we deferred to for guidance. Today, the committee will present its report and what has been accomplished to date. Our main focus is on the Kisii child and we should devote our energies to make sure we succeed. So much has been invested and your presence here ensures that appropriate remedies would be found.

In conclusion, I must thank MKIDA Board, the Conference Planning Committee, our sponsor's for their generosity to make the conference successful. Special thanks go to our community for their unquestionable support and well wishes and in keeping us focused on this issue

Thank you and have a blessed day as we deliberate on this complex issue. Once again we are honored to host you. ¹

¹ Reference President's speech at the 2007 MKIDA Graduation Gala in the Appendix III, Page 63.

Purpose of the conference

By

Tabitha Nyaboke Otieno, Ph.D

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Jackson State University

College of Education and Human Development

The importance of education is quite clear. Education is the knowledge of putting one's potentials to maximum use. One can safely say that a human being is not in the proper sense till he is educated.

The training of a human mind is not complete without education. Education makes man/woman a right thinker. It tells him/her how to think and how to make decision.

Through the attainment of education, man/woman is enabled to receive information from the external world. Without education, man/woman is as though in a closed room and with education he finds himself/herself in a room with all its windows open towards outside world.

John F. Kennedy said, "Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, when fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."

Every child deserves an education -- no matter what the circumstances.

We are gathered here to share and discuss:

- The role of Gusii in diaspora in improving education performance in Gusii
- Identity and discuss activities that address root causes of poor performance in Gusii.
- How we can give back to the community that means so much to us
- How to ignite/exploit/unlock the educational potential of Gusii children
- How to change the examination trends in Gusii for the better
- Collectively strategize on how Gusii education performance can be improved for maximize employment opportunities for Abagusii

Once examination performance is improved it will translate into many benefits, for example reduce teen pregnancy, crime, drug use for young people who otherwise would be ejected by poor performance and are left roaming idle and desperate.

"chinguru namakonde akoria" Let us use chinguru, nechisemi amo nebitokio Nyasae atoire to address the issue at hand.

"Egetinkinge ekengaini igo gekorigia oboundi kiagacha egesa embura egotuwa gesoe mwage" twachire amo torigie obounde toagachere abana bomoGusii a better future through improved education.

This is the purpose if this conference.

School, Family and Community Collaborations: A policy recommendation for stemming gender crisis in Kenyan education

By

Orpha K. Ongiti

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Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies

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Introduction: Kenya

- Kenya lies across the equator in the East African region
- Gained independence from the British administration in 1963.
- A population of 31,639,091
- Majority of the population live in the rural areas
- 8-4-4 system of Education

Background:

- Lack of gender equality in enrollment and performance in National Examinations are some of the challenges facing the Kenyan education (Saitoti 2006)
- The education in Kenya is like a pyramid with girls' enrollments decreasing as they move up the educational ladder (Mwiria & Ng'ethe, 2002; UNFPA, 2003; Bunyi, 2004).

Gender Crisis:

Gross Enrollment Rates by gender (2003)

Girls are being left behind

- Low enrollment (Teferra and Altabach 2000, Bunyi 2004; Daily Nation 3/1/2006)
- Poor academic performance, (KCSE 2006 = girls 27% and boy 73% in the top 100 candidates nationally, no Kisii girl among the top 20 best students) Top 100 positions in Nyanza, 14 Kisii (12 boys, 2 girls) (Daily Nation 1/10/2006, 3/1/2006, 2007)
- Low participation in math and sciences (Teferra and Altabach 2000, Bunyi 2004, Daily Nation 2007)
- High dropout rates (Ndunda 2001)
- Low transition rates (Daily Nation 1/5/2006, 2007)

Causes of gender crisis in Kenyan education:

- Historical (Ndunda 2001)
- Cultural beliefs (Kwesiga 2003; Ngerech 2003)
- Psychological aspect (Kibera 1993)
- Institutional barriers (Obura 1992, Manuh 1998, Rathgeber 2003)
- Economic aspect (Ndunda 2001; Kevane 2004)
- HIV/AIDS pandemic (Daily Nation 1/10/2006)

Example:

Gender crisis—a 14 year old girl is rescued from being married to a 60 year old man

Example:

Gender crisis—family preference to educate boys

Example:

Gender crisis—girls are forced to share their teacher's table in class

Unsuccessful policy recommendations by the Kenyan government to address the problem:

- Government appointed commissions and reports:
- Girls-only secondary schools (Ominde Report 1964)
- Increase women's educational and economic opportunities (Gachathi Report 1976)
- Introduction of sex education in schools (Wanjigi Report 1982-83)
- Enhance women's reproductive and productive roles (Ndegwa Report 1991)
- Equitable distribution of resources (Koech Commission 1999)
- Failure of policies because they did not involve family and community

Policy recommendation: Collaboration

❖ What is collaboration?

❖ A special kind of collective social action, and it is both a process innovation and product innovation (Lawson 2003)

❖ Who is to collaborate?

❖ School, families (parents/guardians) and community

❖ What is community?

❖ Individuals (professionals), organizations, agencies, and groups.

Collaboration:

Why collaboration policy?

- Ubiquity of change
- Past government unsuccessful policies to address gender crisis
- Involve parents and community—affected by the problem
- The solution to the problem is with parents and community

□ Families and community are:

- key resources for school improvement; schools—key resources for families
- The heart of students' identities and experiences (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997).

□ Parents:

- Spend most of the time with their children
- Know what they want for their children
- Implementers of the decisions made in school (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997).

How will collaboration work?

- Develop a “Theory of partnership” (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997)
- Build “Partnership” (Lawson, 2003; Ships, 2003).
- Develop a “Theory of change”. (Briar-Lawson, 2000; Larson, 2003).
- Interrelated working concepts:
- Interdependence, unity of purpose, shared responsibility for results,

Enlightened self-interest, reciprocity, and innovative approaches (Lawson & Briar-Lawson, 1997; Lawson & Sailor, 2000)

- Professional teamwork, parents—experts and partners, and accountability among stakeholders (Lawson 2003)

Benefits of collaboration

- Girls:

- More positive attitudes and behavior,
 - High participation in school and in math and sciences,
 - Improved academic performance,
- (Lawson 2003))

- School:

- More successful academic programs
- Improved teacher morale
- Improved performance
- More support from families (Lawson 2003)

Benefits of collaboration

- Parents:

- Participation in school affairs,
- Social connections and trustful relationships,
- Accountability,
- Empowerment (Goldring & Shapira, 1993; Lawson 2003)

- Community:

- Resource mobilization for education and training
- Cooperation—teamwork (Lawson 2003)

Conclusion

■ Based on the complexity of the contemporary families, community and society with diverse rooted cultural beliefs, varied political interests, economic difficulties and rapid demographic change of school population, schools cannot be stand-alone organizations if they want to succeed in stemming gender crisis. With collaboration the three separate autonomous entities (school, family and community) will become interdependent and work together towards a common goal—stemming gender crisis in the Kenyan education. In collaboration all will benefit.

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The State of Education in the Gusii Districts
Joshua Gisemba Bagaka's
Cleveland State University, Ohio

Complication with unit of analysis

- Choosing the educational unit of analysis
 - Individual student
 - School
 - District

Complication with unit of analysis

- Gusii students are in schools located in other districts in Kenya. The same is true for students from other regions attending Gusii districts schools.
- The concern here is the performance of schools in Gusii, where a typical Gusii child is attending.

Performance of Schools in Nyanza

- There is general concern that schools in Nyanza Province are underperforming relative to other provinces
- In 2003 and 2004, Nyanza boasted 462 and 497 A's in KCSE respectively. Two other provinces had over 1000 A's each for each of these years.

Nyanza Schools in the top 100 National Ranking in the KCSE, 2005

Performance of Schools in Gusii

- Schools in Gusii districts are severely underperforming relative to other Nyanza districts
- In 2004, Kisii Central had 34 A's in KCSE while Migori had 80 which is more than Nyamira and Gucha combined (72)

Why was this?

- Mushrooming of schools in Gusii which are not well equipped.
- These are clan-based schools which employ sons/daughters of the soil as teachers. They are competing among each other for resources.
- Some private schools are commercial centers with students as commercial goods

Measures of School Performance

- Poor Performance Indicator (PPI) or Wastage is the percentage of students with a grade of D or below.

❑ University Possibles is the percentage of students with a grade of B or better.

❑ These Indices can be measured at the school or district level

Non-Gusii Nyanza Student Performance in KCSE by District, 2003

Gusii Nyanza Student Performance in KCSE by District, 2003

School Management Committee

❑ The School Board of Governors

❑ Members with low or no education

❑ Political alignment of members of BoG

❑ Members of BoG practice clannism

❑ Some sponsors are not adding value to the schools they sponsor

Lack of Early Childhood Education

❑ Early Childhood Education (ECE) is necessary but not compulsory

❑ In the Gusii districts

❑ ECE Centers are scarce

❑ Financed by NGO, churches, or parents

Shortage of Quality Teachers

❑ In a secondary schools in Nyanza, the shortfall of teachers is in the 20-25% range.

❑ The profession, particularly in primary is characterized by drunkardness, drug addiction, and sickness

Quality Assurance and Standards

❑ QAS officers are too few and are doing inadequate work.

❑ QAS officers are sometimes influenced by clannism and political alignments.

PEST: Forces Impacting Education

❑ Political – sons/daughters of the soil and political alignments.

❑ Poverty

- ❑ Social – our school, son, daughter syndrome; alcohol and drug abuse and family stresses.
- ❑ Technological – lack of basic facilities.

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ABANA BA MOGUSII, ARISE & SHINE

By Omari Onyango, DDS, MPH.

A speech Delivered at Minneapolis, Minnesota on June 29th, 2007 during the Launching of GEAR (Gusii Educational & Advancement Resources)

Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

I appreciate you giving me an opportunity to be part of this great course. I am delighted to be here and I'm particularly delighted to be here on this occasion.

I am among people noted for knowledge, in a city noted for progress, in a state noted for strength, in country noted for freedom and bravery. We meet for our motherland - a country in need of so much. We meet for the Gusii people. A community noted for strength. A community noted for resilience. A community so small with a national impact. A community that must remain so.

Today, we meet in an hour of change and challenge, in a decade of hope and fear, in an age of both knowledge and ignorance. The greater our knowledge has increased, the greater our ignorance unfolds. Our community is shaken. I must again note that here among us, we have the best of the best among the Gusii people.

However, despite the striking fact that most of the best Gusii elite that the community has ever known are alive and successful today, despite the fact that our community's own manpower is increasing fast, despite that, the vast stretches of illiteracy, ignorance and misery far outstrip our singular solutions.

We know where we are today. We know who we are today. In fact, we know that we are where we are because of small steps taken by community leaders days before us.

This fact reminds me of 1904 when Captain Jenkins called our forefathers an incredibly stubborn Bantu-speaking community, which for centuries has resisted absorption by any neighboring tribe.

It reminds me of 1970s and early 1980s when schools in Gusiiland shined and produced some of the elite we are proud of today.

It reminds me of those days when people gathered around radios to listen to broadcasts of the release of national exam.

It reminds me of those days when villagers celebrated each child who passed well in national exams.

The fact reminds me of ululations and merry making in many hills and valleys of our beautiful land when harambees were conducted to send children abroad for studies.

The fact reminds me of the top ten schools in the country, where schools from Gusiiland featured. It reminds me of the pride we inherited from our forefathers.

The fact reminds me of the comparison of the Kisii economic prowess in Kenya to that of the Japanese in the world by Dr. David Maillu, a columnist in one of our local daily news papers.

These facts scare me at times. They scare me because of the history they allude to. They scare me because they portray a fast evaporation of the very pillars that we stand on today. The image we have is confusing. On one hand, we have successful people, emanating from the solid past our forefathers put in place, and on the other hand, a shining and successful group of people standing on a crumpling foundation, which has been eroded by strong winds of change that have been blowing in recent years across the country. Education in Gusiiland is in jeopardy.

It scares me because with this, our changing world, the thinking process is different. Yesteryears, we went schools to be hired by the government. Today, the government is retrenching. Yesteryears, we "went home" if we lost a job. Today, there is no land to go back to. Yesteryears, we went to Nairobi for better lives. Today, we are scared of the slums and insecurity in the cities. The community's future is at the crossroads.

This is breathtaking. What do we do now? It is not surprising that some would have us stay where we are a little longer to rest. But in this very meeting, in this people sitting here with us, the education they have, the vehicles they drive, the properties they own were not achieved by those who waited and rested and wished to look behind them. These individual and collective achievements were made by those who moved forward. Those whose parents moved forward. Those who the community moved forward to boost. Those rooted in the pride mentioned by Jenkins. Those rooted in the pride mentioned by Dr. Maillu. The Gusii. The Gusii at heart...regardless on who they are.

If you know history, Kisiis were pastoralists. When need arose, they became better farmers than the Kipsigis people from whom they learned. When faced with absorption, assimilation, and possible annihilation, as Jenkins indicated, they moved to the highlands and perfected their defense mechanisms. When faced with diseases, they discovered many herbal and even complicated surgical procedures. They were never worried by the winds of change. They knew that the answer to situations was blowing in the same wind. They adapted with the situation. They simply beat the time. They used applied education. And so can we.

When modern education was introduced, those who came before us made certain that our community produced lawyers, doctors, accountants and every other professional and skill. They started waves that spread our people to India, USA, Russia, and even smaller countries like Uganda and Tanzania. They did not wait to rest. We cannot rest. They did not look behind to marvel at their success.

This history tells that our forefathers must have had a sense of Duty, Honor, Community and Moral integrity to get us where we are today. And this they did with focus, dedication and pride.

Those four hallowed words reverently dictate what we ought to be, what we can be, what we will be. They should be our rallying points: to build courage when courage seems to fail; to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith; to create hope when hope becomes rare.

Those four words should and will propel us to rebuild our foundation. Those four words should and will propel us to reinvigorate the energies in our schools. Those four words should and will make us reshape the destiny of our children. Those four words should and will create employers out of our children. Those very four words will create a community we have all yearned for.

Those four words should and will realign our thinking process with the rest of the world. In this great country, people succeed not just because of their education but what they do with it. The education does not make innovators but the thinking process does. The education does not make employers but the environment does. The education does not make leaders but the general way of thinking does.

Ladies and gentlemen, we cannot look behind to marvel at our individual successes. The future is staring at us with anticipation. The past has prepared the launching pad in those great words. The possibilities are limitless. All we have before us is the launching button to press and the countdown will start soon. Let us stand to be counted as part of HISTORY.

Let us give Gusiiland a new educational order. One that will train our sons and daughters to be job creators and not job seekers. One that will manufacture and not just shopkeepers. One that will enable them to be innovators and inventors and not mere recipients of other people's discoveries.

Let us train a youth that will take its rightful place in the great nation of Kenya.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are the future of our community. We are the hope of Omogusii. We are the link between the future and the past of Mwamogusii. Abana ba Mogusii, Arise and Shine.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Who are the Kenyans/Abagusii in the United States?

By Dr. Kefa M. Otiso
Bowling Green State University
Department of Geography
Bowling Green, OH 43403
Email: kmotiso@bgnnet.bgsu.edu

Summary of the presentation at the Gusii Education Conference, New Brighton Family Services Center, 400
10th Street N.W., New Brighton, MN 55112-6806, June 29-30, 2007²

A. Number of Kenyans in the US in 2000

Country	Immigrants	% of Africa's Total
Nigeria	134,940	15.3
Egypt	113,395	12.9
Ethiopia	69,530	7.9
Ghana	65,570	7.4
South Africa	63,560	7.2
Kenya	40,680	4.6
Liberia	39,030	4.4
Somalia	35,760	4.1
Morocco	34,680	3.9
Cape Verde	26,605	3.0
Sierra Leone	20,830	2.4
Sudan	19,790	2.2
TOTAL	664,370	75.4
REST OF AFRICA	216,930	24.6
AFRICA	881,300	100.0

Source: 2000 US Census (Sample data)

● According to Table 1, Kenyans are one of the 12 largest African immigrant groups in the US. Because Table 1 is based on sample data, it underestimates the actual number of African immigrants in the US.

B. Where Kenyans/Abagusii Live in the US

● 76% of Kenyan immigrants (i.e., 34,823) in the US live in major Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) especially: Houston-Brazoria, TX; Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA; Chicago-Gary-Lake, IL; Washington, DC/MD/VA; Atlanta, GA; Dallas-Fort Worth, TX

● Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ; New York-Northeastern NJ; Baltimore, MD and Fort Worth-Arlington, TX (Figure 1). The remaining Kenyans (24% or 11,134) live outside of Metropolitan

² Reference Dr. Kefa Otiso's full PowerPoint presentation in Appendix II, Page 48.

Statistical Areas (MSAs). And as Figure 2 shows, Kenyans in the US are concentrated in states like Texas and California.

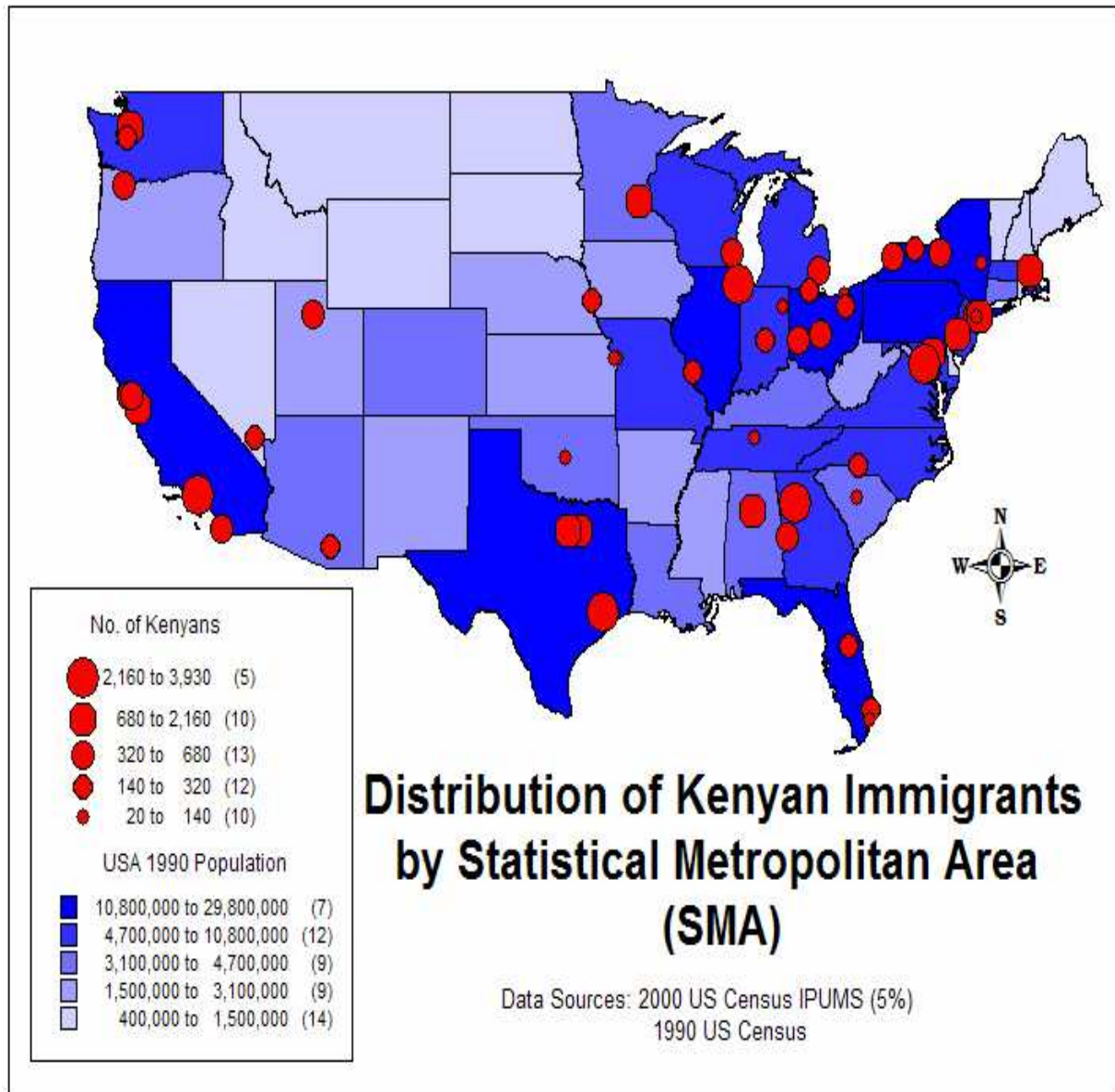


Figure 1: Distribution of Kenyans by Metropolitan Statistical Area

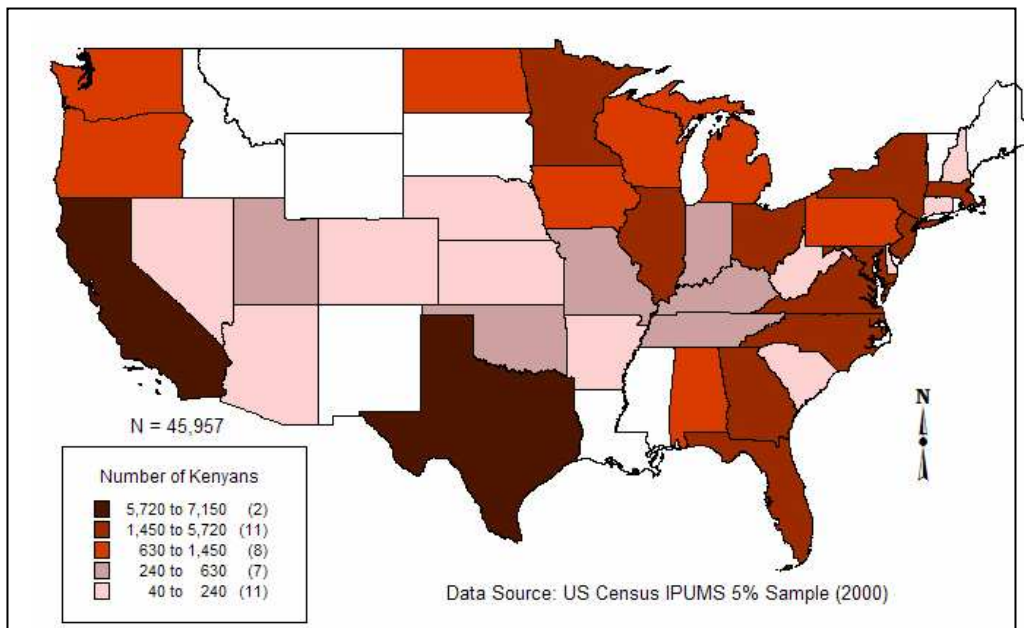


Figure 2: Distribution of Kenyans by State

C. Age & Gender Distribution

- The 40,680 Kenyans in the US in 2000 were overwhelmingly young
- 87% were 15 to 64 years old; 65%: aged 20 to 44
- Their median age of 32 was 3 years lower than that of the general US population

D. Gender and Family

- 54% of the Kenyans in the US in 2000 were male while 46% were female
- The number of females is getting closer to that of men due to increased female immigration
- 41% of the Kenyans in the US in 2000 were married

E. Educational Attainment for Population Aged 25 Years & Older (2000)

- Kenyans in the US are well educated and speak very good English
- 52% of them had a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to 28% of the general US population.
- 23% of them had a masters or professional degree compared to 14% of the general US population
- Among African immigrants in the US, South Africans (55%), Nigerians (59%), and Egyptians (60%) had a better undergraduate degree attainment compared to Kenyans
- Since the 1993-94 academic year, Kenya has led all other African countries in the number of students in US colleges and universities.

F. Employment Status Population Aged 16 Years & Over in 2000

- Over 70% of Kenyans, Nigerians, Ghanaians, and Sierra Leoneans in the US in 2000 were in the laborforce.

Kenyans along with Nigerians, Egyptians, and South Africans mostly worked Management & Professional occupations in the Education, Health and Social Service sectors of the economy.

G. Commute to work (Vehicle ownership) for population aged 16 years & over in 2000

●Close to 70% of Kenyans drove to work in their own cars. Together with Egyptians, South Africans and Nigerians, Kenyans had one of the highest vehicle ownership rates among African immigrant groups in the US.

H. Income

●Kenyans had a *per capita* (personal) income of \$28,000 – an income that was higher than that of all other black African immigrants such as Nigerians (\$27,000) and Ghanaians (\$23,000) but less than that of the Egyptians (\$33,000) and South Africans (\$42,000). Since the per capita income for the general US population in 2000 was \$21,587, the average Kenyan immigrant earned nearly \$6,000 more than the average American.

●The Kenyan median family income was \$55,000 or \$5,000 more than the general US population, \$2,000 more than Nigerians, nearly equal with Egyptians (\$57,000) but much less than the South Africans (\$81,000) who topped all African immigrant groups.

●The average Kenyan in the US in 2000 had a retirement income of \$11,000 – a figure that is at par with that of Ghanaians but significantly less well of than Nigerians (\$15,000), Egyptians (\$19,000), and South Africans (\$30,000). Although this low retirement income could be due to their relatively recent arrival in the United States, it might also be due to their low level of savings or investment in US retirement programs.

●Kenyan men made nearly \$10,000 more than their women counterparts in 2000

I. Housing

●35% of Kenyans in the US in 2000 were homeowners, the rest were renters

●Among African immigrant groups, only Egyptians & South Africans had more home owners than renters – these two groups have either been in the US longer or have higher incomes

●The Median Kenyan Home Value was \$180,000 and was the highest among black African immigrant groups in the US.

J. General Conclusions about Kenyans in the US in 2000

●Concentrated in populous states & cities

●Mostly recent immigrants, non-citizens, though many have green cards

●Mostly unmarried; most of the married have young families

●Males outnumber females slightly, near parity because of Diversity Lottery

●Most are in economically active age groups (20-54) – median age 32 years old

●Mostly well educated with at least high school diploma & high English proficiency

●Mostly in labor force & have service sector jobs that require relatively high skill levels – e.g., educational services

●Reasonable income levels though recent arrival works against higher incomes

K. IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABOVE DATA FOR THE GUSII DIASPORA

●As the famed Gusii prophet Sakawa (1840-1902) noted at the dawn of colonial rule in Kenya “*Amandegere name Getembe Kiagasuku, ore nabamura nere oranyae*” i.e., a new kind of economic prosperity was about to dawn in Gusii but only those that are prepared will benefit.

●Unfortunately, although Sakawa forewarned Abagusii about imminent and drastic socioeconomic changes, few paid attention. As a result, it took the community a long time to come to terms with the new economic changes.

- Thus in 1900-1990 period, the community lagged behind in acquiring the educational, social, and economic skills (“abamura”) needed to thrive in the new economy. Why?
 - Failure to grasp the value of education in the new economy
 - Shortage of educational facilities, teachers etc
 - Educational expansion without proper depth
 - Growth of millennial religious movements – escapism
 - Churches that are too heavenly minded for earthly good, hence poor supervision of schools
- Since the 1990s the community has woken up as demonstrated by:
 - Greater emphasis on education and business
 - Massive migration to other parts of Kenya and internationally

America as the new Getembe Kia Gasuku or Frontier

- Does the Gusii community have the necessary educational, social, and economic “abamura” (i.e., skills) to thrive in the US? Not necessarily so.
- Of the Kenyans in America with impressive educational credentials, how many are Abagusii?
 - Not that many. Progress has been made but we have a long way to go
 - Besides, Gusii men are far ahead of their female counterparts in educational attainment

Why does the Gusii lag behind educationally in the US?

- Wrong priorities
 - Too much emphasis on home (nka) – Ever planning to return home “next year” even though the likelihood of that happening is low
 - Nobody but God can be in two places at the same time
 - Be fruitful where you are – It is those who do well in the US that are prepared to return to Kenya
- Over-extension - conspicuous investment at home
 - Consumption, rural palaces, land, home burials
 - Focus on productive assets in productive locations
- Too much emphasis on money yet “*Semi tiching’ana nguru*” i.e., knowledge is better than power. Those with a good education earn far more than those that are less educated. In US, a person with an undergraduate degree earns 70% more money over his/lifetime than one with a high school education. Invest in education. Period.
- Failure to use the Green Cards to get educational loans.
- Few good role models
- Lack of information – student loans, educational programs, application process
- Growing under-assimilation especially among kids.
- Parents – if nothing else, get a good education for the sake of the kids. It is easier for them to catch it than for you to tell them.
- Watch your friends. Two cannot walk together unless they agree. And nobody can lead another beyond where he/she has been

Way Forward

- Prioritize education – it is foundational in the new global information economy
- Community organizations e.g. Churches, Nyagetinge, and MKIDA should do more to promote education
- Our role models should do a better job of promoting education
- Target suburban schools to avoid under-assimilation of kids
- Greater parental involvement – balance work & kids’ interests (contentment is key)

2nd Gusii Education Conference
2006 Conference Report
By Matunda Nyanchama
Minneapolis, Minnesota
July 29, 2007

SOME BACKGROUND:

*Kiara kemo tikegoita nda! – kidole kimoja hakiui chawa
kagiasinyire nyomba keire tureti!
Gakiaborire ‘nchera rogoro kerigerie ‘nchera maate.*

If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.

Someone put it well: Gusii is a giant urban landscape without the associated infrastructure and amenities. The problems we face are complex; in many cases our people are working hard, applying simple approaches to complex problems. As such, we need a systematic approach to dealing with the issues, identify the opportunities that exist and take advantage of those opportunities.

We cannot overemphasize the value of education. We know its value: better & higher living standards, higher life expectancy, low infant mortality rate, low crime, and better contribution to society.

I am glad to present the report of the outcomes of last year’s conference that took place in this very same place on June 26, 2006 a day that coincided with the annual MKIDA graduation gala. I must commend MKIDA for taking the initiative and we must be grateful for taking this type of leadership.

The conference was convened by MKIDA due to the fact that schools in Gusii have been performing poorly compared to schools in other parts of Kenya. The conference was intended to provide a brainstorming session on the root causes of the poor performance, explore potential ways of addressing identified problems and propose a way forward. In the words of the final report:

“The aim was to try and isolate the root cause(s) of the consistently poor performance of primary and secondary academic institutions in Gusii and then make some recommendations that would, hopefully, make a difference.”

Participants were drawn from across North America with a majority coming from Twin Cities area.

The format:

- Key presentations to place the issue in perspective.
- Breakout sessions
- Keynote speeches & presentations
- Open forum – Q&A
- Keynote address to MKIDA graduation.

1. How does lack of teaching materials, supplies and inadequate facilities affect education in Gusii?

2. Impact of poor teacher attitude, morale and commitment on Education in Gusii.
3. Significance of parental involvement on Education in Gusii.
4. How does political influence in schools/government intrusion/bad leadership affect education standards in Gusii?
5. What is the impact of poverty on Education performance in Gusii?
6. How does lack of role models affect education in Gusii?
7. Importance of strong foundation in English language on performance in Education in Gusii?
8. What role has religion, culture/superstition/witchcraft/, played in Education in Gusii?
9. How does cheating/impersonation/stereotyping affect education?
10. Are Gusii students motivated enough to pursue educational excellence?

Key Highlights:

The issue of Gusii education is complex; it has multifaceted challenges; no single cause can be associated with it no single solution.

Some Root Causes: – no single cause of problems; very complex situation:

1. Limited resources and impact on students:
 - a. Materials for education that many parents cannot afford and
 - b. The need to tap into CDF funds for school funding.
 - c. The need for equity on distribution of resources.
 - d. Ensure relevant material that would be useful in modern age
2. Student Motivation
 - a. Lack of student motivation and hence the need for motivation; Student motivation – getting successful people involved in the community with increased interaction with students – role models
3. Teacher motivation and the role of parents in the school system.
4. The nature of education and the need to move to “brain power” rather than brawn power and more holistic education.
5. Model schools – recall the days of Kisii High, Cardinal Otunga, Nyamagwa, Kereri, Nyabururu and others? Excellence centres e.g. in mathematics and science.
6. Economics
 - a. Inability to meet school-related expenses
 - b. Poor employment prospects is a demotivator
7. Political interference from politicians and undue influence they exert on the running of schools. The undue say politicians have in education.
8. School Administration
 - a. Circulate and transfer school HMs and Admins across the country; and not simply locally.
9. Education equity and considerations for the girl-child.

10. Impact of AIDS

Approach:

It was recognized that this problem is monumental and hence needs to be understood; that way we can get systematic and realistic solutions. *'Semi tiching'ana 'nguru! Toyerigerie ekebero!*

As such:

1. Strive to understand the “elephant” don't want to be like the ten blind men and their different facts about what they thought the elephant was.
2. Involve Mogusii across all spheres to own this – this is a problem for Omogusii across the world and should look to Mogusii to fix it; we are only attempting our part.
3. Hold a conference in Gusii to get to the bottom of the problem and solutions thereof
4. Understand and address specific issues affecting the girl-child and ways to deal with them, some of which may be cultural.

Some suggested solutions:

1. Resources, e.g. Books from such organizations like Books for Africa; mobilizing Gusii to provide text books and equipment as these remain a problem in Gusii schools.
 - a. Fight for commensurate allocation of resources – we couldn't tell whether the funding formula is fair – example: Gusii has as many students and schools as there are in the rest of Nyanza
 - b. Encourage a culture of philanthropy in the community both at home and the Diaspora.
2. Student Motivation
3. Teacher motivation and the role of parents
4. The nature of education
 - a. Focus on relevant education – academic, practical and entrepreneurial
5. Model schools:
 - a. Start two schools in each of the districts modeled on Starehe Boys Center (one for girls and one for boys).
 - b. Get a doctoral research student to do an investigation on the weaknesses and challenges of Gusii education system and make recommendations for reform.
 - c. A permanent committee for managing Gusii education system be formed by Gusii leaders in consultation with Gusii community in the Diaspora.
 - d. Old Boys Networks – and the contribution to improving our schools
6. Economics
 - a. Improve productivity and marketability of resources to increase disposable income.
 - b. Agricultural and Industrial e.g. soap stone, light industries to add value to agricultural products.
 - c. Improve the health of the people.
 - d. Investment in the local community e.g. hotels, transport.
 - e. Decentralize government activities. This will redistribute government resources and infrastructure, which will stimulate growth of local economies.
7. Politics
 - a. Members of parliament should leave schools and their boards to perform their duties unhindered.

- b. Incorporate MPs to become board members, and encourage their participation in school activities.
 - c. Parents can vote for good leaders.
 - d. Involve students in the decision making process through formation of student boards.
 - e. Do not alienate the MPs, be on their side (as they are very powerful) and involve them in the decision-making but be firm.
 - f. Give incentives to teachers.
8. School Administration
- a. Should encourage HM transfers outside the region;
 - b. Should focus on effectiveness and ability to delivery results
9. Girl Child
- a. Explore the impact of culture and gender view on girls; should explore the ways that this is retrogressive and fix it.
10. Impact of AIDS

Means:

- Awards
- A major conference in Gusii
- Extensive involvement of the Gusii community at home in the Diaspora.

Actions Plan:

Given the complexity – appoint a select committee to address this and make recommendations on the way forward.

Gusii Education Select Committee	
Dr Joshua Bagaka	Dr Tabitha Otieno
Dr Kefa Otiso	Dr Harrison Koroso
Dr Omari Onyango	M/s Orpha Ong’iti
Ms Margaret Obaga	Mr. Kennedy Gisemba
Mr. Jared London	Dr. Meshack Sagini
Dr Justus Ogembo	Dr Matunda Nyanchama

Among the questions:

- What role can we play in advancing the education standards in Gusii?
- Through what means?
- What would be long and short term goals?
- What local, i.e. Kenya-based partnerships, do we need?

The committee has been working year-long and has made great progress as will be reported later.

I want to leave you with a word from Gusii wisdom:

“*Ng’ererie orotambo ‘nduserie abainto baito roche, orwange n’engegu rwaereire*”
 “*Ore n’omwabo obwatwa ‘koboko ocha ‘nka.*”

Let’s strive in the spirit shown in last year’s conference for which we must thank MKIDA. And let’s all strive to make a difference. Gusii needs you and I; our country needs you and I. Asante sana.

MKIDA Select Committee Report

2nd Gusii Education Conference

June 29, 2007

By Kefa Otiso

Presented at the Gusii Education Conference, New Brighton Family Services Center, 400 10th Street N.W., New Brighton, MN 55112-6806, June 29-30, 2007

Committee Constitution & Mandate

- The MKIDA Select Committee (MSC) was constituted by MKIDA soon after the 1st Gusii Education Conference (GEC) in Summer 2006
- MSC charged with the responsibility of finding ways of implementing the findings of the 1st GEC – essentially charting the way forward

MSC Members

- Dr. Joshua Bagaka - OH
- Dr. Tabitha Otieno - MS
- Mr. Kennedy Gisemba (MKIDA) - MN
- Mr Jared London (MKIDA) - MN
- Dr. Kefa Otiso - OH
- Dr. Omari Onyango - CA
- Dr. Matunda Nyanchama - Canada
- Dr. Harrison Koroso - AZ
- Dr. Justus Ogembo - NH
- Ms. Mary Obaga - MN
- Ms. Orpha Ong'iti - NY
- Dr. Meshack Sagini - OK

MSC – First Meeting

- The committee started to teleconference on October 17, 2006
- MSC grateful to MKIDA for organizing the GEC and for creating MSC
- Election of MSC Officials
 - Dr. Joshua Bagaka (Chairman); Dr. Tabitha Otieno (Vice-Chairman); Mr Kennedy Gisemba (Convener); Dr. Kefa Otiso (Secretary)
- Resolved to meet every other Sunday for 1 hour – have been meeting since

MSC Achievements

- Has identified need for a more inclusive non-profit organization to implement GEC findings - MKIDA supports the idea and will collaborate with new organization when it created
- Suggested name of the proposed organization: GEAR (Gusii Educational and Advancement Resources)
- GEAR draft constitution has been created – will be circulated for comment after GEAR is launched and registered
- Development of GEAR objectives:
 - to collectively mobilize resources to be used for projects aimed at the betterment of the educational opportunities of the Gusii learners at home and in the Diaspora.

- to become united and eager to discuss and explore ways to enhance the quality of education among Abagusii.
- to mobilize membership of at least 5,000 across North America, Europe, and the Diaspora.
- to establish branch offices around the world in order to effectively involve Gusii members in the Diaspora.
- to operate in a manner where the organization can respond sensitively, urgently, and constructively to issues that affect the educational and related issues of the Gusii community.
- to establish an educational foundation for the express purpose of accomplishing the purpose of the organization.

- Identification of short-term and long-term action plans derived from 1st GEC
 - Short-term: awards
 - Long-term: textbooks, school governance etc.
- Inauguration of GEAR awards for Gusii students, teachers and schools that excel in national exams
 - Best and 2nd best boy for each of 3 districts
 - Best and 2nd best girl for each of 3 districts
 - No award to students with less than 400 points
 - Best public and private school for each of 3 districts

GEAR Awards

- Phase 1 has been implemented already
 - Awards issued for best pupils in 2006 standard 8 exam
 - Awards for secondary school students, teachers, and schools to follow in the future
- Phase 1 awards
 - Best student: 10,000/=
 - Second place student: 5,000
 - For all winners: A certificate and commendation letter signed by 2 GEAR officials (Copy of the letter to pupils' former schools)
- Certificates and letters have been sent to Kenya
- Cash awards have been given to winners from Kisii Central and Nyamira districts
 - Kisii Central award ceremony – Kisii High School, May 31, 2007
 - Nyamira, Nyamira, June 18, 2007; Gucha yet to be scheduled
- Dr. Mary Getui of Kenyatta University and Esther Nyarangi gave awards on behalf of GEAR
- Award meetings were organized by respective District Education Offices
- MSC with the assistance of MKIDA raised \$1,700 (Kshs. 110,000) for the GEAR awards
- Need community support to expand and sustain this effort

MSC Goals for the Next Year

- Formalize GEAR
- Popularize GEAR
- National membership drive
- Streamline GEAR activities e.g., awards
- Fundraise – need your help

- Hold 3rd GEC in another state
- Educational Conference in Gusii in 2008
- Implement outcomes of this conference

MSC Lessons Learned

- Organize our own award ceremonies at a central location to avoid some the logistical issues we have experienced this year

Acknowledgements

- MKIDA
- Local community

MKIDA COPYRIGHT 2007

Gusii Education Advancement Resource – GEAR – Launch

The Way Forward

Matunda Nyanchama

Minneapolis, Minnesota

July 30, 2007

A year ago, we gathered here on a day that coincided with MKIDA (Minnesota Kenya International Development Association) Graduation Gala; we had participants from across North America – Ohio, Michigan, New Hampshire, Ontario (Canada) and from here in Minnesota.

This was a MKIDA initiative; and we must thank MKIDA for taking the initiative; in doing so, they demonstrated leadership!

Our charge was the subject of the state of Gusii Education; as you know, in Gusii, school performance continues to be extremely poor. All the Gusii districts rank near the bottom in the performance list across the country. Year to year, Gusii is taking less and less children to university and colleges since very few of them qualify. At the rate of failure we are experiencing in Gusii, we could end up as bottom feeders in the national and global economy

Clearly, this is a problem!

Questions were asked to try and understand the problem of education in Gusii. So what really is wrong? Why are children from Gusii not doing well? Is Mogusii innately stupid and cannot do well? Yet, across Kenya Gusii children are doing well? Outside Kenya, we have successful people from Gusii.

The next question was: what is the nature of the problem? What are the root causes?

These questions were necessary to make sure that we understand what we are dealing with? How big was the problem? This is because we know that only if and when we understand the problem can we attack it successfully.

The issues of Gusii Education are complex; they are intricate and have to do with:

1. *Poverty & Lack of Resources*
 - a. *Lack of resources; it also inefficient of resources*
 - b. *Poverty and lack of employment opportunities*
2. *Leadership, politics and mentorship*
 - a. *Too much political interference*
 - b. *Leadership and management in schools and the role of HMs and lack of accountability*
 - c. *Lack of model schools – excellence standards*
3. *Cultural practices like those favouring boys over girls – and yet we know that women are the foundation of society – and this is not simply a statement for Gusii*
4. *Motivation*
 - a. *Student motivation – are our students motivated enough?*

- b. *Teacher motivation and their commitment*
5. *It has to do with the nature of education: our education is tailored to passing examinations so that one can become someone's employee! How about entrepreneur – the people who create businesses and jobs?*
 6. *Disease: AIDS continues to have a huge impact*
 7. *Lack of Model schools:*
 8. *Economics: lack of jobs in sight is a demotivator.*
 9. *And more!*

So we know there is a beast with respect to Gusii education? We know a little about the nature of the beast; and we know what could be done?

Now the question is HOW??

Given the complexity of the problem, a select committee was appointed to help guide us address this and make recommendations on the way forward. The following were appointed members of the select committee:

Gusii Education Select Committee	
Dr Joshua Bagaka	Dr Tabitha Otieno
Dr Kefa Otiso	Dr Harrison Koroso
Dr Omari Onyango	M/s Orpha Ong'iti
Ms Margaret Obaga	Mr. Kennedy Gisemba
Mr. Jared London	Dr. Meshack Sagini
Dr Justus Ogembo	Dr Matunda Nyanchama

As you can see this is a team of accomplished individuals; and expectations were high!

Since then, the team has worked diligently for the last one year; we have met faithfully every 2nd Sunday 3:00 PM CST. In the process, the committee develop proposals to MKIDA on the way forward for education in Gusii; we have also planned and partially implemented an award program for students at KCPE, KSCE, best schools and best teacher. Awards for Nyamira and Kisii Central have been given for a boy and girl each with the best marks at KCPE. The one for Gucha will be given in the future.

Yesterday, we reconvened again for the entire day for the 2nd Gusii Education Conference. The participation was impressive. We sat for a marathon 13 hours! Amazing what motivated people can do! The outcomes from are these:

1. **The size of the problem:** The issue of education is Gusii a LARGE BEAST; we need to define it well! We need to understand it so that we don't act like the ten blind men and the elephant.
2. **We need to know who to work with – stakeholders:** and they are me, you, and every Mogusii; they include the teachers, students and parents; they consist of politicians, school headmasters/mistresses; and they embrace everybody interested in Gusii education
3. **Resources:** What resources do we have: the people, the material, the cash, the facilities? How do we access these resources?

4. **What are the short term priorities:** Sensitize and popularize this initiative to ALL stakeholders; identify target group of schools to work with on specific activities that would have the BIGGEST BUNG for the BUCK; define those activities we can initiate right away with the target groups of schools; develop resources – especially financing for these.
5. **Management Structure and Approach:** we need a vehicle that has a national outlook and global reach to drive this initiative.
6. **Economic environment:** what is it we can do to improve the economy of Gusii to provide jobs and employment

And we need a good vehicle to drive this initiative!

Yesterday, in this very hall, the team that was selected last year proposed, and it was accepted, that we launch a new initiative for advancing Gusii education. It will be called *Gusii Education Advancement Resources – GEAR!*

GEAR’s mandate will be international; it will embrace each and everyone keen on advancing Gusii education. It will embrace organizations like MKIDA, DELKA and all others that exist or may exist in the future. It will engage our leadership in Kenya – education leaders, politicians and teachers. In a word, GEAR will harness the effort and goodwill of all that are interested in advancing education in Gusii.

There is a song sang in Gusii about a bird, called *egetinginye*, which diligently prepares its nest to shelter it from rain and make a home for its young! *Egetinginye* is always forward-looking! In the same spirit, GEAR will help us become proactive and forward-looking in matters of education. The song goes thus!

Egetinginye ekeng’aini kerigia oboundi keagache
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye
Egetinginye ekeng’aini kerigia oboundi keagache
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye Baba
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye

There have also been more recent songs. For example, the singer Nyang’au Bw’Onsoti – *emansamu y’egetonto* - sings about the value of education; in one refrain he regrets that he didn’t go to schools because when he is with his friends, he cannot understand what they are saying. For example when they say: “Thank you very much” he interprets it as “*etangi eyio beria amache*”

The singer wishes he were literate to understand the language; it is a worthwhile and important concern. You can say that he wants to be linguistically literate! Our community yearns for education; the need today, beyond linguistic literacy; it is to do with being functionally literate!

The fact is that we don’t query the value of education in Gusii any more; we know it; we have experienced it; we have seen its benefits; Another fact is that the nature of education counts: consider a child schooled in the world of hammers and nails; suppose this child is taught that whenever he sees a nail or something like it, he hits it with a hammer. Now suppose that we take the

child out of that world and expose the child to other worlds with screw drivers and the like; the first instinct – to treat the screw driver as a hammer!

It means we need to reorient education. Part of that is embracing enterprise! I read somewhere that in America, for every one technical person trained, there are four business-related people! These are the people that take an idea and out of the idea create goods and services, which in turn provide employment.

The issues of Gusii Education are complex; they are intricate; they need a sophisticated approach; they need commitment; they need ownership; they need you and me; they need you as a child, a parent, a brother a sister; they need you as a politician; school teacher, headmaster and education officer; and yes, they need the Kenyan government.

And these issues of education cannot be divorced from the economic realities that exist today. We need economic opportunities for all those kids that drop out Standard 8, Form IV, Universities and Colleges! Our efforts in advancing education will come a cropper were we to ignore this reality.

In 1963 there was a rallying by the newly elected independence government of the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. Kenyatta's started a "back to the land movement" aimed at increasing agricultural production! *Yaani turudi mashambani*. The idea was that we all go work our *shambas* to feed the nation, sell the surplus and all would be well. There was even a song with a refrain going thus: *Mzee kasema rudi mashambani hakuna vya bure! Mzee kasema rudi mashambani tuijenge Kenya*

In 1963 there was fair land size holdings per family that one could turn to; contrast that with today, as you know, *ense yaakirwe omoroka! Oboremo bwabeire chincerere. Gose inaki!* In fact, if everybody in Gusii decided to work the land, there is NOT enough of it to keep our people busy enough, let alone feed all those mounts and stomachs in the region. As a friend, Edwin Okong'o said on another forum, Gusii is a giant urban landscape without associated urban infrastructure and services – no roads, piped water, sewage, etc.

This is NOT 1963! We need a new rallying cry. And as Mogusii said: *gakiaborire 'nchera rogoro, kerigerie 'nchera maate!* We need new thinking to find that *'nchera maate*. For example, how can we improve economic opportunities beyond what we have today?

World over tourism is a great money maker. Can we have tourism that taps into Gusii culture to showcase to the rest of the world? How about a Gusii museum of history and culture of Mogusii in which we could display such things as traditional iron works that allowed Mogusii to make metal implements for spears, hoes, arrows, etc. How about cultural industries that tap into our music, centred on *obokano* and songs of events like *amabina*. Gusii is blessed with good soils, despite the shrinking land sizes. Is there a way we could do food processing as added value to increase economic opportunities? Here I am thinking of much of the seasonal harvests that go to waste. How about an industry around the banana which is a major crop from our region? Can we learn from the Tanzanians and Ugandans who have learnt to add value, create jobs and increase economic gain for their banana farmers?

There are more possibilities for economic development. Suppose we diverted some of the money send home to ventures that could create jobs. Here is a good example: we consume a lot of cement and iron sheets for construction. Yet there is neither cement nor iron sheet factory in the region. Can

our entrepreneurs get together and start one such factory? How about horticulture? With improved communications we could be airlifting flowers and French beans out of Gusii for consumption in Europe and North America. There is more. With the coming of the optical fibre, it is feasible that in future one can offer outsourcing services in Gusii for companies in the Western world! India has done it! The Philipines have done it. How about us in Kenya? And this doesn't have to happen in Nairobi!

There is more that we can do! And we all need to think about these possibilities. Let's us to remember that, as big a problem as it may be, nothing is insurmountable; and there is strength in numbers and that half the problem is solved if it has been fully defined. As we tackle this mammoth of an elephant, let's imagine the end and the means to that end. Those means to the end must be consistent with age-old wisdom that if you *give someone fish and they will come for more fish; however, if show them how to fish, and they will go fishing on their own.*

The deterioration in our education did not happen overnight; I don't expect that it can be solved overnight. So your task, my task and every stake holder's task is to do the following: own this issue; evangelize about it and GEAR and MKIDA; embrace the vision to a better end; for without vision people perish; and if you don't know where you are going, any road will lead you there! Contribute ideas, materials (money – e.g. for GEAR Awards). And also remember that a journey of a thousand miles starts with a first step.

MKIDA, GEAR and the entire Mogusii calls for your support; it is you and I and everyone that will make this a success.

Dr George Agoki used the correct term yesterday: we need an army of energetic committed people; we need foot soldiers with a mission to transform Gusii Education. That army is you and I; that foot soldier is you and I; with GEAR at the lead and supported by organizations including MKIDA, Mwanyagetinge and all other Mogusii organizations in the Diaspora and Kenya, we will win.

Also remember that there is no mountain to tall to climb; there is no problem to BIG for a committed army.

So let's go forth and:Own this issue; let's go forth and evangelize about it; let's embrace the vision to a better end. And let's support GEAR for a better education for our children; and for a better future for us and our country. A journey of a thousand miles starts with a first step.

Once more!

*Egetinginye ekeng'aini kerigia oboundi keagache
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye
Egetinginye ekeng'aini kerigia oboundi keagache
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye Baba
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye
Embura egotwa geseo mwaye*

Nyasae oyio!

DISCUSSIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

Panel discussion leaders:-

Margaret Obaga – Facilitator

Olpha Ongiti – Former Senior Administrator TSC and PhD candidate in Educational administration and policy

Eng. George Agoki – Professor in engineering at St Andrews University in Michigan

Donald Nyang'aya – High School teacher in Illinois

Elijah Maronga – Professor at St Mary's University in Minnesota

Eijah Maronga:

Emphasized the need of parent involvement in learning noting that the education of a child starts in pre-school hence the need to set up a strong foundation.

George Agoki:

Underscored the importance of problem definition by all stakeholders first putting heads together.

Mentioned that the good things coming out of Gusii are as a result of individual efforts as opposed to concerted efforts. He noted that the Abagusii people are very good at replicating what has been done by others and are capitalists by nature.

He noted that there are over 400 high schools and over 1000 primary schools in the larger Gusii and teachers are under qualified because of the quality of intakes into training institutions.

He noted that the education system in Gusii needs a total transformation and radical intervention owing to the fact that religion is deeply rooted in Gusii and yet corruption is at its highest. There is urgent need of more of the CDF to be invested in education than has been the case previously.

Donald Nyangaya:

Noted that Human Resource is the most critical input into the development process and that education is key to human development.

He coined four steps in problem solving:

1. Problem definition
2. Development of an action plan
3. Execution of the action plan and
4. Evaluation of progress

He brought to the audience recommendations from a 2006 conference on the way forward as being:

- Involving all stakeholders in identifying root causes of problems. Some of the stakeholders identified were; school administration, education officers, KNUT, Education Ministry, parents, politicians and religious organizations.
- Debate and analyze identified problems
- Prioritize problem solving based on available resources
- Statistical data to be analyzed to determine trends in educational performance
- Involve stakeholders in solving the identified problems
- Investigate the impact of government policy in high school selections. It was noted that the best equipped government schools are found around Kisii central.
- Research on why schools in Gusii perform poorer than those in Luo Nyanza
- Workshops be held in Gusii to sensitize the populace on the identified problems and their solutions.

In conclusion, she noted that the Gusii educational issues are complex and they need a multifaceted approach.

Olpha Ongiti:

She noted that the Gusii girl child has been left behind because there is no equity in enrolment and performance. She noted that there is a gender crisis between the family, the community and the school.

EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS

GRACE MAINA, Former High School Teacher:

The inside desire to learn is an objective that is cultivated into the child and therefore mentorship is key in building the desire for further education.

Healthy and jealous competition should be encouraged amongst ourselves and there should be a unity of purpose to avoid tearing at each other as our children watch as it discourages them

Parents need to keep track of the development of their children at every stage and be available for them.

There should be sincerity in evaluation and in critiquing ourselves, teachers and all participants in the education system.

Some of the reasons for poor performance in Gusii are:

- Poor relations between teachers, parents and students
- Students' poor preparedness for exams
- Lack of learning facilities

THE ROLE OF HEADS OF INSTITUTIONS IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

PATRICK MONENYE, Former High School principal

Mr Monyenye noted the role that America has played in training Kenyans noting that many professionals in Kenya took their training in the US. He therefore urged the community to play a more active role in guiding Kenyan students coming to the US in pursuit of higher education by providing professional guidance and helping them to cope with the social life in the US.

On education in Kenya, Mr Monyenye stated that heads of institutions play a key role in the performance of their schools. He gave an example of Kisii High school in which in the 1998 KSCE exams, there were only 15As in mathematics. When he took over the running of the school, he put in measures in place that ensured that teachers were motivated and in the following year's KSCE exams the number of As more than doubled.

He cited a survey that was conducted by professor Tumbo Oeri in which out of every 10 schools visited, only one head teacher was present in the school.

PLENARY SESSION:

Josh Maangi:

Noted that the African Diaspora is recognized as the 6th region of the continents. He urged MKIDA to be more inclusive and get more stakeholders on board so that it can be strong and organized in order to access US government funds to help in building Satellite schools.

Hezbon Simba:

He noted that we cant run satellite schools from the US but we should get in through the schools' management by making the head teachers accountable and connecting with community leaders and parents.

He noted that the plight of children with learning disabilities has not been adequately addressed by MKIDA and other stakeholders.

Pastor Clement Moturi:

He blamed Diasporans for being part of the problem in the declining educational standards in Gusii by only helping their relatives and leaving well qualified but poor students go to waste. He also noted that school sponsors discriminate along religious lines and underscored the need for different church leaders to be educated on the need to work together.

Walter Nyambati:

He underscored the importance of a skilled labour force in the development of a nation citing Japan as an example of a country without natural resources but with a human resource base that has put it in the limelight.

He analyzed the 2006 KCSE examination results noting that out of 142 schools in Nyamira district, there were only two students with an aggregate grade of A whereas in a single school like Pangani in Nairobi, there were more than 100 As a good number of whom hailed from Gusii.

As a solution to the deteriorating situation, he suggested that school heads and their deputies be made to live in schools to save time they spend commuting to and from school and urged Diasporans to get involved in their respective school boards.

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FINAL HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2007 CONFERENCE

The conference attempted to shed light on the deteriorating educational standards in Gusii. One thing that was apparent was that this is a gargantuan problem or as one speaker put it an “elephantine” task to undertake to rectify the situation from what it is now. It would require the participation of everyone – all of society’s elements - academicians and non-academicians, “elites and non-elites”, the young and the old, those in the Diaspora and those on the ground. Also it would require a multifaceted approach. During the proceedings, it was clearly stipulated that input from the people on the ground was crucial and was not to be ignored in any approach to the problem. Otherwise MKIDA and GEAR were going to be “doomed to fail” as another speaker amplified. It was very clear to all that we need “boots on the ground” in order to know how to proceed expeditiously.

This year MKIDA changed tact by inviting long-serving educational professionals like “Mwalimu” Patrick Monyenye, Grace Maina, and Mr. Onyando. Mrs. Maina taught as a high school teacher in Gusii for many years, while Mr. Onyando served as a teacher for many years before getting promoted to be education officer. Mr. Patrick Monyenye (former principal Kisii high school) spoke as an authority on educational matters, interspersing his talk with primary facts from the ground. These three very distinguished professionals provided some of the “boots on the ground” orientation that we all agree MKIDA and GEAR sorely needed. It was articulated rather boisterously by a number of speakers that the problem of education in Gusii is complex and a solution cannot be reached by assembling elites whose most recent experience is in the Diaspora. Some of the questions posed included: How relevant is this kind of experience to unraveling the problems of Gusii education and unlocking the potential therein? How authoritative would this group’s input be in shedding light on the problems plaguing education in Gusii? What role can we play in advancing the educational standards in Gusii? Through what means?

A number of speakers touched on the Ogotu Report, and like in the previous conference, the relevance of the seminal Ogotu Report to the current situation could not be made any more apparent. Among the questions that were raised this year were the following: Are the findings of the Ogotu Report still relevant to Gusii? Are there any reasons why more resources ought to be allocated in identifying the problem than have already been allocated? And if so, what would be the logic and justification? Judging from some of the sentiments articulated by participants at this year’s conference it would appear that there was a lot of agreement or concurrence with the findings of the Ogotu Report.

Dr. Nyanchama suggested a way forward – That we might be way better off attempting to address the issues that are clear to us as we find ways of illuminating the unknowns through research. Even though there were dissenting views about the way forward, it was apparent to all that this being such a gargantuan task, there could be no simple prescriptive. Getting the best brains together to brainstorm and generate ideas would have to be part of the multifaceted approach, of course coupled with “boots on the ground” contact with the affected, jointly diagnosing the problems with them, getting an appreciation for the scope of the problems needing remedy, then moving on to put plans in place, implementing them, evaluating and re-evaluating them, making changes if necessary and when appropriate, re-evaluating the situation on the ground again, and then finally - institutionalizing the changes. Since there are a multitude of problems, there needs to be a multitude of solutions; some problems might require less arduously action to solve than others, while of

course others would require “Samsonian input” to rectify. As Joash Omandhi rightly pointed out, “Giving recommendations and going to the ground to implement them without the goodwill of those concerned will meet strong opposition or lack of support”. Indeed it would be foolhardy to attempt to diagnose problems and give a prescription without consulting the ailing! On the other hand it would be equally foolhardy to ignore the obvious signs of distress in Gusii’s educational system. That would be tantamount to hiding one’s head in the sand!

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APPENDIX I:

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION				
<p>2nd Gusii Education Conference & MKIDA Annual Graduation Gala June 29 – June 30, 2007 Minneapolis, MN, USA.</p>				
Education Conference Theme	Enabling the Unlocking of the Education Potential of Gusii			
Dates	Education Conference	June 29, 2007	8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	
		June 29, 2007	9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	
	MKIDA Graduation Gala	June 30, 2007	4:00 PM – 10:00 PM	
Location	New Brighton Family Services Center, 400 10th Street N.W. New Brighton, MN 55112-6806, Phone: 651-638-2130			
2nd Gusii Education Conference	<p>This year's Educational Conference is a follow up on the one held last year. It will have the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A report on the state of education in Gusii and its implications; ➤ A progress report from the select committee appointed at last conference; ➤ The launch of a new initiative for the advancement of education in Gusii and some of the proposed programs; ➤ Membership drive for the new initiative. <p>Participants are sought from Kenya, across North America and elsewhere in the Diaspora. We expect benefits from participants' vast experiences discussing, proposing and implementing solutions for education advancement in Gusii.</p> <p>Participate as a speaker or attendee. Attendees, please contact Kennedy Gisemba (kgisemba@yahoo.com) or Marcellus Mayaka (mwanchi@yahoo.com); Presenters to contact any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tabitha Otieno (tabitha.n.otieno@jsums.edu) ➤ Kennedy Gisemba (kgisemba@yahoo.com) ➤ Joshua Bagaka's (j.bagakas@csuohio.edu) <p>Suggested topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Root cause(s) of poor performance in Gusii – culture, politics, resources, education regulation ➤ The Education Act its impact on performance ➤ Role of the Gusii Diaspora in elevating education performance in Gusii ➤ The role of media in promotion of education 			

	You can also subscribe to Gusii Education Discussion List at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GusiiEducation or send a message to GusiiEducation-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
MKIDA Graduation Gala	<p>MKIDA believes in celebrating and showcasing our compatriots' success, and encouraging each other to set, pursue, and meet educational goals as a prelude to long-term success. This year's gala will honor all Kenyans students graduating in Minnesota in the academic year 2006-2007. As always, we intend to showcase our rich heritage and culture, and have an opportunity to network and socialize with each other.</p> <p>Graduates from Minnesota Schools and Colleges are invited to register for the graduation gala to have their achievements recognized. Contact the following: Marcellus Mayaka (mwanchi@yahoo.com) - - 952-938-6353 Gloria Bosire (nyau0004@umn.edu) - 763-300-9541 Lameck (Omariba@mninter.net) - 763-300-9541</p>

2nd Gusii Education Conference
Draft Program
 June 29, 2007

Arrival	08:30 AM – 09:00 AM	All
Welcome/Introductions of Participants	09:00 AM – 09:10 AM	Paul Morande
Purpose of Conference	09:10 AM – 09:20 AM	Tabitha Otieno
Historical Overview	09:20 AM – 09:30 AM	Kennedy Gisemba
Select committee report	09:30 AM – 09:40 AM	Kefa Otiso
Presentations	09:40 AM – 10:30 AM	Erastus Mongare Haron Gekonde Kefa Otiso Grace Maina
Break	10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	All
2006 Conference Summary	10:45 AM – 11:15 AM	Matunda Nyanchama
Current State of Education in Gusii	11:15 AM – 12:00 PM	Joshua Bagaka
Lunch	12:00 PM – 12:30 PM	All
Luncheon Speaker	12:30 PM – 01:00 PM	Omari Onyango
The Way Forward/Action Plan – a Panel Discussion	01:00 PM – 02:45PM	Panelists /Audience Donald Nyangaya/George Agoki Enock Annasi/Ayuka Oendo Trufena Choti/Elijah Maronga/ Margaret Obaga - facilitator
Break	02:45 PM – 03:00 PM	All
The Way Forward/Action Plan – Action Plan – questions + comments		Panelists /Audience Donald Nyangaya/George Agoki/ Enock Annasi/Ayuka Oendo

		Trufena Choti/Elijah Maronga/ Margaret Obaga - facilitator
Formal Launch of Gusii Education Advancement Resource (GEAR)	04:20 PM – 05:00PM	Pastor Peter King'oina
Interim GEAR Leadership Affirmation	05:00 PM – 05:20 PM	Joshua Bagaka

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APPENDIX II:

KENYANS/ABAGUSII IN THE UNITED STATES BY KEFA OTISO, PHD

Who are the Kenyans/Abagusii in the United States?

Dr. Kefa M. Otiso
Bowling Green State University
Department of Geography
Bowling Green, OH 43403
Email: kmotiso@bgnnet.bgsu.edu

Presented at the
Gusii Education Conference
New Brighton Family Services Center
400 10th Street N.W., New Brighton, MN 55112-6806
June 29-30, 2007

1

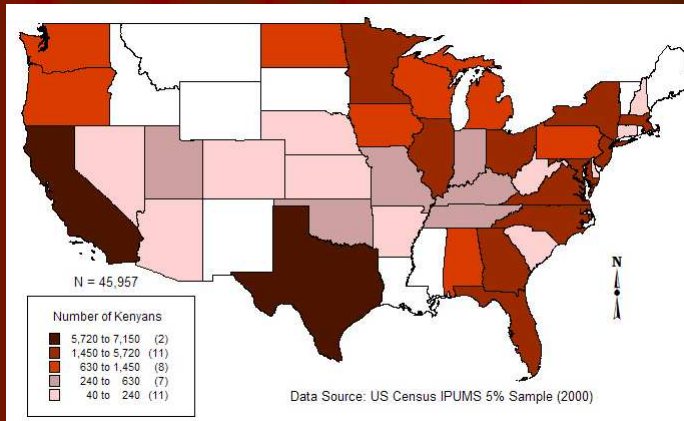
A. Kenyans in the US in 2000

COUNTRY	IMMIGRANTS	% OF AFRICA'S TOTAL
Nigeria	134,940	15.3
Egypt	113,395	12.9
Ethiopia	69,530	7.9
Ghana	65,570	7.4
South Africa	63,560	7.2
Kenya	40,680	4.6
Liberia	39,030	4.4
Somalia	35,760	4.1
Morocco	34,680	3.9
Cape Verde	26,605	3.0
Sierra Leone	20,830	2.4
Sudan	19,790	2.2
TOTAL	664,370	75.4
REST OF AFRICA	216,930	24.6
AFRICA	881,300	100.0

- Kenyans are one of the 12 largest African immigrant groups in the US

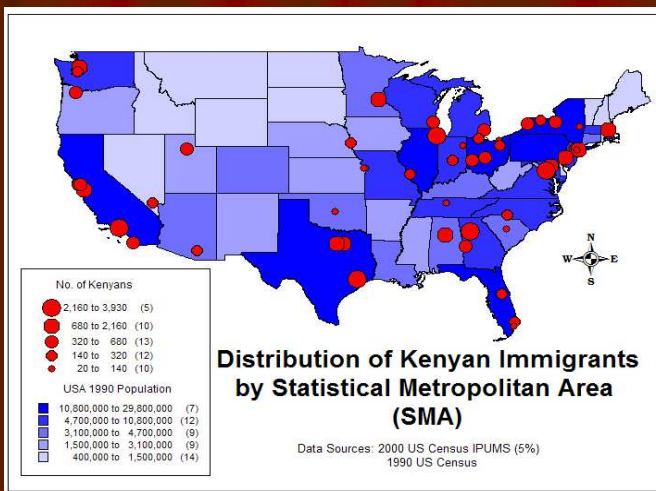
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Where Kenyans/Abagusii Live by State



- Mostly concentrated in major population states

3

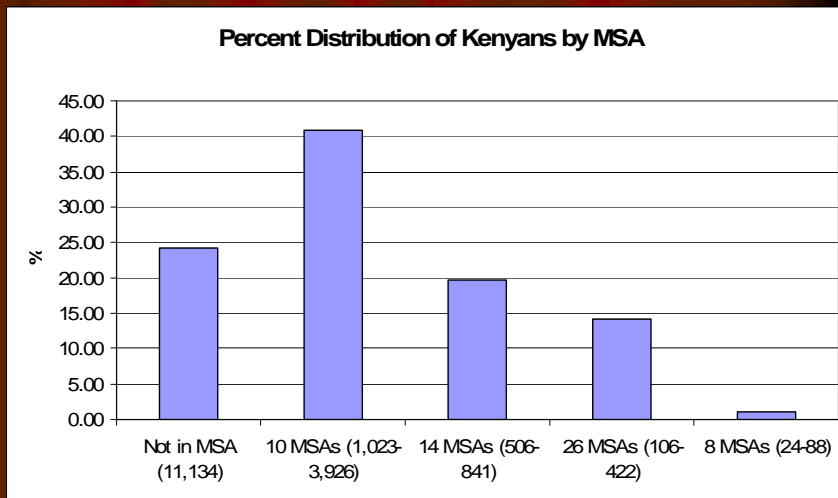


Where Kenyans/Abagusii Live by MSA

- **76% of Kenyan immigrants (i.e., 34,823) live in major MSAs especially:**
 - Houston-Brazoria, TX
 - Chicago-Gary-Lake, IL
 - Atlanta, GA
 - Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ
 - Baltimore, MD
 - Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA
 - Washington, DC/MD/VA
 - Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
 - New York-Northeastern NJ
 - Fort Worth-Arlington, TX

4

Most Kenyans/Abagusii Live in Large MSAs

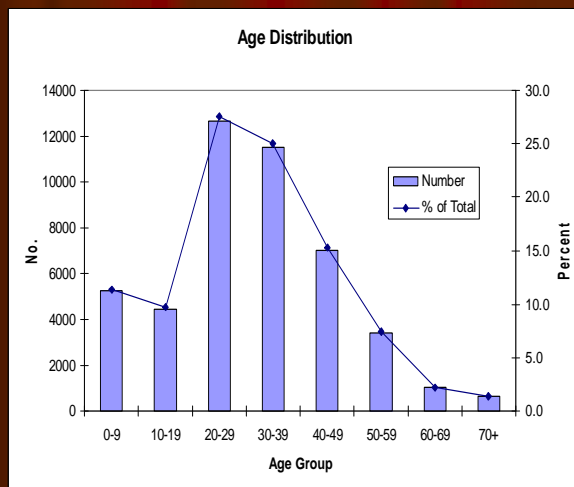


- 24% of Kenyan immigrants (i.e., 11,134) live outside of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs)

B. Social Characteristics

- Age distribution
- Gender distribution & family
- Educational attainment
- Male-Female distribution

Age Distribution



- Overwhelmingly young
- 87% were 15 to 64 years old.
- 65%: aged 20 to 44
- Median age of 32 - 3 years lower than that of the general US population
- 54% of the 40,680 Kenyans in the US in 2000 were male while 46% were female.

7

Gender and Family

- 54% of the 40,680 Kenyans in the US in 2000 were male while 46% were female
 - Increased recent female immigration
- 48% unmarried – never married or single
- 41% married and living with spouse
- 36% are household heads
- 77% (35,621) live with 2 or more family members

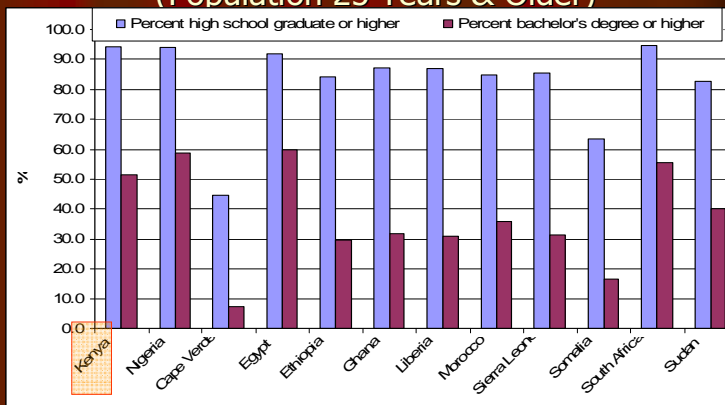
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Educational Attainment (2000)

- Well educated; Speak very good English
- 52%: Bachelor's degree or higher (28% for the general US population).
 - 23% had a masters or professional degree (14% in US population)
- South Africans (55%), Nigerians (59%), and Egyptians (60%)

9

Educational Attainment (Population 25 Years & Older)

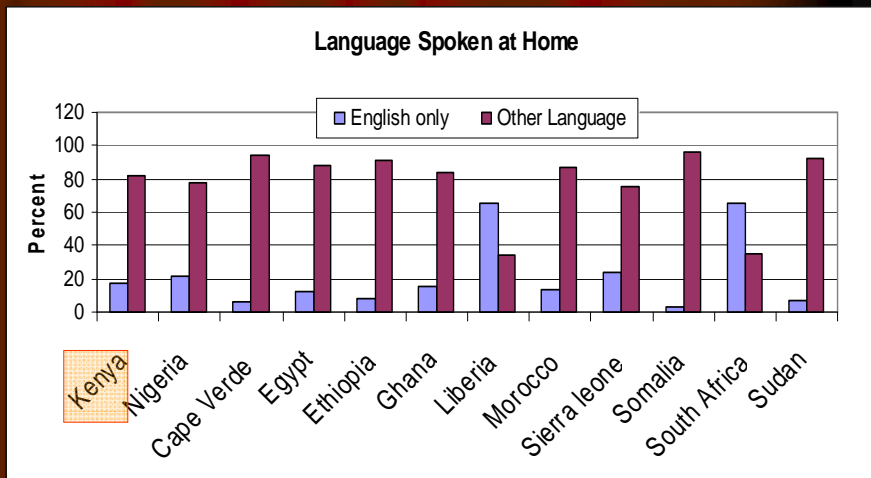


•Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt & South Africa lead

•Also exceed US natives on HS & BA diplomas & attainment in Bachelor's & Graduate/professional degrees

10

Language Spoken at Home (Population aged 5 years and over)



•English: Liberia, South Africa; Other languages elsewhere¹¹

Kenyan has most Students in US

COUNTRY	1992/1993	1993/1994	1994/1995	1995/1996	1996/1997	1997/1998	1998/1999	1999/2000
Morocco	941	946	912	986	1053	1,168	1,419	1,607
Ghana	1,046	1,113	1,156	1188	1327	1,494	1,750	2,127
Ethiopia	1,493	1,510	1,325	1328	1160	1,014	1,052	1,286
Egypt	1,555	1,537	1,577	1490	1540	1,831	1,834	1,964
South Africa	1,858	1,853	1,919	1888	1851	1,809	1,839	1,962
Nigeria	2,490	2,285	2,147	2093	2184	2,436	2,876	3,602
Kenya	2,345	2,399	2,603	2934	3723	4,346	4,945	5,684
AFRICA	20,518	20,569	20,724	20844	22078	23,162	26,222	30,292

Source: Institute of International Education, *OpenDoors Reports, 1992/93 to 1999/00*, Available at <http://opendoorsweb.org/datadownload/>

• Increased student enrollment – Kenya now leads Africa in # of students in US colleges and universities: Ltd tertiary ed. Opportunities, close ties to US (terrorism dividend?)¹²

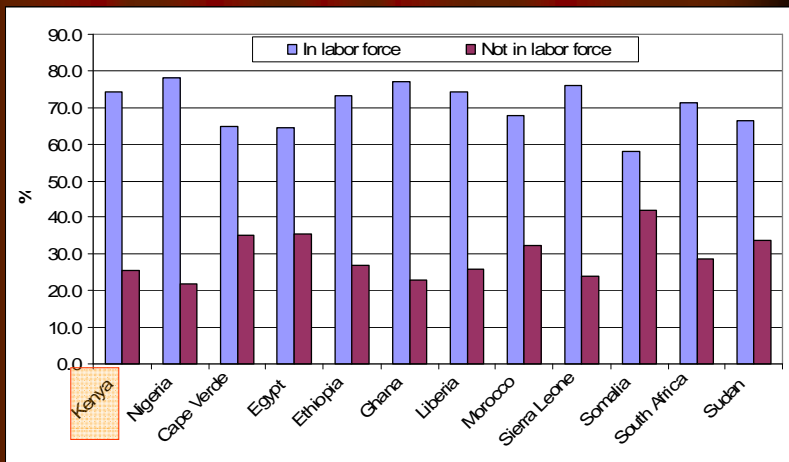
C. Economic Characteristics

- Employment Status
- Occupation
- Industry
- Commute to work
- Income
- Income and gender
- Housing Tenure & Home Values

13

Employment Status

(Population 16 Years Old & Over)

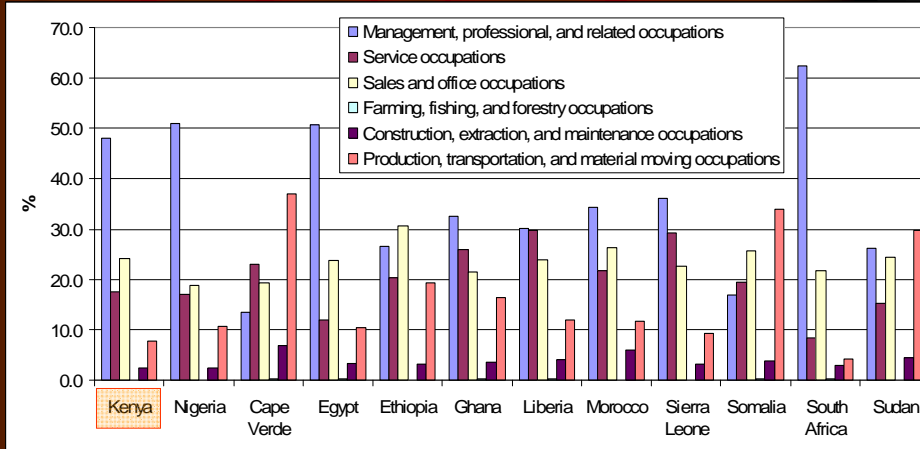


•Highest in labor force: Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya

•Highest not in labor force: Cape Verde, Egypt (family size), Somalia (language barriers)

14

Occupation: (Employed Civilians 16 yrs & over)

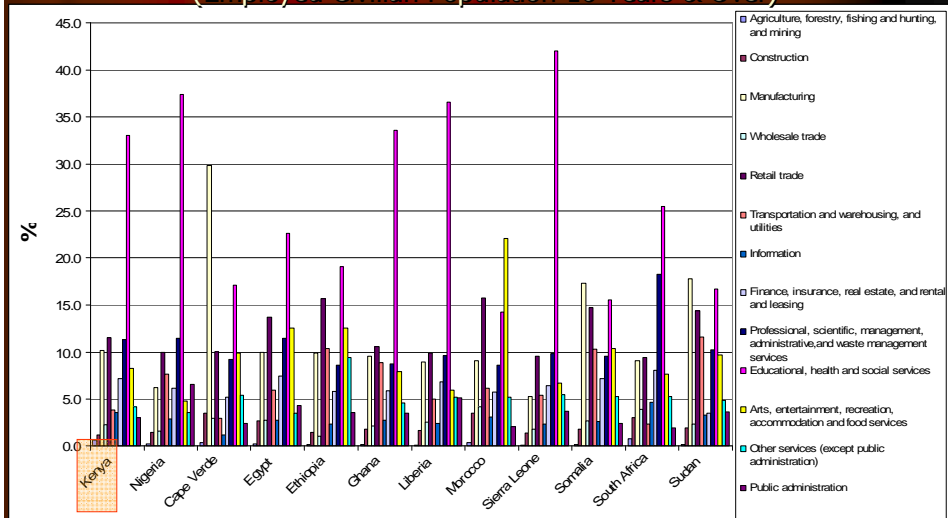


- Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa dominate Management & Professional occupations (also dominates in 8 countries total)
- Cape Verde & Somalia dominate Prod. & Transportation work
- Ethiopia dominates in Sales & Office occupations – important for other countries also

15

Industry

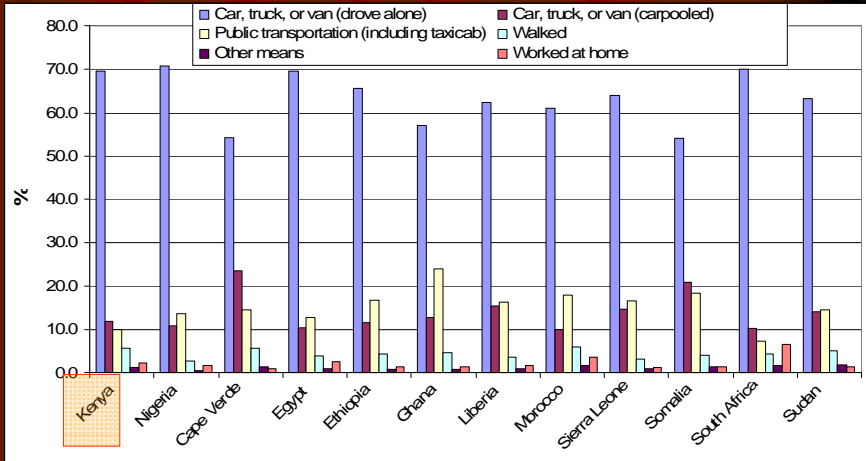
(Employed Civilian Population 16 Years & Over)



- Educational, health and social services; manufacturing (Cape Verde), Arts (Morocco)

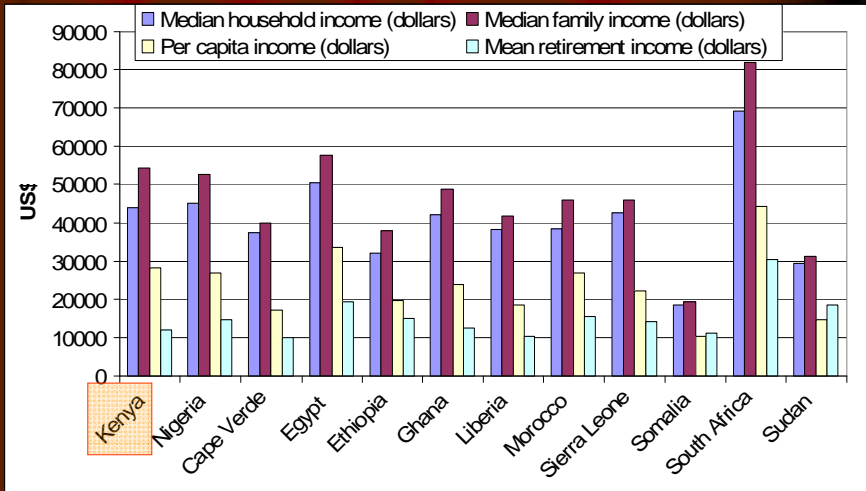
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Commute to work (Employed Civilian Population 16 Years & Over)



- Cape Verde, Somalia, Ghana, Sudan: High carpooling; Also high "no vehicles"
- Ghana: pronounced public transportation (major urban settlement, low income?)
- Most African immigrant households have 1 or 2 vehicles; 3 or more (Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria (income effects))

Median Household, Mean Family, Per Capita, & Mean Retirement Income

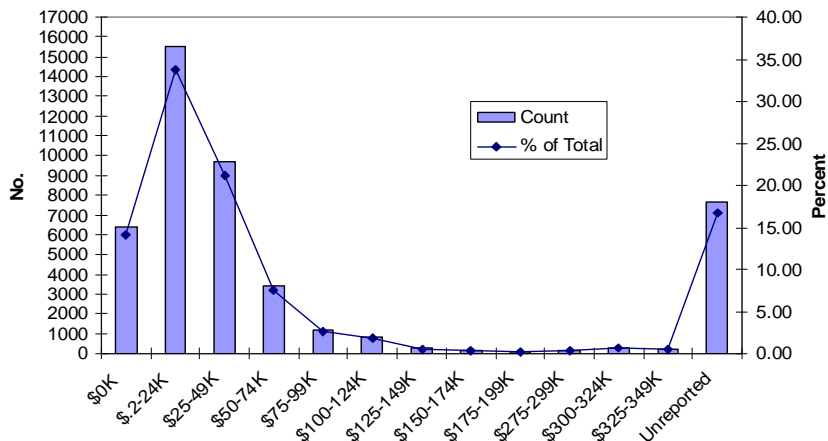


South Africa leads, then Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria

Modal income: \$50-74K; low income in Somalia, Sudan

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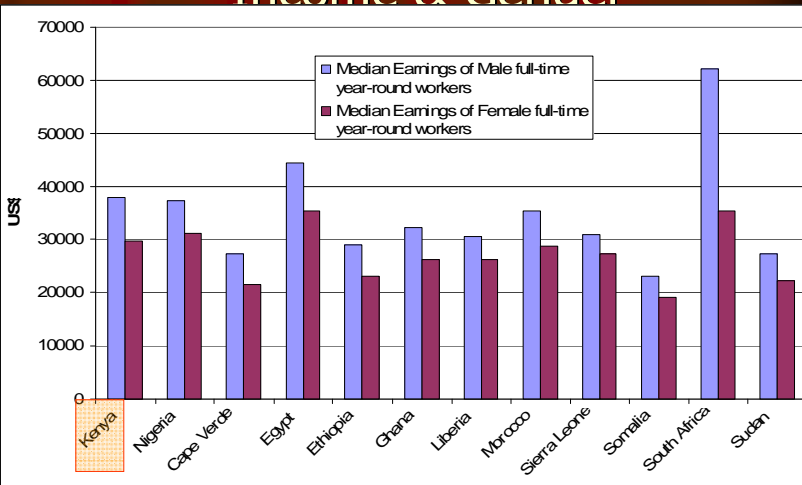
Total Personal Income **Income**



- 14% dependants, 34% (.2-24k), 29% (25-75k), 7% affluent (>75k), 16% unreported

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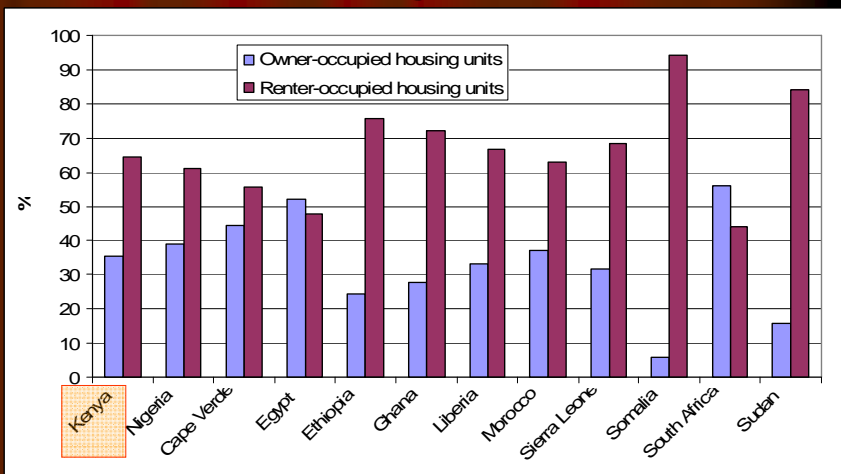
Income & Gender



- High levels of poverty among female headed households, individuals, refugee populations & elderly

20

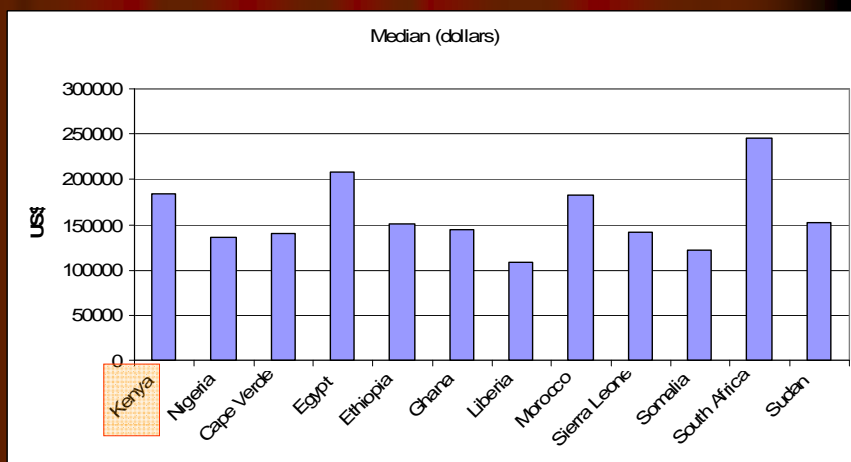
Housing Tenure



- Home ownership exceeds renting in Egypt & South Africa
- Widest gap between ownership and renting: Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia

21

Median Home Value



- Highest values: South Africa, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco

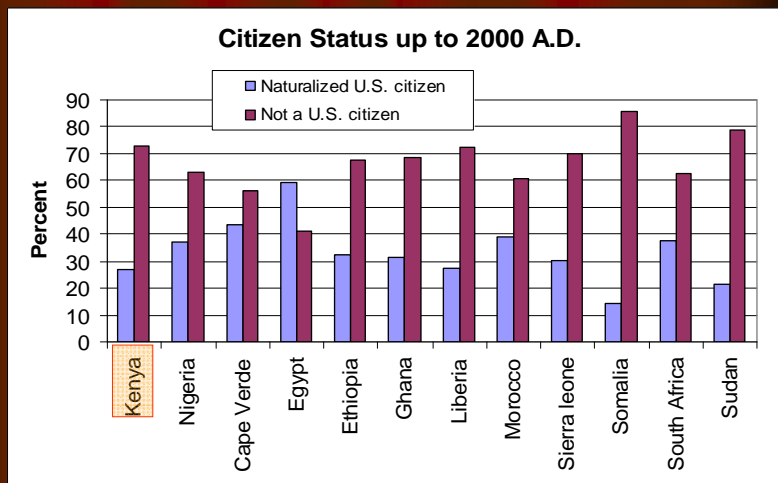
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D. Immigration Issues

- Citizenship Status
- Length of Stay
- Reasons for increasing immigration

23

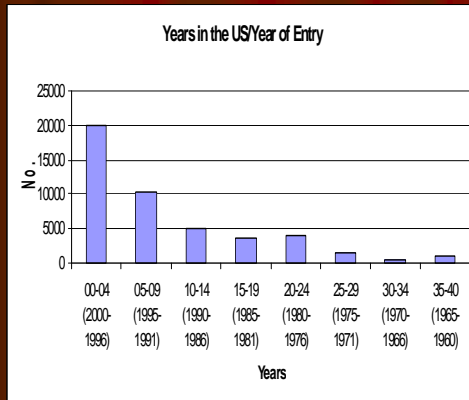
Citizenship Status



- Egypt & Cape Verde: Highest proportion of naturalized citizens

24

Length of US Residence



YEARS IN THE US	No.	Percent
00-04 (2000-1996)	20,019	43.6
05-09 (1995-1991)	10,345	22.5
10-14 (1990-1986)	5,134	11.2
15-19 (1985-1981)	3,636	7.9
20-24 (1980-1976)	3,943	8.6
25-29 (1975-1971)	1,491	3.2
30-34 (1970-1966)	352	0.8
35-40 (1965-1960)	1,037	2.3
TOTAL	45,957	100.0

- 66% less than 10 yrs; 77% less than 15 yrs; Most came between 1986-2000. Why?

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Why High Recent Immigration?

- Changes in US immigration legislation
 - *1980 Refugee Act* – aided Kenyan political refugees
 - *1986 Immigration Control and Reform Act* – Legalized illegal aliens in US since 1982
 - *1990 Immigration Act* – Boosted Skilled Immigration (H1-B) – US 1990s Economic Boom
 - Diversity Lottery Program in amended 1990 Immigration Act
 - Increased family re-unification
- Tough economic conditions in the 1980s-1990s
 - World Bank-IMF structural adjustment reforms, golden handshakes
- Better US-Kenya transport & communications
 - Globalization, cell-phone boom in Kenya
- Cumulative causation – family competition

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E. General Conclusions

- Concentrated in populous states & cities
- Mostly recent immigrants, non-citizens, though many have green cards
- Mostly unmarried; most of the married have young families
- Males outnumber females slightly, near parity because of Diversity Lottery
- Most are in economically active age groups (20-54) – median age 32 years old

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E. General Conclusions

- Mostly well educated with at least high school diploma & high English proficiency
- Mostly in labor force & have service sector jobs that require relatively high skill levels – e.g., educational services
- Reasonable income levels though recent arrival works against higher incomes
- Need to comparative work with native population and other African Immigrants

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F. IMPLICATIONS FOR ABAGUSII IN THE USA AND AT HOME

29

Amandegere name Getembe Kiagasuku, ore nabamura nere oranyae (Prophet Sakawa, 1840-1902)

- *Literal translation:* Mushrooms will bloom at Kiagasuku's meeting place (Getembe) but only those with "sons" will harvest them.
- *Actual meaning:* The good things of life are for the well prepared.
- Although Sakawa forewarned Abagusii about imminent and drastic socioeconomic changes, few paid attention (Otenyo Nyarigoti saga)
- 1900-1990: Community lagged behind in acquiring the educational, social, and economic skills ("abamura") needed to thrive in the new economy.
 - Educational expansion without proper depth
 - Growth of millennial religious movements – escapism
 - Too heavenly minded for earthly good – poor supervision of schools
- 1991 – present community has responded by:
 - Massive migration to other parts of Kenya and internationally
 - Greater emphasis on education

30

America as the new Getembe KiaGasuku

- Does the community have the necessary educational, social, and economic “abamura” (i.e., skills)? No.
- Of the Kenyans in America with impressive educational credentials, how many are Abagusii?
 - Not that many. Progress has been made but we have a long way to go
 - Why do we lag behind educationally in the US?

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Why Low Educational Attainment among Abagusii in America?

- Wrong priorities
 - Too much emphasis on home (nka) – Ever planning to return home “next year” even though the likelihood of that happening is low – You can’t be in two places at the same time – Be fruitful where you are
- Over-extension - conspicuous investment at home
 - Consumption, rural palaces, land, home burials?
 - Focus on productive assets in productive locations
- Too much emphasis on money yet “Semi tiching’ana nguru”

32

Why Low Educational Attainment among US Abagusii?

- Failure to use the Green Cards to get educational loans
- Few good role models – whether in Minnesota, Texas, New Jersey
- Lack of information – student loans, educational programs, application process
- Growing under-assimilation especially among kids.
- Parents – if nothing else, get a good education for the sake of the kids. It is easier for them to catch it than for you to tell them.
- Watch your friends. Two cannot walk together unless they agree. And nobody can lead another beyond where he/she has been

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Way Forward

- Prioritize education – it is foundational in the new global information economy
- Role of community organizations e.g. Churches, Nyagetinge, and MKIDA in promoting education
- Role models
- Target suburban schools to avoid under-assimilation of kids
- Greater parental involvement – balance work & kids' interests (contentment is key)

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APPENDIX III:

**4th ANNUAL MKIDA GRADUATION GALA
SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2007**

CHAIRMAN’S SPEECH

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I’d like to welcome you to our 4th Graduation Gala. On behalf of Minnesota Kenyan International Development Association (MKIDA), I thank you all for attending.

I would also like to welcome our visitors who came from all over North America to attend our second Gusii Education Conference yesterday and have found time to join us in celebrating our compatriots’ successes. Feel at home and welcome.

Special thanks go to MKIDA board for their tireless effort in making sure yesterday and today’s function run smoothly:-

Lameck Omariba	Secretary
Hesbon Simba	Treasurer
Dr. Geoffrey Bosire	Board Member
Paul Morande	Board Member
Elijah Maronga	Board Member
Richard Oganda	Board Member
Marcellus Mayaka	Board Member
Gloria Bosire	Board Member

Special recognition goes to Loice Oburu and Denise Achoki for their help in making our activities a success.

I would not forget to mention our sponsors without whom this occasion would not have succeeded. To them we say thank you for your generosity and may you be blessed with more as you continue to support our community.

Lastly we must congratulate the graduands for their academic achievement, perseverance and self sacrifice which have contributed to their success. Without you we would not be gathering here tonight. We have come to bear witness to your accomplishments. Mention must also be made for the encouragement, support and assistance given to you by your families and friends who are also justly participating in tonight's ceremony.

MKIDA is involved in educational, health and development activities that qualify under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. We are working with all interested people and organizations to identify and resolve pressing issues affecting our community. MKIDA aims at building on community strengths, and bringing individuals, and groups together to contribute in building a vibrant community.

Over the last few years, MKIDA has made major strides in the promotion of education. In Minnesota we have held annual graduation galas to honor and celebrate our compatriot's success. This has brought together many in our community in support and promotion of education. We have awarded scholarships to students and are now working on different programs to promote education such as mentorship, summer and after school programs. I must make a special mention of our career development event coming up soon. During this event current Gusii professionals, previous graduates and others shall be encouraged to give accurate and relevant information to students and new immigrants aspiring to become professionals. The forum will avail information, individuals and/ or material from institutions that train such professions. These professionals will not only share

their personal journey but highlight career opportunities that they may have missed or benefited from over the years.

MKIDA has supported orphaned students in Gusii pay first term fees to secure admission to National schools. Last year, the first Gusii Education Conference was hosted by MKIDA followed by another one this year. Important decisions have been made and an education initiative was launched under the banner of Gusii Education and Advancement Resources (GEAR) to incorporate all Abagusii in the Diaspora in this effort. Effectively GEAR will spearhead our educational efforts in Gusii.

In health, MKIDA is undertaking a responsibility in assisting our people in Gusii. MKIDA has facilitated an HIV research project in Gusii which will be a collaboration between Nyamira District Health Management Team (NDHMT), the University of Nairobi, and the University of Minnesota. The plan is to set up a clinical research relating to care and treatment of HIV-infected patients in a rural setting that will explore:

- (a). The different opportunistic and other infections that HIV-positive patients in Gusii get, Such as TB, bacterial pneumonia, fungal infections, intestinal parasites, and/or malaria.
- (b). To explore the efficacy of antiretroviral therapy (efficacy of antibiotics in preventing some of these), as well as side effects.

We hope to help Gusii benefit from International donor funds and provide a few employment opportunities, training and equip some of the hospitals in Gusii.

Dr. Alan Lifson, an Epidemiologist from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, was in Gusii from January 3rd through 11th for an exploratory tour and to find a place where this study

will be conducted. Funds have been provided. Dr. Lifson just came back from his second trip to Gusii on June 25th, 2007. The research clinic will be set up in Nyamira;

- 1) Because of its proximity to Kisii Hospital, if the capacity of Nyamira is improved it may relieve Kisii Hospital in overcrowding which is a major problem
- 2) Nyamira is under utilized. There are enough rooms most of which are unused.
- 3) Other places he visited did not meet his expectations. He visited Ogembo, and Tabaka a mission hospital which does not treat HIV/AIDs cases.

In rural development, Gusii is unique and challenging. We have not made sufficient efforts in seeking solutions in this area. MKIDA's focus now is to identify individuals amongst us to work on an economic package to benefit the community. The focus should be on financial stability; seeking tools and strategies that can help individuals and families increase their income. Low- to moderate-income families struggle to build and increase their personal savings, often because immediate needs take priority over longer-term financial needs. We should seek ways to encourage savings since savings give individuals the flexibility to make financial decisions that benefit them and their families and are critical in helping families manage crises. The team shall also be tasked to formulate a plan on how to better utilize and manage our resources.

All these issues need your moral and financial support. We want to do this because our commitment to our Gusii people is greater. Find what you can do and volunteer. Our community can only grow strong if we all can lend a hand.

Thank you.

**4th ANNUAL MKIDA GRADUATION GALA
SATURDAY, JUNE 30, 2007**

GUEST SPEAKER

HAVE A VISION FOR YOUR LIFE AND DREAM BIG

By Tabitha Nyaboke Otieno, Ph.D

Professor of Social Science

Jackson State University

College of Education and Human Development

Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen, our celebrated graduates. I am extremely honored to address you this evening.

As a young girl growing up in a small village in Kisii District, farm work was a very important part of our lives. We had to do all kinds of work including picking and weeding the tea and pyrethrum, cultivating and harvesting all farm produce, milking cows, and so much more. In addition, we had to fetch water for all house use. I remember at the elementary level, the day's activities started early; we did some farm work, then prepared to go to school. School was three miles away and there was no excuse for being late. We had an hour for our lunch break- this was enough time for us to run the three miles back home, give water to the animals to drink, then eat and go back to school. In the evening, it was back to the farm again before doing more chores around the house. Sometimes I wonder if the days were longer then, than they are today because we got so much work done.

For my secondary school education, I joined Kenya High School in Nairobi. For a country girl like me-coming from Nyambaria village- Kenya High was like heaven. But I did not forget where I came from and what I had gone there to do. I quickly came to the realization that the only place that I could compete, with the well-to-do girls was in the classroom. And that is what I did. This realization enabled me to survive the mockery and condescension that come from interacting with children from well to do homes.

With these experiences fresh in my memory, I found my next school, Kereri Girls in Kisii, to be quite a contrast. The challenges were different; we not only had to work hard and make it to college, but we also had to survive in a new environment with a shortage of teachers and resources. My background from secondary school boosted my morale and that of ten other girls in my study group. We had to dream big by developing our own visions and working with the scarce resources that were available. We also had to go beyond what was there- I remember we had to seek resources- books, class notes- wherever they could be found, so we made friends with other students from other schools- Kisii School, Mosochi even Mukumu girls etc. We borrowed their class notes and copied them at night, then shared them with others.... We had dreams; we did not have time to view the obstacles on the way.

So what is the relevance of my experience? What lessons can you learn from them, today? Here are a few things that I think you could carry with you today....

1. Life is what we make of it, always has been, always will be. Life itself cannot give you joy, unless you will it. Life just gives you time and space; it's up to you to fill it.

2. Champions believe in themselves even if no one else does. In order to succeed, we must first believe that we can. You become a champion by fighting one more round. When things are tough, you fight one more round. When you get into a tight place and it seems like you can't go on, hold on, for that's just the place and time that the tide will turn.

3. Most people give up just when they're about to achieve success. They quit on the one yard line. They give up at the last minute of the game one foot from a winning touchdown. When you have dreams to achieve this will not be the case. Remember the darkest hour is just before dawn—so, when you think you can't take any more—hold on because you are about to get to the finish line.

4. Fix your eyes on perfection and you make almost everything speed towards it. Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anyone expects of you. Go beyond people's expectations of you. Be extraordinary. Hope sees the invisible, feels the intangible, and achieves the impossible. We only learn our limits by going beyond them. A friend of mine says "the sky is below the limit".

5. Carpe Diem-Seize the day. Opportunity is missed by most people because it's dressed in overalls and looks like work. Opportunities are seldom labeled as opportunities. Take advantage of all opportunities to achieve your dream.

6. Big dreams will make you have courage, push yourself to places that you have never been before... test your limits... break through barriers Fortune favors the brave. To conquer without risk is to triumph without glory. Do not be afraid to take risks to achieve your dream. And lastly...

7. Work must be respected. So as you figure out the kind of work you want to do, the challenge is to find work imbued with meaning, work that provides enjoyment on a daily basis. If you choose a career for money or prestige or security but dislike going to work more days than not, it will never be worth it in the long run. The creator has some advice on work ethics - Eccles. 9:10: whatever, you do, do your best and enjoy it. Once you die, there is no activity, thought, knowledge, or wisdom in the grave where you will go eventually. Col. 3.23, 24: Whatever you do, do your best, as if you were working for the Lord, not for men.

So graduates, I want you to remember these few things as you go on to greater things:

- Live to the fullest;
- Strive to be the best in whatever you do, We read in the Old Testament in 2 Samuel that "where there is no vision, people perish" So have a vision for your life- know where you want to go- then set priorities for yourself to help you get there
- Even as one vision is realized, a new one begins. – always dreaming big
- Do not look at challenges as something negative. In reality, challenges are what make us into stronger individuals and help us achieve our visions
- Take the time to appreciate the people in your lives who have been there along the way; the support you receive from your family and friends is invaluable
- Make good choices, and be strong. Develop a "yearning for learning" as Thomas S. Monson put it. Learning does not end with formal schooling, whether high school or college- learning is a lifelong adventure. In words of Aristotle: "The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet."
- Don't let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do
- Always do your best. What you plant now, you will harvest later

I leave you with these words from the mountain climber John Amatt: **"Adventure isn't hanging on a rope off the sides of a mountain. Adventure is an attitude that we must apply to the day to day obstacles of life - facing new challenges, seizing new opportunities, testing our resources against the unknown -- and in the process, discovering our own unique potential."**

In the words of Jonathan Swift, **"You can't change the direction of the wind but you can adjust the sail." I believe that we can all adjust the sails of someone else by doing something as little as giving them a compliment or lending them a hand when they have fallen.**

My father always said, **"Believe in yourself and the best you can be. Strive for each goal that you have set. Know that you've tried with courage and pride and never look back with regret. Living your own life in that manner you've chosen, refusing to settle for less, to shape your own destiny, build your own world - that is success"**

In closing, I would like to leave you with these thoughts. Whether you are a graduate or a self-taught person, the important things in life are simple. Use your God-given talents to the best of your ability to achieve your vision, be honest and kind and make serving others a priority in your life. The most important part to achieving any goal is making the first step. As you travel the road of your future - enjoy the journey and embrace all your possibilities. James Dean once said, "Dream as if you'll live forever. Live as if you'll die today. Some people follow their dreams; others hunt them down and beat them mercilessly into submission. Either way, they are following their dreams. So, go confidently in the direction of your dreams. In the long run, we only hit what we aim at.

I dare not sit down without pointing you to the maker and provider. Ecclesiastes 12.1: Remember your creator while you're still young and give Him the best of your life. The years pass quickly, and soon you'll be old and will say to yourself, "I surely don't enjoy life like I used to." Do not forget your family values and who you are. "Congratulations to the class of 2007 and may you find happiness on your journey.

God bless you.