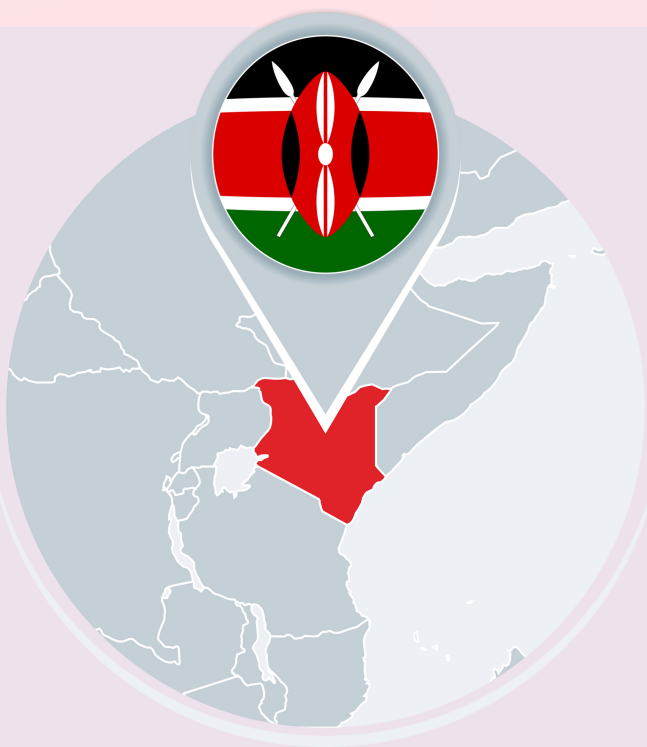


KENYA'S COLONIAL WELFARE LEGACY AND ITS IMPACT ON CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES.

Damarie Kalonzo | School of Law, University of Leeds.
Email: pt15dsmk@leeds.ac.uk T: @DamarieSK

- Kenya came under British colonial rule in **1895** as part of the British East Africa Protectorate.
- Became a crown colony in **1920**.
- Known for the **Mau Mau Uprising** between **1950 - 1962** in which Britain's colonial government brutally killed thousands of freedom fighters.



- **Gained independence** in **1963**
- **Became a republic** in **1964** with an elected President as Head of State.
- 60 year's later post-colonial Kenya still grapples with its colonial history. *Welfare policies and infrastructures have developed around colonial remnants.*

"Imperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the world today." -- Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Colonial welfare activities

Missionaries

Established schools for persons with disabilities

- **Salvation Army** - Thika School for the Blind (1946), Joy Town School for the Physically disabled (1962)
- **Catholic Church** - St. Lucy's Catholic School for the blind (1958)
- **Presbyterian and Methodist missions** also established schools for deaf people in Kiambu, Meru and Nyeri

Settlers

Involved in the formation of:

- **Kenya Society for the Blind (1956)** : affiliated to Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (now Sight Savers International) - run mobile clinics
- **Kenya Society for Deaf Children (1958)** : affiliated to Royal Commonwealth Society for the Deaf - established schools
- **Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya APDK** - in 1959 by Humphrey Slade and Derek Erksine

Colonial Government

Collaborated with missionaries and settlers:

- Gave £1000 **financial assistance** to the Salvation Army for the construction of the Thika School for the Blind in 1945

Mapping activities onto various models of disability

These activities the foundations for care.

- The involvement of missions in the establishment of institutions proliferated the **religious model of disability** with misguided ideas of disability as a punishment for sin or as a test of faith.
- Settler establishment of various charities positioned people with disabilities as objects of pity and victims of circumstance who must rely on others for assistance; a feature of the **charity model of disability**.
- Settler activity also involved interaction with healthcare and medicine which allowed the pathologization of disabilities; a feature of the **medical model of disability**. It also placed medical professionals in a position of power in the care of children with disabilities.



Human rights instruments meet this legacy and infrastructure as a barrier to implementation.

IMPACT

- **Over-reliance on institutions** - leads to exclusion from the community for persons with disabilities.
- **Sector underfunded sector by government** - government shirks responsibility to donors, charities and missions
- **Inclusive education an elusive dream** - boarding schools seen as the only options by many caregivers.
- **Over-bureacratization** - many organisations established which end up acting as gatekeepers.

References:

David Anderson, Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire (Phoenix 2006) | Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the mind: the politics of language in African literature* (J. Currey, 2005) | Shaun Grech, 'Decolonising Eurocentric Disability Studies: Why Colonialism Matters in the Disability and Global South Debate' (2015) 21 Social Identities 6 | Kenya National Council of Social Services, 'Social Welfare and Its Role in the Development of Kenya,' (Government Printer Nairobi, 1967) | Felicity Jensz, 'Missionaries and Indigenous Education in the 19th-Century British Empire. Part II: Race, Class, and Gender: Missionaries and Indigenous Education:Pt 2' (2012) 10 History Compass 306 | Samuel Kabue, 'Chronological Aspects of Disability, Human Rights and Development; A Kenyan Perspective' in Isaac M Mwaura (ed), Human Rights, Disability and Development in Kenya: A Discourse (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung 2009) | David Kavijne Chikati, Dr Lydia Njoki Wachira and Dr Joseph Muniyoki Mwinzi, 'The History of Education for Learners with Visual Impairments in Kenya' (2020) 10 International Journal of Humanities and Social Science 36 | Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya, 'Our Journey - Association for the Physically Disabled of Kenya - APDK' (ADPK, 2020) <https://www.apdk.org/our-journey/> accessed 28 June 2021 | Kenya Society For the Blind, Act No. 51 of 1956 (Cap 251) | Renison Muchiri Githige, 'The Mission State Relationship in Colonial Kenya: A Summary' (1982) 15 Journal of Religion in Africa 110 | Mwendwa, E.N. Report of the Committee for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled in Kenya (Nairobi: Ministry of Labour and Social Services, 1964 | Fikru Negash Gebrekidan, 'Disability Rights Activism in Kenya, 1959-1964: History from Below' (2012) 55 African Studies Review 103 | Njeri Chege and Stephen Ucembe, 'Kenya's Over-Reliance on Institutionalization as a Child Care and Child Protection Model: A Root-Cause Approach' (2020) 9 Social Sciences 57 | Retief, M. & Letšosa, R., 2018, 'Models of disability: A brief overview', HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies 74(1), 4738.



SCAN ME