

The History of Rural Service Programme in Kenya, 1903 - 1978

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Abstract

This paper investigates the historical development of the Rural Service Programme (RSP) in Kenya, from 1903 to 1978. Originally referred to as the vocational programme, the RSP was founded in 1903 by the Friends African Mission (FAM) in Kenya and ceased operations in 1978. The aim of this paper was to analyse the available written records on the dynamic history of RSP. The collected data was qualitatively evaluated for accuracy and detail, resulting in a descriptive overview of the findings. The analysis reveals a gap in knowledge on RSP's economic policy. Research findings revealed that FAM's vocational programme focused on generating income not only to sustain the mission but also to provide profits for the American Friends Board of Foreign Mission (AFBFM). The economic welfare of African converts was not given priority in the initial vocational programme, leading to conflict between African converts and FAM missionaries. To address this conflict, the vocational programme was rebranded as RSP and shifted its focus to meeting the economic needs of African converts. However, following Kenya's independence, the management of RSP was handed over to African East African Yearly Meeting (EAYM) leaders. Under African leadership, RSP encountered protracted conflict that eventually resulted in its collapse in 1978.

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1. Introduction

The Rural Service Programme (RSP) was an essential component of the Friends Church in Kenya. Originally called the vocational programme, the RSP was initiated by the Friends African Mission (FAM). The pioneer FAM's missionaries in Kenya - Willis Hotchkiss, Arthur Chilson, and Edger Hole - received support from Charles Hobley, the North Kavirondo District Commissioner (DC), in setting up their station at Kaimosi (FAM, 1904). In 1902, Hobley granted the missionaries permission to temporarily occupy the Kaimosi site. Later that year, FAM was given around 850 acres of land at a cost of Sh.4.60 per acre. An additional 150 acres was acquired on a leasehold basis. In total, FAM secured approximately 1,000 acres of land for their first Christian mission in Kenya (FAM, 1904).

The missionaries decided to establish their mission station in Kaimosi due to economic considerations. They identified the opportunity to utilise water power from Goli Goli River to power mills for sawing and flour making. The presence of timber for the saw mill and land for farming also played a role in their choice. Moreover, the missionaries observed the amicable nature of the people in Kaimosi, who were willing to contribute their labour to the mission. (FAM, 1904). These pragmatic factors played a pivotal role in establishing Kaimosi as the focal point of FAM and subsequently the EAYM (FAM, 1904).

According to most historical records, the principal agenda of FAM in Kenya was spreading Christianity and converting Africans into Christians (FAM, 1904). However, in the records of FAM, there is no mention of the relevance of the vocational programme for generating income, not only for the sustenance of the mission but also for profitability to its main sponsor, AFBFM. To AFBFM the vocational concept had two major meanings: first, as a device for rendering FAM self-supporting, and secondly, as a source of profit. AFBFM had invested funds in Kenya. Land had been bought, a road from Kisumu to Kaimosi was built and at Kaimosi enough infrastructure, such as electricity, had been initiated (FAM, 1912). The investment made by AFBFM in Kenya was in fact the largest foreign investment.

The colonial government also supported the FAM's vocational programme for economic reasons. The colonial administrators believed that teaching vocational skills to African converts would create a pool of skilled workers. These skilled workers were required by the colonial government to provide cheap labour for government projects and settler farms. Thus, the economic well-being of Africans was not the main aim of FAM when establishing a vocational programme. As the needs of Africans were not taken into consideration while designing the vocational programme. Gradually, therefore the vocational training began to face opposition from African converts from the 1930s onwards. Africans started giving more preference to academic education than vocational training (Mackatiani & Ejore, 2023).

Moreover, in the 1950s, Africans started opposing colonial land and labour policies. African agitation eventually mutated into the militant Mau Mau revolt. Due to the Mau Mau revolt, the colonial government finally changed its land and labour policies and started considering African economic welfare. The FAM missionaries also started focusing on the economic well-being of Africans, and the vocational programme changed into the RSP. RSP was intended to enable African converts earn a living out of farming to support their families. Following the independence of Kenya in 1963, EAYM African leaders took over the management of RSP. However, despite being under African leadership,

conflicts and mismanagement plagued RSP, ultimately resulting in its closure in 1978 (Mackatiani & Ejore, 2023).

The aim of this research was to provide a sequential account in response to several interconnected inquiries: the rationale behind the initiation of the vocational programme, the alignment of its policy with AFBFM's objectives of self-sufficiency and profitability, the impact of the vocational programme on African economic prosperity, the correlation between the vocational programme and the colonial government's focus on African education and economic welfare, the reasons for RSP's shift towards supporting African economic welfare in the 1950s, and the factors leading to RSP's collapse in 1978.

The paper presents two main contributions. The primary empirical contribution involves a comprehensive documentation of the vocational programme's income generation strategy. While most available literature analyses the FAM's evangelical policy, the economics of the industrial programme/ RSP remains poorly understood. The paper has thus undertaken a comprehensive documentation of the history of vocational programme /RSP. The paper has thus provided a dataset that enables scholars to address new inquiries on FAM's vocational programme/RSP, including its origins, dynamics and decline. In doing so, the investigation surpasses previous studies in terms of its accuracy in both time and space. Additionally, the article enriches the ongoing discussion on the historical context of faith-based initiatives that aim to bring about change in rural areas of Kenya. It sheds light on the factors that have contributed to the failure of some of these initiatives under African management.

2. Material and Methods

This research employed a descriptive research methodology. Descriptive research method involves systematically collecting and analysing data to gain a comprehensive understanding of significant past events. In order to achieve this objective, the study conducted a thorough literature review to identify gaps in the existing knowledge and documentation regarding the dynamic nature of FAM's vocational programme/RSP. According to Walliman (2016), literature review entail reading, analysing, evaluating, and summarising the key points of current knowledge on a research topic. Therefore, a comprehensive literature review on FAM's vocational programme/RSP was essential in selecting relevant published and unpublished materials that align with the objectives of this paper (Snyder 2019). The literature review provided a clearer understanding of the research subject, its significance, and its structure, revealing inconsistencies and knowledge gaps that require further investigation. By exploring the existing literature, the study gained insights into the historical context of the vocational programme/RSP, identified key resources, and highlighted major issues for further research. As a result, the literature review laid the groundwork for expanding upon the work of other scholars in the field of FAM's history in Kenya.

In order to carry out this research, available published materials on the subject were found and analysed to pinpoint areas where there were discrepancies in the literature. To fill in these gaps, an extensive examination of materials was conducted at the Friends Church archives in Kaimosi, focusing specifically on the vocational programme/RSP income generation approach. Records from EAYM and relevant documents from the Kenya National Archives (KNA) such as meeting minutes, reports, correspondence, diaries, letters, and newspaper articles were examined. The collected information was qualitatively evaluated for accuracy and reliability, resulting in a narrative summary of the findings.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section examines the concept of entrepreneurship, vocational training programmes, RSP and EAYM. The aim of this section is to present a comprehensive overview of the development and expansion of RSP in Kenya.

The concept of entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship served as a foundational element in shaping the income-generating strategy of the FAM. Entrepreneurship is defined as the series of actions undertaken by an entrepreneur to create and develop their business. An entrepreneur is an individual who takes on the responsibility of establishing a business or enterprise. This person possesses the initiative and innovative skills necessary for pursuing significant accomplishments. Acting as a catalyst for change, the entrepreneur endeavours to benefit society. The entrepreneur, initiate new greenfield projects that generate wealth, create job opportunities and contribute to the growth of various sectors (Velu & Manikandan, 2015).

Consequently, entrepreneurship can be viewed as a continuous cycle of activities aimed at advancing the entrepreneur's objectives. A key characteristic of entrepreneurship is the capacity to identify investment opportunities and effectively organise a business, which in turn fosters economic growth. This process entails assuming risks and making essential investments amidst uncertainty, as well as engaging in innovation, strategic planning and decision-making to enhance production levels (Velu & Manikandan, 2015). Entrepreneurship thus encompasses a diverse set of skills, arising from a combination of various qualities and characteristics. These encompass creativity, a willingness to embrace risks, and the capability to integrate and utilise different factors of production, including capital, labour, and land. Additionally, it involves intangible elements such as the capacity to leverage scientific and technological innovations (Velu & Manikandan, 2015).

As noted by Turnbull (2014), the history of the Friends Church in the United States is replete with entrepreneurial figures. Members of the Friends Church were instrumental in founding various manufacturing enterprises, including Cadbury, Rowntree's, Clarks, Lloyds, and Barclays Bank. This indicates that the entrepreneurial ethos significantly influenced the followers of the Friends Church. Consequently, it is not surprising that a similar commitment to creating economic value motivated FAM to expand into Kenya. FAM chose Kaimosi as its initial location due to the area's economic prospects and the potential to generate financial benefits for both the missionaries and AFBFM. In their quest for economic value creation, FAM missionaries sought the endorsement and support of colonial entrepreneurs. Furthermore, they identified Africans as potential customers for their entrepreneurial initiatives.

The vocational programme

To operationalise their vocational initiative, the pioneer missionaries proposed using the fast-flowing waters of Goli Goli River to run a timber saw and flour mill. Prior to the actual construction of the mills, the missionaries, with the assistance of African laborers, constructed a road that connected Kisumu to Kaimosi. This road facilitated the transportation of heavy machinery from the Kisumu railway station to the mill sites. The mills were operational by the end of 1904 (FAM, 1912). The early missionaries also sought to change African culture as part of their efforts to promote evangelical and vocational programmes. To accomplish this, the missionaries provided literacy education. At first, they concentrated on working with young people but were willing to teach anyone who was interested. They thought that young individuals, who were less bound by traditional beliefs, were more open to new

notions and were curious about reading and writing (FAM, 1912). Initially, however, the missionaries had to work with the workers at Kaimosi station.

The missionaries aimed to teach Africans how to read the Bible, starting with Swahili and later transitioning to local languages. Early literacy programmes were known as “catechetical schools” where students learned reading, writing, and religion (FAM, 1905). Education focused on spreading both knowledge and Christianity. Students would begin their day with a prayer and worship service, then participate in classes and communal gardening activities in the afternoons. The gardening sessions served as a means to provide sustenance for the community (FAM, 1905). Prior to 1911, Christian missionaries were solely responsible for educating Africans in Kenya. At that time, the colonial government prioritised economic and political matters over African education. However, the government did provide support to various missionary initiatives aimed at educating Africans (Sifuna & Otiende, 2006). But, as the costs of hiring expensive Asian labour for government projects increased, colonial administrators began considering the provision of technical education to Africans. The objective was to train affordable skilled African workers who would be subservient. Consequently, the government extended its support to missionary education through a grants-in-aid programme. The grants were intended to enable FAM and other Christian missions teach Africans skills such as smithing, carpentry, agriculture, and typing. The government believed that developing vocational skills would not only enhance “African training in agriculture and manual labour but also address negative traits like arrogance and disrespect, which were thought to arise from providing Africans with a literary education” (Sifuna & Otiende, 2006).

To leverage the government’s support, AFBFM posted Frank Conover and Fred Hoyt to Kenya in 1913, to carry out the directive on vocational training (FAM, 1913). Conover, an agricultural expert, was tasked with expanding FAM’s agricultural programme. He demonstrated practical planting and tending skills to new converts, focusing on fruit trees, vegetables, and maize. Conover introduced what he believed to be improved agricultural methods, including planting crops in organised rows. His efforts led to the exploration of coffee, pineapple, and wattle tree cultivation. (FAM, 1913). Wattle trees were specifically grown to ensure a consistent supply of wood fuel. Fred Hoyt, a mechanical and vocational arts specialist, played a key role in establishing the vocational department and training schools. He offered guidance to African converts in carpentry, masonry, and brick-making. In addition, he set up a structured apprenticeship scheme for carpentry and masonry, with as many as ten individuals receiving technical training in these crafts each year (Nyanza Province, 1914). In 1914, FAM began building a training workshop in Kaimosi, however, due to the interruption caused by the war, the project was not completed until 1919 (Nyanza Province, 1914).

During the 1920s, the colonial government introduced new guidelines for the vocational programme of Christian missions. These guidelines were based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa. This committee was established by the British government in 1923 to provide guidance on education in British African colonies (Gikungu, Karanja, & Thinguri, 2014). Referred to as the Phelps-Stokes Commission, this committee visited East Africa in 1924 and proposed various strategies that were later adopted by the colonial government. One significant recommendation was to encourage closer collaboration between government and mission schools to improve African education. The Commission also suggested a curriculum focused on agriculture, industry, and tailoring to address the specific needs of local communities, with schools playing a role in advancing rural social change and community well-being (Gikungu, Karanja, &

Thinguri, 2014). To achieve these objectives, the Advisory Committee supported the vocational training programmes, the establishment of Jeanes Schools and the Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD). AFBFM officially endorsed the idea of partnering with the colonial government to implement the recommendations and guidelines laid out in the Advisory Committee's report (FAM, 1924).

AFBFM requested and FAM missionaries agreed to use both the Jeanes school and NITD models in implementing the vocational programme to prepare young Africans for a Christian rural lifestyle. The Jeanes school was named in honour of Ann Jeanes, a Friends philanthropist from Philadelphia who supported the education of African Americans in the 1860s. The first Jeanes School in Kenya was established in Kabete in 1925. FAM sent some of its teacher-evangelists to the Jeanes School in Kabete for further training (FAM, 1924). Teachers at Jeanes School underwent a practical two-year training programme. The initial Jeanes teachers from Kabete in the late 1920s were mainly trained as community development agents with basic knowledge of health, agriculture, and village industries. The NITD was also established as a vocational training centre to offer specialised education for mission apprentices, providing skilled labour needed on settler farms and in government institutions (Nyanza Province, 1929). By adopting both the Jeanes school and NITD models, FAM began implementing the colonial government's vocational training strategy.

At first, Jeanes teachers supported the FAM's vocational training and apprenticeships to help Africans gain European technical skills. However, as labour systems changed, African converts started to see manual training and agricultural education as leading to low-paying, inferior positions within the colonial system. In the 1930s, with the Great Depression and colonial policies limiting African participation in trade, there was a growing interest in academic education that could lead to better-paying jobs such as clerks, school supervisors, and inspectors. This conflicted with the vocational training, which promoted vernacular language, agriculture, and handicraft training (Nyanza Province, 1929). Consequently, Africans began questioning the relevance of the vocational training programmes in the colonial setting and resisted attempts to introduce more rural-focused education in FAM schools.

Rural Service Programme

African leaders of EAYM had a primary focus on advancing the socio-economic welfare of their members, largely due to the increasing presence of the money economy and the necessity of the colonial system. This led them to recognise the importance of advanced academic education for financial success. During the 1950s, these leaders consistently emphasised the need to expand educational opportunities and were willing to tax themselves to increase funding for schools in their communities. The demand for education intersected with political and agricultural needs (Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1954).

In the early 1950s, Kenya saw protests against colonial agricultural policy, which later escalated into the Mau Mau rebellion (Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1954). This rebellion forced the government to prioritise agricultural needs of the Africans. Consequently, the government began placing greater emphasis on African agriculture to strengthen the colonial state. Subsequently, a new organised effort was introduced by the colonial administration to improve African agriculture, with substantial backing from the £5 million provided by the Swynnerton Plan in 1954 (Kenya Colony and Protectorate, 1954).

To leverage the support provided by the government, FAM appointed Rodney Morris in 1955 as an agricultural missionary tasked with assisting the colonial government in the advancement of African

agriculture. His responsibilities included the planning and establishment of farms for Friends converts, aimed at demonstrating modern farming techniques to African farmers. In 1959, Morris subsequently launched the RSP, which replaced the Church's vocational programme. The RSP was inspired by the Jeanes school model and focused on educating converts to achieve self-sufficiency in food production, enhance agricultural productivity, promote community health, and offer technical and vocational training (EAYM, 1963).

In 1962, RSP was expanded to accommodate the Lugari Farmers Christian Training Centre and Friends College of Research and Technology. The Lugari Farmers Christian Training Centre began its operations in 1961 following the Friends church's awareness of Kenya's colonial government resettlement programme. Leading up to Kenya's independence, the colonial government made a significant effort to transfer land from European settlers to Africans through the million-acre scheme. The goal of this initiative was to transfer approximately 1.2 million acres of large farms and ranches previously owned by Europeans to African smallholders (Leo, 2014).

In May 1963, the Settlement Department of the government, the Christian Council of Kenya, and EAYM engaged in discussions to establish a project centred on agricultural and church development in Lugari. Lugari was chosen as one of the designated areas for the resettlement of Africans. Subsequently, in September 1963, these three organisations reached an agreement. The Christian Council of Kenya committed to funding a four-year development programme, with support from the Freedom From Hunger Campaign. The Settlement Department assigned a staff member and contributed specific assets, while EAYM and AFBFM became the primary financial sponsors. Following the initial four years, EAYM was to assume full responsibility for the programme (Leo, 2014).

On January 6, 1964, the training centre was inaugurated in accordance with the agreement. The centre had two main goals: firstly, to assist Friends converts from heavily populated areas in western Kenya in acquiring land in Lugari, and secondly, to provide adult education programmes focusing on animal and crop husbandry, as well as soil conservation. Thanks to this initiative, numerous Friends converts, primarily from the densely populated Maragoli area, successfully obtained land in Lugari (EAYM, 1972).

RSP also took over the management of Friends College of Research and Technology, which was originally founded as a technical school in 1914. The school underwent a transformation and was re-opened as a comprehensive training centre in 1971. The purpose of the institution was to assist young individuals known as "Youth in the Gap" who had completed four years of secondary education but were unable to continue their studies for various reasons (EAYM, 1972). Friends College of Research and Technology aimed to bridge this educational gap by offering courses such as tailoring, carpentry, joinery, home economics, auto mechanics, and bookkeeping. Despite being under the supervision of EAYM, the college received financial support from the government and organisations like World Vision International and Equator Community Education, both located in the United States. For instance, in 1972, the college received Ksh. 210,000 from these USA based organisations to cover its budget of Ksh. 219,906.50 for that year (EAYM, 1972).

During the 1970s, the primary objective of the RSP was to provide advice and guidance on various initiatives aimed at empowering EAYM members residing in rural areas. For instance, RSP

concentrated on vegetable growing, increasing maize production and using the Kaimosi farm for training seminars and demonstrations to farmers. Additionally, the RSP arranged agricultural exhibitions and distributed complimentary hybrid seeds and fertilizers. As per the EAYM report on agriculture, the RSP played a significant role in the church's endeavors by prioritising the enhancement of the overall well-being of its church members. This showcased a dedication to personal development and an acknowledgment of the church's capacity to support the advancement of rural communities (EAYM, 1972). Over time, the RSP transformed into a catalyst for change in rural areas. However, conflicts emerged within the RSP during the same decade, resulting in mismanagement and ultimately leading to the discontinuation of the programme in 1978.

East African Yearly Meeting

In the early 1940s, FAM's membership saw a significant increase from 7,000 to 20,000 converts (FAM, 1946). As a result of this growth, FAM missionaries requested permission from the AFBFM in December 1945 to establish a yearly meeting in Kenya. In the Friends church, a yearly meeting serves as an independent and supreme authority for governing the church in a specific area. The AFBFM granted approval just four months after FAM's request, and the inauguration of the new yearly meeting took place on November 18th, 1946 (FAM, 1946). The establishment of an independent and self-governing EAYM under African leadership signified that the Friends church in Kenya would be self-sustaining, requiring minimal technical support from FAM (EAYM, 1946).

The founding of EAYM represented a pivotal moment in the development of an autonomous African church, governed by Africans and poised to attain complete self-governance upon the departure of missionary advisors. The management of local church activities, especially pastoral responsibilities, was now entrusted to Africans. However, the financial backing from AFBFM for missionaries and EAYM's secular initiatives continued to exert considerable influence over the trajectory of the newly established church (EAYM, 1946).

A pivotal event in the history of EAYM occurred on October 1, 1963, when the Friends Church in Kenya attained full independence. At this juncture, FAM transferred all administrative duties and assets to the trustees of EAYM (EAYM, 1964). The formal acknowledgment of EAYM's independence took place on February 9, 1964. However, despite this newfound autonomy, there was still a considerable degree of financial dependence and a prominent presence of foreign personnel in both professional and administrative roles, particularly within RSP (EAYM, 1964). This arrangement fostered a distinctive relationship between Friends United Meeting (FUM) and EAYM. FUM succeeded AFBFM as the organisation responsible for overseeing the activities of USA's Yearly Meetings in Kenya. Following 1963, FUM continued to provide support to EAYM, with financial assistance remaining consistent at approximately \$25,000 annually, primarily allocated to RSP initiatives (EAYM, May, 1964).

Upon gaining independence, EAYM took over full control of RSP assets, which included more than 1,000 acres of agricultural land in Kaimosi, the agricultural and vocational departments, the Lugari Farmers Christian Training Centre, and Friends College of Research and Technology (EAYM, 1964). However, following EAYM's independence, RSP experienced prolonged conflicts, particularly concerning leadership and property control. These conflicts ultimately led to mismanagement of RSP, resulting in its collapse in 1978.

4. Findings

Upon reviewing the historical data related to the RSP's background, the research paper has uncovered two separate sets of findings regarding the income generation of FAM's vocational programme and the factors contributing to the downfall of the RSP.

Income generation

The analysis of FAM's income generation strategy in Kenya has produced four key findings. Initially, FAM purchased over 1000 acres of African land to establish their first mission station in Kenya. At that time, land was a crucial factor and almost the sole factor of production in the country. The choice of the specific location for the site demonstrated FAM's intention of generating income. FAM missionaries selected Kaimosi as the location for the mission station primarily because of the existence of the Goli Goli River, which could provide hydroelectric power for sawmill, a dense forest suitable for the planned sawmill, and ample land for agriculture. Considering these practical aspects in selecting the land, AFBFM was “hopeful about the potential of implementing an organised vocational programme in Kenya that could result in the growth of a large lumbering industry and plantation agriculture” (Nyanza Province, 1913)

Following the establishment of Kaimosi station and the opportunity to generate revenue, AFBFM notably reduced its financial support to FAM. In response to this financial gap, FAM missionaries developed trading initiatives to create income. They initially pursued trading partnerships with European companies and settlers by leveraging the economic resources at their disposal. The missionaries offered a range of products to Europeans, including timber, hydroelectric power, agricultural produce from demonstration farms, medical services, and affordable African labour. Additionally, some of their apprentices were assigned to work for Europeans, who compensated the mission for the services rendered by these apprentices (EAYM, 1946).

Furthermore, FAM missionaries played a significant role in facilitating trade between European companies and African agricultural products. During this period, Africans were prohibited from selling their agricultural produce directly to Europeans or the government, forcing them to depend on missionaries as intermediaries. Since there were limited options for selling their produce, missionaries would purchase African goods at low prices and then sell them to the Kenya Farmers Association (KFA), a settler organisation, at prevailing market rates, generating significant income (EAYM, 1946). However, this trade-based income generation method angered African converts. African converts were infuriated because FAM missionaries not only outcompeted them in trade, but also devalued their agricultural products. Africans criticised the missionaries for engaging in what they considered unethical business practices. African converts had expected the missionaries to solely focus on providing agricultural and vocational assistance, rather than competing against them. African church leaders directly contacted the AFBFM, accusing the mission of not prioritising the interests of Africans (EAYM, 1946). The outcome of the rent-seeking behaviour of FAM missionaries was twofold. While the mission was able to raise funds for vocational projects, their income-raising strategy also led to conflicts with their African converts.

The Collapse of RSP

The study also established that shortly after EAYM gained full independence, the Friends Church in Kenya encountered prolonged ethnic conflicts, particularly in relation to leadership and the management of assets and benefits. These assets and benefits encompassed financial resources,

educational scholarships, employment opportunities within the church institutions, and leadership roles within the church. The control of EAYM and its assets was perceived as a means for the economic advancement of the community. As different ethnic groups vied for control over the church and its properties, there was a push for the establishment of yearly meetings to cater to the interests of their respective communities. These yearly meetings were considered crucial for the economic development of particular regions or ethnic groups. According to EAYM records (1986), politicians often supported their ethnic groups in their efforts to establish yearly meetings, as they saw the church as a means to gain political advantage, especially in their aspirations to become Members of Parliament (MPs).

The initial ethnic conflict arose between the Maragoli and Bukusu Friends factions, as they were the predominant groups within EAYM. Following the transfer of authority and assets from FAM to EAYM in 1964, the Bukusu leaders of Elgon Religious Society of Friends (ERSF) Quarterly Meeting began pushing for the decentralization of some of the RSP projects and institutions from Kaimosi to Lugulu to ensure a more equitable distribution. Upon the refusal of these requests by the EAYM leadership, ERSF Quarterly Meeting leaders initiated efforts to establish their own yearly meeting (EAYM, 1986). With the support of Elijah Mwangale, a Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister in the Kenyan government, the leadership of the ERSF Quarterly Meeting applied for and successfully obtained a government registration certificate on April 19, 1973, establishing it as an independent yearly meeting in Kenya (EAYM, 1986).

It is worth noting that during that time in Kenya, all voluntary organisations, including churches, were required to register with the Attorney General's (AG) office, submitting their constitutions and providing annual reports. However, despite the fact that ERSF was registered as an independent yearly meeting, the underlying ethnic tensions within the Friends church in Kenya remained unresolved. After ERSF's registration, other ethnic groups also started demanding their own yearly meetings. Beginning with the formation of EAYM (south) to cater to the Maragoli Friends, EAYM, and later ERSF, quickly fragmented into numerous small, self-governing yearly meetings. By 1978, there were over ten yearly meetings in Kenya. Each newly registered yearly meeting aimed to have control over RSP, its assets, and the aid received from development partners. Foreign support, in particular, became a growing source of conflict among EAYM leaders (EAYM, 1986). As a result, these leaders pushed for the creation of their own yearly meeting to oversee the foreign aid. However, with the establishment of multiple yearly meetings, financial support from a wide range of sources was discontinued, consequently having an adverse effect on the functioning of RSP (EAYM, 1986).

Moreover, following the Registration of ERSF as a yearly meeting, a fierce dispute arose between EAYM and ERSF regarding the ownership of the Lugari Farmers Christian Training Centre. ERSF aimed to gain control of the centre from EAYM, arguing that it was situated closer to the yearly meeting. This conflict between EAYM and ERST led to confusion and mismanagement as the centre's staff became divided along ethnic lines, aligning themselves with either group. Consequently, due to the tension, FUM decided to withhold its financial support for the centre (EAYM, 1986). With limited financial assistance, the centre struggled to fulfill its obligations. On April 4th, 1978, EAYM leaders appealed to the government to intervene and rescue the centre from collapse. In a letter to the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Agriculture on August 2, 1978, R.M Isiaho, the Principal of the centre, highlighted the financial and managerial challenges faced by EAYM and requested the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, to assume "complete financial and managerial responsibility for the centre as soon as possible" (EAYM 1978). However, the government declined to take over the

centre but offered a grant “to bridge the gap left by the withdrawal of overseas donors who had previously channeled their support through EAYM” (EAYM 1978). With limited financial aid and ongoing conflicts over management, the centre ceased its operations in December 1978.

The Friends College of Research and Technology, which was also managed by RSP, also closed down around the same time as Lugari Farmers Christian Training Centre. While EAYM was responsible for the running of the college, it received financial assistance from both the government and foreign development partners (EAYM, 1972). The registration of many yearly meetings affected the college's operations once again. ERSF expressed dissatisfaction with the college being located in Kaimosi, citing the concentration of RSP institutions in the area. Additionally, in 1980, EAYM (South) began to insist that the college be transferred to its ownership. Politicians started supporting their communities' efforts to take control of the college. even though most of them were not part of any yearly meeting. Their involvement in the governance conflicts within RSP was mainly due to the organisation's significant role as a development agency in rural Kenya at that time. These politicians sought to gain political benefits by aligning with the demands of their ethnic groups. Unfortunately, the conflict within the Friends Church of Kenya, led to the withdrawal of funding from the government and other donors, resulting in the college suspending the majority of its activities. As a result, it ceased its operations in 1978 (EAYM. 1994).

In conclusion, the establishment of numerous annual meetings in Kenya based on ethnic affiliations not only created tension but also strained relationships within the Friends Church in Kenya. The Religious Society of Friends adheres to a set of principles which include simplicity, integrity, equality, and stewardship. The Friends has also been in the forefront as an advocate of world peace. However, it appears that these values gradually became alien to the Friends church in Kenya. The internal conflicts that have plagued the Friends Church in Kenya contradict the fundamental teachings of the church. Instead of fostering friendship, the followers of the Friends Church in Kenya have increasingly become adversaries. This animosity not only resulted in the collapse of RSP but also caused the church to lose its position as one of the leading rural development organisations in Kenya.

5. Conclusion

The research paper concludes that there are three distinct paths that can be observed in the history of RSP. Initially, when the first station was established in Kaimosi, the pioneer missionaries were driven by the desire to generate income. Their aim was not only to make the mission in Kenya self-sustaining, but also to generate income for the AFBFM. As a result, the FAM missionaries came to Kenya not only to convert Africans to Christianity, but also to profit from their investments in the country. However, the study revealed that the economic well-being of Africans was not given priority in this economic value creation scheme. In fact, the FAM became the main competitor of Africans in trade and other entrepreneurial activities in the area. This income-generating strategy caused tension between the missionaries and African converts. Africans expected the missionaries to assist them in generating income for their households, rather than competing with them in economic matters.

The second trajectory in the history of RSP began in the 1950s, when Africans in Kenya started demanding reforms in the colonial economic and political policies. This agitation eventually led to the Mau Mau revolt. In response to the revolt, the colonial government changed its policies to include Africans in the political and economic sectors of the country. With this shift in government policy,

FAM missionaries also began to prioritise the economic welfare of Africans. They rebranded RSP to focus on the economic improvement of Africans in rural area.

The third phase unfolded during the 1960s, following Kenya's independence. The leadership of RSP was transferred to African leaders within EAYM. However, under their guidance, RSP became entangled in conflicts and disputes among the ethnic groups that constituted the membership of EAYM. These ethnic groups, through their leaders, demanded a portion of RSP's assets. Church leaders from various ethnic backgrounds expressed concerns about the alleged unequal distribution of RSP's assets, asserting that their areas and ethnic groups were receiving fewer benefits compared to others. Consequently, with the support of politicians, church leaders advocated for the establishment of separate yearly meetings for each ethnic group to address their economic welfare needs. Throughout the 1970s, politicians backed church leaders in their endeavour to form yearly meetings based on ethnic identity. As a result, numerous yearly meetings emerged, each driven by self-interest. With the formation of each new yearly meeting came demands for a share of RSP's assets, leading to vandalism of these assets and financial mismanagement. Ultimately, these circumstances culminated in RSP ceasing its operations in 1978.

6. Recommendations

This study presents three recommendations.

1. The Friends church, renowned for its dedication to promoting peace, must prioritise the cultivation of harmony among church in Kenya. It is imperative that church leaders demonstrate selflessness by setting aside personal aspirations in favour of financial gain. Once united and responsible, the church leadership should focus on revitalizing and overseeing RSP to effectively serve as a catalyst for rural transformation, as detailed in its 1959 strategic plan.
2. It is imperative that political figures and individuals outside the Friends Church in Kenya refrain from meddling in the administration of RSP. As a catalyst for rural development, RSP should be managed by competent professionals.
3. It is essential to secure and deposit the relevant documents of RSP, including land title deeds, with the trustee of the Friends Church in Kenya. This will ensure that the property of RSP serves the entire membership of the Friends church in Kenya.

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