

# Cross-cultural agenda in a theological institution: A review of St. Andrew's Kabare, Kenya

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This research article sets out to understand the extent to which a cross-cultural agenda of inclusivity and the appreciation for the 'other' (ubuntu) was addressed at St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, Kenya, which has been viewed as a conglomeration of diverse ethnic groups, races, and nations. Despite her leadership's acknowledgement of her rich cross-cultural diversity, as they celebrated 40 years' of institutional existence, from 1977 to 2017, its execution was not spelled out explicitly. While appreciating the barriers of cross-cultural engagements as including, but not limited to: language, conflicting values, irrelevant studies and knowledge for diverse assemblages, geographical distance, ethnocentrism, bad-mouthing and character assassinations, and stereotypes, our main concern remains: what were the deliberate steps that were employed at St Andrew's Kabare to promote a cross-cultural agenda? In its methodology, it employs hybridity in data gathering. That is, it utilised an in-depth interview (IDI), the use of key informant interviews (KIIs), the use of unpublished Church Synod reports, and a review of relevant literature in order to unveil the problem under consideration.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** This research article contributes to the intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications by demonstrating how cross-cultural agenda is a matter whose interplay goes across the disciplines of theology, communication, culture, oral history and church history, among others.

**Keywords:** cross-cultural; education; non-theological courses; St. Andrew's Kabare; theology.

## Introduction

Geert Hofstede has defined culture as 'the collective planning of mind [and] is the process that distinguishes members of a group or class from other people' (Hofstede, Minkov & Zografis 2012). Although the point here is the 'collective' and/or holistic nature of culture, it is worthwhile to concede that understanding of culture goes beyond mere 'collective planning of the mind', as it is indeed the total sum of life. With religion, politics, ethics, aesthetics, economics and kinship forming some of the critical pillars of culture (Mugambi 2003), appreciating its all-inclusive nature in the lives of individuals and societies takes it beyond the mere 'planning of the mind'. Nevertheless, this gives us a broad interpretation of culture, which embraces all pillars that constitute it, as in the case of its socio-economic mind, religious mind, moral-ethical mind and aesthetic and kinship mind, among others. In considering that culture is learned (Constantin 2013), cross-cultural agenda becomes a critical point in discussing how St Andrew's College, Kabare, Kenya, has navigated the terrain since 1977 when it opened its doors for theological training, and later for Business Studies, in 1988. The 'collective planning' in Hofstede's works (2012) may also refer to shared and learned values among peoples living in the same environment.

As an area in academia, cross-cultural communication has emerged in the 21st century as a critical area that informs our forms of socialisation, learning and improving our wanting situations (Constantin 2014). It connotes a meeting point of diverse cultures to create a better world in all dimensions of life. In a sense, world civilisations will find their future in cross-cultural communication, as it encourages inter-faith relations, religious tolerance, cultural relativism, cultural universality, appreciation of those who do not look like us (ubuntu) and peaceful co-existence, among other virtues. As a concept, cross-cultural relations also encourage a cross-pollination of ideas, in academia, business, ecclesial, medicine, and in all life domains. In business, it helps in expanding business, just as it benefits ecclesiastical growth. In light of this, students and staff who joined St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development (1977–2017), especially from neighbouring countries and from diverse ethnic

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groups, needed local orientations so as to cope easily in the new environment, just as transferring employees of an international company are compelled to learn some aspects of the nation's culture (Carolina 2019). In the East African countries, a step towards understanding the social norms would best start by teaching Swahili language. With language being the vehicle of culture, riddles, proverbs, idioms and narratives, among others, a study of the local languages gives a strong starting point. Certainly, barriers to cross-cultural agenda include ethnocentrism, non-verbal misinterpretations, prejudices, stereotypes, emotional outbursts, language differences, poor interpretation and adherence of cultural values, negative attitudes and retrogressive beliefs (Carolina 2019). Such concerns help in justifying the significance of addressing cross-cultural agenda in our institutions of learning, among other places, as diverse peoples converge in such places.

## St. Andrew's College, Kabare

As the leading Anglican institution, St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, located in Kirinyaga East, held her first elaborate commemoration of 40 years of existence (1977–2017) on Friday, 10 November 2017. As an eyewitness, the researcher observed that her leadership was quick to appreciate her cross-cultural diversity. In the November 2017 gathering, it was established that her teaching staff came from the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Germany, Canada, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya (host country), among other places; and her students came from Kenya (mainly), Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other places. While the introduction of non-theological education courses, in 1988, appears to have addressed cross-cultural concerns (Gitari 2014), one wonders whether it was sufficient enough, as inclusivity is best experienced within a broader socio-cultural perspective. In view of this, the article seeks to unveil the problem: To what extent did St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, address cross-cultural agenda of inclusivity, appreciation of the other (ubuntu) and clear dalliances with diverse traditions?

St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, in Kirinyaga County of Central Kenya, was established in 1977 primarily to cater for the theological needs of the inhabitants of Mount Kenya East region and/or North-Eastern part of central Kenya. This is an area which is rich in cultural diversity and refers to the present day counties of Kirinyaga, Embu, Tharaka-Nithi, Marsabit, Isiolo, Moyale, Garissa, Marsabit, Mandera and Wajir (Cole 1970; Gitari 2014). Notably, however, the North-Eastern part of Kenya remains a Muslim dominated area, providing the counties with the highest Muslim populations in the country. Besides this, the North-Eastern Kenya is also rich in cross-cultural religio-cultural diversities, as indigenous religion remains strong in the upper parts of Isiolo, Garissa,

Marsabit, Moyale and Wajir counties. According to Natalie Cowling (2023):

nearly 50% of individuals adhering to Islam lived in the Northern-East counties of Mandera (856.5 thousand people), Garissa (815.8 thousand people), and Wajir (767.3 thousand people). Overall, around 10% of Kenya's population identified as Muslim. (p. 1)

Besides the agenda of winning Muslims to the God of Christendom, the establishment of St. Andrew's College, Kabare had the task of tackling cultural issues that are inimical to the dignity of women, as in the case of forced marriages, elopement, under-age betrothals, female genital mutilation and denial of school education (Gathogo 2017a; Gitari 2014), which were prevalent in the North-Eastern part of the country. Theo-doctrinal embargo was another thorn in the flesh of the area that St. Andrew's College was set to serve. In particular, heretical teachings and/or unsound theologies were also hurting the lower side (Kirinyaga, Embu, and Meru counties) which was largely dominated by Christians (Gitari 2014). Nominal Christianity equally posed another challenge. To tackle poverty, which remains an overwhelming challenge right into the 21st century, the then Anglican Bishop of Kirinyaga, David Gitari, and other founders of St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, mooted the idea of integrated development and education that was holistic and beyond theological and/or missiological training. Thus, the holistic training that was ushered in at St. Andrew's College of Theology and Development, Kabare, in 1988, now included: Business Studies, Secretarial, Accounts, Community Health Workers' (CHWs) Training, Retraining of Teachers, Pilot Programme Training, Counselling Psychology, and Rural Development courses, among others (Gathogo 2017a). In this article, the pioneer founder of Secretarial Training and Business Studies (Pam Wilding from Britain) has been given more attention considering that she was an employee of the London-based Church Missionary Society (CMS); hence, she was a mission partner who identified with the local people until her retirement and return to her home in the UK.

## Conceptual clarification and cross-cultural agenda

In retrospect, cross-cultural theorists, who are basically scholars in communication, include: Edward T. Hall, Jeanne M. Brett, Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars (Carolina 2019; Constantin 2013). In their treatises, they have developed frameworks that seek to describe diverse cultural orientations, and redefine cultural norms that guide social interface. In particular, Gerard Hendrik Hofstede, popularly called Geert Hofstede (1928–2020), and who is variously referred to as the father of modern cross-cultural science and thinking, focussed on contrasting various nationalities (Constantin 2014; Hofstede 2010). As a social psychologist, he did this by utilising statistical scrutiny of two exceptional databases. One of them composed of answers that matched employee

samples from 40 nations who responded to similar sampled questions dealing with matters to do with beliefs and attitudes. The second database that Hofstede used was the responses from some of the same questions from learners from 15 nations, and from diverse industries and companies. In these two databases, he sought to understand the systematic differences among nations (Carolina 2019; Constantin 2013). In a nutshell, his theoretical framework dwelt on value dimensions. He established that there are tendencies of some values lording over others, albeit unconsciously. It is from there that Hofstede (2011) brought out a framework that is helpful in understanding how these values trigger corporate conduct, and went on to identify five major value dimensions that analyse and interpret attitudes and general conduct among peoples from diverse nationalities (Constantin 2014; Hofstede 2010).

These five value dimensions included: power distance, a phenomenon where diverse societies tend to reject or accept hierarchies in social life; individualism, where some societies utilise competition as the inspiration of success; masculinity dimension, where division of labour is well spelt out, with male gender being expected to be independent personas, as women stand out as modest in character (Constantin 2014; Hofstede 2010). In the scheme of things, Hofstede viewed Japanese and Latin American cultures as masculine-oriented and/or patriarchal societies. The fourth dimension of interpreting or understanding behaviours in his treatise was uncertainty avoidance (UA), a phenomenon where certain people prefer to avoid unnecessary competition, conflicts and grabbling, and opt for formal ways – as in the case of France and Japan where workers or the citizenry prefer non-aggressiveness exhibitions in their discourses (Constantin 2014; Hofstede 2010). The last dimension in Hofstede's view on what guides our socio-cultural conduct across diverse peoples is the long-term orientation, a phenomenon where we are 'trained' to embrace certain cultural traits that strongly get inculcated in our systems of thought and mind. In this scheme of things, some cultures have long-term and short-term orientations. In considering long-term orientation, a Japanese chief executive officer (CEO) is likely to apologise for a corporate process gone awry, just as a well-oriented African leader, schooled in ubuntu indigenous philosophy of injury to one as injury to all, will do (Shutte 2001). In focussing on Hofstede's five value dimensions that inform our attitudes and general conduct, St. Andrew's College, Kabare, and her diverse cultures found herself theoretically fitting in these projections. In focussing on cross-cultural agenda, Hofstede provides a working platform for engaging diverse peoples, as it aids our understanding on what informs our modus operandi across various nationalities, ethnicities, races and genders.

Thus, although the framework of the concept of cross-cultural agenda can be traced in communication, it remains relevant to this research article as it has something to do with comparing more than one's cultures. It is a concept that

appreciates the divergent persons from diverse backgrounds, nationalities, ethnicities, gender, races and acknowledges the value of bridging them. In the era of globalisation, cross-cultural education and practice has gained currency as it eases working environment because of its emphasis on mutual reciprocity and the respect of 'others' (ubuntu). In its emphasis on effective communication among peoples, or good understanding of others' action, it eventually leads to cascading of problems within the business sector, the religious sector and other social domains.

The materials in this presentation are gathered through an in-depth interview (IDI), key informant interviews (KIIs) via personal communication with some people who were connected to the subject under discussion, participant observation, an extensive review of relevant literature, and an appeal to the unpublished Diocesan Synod books. An interpretation of the same is analysed in light of the available facts, and the entire treatise is addressed from a theo-historical-analytical design. It also includes drawing from various socio-cultural realities that build the case for cross-cultural agenda. This helps us to understand the steps that were employed in addressing cross-cultural concern in an institution which was initially set to be a theological school for training ecclesiastical leaderships.

## Results

### Staff and students

As noted in our introduction, cultural diversity at St. Andrew's College, Kabare was first acknowledged by public appreciation that diverse ethno-racial groups formed the socio-academic community. Among the teaching Staff, St. Andrew's Kabare appreciated its ethno-racial diversity when its long serving (former) Principal (M. Njoroge, pers. comm., 06 June 2017) admitted that its first Principal was a local Kenyan, Bishop David Gitari (College principal in 1977), while the second one was a Northern Kenyan-based Bible translator to Borana language (sometimes called 'Borana dialect' of the Oromo language), Revd Stephen Houghton (January–December 1978), who had been recalled by the local Bishop to head the then college of theology and mission studies, Kabare. Revd Houghton (1932–1983), who stayed with his wife, Eve Houghton and their four children (Rachael, Sue, Jane, and Paul), was a Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society (BCMS) instructor from Britain, just as Revd Allan Beavan, who taught at St. Andrew's in early 1990s, was an Australian. Houghton, who came to Kenya in 1960, died in a Nairobi hospital on 17 April 1983, and was buried in Northern Kenya, near St. Peter's Anglican Church. As he had indicated in his will, his tomb bears the following words from Revelation 2:10, in Borana language: 'Haga dootuuti nama d'ugefatani tahi, duuba anini eebafi jireenna sii kenna' (i.e. 'Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the Crown of life' Tablino 1993:170).

The BCMS, which was largely involved in Bible translations in local African languages, had its name changed in 1992 to Crosslinks (Tablino 1993). The name change was meant to



appreciate cross-cultural agenda as it was a global body which now sought to 'move' the mission from 'the west to the rest'. They now sought to broaden BCMS' cross-cultural agenda so as to shift its paradigm to 'everywhere to everywhere'. Eventually, this translated to meeting all global societies under a more inclusive name, and eventually fulfil the Great Commission of Matthew 28:17–20 in the most comprehensive way possible (Gathogo 2017a). Venerable Parick Benson (popularly called Paddy, born 1949) who arrived from Britain in January 1979, and served as the College Principal from January to August 1979, explains the socio-cultural diversity in his recollections, thus (Benson 2016):

Concerning our time in Kenya: We (and our friends Rob and Sue Martin – Rob retired as Bishop of Marsabit last month) arrived in Nairobi at the end of August 1978 – after the death and just before the funeral of [the first African President] Jomo Kenyatta. ... Back to our arrival in 1978: After three months' study of Swahili at the CPK [now ACK] language school, we went to Embu to the headquarters of the Diocese of Mt Kenya East. ... [The Anglican Diocese of Mount Kenya East that hosted St. Andrew's College, Kabare] had a statistician, Dr (now Revd Dr) Emil Chandran, a CMS mission partner from South India, who tracked church growth. In addition to training clergy (never enough) the diocese had a TEE programme, led for a time by Revd Symon Beesley [CMS], on which I also taught [which further affirms cross-cultural diversity]. (p. 3)

Paddy Benson (2016) goes on to say:

Revd Stephen Houghton a BCMS<sup>1</sup> missionary working in Marsabit was transferred South to train the clergy. (Stephen was not happy about this move.) On Eleanor and my arrival at Kabare in January 1979, Stephen returned to Marsabit and we took on the teaching: I taught Biblical studies; Eleanor taught church history and doctrine. The local vicar Marclus Itumu came in to teach pastoralia (his son John Itumu is now a vicar in Gloucester). We had about a dozen students. Eleanor and I had a wooden house; the students had a second wooden house. The classroom, library (immensely upgraded by Eleanor) and chapel were in the Old Mission House – a stone building which had been the home of CMS missionaries in the earlier years of the century. We were however the first white people that many of the children had ever seen. For the history of Kabare mission – learn Kikuyu and read the *Kiririkano* [translated Kikuyu Bible] book! We did our Kikuyu study in another three-month stint at the language school after returning from our first spell of home leave in 1983. (p. 3)

## Students Exchange Programme

In regard to the Students Exchange Programme (SEP) where African students from St. Andrew's College, Kabare benefitted after the then Principal, Revd (later Bishop) Graham Kings, a Briton by nationality, endorsed it in 1989, several people benefitted from this intercultural encounter. Some of the Africans (Kenyans) who went to serve in Europe (mainly the UK) included: Lydia Ndambiri-Mwaniki in

January 1989, Andrew Kibiti in July 1990, Jesse Ngure Kariuki from September 1994 to February 1995, among others (L. Mwaniki, pers. comm., 08 June 2017; V.J.N. Kariuki, pers. comm., 06 June 2017). From the European side, several students joined St. Andrew's College, Kabare, in different calendar years. They included: Simon Tillotson (1992), Derek Jo Honour (1988), Sue Gould (1991), Anna Doughty (2002) and Polly from the County of Essex, UK (M. Njoroge, pers. Comm., 03 June 2017). Anna Doughty later married a local Kenyan, the then St Andrew's College, Kabare student, the Revd Daniel Cahira Njuguna, from Nakuru Anglican Diocese. By 2017, they were living and working in UK. From my personal communication with the former Principal (M. Njoroge, pers. comm., 03 June 2017), the Church Mission Society (CMS) facilitated this Student Exchange Overseas, which was a partnership training that was beneficial to the students' quest for cross-cultural engagements.

In the researcher's personal communication with Lydia Mwaniki (08 June 2017), who was the pioneer in this, the SEP had remained a one-sided affair which was, in 1980s, benefitting their European counterparts who joined St. Andrew's College, Kabare, as librarians, parish attachments, tutors, among other areas. This helped them to interact with African cultures, languages and forms of education. In the 1980s thus, there were complaints from St. Andrew's College students regarding what they considered as the 'One-Sided Approach' to the SEP, as it appeared to benefit their counterparts from UK. In other words, students in their 'powerful' General Student's Body (GSB), and in their general conversations, were constantly voicing their concerns that they were getting excluded from this noble cross-cultural agenda. Consequently, the then Principal, Rev. (later Bishop) Graham Kings, took up the matter more seriously and raised it up in their staff meetings. Subsequently, the staff finally ratified it, despite setting critical conditions for the students that included good academic performance, display of leadership skills and good general conduct. From King's activities, it appears that he was tasked with the responsibility of organising these reciprocal exchange programmes (L. Mwaniki, pers. comm., 08 June 2017). He therefore liaised with others abroad to establish an all-inclusive student's exchange programme that obtains right into the 21st century.

In the case of the pioneer Kenyan student, Lydia Mwaniki, she joined St. John's College, Nottingham, UK, from January to May 1989. In addressing cross-cultural agenda, she attended lectures for three months (January to March) where she learnt theological subjects and cross-cultural studies. In the last month of her stay, she was sent for practical experience to Orpington Parish, Diocese of Rochester, England (L. Mwaniki, pers. comm., 08 June 2017). In a personal communication with Pam Wilding (06 July 2017, via email, from her UK home), she recalled hearing Lydia telling them that she was shocked to learn that bodies were burnt in England (cremation), something she had not experienced in Kenya.

1. BCMS is an abbreviation for the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society. Since 1992, it ceased from being called BCMS and adopted the new name, Crosslinks (<https://www.crosslinks.org/> accessed 06 August 2024).

## Staff empowerment

Another cross-cultural gesture that emerged at St. Andrew's College, Kabare, was the staff empowerment. Although the idea was to build a strong teaching staff, it also promoted cross-cultural agenda. One such case is that of Ven. Winfred Wanjiku Munene who received a CMS scholarship, in 1998–1999, which took her to Ridley Hall Theological College, Cambridge (W. Munene, pers. comm, 08 June 2017). By the time she was awarded a CMS scholarship, Dr Ben Knighton, a UK national, was the principal. The conditions of the scholarship were that she would return to St. Andrew's College, Kabare, as a tutor and/or lecturer upon her completion of studies. In turn, Ridley Hall was an affiliate college of Anglia Ruskin University, UK. Although Revd (later Bishop Professor) Moses Masamba Nthukah and Ven Andrew Kibiti were not tutors and/or lecturers at St. Andrew's College by that time, they also received a CMS scholarship a year after Winfred. In particular, Kibiti went to Crowther Hall College, in Birmingham, UK, where he pursued an MA in Missiology (1999–2000). Like Winfred Munene, Moses Nthukah studied for an MA in Pastoral Theology at Ridley Hall Theological College in Cambridge (1999–2000).

In all the three noted cross-cultural engagements (refer to student exchange, staff empowerment and the composition of staff and students), it largely sought to empower them to understand their global cross-cultural constituencies in God's Great Commission (Mt 28:17–20). These encounters were also meant to help them overcome ethnocentrism in mission, embrace cultural relativism, learn and know how to live under new norms, appreciate cultural diffusion, overcome culture shock and appreciate cultural universals (Gathogo 2017a:166–169).

## Non-theological courses

Apart from the above-stated three gestures that addressed cross-cultural agenda, the introduction of non-theological courses in a college that was initially billed as a Bible School was a major radical step that was geared towards inviting Jews and Gentiles. It would enrich the college with cultural diversity; as indeed, plurality is God's economy for the world. With theological studies being seen as largely a men's affair, the introduction of non-theological courses was certainly geared towards addressing the gender equation. Although non-theological courses, such as: Secretarial Training, Business Studies, Community Health Training, Rural Development Studies, Retraining of Teachers, Pilot Program Training, and Counselling Psychology among others, were taught at St Andrew's College, Kabare, this section will sample some few cases that will be utilised to demonstrate deliberate attempts to show-case cross-cultural and multidisciplinary agenda at St Andrew's College, Kabare, particularly after 1988 when the Business School was inaugurated under Pam, later Revd Canon Pam Wilding.

## Secretarial training

Besides theological studies, St. Andrew's College also trained secretarial students from the latter part of 1988 when Pamela Wilding, from the UK, joined the teaching staff and founded the Secretarial Training and the Business School (Synod 1992). The College provided a suitable classroom with good typewriting tables, plastic chairs and typewriting chairs that were locally made later.

The computer training really went ahead when Revd Philip Gray of the United Reformed Church, UK, raised the funds for new computers and printers. This enabled theological students also to do computer training. Additionally, in 1992 the College was looking forward to employing more staff to run short courses in accounts, database and desktop publishing, so as to widen the scope of computer training, and this happened (Synod 1989).

Pam, as Pamela Wilding was popularly called, was a CMS mission partner who lived in Kenya and Tanzania from 1967 to 2003 when she retired and returned to her home in the UK. Before she joined St. Andrew's College, she had worked in Western Kenya under Bishop John Henry Okullu (1929–1999). In his book, *Quest for Social Justice* (1997), Okullu mentions her as one of the CMS missionaries who worked closely with him and who made huge impact in the western region. In his book, *Troubled But Not Destroyed*, Gitari (2014:45) speaks favourably about her when he says that the College started 'training office secretaries under the able leadership of the Revd Pamela Wilding'.

Characteristically, students in secretarial training, who were largely ladies, would go on to become company secretaries, non-governmental organisation (NGO) leaders, para-church workers, and diocesan secretaries, among other duties to the nation. On a lighter note, their interaction with the male theological trainees would, from time to time, lead to marriage; thus, making it possible for aspiring clergy to marry lay women who understood them better, right from their college days. In the researcher's observation, the Secretarial Department produced the first computer literate people in Mt. Kenya East region in the late 1980s. This demonstrates how St. Andrew's College led the pack in holistic education, which ultimately encouraged socio-cultural diversity as learners from various parts of Kenya and outside the country joined the secretarial course for example Madam Benga, a lady from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who completed her studies in April 1993 (J. Mugure, pers. comm., 13 March 2024). In a personal communication with Pam (06 May 2017, via email), she explained how she came from the UK to Kenya. She explained that she first contacted the CMS in its London headquarters, where she first worked for a year, attended their Training College, then sailed for Kenya, and arrived on 22 February 1967. She had been sent to work for the Christian Industrial Training Centres under the care of its founder, the Revd Charles and Mrs Helen Tett (M. Njoroge, pers. comm., 06 June 2017).

## Business studies

Business Studies came as a progression and/or expansion of the Secretarial Studies that Pamela Wilding had begun in January 1988 (M. Njoroge, pers. comm., 06 April 2017). With this expansion, Accountancy Courses were introduced in 1990 with Eliud Gicheru as one of the early tutors in the Accounts Section. In 1998, the Director of the Department of Business Studies was Mr Stephen B. Mukasa Munulo (a Ugandan national). He taught Business English, Commercial Knowledge (Commerce), and Office Procedures, among other courses. In the same Department of Business Studies, Pamela Wilding (Secretarial Tutor) taught Shorthand, Office Practice, Secretarial Duties, Computer Studies and Audio Typing. Eliud Gicheru (Accounting Tutor) taught Book Keeping and Accounts, Business Calculations and Statistics, and Business Studies. In the same Business Studies Department, Jane Mattundu (Secretarial Tutor) taught Typewriting, while Agness Githinji (Accounting Tutor) taught Elements of Law. In 1992, David Gathu (who had graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce, from Kenyatta University) joined the Business Study Department; and his work was funded by a grant from the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) (Gathogo 2017b). His deployment to St Andrew's Kabare further boosted a cross-cultural agenda, as the multidisciplinary perspective of the institution encouraged a recruitment of learners from diverse backgrounds.

## Community health workers' training

Although the Primary Health Care was a programme of the Anglican Development Services of Mt Kenya East, most of the health care workers were trained at St. Andrew's College from 1982 when it was established. As Gitari says, the Primary Health Care Programme had five components: Setting up Village (local church) Health Committees; Training of CHWs; Mobile Clinics; Family Planning and Child Survival. Gitari (2014) says:

The local Church health committee had to identify a person (usually the evangelist or catechist) who would undergo six weeks of training at St. Andrew's, Kabare, and upon graduation, would return to his or her village and teach the community on the causes of the commonest diseases in the area and how to prevent them. Being a trained evangelist, he or she would cater for the spiritual as well as the physical needs of the community. The syllabus at St. Andrew's [College] was developed according to the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO). During the first graduation ceremony, the Eastern Province Director of Health Services acknowledged that we were the first organization in Kenya to train CHWs in accordance with the recommendations of the WHO. (p. 48)

Gitari (2014) continues that:

Hundreds of thousands of people die of preventable diseases each year and the WHO had observed that if developing countries borrowed from the Western model, which was highly dependent on graduate medical doctors, then it would take a long time for medical services to percolate through to rural and grassroots communities. After all, most medical doctors tend to concentrate their clinics and operations in urban areas. It also takes up to seven years or more after secondary school education to train a medical doctor, a long and expensive venture by any standard. (p. 48)

From Gitari's remarks, it is clear that CHWs were trained at St. Andrew's College, Kabare. After the CHW training, as a programme of the Christian Community Services (CCS), which was initiated by the Diocese of Mt. Kenya East, the pioneer leader, Kerk Burbank, had to return to America in 1982. After Burbank's return, Revd Josphat Mugweru succeeded him and consolidated the work until 1989. After Anne Murage became the Director in 1989, the Principal, Moses Njoroge, concedes that it is the moment when St. Andrew's College, Kabare, was given more training opportunities that improved the college's revenue greatly (M. Njoroge, pers. comm., 06 April 2017). As Gitari (2014:48–50) has noted, the CHW training at St. Andrew's College, Kabare, was geared towards addressing nine of the commonest diseases locally. That is, malaria, pneumonia, diarrhoea, intestinal worms, measles, anaemia, upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) and meningitis. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) was factored in during the 1990s. After a thorough training at St. Andrew's College, Kabare, CHWs had to return to the villages to teach the members of the general public how to prevent the above diseases. The breakthrough in CHWs' training at St. Andrew's could be established in the fact that there were over 400 of them by 1990 when the Diocese of Mt. Kenya East was getting sub-divided into Embu and Kirinyaga Dioceses. Using the motto, 'Prevention is better than cure' (Gitari 2014:48), the over 400 CHWs were scattered across the vast Mt. Kenya East region impacting change along the medical lines, and especially in the rural areas. Unfortunately, due to a lack of donor support, the programme that had started under Bishop Gideon Ireri as the principal finally came to an end in the middle of the 1990s.

## Rural development studies

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) of the Anglican Services of Mt. Kenya East was initially led by Stephen Githendu, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s (Synod 1992). The target here was mainly the trainees in theological studies, whose input in rural development was seen to make more impact. Another target was the church leaders and church elders. In trying to eradicate poverty by empowering local church leaders on how to overcome underdevelopment, the trainers aimed at bringing change. In this programme, as in the case of CHWs, St. Andrew's College which hosted the entire training would earn a lot of revenue out of this venture (M. Njoroge, pers. comm., 06 April 2017). As the parishes met the cost of the transport of the elders and church leaders, the RDP met other costs such as food, hiring of buildings, and so on.

## Critical analysis

Although the Muslim presence in the North Eastern counties of Kenya, then called districts (Mandera, Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, and Marsabit) was certainly big, Christian-Muslim Studies and/or Courses did not feature prominently as one would have expected. Indeed, a study of the 40 years of St Andrew's existence as a theological institution, from 1977



to 2017, did not provide strong evidence for such courses on Interfaith Relations in concrete terms. A study of World Religions was certainly a step forward despite its inadequacy. With the lower part having a composition of the Kikuyu, Embu, Mbeere, Kamba and Embu ethnic groups, the upper part produces the Somalis, Burji, Gabra, Borana, Orma, Rendille communities, among others (Gitari 1990; Synod 1990a, 1990b). The latter communities are Cushitic speakers, while the former are Bantu linguistic communities. While Bantus are largely agriculturalists, Cushitic-speaking people are largely nomads who occupy the dry regions in both Kenya and Somalia (Gathogo 2011, 2017b; Synod 1992), hence the cross-cultural agenda needed more attention for the greater good of St. Andrew's College, Kabare, community.

Further, the members of the Cushitic communities, noted precedingly, were more inclined to indigenous religion and its accompanying cultures and rituals of female circumcision, arranged marriages, levirate marriages and polygamous marriages, some of which were getting overtaken by the Christian religious wave that discouraged some of these practices (Gathogo 2011). While this article does not intend to offer wholesale condemnations of socio-cultural trajectories, we however insist that it was incumbent upon the management of the Training College, St. Andrew's Kabare, to usher in cross-cultural programmes or courses that would aid the various dialogues in the areas noted earlier. Or were the above learning programmes adequate and inclusive enough to cover both staff and students? Additionally, setting up a Cultural Day is another big step forward, as lecturers/tutors from Rwanda, Kenya, Britain, Australia, Germany and other places could have enriched the learning community in diverse ways. Likewise, the student community (1977) that came from Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo could have enriched the community; and indeed widen the horizons of both staff and students, with their unique activities. With the emergence of diverse colleges and the so-called regional universities in the 21st century Kenya, St. Andrew's College, like other premier institutions, however, lost the monopoly. Hence, the above-mentioned proposals could be carried out via collegiality and/or joint efforts so as to avoid duplication of courses within one region.

Besides these great strides at St. Andrew's College, the theological concern in the cross-cultural agenda was not explicit enough as in the above cases (SEP, rural development studies, health workers training, secretarial training, and in business training). Although inculturation as a theological concept was given attention in the course of studies, as was evident in the Africanisation of liturgy, the failure to get the theological training from the cocoons of the Euro-American evangelicalism remains the weakest link in this noble agenda. Indeed, the lack of theo-social teaching courses that sought to solve the cross-cultural equation drives us to understand the gap that was evident. The fact that most of St Andrew's projects were funded by overseas friends in Euro-America

could be one of the reasons for the lack of clear cross-cultural agenda in theological education in concrete terms. Or was cross-cultural agenda set to be purely a social matter, rather than as a theo-social construct? Further, because of the fact that the institution was a mere affiliate college of St Paul's United Theological College, Limuru (renamed St Paul's University in 2007 after being accredited as a university by the Kenya's Commission of University Education), it could not develop her own theological curriculum that was geared towards cross-cultural agenda. In view of this, theological curriculum could have brought in courses such as Theology and Diversities, Interfaith Dialogue, Dynamics of Culture and the African Context, Religions and Cultures of East and Central Africa, Indigenous Religion and Other Faiths in Africa, and Muslim-Christian theologies, among others. Being seen as an institution that was offering uncritical Euro-American evangelical theological education model is certainly a weak link. It could be remedied by inculturation initiatives, cross-cultural studies, and through dialogical theological studies.

## Conclusion

The research article set out to understand the extent to which cross-cultural agenda of inclusivity and the appreciation for the 'other' (ubuntu) was addressed at St. Andrew's Anglican College, Kabare, Kenya. Methodologically, it began by redefining the concepts of culture, cross-culture, and provided an overview of St. Andrew's College, Kabare, from 1977 to 2017. The article has also addressed its methodology, design and conceptual clarification so as to link it up with other global realities; and went on to demonstrate the various attempts in cross-cultural breakthroughs at St. Andrew's College, Kabare. And although it has not majored on the barriers of cross-cultural engagements, it has noted the lack of liberal courses such as Interfaith relations, Interfaith dialogue, Christian-Muslim studies, Trilogy of Christian-Islam-Indigenous religion, and Religio-Cultural conflict at St. Andrew's College, Kabare, which could effectively address African religion, Islamic religion and the Christian faith from an ubuntu backcloth of inclusivity. St Andrew's College serves both Muslim-dominated regions (Wajir, Mandera, Samburu, Garissa, and Isiolo) and Christian-dominated regions (Tharaka-Nithi, Meru, Embu, and Kirinyaga). This creates an opportunity for interfaith dialogue and education. Further, the fact that the area under consideration has diverse ethnic groups such as Kikuyu, the Meru, Embu, Mbeere, Samburu, Rendile, Borana, Burji, Gabra and the Somali, among others, provided a strong reason to put up the agenda of cross-cultural dialogue.

Nevertheless, broadening of the institution by offering Secretarial Training, Business Studies, Community Health Training, Rural Development Studies, Retraining of Teachers, Pilot Programme Training, and Counselling Psychology, among others, was a major step forward as it attracted more culturally-diverse peoples. On a positive note, the research article has established some elements of success in

cross-cultural engagement at St. Andrew's College, Kabare, through the introduction of non-theological courses that ushered in more learners and tutors from diverse corners of the world. The success of the staff empowerment, the SEP and the ethno-racial composition of staff and students shows the college's potentiality in building a cross-cultural centre for global community.

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## Ethical considerations

This article does not contain any studies involving human participants performed by any of the authors.

## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this study as no new data were created or analysed in this article.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are the product of professional research.

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