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### Making Country Proud: The Role of Athletics in the Development of Eldoret City, Kenya

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**Keywords:**

*Athletics,  
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Kenya.*

This study examined the impact of athletics on the development of Eldoret City from 1920-2020. The study was informed by the need to discuss in detail and document the development of athletics among the Kalenjin community in Kenya. To realize the above, the study utilized Social Constructivism and Self-efficacy theories. The study was guided by one objective: the development and impact of athletics among the Kalenjin community in Kenya from 1920 through 2020. The literature reviewed, global, regional, and local, helped identify the knowledge gap, hence the study's justification. The philosophical paradigm that anchored this study is constructivist philosophy. The study is qualitative and has an applied historical research design. The sampling procedure entailed using purposive and snowball sampling to arrive at knowledgeable informants. The sample size of 20 informants was determined by saturation. Data collected was from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources entailed archival materials such as artefacts and photographs, while unstructured interview schedules were used to collect oral data. The secondary sources were the books, theses, journals, magazines, and newspapers. Using the qualitative method, the study analyzed data thematically and presented the findings through narration, direct quotes and descriptive texts. Photographs were also used to present the findings. According to the research findings, the Kalenjin community had traditional sports activities, primarily athletics. The thrust of the athletics was reminiscent of their cultural aspirations. Further, the study established that the development of athletics grew gradually in phases marked by the arrival of the European colonialists, the internationalization of sports in the 1950s and the emergence of Kenya as a world athletics player. The study additionally found that scholarship, employment opportunities, and acquisition of wealth through diverse investments are evident in Eldoret City. The town has recently grown into the 5th Kenyan City following a significant economic contribution from the athletics arena. The rise of the Kalenjin diaspora and the attraction of multinationals to local athletics constitute substantial socioeconomic and political impacts on athletics among the Kalenjin. The study thus recommends that the government improve funding for sports and fully implement the existing laws and policies.

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## INTRODUCTION

This article examines the impact of athletics on the development of Eldoret City from 1920 to 2020 and addresses the effects of colonial sports on the Kalenjin community. It explores replacing traditional sports, using colonial sports as a tool for social control, and the impact of the internationalization of sports among the Kalenjin in the 1950s. It also looks at sports' social-economic and political impact on the Kalenjin during the post-colonial era.

### Statement of the problem.

Athletics has been and continues to be part and parcel of human history. Athletics transcends communities, cultures, religions and regions of the world. Different studies view the concept of athletics development and impact from various perspectives. Globally, athletics is considered a socio-economic and political impetus. In Kenya, the development and impacts of athletics are measured mainly in terms of improved performance in records and the winning of an increasing number of medals. It has also been measured in terms of increasing successful recruitment of people into achievement sports. This pedigree of elite athletes produced annually and representing the country in global championships has brought enormous international prestige and publicity to the government. Their earnings and fame have improved Kenya's visibility as a sporting

destination. Given the above, there is a need to investigate athletics' development and impact on the development of Eldoret City and the Kalenjin community.

### Objectives of the study

To assess the impact of athletics on the Kalenjin community and the development of Eldoret City.

### Impact of Colonial Sports on the Kalenjin Community

The impact of colonial sports had both positive and negative results. The impacts have been subdivided into sections as outlined below.

### Sport as a colonial tool for social control

Sports in formal education were used mainly as a means to achieve order and to discipline the African youth, particularly the males. (Mangan, J. A. 1987., *Ethics and Ethnocentricity*, 137-171). African players who engaged in British sports internalized norms of superiority and were taught values that impacted their identity formation. It will be appreciated that these values remained long after independence. It was also meant to disengage indigenous clan systems from maintaining societal order. (Ibid, 140).

Over the years, there has been adequate evidence that governments worldwide get involved in sports to achieve political agendas. Out of the scientific knowledge available, the government entrench sports into their policies for several

reasons. Developing the physical fitness and health of the nation is integral for national defence in maintaining public order, promoting national prestige, and promoting social solidarity and political ideology. Governments also support Sport in legitimizing itself and promoting public moral status necessary for focusing a nation. (Hargreaves, J., 1986: Sport, Power and Culture, 258).

Sports are a serious venture in many countries due to their roles and functions among the masses. Given that the masses control the state, governments keep close to that which can promote its image, stability, and development. Sport, often considered to play a revolutionary role as an agent of social change, with the state as its pilot, is utilized by governments for the sole purpose of managing (Ibid 258).

Hargreaves weaves the narrative that the concept of social integration can be traced to the operations of a capitalist/industrial economy by accepting the modern state's codification, rationalization, and governing bodies. Further, Sport promotes traditional values and societal arrangements, such as gender roles and sexuality.

### **Sport: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy**

According to Chalip (2005), in the increasingly interconnected international systems, Sport can play an important role in diplomatic processes because of its universal popularity and ability to serve as a common ground between nations. He further posits that sports of world-class level events can provide an opportunity for initiating multilateral diplomacy. It is also used as a foreign policy tool, an instrument to wield *Soft Power*. This literature will anchor this research, more so on the relationship between athletics and politics in the life of elite athletes. (Chalip, L. 2005).

Fuat and Oguz, in their exposition about the role of sports in international relations, contend that international Sports being a part of the universal culture is an essential means of combining different people in the world and contributes to world peace. They claim that sports can be defined as a totality of activities that are realized to affect

social, moral, and physical benefits positively. Fuat and Oguz assert that Sport has been an excellent sanction tool in international relations. It is also a new science that determines the nature of human behaviour and mental structure by utilizing activities, games, competitions, and physical training of the human body. They further posit that it has become a social event deeply entrenched in people's social life. (Fuat, B. and Oguz, G., 2016. The Role of International Relations).

The authors observe that Sport has become increasingly efficient in international politics. In cases where the first diplomatic instruments give no results, sports can be used as a second diplomatic tool by countries and groups that feel powerless. Sports complete the training of people and nations based on common training, and they are the mirror of the mind and level of education of people. They emphasize that Sports are the noblest of the wars on international platforms because they are wars of peace, and international sports battles are not like military wars. (Ibid). The sporting competitions are open, honest, friendly and sportsman-like

Sports have also been used as a political tool to spread propaganda. Due to its utility, Sport has been used to gain prestige and support a particular regime in power. On many occasions, status has often found it necessary to use sportsmen and women as representatives to project either positive or negative diplomatic signals. Across the world, governments resort to sporting contacts to develop international relationships with a low cost but a high gain. (Gilboa, E. (2008) Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy).

According to Gilboa, sports diplomacy falls under public Diplomacy. Public Diplomacy improves short- and long-term relations between nations by influencing the public abroad to accomplish foreign policy goals. This is achieved through a review of different foreign policy objectives. Sports, therefore, become a suitable platform for the smooth conveyance of diplomatic desires. Studies have shown that the most common strategic objective, thus, provides; (Ibid). (a) an unofficial reason and location for international

leaders to meet and have a dialogue; (b) provide insight into the host country and educate others about it; (c) bring cultural and linguistic differences among nations and seek common ground through sports; (d) creates a platform for new trade agreements or legislation; creating awareness for the international relationship through sports ambassadors; (f) creating a legacy for the host country improving its image in the world; (g) using Sport to provide legitimacy for a new nation. (Trunkos, J., and Heere, B., 2012)

Although there are several theories and world views on how to approach diplomatic engagements, such as the Realist Scholars and Liberal Scholars view, the latter is widely considered to suit the use of sports to facilitate the realization of concurrence. (Nye, J. S., 2014. *Soft Power*). Since one of the ways of realizing diplomatic concurrence is through official formal negotiation and cultural exchanges, sports come in handy as a cultural phenomenon. Sport as a cultural exchange can be used because of its universal popularity and homogeneous status characterized by international rules and federations. (Trunkos, J. & Heere, B., 2012. *Sports Diplomacy*).

Diplomacy is the main instrument used to implement national foreign policy during peace, and with its inherent acceptability and capacity to be used as a tool for communication during conflict, sports become a fitting choice. The main features of Diplomacy are communication and representation; the latter has proved reliable as far as sports are concerned (Mike, B., O.I., 24 December 2022).

According to Mike, sports are an essential and proven diplomatic tool that can be harnessed in two ways. Firstly, the coming together of teams representing communities or nations is attractive and provides a good platform for warring communities or leaders to come together and share a table. In a way, the atmosphere is relaxed, tension reduced, and the gap closed. (Ibid, O.I., 24 December 2022).

There has been a tremendous shift in the manner and form of Diplomacy. Traditionally, Diplomacy has always involved government-to-government contact in pre-arranged summits. However, because of technological advancements, other cheaper and easier ways of carrying out bilateral negotiations and summits are in place. Trunkos and Heere posit that: -

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, how Diplomacy is conducted and who the actors are have changed significantly. From the traditional way of diplomats communicating their state's preferences at summits or multilateral negotiations, modern Diplomacy has moved to operate through many new channels and actors. The government may not even participate in these exchanges, but instead, an athlete, artist, or scientist can represent the state's interest at various events. (Trunkos, J. and Heere, B., 2012).

According to Pigman, international multilateral institutions such as the Olympic Committee, global firms like Apple and Nike, and individuals of outstanding stature in sports or other sectors are now utilized by states to represent them. Further, the traditional venue of Diplomacy has also moved towards economic and cultural forums and international sports events such as the Olympics. Pigman notes that the official diplomats are no longer the ones who carry out the nation's interests. Still, other non-state actors such as individuals, teams and even companies can now function as representatives of states. (Pigman, G. A. & Rofo, J. S., 2014. *Sport and Diplomacy*).

The preceding trend is attested by the current increasing trend of representation by sports teams and other actors as representatives of their nation. These growing non-state diplomatic instruments are great examples of how governments can influence other states indirectly. As earlier pointed out, though athletes usually do not directly participate in the negotiations, the athletic event is an excellent venue for heads of state and diplomats to meet and discuss issues. This kind of power and influence that causes attraction is called soft power. (Pigman, G. A. & Rofo, J. S., 2014:9).



Turning back to Kenya, the arguments above can have meaning when considering our athletes who have earned global recognition. As it stands, the image of Kenya as a sports nation is globally comparable and has been projected well by our athletes. Kenyan athletes brought respect and honour to our nation and projected our country's image positively. (Kipkoech, P., O.I., 10 April 2023). Three pieces of evidence exemplify the assertion above.

Paul Tergat of Kenya is a member of the apex international sports body, the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Kipchoge Keino is a globally renowned sportsperson and chairman of the National Olympic Committee of Kenya (until 29 September 2017); a Kipkeino stadium in Bristol, Britain, is named after him. (Ibid).

Having our athletes in such high international positions is a great honour. They are silent ambassadors of Kenya. Secondly, Kenya is the only African country to have merited and been honoured with several accredited marathons and cross-country races. The Cross countries and the Marathons attract athletes from around the world. Thirdly, due to Kenya's performance at the global level, many athletes from around the world have come to train in Kenyan training camps. They would want to be associated with and probably learn from the Kenyans. (Brother Colm, O. I., 20 March, 2023).

## Results and discussion

### Impact of Sports among the Kalenjin in Post-colonial Kenya

The country's Economic and commercial entities have used Sport to advertise and market their goods and services. Sports have opened up employment opportunities in the country's private and public sectors. This is diverse and ranges from athletes who take Sports as a career (elite athletes), those who use Sports to acquire education scholarships, the coaches and other agents, managers and administrators of sports, and those in the medical line. The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs has a team of personnel

employed in various capacities. (Mike, B., O. I., 24 December 2022).

Athletics have provided a lifeline for the youths among the Kalenjin through formal jobs and earning a living from participation. In addition to the direct earnings from participation in athletes' competitions, signed contracts are being used to promote a product or idea of a commercial entity. Others have been absorbed into the sports ministry in various capacities. These include directors of sports, sports managers and administrators. Institutions of learning have positions for sports personnel. For example, in primary learning institutions, there are coaches and trainers; in the university, sports and games tutors manage sports in the universities. (Sawanda, O. I, 27 March 2023).

Producing sports goods has become a significant industry that directly or indirectly engages athletes and the community. Therefore, sports production and products have created employment opportunities for the locals. At the highest level, sports houses/outlets such as Nairobi Sports House, Olympic Sports Centre and the Sports House in Eldoret are notable examples that provide job opportunities. (Andanje et al., 2015 'Contribution of Sports towards National Development in Kenya').

Kenya's performance in Athletics has been an effective catalyst for developing sports infrastructure. Modern standard stadia are in various corners of this country, either completed or under construction. The need arises from sports performance, Kenyans being icons who attract other foreign athletes. Alongside the development of the stadium, other related infrastructure has become necessary. These consist of roads, hotels, power and telephone lines, water suppliers and police posts and shops. (Sawanda, E., O. I, 27 August, 2023).

The accompanying construction and maintenance of various facilities are closely related and tied to the concept of sport infrastructural development. The facilities for competitive and recreational sports activities have caused a considerable sector

that harnesses skilled and unskilled labour. The industry comprises architects, engineers, managers and administrators, while unskilled labour includes but is not limited to cleaners, groundsman, watchmen and flower gardeners. In recognition of the psycho-social importance of recreational activities, the public and private sectors have made deliberate efforts to have the facilities in place. The presence of recreational facilities such as stadiums, swimming pools, tennis courts, gyms, and pulleys attest to the importance and contribution of sports. (McPherson, et al., 1989).

Sport has also benefited the tourist sector in a big way. The sustained super performance of Kenya's athletes since independence has attracted tourists in diverse ways. The dominant performance of Kenya's athletes in the middle- and long-distance races has triggered researchers from across the world to come in and try to find out the reason behind such sterling performance. Others have come to witness the life they live, how they practice what to eat, and how the environment they train in is. Others have just come to intermingle with the heroes, compete alongside them or learn from them. (McPherson, et al., 1989)

According to McPherson, et al., 1989, the trooping in of tourists to Kenya directly and indirectly stimulates the local economy across the sectors of hospitality and retail businesses. Regional economic activities trigger the dollars spent and subsequently improve the standard of the locals. (Ibid).

### **Sports and Social Development in Kenya**

There are several ways in which Sports enhance social development. Mazrui asserts that: -

Sports have made an indelible mark as a tool of socialization and a reflection of people's culture. This is indeed a true reflection of the social development that Sport has brought to Kenya. Sport is recognized as a symbol of national unity in the country. (Mazrui, A. A., 1986., *The Africans*).

Andanje et al. (2015) justify the applicability of Sport as a unifying factor by reflecting that Kenya is composed of over 42 ethnic groups and people of diverse religious affiliations and racial backgrounds. As such, sports become a unifying factor since it is the only activity in which one's talent and capacity determine performance. Also, when teams go out to compete in the Olympics or the Commonwealth Games, the name of a nation comes first. (Andanje, Mwenda & Wanderi, 2015).

Andanje et al., 2015 posits that: -

Whenever local teams compete against foreign ones, Kenyans, regardless of ethnic, racial and religious differences, unite in solidarity to support their teams. Such solidarity is good as it enables people to work harmoniously towards common goals. It brings about understanding among the people and appreciation of one another, creating opportunities for them to pull together. (Ibid).

### **Sports and its impact on politics**

According to Andanje et al., 2015, there has been a close link between Sports and politics from ancient times to the present. Andanje et al., 2015 maintain that Sport has continued to play a pivotal role in enhancing political harmony in Kenya. It continues to be a neutral tool for reducing political tension and animosity but provides a platform for collection efforts toward a common development agenda. The reasoning behind such capacity inherent in athletics is the enormous following athletics has that cut across ordinary bounds. (Ibid).

### **Social impact of sports among the Kalenjin**

On the social impact of athletics, scholarships for athletics to pursue education were the greatest in the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, many talented athletes were allowed to join secondary schools, colleges, and universities under scholarship programmes. St. Patrick's Iten, Kapsabet Boys, Kabianga, Sing'ore Girls, and Kapkenda Girls were among the High Schools offering scholarships. The scholarships were either partial or complete. Many parents who otherwise would not have educated their children

are relieved, and their children are assured of education. (Kipchoge Keino, O.I, 07 May 2024). The students picked for scholarships were identified at primary schools, and those to join universities and colleges were picked from high schools. The scholarships became a significant opportunity for needy but talented youths to acquire higher learning and have careers. Many who completed their career courses were employed in various sectors, and consequently, their standard of living with their families improved. (Koila, W., O. I., 12 March 2023). Singoei asserts that athletics has a significant impact on education. He says many scholarships have changed the lives of many initially poor athletes. He cites his example to testify how education can lift life from poverty to riches. (Singoei, D., O. I, 20 December, 2022).

Athletics is one of the agents through which the Kalenjin community has gained much education. Boit asserts that athletics had a lot of impact on the Kalenjin. Since athletics in Kenya became an international event, many Kalenjin youths in primary and high school received scholarships to further their studies. The scholarships are both local and global. Local scholarships are offered by individuals to outstanding student-athletes, scholarships offered by schools and other institutions of learning, and scholarships provided

by corporate bodies like banks and companies. (Boit, T., O.I., 22 March 2023)

### Economic impact

i) Investment in permanent Assets (Business buildings, rental buildings, land etc.)

Concerning the economic impact of athletics, Singoei asserts that athletics has moved many ordinary village boys to the heights of an excellent economy. He points out that the effects of a training camp alone are immense. It provides employment; direct - coaches, physicians, and managers; and indirect - Hotel, accommodation and shop services. (Sing'oei, D., O. I, 20 December, 2022).

Boit asserts that Sport's impact on the Kalenjin community is immense. He gives the town of Eldoret as an example of a city whose several magnificent buildings were erected by athletes. Athletes run several businesses, rental houses, schools, farming, and charity organizations. Examples of charity organizations include Kipchoge Keino Lewa School for the orphans in Eldoret. (Boit, T., O. I, 22 March, 2023). Daniel Komen affirms that Athletes' investments have significantly impacted Eldoret Town's development. He points out that several winners of the Marathon and other long-distance races have invested in Eldoret town. (Daniel Komen, O. I, 09 May 2024).

**Figure 1.1: Kipkeino Sports House in Eldoret town CBD, one of the Athletes' investments**



**Source:** Photo taken by Paul K Kurgat in Eldoret town on 7 March 2024.



The building above, owned by the legendary Kipchoge Keino, hosts the Kipkeino Sports House, which sells sportswear and other sports equipment. The business premise has been there for several decades and provides employment opportunities. There are at least three employees at every given time. (Kipchoge Keino, O. I, 07 May 2024).

Sugut observes that athletics has brought about a lot of positive change. Firstly, our country's image has dramatically improved, and Kenya's name and fame are placed on the global map. He also points out investment in farming, learning institutions, transport, and many other business ventures. However, Sugut points out that athletics has its opposing challenges. (Sugut, P.K., O. I, 27 December, 2022).

In the 1990s, the Olympics, Marathons and Cross-Country organized at international and regional

levels and cities became lucrative. Great prizes and cash are won. Many athletics have invested in initiatives such as business apartments, farming dairy and crops, schools (Academies), training camps, and charity organizations. For example, elite athlete investment has significantly impacted the town of Eldoret. (Sitienei, A., O. I, 27 December 2012, Sugoi, Uasin Gishu County). In the City, tall storey buildings belonging to athletes characterize the towns of Eldoret, Iten and Kapsabet. The investment's numerous employment opportunities help improve the community's livelihood. The investments have a spiral effect. In Eldoret, examples of investment are Komora Centre, Juma Hajee Arcade, Grand Pri House, Sagaas House, Tabain Plaza and Hotel Winstar. Others include Johannesburg Plaza, Marmuk House, Kirem Arcade and the Transmatt Building. (Tanui, P., O. I, 27 December 2023).

**Figure 1.2: Komora Centre at the Central Business District in Eldoret Town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Paul K Kurgat on 5 May 2023.

The Komora Centre, owned by a multiple 3000 Steeplechase gold Medalist, Moses Kiptanui, is adjacent to the Main Matatu stage in Eldoret. Komora originates from 'Kapkomora', the home village of Moses Kiptanui in Marakwet of Elgeiyo

Marakwet County. (Paul, K. Sugut., O. I, 7 May 2024). According to Paul, a caretaker of the Komora Centre, the building is a direct investment of cash earned from athletics competitions. He posits that the entire building holds slightly over



300 individual business Premises. The leading business enterprise is the Tulin Supermarket, whose proprietor is Moses Kiptanui, the owner of

the building. Paul further asserts that all the business entities in the building employ up to 700 workers. (Ibid).

**Figure 1.3: Transmatt Supermarket, at Eldoret Central Business District, Eldoret town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Paul K. Kurgat on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town

**Figure 1.4: TABAIN PLAZA in Eldoret Town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Paul K. Kurgat in Eldoret Town on 7 May 2024.

The TABAIN PLAZA is owned by Joyce Jepchumba, one of the most accomplished long-distance female athletes. Among her achievements is the two-time win of the Flora London Marathon. Among her significant

investments is the Tabain Plaza, which houses over 350 individual business premises. Accordingly, the businesses in the building provide employment opportunities of around 400. (John, K. O. I, on 10 May 2024).

**Figure 1.5: GRAND PRI HOUSE in Eldoret Town, owned by Multiple World Marathon Champion Moses Tanui.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Benjamin K. Ng’etich on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town.

The Grand Pri House is owned by Moses Tanui, the first athlete in history to run a half Marathon in less than one hour in Milan, Italy, on 3 April 1993. He also won the Boston Marathon twice, in 1996 and 1998. The Grand Pri House provides

investment and employment opportunities to many people. (Tanui, P. O. I, on 27 December 2022).

**Figure 1.6 SAGAAS HOUSE in Eldoret Town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Benjamin K. Ng’etich on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town.

Emmanuel Kipchirchir Mutai owns SAGAAS HOUSE. Mutai won his first World Marathon event in April 2011 at the London Marathon. Mutai, born on 12 October 1984, won several other world-class competitions and amassed a tremendous amount of money he invested in

business premises and farming. The SAGAAS HOUSE is a landmark in Eldoret town and has provided small and large business opportunities. Tanui notes that SAAGAS HOUSE businesses absorb well over 300 people. (Tanui, P., O. I on 27 December 2022).

**Figure 3.7 KIREM ARCADE in Eldoret Town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Benjamin K. Ng’etich on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town

Athlete Fred Kiprop owns the KIREM ARCADE located along Uganda Road. He is the 1999 winner of the Amsterdam Marathon. KIREM ARCADE houses two banks and several other

businesses. Like all the different premises, the building provides investment and employment opportunities well over 200. (Tanui, P., O. I on 27 December 2022).

**Figure 1.8 JUMA HAJEE ARCADE in Eldoret town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Paul K. Kurgat on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town.

Boaz Kimaiyo owns JUMA HAJEE ARCADE. He is one of the long-distance runners in Kenya. The building is located in the very Central Business District of Eldoret. It hosts several large and medium-sized enterprises. According to Tanui, there are hundreds of business opportunities on the premises. (Tanui, P., O. I on 27 December 2022).

The social aspect encompasses schools, health facilities, and training camps. Leading the pack among the schools are Kipkeino Schools, which belongs to the legendary pioneer athlete Kipchoge Keino, Potters House Academy, and Daniel Kipng’etich Komen, both at Eldoret. Other prestigious schools associated with athletes include Mosop Glory School in Nandi County, Salaba Academy, and Lornah Kiplagat Academy

## ii) Investment in Social Amenities



in Elgeiyo Marakwet County. (Tanui, P., O. I, 27 December 2012).

**Figure 1.9 Potters House Academy in Eldoret Town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Benjamin K. Ng'etich on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town

The proprietor of Potters House Academy, Mr. Daniel Komen, opines that the school has positively impacted the surrounding community and beyond. He asserts that:

“.....the school has 1000 learners from the Pre-Primary (Early Childhood Education) through to grade 8, a teaching staff of 70 teachers and 30 subordinate staff members. The school, therefore, provides direct employment opportunities for 100 people. There are other opportunities created by the school, such as the supply of cereals, milk, vegetables, sugar and other foodstuffs required in the school. There is also the supply of uniforms, stationery, textbooks and other instructional materials. Employees of the school rent houses from the surrounding community and hence help to boost the economy of Eldoret City and the community”. (Komen, D., O. I, 7 May 2024).

Komen further posits that:

The school pays a good amount of money to the Kenya Power and Lighting Company for the

school's electricity and the County Government of Uasin Gishu's water supply and related sanitation services. During construction, a large skilled and non-skilled labour force is employed. Engineers, electricians, masons, plumbers, carpenters, and all others are looking for a chance to work here. (Ibid).

Komen notes that Potters House School has, through its charity section, enabled many less fortunate and needy children to achieve their dreams of education. He points out that many successful former learners of this school spread across the world, including those who benefitted from the charity assistance provided by the school. The school facilities have benefitted the community in several ways. Komen observes that the school playground is used by the youth from around during the school holidays, making them busy and avoiding engaging in wayward behaviour and activities. (Ibid).



**Figure 1.10: HOTEL WINSTAR in Sosiani Street in Eldoret Town.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Benjamin K Ng'etich on 7 May 2024 in Eldoret Town.

Byron says Mary Jepkosgei Keitany is one of Kenya's most accomplished lady athletes. (Byron, K., O.I., 20 June 2023). Mary Keitany was the proprietor of Hotel Winstar in Eldoret and Chamaster Hotel in Kabarnet town. Mary Keittany was born on 18 January 1982 in Baringo County. In her athletic career, Keitany won the London Half Marathon in 2011 and 2012 and later won the New York City Marathon thrice from 2014 to 2016. In 2019, Keittany registered the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest time in the event's history. Earlier in 2017, Keitany had won the prestigious Virgin Money London Marathon. Mary Keitany, married to Charles Koech, has participated in several community activities, including constructing a church in her home village. In 2019, Keitany was invited to the Vatican to be blessed by the Pope for her accomplishments. ('*Inside Business Owned by Millionaire Kenyan Athlete, Mary Keitany*', [www.tuko.co.ke](http://www.tuko.co.ke)).

Boit asserts that athletics greatly impacted the development of Eldoret City, Iten and Kapsabet towns, and the Kalenjin community. Firstly, Boit

points out that athletics has had a massive impact on the education sector. Since athletics in Kenya became an international event, many Kalenjin youths in primary and high school received scholarships to further their studies. The scholarships are both local and global. Local scholarships are offered by individuals to outstanding student-athletes, scholarships offered by schools and other institutions of learning, and scholarships provided by corporate bodies like banks and companies. Boit gives examples such as St. Patrick's High School Iten, Kapsabet Boys High School, Lelmokwo High School, Sing'ore Girls, Kapkenda Girls, Cheptil High School and Kabianga Boys High School, among others. He says these scholarships end up opening life opportunities for athletes. (Mike, B., O. I, 22 March 2023).

On the other hand, Mike Thomas asserts that foreign nations and institutions offer international scholarships. It mainly comprises athletes proceeding for higher education. Boit Thomas singles out his case, where Mike Boit organized

his scholarship to America in 1972. He asserts that many other scholarships are available to various nations, institutions, and companies. (Mike, B., O. I, 22 March 2023). Boit opines that the scholarship has brought a Kalenjin diaspora, America being the leading. Examples include Peter Ronoh, Bernard Lagat, Bernard Keter, Hillary Bor, Emmanuel Bor, Julius Bor -The US, Stephen Cherono, Benson Kiplagat Seurei, Mike Kigen, Eunice Jepkirui Kirwa, Eunice Chebichii Chumba and Ruth Chebet - Bahrain, Lornah Kiplagat - Netherlands, Norah Jeruto Tanui and Daisy Jepkemei-Kazakhstan, Lonah Chemtai Salpeter – Israel, Isaac Kimeli – Belgium. (Mike, B., O. I, 24 March, 2023).

Mike asserts that Sports' impact on the Kalenjin community is invaluable. He gives the Eldoret City as an example of a City whose several magnificent buildings were erected by athletes. Athletes run several businesses, rental houses, schools, farming, and charity organizations. Examples of charity organizations include Kipchoke Keino Lewa School for the orphans in Eldoret. (Ibid).

### Impact of Athletics on Institutions

In the 1990s, after Nabiolo and Antonio brought commercial elements to athletics, winning medals

and cash became the focus of athletics. The Olympics, Marathons and Cross-Country Organized at international, regional and City levels became lucrative. Great prizes and cash are won. Many athletics have invested in initiatives such as business apartments, farming dairy and crops, schools (Academies), training camps, and charity organizations. For example, elite athlete investment has significantly impacted the City of Eldoret. (Byron, K., O.I., 20 June 2023).

### Tourism and Publicity

Sugut observes that a lot of positive change among the Kalenjin has been realized courtesy of athletics. Firstly, the image of our country has been dramatically improved. Kenya's name and fame are placed on the global map. He also points out investment in farming, learning institutions, transport and many other business ventures. (Sugut. O. I, 27 December, 2022). Terwes points out that athletics at Iten is a tourist attraction apart from attracting athletes worldwide. Many tourists from around the globe flock to Iten to get a feel for what it is. Athletics artefacts dominate the Museum at (St. Patrick's High School), and historical captions are evidence of athletics' impact. (Terwes, O.I., 27 March 2023).

**Figure 1.11: Hall of Fame, Roll of Honour in a St. Patrick's High School Museum, Iten.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Benjamin K. Ng'etich on 20 March 2023 at St. Patrick's High School, Iten

**Figure 1.12: Bro. Colm, the long-serving coach at St. Patrick's High School, Iten.**



**Source:** Photo taken by Paul K. Kurgat on 12 March 2023 at St. Patrick's High School Museum

## Conclusion

This article assessed the impact of athletics on the Kalenjin community guided by the objective. The study established that diverse athletics impacts occurred and can be categorized into social, economic and political. It was found that during the colonial era, Sport was used to advance colonial cultures and ideologies. The impact was negative until exposure and internationalization of Sport began to open doors for Kenyan athletes. In the post-colonial period, assessments pointed to the positive effects of athletics on education and employment opportunities; both direct and indirect investments in various business ventures were evident. Evidence has shown that scholarships for athletic, talented students locally and abroad significantly impacted the community. The study pointed out sponsorships like Shoe4Africa to have significantly impacted the development of athletics. Also, recruitment into the armed forces, parastatal bodies and other sectors are other gains from athletics.

The study demonstrated that athletics have positively impacted the development of the tourist sector, with Eldoret City and Iten Town being appropriate examples of sports-related tourist destinations in Kenya. According to this article, the sports industry has been spurred by athletics, with multinationals such as NIKE, PUMA, and FILA, among others, registering their presence in

Kenya. The rise of sports-giant schools like St. Partrick's Iten, Kapkenda Girls and Sing'ore Girls, among others, emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. The study indicated that politicians have used the popularity and fame in athletics to propel themselves to political offices.

## Recommendations

In concurrence with the study's findings, athletics is an important sector that provides diverse employment opportunities. The study demonstrates that it can be harnessed to promote human life. Therefore, the article proposes the following recommendations to enhance the knowledge and utility of athletics among the Kalenjin and humanity.

- Re-looking at the policy of direct taxation of athletes' proceeds; instead, explore charging tax on their investment.
- The government should leverage the rich athletic talent by establishing safe exporting mechanisms globally.

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