

A COLLECTION OF 100 DIGO (MIJIKENDA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS



BY

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I thank my uncle Jeremiah Kithaka, who devotedly helped me to link with the collaborators, and to compile this collection of proverbs and wise sayings from the Digo ethnic community.

Thank you all for encouraging and enabling me to complete this project.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My uncle Jeremiah Kithaka,

Who lives among the Mijikenda people,

And

My collaborator Hamisi Muaje Ndegwa

Who hails from the Mijikenda community, in the southern coast of Kenya

Thank you for your inspiration.

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A Collection Of 100 Digo Proverbs And Wise Sayings

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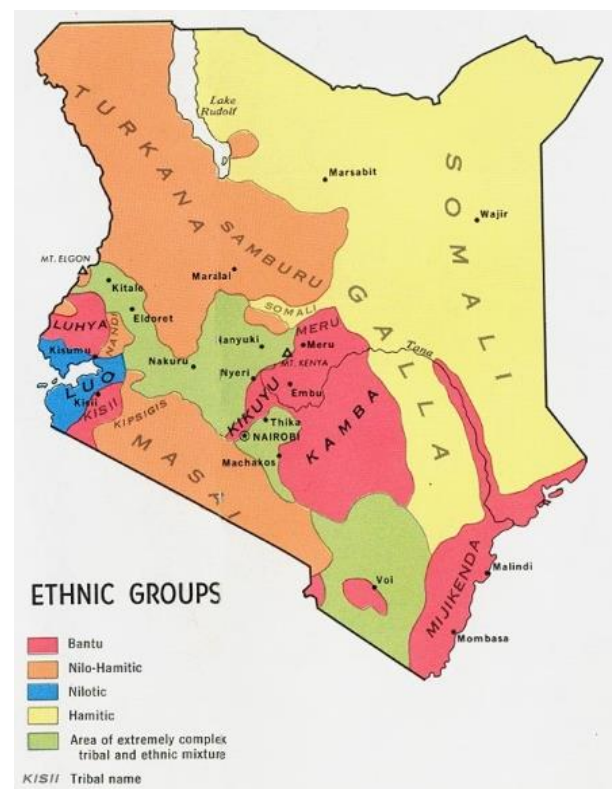
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English: If a child wets your thigh don't cut it off.	19
77. Mwana msikizi kaambirwa mara nyinji.	
English: A child who listens is not told many times.	19
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English: A laughing child refuses (to give) the father meat.	20
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English: The beginning of a sore is a little itch.	20
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English: An angry cow has its own person to milk it.	21
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English: Money is like nakedness it is not exposed to people.	22
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88. <i>Uchenda khwa mwenye tsongo fumba dzitso mwenga.</i>	
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91. <i>Uchilunga ngoma fwiha ngoma</i>	
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93. <i>Ukachengbwa ni giza, ukanya muhalani</i> ²⁴	
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94. <i>Udugu wa mbata umanywa guniani</i>	
English: The brotherhood of ducks is known inside the sack.	24

95. <i>Ukala wa nyoka ni ligundzu</i>	
English: The one who wants to kill a snake does it in the morning.	24
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English: Don't despise the 'ngorow' dance because it is the original dance.	24
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98. <i>Utsapapho pore ndipho wedzapho ukaphatwapa mairo</i>	
English: The place you pass slowly is the place where in the future you may be running past.	25
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English: A stinking person does not know it himself.	25
100. <i>Yuya ni mmwenga, hara ni anji</i>	
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INTRODUCTION

The Location: The Digo people live in the southern coast of Kenya, south of Mombasa, in Kwale district. They speak the Bantu language, called *Chidigo*. They are part of the greater Mijikenda ethnic group, a Kenyan coastal Bantu ethnic group that consists of nine closely related sub-ethnic groups. In the past, the Mijikenda were also referred to as the “*Nyika*” tribe, a near-derogatory term implying “bush people”. “*Mijikenda*” literally means nine homes or nine homesteads (in Swahili), referring to their common ancestry. The nine Mijikenda sub-groups are believed to be nine different homes of the same tribe. These are the Giriama, Digo, Chonyi, Kauma, Duruma, Jibana, Kambe, Rabai, and Ribe. Each speaks its own dialect of the Mijikenda language. Their closest neighbours are the Duruma and the Rabai sub-ethnic groups.



The ethnographical location of the Digo (Mijikenda) ethnic group in Kenya

Myths of Origin: They are said to have originated from Shungwaya in the southern Somali hinterland at the turn of the 17th century. They came along the River Nile. It is believed that they escaped constant attacks from the Oromo and other Cushitic ethnic groups, and settled in fortified villages along the coastal ridges of the southern Kenya coast. History shows that they intermarried with the Arabs from Yemen (Persian Gulf) and gave birth to the Swahili culture and language. Another Digo myth of origin indicates that during that time, they were led by a King named *Digore*. They used “*Rada*” which was a pot used to guide them and was carried on the head. Led by their King, they came up to a mountain called Dzombo, where the pot fell and

broke and their journey came to an end since they depended on the pot for direction. When the pot fell down they said "*DI...GO*", meaning 'the end'.

Culture and Social Structure: The Digo people live in villages consisting of about 40 huts each. Proverbs and wise sayings, riddles, folktales, songs and dance are used to pass knowledge and cultural practices. Circumcision is for both girls and boys. However, due to government pressure to stop this, it has reduced for the girls. It would lead to early marriages and girls dropping out of school as well as cases of early pregnancy. When a young Digo man marries, he must pay the normal bride-price of four heads of cattle, two goats or sheep, and palm wine. Eventually he is incorporated into the bride's family. As he demonstrates leadership qualities, he is accepted into the body of tribal elders. Digo women do a tremendous amount of labor, but are excluded from participating in politics, religion, kinship issues, and major economic transactions.



Digo women pounding maize using a mortar and pestles

Music is very important part of their culture. The Kayamba dance is named so because of the main instrument used in it. The *Kayamba* is a rattle made of seed pod and a reed case which is shaken rhythmically to produce smooth sound. The *Chivoti* is a flute made of bamboo or plastic pipe. The *Ndzuga* are jingles made of metal, with metal bearings inside them. These three are the main instruments used in their music.



Kenyan Traditional Dance (Kayamba) Performed by Digo Tribe, "Lawakera"

Religious practices: During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Digo experienced a time of great famine. It became a common practice for them to give either themselves or their children to serve as temporary collateral for a loan of food. Sadly, when the debt could not be redeemed, they were left to live as slaves.

Kaya is a sacred forest of the Mijikenda people in the Coast Province of Kenya. The *kaya* forest is considered to be an intrinsic source of ritual power and the origin of cultural identity containing the remains of numerous fortified villages, known as *kaya*. They are regarded as the abodes of ancestors and are revered as sacred sites and, as such, are maintained by councils of elders.



A kaya prayer hut in the kaya forest.

Their religious practices are deeply rooted in spiritism and folk Islam. Ties with traditional practices such as animism and ancestor worship still have more influence on the Digo community than Islam. Witchdoctors are also consulted regularly by the community members.

Economy: For many years the Digo have been involved in trade with Muslim Arabs. As a result, they have enjoyed a higher standard of living than most of their neighbors. In addition to trading, farming and fishing are sources of income for the Digo. Their principal crop is cassava, but they also grow sesame, corn, rice, and beans. "Palm wine" *mnazi* is a popular drink produced from the palm tree. They fish in the Indian Ocean and supply seafood to Kenya's coastal hotels and residents.

Leadership and Administration Traditional Digo governance systems were based on a council of elders called the *ngambi* representing each clan. These elders worked very closely with the *kaya* elders, who were, adjudicating all matters for their community. They were custodians of the traditional laws and maintained peace and order in the community. Today, most of traditional systems have given way to modern and contemporary forms of governance. The lowest levels of community leadership are the village elders. Religious leaders, mainly the *Imams* have taken up from traditional religious leadership, but the *kaya* elders still have space in social lives of the people.

A COLLECTION OF 100 DIGO PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

1. Achili ni nyere, chila mmwenga ana zakpwe.

English: Intelligence is like hair, everyone has their own.

Swahili: Akili ni nywele, kila mtu ana zake.

French: L'intelligence est comme les cheveux, chaque personne a les siens.

Teaching: This proverb brings awareness that everyone has their own way of reasoning. Each person's opinions could be different from that of another people. We cannot be the same in you reasoning and level of intelligence.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:6-8 *"In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well."*

2. Aendaye na vuto akauya na kusi.

English: The flag follows the direction of the wind.

Swahili: Bendera hufuata upepo.

French: Le drapeau suit la direction du vent.

Teaching: The proverb warns people who have no steadfast character because they waver according to time and trends. Such a person cannot make decisions and stand by them, but will change from one decision or opinion to another.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 16:13 *"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."*

3. Achiyetsupa mbere, siye myao.

English: He who overtakes you is not your companion.

Swahili: Akupitaye si mwenzio.

French: Celui qui te surpasse n'est pas ton comparable.

Teaching: This proverb informs us that people can be friends, but their relationship can change as a result of either finances. One gets rich the other does not. Another may acquire high levels of educations unlike the other. We can never be the same.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:6 *"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;"*

4. Akakala mamba anavwehera chivwani

English: He has become (like) a crocodile pulling (prey) into deep water.

Swahili: Amekuwa kama mamba, kuvuta windo lake ndani ya maji ya kina.

French: Il est comme un crocodile qui porte sa proie au fond du lac.

Teaching: It points out a person's deceitful behavior. It is said of one who tempts others by deceitful means either to acquire property or to be able to benefit somehow from them.

Bible parallel: Romans 16:18 *"For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting."*

5. Akazondohera mgomba anaphiya na mavige

English: He has wiped himself on a banana tree and is going with his excrement.

Swahili: Amejipanguzia kwa mgomba wa ndizi na anaenda na kinyesi chake.

French: Il se nettoie avec les feuilles du bananier en oubliant qu'il est parti avec l'excrement.

Teaching: It warns that we should stop trying to trick others to gain what we want because deceit is never a perfectly clean job. One will always be found out finally. The trickster never does a good job and still gets exposed.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 12:19 *"Truthful words stand the test of time, but lies are soon exposed."*

6. *Akiba taytiola*

English: Savings do not rot.

Swahili: Akiba haiozi.

French: La provision ne pourrit pas.

Teaching: This proverb encourages people to save for the future. A person should not consume all they have, so that they have nothing to fall back on. Either money, seed for planting, or business stocks. Keep something for the future.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 21:20 *"The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down."*

Proverbs 21:5 *"The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty"*

7. *Alume mbere, alume nyuma*

English: Men in front, men behind

Swahili: Wanaume mbele, wanaume nyuma.

French: Les hommes en avant, les hommes en arriere.

Teaching: When a leader is away other men must step in to solve a problem. When the leader returns he will be pleased because he approves of what they have done in his absence. It encourages people to seek solutions and other options when the person in authority is not present.

Bible parallel: Luke 6:40 *"The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher."*

8. *Ana nguluwe nkuamwana madomo*

English: Piglets suckle each others lips.

Swahili: Wana wa nguruwe hunyonyana midomo.

French: Les porcecs s'allaitent entre eux.

Teaching: The proverb encourages people to help each other selflessly with what they have. We should not be looking for help from far, it is always a step away.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:13 *"Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."*

9. *Ariye dzulu mgodze photsi*

English: A person who is high up, wait for him below.

Swahili: Aliye juu mgoje chini.

French: Celui qui est en haut, on l'attend en bas.

Teaching: The proverb teaches us not to be too proud about what we have in our possession, because finally it brings a person to get into trouble. Pride comes before a fall.

Bible parallel: Exodus 10:3 *“So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me.'”*

10. Aryaye jashoye kana kondo na mutu.

English: He who eats his own sweat has no conflict with anyone.

Swahili: Anaye kula jasho lake hasumbuani na yeyote.

French: Personne peut troubler celui qui mange de son sueur.

Teaching: It encourages people to work hard and achieve what they wish. Depending on your efforts helps one not to have estranged relationships with family, friends or business partners. It is more fulfilling to be independent.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 13:11 *“Wealth [gotten] by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase.”*

11. Asiyemanya kuhula kadzangbwelumwa.

English: He who doesn't know how to groan has not yet been in pain.

Swahili: Asiyejua kugumia bado hajakuwa na uchungu.

French: Celui qui ne sait gissement n'a jamais ete en douleur.

Teaching: It is used to warn that a person who does not have responsibilities as a provider for the family, cannot understand the difficulties of being a breadwinner. Experience something first before you talk about it like an expert.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 2:21 *“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”*

12. Bandu-bandu yamala gogo

English: Bit-by-bit finishes chopping the log

Swahili: Kidogo kidogo humaliza kukata gogo.

French: Petit a petit on fini a couper le gogo.

Teaching: Its lesson is that a person should undertake even the toughest ventures carefully and meticulously in order to complete the task successfully. Doing things in a hurry usually leads to a failure to achieve intended goals. *Slow but sure wins the race.*

Bible parallel: Proverbs 21:5 *“The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.”*

13. Bure tahirika dzana siyo rero.

English: A free (gift) is not eaten, yesterday is not today.

Swahili: Zawadi ya bure hailiwi, jana si leo.

French: On ne mange pas un don ni hier ni aujourd'hui.

Teaching: The lesson is that even if you received something for free yesterday, don't expect the same today. Opportunities do not present themselves every day. We should therefore use the first chance to achieve our best.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 5:16 *“Making the best use of the time, because the days are evil”*

14. Batu batu ya mala gogo

English: Drop by drop fills the can.

Swahili: Haba na haba hujaza kibaba.

French: Petit a petit on complete la cannette.

Teaching: It teaches us to be patient when doing anything. We should not be in a hurry to achieve our goal too fast. Success takes time, patience and hard work, which does not in a day. *Rome was not built in a day.*

Bible parallel: Habakkuk 2:3 *“But these things I plan won’t happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day.”*

15. Cha kuhewa tachina ukoko

English: Food which is given does not have leftover.

Swahili: Chakula kilicho pewa mtu huwa hakina mabaki.

French: Les repas qu’on a donne a une personne n’a pas des restes.

Teaching: If you are given what you need, you should not expect more. The giver is the one who controls the source and decides what to give out. We cannot ask for more because we don’t know what is left. The proverb teaches us to appreciate what is given to us instead of expecting donations always.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 5:20 *“Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,”*

16. Cha mfupi chiriwa ni mure

English: A short person’s things are eaten by the tall person.

Swahili: Cha mfupi huliwa na mrefu. (Mnyonge hana haki)

French: Ce qui appartient a une personne courte est mange par un geant.

Teaching: The proverb teaches that a poor/ powerless person has no influence over a rich person. A poor person is not usually listened to, but a rich person even when he is wrong he is listened to.

Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 19:4 *“Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly.”*

17. Cha mlevi chiriwa ni mjema

English: The drunkard’s money/property is consumed by the palm wine tapper.

Swahili: Mali ya mlevi hukuliwa ni mgema.

French: Les biens d’un voyou sont consommées par un malin.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us not to exploit other people. Usually a person who does not have much knowledge is taken advantage of. He/she can be used to benefit others without knowing that his rights are being violated by the cunning.

Bible parallel: Deuteronomy 24:14 *“You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns.”*

18. Cha mnyonje chaangulwa ni kusi

English: The weak person’s is destroyed by the wind.

Swahili: Mnyonge uharibiwa na upepo.

French: Le vent detruit les faibles.

Teaching: This proverb teaches that a person should be principled and make firm decisions. Someone who is not principled is easily influenced, especially negatively by other people.

Bible parallel: Job 2:9 *“Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die.” (Job’s wife mocking Job after great tragedy)*

19. Chala chihuphu tachilambwa

English: An empty finger is not licked.

Swahili: Kidole kitupu hakilambwi.

French: On ne leche jamais une main vide.

Teaching: It brings out the public thought that a poor person cannot help anybody. Nobody takes notice of the poor people because they have nothing to offer to the community. In reality, they may lack monetary ability but have other abilities to offer.

Bible parallel: 1 John 3:17 *“Rich people who see a brother or sister in need, yet close their hearts against them, cannot claim that they love God.”*

20. Chala chimwenga tachibanda tsala.

English: One finger does not crush a louse.

Swahili: Umoja ni nguvu utengano ni udhaifu.

French: Union fait la force, la separation est la faiblesse.

Teaching: It teaches that team work leads to great success. A team can achieve a lot by working together. Unity is strength.

Bible parallel: Nehemiah 4 *“When the Israelites were rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem, the work got tough and they got discouraged. Finally, they just gave up. So Nehemiah reorganized the work into teams. Half would stand guard with their spears and swords and protect everyone. The other half would work. Then they’d alternate their positions. He posted everyone by groups and families, so they could encourage and support each other.”*

21. Chala chinono chavwikpwa pete

English: The good finger is trapped in a ring.

Swahili: Kidole chema hunaswa kwa pete.

French: Un bon doigt est attrape par un boucler.

Teaching: This proverb is used to show that honor and reward be given to the right, the good people. The person who deserves esteem will get it.

Bible parallel: Colossians 3:23-24 *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.”*

22. Chala tachioloha tsaka

English: A finger does not point at a forest.

Swahili: Kidole haki nyoshewi msitu.

French: On ne pointe pas le doigt vers une foret.

Teaching: The proverb teaches us that we should not boast about what we own; for example, properties/wealth, until we have actually acquired them fully. Let’s not just dream about them, but make them a reality.

Bible parallel: Jeremiah 9:23 *“Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,”*

23. Charo cha muhondo chifunganywa rero.

English: Tomorrow's journey is prepared today.

Swahili: Safari ya kesho hutayarishwa leo.

French: On se prepare bien avant pour bien voyager demain.

Teaching: It teaches us to plan ahead so that we are prepared for eventualities. In our daily endeavours we need to plan so that we have all the facts ready, and to ensure we do not fail to achieve our intended goal.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 24:27 *“Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house.”*

24. Chibuzi cha mbere-mbere chavundzwa liphembe

English: The goat out in front breaks his horn.

Swahili: Mbuzi aliye mbele huvunja pembe zake.

French: La chevre qui est devant se casse le cornes.

Teaching: It is used to warn us that someone who rushes into things, or is always the first to speak up will end up in trouble. We should take time before expressing our opinions.

Bible parallel: Psalm 39:1 *“I said, “I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence.”*

25. Chichigbwirwa china uriziwe na chichirichirwa china uriziwe

English: The thing that you hold onto has its own cry and the thing that you leave has its own cry.

Swahili: Unacho kishikilia kina mlilo wake, na unacho kiwacha kina mlilo wake.

French: Ce que tu pris a sa sonnerie et ce que tu laisses a la sienne.

Teaching: The proverb points out that in whatever situation a person can never win. Every situation has a negative and a positive side. In a domestic situation, a child who is punished will tell you it's not fair, but a child who is not punished will not respect you. As a disciplinarian you can't win!

Bible parallel: Genesis 18:25 *“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”*

26. Chichimendzwa ni Mwanasiti, Chamkpwaya kana rakpwe

English: Whatever is loved by Mwanasiti, Chamkpwaya doesn't have a choice but get it.

Swahili: Chochote Mwanasiti hupenda, Chamkpwaya lazima amnunulie.

French: Tout ce que Mwanasiti aime, Chamkpwaya est obligé de lui acheter.

Teaching: Whatever the wife (Mwanasiti) wants, the husband (Chamkpwaya) has to buy, because he loves her. The proverb emphasizes the importance of a husband being a provider of the family. He should love his wife and provide all her needs as an obligation.

Bible parallel: 1Timothy 5:8 *“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

27. Chigongo cha mgayi chaangulwa ni kusi

English: A poor person's stick is destroyed by the wind.

Swahili: Kijiti cha maskini huharibiwa na upepo.

French: Le baton du pauvre se detruit par le vent.

Teaching: In the proverb the wind represents the 'big man'. For a poor people to succeed in their planned ventures, they need the patronage of the stable members of the society. Usually financial support, references and linkages, otherwise they will fail.

Bible parallel: Romans 15:1 *"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves."*

28. Chigongo chiphya chahangula cha kare

English: The old stick destroys the new one.

Swahili: Fimbo ya kale uharibu ile mpya.

French: L'ancien baton est detruit par le nouveau.

Teaching: The proverb teaches us not to judge people, especially. For example, children are negatively affected by the bad deeds of their parents. People will judge them by what their parents have done. Accept someone for who they are, and not by the history of their lineage.

Bible parallel: Matthew 7:1-6 *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."*

29. Chigulu chinadzanga, hako taridzanga

English: The leg moves, the buttocks do not move.

Swahili: Mguu hupiga hatua, makalio hayapigi hatua.

French: La jambe fait un pas mais pas les fesses.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that when a person is idle and lazy, one does not achieve anything. A person has to work hard, engage in beneficial activities and put effort in their endeavors in order to succeed.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 6:10-12 *"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man"*

30. Chiguzo bora panda.

English: Borrowed clothes do not cover the bottoms.

Swahili: Nguo za kuomba hazisitiri makalio.

French: Les habits en emprunte ne se cache pas le derriere.

Teaching: This proverb points out that a person should struggle to become independent. It is more beneficial to work hard, acquire enough to depend on yourself. Only your acquisitions can satisfy all your needs.

Bible parallel: Genesis 14:21-23 *The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'*

31. Chiko chaajira ndilo

English: A smoking pipe suits an honourable person.

Swahili: Sigara bomba hufaa mtu mwenye heshima.

French: La pipe merite a une personne honoree.

Teaching: This teaches us not to be judgemental and misjudge people. People believe that certain items should only belong to the rich and good. If a person who is known to be poor or bad suddenly has something such as a car, or a beautiful wife people will say that it is not his, or that he doesn't deserve it. We all deserve good things in life.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 3:5 *"Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God."*

32. Chiko kipira ni ndilo.

English: Riches without health is not wealth.

Swahili: Utajiri bila uzima sio utajiri.

French: La richesse sans la vie n'est richesse.

Teaching: The proverb teaches that a person may have all the wealth, but they cannot enjoy it unless they are in good health. When in poor health a person uses the riches in medical related matters and not further investment.

Bible parallel: 3 John 1:2 *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers."*

33. Cha mfupi chiriwa ni mure

English: The short person's thing is eaten by the long person's

Swahili: Mali ya mtu mfupi huliwa na aliye mrefu.

French: Ce qui appartient a une personne courte est mange par un geant.

Teaching: This proverb teaches that a person who doesn't plan ahead and lacks intelligence will be outwitted by a cleverer person, who can think ahead. Even when we plan business, we need to be witty so that another person does not overtake our plans.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 2:26 *"To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind."*

34. Chila mmwenga ana fwerereye, gula waolagbwa ni jembe

English: Everyone has their own bereavement, the frog is killed by a hoe.

Swahili: Kila mtu hufiwa kivyake; chura huuawa ni jembe.

French: Chaque personne meurt de sa facon, le grenouille est tue par la houe.

Teaching: We all have a different way to die. The proverb can be used to refer to a person's challenges in daily activities. We all have different challenges which contribute to our failures. Be they social, financial or others. we should expect them and be ready to face the odds.

Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 17:45 *"Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."*

35. Chila nyumba ina msehowe.

English: Every house has its sigh.

Swahili: Kila nyumba hushusha pumzi yake.

French: Chaque maison a sa façon de vivre.

Teaching: The proverb reminds us that every homestead/family/community has its own rules and principles, ways of doing things. A society must have guidelines which direct the members in life. These bring control and order which helps to create harmony and cohesion among members. Boundaries are clear to all, which allows for discipline to be enforced.

Bible parallel: Deuteronomy 6:6-7 *“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”*

36. Chiphala kudosa lugbwe siko kumala makonje

English: If an antelope cuts a rope it does not mean the sisal is finished.

Swahili: Swara akiikata kamba sio kumaanisha kwamba makonge yameisha.

French: Si le cheval se détache ne signifie pas que le sisal est fini.

Teaching: The proverb teaches us not to lose hope, even if things are not going well. Difficult times can discourage someone, but problems always come to an end. (There will always be enough sisal to make a new rope.)

Bible parallel: Joshua 10:25 *“Joshua said to them “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight.”*

37. Chisicho dambi usichihendere dambi

English: Do not sin against a thing which has no sin.

Swahili: Usifanye hatia kwa kitu ambacho hakina hatia.

French: Ne pas pécher contre une chose qui n'a pas de péché.

Teaching: It warns that if you have a good relationship with someone, don't abuse it. You can benefit from a good relationship without misusing your partner. People use others to gain what they want, and that is not genuine friendship.

Bible parallel: Leviticus 25:14 *“If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other.”*

Matthew 7:12 *“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”*

38. Doko-doko yamala chiphinda

English: Bit by bit finishes the basket.

Swahili: Kidogo kidogo humaliza kikapu.

French: Peu à peu se termine le panier.

Teaching: If you keep on consuming/spending your savings little by little without control, then your store will soon be empty. This proverb warns us against failure to save for the future. We should not exhaust our savings but look for an extra source to sustain us, so that we don't spend our savings and remain with nothing.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 16:2 *“On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”*

39. Dzogolo kuika sio dawa ya kucha

English: The cock crowing is not medicine for the dawn.

Swahili: Jogoo kuwika sio dawa ya kupambazuka.

French: Ce n'est pas la coquerie du coq qui fait le soleil s'élever.

Teaching: The day will always come, whether the cock crows or not. This proverb carries the message that whatever is meant to happen will do so. Nobody has control over destiny. Your life is laid out by God.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 6:10 *"Everything has already been decided. It was known long ago what each person would be. So there's no use arguing with God about your destiny."*

40. Fisi richirya mkpwongo, mzima funga mryango

English: If a hyena eats a sick person, the healthy person should shut the door.

Swahili: Fisi akimla mgonjwa, mwenye afya atabidi afunge mlango.

French: Lorsque l'hyène ne mange un malade, il doit fermer la porte.

Teaching: You must take steps to ensure someone else's problem doesn't affect you too. Another person's bad behavior can also affect the good behavior and morals of another. We should therefore, take precaution to ensure we are not influenced by others.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:2 *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."*

41. Ga kare taganuka.

English: Old things do not stink

Swahili: Vitu vikuu kuu hazinuki.

French: Les choses anciennes ne puent pas.

Teaching: This proverb points out that old people in our community do not lose their value. Their wisdom and opinions guide the society. They have good experience, gained throughout their lives, which can be relied upon by the society. Old is gold.

Bible parallel: Job 32:7 *"I thought, 'Those who are older should speak, for wisdom comes with age.'"*

42. Ganja ganja ya laza mkongo na tama.

English: Even though the flour is little there is hope for satisfaction.

Swahili: Hata kama unga ni kidogo kuna matarajio ya kushiba.

French: Même si la farine est peu il y a un espoir pour la satisfaction.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us about gratitude and hope. Whatever we have in our possession should encourage us and give us hope, unlike when we have nothing at all. We should appreciate our meager resources or abilities, because they can make us useful to ourselves and society.

Bible parallel: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 *"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

43. Gasigobwa, gahendazuguzwa

English: Fruits which won't fall will be shaken down from the tree.

Swahili: Matunda ambayo hayaanguki hutingishwa kutoka juu ya mti.

French: Les fruits qui ne tombent pas, on le force de tomber.

Teaching: The proverb teaches that there is an alternative way of doing things whatever the situation. If someone won't do something voluntarily they will be forced to do it. Situations occur which change someone from what they were before. For example, a rich and proud person may become poor and change to become a humble person.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 8:9 *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."*

44. Gongolo na chigongoche.

English: A millipede and its stick.

Swahili: Jongoo na kijiti chake.

French: Voila le coq et son son roseau.

Teaching: It means that if you throw a millipede out together with a stick the millipede will not return. It teaches us that if a person wants to make sure a problem does not happen again, he/she should make sure they take care of it properly, so that it does not recur. Complete it with finality.

Bible parallel: Matthew 18:16 *"But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses."*

45. Hanga siro mbara tarifika

English: The days of mourning don't happen until a person dies.

Swahili: Siku za maombolezi hazifiki mpaka mtu afariki.

French: Les jours de funeraille n'arrivent pas seulement quand une personne meurt.

Teaching: There is a time for everything to happen. A person should not expect things to happen without a plan. A person plans a lot of activities, but they only get fulfilled when the time is right for each one.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 16:9 *"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."*

46. Hona rangu rako ronwadze.

English: The monkey does not see its bottoms.

Swahili: Nyani haoni kundule.

French: Le singe ne voit pas son derriere.

Teaching: It teaches us that we do not see our individual weaknesses, but see those of others. Nobody is perfect. We should understand our own weaknesses and correct them before correcting other people. Ours may be more serious than those of the other person.

Bible parallel: Matthew 7:3-5 *"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

47. Kata pula uunge wajji.

English: Cut your nose so that you make it beautiful

Swahili: Likate pua lako ili likuwe na sura nzuri.

French: Coupe ton nez qu'il ait une belle figure.

Teaching: The proverb is a plea for reconciliation. Correct your wrongs and your life will be comfortable. If you owe a friend money, or anything else, pay it back so that your friendship does not suffer. If you have argued with your parents, apologize even if it hurts you a little to do this.

Bible parallel: Psalm 25:7 *“Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good”*

48. Kazi tairiwa ni lutswa

English: Work is not eaten by termites

Swahili: Kazi hailiwi na mchwa.

French: Le travail n’a jamais été mangé par les termites.

Teaching: The proverb teaches us that when work is too much, we can leave it to undertake other responsibilities. It should not lead us to neglecting other duties which are a priority. We always find it where we left it, so all we need to do is continue with it.

Bible parallel: Genesis 2:3 *“Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done”*

49. Kichone kuriko kukitsuha

English: It is better to have a naughty child than not have any.

Swahili: Mtoto mjeuri ni bora kuliko kuwa bila mtoto.

French: Mieux vaut un enfant troubleur que de le manquer.

Teaching: This reminds us that it is better to have a naughty child than not have a child at all. Children are a treasure to a family because they carry forth the generation. People should have children in order to have respect and honour in the community, and to have pride and hope about the future. Children support parents later in life when one is physically weak. *“The old woman looks after the child to grow its teeth and the young one in turn looks after the old woman when she loses her teeth.” ~ Akan (Ghana, Ivory Coast) proverb*

Bible parallel: Psalms 127:3 *“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward.”*

Proverbs 13:22 *“A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just.”*

50. Kondo ya mlomo igololwa ni mlomo

English: The war of the mouth is straightened by the mouth

Swahili: Vita vya mdomoni hunyoshwa na mdomo.

French: La guerre de bouches se redresse par la bouche.

Kiswahili: Maneno matamu humtoa nyoka pangoni.

Teaching: It teaches that quarrels can only be solved by calm discussion about the problem. A soft answer turns away wrath and calms a situation. Even if another person is angry, the other should be calmer in order for the situation to go back to normal.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 16:24 *“Pleasant words are like a honey comb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”*

51. Kuambirana kukuko ela kusikirana takuna.

English: There is talking, but not listening to one another.

Swahili: Kuna mazungumzo, lakini hatusikilizani.

French: Il y a une conversation mais on se comprend pas.

Teaching: People are given advice but do not act upon it. Someone can listen to a person giving them guidance, but do not take the counsel seriously. This leads one to make grave mistakes which can ruin their lives. We should take advice and not ignore it.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 19:20-21 *"Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future. Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."*

52. Kulani mwedze mgaone

English: Grow up then come and see.

Swahili: Komaa halafu uje uone.

French: Agrandisses-toi et puis viens et voir.

Teaching: Young people have little or no experience about the responsibilities and burdens of adult life. They need to mature into adulthood first, so that they can be wiser to take such duties. It warns young people that they should not take on responsibilities they may not be able to handle. Eg. Marriage when underage.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:14-15 *"So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,"*

53. Mairi mairi Mwatunya wachimbirwa ni gari

English: Two by two Mwatunya missed the bus.

Swahili: Mbili kwa mbili Mwatunya aliachwa ni basi.

French: Deux a deux Mwatunya a rate le bus.

Teaching: The bus will always come when you have gone away for a moment and so you miss it. This proverb gives warning that a person should not pay attention to two things at the same time, because one will fail. A person should make priority to handle one thing at a time, and it will be successful.

Bible parallel: Matthew 6:24 *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."*

54. Makalo ga simba, ganagalwa-galwa ni nyani

English: The lion's mane, the baboons roll around on it

Swahili: Shungi ya samba, nyani huzunguka nayo.

French: La criniere du village, les singes tournent autour d'elle.

Teaching: The proverb encourage us to understand that even a fierce person can be gentle. People can change behavior and attitude when given an opportunity to change. Guidance and pointing out to them that they are hostile, may enable them to change. Be polite with them, and they will feel they too need to change.

Bible parallel: Isaiah 49:25 *"Surely, thus says the LORD, "Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, and the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, And I will save your sons...."*

55. Mayo wa myao nawe mmayoho

English: Your friend's mother is your mother too.

Swahili: Mamake mwenzi ni mamako pia.

French: La mere de ton ami est ta mere aussi.

Teaching: It reminds people that all elders and especially parents should be respected. Whether they are your biological mother or father, they are parents. They should be respected as elders of the community.

Bible parallel: Deuteronomy 5:16 *'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.*

56. Mbere kaikuluphirwa.

English: Greed prevented the hyena from getting the meat.

Swahili: Tamaa ilimshinda fisi akakosa nyama.

French: L'avidite a empeche l'hyene d'avoir la viande.

Teaching: The proverb gives warning about people being greedy and wanting to possess even the unnecessary things. People should be satisfied with what they have. Trying to amass property that one does not need, may lead to losing even what you rightfully have.

Bible parallel: 1Timothy 6:9 *"Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction."*

57. Mjeni aphokerwa ndata, ela matso anago mwenye

English: A visitor has his staff taken, but he still has his eyes.

Swahili: Mkwaju wa mgeni huchukuliwa, lakini macho yake hubakia nayo.

French: On a prit le bien du visiteur mais on l'a laisse ses yeux.

Teaching: Taking a visitor's staff inside the house is superficial politeness does not mean that other bad behavior in the home will not be noticed. This proverb points out that however polite, well spoken or respectful a person may appear to be, their negative characters are eventually exposed. One cannot hide negative qualities for long.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 26:24-28 *"Whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart; when he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there are seven abominations in his heart; though his hatred be covered with deception, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly. Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and a stone will come back on him who starts it rolling. A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin."*

58. Mjeni ni mvula.

English: A visitor is like rain.

Swahili: Mgeni ni kama mvua.

French: Le visiteur est comme la pluie.

Teaching: Rain doesn't last forever, the sun comes out again. A visitor will be with you for a while and will then go. It encourages us to give the best hospitality to a visitor and not feel they are a burden. It increases our respect in their eyes, and of those he/she will tell about it.

Bible parallel: 2 Kings 4:8 *“Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food.”*

59. Mbuzi undarya khwa urefu wa mkowawe.

English: A goat eats what is high enough for it to reach.

Swahili: Mbuzi hula kile kina urefu anachofikia.

French: La chevre mange selon la longueur de sa corde.

Teaching: This proverb cautions against a person getting obsessed with his wealth, such that other things in life do not matter. There is a limit to everything. What you are able to acquire or achieve should be sufficient for us. Too much may not be beneficial, and may damage your wellbeing and morals.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 9:8 *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.”*

60. Mkala karemwa, achiremwa anaocha

English: A hunter doesn't get tired, when he gets tired he roasts.

Swahili: Muwindaji hachoki, anapochoka huchoma.

French: Le chasseur ne se fatigue pas, il cuit quand il se fatigue.

Teaching: This proverb encourages people to put continuous effort in whatever they do until they succeed. A people can only enjoy comfort once they achieve their intended goals. The hunter only roasts when he has caught an animal. If a person wants something, he/she should not get tired and give up. Rest only after you have got what you want.

Bible parallel: 2 Chronicles 15:7 *“But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded”*

61. Mkwaza mganga kaonda

English: A medicine man's wife does not get thin.

Swahili: Mke wa mganga hakondi.

French: La femme d'un medecin ne maigrit pas.

Teaching: This proverb encourages people to engage in endeavours which benefit themselves and other people. A medicine man always gets lots of money and gifts. He can therefore, be able to provide for the family from a stable source. People will always visit the medicine man because sickness is a usual thing in the life of human beings.

Bible parallel: Deuteronomy 14:26 *“And spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household.”*

62. Mlachu kadzinyola.

English: The path of the liar is short.

Swahili: Njia ya muongo ni fupi.

French: Le chemin d'un peureux est court.

Teaching: The proverb warns people against telling lies. However hidden they may be, they will be exposed eventually. In a short while, truths come out into the open and create problems for the liar. People should desist from cheating.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 12:19 *“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.”*

63. Msagala vii kaigbwa

English: A person who lives a bad life is not imitated

Swahili: Mtu anayeishi maisha mabaya haigwi.

French: On n’immite pas une personne qui vit mal.

Teaching: The proverb warns that when someone is of poor character, they should be avoided as associates because they negatively influence others. People of poor character are poor role models and not acceptable in the community. We should all try to adjust to have good behavior.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 2:12 *“Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

64. Mshona nguwo ajeza chunuche

English: The one who sews the clothes should try his own waist.

Swahili: Anayeshona nguo anafaa ajaribu kiuno chake mwenyewe.

French: Celui qui coud les habits doit mesurer son bassin.

Teaching: The proverb warns us that we should ensure that whatever we do to others, can not harm them. Any actions we take against other people should not be harmful to us too. Be considerate and wish only good for other people.

Bible parallel: Luke 6:31 *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*

65. Mwana wa nyoka n’nyoka

English: The child of a snake is a snake.

Swahili: Mwana wa nyoka ni nyoka.

French: Le petit du serpent est serpent.

Teaching: This proverb is used to help us understand that a child will always adopt behavior from a mother or father. The immediate environment and people in it affect the way one lives, views life’s issues and makes decisions.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 14:18 *“Foolish behaviour is the heritage of the simple, but men of good sense are crowned with knowledge.”*

66. Mtsuzi wa ndenje unewa/uriwa wa moho

English: The sauce of an old he-goat is eaten when hot

Swahili: Mchuzi wa beberu aliye zeeka huliwa ukiwa na moto..

French: Le sauce d’un bouc mange quand il est encore chaud.

Teaching: The sauce will smell bad if not eaten straight away. The proverb teaches that an important matter has to be dealt with immediately and not left until later. Delay magnifies the bad effects and a problem may not be solved after that, or it can have devastating effects.

Bible parallel: James 5:16 *“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”*

67. Muhi ugbwerera ariye phephi

English: A tree falls on those who are near it.

Swahili: Mti huangukia walio karibu nao.

French: L'arbre tombe souvent a ceux qui sont a cote de.

Teaching: It warns us to beware that when a problem comes up, those who are closest suffer most. When a member of a family or a group experiences a problem, the others suffer with them.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:16 *"From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."*

68. Muivi mgbwire na suche

English: The thief, catch him with the ear (of corn).

Swahili: Mwizi, mshike na mahindi.

French: Le voleur, attrape-le avec le mais.

Teaching: Don't accuse someone of being a thief without proof. Catch him red-handed we should not judge anyone until proven guilty.

Bible parallel: John 7:24 *"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with the right judgement."*

69. Muona mbulu ndiye muhumbuli

English: The one who sees a monitor lizard is the trapper

Swahili: Anaye muona kenge ndiye msakaji.

French: Qui voit le lizzard est le vrai chasseur.

Teaching: A monitor lizard is not easy to spot, so only a skilled person can catch one. Similarly, the one who sees a solution to a problem is the best person to implement it or explain it to others.

Bible parallel: 2 Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*

70. Muoza nyama ni mwenye muhambo

English: The one who lets the meat rot is the one who owns the trap.

Swahili: Anaye wachilia nyama ioze ndiye mwenye mtego.

French: Qui laisse le gibier pourrir est le proprietaire du piege.

Teaching: If a trapper is lazy and doesn't check his traps often the animal might decay. A person who doesn't work hard enough may be dismissed from his job because he may not have good results of his work.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 12:11 *"Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense."*

71. Mutu aambirwa anauya, kaambirwa anaphiya

English: A person can be told while he is returning, he cannot be told while he is going.

Swahili: Mtu anaweza kuambiwa anapo rudi, lakini haambiwi wakati anapo kwenda.

French: On informe une personne lorsqu'il est du retour, pas lorsqu'il va.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that when someone is determined to do a certain

thing, they will not listen to advice until they have run into difficulties. They will then start seeking for your help.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 12:15 *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel."*

72. Muuyu uvwimbwa ni mitsatsa

English: A baobab is covered by undergrowth.

Swahili: Mbuyu hufunikwa na chaka.

French: Le baobab couvert par, se broussailler

Teaching: This proverb expresses the fact that important people always want to surround themselves with the less influential people. It adds to their prestige. If alone, the community cannot realize the extent of their power and influence.

Bible parallel: Psalm 119:63 *"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts."*

73. Mvula igodzwa na utseru

English: The rain is waited for with a cleared plot.

Swahili: Mvua husubiriwa na shamba lililo paliliwa.

French: C'est le champs rase qui attend la pluie.

Teaching: A person needs to plan ahead about their activities. One needs to lay down all the preparation steps before hand. This helps to eliminate any chance of omissions which can make the endeavour fail, or making you to do things hurriedly. Plan ahead and you will succeed.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 21:5 *"Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; and scurry puts you further behind."*

74. Mtsagula jembe tsimkurima.

English: One who chooses a hoe is not a farmer.

Swahili: Mchagua jembe si mkulima.

French: Qui choisit la houe n'est pas un cultivateur.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us not to be too choosy about what we do to earn a living, as long as it is beneficial. Any work that can provide support for you and your family is good. Accept whatever opportunities you have in life, make the best of it.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 9:10 *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going."*

75. Mwana achinyerera chiga kachitsonghwa

English: Discipline a child with a stick, not with a knife.

Swahili: Tia adabu kwa mtoto ukitumia fimbo, sio kwa kisu.

French: Mets-toi le respect sur l'enfant en utilisant le foue, mais pas le couteau.

Teaching: It is used to teach that problems should be corrected at their initial stages, and in the correct. To rectify mistakes and weaknesses in a person, extreme measures can cause much more damage. Waiting makes it difficult to rectify a problem. This is applicable when referring also to correct behavior.

Bible parallel: Ezra 7:26 *"Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed upon him strictly, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of goods or for imprisonment."*

Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."*

76. Mwana mnyerera chiga tachikatwa

English: If a child wets your thigh don't cut it off

Swahili: Mtoto akikojolea paja lako usilikate.

French: Quand l'enfant mouille ta cuisse ne la coupe pas.

Teaching: This teaches about forgiveness. We should learn to forgive the people who have wronged us. When they make mistakes we should not take drastic measures.

Bible parallel: Matthew 6:14-15 *"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*

77. Mwana msikizi kaambirwa mara nyinji.

English: A child who listens is not told many times.

Swahili: Mtoto anaye sikiliza haambiwi mara nyingi.

French: On ne dit pas deux fois à l'enfant qui écoute les instructions.

Teaching: Obedience is a great key to success in life. A person who heeds advice succeeds in his endeavours. People want to associate with him and also to assist him because of the positive elements he/she portrays. He/she is a good role model.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 3:1-2 *"My son do not forget my teaching, but in your heart keep my commandments for length of days and years of life and abundance will they give you."*

78. Mwana wa kutseka-tseka walafya ise nyama

English: A laughing child refuses to give the father meat.

Swahili: Mtoto anaye cheka humkatalia babake nyama.

French: L'enfant qui rit, refuse son pere la viande.

Teaching: The proverb is used as a warning about behavior. A parent has to be observant so that they understand the meaning of their child's hidden behavior. The laughter of a child can hide stubbornness and refusal to obey rules. A clever and pleasant child is not always helpful to his parents, but can be helped to change to become a good person.

Bible parallel: Titus 3:5 *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,"*

79. Mwandzo wa chironda ni chitswetswe

English: The beginning of a sore is a little itch

Swahili: Mwanzo wa kidonda ni mwasho.

French: Se grater est le debut d'une plaie.

Teaching: This proverb is used as a warning that when one notices a problem at its initial stages, it requires to be dealt with immediately. Some big problems start out very

small and get magnified and difficult to solve. We should always act quickly to solve a problem.

Bible parallel: Mathew 5: 23-24 *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift"*

80. Mwenda pwani kauya chiuphu

English: The one who pours sweat does not lack something to wipe the tears.

Swahili: Mmwaga jasho hakosi cha kufutia machozi

French: Qui fait couler de sueurs ne manque quelque chose pour s'essouiller.

Teaching: It teaches that one has to work very hard and tirelessly to earn a living by whatever means so that he/she cannot go hungry. When difficult times come, there is some investment or saving which can be depended on.

Bible parallel: Colossians 3:23-24 *"Whatever your task, work heartily as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward, you are serving the Lord Christ."*

81. Nang'a-nang'a ya kuyu, ndani ina mabulu

English: Ripeness of a fig, inside it has maggots.

Swahili: Kuiva kwa tini, ndani mna buu.

French: Lorsque un figue est mur, il y a des larves dedans.

Teaching: Don't judge a book by its cover. Outward appearance is misleading. A person or situation may seem appealing or comfortable, but it is not so. For example, a couple may seem like they have a comfortable relationship, but they may not be in talking terms. *(All that glitters is not gold).*

Bible parallel: John 7:24 *"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."*

82. Ng'ombe siru ina mkamiwe

English: An angry cow has its own person to milk it.

Swahili: Ng'ombe mwenye hasira anaye wa kumkamua.

French: La vache fache a quelqu'un pour la traire.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that a person who is always angry will have somebody who knows how to calm them, and get them to talk about their problem.

Bible parallel: James 1:19-20 *"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."*

83. Ng'ondzi kuuya nyuma, siko kuchimbira kondo, ela ni kuaza mizungu.

English: When a sheep takes some steps backwards, it isn't running from a war, but is thinking about attacking.

Swahili: Kondoo anapo rudi nyuma, hatoroki vita, lakini huwa anafikiria jinsi atashambulia.

French: Recurer n'est pas fuir.

Teaching: It is used as a warning against taking things for granted. We should not be fooled if we see our enemy retreating a little, they may come back with greater force and

ruin us. We must be prepared to handle a problem from the initial stages before it gets serious. Never underestimate your enemy or a problem.

Bible parallel: Mark 13:33-37 *"Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time will come. It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. Therefore, be on the alert--for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning"*

84. Nyani kuhenda ngoti nkukala diya rikure

English: When a baboon is kneeling, the dog is far away.

Swahili: Nyani anapo piga magoti, mbwa huwa mbali sana.

French: Quand un singe est assis, le chien reste tres loin.

Teaching: the proverb shows that people can have a poor sense of responsibility. They do what they wish when the authority is away. It cautions that a sense of duty should be observed for others to respect us. Children with a strict father will do what they like when he is not around!

Bible parallel: Jude 1:6 *"And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day."*

85. Nyumba ya mndzaka taina hanga

English: In the house of a bachelor there is no mourning.

Swahili: Katika nyumba ya kapera hakuna maombolezi.

French: Pas de douleurs dans la maison d'un celibataire.

Teaching: He is the only one living there, so if he dies there will be no-one there to mourn him, the funeral will take place elsewhere. This proverb is used as a warning that people should not live alone. They should have a companion.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 4:9 *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil."*

86. Pesa ni chitsaha tazionyeswana

English: Money is like nakedness it is not exposed to people.

Swahili: Mali/pesa ni kama uchi, haionyeshwi watu.

French: L'argent est comme le sexe, on ne le montre pas au gents.

Teaching: It teaches that a wealthy person will usually have troubles trying to protect his wealth, for fear of becoming poor. However, they should not expose their wealth to everyone because it can endanger them. One should be discreet about their possessions, so that they do not intimidate the other members of the society.

Bible parallel: Jeremiah 49:4 *"How boastful you are about the valleys! Your valley is flowing away, O backsliding daughter Who trusts in her treasures, saying, 'Who will come against me?'"*

87. Takuna kanga wa kare na moho

English: You don't get an old guinea fowl and fire.

Swahili: Hauhitaji kanga aliye zeeka, wala moto.

French: On n'est besoin d'une vieille pintade et du feu.

Teaching: Any guinea fowl that wanders too near the fire will end up in the cooking pot – old or young. This proverb warns that an older person is just as capable of making mistakes as a younger person.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 28:13-14 *“Whoever tries to hide his sins will not succeed, but the one who confesses his sins and leaves them behind will find mercy. Happy is the one who always fears the Lord, but the person who hardens his heart to God falls into misfortune.”*

88. Uchenda khwa mwenye tsongo fumba dzitso mwenga.

English: When you go to a foreign place eat any food offered to you. Don't ask.

Swahili: Unapo enda ugenini kula chakula utakacho pewa. Usiulize.

French: Lorsque tu vas à l'étranger mange tout, ne demande pas.

Teaching: Accept what is available to you, and the opportunities you have. We should also try to fit into the community by accepting and practicing their norms. Usually we do not query other people's ways of life, but try to accept them as they are. We should learn to accept others without judging them.

Bible parallel: Romans 14:1-4 *“Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.”*

89. Uchifwitsa ukongo undasemwa ni chiriro

English: If you hide an illness you will be spoken of in mourning.

Swahili: Ukiuficha ugonjwa utaongelewa kwa maombolezi.

French: Si tu caches la maladie, on te la dira lors du deuil.

Teaching: This proverb points out that a hidden problem will get so bad you can no longer hide it, especially if you don't seek help or take action. Problems can only be kept secret for a while.

Bible parallel: Luke 12:2 *“Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.”*

90. Uchikosa ga ameyo tag a ndia undarya.

English: One who lacked the mother's milk can breastfeed on a dog's milk.

Swahili: Aliye kosa maziwa ya mamake, anaweza kunyonya maziwa ya mbwa.

French: Qui manqué le lait de sa maman, peut s'allaiter seul du chien.

Teaching: It teaches that a person with nothing does not have a choice about what he is offered. At least he has something at hand. So a person who asks for help should not disregard whatever he/she is given.

Bible parallel: Acts 15:8 *“And God who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he had to us.”*

James 1:17 *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”*

91. Uchilunga ngoma fwiha ngoma

English: If you follow the dancer then dance.

Swahili: Ukifuata mchezaji wa ngoma, icheze.

French: Quand tu suis le tambourer, dances.

Teaching: It is used to advise that someone should remain focused on their intended goal. If you decide to do something you have to do it without being distracted by other things, if you expect to succeed in your endeavor. Diversion from your goal causes failure.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 4:25 *“Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.”*

92. Uchitsekera vyoga undahenda mahana

English: If you laugh at the first signs of leprosy you will become a leper.

Swahili: Ukicheka unapoona dalili za mwanzo wa ukoma, utapatwa na ukoma.

French: Lorsque tu ris les premiers signes du lepreux tu le deviendras.

Teaching: We should consider the early signs of illness or any problem as being seriously, and act to prevent its extension. A problem can magnify to full measure, or to a level where it cannot be rectified.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:26-27 *“Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath”*

93. Ukachengbwa ni giza, ukanya muhalani

English: You were deceived by the darkness, you urinated in the compound.

Swahili: Ulidanganywa ni giza, ukakojia nje ya nyumba.

French: On t’a trompé que c’est la nuit, tu as uriné à côté de la maison.

Teaching: Usually a person does stupid things thinking that nobody would find out, but people saw him/her. It is inexcusable! No wrong deeds can be hidden forever. People should have a conscience and always be transparent in their activities.

Bible parallel: Acts 23:1 *Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, “Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.”*

94. Udugu wa mbata umanywa guniani

English: The brotherhood of ducks is known inside the sack.

Swahili: Undugu wa bata hujilikana wakiwa ndani ya gunia.

French: Le frère des canards se connaît quand ils sont dans le sac.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that when we are in problems, it is the time we are able to identify who are true friends to us. During tribulations, only genuine friends help you. Others desert you. We should expect not to always have many friends when we have problems.

Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 18:1-3 *“Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.”*

95. Ukala wa nyoka ni ligundzu

English: The one who wants to kill a snake does it in the morning.

Swahili: Anayetaka kumuua nyoka hufanya hivyo asubuhi.

French: Qui veut tuer un serpent, le fait le matin.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that when you want to achieve an objective, you should do it early without delay. One should be determined to achieve the goal, as early as possible. *The early bird catches the worm.*

Bible parallel: Joshua 6:15 *“Then on the seventh day they rose early at the dawning of the day and marched around the city in the same manner seven times; only on that day they marched around the city seven times.”*

96. Usibere ngorowa, mana ngorowa ndiyo ngoma

English: Don't despise the 'ngorowa' dance because it is the original dance.

Swahili: Usiidharau ngoma ya 'ngorowa' kwani ndiyoya hapo awali.

French: Ne neglige pas le tambour de “Ngorowa” puisque c'est l'ancien tambour.

Teaching: This proverb warns us about disrespecting or despising our parents, whatever their stature or nature. Our parents will forever be our parents and it cannot change. They should be accepted as they are and respected for their age also.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 6:1-4 *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

97. Usigule makopa na kufwiha

English: Don't buy dry cassava and dance.

Swahili: Usinunue mhogo uliokauka na ucheze ngoma.

French: N'achete pas un manioc sec et dance au tambour.

Teaching: It acts as a warning that a person can only know the bad and the good side of a thing, after they use it themselves. Once you obtain it, you use it and you are able to make a decision about its benefits, suitability and choice. Buy carefully, then cook the cassava, only then will you know that it is good and you can rejoice.

Bible parallel: Jeremiah 29:11-13 *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.”*

98. Utsapapho pore ndipho wedzapho ukaphatwapa mairo

English: The place you pass slowly is the place where in the future you may be running past.

Swahili: Mahali unapo pitia pole pole ndipo baadaye utakapo pitia umekimbia.

French: La que tu passes pas a pas, tu vas passer en vitesse. (en courant)

Teaching: When you want something from a person you approach them in a very friendly manner, but when it comes to paying back you run away from them.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 3:27-28 *“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, “Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it”—when you have it with you.”*

99. Wa kunuka kadzimanya

English: A stinking person does not know (it) himself

Swahili: Anayenuka hajijui.

French: Celui qui puante ne se connait pas lui-meme.

Teaching: This proverb applies to many situations such as pride and foolishness. people who are arrogant, rich and disregard others, usually are not aware of their weaknesses until someone tells them so. We need others to point out our weaknesses so that we can correct them.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”*

100. Yuya ni mmwenga, hara ni anji

English: That is one (person), these are many.

Swahili: Huyu ni mtu mmoja, hawa ni wengi.

French: Celui-la est une personne, celles-ci sont nombreuses.

Teaching: This proverb is used in relation to family structure. If you just have one child, people will ask questions, because in the future you may need support. This support is best provided by the many children born in the home; rather than just one. It is a justification for large families. The family is a team.

Bible parallel: Psalm 127:3-5 *“Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.”*

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5. BIBLE STUDY TOOLS - www.biblestudytools.com/
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Appendixes

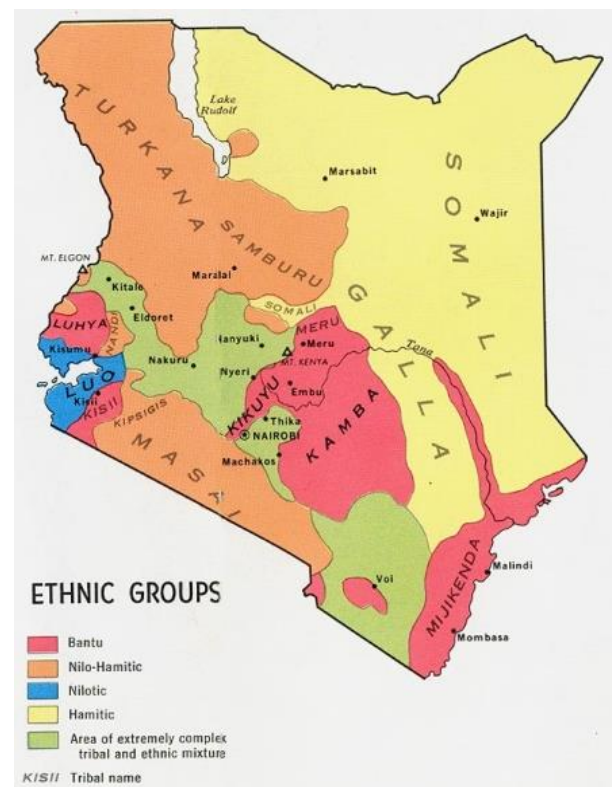
A RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR COLLECTION OF DIGO (*MIJIKENDA*) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

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(Kenya)

INTRODUCTION

The Location: The Digo people live in the southern coast of Kenya, south of Mombasa, in Kwale district. They speak the Bantu language, called *Chidigo*. They are part of the greater Mijikenda ethnic group, a Kenyan coastal Bantu ethnic group that consists of **nine closely related sub-ethnic groups**. In the past, the Mijikenda were also referred to as the “*Nyika*” tribe, a near-derogatory term implying “bush people”. “*Mijikenda*” literally means **nine homes or nine homesteads (in Swahili)**, referring to their common ancestry. The nine Mijikenda sub-groups are believed to be nine different homes of the same tribe. These are the Giriama, Digo, Chonyi, Kauma, Duruma, Jibana, Kambe, Rabai, and Ribe. Each speaks its own dialect of the Mijikenda language. Their closest neighbours are the Duruma and the Rabai sub-ethnic groups.



The ethnographical location of the Digo (Mijikenda) ethnic group in Kenya

Myths of Origin: They are said to have originated from Shungwaya in the southern Somali hinterland at the turn of the 17th century. They came along the River Nile. It is believed that they escaped constant attacks from the Oromo and other Cushitic ethnic groups, and settled in fortified villages along the coastal ridges of the southern Kenya coast. History shows that they intermarried with the Arabs from Yemen (Persian Gulf) and gave birth to the Swahili culture and language. As a result, the Swahili language - Kiswahili - bears a close lexical similarity with all dialects of the Mijikenda people.

Another Digo myth of origin indicates that during that time, they were led by a King named *Digore*. They used "*Rada*" which was a pot used to guide them and was carried on the head. Led by their King, they came up to a mountain called Dzombo, where the pot fell and broke and their journey came to an end since they depended on the pot for direction. When the pot fell down they said "*DI....GO*", meaning 'the end'. They settled initially in fortified villages along the ridges behind the southern Kenya coast, between Mombasa in southern Kenya and Tanga in northern Tanzania. The Giriama and the Digo are the most well known and most populous, making them dominant along the Kenyan coast.

Culture and Social Structure: The Digo people live in villages consisting of about 40 huts each. The shape of each hut clearly indicates the villager who lives inside. The huts for elders are round, while those of other people are rectangular.

Proverbs and wise sayings, riddles, folktales, songs and dance are used to pass knowledge and cultural practices. Emphasis on the use of proverbs and wise sayings are encouraged in ordinary daily conversation. This custom has helped even the children and the youth to learn their culture, learn norms and maintain good morals.

Circumcision is for both girls and boys. However, due to government pressure to stop this, it has reduced for the girls. It would lead to early marriages and girls dropping out of school as well as cases of early pregnancy. When a young Digo man marries, he must pay the normal bride-price of four heads of cattle, two goats or sheep, and palm wine. Eventually he is incorporated into the bride's family. As he demonstrates leadership qualities, he is accepted into the body of tribal elders. Digo women do a tremendous amount of labor, but are excluded from participating in politics, religion, kinship issues, and major economic transactions.

Music is very important part of their culture. The Kayamba dance is named so because of the main instrument used in it. The *Kayamba* is a rattle made of seed pod and a reed case which is shaken rhythmically to produce smooth sound. They believe that a *kayamba* can exorcise demons and heal sicknesses. The *Chivoti* is a plute made of bamboo or plastic pipe which produces beautiful sound and accompanies the *kayamba*. The *Ndzuga* are jingles made of metal, with metal bearings inside them. These three are the main instruments used in their music.



Members of the Digo community singing a traditional song.

Religious practices: During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Digo experienced a time of great famine. It became a common practice for them to give either themselves or their children as *kore*, or "blood money", to serve as temporary collateral for a loan of food. Sadly, when the debt could not be redeemed, they were left to live as slaves. Many of the Digo who were brought to Mombasa as slaves later obtained their freedom by converting to Islam.

Kaya is a sacred forest of the Mijikenda people in the Coast Province of Kenya. The *kaya* forest is considered to be an intrinsic source of ritual power and the origin of cultural identity containing the remains of numerous fortified villages, known as *kayas*, of the Mijikenda people. They regarded as the abodes of ancestors and are revered as sacred sites and, as such, are maintained by councils of elders.



A sacred Kaya forest.

Their religious practices are deeply rooted in spiritism and folk Islam. Ties with traditional practices such as animism and ancestor worship still have more influence on the Digo community than Islam. Witchdoctors are also consulted regularly by the community members.

Economy: For many years the Digo have been involved in trade with Muslim Arabs. As a result, they have enjoyed a higher standard of living than most of their neighbors. In addition to trading, farming and fishing are sources of income for the Digo. Their principal crop is cassava, but they also grow sesame, corn, rice, and beans. "Palm wine" *mnazi* is a popular drink produced from the palm tree. They fish in the Indian Ocean and supply seafood to Kenya's coastal hotels and residents.



A Young Digo Girl, selling fried fish near Tiwi Beach, which is located on the South Coast of Mombasa, Kenya.

Leadership and Administration: Traditional Digo governance systems were based on a council of elders called the *ngambi* representing each clan. These elders worked very closely with the *kaya* elders, who were, adjudicating all matters for their community. They were custodians of the traditional laws and maintained peace and order in the community. Today, most of traditional systems have given way to modern and contemporary forms of governance. The lowest levels of community leadership are the village elders. Religious leaders, mainly the *Imams* have taken up from traditional religious leadership, but the *kaya* elders still have space in social lives of the people.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are:

1. To collect one hundred proverbs and wise sayings from the Digo people, from the elders and their general community.
2. To translate these proverbs and wise sayings into English, Kiswahili and French, for reference by a wider group of readers.
3. To find Biblical parallels to complement the Christian point of view.

JUSTIFICATION

This will help people to enrich their communication skills by using these proverbs and wise sayings.

METHODOLOGY

The writer will research and collect Digo proverbs and wise sayings community at the Kenyan southern coast. The teachings and a bible parallels will be added to each. One hundred of these proverbs and wise sayings will be recorded for translation into Kiswahili, English, French and be published in a booklet.

REFERENCES

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BUDGET

Data gathering and processing	\$180
Typing and printing	\$100
Binding	\$ 70
Transport	\$100
Miscellaneous	\$ 50
TOTAL	\$ 500