#### HAIR: A SAMBURU IDENTITY STATEMENT

RUTH NYAMBURA (EGERTON UNIVERSITY)

&

TOM NYAMACHE
REUBEN MATHEKA
PETER WAWERU

### INTRODUCTION

Hair in Africa: An Overview

Hair reacts to our state of mind
Hair has a meaning in African
culture and similarly to the
Samburu

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Observation
- Interviews & focus group discussions
- Photography
- Secondary data in the libraries

### RESULTS& DISCUSSIONS

#### ORIGIN OF THE SAMBURU

- Samburu are *Maa* speakers from Southern
   Sudan others are Maasai &Illchamus
- Sampurri butterflies by maasai
- Ngikor Beautiful people of the red feet as described by Turkana
- People of the land 'lokop'
- Samburu hairstyles have been adopted during the migration, settlement and neighboring communities

Hair is used to cause childlessness

Hair of a newborn is kept long till weaning time to chase away evil spirits. The hair is referred to *Imasin* 

From age nine, beading process starts for a girl. The mother shaves her hair and paints it with red ochre to attract suitors



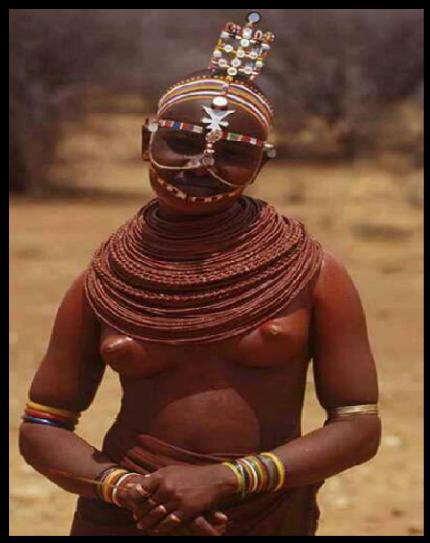


A boy ready for circumcision is shaved by the mother and a small tuft of hair is left at the middle, *Imanjeu* 



Womanhood, sumelei is identified by shaving roundly making a circular hairline known as Kub. a crown, saen e ngwe and a mass of red neck beads, Ichatata are worn





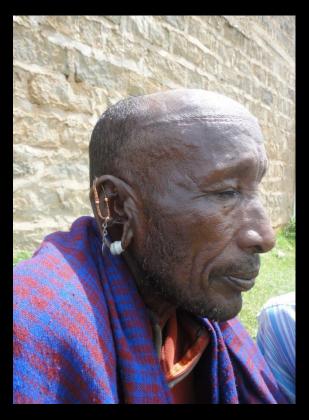
• Moranism the most significant stage of a man's life. A Moran is expected to be "beautiful" throughout the moranism. Ochers hair is key in adornment.





 An elder has responsibilities and doesn't have to be colourful





- At death all members of a dead *Moran* shaves their heads
- Wives of a dead husband and their clans shave their heads once he dies
- A mother to a dead bride also shaves her hair
- A mother shaves her head to mark a child's death

### Conclusion

- Samburu community still value hair in transmission of traditions.
- Samburu culture didn't change much in the colonial period as the British government didn't develop the area
- Kenyan communities imitate the Samburu hairstyles as part of modern fashion today.

#### RECOMMENDATION

There is need to incorporate art in our school curriculum

There is need to preserve our indigenous cultures because they mirror our societies.