A COLLECTION OF 100 TESO (KENYA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Marion Apondi.
INTRODUCTION

The Kenyan Teso people are natives of the Teso District, in Western Kenyan. They are an extension of their Ugandan counterparts, in that they were merely separated by the partition of East Africa during the historic scramble and partition of Africa. This is similar to the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, and the Oromo of Kenya and Ethiopia. The Teso are among the Plain Nilotic groups closely related to the Turkana, Karamojong, Toposa, Maasai and Samburu.

Teso has about seven main clans, but the most popular and dominant ones are Irarak, Inyakoi, Atekok, Ikomolo, Ikarebwok, Inom. Teso clan names reveal a history of long-standing ethnic interactions. Names of Bantu and northern Nilotic origin are found among them.

Marriages are not just alliances between spouses, but also between two exogamous clans. The first alliance is evident in the practical arrangements of setting up a household, and the second is expressed in ritual and healing practices. More than one-third of all men and a majority of all women are married polygymously.

The Teso live in family groups, related to their clans, and their children are taught their culture in the evenings during a story-telling time as they have evening meals. The elders and parents transmit the traditional community norms by telling stories, using riddles, proverbs and wise sayings. Having been pastoralists since time immemorial, these people are now the most successful farmers in both Western Kenya. They grow finger millet and sorghum as their major food crops. Cassava is used as a supplement to these staples and as a famine-relief food. Women grow vegetables in gardens next to their sleeping houses and gather various wild foods, especially mushrooms. The primary cash crop was cotton, which is grown for individual income during the short rains. Newly introduced cash crops such as maize and tobacco are grown during the long rains.

They also keep animals, but because of urbanization and population growth, they cannot do it extensively. The primary commercial activities are trading in cattle, fishing (those near Lake Victoria) and doing small businesses.

Famous Teso include the current governor of Busia County, Hon. Sospeter Ojaamong, Hon. Albert Ekirapa, Ojamaa Ojaamong, Oduya Oprong, Pancras Otwani, educationists like Isogol Titus, Silvester Silver Omunyu and student leaders like Titus Adungosi, Odula Ongaria Meshack Patrick Emongaise and Samson Iliwa.
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A COLLECTION OF 100 TESO (KENYA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

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   English: The alarm from the other house does not prevent one from eating.....................1

2. *Achanakin ka aparu kakito kanuka iraraie ijo elepe.*.........................................................1
   English: The patient knows the pain.

3. *Achwa esiti bala itimakilitwani ajasi ka nukeni boni.*......................................................1
   English: Intelligence is like hair, everyone has its own.

4. *Adani ka edwe lu idouno kama ka toto ape atacho koroto kala egelagela.*.......................1
   English: A debt between children born by the same mother is paid in a clever way.

5. *Adio akongu kotwana akilanya eteu atwanare.*...............................................................2
   English: It is better for the eye to die than the heart.

6. *Adio kopali palite eroko ijo edite akilanya arauni ijo lokopala plani kimojong ijo.*......2
   English: It is better to be poor when one is young, rather than becoming poor at old age.

7. *Ajakun ka punda eteke.*........................................................................................................2
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8. *Akeju kitwani na egwalit mam kebeikini ameja eting.*..................................................3
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9. *Akejuu mamu kitogwoi itwani asite nama karononi.*....................................................3
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18. Akongu ekuriana……………………………………………………………………………………………..5
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   English: Burning charcoal is turned into ashes.

21. Amaka nuichwelkite ebonguni arauni ekaruoni…………………………………………………………6
   English: Burning charcoal is turned into ashes.

22. Amaria itapasite amaraga……………………………………………………………………………………6
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23. Amina nakapoloni iduponori atwanare kamin…………………………………………………………..7
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28. *Ata kichudi ijoo kware ejenuni paran* .......................................................... 8
   English: Even if you bewitch in the night, you will be known.

29. *Ata lokapirianut kakikwang elumi* .............................................................. 8
   English: Even an expert swimmer drowns.

30. *Atakonin edoe akiru nepolo namakoni emamu alaboro nakokitwi nebuni alibuni kokuju kakou koni* .......................................................... 9
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31. *Boni ekeri abala ejasi kakejen ekerichubi* .................................................... 9
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32. *Ebaraka elae akilanya akibuses* ................................................................. 9
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33. *Ebela lo ejatatar kajoo akan nesi ari emunu.*
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35. *Echogoire ka emasinik mamu kedumni etori* ................................................ 10
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37. *Eji akiara akimi eroko edite* ..................................................................... 11
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38. *Ekiaka mam kiposio* ................................................................................. 11
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   English: The man may be head of the home; the wife is the heart.

40. *Ekitoi lokapolon mam kebilakini kakitosom kalosia* ...................................... 12
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41. *Ekokot lokirionon mamu kebeikini akikonyo loche* ........................................ 12
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42. *Ekoleit lokapolon enyemi ekoleit nichii* ...................................................... 12
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43. Elangiri akoto akiilanya
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English: Stream, it knows where to flow.

44. Emamu amunosoit kitunga kiuni, amunosoit eraunene naki itwani kipe
boti........13
English: Three can keep a secret when two die.

45. Emongo loka dedengani egeuni
kakidouni........................................................................................................13
English: A champion bull starts from birth.

46. Epachit mamu kiboye
chute............................................................................................................13
English: The celebration does not last forever.

47. Erisa mam kenguni a
ken..................................................................................................................14
English: A hyena cannot smell its own stench.

48. Etwani niche aboni nesi epedori anagoliyar ibere ni ejai
akaulo...........................................................................................................14

English: Only someone else can scratch your back.

49. I belkin ijo akipok adaraga na ejai
akadoat..........................................................................................................14

English: You only make a bridge where there is a river.

50. Ijo ngiei ni boyete kitwani lokoasoye jode erauni loka
soya.............................................................................................................14

English: One who relates with a corrupt person likewise gets corrupted.

51. Ijo ni amamu lukoni achoka kelomotsi mamu akipasa
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52. Ikoku mamu kekuriana alosite kama erono kakwunpo poka nesi ama iche
enangakiner kibore........................................................................................15
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53. Ikoni ai araisi akiilanyu itunga luu amamu kebeikineti akiara akimi kanukese
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55. **Ikote ijo akia adokolet mamu akitere akonyeni**..........................16
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56. **Itwan ni elaye ketoto akimeche kajo okitwi nesi ijenuna yo nesi bobo`de nikarononi**
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57. **Itwan keinakin epura churi korauni bobo nesi etamio atamashait**...............16
   English: The one who is praised, comes forth to chant.

58. **Je ei mamu ikochak kapedori alibuni mamu kepedori akipiakini pwap amukebete**..........................17
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59. **Je Etwani lokabokan ike boni nesi abar ejotoe**..........................17
    English: Only a medicine man gets rich by sleeping.

60. **Je lo ekote nikapatat paka kokukumu,pwap chuti**..........................17
    English: He who wants what is under a bed must bend over to get it.

61. **Je lo mamu kebelkini akiyong mamu kebelkini atubokino**..........................17
    English: He who refuses to obey cannot command

62. **Je lo mamu kepedori ajenuni ibore ipe mamu kepedori ajenuni ni cheda**..........................18
    English: He who does not know one thing knows another.

63. **Je loiteni awo mamu kepedori akadakiri kedwar.awo ken**.....................18
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64. **Jelo elosi nedio edoli nama eluana sana**............................................18
    English: who walks slowly will also reach the aim.

65. **Kebuu engatuni nama kon kokere ijo nama ka paduk mam epaduk kirengiari engatun kama kon**..........................18
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66. **Kemamu ijo kijeni atwanare kongoleki atesi**........................................19
    English: Closed mouth catches no flies.

67. **Kedumun etwani epei achok aree ebeikini ape kama ka are**..........................19
    English: If one is roasting two potatoes, one of them is bound to get charred.

68. **Kemam keputosi ka papa eputosi ka toto**.............................................19
    English: If you do not know death, look at the grave.
69. Kibwap awo kome awoo .................................................................19
   English: Follow bees and get honey.

70. Kidar angaje kon .................................................................20
   English: The mouth wronged the walker.

71. Kikosa erisa akiring enyemi inya .........................................20
   English: When the lion cannot find meat, it eats grass.

72. Kilimo ijo itwani ka kongu ka pete egeuni akangu ariapunun .........20
   English: When you mention the person with one eye, the one with the eye problem reacts.

73. Kiloki ijo akolong eoni ..........................................................21
   English: When you spread it in the sun, it becomes dry.

74. Kimongin iyare mamu kepedorete akiboi kaujokape .....................21
   English: Two guests cannot be entertained satisfactorily at the same time.

75. Kingarakini bere kere ingarakini nakasabani ................................21
   English: Help yourself and God will help you.

76. Kituruoi lokameran sana I chute emongakipianakin akipi ..................21
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77. Kotubu ikumesi kitukuu esura ..................................................21
   English: Cut your nose to save your face.

78. Kwilu edodorunete kesi kwi luemasete akipi, n elaete, ejoka ............22
   English: Those who arrive at the spring first, drink the purest water.

79. Mam akibwapa etwani ni elepor. ..................................................22
   English: Do not follow a person who is running away.

80. Mamu akimuruori apadak kori kere ajai apejo ore ..........................22
   English: You should never forget your neighbor when you invite people to the feast.

81. Mamu akipi kedokenorete aukoto .............................................23
   English: Water never flows up the mountain.

82. Mamu emoru kapi kanen apete imoru lu chaki kanen ........................23
   English: When the rock is not around, the small stone sits there.

83. Mamu ijo kashishanakini edokohet akidok okitoi .............................23
   English: You don’t teach a grown up monkey how to climb a tree.

84. Mamu ijo kidemari etwani a bahati ken .....................................23
   English: You cannot take away someone’s luck.

85. Mamu ijokibelkini achakari iborekoni nimojong kanuka ei nikitetet ..........24
English: One does not throw away his old praying mat just because of a new one is borrowed.

86. *Mamu siong kekorakite alipo/amana kama kalukauriak kosi kone elipatosiongo idwe kosi.*

English: We have not inherited this land from our ancestors, but borrowed it from our children.

87. *Ni akonyi emunu ata kaanyu aunot elepor.*

English: The one who has been attacked by a buffalo is afraid when he sees a black cow.

88. *Ni ebangi egwa akiro nu ebelkinete adamun neside.*

English: The fool hides what would eat him.

89. *Ni edokiti ateukoto edokumi.*

English: The possessor may become dispossessed.

90. *Ni elaye egwelari nikarononi itolosio.*

English: Good things sell, bad things advertise.

91. *Ni enyemi ijo ejai akeju kon.*

English: The devil turns against his friends.

92. *Ni enyemi ijo ejal onopen kon.*

English: What bites you is in your clothes.

93. *Ni erait Nikon erait Nikon ata kerono.nikon.*

English: When the leopard comes for you, the club at your neighbor’s house won’t drive him off.

94. *Ni erengiara kakimati kotogo lokajon ebonguni kene lo erengiara kakirot mamu kebonguni amata.*

English: The one chased away with a club comes back, but the one chased away with reason does not.

95. *Ni itekeri nicheneside apasi akiteker niche.*

English: The chaser and the one who is chased get tired.

96. *Opoapa nesi je lo iyelewaye ekuruke lo ejei otau keng ebelkini abongokin kamakuni esaa lo imuruori kakiro.*

English: A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words.

97. *Panya ipwaka mamu kepedorete akibok adwi.*

English: The rat does not help the other rat to peel a piece of maize.
A COLLECTION OF 100 TESO PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

1. Achala ka egerechi mamu kitengeri akiteng akimat akipi.
   English: The alarm from the other house does not prevent one from eating.
   Swahili: Kengele ya nijirani haikuzuii kula chakula.
   French: La cloche du voisin ne t'empeche pas de manger.
   Teaching: This proverb is used to teach that even though you might be going through tough times in life that does not because your neighbor sleepless nights, they will still go on with their business as usual.
   Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 4:10-12 “For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken”.
   1 John4:20 If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.
2. *Achanakin ka aparu kakito kanuka iraraie ijo elepe.*

**English:** The patient knows the pain.

**Swahili:** Mgonjwa ndiye anayeyajua maumivu.

**French:** Le malade connaît de douleurs.

**Teaching:** This saying is used to understand that when we are in difficult situations in life like sickness, no one can understand the pain you are going through a part from yourself, however much people might sympathize and empathize but they can have the firsthand experience.

**Bible parallel:** Revelation 21:4 “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

3. *Achwa esiti bala itimakilitwani ajasi ka nukeni boni.*

**English:** Intelligence is like hair, everyone has its own.

**Kiswahili:** Akili ni kama nywele, kila mtu anazake.

**French:** L’intelligence est comme les cheveux, chacun a les siens.
Teaching: This proverb is used to help us understand the benefits of making good decisions because in the end you will receive great rewards.

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

4. **Adani ka edwe lu idouno kama ka toto ape atacho koroto kala egelagela**

**English:** A debt between children born by the same mother is paid in a clever way.

**Kiswahili:** Deni ya ndugu ambao wamezaliwa na mama mmoja hilipwa kwa ujanja.

**French:** La dette entre deux freres se paye d’une facon malicieuse.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that in a family when there is differences, they are solve before they get out of hand so that it brings love and unity within the family.

**Bible parallel:** 1 John 4:20 “If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.”
5. **Adio akongu kotwana akilanya eteu atwanare.**  
**English:** It is better for the eye to die than the heart.  
**Kiswahili:** Afadhali jicho life badala ya moyo.  
**French:** Vaut mieux de manquer l’œil que l’ame.  
**Teaching:** This proverb is used to help us understand the importance of every human being because everyone is unique and important on his own way and no one can claim to be more important than the other.  
**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 139:14 “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”  

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord **God** is upon me, because the **Lord** has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;”
6. Adio kopali palite eroko ijo edite akiinya arauni ijo lokopala plani kimjong ijo.  
**English:** It is better to be poor when one is young, rather than becoming poor at old age.  
**Kiswahili:**  
**French:** Mieux vaut d’être pauvre quand on est encore jeune que de devenir pauvre à la vieillesse.  
**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that it is useful to work hard when you have the energy and the zeal to do it, because a time is coming when you will grow old and when you will not be in opposition to do what you used to do at old age.  
**Bible parallel:** 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 “*For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.*”
7. **Ajakun ka punda eteke**  
**English:** A donkey always says thank you with a kick.  
**Kiswahili:** Asante ya punda ni teke.  
**French:** Le merci d’ane, c’est les coups de pied.  
**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that you might sacrifice and do your best to someone who may be in need but the same person will forget all the good things that you have done to them and at times they throw insult to you or harm you physically.  
**Bible parallel:** 1 Timothy2:1-4 “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”

8. **Akeju kitwani na egwalit mam kebeikini ameja eting**  
**English:** Bow-legged person does not hunt antelopes.  
**Kiswahili:** Mtu wenye matege hamuwindi swara.  
**French:** Personne aux jambs arquées ne peut pas chasser le cheval.  
**Teaching:** This proverb is used to teach us that in life there are something’s that are mysterious and you will never understand their existence in nature. It also teaches us that as an individual you cannot be good in all areas in life.  
**Bible parallel:** Mathew7:1-5 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ‘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.”

9. Akejuu mamu kitogwoi itwani asite nama karononi
   **English:** Feet cannot stop one from going into danger.
   **Swahili:** Miguu haiwezi kumzuia mtu kwenda kwenye hatari.
   **French:** Les pieds ne peuvent pas empecher quelqu’un d’aller la ou il fait dangereuse.
   **Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that in life something’s are bound to happen and we have no control over them however much we might try to avoid them but eventually they will come to pass like, death and old age.
   **Bible parallel:** Acts1:1-26 “In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
10. Akichanakini ka puru katito kanu irarae ijo elepet.
   English: the patient knows the pain
   Swahili: Mgonjwa ndiye anayejua uchungu mlilini.
   French: C’est le patient qui sent douleur dans son corps.
   Teaching: This saying is used to understand that when we are in difficult situations in life like sickness, no one can understand the pain you are going through a part from yourself, however much people might sympathize and empathize but they can have the first-hand experience.
   Bible parallel: Revelation 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

![Image of a patient being cared for]

11. Akimee pole pole adauni etweli ka woo.
   English: Dip after dip depletes a jar of honey.
   Kiswahili: Kuchota kidogo kidogo humaliza chupa ya asali.
   French: En prenant en une petite quantite, on termine toute une bouteille du miel.
   Teaching: This proverb is used to advise that whatever we have as savings or wealth should be carefully taken care of. It encourages people to save what they have for future use, and not use it all and lack sustenance for their future.
   Bible parallel: Proverbs 21:20 “The wise store up choice food and olive oil, but fools gulp theirs down”
   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.”
12. *Akimi enyeni yeini echeweiki.*

**English:** The fire burns the fire maker.

**Kiswahili:** Moto humchoma anayeitengeneza.

**French:** Le feu brille celui qui le fait.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that as human being we keep on learning from one another and we cannot boast of our experience or ability to do something several times not knowing that each and every day there is new recovery.

**Bible parallel:** James 4:6 “But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

13. *Akinapakina elangari kone eyauti ayongara kalangiru.*

**English:** Peace is costly but it is worth the expense.

**Kiswahili:** Amani ina gharama lakini ni gharama yenye dhamani.

**French:** La paix est couteuse, car sa valeur est tres couteuse.
Teaching: This proverb is used to help in encouraging coexistence between warring communities because for any development to occur it is important to live together as a unit, because war is expensive.

Bible parallel: 2Thessalonians3:16 “Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all”

Psalms4:8 “In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.”

   English: We add wisdom to knowledge.
   Swahili: Sisi huongeza ujuzi kwa maarifa.
   French: On ajoute la sagesse a la conscience.
   Teaching: This saying encourages us that as much as we can acquire knowledge, wisdom is better and it comes by age and experience.
   Bible parallel: James1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.
15. Akiro nu arête etwani nu edisaka.
   English: The thing that kills someone is small.
   Swahili: Kinacho muua mtu ni kidogo.
   French: Ce qui tue l’homme est une petite chose.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that great people in life fail from small things that are common but they excel in complicated issues.
   Bible parallel: Joel2:21 “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things!”
   Jeremiah33:3 “Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.”

16. Akitoi nai ajai omugo mamu kekwenar na ejai akimi.
   English: The one in the wood pile does not laugh at the one in the fire
Kiswahili: Iliyo ndani ya rundo la kuni haicheki iliyo kwa moto.
French: Ce qui est dans une foule des bois ne rit pas à ce qui est dans le feu.
Teaching: When someone is in trouble, we should not celebrate and blow trumpets because you never know when your troubles will begin, they might be bigger and worse than you thought.
Bible parallel: Isaiah 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

17. Akokor enyemi kakimwat akituk ken
   English: The hen pecks and wipes its beak.
   Kiswahili: Kuku hudona na hupanguza mdomo wake.
   French: La poule picote et nettoye son bec.
Teaching: This saying help to understand when you have done something which is not right do not defensive but accept your mistakes so that you can be helped through.
Bible parallel: Hebrews12:11 “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”
Hebrews 12:11 “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

18. Akongu ekuriana

**English:** The eye is a coward.

**Kiswahili:** Jicho lina uoga.

**French:** L’œil a la peur.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that your eye can cause you to fear and not achieve your ambition because it sees things that are impossible and unachievable, until you put your hands on it that is when you can realize how easy it is.

**Bible parallel:** Isaiah 41:10 “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
19. *Akongu ka mulanwa edisaka kama ka yeini ite.*

**English:** The eyes of the in-law belittle what they have seen  
**Kiswahili:** Macho ya mkwe hubughudhi yaliyo ona.  
**French:** Les yeux de beau-frere amoindrit ceux qu’ils ont vue.  

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that it is easy to make judgments by looking at things on the periphery, yet there might be something good and more important when you go deeper or you give someone time to express themselves.  
**Bible parallel:** Romans14:12-13 “So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.”

20. *Amaka nuichwelkite ebonguni arauni ekaruoni.*

**English:** Burning charcoal is turned into ashes.  
**Kiswahili:** Makaa inapo chomeka huwa jivu.  
**French:** Le charbon brulant devient en cendre  

**Teaching:** This proverb is used to warn people that in every action we take there are consequences either positive or negative depending on the action.  
**Bible parallel:** 2peter1:5-8 “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
   **English:** Competition exhausted the lungs.
   **Kiswahili:** Mashindano yalichosha mapafu.
   **French:** La competition affaibli le poumon.
   **Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that healthy competition is good for growth but unhealthy competition can lead to loss of life or diseases.
   **Bible parallel:** Phillippians2:3-4 “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

22. Amina nakapoloni iduponori atwanare kamin.
   **English:** The abundance of fruit caused the death of the fruit lover.
   **Kiswahili:** Wingi wa matunda ulimuua anaye yapenda matunda.
   **French:** L’abondance de fruits est cause par la destruction de ceux qui aime les fruits.
**Teaching:** This proverb warns that too much of anything is not good. Anything that a person does must have a limit. Excesses ruin good deeds.

**Bible parallel:** *Proverbs 25:16* “Have you found honey? Eat only what you need, that you not have it in excess and vomit it.”

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23. **Amori itongolopi loka mejan.**

**English:** The blame of the antelope is on the hunter.

**Kiswahili:** Lawama ya swara huwa kwa muwindaji.

**French:** La condamnation du cheval est au chasseur.

**Teaching:** This proverb encourages people to correctly guide their children. To teach them correct norms and good behavior, which helps them lead a productive positive life. When this is not done, children blame the parents for their failures.

**Bible parallel:** *Genesis 18-19* “For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”

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The image shows a group of children holding apples, which may symbolize the proverb’s message about not overindulging in enjoyment.
24. *Amunong akituk kelomtu apunda amugwar.*

**English:** I shall come for the cows after the donkeys have grown horns.

**Kiswahili:** Nitakuja kuchukua ng’ombe baada ya punda kumea pembe.

**French:** Je viendrai pour les vaches après que les ânes grossirent les cornes.

**Teaching:** This proverb is used to warn us that when we want to do great things in our life, we should not wait for other people to attain them for us. We should attempt doing and finally we shall succeed in the endeavor.

**Bible parallel:** *Joshua*1:9 *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.*

*Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*

**Deuteronomy**31:6 *Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.*
25. **Anyunyura amamu adiemunete**

**English:** Suppression of hunger leads to death.

**Kiswahili:** Kukatalia njaa husababisha kifo.

**French:** La suppression du fain mene a la mort.

**Teaching:** In Teso community they are great farmers and they believed that when you don’t work hard in the farm then hunger will crawl at your doorstep and you are prone to losing your life when you don’t work hard to attain health through farming, whereby produce is used in Bata trade to help in acquiring wealth.

**Bible parallel:** James 1:15-17 “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
26. Asomo nukakila barani itapasete aberu kone ata ekiliokiti.
   **English:** Regular work tires a woman but totally wrecks a man.
   **Kiswahili:** Kazi ya kawaida huchosha mwanamke, lakini hudhuru mwanamme kabisa.
   **French:** Un travail régulier fatigue la femme mais detruit l’homme.
   **Teaching:** This proverb is used to recognize the hard and tiresome work women go through to make their families who they are, but if the same job was to be done by a man then it would totally weigh down a man.
   **Bible parallel:** 2 Thessallosians3:10-12 “*For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.*”
27. *Ata epoapa mam kabelkin akilokonyuni ijo o kamajong.*

**English:** Even a friend cannot rescue one from old age  
**Kiswahili:** Hata rafiki hawezi kuokoa usipatwe na uzee.  
**French:** Meme l’amí ne peut pas t’aider de ne pas vieillir.  
**Teaching:** This proverb is used to teach us how to live and be consistent in what we are doing because there will be time in life when you will be too old to do what you used to do at the young age.  
**Bible parallel:** Ecclesiastes3:1-8 “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ...For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”
28. *Ata kichudi ijoo kware ejenuni paran*

**English:** Even if you bewitch in the night, you will be known

**Kiswahili:** Hata kama unaroga mchana, mwishowe utajulikana

**French:** Meme sit u ensorceles pendant la nuit, tu seras connu.

**Teaching:** This proverb is used in Teso community to cultivate good moral from the people, it also means that if you do something that is not right or you have killed, it will only take a few days before you are caught and punished for the wrong.

**Bible parallel:** 1John2:15-17. “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”
29. *Ata lokapirianut kakikwang elumi.*

**English:** Even an expert swimmer drowns

**Kiswahili:** Hata mpiga mbizi shupavu hufa maji.

**French:** Meme un expert en nageant, noye.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that even when you are experienced in a certain area like profession; you will definitely get challenges on the same area of expertise and it is advisable to seek new knowledge every time so that you can be resourceful.

**Bible parallel:** James1:2-4 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”
30. Atakonin edoe akiru nepolo namakoni emamu alaboro nakokitwi nebuni alibuni kokuju kakou koni.

**English:** However much it rains on you, no wild banana tree will grow on your head.

**Kiswahili:** Hata unyeshewe ni mvua nyingi vipi, hamna mandizi yatakay mea juu ya kichwa chako.

**French:** Malgré qu’il pleut sur toi, aucune bananier grandira sur toi.

**Teaching:** This proverb is used metaphorically to help us learn that however much we might acquire wealth and be wealthy, they will not make us go to heaven. It also teaches us that however much you work hard to create wealth you will never consume them alone. so learn to share.

**Bible parallel:** 1Peter4:10-11” As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”


**English:** A lone runner says he has legs and can run fast.

**Kiswahili:** Anaye kimbia peke yake husema ana miguu, na anaweza kukimbia haraka.

**French:** Un coureur personnel dit qu’il a les pieds et peut courir en vitesse.

**Teaching:** It is good to run fast but it is better to go far, that’s why this proverb teaches us that when you want to go first you can go alone but when you need to go far then you can invite other people to help you run. It shows the importance of team work via working alone because you will get tired easily when you do thing alone.

**Bible parallel:** 1 Corinthians 1:10 “ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [that] there be no divisions among you; but [that] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
32. *Ebaraka elae akitanya akibuses.*

**English:** Blessings are better than possessions.

**Kiswahili:** Baraka ni bora kuliko mali.

**French:** Les benédicitions sont tres bonnes que la possession.

**Teaching:** This proverb bring the true meaning of knowing God, because when you have God’s blessings you are better and at peace than someone who has wealth or possessions because he will always be concern of his security.

**Bible parallel:** James1:17 “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. Isaiah 41:10 “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”
33. Ebela lo ejatatlar kajoo akan nesi ari emunu.
   English: The stick in the hand kills the snake.
   Kiswahili: Fimbo ilyo karibu ndio inayoua nyoka.
   French: C’est le foue qui est proche, qui tue le serpent.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us the value of valuing what we have because in times of need or shortfalls you can easily use what you have to salvage a situation rather than depending on other people who might not show up at times of need.
   Bible parallel: Romans 8:35-39 “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the daylong; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

34. Ebokori epe mamu kepedori akiara achi.
   English: One finger does not kill a louse.
   Kiswahili: Kidole kimoja hakiuii chawa.
   French: Un seul doit ne tue pas le pou.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that we cannot succeed alone we need other people to help us grow, because human being is a social being we need people around us who can make us grow and achieve our maximum potential.
   Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 12:20-25” As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it”
35. *Echogoire ka emasinik mamu kedumni etori.*

**English:** The curse of the fowl does not bother the eagle.

**Kiswahili:** Laana ya kuku haimsembui tai.

**French:** La malediction du poule ne trouble pas l’aigle.

**Teaching:** When your neighbor is in trouble, however much you try to solve the problem, it will not cause you any sleepless nights.

**Bible parallel:** 1Timothy5:8 “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
36. *Ei yeni idelodelo kokitoi bala ememeia ejeni ata alosite kouri.*

**English:** When he hangs himself down like a bat, he definitely knows how he would float through the air.

**Swahili:** Anapo ning’ina juu chini kama popo, lazima awe anajua vile anaweza kupepea hewani.

**French:** Quand il s’est pendu, il connait définitivement qu’il va flotter dans l’air.

**Teaching:** This proverb is used symbolically to mean that we should be flexible to fit in any situation in life, whereby we can make lemonade from lemon, meaning that we have high resilience to bounce back and make something better from life challenges.

**Bible parallel:** Phillippians 4:12-14 “know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.”
37. *Eji akiara akimi eroke edite.*

**English:** We should put out fire while it is still small.

**Swahili:** Tunafaa tuizime moto kama ungali mdogo.

**French:** On peut mettre a cote le feu quand il est encore petit.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when we have conflicts in families, it is better if it can be sorted out early rather than wait until it goes out of hand and it grows to physical and emotional abuse.

**Bible parallel:** Mathew 18:15-17 “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 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. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”
38. **Ekiaka mam kiposio.**

**English:** Messenger cannot be beaten  
**Kiswahili:** Mjumbe hachapwi.  
**French:** On est bat pas le messager.  
**Teaching:** This proverb is used in Teso community to help us understand the importance of what we are doing might have a negative impact or a positive impact but whatever the situation to need to learn from it and move on with your life.  
**Bible parallel:** Colossians 1:12-18 “Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”

39. **Ekiliokit nesi akow kare na aberu nesi etau.**

**English:** The man may be head of the home; the wife is the heart.  
**Kiswahili:** Bwana anaweza kuwa kiongozi wa boma; mkewe ndiye roho.  
**French:** L’homme peut etre la tete de la maison, la femme est le Coeur.  
**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that you might claim to be a master in a field but there is someone you can do better than you in the field but you should complement each other in all that you do.
Bible parallel: 1Peter 3:4 “But let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.”
Galatians3:28 “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

40. Ekitoi lokapolon mam kebilakini kakitosom kalosia.
   English: A fully grown tree cannot be bent into a walking stick.
   Kiswahili: Mtili iliokomaa hauwezi kupindwa ukawa mkonjo.
   French: Un arbre grandit ne peut pas etre courbe en baton.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that for you to be able to mold a character that is upright from a child then you need to start when the child is still young because when he grows old you will not be able to direct him.
   Bible parallel: Phillipians 3:12-15 ‘Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you.”
41. **Ekokot lokirionon mamu kebeikini akikonyo loche.**

   **English:** A black ant will not bite another black ant.
   **Kiswahili:** Siafu mweusi hawezi kumuuma siafu mwingine mweusi.
   **French:** Un fourni noir ne peut pas piquer un autre fourni noir.
   **Teaching:** This proverb is used to help foster unity among family members, the Teso community is using it to create harmony in the family, it means that people from the same family should not fight despite of their differences.
   **Bible parallel:** *Colossians*3:13 “Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

42. **Ekoleit lokapolon enyemi ekoleit nichii.**

   **English:** The big fish eats the smaller one.
   **Kiswahili:** Samaki mkubwa hula wale wadogo.
   **French:** Les gros poissons mangent les petits.
Teaching: This proverb is warning us of bad leadership which is self-centered and doesn’t care about the needs and suffering of the citizens or subjects.

Bible parallel: Colossians3:23-25 “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. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.”

43. Elangiri akoto akilanya akipi.
   English: The stream knows where to flow.
   Kiswahili: Mto hujua utakapo pitia.
   French: Le ruisseau connait la qu’elle va passer.

Teaching: This proverb is used to help us acknowledge that in life there are boundaries and if you are to do anything constructive then it’s critical to use the stipulated boundaries to help you keep out of trouble.

Bible parallel: Proverbs3:13-18 “Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.”
44. *Emamu amunosoit kitunga kiuni, amunosoit eraunene naki itwani kipe boti.*

**English:** Three can keep a secret when two die.
**Swahili:** Watatu wanaweza kuweka siri wakati wawili watakapo kufa.
**French:** Les triples peuvent garder un secret, quand les deux meurent.
**Teaching:** This saying teaches that only one person can keep a secret, if it is more than one person then it is no longer a secret.
**Bible parallel:** Mathew 6:6 “But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
45. *Emongo loka dedengani egeuni kakidouni.*
   **English:** A champion bull starts from birth.
   **Kiswahili:** Fahari bingwa huanza akizaliwa.
   **French:** Un champione geant commence des sa naissance.
   **Teaching:** This proverb is used in encouraging people of good character not to give up because you can identify an individual’s potential in the early years of a person’s life.
   **Bible parallel:** Deuteronomy 31:6 “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”
   Isaiah 41:10 “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

46. *Epachit mamu kiboye chute.*
   **English:** The celebration does not last forever.
   **Kiswahili:** Sherehe haiishi milele.
   **French:** La celebration ne finira jamais.
   **Teaching:** When you are crown champion in any field, remember that there is someone who is also working hard day and night so that they too can be crowned champions so don’t celebrate for long lest you be taken aback by events.
   **Bible parallel:** Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
47. *Erisa mam kenguni a ken.*

**English:** A hyena cannot smell its own stench.

**Kiswahili:** Fisi hawezi kunukia harufu yake mbovu.

**French:** L’hyène ne peut pas sentir son propre odeur.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that you cannot be your own doctor, or you cannot live in isolation, you cannot realize your shortfalls unless other people help you to identify them.

**Bible parallel:** John 5:30 “I can do nothing on My own initiative As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

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.”

**English:** Only someone else can scratch your back.

**Kiswahili:** Ni mtu mwingine tu anayeweza kuugwara mgongo wako.

**French:** Seulement quelqu’un d’autre qui peut te grater sur le dos.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when you need any assistance or when you are in trouble you cannot take yourself out of it alone or you cannot find a solution by yourself but you need the assistance of others to help you through it.

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 3:5-9 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

![Image of two people helping each other]

49. *I belkin ijo akidok adaraga na ejai akadoat.*

**English:** You only make a bridge where there is a river.

**Swahili:** Daraja hujengwa pale kuna mto.

**French:** Tu peux seulement construit un pont la qu’il y a une riviere.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that we can only intervene where there is a problem to help creating peace and wellbeing of other people.

**Bible parallel:** Mark 11:22-25 “And Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that you’re Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”
50. *Ijo ngiei ni boyete kitwani lokasoya jode erauni loka saya.*

**English:** One who relates with a corrupt person likewise gets corrupted.

**Kiswahili:** Anaye husika na mfisadi pia huingia kwa ujisadi.

**French:** Un ami a une personne corruptive, le devient.

**Teaching:** This proverb brings true the wise saying of birds of the same feathers flock together meaning that people who share something in common will always be together whatever the situation

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs 28:28 “Be not envious of evil men, nor desire to be with them, for their hearts devise violence, and their lips talk of trouble. By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might”

51. *Ijo ni amamu lukoni achoka kelomotsi mamu akipasa akira.*
English: One whose seeds have not sprouted does not give up planting.

Kiswahili: Yule ambaye mbegu zake hazijaota haachi kupanda.

French: Quelqu’un don’t le grain ne pousse pas ne cesse pas de planter.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that when you are focused in life and you want to achieve your goals, you should not give up despite the challenges that life will throw at you, you only need to take the challenges as a learning experience which will help you grow and attain your success.

Bible parallel: Luke11:9-10 “And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

52. Ikoku mamu kekuriana alosite kama erono kakwapu poka nesi ama iche enangakiner kibore.

English: A child does not fear treading on dangerous ground until he gets hurt.

Kiswahili: Mtoto haogopi kutembea pawala pabaya mpaka aumie.

French: L’enfant ne fuit de marcher sur une place dangereuse jusqu’a ce qu’il se laisse.

Teaching: This proverb is used in Teso community to warn people not to attend to everything more so when they are doing a ceremony of exhuming bodies known as ekutet because the bad spirits can harm them. It also emphasize the true meaning of the saying” experience is the best teacher”.

Bible: 2 Timothy 3:14-15 “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”
53. **Ikoni ai araisi akiilanyu itunga luu amamu kebeikinete akiara akimi kanukese boni.**

**English:** How easy is it to defeat people who do not kindle fire for themselves?

**Kiswahili:** Ni rahisi kuwashinda watu ambao hawawezi kujiwashia moto.

**French:** C’est facile d’eliminer les gens qui ne peuvent pas allumer le feu pour eux-même.

**Teaching:** It is easy to climb to greater heights when you are a team and working together as a community of family because you will spur one another but it is hard for an individual to accomplish what many people have done.

**Bible parallel:** Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken”.”
54. Ikoni ai ayongara nakajokunu ta angaleu naka manyakini ka wai saana nesi lo ipugae eseti esibala lakini eyonga.
**English:** How gently glides the married life away when she who rules still seem but to obey.

**Kiswahili:** Ndoa huteleza mbali pole pole wakati yeye anayetawala bado aonekana kutii.

**French:** Le mariage trebuche, petit a petit, pendant que la celle qui semble reigner, obeit.

**Teaching:** It is easier to make a united family through obedience and gentleness which community need because family is a very important unit in the community.

**Bible parallel:** 2Timothy2:24-26 “The Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

55. Ikote ijo akiara adokolet mamu akitere akonyeni.
**English:** If you want to kill a monkey, avoid looking him in the eyes.

**Kiswahili:** Ukitaka kumuuwa nyani, usimwngalie kwa macho.
French: Si tu veux tuer un singe, ne le regarde pas par les yeux.

Teaching: This proverb is used metaphorically to mean that when you want to achieve great things in life, you should make sure that every day you take a step towards your goal and slowly, you will accomplish it.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 16:3 “Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.”

1 Kings 2:3 “Keep the charge of the LORD your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.”

56. Itwan ni elaye ketoto akimeche kajo okitwi nesi ijenuna yo nesi bobo`de nikarononi dekonin.

English: Once you shelter with him good and a person under the bush, you will know him.

Kiswahili: Unapo jificha na mtu mzuri ama mbaya kwa kichaka, utamjua.

French: Si tut e caches avec une personne en brousse, tu la connatras, tant mauvaise ou bonne

Teaching: This proverb is used to help us understand that people of good characters are noticed even when there are uncertainties or first contact and a bad person is also noticed from the first contact with him.

Bible parallel: Luke 6:35 “But love your enemies, do well to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”
57. Itwani keinakin epura churi korauni bobo nesi etamio atamashait.

**English:** The one who is praised, comes forth to chant.

**Kiswahili:** Anayesifiwa hujitokeza akiimba.

**French:** Quelqu’un loue, se presente en chantant.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when you praise someone too much and value him to appoint that nothing can be done with him then it come a time that he is irrelevant and not productive.

**Bible parallel:** Psalms150:1-6 “Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens! Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness! Praise him”
58. Je ei mamu ikochak kapedori alibuni mamu kapedori akipia kini pwapu amukebete.
   English: He whose seeds have not germinated does not put down the seed container.
   Kiswahili: Mtu ambaye mbegu zake hazijaota haweki mkebe wa mbegu chini.
   French: Celui que ses grains ne sont pas encore pousses, ne jette pas le recipient des grains.
   Teaching: This proverb is used to help us understand the true meaning of hard work and consistency and it brings out the true Swahili saying mtafutaji hachoki, when you have to achieve anything in life, you need to persevere and work hard towards it.
   Bible parallel: Galatians6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

59. Je Etwani lokabokan ike boni nesi abar ejotoe.
   English: Only a medicine man gets rich by sleeping.
Kiswahili: Muuguzi pekee ndie utajirika akiwa amelala.
French: Seulement un medecin qui s’enrichi en dormant.
Teaching: This proverb teaches us that we should not be comfortable even if we have all that we wanted to attain but to work hard to maintain our status and even to acquire more
Bible parallel: 2Corinthians9:6-8 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

60. Je lo ekote nikapatat paka kokukumu,pwap chuti.
English: He who wants what is under a bed must bend over to get it.
Swahili: Mwenya anakata kite ambacho iko chini ya kitanda lazima aina.
French: Celui veut une chose endessous du lit, doit se courber.
Teaching: This proverb teaches us that good things don’t come easy they need you to go that extra mile so that you can get them.
Bible parallel: Galatians6:9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
2Peter3:9 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.
61. Je lo mamu kebelkini akiyong mamu kebelkini atubokino.

**English:** He who refuses to obey cannot command.

**Swahili:** Anaye kataa kutii hatoi amri.

**French:** Celui qui refuse d’obeir, ne commande pas.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that we should be people of our words, when we say something we should mean it and not to do contrary to our words. It brings forth the true meaning of the proverb we should not preach water and drink wine.

**Bible parallel:** [2 Chronicles 12:5](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Chronicles%2012:5&version=NIV) “Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, ‘You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak.’”
62. Je lo mamu kepedori ajenuni ibore ipe mamu kepedori ajenuni ni cheda.

**English:** He who does not know one thing knows another.

**Kiswahili:** Yule ambaye hajui jambo moja anajua lingine

**French:** Celui qui connait pas une chose, connait quelque chose d’apart.

**Teaching:** This proverb is used to help us learn how to appreciate one another because no one can be good in all areas of life but through interacting with different people we learn from them on how to better our life.

**Bible parallel:** Hebrews3:13 “But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

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63. Je loiteni awo mamu kepedori akadakiri kedwarawo ken.

**English:** What is your own is your own even if it is bad.

**Swahili:** Chako ni chako hata kama ni kibaya.

**French:** Ce qui est a toi, est a toi, meme si n’est pas bon(ne).

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that we should accept ourselves the way we are with our weaknesses and there is always room for improvements, we should not focus or dwell on weaknesses but look for positive aspects in our life.

**Bible parallel:** Psalms91:2 “I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Mathew16:24-25 “Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”
64. Jelo elosi nedio edoli nama eluana sana.

**English:** He who walks slowly will also reach.

**Swahili:** Anaye tembea pole pole pia hufika.

**Franch:** Celui qui marche lentement doit aussi arriver.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when you have set your eyes on particular goal and be focussed, it might take long but eventually you will achieve it.

**Bible parallel:** Proverbs16:3 “Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established”

Ephesians4:29 “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”
65. Kebuu engatuni nama kon kokere ijo nama ka paduk mam epaduk kirengiari engatun kama kon.

**English:** when the leopard comes for you, the club at your neighbor’s house won’t drive him off.

**Swahili:** Chui ikikujia fimbo iliyo kwa jirani haiwezi kumfukuza.

**French:** Quand le lion te poursuit, le baton qui est dans la maison de ton voisin ne peut pas le chaser.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when we face challenges in our daily life we cannot bank our hope on neighbors to help us find solutions to the problem but you should believe in your ability to find a solution before seeking support from other people.

**Bible parallel:** Zacharia4:6-7 “So he said to me, this is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God bless it! God bless it!’”
66. *Kemamu ijoo kijeni atwanare kongoleki atesi.*

**English:** Closed mouth catches no flies.

**Kiswahili:** Mdomo uliofungwa haushiki inzi.

**French:** Une bouche ferme n’attrape pas une mouche.

**Teaching:** A person who is not open to new ideas and innovations will not grow to its limit but will stagnate for his entire life.

**Bible parallel:** Hebrews13:1-25 “Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.””
67. *Kedumun etwani epei achok aree ebeikini ape kama ka are.*

**English:** If one is roasting two potatoes, one of them is bound to get charred.

**Kiswahili:** Anayechoma viazi viwili, moja lazima iungue.

**French:** Celui qui rotit deux patates, l’une doit calciner.

**Teaching:** It is not easy to work towards two goals at the same time, because you will take much time on one and let the other one stall or undone. This proverb teaches that we should perform one duty at a time to prevent errors.

**Bible parallel:** James 1:2-4 “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

68. *Kemam keputosi ka papa eputosi ka toto.*

**English:** If you do not know death, look at the grave.

**Kiswahili:** Kama hujui kifo tazama kaburi.

**French:** Si tu ne sais pas la mort, regardes les tombeaux.

**Teaching:** This proverb warns us that every evil deeds that we commit there are consequences some which cause irreversible damage like death.

**Bible parallel:** Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.
69. *Kibwap awo kome awoo.*

**English:** Follow bees and get honey.

**Kiswahili:** Fuata nyuki ule asali.

**French:** Suis l’abeille et tu auras du miel.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that good things doesn’t come easy you need to position yourself correctly so that when good things come they find you ready to grab them. It also teaches us that we should have right people or good friends who can help us grow and achieve our full potential.

**Bible parallel:** John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

70. *Kidar angaje kon.*

**English:** The mouth wronged the walker.

**Kiswahili:** Mdomo ilikosea mtembezi.

**French:** La bouche trompe le marchant.
Teaching: The proverb is used in the to warn those people who like to talk evil about other people and create a situation that can generate to fight or exchange bitter verbal words.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 5:7 “For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity; but God is the one you must fear.”

James 3:6 “And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.”

71. Kikosa erisa akiring enyemi inya.

English: When the lion cannot find meat, it eats grass.

Swahili: Simba akikosa nyama hula nyasi.

French: A l’absance du viande, le lion mange les herbes.

Teaching: This proverb is used to teach us that we should be flexible to adjust to every situation and not be ridged to change but embrace change positively.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
72. Kilimo ijo itwani ka kongu ka pete egeuni akangu ariapunun.

**English:** When you mention the person with one eye, the one with the eye problem reacts.

**Swahili:** Ukimtaja aliye na jicho moja, aliye na shida ya jicho huguswa.

**French:** Quand tu addresses une personne en clignant l’œil, le borne s’enerve.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us the need of understanding every person’s weaknesses and being accommodative to different ideas and ideologies. We should not discriminate any person based on race or tribe.

**Bible parallel:** Romans 8:38-39 “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
73. Kiloki ijo akolong eoni.

**English:** When you spread it in the sun, it becomes dry.

**Swahili:** Unapoianika kwa jua, hukauka.

**French:** Quand tu l’etales en plein soleil, il se seche.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us the importance of exposure because through it we can be able to learn new lessons and best practices and become better people in the future.

**Bible parallel:** 1Corinthians1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”
74. *Kimongin iyare mamu kepedorete akiboi kaujokape.*

**English:** Two guests cannot be entertained satisfactorily at the same time.

**Swahili:** Wageni wawili hawawezi kuandaliwa vifaavyo kwa wakati mmoja.

**French:**

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches that a person cannot effectively perform more than one duty effectively whatsoever. One will fail for failure of giving it the warranted attention. Success comes from concentration and commitment.

**Bible parallel:** Deuteronomy 6:14-16 “Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land. Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah.”

75. *Kingarakini bere kere ingarakini nakasabani.*

**English:** Help yourself and God will help you.

**Kiswahili:** Jisaidie na mungu atakusaidia.

**French:** Aides-toi, toi-meme et Dieu t’ aidera.

**Teaching:** This proverb is used to warn the lazy people that they should not wait for things to happen but they should take part and participate to make things happen.
Bible parallel: Philippians4:6 “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

76. Kituruoi lokameran sana I chute emongakipianakin akipi.

English: The brewer dilutes the beer if over-praised.

Kiswahili: Mgema hulitia tembo maji anapo sifiwa.

French:

Teaching: This proverb teaches that when you have the opportunity to do great thing do it to the best of your ability and when you are praised don’t relax but to continue doing what you do at its best.

Bible parallel: 1Corinthians10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”
77. **Kotubu ikumesi kitukuu esura**

**English:** Cut your nose to save your face.

**Kiswahili:** Kata pua lako kuokoa uso yako.

**French:** Coupes ton nez pour sauver ta face.

**Teaching:** In life there are circumstances that are too difficult to handle and you are always left in dilemma example when your loved one is critically ill to a point of death and you are told to make decisions on their behalves.

**Bible parallel:** Galatians 6:7-9 “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

78. **Kwilu edodorunete kesi kwi luemasete akip,n elaete,ejoka.**

**English:** Those who arrive at the spring first, drink the purest water.

**Swahili:** Wanaofika mtoni kwanza, ndio huyanywa maji masafi zaidi.

**French:** Ceux qui arrivent a la source d’eau les premiers, boivent l’eau la plus pure.

**Teaching:** This proverb help us understand the importance of being innovative, because if you have invented something you will make more money into it before other people think of it and start to implement it.

**Bible parallel:** James 4:13-15 “Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist
that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

79. Mam akibwapa etwani ni elepor.

**English:** Do not follow a person who is running away.

**Kiswahili:** Usimfuate mtu ambaye anatoroka.

**French:** Ne suis pas une personne qui fuit.

**Teaching:** The proverb is used as a warning to people not to follow the directions or guidance of others blindly because you can be led into trouble. Doing things without reasoning for one is not helpful and can lead to failure and problems which may affect your life, reputation or circumstances.

**Bible parallel:** Psalm 32:8 “God will instruct me and teach me in the way I should go. He will guide me with His eye.”

John 10:3-5 “I hear Jesus’ voice and He calls me by name and leads me out. Jesus goes before me and I follow him, for I know his voice. I will by no means follow a stranger.”
80. *Mamu akimuruori apadak kori kere ajai apejo ore.*

**English:** You should never forget your neighbor when you invite people to the feast.  
**Swahili:** Usimsahau jirani yako unapo waalika watu kwa karamu.  
**French:** Tu pourres pas oublier ton voisin quand tu invites les gens pour festoyer.  
**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that we should treat all people with respect and high regard because they are all important in our life and they play critical life in our life no matter their state in the society.  
**Bible parallel:** Leviticus 18:19 “*You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.*”

81. *Mamu akipi kedokenorete aukoto.*

**English:** Water never flows up the mountain.
Swahili: Maji kamwe hayatiririki yakielekea juu ya mlima.
French: L’eau n’a jamais tombe au dessus de la montagne.
Teaching: This proverb is used to warn people that there are some procedures in society and in life that cannot be changed. Pre-set community norms, principles and standards cannot be changed. We are required to follow them in order to fit in the community. Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

82. Mamu emoru kapi kanen apete imoru lu chaki kanen.
English: When the rock is not around, the small stone sits there.
Swahili: Wakati mwamba haupo, kokoto huketi hapo.
French: Lorsque le rock n’est pas là, les cailloux y restent.
Teaching: This proverb is used the importance of shared responsibility, and giving chance to others in a family or in other areas of work. Rigidity and dictatorship does not allow others to show their ability, or grow others to handle responsibilities and make decisions. We should give everyone a chance in society.
Bible parallel: Corinthians 6:3 “We put no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.”
1 Corinthians 8:9 “Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak”
83. *Mamu ijo kashishanakini edokohet akidok okitoi.*

**English:** You don’t teach a grown up monkey how to climb a tree.

**Swahili:** Humfunzi nyani aliye komaa jinsi ya kuupanda mti.

**French:** Tu ne peux pas montrer un singe comment grimper sur les arbres.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that wisdom is very important and it comes with age and experience. Therefore, we may not be able to change old habits in a person, be they positive or negative. What we can’t change, we let it be.

**Bible parallel:** *Jeremiah 13:23* “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good who are accustomed to do evil.”
84. Mamu ijo kidemari etwani a bahati ken.
   English: You cannot take away someone's luck
   Swahili: Huwezi kuichukua bahati ya mwingine.
   French: Tu ne peux pas prendre a cote la chance du quelqu’un d’autre.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that what fate has for a person is meant to be and cannot be changed. We all cannot have similar opportunities in life. We are blessed with different talents, wealth, skills and abilities and we cannot take them away from other persons. When one is blessed, no one can take their blessings.
   Bible parallel: James1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”
   1 Corinthians 12:4-6 “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.”

85. Mamu ijokibelkini achakari iborekoni nimojong kanuka ei nikitetet.
   English: One does not throw away his old praying mat just because of a new one that is borrowed.
Kiswahili: Mtu hatupi mkeka wake wa maombi ukiwa mkuu kuu kwa sababu ya mpya aliouomba.
French: On ne jette pas l’ancienne natte a cause d’une nouvelle.
Teaching: In life it is not easy to climb to the top without the help of other people that are around you. We should not forget those people who have helped us in our endeavours to achieve our goals in life because we still need them to support us in future.
Bible parallel: Hebrews 10:23-25 “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

86. Mamu siong kekorakite alipo/amana kama kalukauriak kosi kone elipatosiongo idwe kosi.
English: We have not inherited this land from our ancestors, but borrowed it from our children.
Swahili: Hatujairidhi hii ardi kutoka kwa mababu zetu, ila tumeiomba kwa watoto wetu.
French: Quand on n’a pas herite cette terre de nos ancestres, on la demande maintenant pour nos enfats.
Teaching: This proverb teaches us that we should take care of what we have today because tomorrow you might lose it. Taking care of an inheritance is meant for the future generations. Whatever investments we make are for our children and not for ourselves or past generations. It is a duty of the community and individuals.
Bible parallel: Numbers 27:6-11 “And the Lord said to Moses, “The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father’s brothers and transfer the inheritance of their father to them. And you shall speak to the people of Israel, saying, ‘If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. And if he has no daughter, then you shall give
his inheritance to his brothers. And if he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers.

87. *Ni akonyi emunu ata kaanyu aunot elepor.*

**English:** The one who has been attacked by a buffalo is afraid when he sees a black cow.

**Kiswahili:** Aliye vamiwa na nyati huogopa akimuona ng’ombe mweusi.

**French:** Celui qui a ete attaque par le buffle, fuit meme une vache noire.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when you have gone through a traumatizing moment in your life, it is not easy to feel safe. Insecure feelings arise when we have encountered problems in life. For instance, if a business venture had failed in the past, one would not attempt it again. You imagine failure will repeat itself. We need to be careful when making decisions, but it should not prevent us from venturing again.

**Bible parallel:** James 41:10 “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. ”

Proverbs 3:5-6 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
88. *Ni ebangi egwa akiro nu ebelkinete adamun neside.*

**English:** The fool hides what would eat him.

**Kiswahili:** Mjinga hukificha kinacho weza kumla.

**French:** Le foux cache meme ce qui peut le manger.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that knowledge is power and it is the best tool you can use to change your environment and the world.

**Bible parallel:** Hosea 4:6-7 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. The more they increased, the more they sinned against me; I will change their glory into shame.”
89. *Ni edokiti ateukoto edokumi.*

**English:** The possessor may become dispossessed.

**Kiswahili:** Aliye navyo huenda akanyang’anywa.

**French:** Le possesseur peut devenir denuer.

**Teaching:** When you hold something with high regard to appoint that you make it valuable in your life remember that there comes a time that what you value will no longer add value to you. It also gives a true meaning of the saying that everything that has a beginning must have an end.

**Bible parallel:** 1Corinthians10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”
90. *Ni elaye egwelari nikarononi itolosio.*

**English:** Good things sell themselves, bad things are advertised.

**Kiswahili:** Kizuri cha jiuza, kibaya cha jitembeza.

**French:** Des bonnes choses se vendent, des mauvaises s’annoncent.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that you can be able to identify good people through their first interaction and their good deeds. People of bad character take most of their time showing off about who they are and what they have accomplished.

**Bible parallel:** James 4:6 “But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Phillipians 2:3-11 “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.
91. *Ni enyemi ijo ejai akeju kon.*

**English:** The devil turns against his friends.

**Kiswahili:** Shetani huwageukia marafiki wake.

**French:** Le diable recourt contre son ami.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that it is easy for friends to turn against each other because of selfish interest. The person you trust most and imagine cares about you, can turn to be your enemy. It warns us to keep relationships with caution.

**Bible parallel:** Matthew 7:16 “You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”

Romans 12:19 “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

92. *Ni enyemi ijoo ejal onopen kon.*

**English:** What bites you is in your clothes.

**Swahili:** Kikulacho ki nguoni mwako.

**French:** Ce qui te mange est dans tes habits.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that the people who we are close to can be our worst enemies because they know everything about us and they can easily use it against us. We should ensure we do not reveal too much about ourselves to other people.

**Bible parallel:** Luke 11:39 "Now then," said the Lord, "you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness."
Proverbs 26:23-25 “Like a coating of silver dross on earthenware are fervent lips with an evil heart. Enemies disguise themselves with their lips, but in their hearts they harbor deceit. Though their speech is charming, do not believe them, for seven abominations fill their hearts.”

93. Ni erait Nikon erait Nikon ata kerono.nikon.
   English: When the leopard comes for you, the club at your neighbor’s house won’t drive him off.
   Swahili: Chui anapo kuja kwako, rungu iliyoko kwa jirani haiwezi kufukuza.
   French: Lorsque le leopard te poursuit, meme le baton qui est dans la maison de ton voisin ne peut pas le chaser.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that when we are faced with challenges in life, it is easy to solve them with what is at hand or what is within your reach rather than depending on a neighbor and someone else who might not be interested to come to your rescue.
   Bible parallel: Mathew6:25 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?
94. *Ni erengiara kakimati kotogo lokajon ebonguni kene lo erengiara kakirot mamu kebonguni amata.*

**English:** The one chased away with a club comes back, but the one chased away with reason does not.

**Kiswahili:** Aliye fukuzwa kwa rungu hurudi, lakini afukuzwaye kwa sababu harudi.

**French:** Celui qui est chasse par un baton revient, mais pas celui par une raison.

**Teaching:** This proverb is teaching us that when we differ in ideas and the only weapon we should use is to reason together but not use weapons when we have different opinions.

**Bible parallel:** Psalms19:8-10 “*The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous*”
altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb”

95. Ni itekeri nicheneside apasi akiteker niche.
   English: The chaser and the one who is chased get tired.
   Kiswahili: Anaye fukuzwa na anaye fukuzana wote huchoka.
   French: Le chasseur et celui qu’on chasse se fatiguent.
   Teaching: This proverb teaches us that in life there is a beginning and end of every activity or journey, so if you have an opportunity to do something, give it your best.
   Bible parallel: 1 Samuel 16:7 “But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”

96. Opoapa nesi je lo iyelewaye ekuruke lo ejei otau keng ebelkini abongokin kamakuni esaa lo imuruori kakiro.
   English: A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart, and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words.
Kiswahili: Rafiki ni yule anayejua wimbo ulioko moyoni mwako, na anaweza kuuimba kama umesahau maneno yake.

French: Un ami est celui qui connaît la chanson dans ton Coeur, et peut chanter pour toi lorsque tu oublies les refrains.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us the importance of friendship, a friend is someone who can help you at all times and value your friendship at all times when you are in need and when you are not in need.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 18:24 “One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother”

97. Panya ipwaka mamu kepedorete akibok adwi.

English: The rat does not help the other rat to peel a piece of maize.

Kiswahili: Panya hasaidii mwingine kukitoa maganda kipande cha mahindi.

French: Le rat n’aide pas un autre pour pelure l’écorce du mais.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that the value of what you posses is well known to you and the other person cannot whatsoever understand the value only you and you alone.

Bible parallel: Ephesians1:13-14 “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.”
98. Yein ni edeka ejenii nama ejiai arieboni.

**English:** The one who has prepared beer does not laugh at the beer which tastes bad.

**Swahili:** Aliye tayarisha pombe haichekelei pombe yenye ladha mbaya.

**French:** Celui qui prepare de la biere, ne rit sur une biere que n’est mure.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when you have failed in your innovation or you have failed in what you plan to do, you should not blame other people but make it as a learning lesson so that you can improve and be better.

**Bible parallel:** 1Peter4:12-14 “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”
99. *Yeni ka amanii kosikis kotubor.*

**English:** The strength of a hero does not centre on his buttocks.

**Kiswahili:** Nguvu ya shujaa hai kituo cha kati kwa makalio yake.

**French:** La force d’un hero ne se centre pas sur ses fesses.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that your ability to do great things should not be focused in specific areas but holistically.

**Bible parallel:** Ephesians3:20 “Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us”
100. **Yeni ni ejeni kere ejii kotenari kichungae muma apasari.**

**English:** Whoever thinks of staying should take care not to fall.

**Swahili:** Anaye fikiria kukaa anafaa ajihadhari asianguke.

**French:** Celui qui pense de rester, doit prendre en garde de ne pas tomber.

**Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that when you are committed to undertake any activity do it to completion and you should not do it and leave it half done.
Bible parallel: Hebrews13:5-6 “Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”
RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR COLLECTION OF TESO (KENYA) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS.

By
Gabriel Odhiambo (Kenya)

Location: The Kenyan Teso people are natives of the Teso District, in Western Kenyan. They are an extension of their Ugandan counterparts, in that they were merely separated by the partition of East Africa during the historic scramble and partition of Africa. This is similar to the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, and the Oromo of Kenya and Ethiopia. The Teso are among the Plain Nilotic groups closely related to the Turkana, Karamojong, Toposa, Maasai and Samburu.

The Ethnographic Location of the Teso in Kenya

Myth of Origin: Myth of origin states that the Teso originated from the present day Egypt, in the area of Alexandra. They are believed to have descended from the Hebrew particularly Joseph who had married a black Egyptian. Later when the Israeli slaves left Egypt for the Promised Land, the group followed the Blue Nile River into Ethiopia. They then acquired the name Iteso, meaning “we have seen.” They saw a land, part of the promise to Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. Over several centuries, they gradually migrated to the South West. They were part of a larger group of Nilo-Hamitic peoples who include; the Maasai and Turkana of Kenya, the Nyangatom of present day Ethiopia, Karamojong, the Toposa of South
Sudan, all known as the Ateker. They further split into several groups, including Jie, Turkana, Karamojong and Teso.

The northern Teso occupy the area previously known as Teso District in Uganda, currently, the districts of Amuria, Soroti, Kumi, Katakwi, Pallisa, Bukedea and Kaberamaido. The southern Teso live mainly in the districts of Tororo and Busia in Uganda, and Busia District in Kenya’s western region.

Culture: Teso has about seven main clans, but the most popular and dominant ones are Irarak, Inyakoi, Atekok, Ikomolo, Ikarebwok, Inom. Teso clan names reveal a history of long-standing ethnic interactions. Names of Bantu and northern Nilotic origin are found among them.

Marriages are not just alliances between spouses, but also between two exogamous clans. The first alliance is evident in the practical arrangements of setting up a household, and the second is expressed in ritual and healing practices. More than one-third of all men and a majority of all women are married polygymously. The amount of bride-wealth required presentation of ten to fifteen heads of cattle, but has changed. It can be paid before or after the birth of the first child, or even gradually over an extensive period of more than twenty years. Bride-wealth helps constrain the incidence of divorce because a man who receives cattle through his sister’s marriage would have to return the bride-wealth.

Figure 3. Teso elders drinking traditional brew at social events.

INTRODUCTION

The Teso live in family groups, related to their clans, and their children are taught their culture in the evenings during a story-telling time as they have evening meals. The elders
and parents transmit the traditional community norms by telling stories, using riddles, proverbs and wise sayings. They teach the children the different traditional dances and songs, which they carry over from one generation to another. During their grazing times, and circumcision periods, before marriage, the young men and women would also be taught more.

Examples of Proverbs.

1. *Ajakun ka punda eteke*
   - **English:** A donkey always says thank you with a kick.
   - **Kiswahili:** A sante ya punda ni mateke.
   - **French:**
   - **Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that you might sacrifice and do your best to someone who may be in need but the same person will forget all the good things that you have done to them and at times they throw insult to you.

2. *Ekitoilokapolon mam kebilakini kakisom kalosia*
   - **English:** A fully grown tree cannot be bent into a walking stick.
   - **Kiswahili:** Mti uliokuwa na kukomaa hauwezi pindika ukawa bakora.
   - **French:**
   - **Teaching:** This proverb teaches us that for you to be able to mold a character that is upright from a child then you need to start when the child is still young because when they grow old you will not be able to direct them.

Like in many African communities, traditional cultural beliefs and taboos among the Iteso mainly glorified the men and the old, while they looked down upon the young and women. The men had the latitude to do whatever their heart desired of them unlike women. The men were the authors of the same rules and regulations. For example, in accordance with strict Iteso tradition, rabbit meat was strictly a ‘men only’ delicacy, though a clear explanation was not given on the consequences of eating them for women. There were, however, many myths that surrounded the rabbits, which scared women away from eating them.
**Figure 4**: Teso women using traditional milling system to get cooking flour.

**Religion**: The Teso believe in a divinity with different aspects, variously called *akuj*, “high,” or *edeke*, “illness.” The *Ajokin*, “little spirits of the bush”, invited people who met them to feast, as long as they kept the invitation a secret. Under missionary influence, the *Ajokin* are identified with the devil.

*Ipara*, (spirits of the dead) figure prominently in the Teso lives, but there are no special shrines for propitiation. They believe that when they possess people, the *Ipara* bring with them exotic spirits from other cultures who harm or make ill the people possessed. The ceremony of exhuming the dead, known as *Ekutet*, and was performed when elders felt the spirit of a particular dead person was disturbing a family member through sickness or other misfortune. They strongly believe that the sick person recovers fully once the remains of a deceased person, thought to be haunting the living, are exhumed. They believe that at death, the body is separated from its *eparait* (spirit), which goes to live in the bush. The spirit ideally moves deeper and deeper into the bush, but in practice many spirits return to bother the living. The skeletons of dead people are exhumed after a number of years so rituals can be performed to “cool” them and make them more kindly disposed to the living.
A double-mouthed pot used for brewing beer in Teso exhumation rituals.

The ritual which is performed by elderly people who are past child bearing age, involves slaughtering of a bull and a ram for feasting alongside traditional beer called *Ajon* which is made from millet.

Churches have been built and evangelism has taken place among the Teso and majority have turned to Christianity. The primary religion practiced by the Teso is Roman Catholicism. This has helped to reduce their beliefs in witchcraft and traditional rituals and beliefs, to adapt the modern way of life. Women are especially involved in the church. The African priests at the missions have successfully advocated the organization of local cooperative groups called “Christian communities.”

**Economy:** Having been pastoralists since time immemorial, these people are now the most successful farmers in both Western Kenya. They grow finger millet and sorghum as their major food crops. Cassava is used as a supplement to these staples and as a famine-relief food. Women grow vegetables in gardens next to their sleeping houses and gather various wild foods, especially mushrooms. The primary cash crop was cotton, which is grown for individual income during the short rains. Newly introduced cash crops such as maize and tobacco are grown during the long rains.

They also keep animals, but because of urbanization and population growth, they cannot do it extensively. The primary commercial activities are trading in cattle, fishing (those near Lake Victoria) and doing small businesses.
Political Structure: The pre-colonial Teso were organized into territorial units called *itemwan*, which were large-scale political units, organized for defense and political expansion. An *itemwan* was led by a successful war leader.

Clan elders led and guided the community, making decisions and liaising with those of other clans. Changes with retirement from the status of elder occurred after performing some rituals. Retired men could no longer marry and were believed to have privileged access to the divinity.

Women’s forms of social organization include special, ritually defined friendships, labor cooperatives, groups formed to heal illness caused by spirit possession, and, since the mid 1980s, church groups.

Prominence in History. Famous Teso include the current governor of Busia County, Hon. Sospeter Ojaamong, Hon. Albert Ekirapa, Ojamaa Ojaamong, Oduya Oprong, Pancras Otwani, educationists like Isogol Titus, Silvester Silver Omunyu and student leaders like Titus Adungosi, Odula Onyia MESHACK Patrick Emongaise and Samson Iliwa.

REFERENCES:

4. 2 Elders of the Teso ethnic group, and collaborators.
   John Peter Osikuku-0706-596-372.
   Joan Amajong-joanlinet246@gmail.com-0715-236-028.

WRITING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are:

1. To collect a hundred proverbs and wise sayings from the Teso ethnic group.
2. To translate these proverbs and wise sayings into English for the youth and other literate people to be wise.
3. To help people to enrich their communication skills by using these proverbs and wise sayings from the Teso people.
4. To facilitate religious teachings using them, and show the relationship to the locally understood sayings and proverbs.

METHODOLOGY
The writer will interview Teso elders and other people with good understanding of the proverbs and wise sayings. He will record them for translation into Kiswahili, English and French, and publish a booklet.

**BUDGET**

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**TOTAL**

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