

**CASE STUDIES OF OVERSEAS KENYAN STUDENTS  
AT LA TROBE UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIA: ACADEMIC AND  
RELATED CHALLENGES**

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## **List of Abbreviations:**

A.B.C.	Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
A.T.M.	Automated Teller Machine.
A.U.C.	Australian Universities Commission.
A.U.S.	Australian Union of Students.
C.M.S.	Church Missionary Society.
C.P.E.	Certificate of Primary Education.
F.A.W.E.	Forum for African Women Education.
F.G.M.	Female Genital Mutilation.
H.E.C.S.	Higher Education Contribution Scheme.
H.I.V./A.I.D.S.	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
I.E.L.T.S.	International English Language Test System.
I.P.O.	International Programs Office.
K.A.C.E.	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education.
K.C.E.	Kenya Certificate of Education.
K.C.P.E.	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.
K.C.S.E.	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.
K.I.S.A.	Kikuyu Independent Schools Association.
K.K.E.A.	Kikuyu Karing'a Education Association.
M.I.U.	Management Information Unit.
N.L.C.	National Liaison Committee.
N.C.E.O.P.	National Committee on Education Objectives and Policies.

O.E.C.D.	Organization for Economic Cooperation and
Development	
U.N.E.S.C.O.	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural
	Organization.
U.N.I.C.E.F.	United Nations International Children’s Emergency
Fund.	

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## **Abstract**

This study involves an exploration of the perceptions of four overseas Kenyan students about their educational experiences at La Trobe University. A related aim of this research is to find out how these four students' previous learning in Kenya affects their learning and living experiences in Australia, for instance, in terms of demands associated with differences in learning and teaching styles, cultural expectations and proficiencies in English.

A non-positivist, qualitative methodology is adopted for this research which employs an interview-based case study approach. Qualitative research demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial and that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock more comprehensive understanding of what is being researched.

While the findings of this study confirm current understandings of the issues that international students commonly face, they also provide a more complex and individualized picture of the needs and aspirations of overseas Kenyan students. As the case studies demonstrate, the academic and related challenges four Kenyan students have encountered at La Trobe University are best understood in relation to several contexts. The difficulties these international students have experienced in the context of transition or border crossing – between two countries, cultures and educational systems – were exacerbated by inadequate pre-departure preparation and orientation on arrival. Incongruities between two educational systems – in particular between

their prior teacher-centred schooling in Kenya and the unfamiliar student-centred university education in Australia – colour the academic and related challenges such students struggle to address, at least in their initial year at University. The broader, global context of the commodification and marketization of higher education – along with increasing strains of an under-resourced university sector in Australia – also impinge upon the lives of these four La Trobe students, in a variety of ways.

## Statement of Authorship

Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in this thesis were approved by the Faculty of Education and Human Ethics Committee.

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Signature of Candidate

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Date

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