The Relevance of Social Work Education for Social Development in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the contribution of professional Social work education towards social development in Kenya. It is believed that fundamental to understand social work involves understanding its educational requirements. Social work education and Social work profession offers a varied preparation at many levels (Ginsberg, 2001). Education is available at every educational level from the community college through to doctorate. Education and training is important because it is the preparatory phase for social work practice. The extent to which professional social workers execute their mandates and roles in society is principally dependent on the adequacy and relevance of the preparation they receive in terms of training and education. Therefore, to fully understand the relevance of this profession's contribution to social development in Kenya, it is paramount to understand what is involved in preparing the Social work professional, it is important to appreciate the comprehensive nature of the education needed to obtain a degree in social work. To ascertain this, a census of 15 Higher Institutions of Learning (HIL) that train social workers and opinions of stakeholders of the profession in Kenya were sought and presented in this paper. The results indicate that the majority of the Social Work HIL in Kenya are public universities which constituted 53%. This states the commitment of the government of Kenya in training social workers who play a huge role in closing social development gaps. Private universities are represented by 27% of the HIL that were surveyed. The remaining 20% are middle level colleges which also train social workers, especially at diploma level. Social work has the potential to fill the gaps in social development if academic preparation of professionals in this discipline is effectively regulated and curricula designed to suit the countries social development needs.

Keywords: Social work, Social development, Education, Higher Institutions of Learning, Curricula.

1. Background

It is believed that fundamental to understand social work involves understanding its educational requirements. Social work education and social work profession offer a varied preparation at many levels. Education is available at every educational level form the community college through to doctorate. To fully understand what is involved in preparing the social work profession, it is important to appreciate the comprehensive nature of the education needed to obtain a degree in social work (Ginsberg, 2001).

Norma (2002) clearly stipulated that there are three levels of social work professional education (professional social workers); those with baccalaureate or bachelor's degree in social work (BSWs); people who hold master's degrees(MSWs); and those who have doctoral degrees, either a PhD. in social work or a Doctor of Social Work (DSW). Earning the social work degree, which is usually called the Bachelor of Social Work, but which may also be called the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work or the Bachelor of Science in Social Work, is similar to earning any other bachelor's degree.

Ginsberg (2001) in his book *Careers in Social Work* observes that, core courses which vary with the college or university are required. Several additional courses or sequence of courses are part of the major. A large portion of the major involves social work courses, at least one of which is the field practicum – supervised professional experience as a social worker.

Also, students who have earned a bachelor's degree in Social Work may decide to work in a social service agency or go on to study for master's degree in social work (MSW). Many graduate programs require that an undergraduate must have degree in the same discipline. It is not necessary to have an undergraduate in Social work in order to apply for an MSW program. Apparently, many people make the decision to study Social work after they have completed a bachelor's degree in another field. It is also not usual for individuals to work for years in a variety of fields before deciding to go back to school and study social work (Norma, 2002).

According to Ginsberg (2001), the education for Social workers consists of five curriculum areas:

human behavior and the social environment to understand human psychology, sociology, and biology; social welfare policy and services to understand programs and services and the ways they are developed and changed; social research to help social workers evaluate better their work and contribute to new knowledge about people and problems they face; social work methods of practice, for information about skills and approaches social workers need for carrying out their responsibilities; and field practicum, for practical field experience in the

profession under the supervision of the experienced professional social workers.

According to the Council of Social Work Education in the USA, it requires that the social work curriculum in both baccalaureate and master's level programs to include content in the following: Social work values and ethics; Human diversity; Social and economic justice; Human behavior and the social environment; Populations at risk; Social welfare policies and services; Social work practice; Social research; and Field practicum.

Apparently, the baccalaureate Social work programs provide the professional foundation necessary for entry level "generalist social work practice". Education for generalist practice prepares students for client, agency, and policy practice (micro, mezzo and macro – level social work practice. But, a typical master's level provides both first year generalist foundation and a second year of specialization (Norma, 2002).

The professional education for social work also demands that on top of class room study, students both in baccalaureate and master's degree social work programs learn through fieldwork, which is an internship in a social agency or organization. Field work apparently, is designed to provide social work students with the opportunity to address challenging social issues through client, agency and policy practice (at micro, mezzo and macro levels). The internship must be supervised by a field instructor who has a MSW degree, expertise of working as a social worker and special preparation to supervise students. The fieldwork provides students with: Carefully supervised hand-on –experience; the opportunity to learn the workings of social service agencies; familiarity with social welfare policies as they impact the social worker's day – to – day practice with clients; and knowledge about the process of policy formulation and change (CSWE, 1997).

Norma (2002) points out that the minimum requirement for fieldwork is 400 hours for baccalaureate students and 900 hours for Master's – level students. A typical undergraduate social work program for instance includes two full days a week in a social agency for one year, while apparently on the other side of the paradigm; a typical graduate program includes three full days of fieldwork for two years. Some schools it is reported offer special programs that make it possible for students who are already employed in a social work agency to do their internship there.

However, MSW is considered the terminal degree for professional practice that a growing number of workers apparently are continuing with their education in a variety of "post – masters programs". These programs it is observed address a variety of specific areas of practice, such as administration; supervision; gerontology; or substance abuse treatment. Apparently, on the same wavelength, other social workers return to study for a doctorate in social work earning either a **DSW** (Doctor of Social Welfare) or a **PhD** (Doctor of Philosophy) degree (Norma, 2002).

It is vital to note that originally, the DSW degree was earned by the practitioners who would carry on extensively sophisticated work with the clients or who would manage agencies. PhDs in social work were earned by practitioners who wished to become researchers and teachers which are roles of PhDs in other fields. The PhD according to the academic tradition is research and teaching credential more than practice certification. However, the literature observes that most of the doctoral degrees offered in social work are PhDs. But, it does not make any sense or difference whether one earns a DSW or PhD even though, there might be a distinction between the two in terms of courses students took and on other educational or research requirements (Ginsberg, 2001).

A dissertation is a unique study that requires the students to develop a topic and conduct research and write about that topic in an extensive study. Some dissertations are based on survey or laboratory research. Others are based on studies of the literature. Dissertations apparently come after the student has finished the course work and the comprehensive examinations and it must be approved and supervised by a four or five faculty member who approve the topic, the dissertation plan and the final dissertation product. Usually, the committee members who have a special knowledge of the student's area of study, are appointed by the social work dean, director or some other university official often in consultation with the student (Ginsberg, 2001).

This paper assesses the potency of the social work curriculum in preparing social workers to address indigenous social problems in Kenya.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

Exploratory or formative studies are taken up in order to achieve new insights or ideas about a phenomenon. Exploratory studies are usually more appropriate in the case of problems about which little knowledge is available. In this paper perceived strengths and gaps in the existing social work curricula as shared by current students, social work practitioners, educators and employers was explored.

2.2 Study Population

The study population comprised of educators and current students of social work in selected Higher Institutions of Learning (HIL). Each of these groups were critical in appraising not just the social work curricula and practice

but the current contribution of the profession in socio – economic development. Final year students were targeted, given the fact that they are the immediate beneficiaries of the most recent social work curricula and they also have had opportunity to test the theories, models and skills acquired during their fieldwork placements.

2.3 Study Sample and sampling methodology
Higher Institutions of Learning, Educators and Students
Purposive sampling, random sampling and census was used to select the higher institutions of learning. HIL in Kenya are all those post-secondary institutions that award qualifications in social work. A range of institutions were selected to represent public universities, private institutions and middle level colleges.

The sample size for this study was 15 institutions of higher learning. This was a census of all public and private universities offering social work courses who were purposively selected on the pretext that they offer the social work courses. The two middle level colleges that participated in this study were randomly sampled/selected from a list of social work training colleges offering social work. They were selected to give the perspective of training of social workers in the middle level colleges.

Both the older and relatively new institutions were included in the sample in order to compare curricula and other variables. In each institution, two categories of respondents were be sampled, namely: the social work educator and 10 final year social work students. Students were randomly selected from the list of the students obtained from the department hosting the social work curriculum. The educator was purposively selected on the pretext that he was the head of the social work department in the universities and middle level colleges that participated in this study. Based on the criteria above the following higher institutions of learning participated in this study.

2.4 Data collection: methods, tools and techniques
Both secondary and primary data was utilized. The data was collected utilizing various methods and tools.
  i.   **Primary data**
Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires and personal interviews (interview guides) and FGDs.
   o   **Structured questionnaires**
Different sets of structured questionnaires were designed and administered to different categories of respondents. For each category, the questionnaire was standardized, with both closed and open-ended questions relating to key research objectives in order to allow for comparability of responses.
   o   **Personal interviews**
The interview guide had a list of open-ended questions to guide collection of data from key actors on the competencies and the gaps in social work both at training and practice levels. The interviews held with the social work educators.
   o   **Focus group discussions**
FGDs were conducted with students before they filled the self – administered questionnaire. Tape-recording was used to record discussions with prior permission of the students and the educators alongside note-taking in order to insulate against loss of data.
  ii. **Secondary data**
A number of existing literatures were reviewed to provide the basis of this study. Data reviewed was on education and training of the Social Work Profession. The findings from the review informed the discussion of findings. The exhaustive list of all the sources consulted is shown in the References.

2.5 Data processing and analysis
Quantitative data collected was cleaned and systematically organized in a manner that facilitated analysis. The data obtained from questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft excel. Focus was on relative frequencies and measures of central tendencies. The presentation employs the use of statistical tables, pie charts and graphs. On the other hand, secondary and unstructured data obtained from FGDs and qualitative interviews was analyzed thematically, focusing on the analysis of the content *vis-à-vis* defined variables in order to allow research question to be established. This involved a move from the qualitative data that was collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we were investigating. This was based on interpretative philosophy. The idea was to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data.
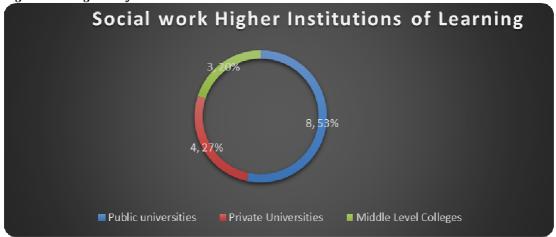
3. Findings of the Study
3.1 Categories of Social Work HIL
The majority of the social work higher institutions of learning (HIL) were public universities in Kenya which constituted 53%. This states the commitment of the government of Kenya to train social workers. Private

universities was represented by 27% of the HIL that were surveyed in this study. The remaining 20% were middle level colleges which also trained social workers. For social work to contribute to development, proper training of social workers is paramount. This study therefore, sought to interrogate the relevance of this kind of training that is given to would be social workers.

Figure 1: Categories of Social Work HIL

Source: Field Data

3.2 Students of social work

This study also sought the views of the students of social work as they are the recipients of the social work curriculum. A total number of 150 students participated in this study. The table below elaborates the characteristics of the students that came forth in this study.

Table 1: Demographics Findings about Students

Characteristic	Frequency N=150	Percentage
Sex		
Female	102	68%
Male	48	32%
Age (years)		
18 – 21	111	74%
22 – 25	21	14%
26 – 30	18	12%
Academic programme pursued		
Diploma	30	20%
Degree	120	80%

Source: Field Data

Majority of the students interviewed in this were female students (68%). This confirms again the assumption there is feminization of the social work profession. On the other hand, the age of most students was 18-21 years (74%). The rest of the students were ages 22 – 25 years and 26 – 30 years which were represented by 14% and 12% respectively.

Most of the students interviewed were pursuing degree in social work as represented by 80% of the interviewed students. The master's degree was left out as only one university – as per the time this study was carried out.

3.3 Social Work Education and training in Kenya

A contingent of well – trained social workers can contribute a great deal in assuring effective social development. For social work to be able to contribute in social development, education and training of social workers needs to be greatly emphasized. The literature even asserts that to fundamentally understand social work involves understanding its educational requirements. Social work education and social work profession offer a varied preparation at many levels. Education is available at every educational level form the community college through to doctorate. To fully understand what is involved in preparing the social work profession, it is important to appreciate the comprehensive nature of the education needed to obtain a degree in social work (Ginsberg, 2002). This section interrogates the current status of social work education in Kenya.

3.3.1 Social Work Higher Institutions of Learning

To further interrogate social work education in Kenya, respondents drawn from the HIL were asked to state the years when social work was established in their institutions, the number of students admitted on yearly basis, and the total number of graduates they have produced since the inception of the programmes. The findings showed that middle level colleges produce a lot of students to the market. Most students from this colleges graduate with Diplomas and certificates of social work. This study also found out that with the diploma, the students can further their studies to the university and obtain a degree in 2 – 3 years.

Interestingly, most of the public universities are still new and as most of them were incepted in 2013. During the duration of this research it came to my attention that most of the private universities in Kenya have a problem with numbers. Every year apparently the number of students keep dwindling. This study sought to unravel the mystery towards the dwindling numbers of students that enroll for social work courses in the private universities. We learnt that apparently exorbitant tuition has scared most of the students to join Public universities whose school fees is friendly. Respondents also pointed out lack of proper marketing of what really social workers do, competition from social hybrid courses and increasing numbers of schools of social work in the country.
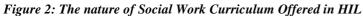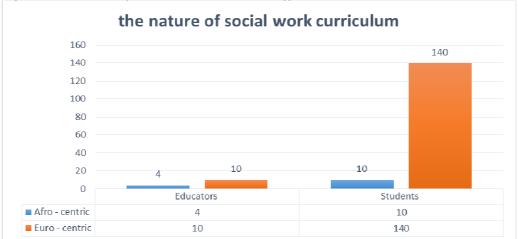
3.3.2 The social work Curriculum

This study sought to establish the views of the educators and social work students concerning the social work curriculum offered in the HIL. The educators from all institutions that participated in this study were of the view that the social work curriculum prepares social work students for generalist practice. The majority of the educators (66%) pointed that social work curriculum is generalist in nature.

The study also sought to know the relevance of the curriculum for social development. Most of the educators pointed that the curriculum properly prepares the students to address the gaps in social development. They felt that social development cuts across the curriculum offered in the universities. However, *Leon(2001)* pointed out that the education for social workers consists of five curriculum areas: human behavior and the social environment to understand human psychology, sociology, and biology; *s*ocial welfare policy and services to understand programs and services and the ways they are developed and changed; *s*ocial research to help social workers evaluate better their work and contribute to new knowledge about people and problems they face; *s*ocial work methods of practice, for information about skills and approaches social workers need for carrying out their responsibilities; and field practicum, for practical field experience in the profession under the supervision of the experienced professional social workers.

Concerning the origin of the social work curriculum taught in Kenya, most of the respondents were of the view that the curriculum was euro – centric (70%). This confirms literature review that asserts that most of the social work taught in Kenya is not indigenous. For social work to be able to adequately bridge the gaps in social development, it must adopt indigenous values, knowledge and principles. As (Mwansa, 2011) clearly puts it, social work or social work education has not been the product of a *progressive social metamorphosis* but rather that of foreign methodologies imposed on African societies. Consequently, the essence of social work education lacks relevance in terms of its philosophical, value and ideological base. Thus students who graduate from such a system of education tend to remain, to some extent, unfamiliar with indigenous knowledge systems and lack adequate knowledge in working with the people. Therefore, it is of essence to assert that while the origin of social work education is well known, its future direction, development and focus on the continent remain unknown, at worst haphazard, ad hoc and undirected with serious implications for the mission and vision of the profession. Also, social work in Africa has been without a platform to foster discourse on its nature, character and direction. Therefore, Transformation of social work education from being *euro-centric* to being *afro-centric* has to be spearheaded by an organization that can provide a forum for dialogue, leadership and a contextual framework.

Figure 2: The nature of Social Work Curriculum Offered in HIL

Source: Field Data

Most of the students (93%) also felt the curriculum they are consuming or consumed euro – centric in nature. For social work to fill the gaps in social development in Kenya, the social work curriculum should be commensurate with the indigenous social problems, indigenous values, knowledge base and principles.

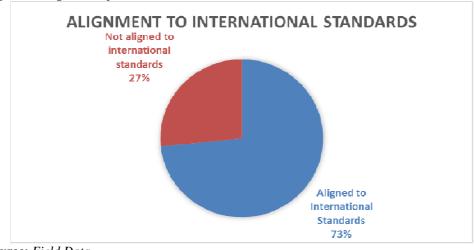### 3.3.3 The Social Knowledge and Skills

This study also sought to interrogate the kind of skills that the social workers are equipped with during the training process. The majority of the educators reported to equip students with the following skills: counselling; community mobilization; teaching skills; facilitation; organizational skills; presentation skills; report writing; methods of social work; project planning and management; and, resource mobilization skills. The educators asserted that this skills are integrated in the social work curricula that is consumed by the students. Equipping the students with the said skills goes a long way to ensure effective and sustainable social development.

The coin has two sides. On the other side of the paradigm, students and who participated in this study were also asked to mention the skills they have learnt since joining the school of social work. This was in the bid to ascertain what skills the students had been equipped with even as they were about to graduate and the skills used by practicing social workers to fill the gaps in social development. The majority confirmed to have learnt actually the skills that there lecturers mentioned on top here.

3.3.4 Curriculum Alignment to International Standards

We are living in a global village. Others say that we are living in the world without borders. Social workers now find themselves working towards solving social problems on a globalized level. This study also sought to know whether the curricula integrated any global standards. 73% of the educators confirmed that the curricula offered is aligned to the international standards. They highlighted the following standards: standards regarding values and ethics of social work; aspirations equity; human rights; and partnership.

Figure 3: Alignment of Curriculum to International Standards

Source: Field Data

3.3.5 Method and materials of teaching

This study found that social work education heavily relies on materials obtained from outside Kenya. This is

apparently occasioned by the low level of academic publication among the scholars. As a result they are forced to rely on methods and materials that have been imported from other countries. The majority of the students (73%) pointed out the sources of the reference materials they use for studies comes from outside Africa. Only 7% of the reference materials were from Kenya. This serves to further assert that the social work curriculum that the students consume in Kenya is westernized and therefore does not adequately address the indigenous social problems of Kenya. The study further sought to know if outside Africa the source of this literature. 50% of the materials were from USA, and Canada and Europe were represented by 13% and 37% respectively.

The students and educators that participated in this study highlighted the most common methods and materials of teaching as follows: lecturers; discussions; group work; practicals; presentations; academic trips; case studies; overhead projectors; books; internet; e-journals; magazines and newspapers.

3.4 Towards an Enabling Environment for Social Work Education

The opinions of the educators were sought on what should be done to ensure that an enabling environment is put in place for social work training and education in Kenya. The majority 78% of the educators especially from the universities who were the key informants were asked to give their opinion because purposefully they are knowledgeable on matters social work. They pointed out that that to assure the enabling environment, the stakeholders in the social services sector need to establish of a strong national association that is legally enacted to regulate and coordinate education and practice of social work in Kenya. The enactment will pave way for the creation of the Social Welfare council and the Social Services Board which will be served the mandated to regulate the profession in Kenya.

3.5 Contribution of Research to Social development

The researcher sought to establish the involvement of educators and social work students in research that can inform and fill the gaps in social development. To be effective, research based practice is an important aspect that social work should advocate for. The researcher was shocked to find out that very minimal research was being done conducted by the stakeholders in this case. Only 40% of the educators admitted to carry out research geared towards development. Most of the educators simply mentioned to carry out research as a requirement by the department as partial fulfilment for award of academic credentials and since graduation have not conducted another research at all. The researchers sought to further ascertain why levels of research on social development are low. The key informants gave this two reasons to substantiate the lack of research: lack of funding and heavy teaching workloads hamper them from conducting any forms of research whatsoever.

75% of the students surveyed admitted that research was a part of the curriculum that they consumed as a part of training. As the old adage goes: "charity begins at home", students need to be taught research while they are still the tertiary institutions for them to be able to carry on with the traditions even to the field. Social development programmes that are not research based are bound to fail miserable because they are not informed. Research based practice, assures success of the projects. Research is considered a crucial component of any education programme. Ability to conduct independent research enhances an individual's investigative and analytical skills and it is also important in the problem-solving process. Further, research is part of the minimum standards for social work training (Twakirize J. M et al, 2013).

3.6 Field work (Attachments)

This study also sought to ascertain the level of participation of the students in field attachments as part of the curriculum. The finalist students were therefore asked how many attachments they had attended so far. Majority of the students 78% admitted to have only gone for one attachment so far. The rest of the students (22%) confessed to have never attended any field work. The experts however point out that social work education is supposed to be conducted through classroom-based instruction and fieldwork placement in social welfare agencies. The latter is intended to help students apply the acquired theoretical social work knowledge, skills and values in practice. Fieldwork placement provides students with a series of supervised assignments and tasks selected to complement classroom-based instruction. The study sought to confirm if indeed all social work students undertook fieldwork as part of their training, and which agencies and locality offered most of their field placements. All these have implications for skills acquisition for competent practice. Placement in the rural areas should acquaint students with the realities of people at the grassroots who are the most exposed to poverty and other vulnerabilities that social workers need to address. It should also prepare students to be willing and ready to practice social work within those settings after their graduation (Twakirize J. M et al, 2013).
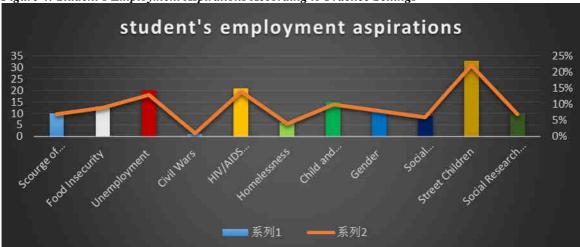
3.7 Employment aspirations of the Social Work Students

In order to achieve balanced social development, social work practice needs to permeate through all levels of society and especially fill the need at the grassroots(Chitereke, 2009.   As a result students were asked to state the practice settings they aspire to work. Majority (22%) of the students preferred to work street children. It was

evident that students were spread throughout all the levels of social development as evident from the figure below. Those students who preferred to work with homeless were the few only represented by 1% of the students that participated in this study.

Figure 4: Student's Employment Aspirations According to Practice Settings

Source: Field Data

Contrary to popularly held assumption, most of the students prefered to practice social work in the rural areas. This was reprensted by 63% of the students who participated in this study. Out of the remaining, 30% preferred to urban social work as their destination while 7% prefferred either of the above. Whilst it is true that poverty affects both rural and urban populations in, the majority of people affected by poverty and exclusion are found in the rural areas; which is also in line with the general distribution of the population. Social work also needs to be practiced at the individual clinical, community and policy levels, if it is to contribute meaningfully to social development. For a long time, university graduates have been reluctant to work in the rural remote areas because of the limited social and economic amenities.

3.8 Policy and legal environment for social work education and Practice.

Social work education in Kenya is provided in the context of post-secondary institutions. The Universities Act (2012) provides the regulatory framework for higher education in Kenya. This Act created the Commission for University Education (CUE) which replaced the former Commission for Higher Education (CHE), the institution that has the overall mandate for establishing standards and regulations for tertiary education in Kenya (CUE, 2015).

The CUE was established to regulate higher education, and to guide the establishment of institutions of higher learning as well as ensure that quality and relevant education is delivered. It has the following functions: promote the objectives of university education; advice the cabinet secretary on policies relating to university education; promote, set standards and assure relevance in the quality of education; monitor and evaluate the state of university education in relation to national development goals; and, license any student recruiting agencies operating in Kenya and any activities by foreign institutions; develop policy and criteria for admission to the universities; recognize and equate degress, diplomas and certificates conferred or awarded by foreign universities in accordance with standards and guidelines set by commission from time to time; and, regular inspection, monitoring and evaluation of universities to ensure compliance with the set standards (ibid).

Accordingly, the CUE has direct influence with regard to determining the content for social work training. This mandate is derived from CUE which is supposed to "ensure minimum standards for courses of study." It is against this background, that the CUE has the responsibility to accredit courses taught in the various universities (ibid).

Three respondents that represented the middle level colleges of social work pointed out that the social work curriculum is offered in their colleges is regulated bythe Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC). Apparently KNEC even is the body that sets and evaluates the exams that are offered in these institutions. However, the KNEC curriculum is only for Certificate and Diploma in Social Work and community development. The diploma lasts for two and divided into 4 modules of 6 months each. The entry requirement is KCSE C- or 2 years of experience in relevant field. The researcher became a little curious and wanted to know the components of this KNEC curriculum. It is represented in the table below.

Table 2: KNEC Curriculum for Diploma in Social Work and Community Development.

Module	Courses offered
Module I	– Social work theory and practice – Introduction to community development – Communication skills – Community – based organization – Development economics – Entrepreneurship education – Community capacity building and empowerment – Empowerment – Information Communication Technology (ICT).
Module II	– Resource Mobilization and Fundraising – Project management – Advocacy and Lobbying – HIV/AIDS and other pandemics – Statistics – Legal Aspects in Social Development – Resource Management
Module III Part A	– Social psychology and human development – Disaster management – Introduction to counselling psychology – Social policy and administration – Social research Project
Module III Part B	– Transformation and social marketing – Community development methodologies – Management of community concerns – Social research project – Community leadership.

Source: KISWCD

      This study also found out that this same curriculum is apparently offered by all middle level colleges who offer certificate and diploma courses in social work and community development. On this effect, this study also found out that KNEC was very strict to ensure that all colleges followed the recommended curriculum.

4. Discussion of the Study Findings

This study sought to interrogate the nature of the institutions offering the social courses. Middle level colleges produce a lot of students to the market. Most students from these colleges graduate with Diplomas and certificates of social work. This study also found out that with the diploma, the students can further their studies to the university and obtain a degree in 2 – 3 years. Interestingly, most of the public universities are still new and as most of them were incepted in 2013.

      During the duration of this research it came to my attention that most of the private universities in Kenya have a problem with number. Every year apparently the number of students keep dwindling. This study sought to unravel the mystery towards the dwindling numbers of students that enrol for social work courses in the private universities. We learnt that apparently exorbitant tuition has scared most of the students to join Public universities whose school fees are pocket friendly. Respondents also pointed out lack of proper marketing of what really social workers do, competition from social hybrid courses and increasing numbers of schools of social work in the country. The table below presents the dates social work was established in the 15 social work schools in Kenya.

      Concerning the adequacy and nature of the social work curriculum, The educators from all institutions that participated in this study were of the view that the social work curriculum prepares social work students for generalist practice. The majority of the educators (66%) pointed that social work curriculum is generalist in nature.

      The study also sought to know the relevance of the curriculum for social development. Most of the educators pointed that the curriculum properly prepares the students to address the gaps in social development. They felt that social development cuts across the curriculum offered in the universities. However, it was also apparent that the education for social workers consists of five curriculum areas: human behavior and the social environment to understand human psychology, sociology, and biology; social welfare policy and services to understand programs and services and the ways they are developed and changed; social research to help social

workers evaluate better their work and contribute to new knowledge about people and problems they face; *s*ocial work methods of practice, for information about skills and approaches social workers need for carrying out their responsibilities; and field practicum, for practical field experience in the profession under the supervision of the experienced professional social workers

Concerning the origin of the social work curriculum taught in Kenya, most of the respondents were of the view that the curriculum was euro – centric (70%). This confirms literature review that asserts that most of the social work taught in Kenya is not indigenous. For social work to be able to adequately bridge the gaps in social development, it must adopt indigenous values, knowledge and principles. As Mwansa clearly puts it, social work or social work education has not been the product of a *progressive social metamorphosis* but rather that of foreign methodologies imposed on African societies. Consequently, the essence of social work education lacks relevance in terms of its philosophical, value and ideological base. Thus students who graduate from such a system of education tend to remain, to some extent, unfamiliar with indigenous knowledge systems and lack adequate knowledge in working with the people. Therefore, it is of essence to assert that while the origin of social work education is well known, its future direction, development and focus on the continent remain unknown, at worst haphazard, ad hoc and undirected with serious implications for the mission and vision of the profession. Also, social work in Africa has been without a platform to foster discourse on its nature, character and direction. Therefore, Transformation of social work education from being *euro-centric* to being *afro-centric* has to be spearheaded by an organization that can provide a forum for dialogue, leadership and a contextual framework (Mwansa, 2011)

5.0 Conclusion

For social work to be able to contribute in social development in Kenya, education and training of social workers needs to be greatly emphasized. Social work education and social work profession offer a varied preparation at many levels. Education is available at every educational level form the community college through to doctorate. To fully understand what is involved in preparing the social work profession, it is important to appreciate the comprehensive nature of the education needed to obtain a degree in social work. A nation cannot be stable without the contributions of the social workers. Since majority of the citizens of any nation are engaged in various day to day social/economic activities, little or no attention is paid to other minority groups. The social workers are there to fill these existing gaps which though appear minimal but if not attended to could destabilize a nation.

Recommendations

The following steps can be taken so as to face lift the status of the Social Work Education in Kenya. The recommendations will assure the professionalization of social work in Kenya:

- Social work institutions of higher learning should come together and form an association of the schools of social work. Through this association of the schools of social work, they can be able to share knowledge and curriculum and organize conferences on annual basis for social development. Education and training is important because it is the preparatory phase for social work practice. The extent to which professional social workers execute their mandates and roles in society is principally dependent on the adequacy and relevancy of the preparation they receive in terms of training and education.
- Social work education and training in Kenya have to abandon their total dependence upon Western frameworks, philosophies, values and knowledge and develop models that rely on Afro-centric systems of indigenous knowledge, community-based interventions, and local values and practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

The role of social work in the achievement of vision 2030 in Kenya.

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