

Continuous Professional Development among Generic Social Work Practitioners in Kenya

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Abstract

Generic social work practitioners contribute to the higher percentage of social work practitioners in Kenya because most learning institutions both higher and middle colleges offer generic social work training. These practitioners are employed in every field and social welfare institutions that provide social work services in emancipation, maintenance and therapeutic that require them not only to perform their duty effectively but also to keep up with the latest global trends in the social work field. Besides, technological advancement, urbanization and the ever changing service economy require professional development. This study explored the nature of continuous professional development practices employed by the generic social work practitioners in Kenya. The study is grounded on continuous learning theories of humanism and ecological models. The study adopted a qualitative approach with an exploratory design. A total of 100 social workers were sampled using simple random sampling cross data were collected through phone interviews, face to face interviews, and WhatsApp Messaging and Email interviews. The study revealed that continuous professional development is a common practice among generic social workers and organizations organize short training and workshop for their practitioners. Respondents indicated that they go for short courses to build up their skills and efficiency and this is reflected in their performance which is significantly impacted by CPD. Few practitioners noted that they attend conferences. The study further revealed that lack of proper framework, lack of awareness and incentives jeopardize the need and urge for continuous CPD. The study revealed that professional development is very important in enhancing skills, culturing the right attitude and networking. The study recommends that there is a need to strengthen CPD, formalizing it through both Government through an Act of parliament, social welfare institutions, and social welfare Professional bodies in Kenya as well as management, crediting, and establishing a mechanism to recognize continuous professional development points to enhance professional growth of social work practitioners.

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