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TOWARDS COLLABORATION BETWEEN SOCIAL WORK IN KENYA AND EUROPE: AN OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK TRAINING AND PRACTICE IN KENYA

There is concurrence among European social work practitioners that social work is challenged by social, structural as well as economic ruptures. These socio-structural and economic changes in European societies over time affect not just social work in Europe but also social work in Africa. For example, in Kenya, disputed election results led to the 2007/8 post election violence where it is estimated that over a thousand people lost their lives and approximately 650, 000 others were displaced from their homes; The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2008). Although the Kenya government's position is that only about 20,000 of these are still in the camps (GOK, 2011), many question these figures. Others argue that ensuring people have gone back to their homes is not a sustainable solution especially where reconciliation efforts have not born much fruit (Daily Nation, 2010) not been able to resolve the sensitive land issue that has haunted it since independence in 1963. In Africa, prevailing social challenges are continuously undergoing a transmutation due to the complexities involved in solving social problems, and also due to the *neo-liberal modernization policies* in European societies. For example the taking up of the Kenyan case by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to judge those suspected to be the most responsible for crimes committed against humanity during the violence has left the citizens at crossroads. Some are for the argument that this will destabilise Kenya's socio-economic and political landscape. Others feel that this is the only way that those affected by the post election violence can achieve justice (Daily Nation, 2011) on for the future of social work in Kenya is that, as much effort as is being put by European Societies to enhance social justice in Kenya, is social work as a profession in Kenya ready to be part of a movement where, *practice can confront the growing tendencies in market-related social policies, defining self-responsibility as a task for service users as individuals?* This paper presents the current scenario of social work education/training and practice in Kenya. Moreover, it analyses social work professional association and adherence to International Federation of Social Workers (I F S W) regulation. The answers to this analysis point to the suggestion that; even if social work in European countries were to come up with a *model of identification which social work can develop to assert itself against structures dominated by criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and very often driven by managerialistic power positions*; it will it be doing so at the expense of the advancement of professional social work in African countries like Kenya and therefore globally; if at the same time social work in countries like Kenya is allowed to stagnate and not supported to provide the same professional quality to its citizens as in Europe. Recommendations are given as to how social workers in Europe and Kenya may work together to bridge the existing and widening gap.

Key words: Social work in European countries, Social work in Kenya, Social structural and economic ruptures, post election violence.