

Indigenizing Social Work in Kenya: The Role of The Implicit Curriculum in Technical and Vocational Education

Njeri Kagothoⁱ

Ohio State University College of Social Work

Karla Shockley McCarthyⁱⁱ

Ohio State University College of Social Work

Euphracia Owuorⁱⁱⁱ

Nairobi Women's Hospital College

Abstract

In social work education, the implicit curriculum is integral in shaping professional values, ethics, behaviors, and practices. When faculty are consciously aware of how classroom interactions explicate, demonstrate, or underscore content covered in class material, they are more likely to use these instances as an invitation for students to analyze and provide a critique of their professional practices. Answering the clarion call to indigenize social work education, and to fulfill the objectives of Kenya's Technical and Vocational Education and Training system, we argue that the social work profession needs to turn its attention to the implicit pillars of the curriculum. By focusing on mid-level colleges, which serve the vital function of addressing workforce gaps in resource constrained settings, we examine the significance of implicit aspects of learning on students' professional development. We focus on the country's multicultural identity, trauma histories, and the deeply embedded culture of student activism and argue that by applying a transformative lens in the conceptualization of the implicit curriculum we can prepare future-ready social workers equipped for practice in Kenya's diverse and rapidly changing practice environment. While the strategies we propose are not exhaustive, they are initial steps in embracing the indigenization of the social work profession.

Keywords: Implicit Curriculum, Social Work Education, Student Learning, sub-Saharan Africa, Professional Development

DOI: 10.29329/ijpe.2025.1163.1

ⁱ **Njeri Kagotho**, Ohio State University College of Social Work, 1947 N. College Road, Columbus, OH USA 43210, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1735-971X>

Correspondence: kagotho.1@osu.edu

ⁱⁱ **Karla Shockley McCarthy**, Ohio State University College of Social Work, 1947 N. College Road Columbus, OH USA 43210, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8238-8496>

ⁱⁱⁱ **Euphracia Owuor**, Department of Social Work, Nairobi Women's Hospital College, Kikuyu Road, Waithaka, Dagoreti South, Nairobi, Kenya, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0677-3763>

INTRODUCTION

The profession of social work suffers from a bifurcated identity—as a state-sanctioned social control agent juxtaposed against its mission of social care. It is through social work’s carefully articulated curriculum and field education experience that we equip our students to recognize and resolve this dissonance. And a regionally responsive curriculum allows students to align their personal values, behaviors, and social expectations with the profession’s ethical standards and expectations. Adding to the rich complexity of social work education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has been the need to design curriculum that de-centers Western hegemonic pedagogies and challenges the epistemic silencing of indigenous perspectives. To this end, the region has produced a rich body of work, including the indigenization literature (Canavera et al., 2020; Nilsen et al., 2023; Twikirize & Spitzer, 2019), decolonization pedagogies (Mathebane & Sekudu, 2018), and Afrocentric paradigms (Kurevakwesu & Maushe, 2020; Mugumbate et al., 2023; Mwansa, 2011). However, while this literature acknowledges the multidimensionality of social work education, a significant body of work has focused primarily on elements of the explicit curriculum, theory development, and the field practicum experience, with little attention paid to the implicit learning environment. This unintended subordination of the learning environment in the social work literature is regrettable because the implicit curriculum is the vehicle through which professional values, ethics, and expectations are communicated.

In Kenya, certificate and diploma-level social workers constitute a significant segment of the workforce (Wairire, 2014), and supporting their skills and competence development is critical to ensuring the continued implementation of locally responsive evidence-based services. However, the social work teaching and learning literature in SSA has tended to spotlight four-year degree university education, ignoring the unique issues facing vocational training colleges. The dearth of literature on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions in the region is not surprising; technical and vocational colleges were historically viewed as subordinate to four-year institutions, attracting low-performing students with few career prospects (African Union, 2007; Aryeetey et al., 2011; Essel et al., 2014; Kahihu et al., 2021). However, the critical role played by the cadre of paraprofessional and auxiliary practitioners graduating from TVET institutions is incontestable. Across sub-Saharan Africa and other resource-constrained societies, these practitioners augment degree-level service providers; they can be rapidly deployed due to the shorter training period required, and provide an intimate connection to the local communities they serve (Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, 2017; Schmid, 2018).

This article argues that to support workforce needs and realize social work’s global ethical principles we must pay attention to the implicit learning environment in TVETs. We consider the mechanics of re-imagining the current social work curriculum in an education system where curriculum development is centralized and disconnected from the instructors who deliver it. We outline the challenges associated with a centralized curriculum development system and argue that paying attention to the implicit elements of the social work curriculum will reinforce professional behaviors and prepare students for practice in complex and challenging situations. We begin by providing an overview of curriculum development in the Kenyan TVET system, examine the role of the implicit curriculum in social work education, and conclude by proposing classroom strategies to bolster the implicit environment.

TVET Institutions

Globally, middle-level colleges serve the vital function of workforce development and retention. In Kenya, these technical and vocational education and training institutions are significant actors in the country’s development agenda (Republic of Kenya, 2012). TVETs are designed to align with the nation’s long-term development blueprint of preparing a competent workforce for sustainable development. Their key role is to equip learners with a wide range of technical work skills and prepare them for (self)employment in industries including manufacturing, construction, health, and transportation.

In our very recent past, TVETs suffered from low social prestige, with the average learner stereotyped as having low intellectual abilities and limited employable skills. Post-colonial Kenya's hyperfocus on producing white-collar workers at the expense of skilled trade workers further diminished the social standing of these institutions. However, TVET popularity has increased as policy and funding changes have made them more attractive and accessible to families (Ministry of Education, 2022; Odhiambo, 2003). In the two years leading up to the financial year 2022, there was a 14% growth rate in TVET institutions and a corresponding increase in student enrollment of approximately 82,000 learners (Republic of Kenya, 2022). Current government statistics indicate that there are currently 350,000 students enrolled in TVETs across the country (Muoria, 2023).

A key attraction to TVETs is their affordability. Even for students who may qualify for government scholarships to attend four-year public universities, the cost of attendance remains prohibitive. TVETs are a more academically accessible option for students whose academic scores exclude them from admission into four-year degree programs. Furthermore, these institutions are deeply rooted in their local communities. For instance, vocational training centers (formally village polytechnics) offer programs responsive to local industry needs and will likely attract learners who live and work in these communities. Indeed, TVETs serve an essential function of professionalizing the human service sector by enrolling adult learner volunteers who serve their communities in various positions. For learners interested in pursuing degree programs, articulation agreements are in place with four-year institutions to facilitate the transition.

The Kenyan TVET system is advantageously placed to train the workforce needed to address issues that people who experience poverty face. Increasing income inequalities and deepening rural and urban poverty (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023) have necessitated human service workers to support community and government-led anti-poverty interventions. Other social problems intimately connected to poverty, including substance use and misuse and mental health issues, have also become a growing concern in the country. Government data indicates that 75% of the population lacks access to mental health care in part due to low provider levels (Kenya Ministry of Health, 2020). The country also reports increasing substance use and misuse issues, more so among children and youth (NACADA, 2022). However, intervention services, including inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation facilities, remain insufficient to meet national needs. Available data confirms this skewed provider-client ratio with an estimated medical social worker-client ratio of 1:920,000 and a psychologist-client ratio of 1:4,600,000 (Office of Auditor General, 2017). The country's high poverty rates, high burden of mental health disease, and skewed patient-mental health provider ratios mandate the continuation of efforts to optimize available community-level strategies, including professionalizing the human services workforce. Moreover, while not a panacea, TVETs present a promising strategy to address these gaps in the human service sector. Indeed, a recent environmental scan has identified 61 institutions (both four-year and TVET institutions) offering social work or social welfare courses with the potential to graduate workers to support the implementation of evidence-based community interventions.

Developing the TVET Curriculum

This section examines curriculum design and development in the Kenyan TVET system. Curriculum development and management are the responsibility of multiple semi-autonomous governmental agencies. These agencies work collaboratively under the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), which was established to regulate vocational training, verify assessment tools, enforce curriculum compliance, and develop and regulate training standards.

Curricula development begins with a draft proposal submitted to a curriculum-developing body. While TVETA's Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC) is the primary governmental agency charged with the design and development of curricula, other key players include the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). These agencies work collaboratively with industry experts organized under Sector Skills Advisory Committees (SSAC) to inform this emerging curriculum. These bodies

are charged with ensuring that the draft curricula comply with national competency-based education and training standards (Kahihu et al., 2021). In the last six years, Kenya has adopted a competency-based education approach across basic educational structures focusing on skills development that facilitates integration into the workforce. Therefore, Sector Skills Advisory Committees propose content aligned with specified competencies and employer-based occupational standards and develop assessment tools to measure mastery of those competencies. Following this, the curriculum is submitted to the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) for registration and then finally to TVETA for implementation in identified institutions (Ministry of Education State Department for Vocational and Technical Training, 2018). It is also important to note that future curriculum amendments must be resubmitted to the CDACC for approval.

There is broad consensus in the literature that teaching faculty play a vital role in the (re)development of curriculum (Allan & Estler, 2005; Alsubaie, 2016), and yet the curricula process described above is primarily external to the instructors who deliver it. Educators offer professional expertise, have knowledge of the local student body, and are intimately connected to the institutional resources that shape the curriculum. When non-educators and actors not directly responsible for in-class instruction control the curriculum, it can adversely impact the educators' ability to rethink pedagogy and innovate through self-determined teaching methods, compromising the classroom environment and student-teacher relationships.

Furthermore, from the curricula development and assessment processes described above, there seems to be a heavy focus on the explicit curriculum (see Kahihu et al., 2021), with only cursory mention of the integral unwritten and hidden elements of the implicit curriculum (Kirior, 2017; Muchira et al., 2023). The teacher's responsibility in curriculum implementation is to translate the explicit curriculum into meaningful learning experiences and to foster a supportive and challenging learning environment. This speaks directly to the implicit curriculum, "which is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program's graduates" (Council on Social Work Education, 2015, p. 14). Table 1 briefly compares critical aspects of explicit and implicit curriculum in the educational context.

Table 1 Explicit and Implicit Curriculum Comparison

Aspect	Explicit Curriculum	Implicit Curriculum
Definition	Clearly defined and formally documented in the curriculum guides	Sometimes undefined and often learned through experiences
Intention	Deliberately planned and stated educational objectives	Unwritten and may be unintentional; learned through observation and experience
Visibility	Observable and measurable in formal lesson plans and assessments, conscious awareness	Less observable and often invisible, it is embedded in the culture and social interactions and operates unconsciously with individuals unaware of its impact
Delivery	Taught directly in the classroom through formal instruction through lesson plans, textbooks, syllabi, etc.	Conveyed indirectly through values, attitudes, cultural norms, and instructor tone and emphasis
Control	Controlled by educational authorities and institutions	Influenced by societal, cultural, and contextual factors

Implicit Curriculum in Social Work Education: A Roadmap for TVETs

While the explicit curriculum is the written part of the curriculum housing coursework and learning activities, the implicit (hidden) curriculum embodies a program's goals, values, and aspirations. The implicit curriculum is the setting within which students experience the explicit curriculum (Bogo & Wayne, 2013). It is the part of the curriculum that is unwritten and demonstrated through unintended learning moments both in and outside the classroom. While not overtly communicated to students, the implicit curriculum is well-thought-out and articulated. In the social work curriculum, it is the element responsible for shaping social work students' professional character and identity. When faculty are consciously aware of how classroom interactions explicate,

demonstrate, or underscore content covered in class material, they are more likely to use these instances as an invitation for students to analyze and provide a critique of these behaviors. For example, when an instructor is fully present in classroom interactions—paraphrasing and reflecting what is said, withholding judgement, paying attention to students’ non-verbal cues—it models the active listening skills students need to practice in their field placements. Further, when an instructor artfully facilitates difficult, controversial, or uncomfortable classroom discussions, students observe firsthand the skills needed to demonstrate empathy, handle conflict, and manage uncomfortable emotions in professional settings.

Compared to the explicit curriculum, which is controlled and driven by external actors, the structure and execution of the implicit curriculum are wholly under the purview of individual institutions. Administrative structures, organizational resources, and the classroom environment all play a role in communicating both national and social work’s mission and values. Therefore, the implicit curriculum in schools of social work cannot be underemphasized given its importance in helping bridge the gap between theory and praxis.

The following section discusses how, through their interactions with students and institutional structures, educators can use the implicit curriculum to inculcate social work values and model professional behavior while supporting content presented in the explicit curriculum. The strategies we propose emerged from the clarion call to indigenize social work education and are informed by a national discourse on social work theory and pedagogy initiated by the Association of Social Work Educators in Kenya (ASWEK). A robust discussion that has drawn together educators, scholars, and practitioners from across the African continent. The indigenization philosophy undergirds our (re)thinking of the implicit curriculum. In our context, indigenization refers to educational practices that acknowledge hegemonic interests and power structures while addressing the unique aspects of the Kenyan ecology through locally developed strategies. This means a curriculum that unapologetically addresses issues of ethnic conflict, corruption, economic inequalities, and historical and contemporary marginalization of minoritized communities. While the concepts covered here are not exhaustive, we intend to address facets that are especially applicable to social work education in the country. In particular, we focus on the country’s multicultural identity, trauma histories, and the deeply embedded culture of student activism.

Social Work Practice in Multicultural Settings

Africa is a multi-cultural continent where practitioners must acknowledge and embrace a range of diverse client characteristics and experiences. Teacher-learner and peer-to-peer interactions can shape learners’ attitudes toward diversity in teaching inclusion and diversity content. Through the intentional choices they make in the classroom, social work educators can illustrate this content in a way that considers the institution’s localized reality. For example, given the rich multicultural makeup of most African societies, educators may assume that students will intuitively exemplify principles of inclusiveness and respect for diversity. However, we know that implicit biases and stereotypes could, in practice, unconsciously impact actions and attitudes toward communities and groups. Because these unconscious biases are developed over a lifetime of social interactions and remain primarily unexamined, students may be unaware of how they shape their professional identity. Like most African nations, Kenya continues to grapple with creating a single nation-state from more than 40 ethnically unique tribes (Population Reference Bureau, 2008) drawn together based on arbitrary administrative colonial boundaries. The result has been the ethnicization of social, economic, and political structures, which, when exploited, have in the recent past stoked ethnic differences, resulting in both localized and national conflict (Kagwanja, 2006). Moreover, while these discordant ethnic sentiments may be implicitly held, when not acknowledged and addressed they could adversely impact the provider-client relationship (Kagotho et al., 2016). Therefore, we must equip novice practitioners with tools to self-reflect and identify unconscious biases in their practice.

The implicit curriculum is used by teaching faculty to leverage content explicitly enumerated in the curriculum and content that may be missing (null curriculum) or inadequately addressed. For

instance, we know that the region as a whole continues to struggle with the concept of unabridged human rights of socially marginalized communities, including sexual and gender minorities. To our knowledge, there is no explicit course content addressing the unique socio-political and economic realities of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex communities in Kenya. Social work educators should demonstrate inclusive behavior in the classroom, regardless of their personal and religious beliefs. An inclusive classroom improves educational outcomes for all students, not just those who may identify as gender or sexual minorities. Alongside supplemental readings, teaching faculty can use the implicit curriculum to address these gaps in the explicit curriculum by creating a climate of mutual respect and a recognition of the region's diverse makeup.

Addressing the uneven practitioner-client power dynamics is crucial in the social work classroom. Not only are we charged with engaging in actions or behavior that could strengthen client self-worth, but this introspective practice is critical in resource-constrained practice settings where clients lack alternative sources of care. Encouraging students to be introspective about the blind spots, particularly the subconscious biases they hold, and to consider how these might impact future practice is key for social work practice in multicultural societies; instructor modeling reflection skills in the classroom is crucial for student professional development. Modeling introspection involves the instructor helping students connect their internal motivations to actions or positions that may come up in classroom engagement and discussion of application in practice.

Even with a centralized curriculum, the quality of training differs across institutions (Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education, 2019), partly because the trainers' knowledge determines the kind of knowledge and skills transferred to the learners. The same is true in applying the implicit curriculum, which can elicit positive and negative learning outcomes depending on the instructor's skill and orientation. To mitigate unintended adverse outcomes, instructors should also pause and reflect on how their biases could inform their interactions with students. Just like our clients, students can easily pick up on the unconscious cues around age, gender, tribe, sexual orientation, and nationality, and this could adversely impact the learning environment. The literature offers several strategies to signal egalitarianism, which embraces a supportive multi-cultural classroom culture. Engaging in inclusive classroom activities provides a safe atmosphere for student self-exploration. These activities can include transparent grading and assessment mechanics that help protect us from having our biases seep into the classroom (Malouff & Thorsteinsson, 2016) and embracing a Freirean approach that centers students' knowledge and invites more collaborative engagement around course work (Clark, 2002).

The Trauma-Informed Classroom

Among college-age Kenyan students, the ongoing stress and difficult circumstances stemming from high poverty rates, substance use and misuse, and exposure to gender-based violence (Oino & Obare, 2022; Wane et al., 2018) are of particular concern. Financial instability and the constant struggle to make ends meet can lead to the development or exacerbation of health issues. Indeed, youth behavioral health disorders are a leading cause of health-related disability in SSA (Erskine et al., 2015; Jenkins et al., 2010; Patel, Flisher, Hetrick, & McGorry, 2007). Individuals living in poverty report feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress. Estimates suggest that 46.8% and 31.7% of college-enrolled youth report incidences of depression and anxiety (Muriungi & Menecha, 2020; Othieno et al., 2014).

What we also know is that trauma histories and diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health are especially prevalent among students in the social work classroom. The concept "wounded healer" is used to explain why helping professions such as social work are disproportionately populated by practitioners with trauma histories, behavioral and mental health problems, and histories of substance use and misuse (Didham et al., 2011; Straussner et al., 2018). Furthermore, while these behavioral and health issues may have occurred prior to joining these professions, research also indicates these issues could onset or be exacerbated during their time in practice (Straussner et al., 2018). When a practitioner's behavioral and health issues are unaddressed, there could be detrimental consequences

on the client-provider therapeutic alliance, including re-traumatization, burnout, and reactions to vicarious trauma (Zerubavel & Wright, 2012). Adopting trauma-informed classroom strategies can help support students experiencing these issues and mitigate adverse professional outcomes.

Instructors can support student learning by committing to a trauma-informed classroom culture. This means identifying course structures that may recreate systems of oppression and reviewing course content to ensure that it is not re-traumatizing to students. Instructors could employ thoughtful ways to address trauma in the classroom (Greene & Kagotho, 2022). First is guidance around the use of self-care strategies (Newcomb et al., 2015). Self-care is an essential skill that we teach students who will be working in extremely emotionally and physically demanding positions. In teaching self-care, instructors can engage in deliberate actions in and out of the classroom to model ways to manage stress, prevent burnout, and improve overall health. Classroom strategies that avoid re-traumatizing students include acknowledging trauma triggers in course content and creating a classroom plan to manage reactions to these triggers (Boysen, 2017). For instance, TVET instructors teaching in regions with histories of ethnic conflict possess historical, cultural, social, and political knowledge that positions them to customize the curriculum to the local context and the social mores to promote and model appropriate behaviors and attitudes. In addition to acknowledging these realities, providing warnings on course content that addresses issues of conflict and violence can also signal care and empathy to students who may have lived experiences of ethnic violence. While these warnings should not minimize class discussions or stifle opposing views, they remind students to be mindful and respectful of the diverse experiences represented in the classroom.

Instructors can also give students the tools to practice reflexive social work. Masson & Graham (2022) provide the critical technique of reflectivity in social work practice where students gain self-awareness through examination of self, which leads to a better understanding of how they situate in the practice setting. In highlighting the instructor's role, the authors point to the need for reflective classroom practices that model for students how they (students) can apply this construct in their own practice. This includes "establishing a trusting and safe emotional context" space where students can learn how to engage in reflective practice. These extend into the class discussion spaces where students are encouraged to share and examine feelings and experiences after client contact in practicum (Masson & Graham, 2022, p. 171).

Preparing for Anti-Oppressive Practice

It is in the social work classroom that students are equipped with skills to disrupt systems of oppression, including sexism, tribalism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and ageism. Advocacy is the fundamental social work skill to promote and defend these human rights and empower communities to achieve their full capabilities. Through case and cause advocacy, students learn the arts of persuasion, networking, fundraising, and coordinating community movements. Students can identify the interpersonal and structural barriers that keep resources and opportunities out of the hands of the people who need them. Informed by the conscientization philosophy of '*each one teach one*,' students are conversely expected to teach and model these skills to their communities. To fully realize the profession's call to champion social change, we need to train practitioners who can navigate power dynamics and empower communities to identify and leverage their collective power. To achieve these goals, we propose two strategies—direct exposure to county and national political structures and creating institutional student co-governance structures.

Political social work. In political social work, the profession engages in the political machinery toward social change. Lane & Pritzker (2018) propose five domains of political social work: (i) supporting community engagement in political processes, (ii) influencing policy agendas, (iii) staffing political offices, (iv) party politics such as campaigning, and (v) seeking and holding political office. While there is no official data on the exact number of Kenyan social workers engaged across this political practice spectrum, the profession has recently produced at least three parliamentarians. The Kenyan higher education ecosystem boasts a rich history of vibrant student leaders whose work has precipitated tremendous social, political, environmental, and economic gains.

This normative culture of political activism could be why the social work profession in Kenya does not seem to have the innate struggle with its political identity faced by the social work profession in the West (Pritzker & Lane, 2017). Kenyan social workers' engagement as policy influencers, political activists, and elected officials is a natural outcome of Kenyan social work practice.

Hands-on exposure to political activities is part of the social work implicit curriculum (Pritzker & Lane, 2017), communicated through direct lobbying of political actors ((Lane, et al., 2012), and attending local political meetings (Pritzker & Lane, 2017). TVETs, by virtue of being embedded at the constituency and county levels, are well-placed to socialize students with the traits needed to engage effectively in the political arena for the benefit of their clients. Local political and civic leadership engagement includes public participation forums, a key element in policymaking enshrined in the Kenyan constitution. Students can also learn to reflexively engage the political system by modeling political neutrality in the classroom. In so doing, the learning environment trains students to engage in direct political action even as they learn about structural determinants of individual and community-level problems.

Student co-governance. Another strategy for preparing students to engage in anti-oppressive practice is through student co-governance. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2014) formally recognized students as university stakeholders. Student leadership provides social work students with a platform through which they can act as advocates for their peers and have a firsthand view of how advocacy campaigns can impact decision-making at the organizational level. Social work students should be encouraged to engage with teaching faculty to contribute to programming and curriculum development to cover any educational gaps to support their learning needs as future social workers. Social work students should also apply their social work skills to critically examine TVET structures to illuminate areas of inequity and oppressive policies and present solutions to provide a better educational experience. Administrators can support student engagement by providing students with the avenues to engage in governance by having well-articulated regulations specifying the opportunities available for students to do so.

CONCLUSION

Informed by the indigenization philosophy, this paper argues for a thoughtful re-thinking of the implicit pillars in Kenya's competency based social work curriculum. The implicit curriculum is the vehicle by which Kenya's national identity as a multicultural nation can be embedded into social work practice. This discussion is especially salient given that the explicit curricula development is external to the individual institutions that train and graduate social work practitioners. Faculty and administrators communicate and model professional values and expectations through these unwritten elements of the curriculum. Furthermore, because the implicit curriculum can be used to convey content that is intentionally and unintentionally absent from the curriculum, it allows instructors to present content that is responsive to the unique characteristics of the particular institution and student body.

Social justice and human rights are at the very core of the social work curriculum, and the implicit curriculum is the element in the learning environment that can carry these concepts across all course content and program structures. Faculty are, therefore, called to create an environment where students can learn how to use an intersectional lens to recognize and challenge the historical and contemporary marginalization of individuals and communities. It is through faculty modeling that students learn how to engage in the lifelong process of reflexivity, wherein they can challenge and hold themselves accountable for personal actions and behaviors that may perpetuate structures that are injurious to communities. As instructors and administrators, we acknowledge and appreciate the diversity of our student body when we create a learning environment that is both relational and interactive. Indeed, the importance of the teaching faculty in executing the implicit curriculum cannot be understated, given the power they exercise in choosing what behaviors to elevate or minimize, include or exclude in their classroom interactions.

Finally, we acknowledge that the strategies presented here, while not exhaustive, present the initial steps to create structures that embrace the indigenization of the profession. The journey towards indigenizing social work education in Kenya by focusing on the implicit curriculum is a transformative stride towards fostering cultural relevance, inclusivity, and genuine community empowerment. By recognizing and addressing the hidden structures that perpetuate colonial legacies, we pave the way for a more equitable and responsive social work education system and social work practice. By dismantling the remnants of colonial influences, we lay the foundation for a socially just and culturally sensitive practice that genuinely serves the needs of the people.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors report no competing interests to declare.

Funding Details: This work was not supported by outside sources.

CRedit Author Statement: Author 1: Conceptualization, Writing- original draft preparation. Author 2: Writing – reviewing & editing, Visualization. Author 3: Writing- review of original draft.

Ethical Statement: Since this study is conceptual and does not include human subjects, ethical approval was not necessary. Nonetheless, the research adhered to ethical standards and academic guidelines. All sources and references were properly cited, and there was no fabrication, falsification, or improper data manipulation involved.

REFERENCES

- African Union. (2007). *Strategy to revitalize Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Africa*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39018-doc-15._au_2007_tvete_strategy.pdf
- Allan, E. J., & Estler, S. E. (2005). Diversity, privilege, and us: Collaborative curriculum transformation among educational leadership faculty. *Innovative Higher Education*, 29, 209-232.
- Alsubaie, M. A. (2016). Curriculum development: Teacher involvement in curriculum development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(9), 106-107.
- Aryeetey, E. B.-D., Doh, D., & Andoh, P. (2011). *From prejudice to prestige: Vocational education and training in Ghana*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293669084>
- Boysen, G. A. (2017). Evidence-based answers to questions about trigger warnings for clinically-based distress: A review for teachers. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, 3(2), 163.
- Canavera, M., Akesson, B., Landis, D., Armstrong, M., & Meyer, E. (2020). Mapping social work education in the West Africa region: Movements toward indigenization in 12 countries' training programs. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 29(1), 83-95.
- Clark, C. (2002). Effective multicultural curriculum transformation across disciplines. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 4(3), 37-46.
- Council on Social Work Education. (2015). *Educational policy and accreditation standards*. <https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS/2015EPASandGlossary.pdf>

- Erskine, H., Moffitt, T. E., Copeland, W., Costello, E., Ferrari, A., Patton, G., . . . Scott, J. (2015). A heavy burden on young minds: the global burden of mental and substance use disorders in children and youth. *Psychological Medicine*, 45(7), 1551-1563.
- Essel, O. Q., Agyarkoh, E., Sumaila, M. S., & Yankson, P. D. (2014). TVET stigmatization in developing countries: Reality or fallacy? *European Journal of Training and Development Studies*, 1(1), 27-42.
- Global Social Service Workforce Alliance. (2017). *Para professionals in the social service workforce: Guiding principles, functions and competencies*. <https://ovcsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Para-Professionals-in-the-Social-Service-Workforce-2ndedition.pdf>
- Greene, G. J., & Kagotho, N. (2022). Trauma-Informed Practices. Retrieved from <https://csw.osu.edu/trauma-informed-practices/>
- Government of Kenya, Ministry of Education (2019). Sessional Paper No. 01 of 2019. Framework for Reforming Education and Training for Sustainable Development in Kenya. Government Printer, Nairobi.
- Jenkins, R., Baingana, F., Belkin, G., Borowitz, M., Daly, A., Francis, P., . . . Kiima, D. (2010). Mental health and the development agenda in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Psychiatric Services*, 61(3), 229–234.
- Kagotho, N., Bunge, A., & Wagner, K. (2016). “They make money off of us”: a phenomenological analysis of consumer perceptions of corruption in Kenya’s HIV response system [journal article]. *BMC Health Services Research*, 16(1), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-016-1721-y>
- Kagwanja, P. M. (2006). ‘Power to Uhuru’: Youth identity and generational politics in Kenya’s 2002 Elections. *African Affairs*, 105(418), 51-75.
- Kahihu, N., Gangadharan, N., & Ondieki, C. (2021). *How to make TVET work for Kenya: From basic employability skills training (BEST) to competency based education and training*. Lambert Academic Publishing
- Kenya Ministry of Health. (2020). Mental health and wellbeing towards happiness & national prosperity. A report by the taskforce on mental health In Kenya. Nairobi, Kenya: Ministry of Health
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *The Kenya poverty report: Based on the 2021 Kenya Continuous Household Survey*. <https://statistics.knbs.or.ke/nada/index.php/catalog/123/download/579>
- Kirior, H. (2017). Improving the TVET curriculum as a strategy for better performance. *Africa Journal of Technical & Vocational Education & Training*, 2(1), 22-30.
- Kurevakwesu, W., & Maushe, F. (2020). Towards Afrocentric social work: Plotting a new path for social work theory and practice in Africa through Ubuntu. *African Journal of Social Work*, 10(1), 30-35.
- Lane, S. R., Altman, J. C., Goldberg, G. S., Kagotho, N., Palley, E., & Paul, M. (2012). Inspiring and training students for social action: Renewing a needed tradition. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 32, 532-549.
- Lane, S. R., & Pritzker, S. (2018). Political social work. *Springer*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68588-5>.

- Malouff, J. M., & Thorsteinsson, E. B. (2016). Bias in grading: A meta-analysis of experimental research findings. *Australian Journal of Education*, 60(3), 245-256.
- Masson, F., & Graham, T. (2022). The importance of reflective social work practice in a traumatised country like South Africa. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 36(2), 163–177. doi:10.1080/02650533.2022.2074972
- Mathebane, M. S., & Sekudu, J. (2018). Decolonising the curriculum that underpins social work education in South Africa. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, 30(1).
- Ministry of Education. (2022). *Education sector medium term expenditure framework 2023/24 – 2025/26*. <https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Education-Sector-Report.pdf>
- Ministry of Education Science and Technology. (2014). *Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy*. https://www.education.go.ke/sites/default/files/2022-05/first_final_draft_tivet_policy.pdf
- Ministry Of Education State Department for Vocational and Technical Training (2018). Competency Based Education and Training Policy Framework. Retrieved from <https://www.education.go.ke/sites/default/files/2022-05/competency-based-education-and-training-cbet-policy-framework1.pdf>.
- Muchira, J. M., Kiroro, F., Mutisya, M., Ochieng, V. O., & Ngware, M. W. (2023). Assessing technical vocational education and training institutions' curriculum in Kenya: What strategies can position the youth for employment? *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education*, 29(2), 563-582.
- Mugumbate, J. R., Mupedziswa, R., Twikirize, J. M., Mthethwa, E., Desta, A. A., & Oyinlola, O. (2023). Understanding Ubuntu and its contribution to social work education in Africa and other regions of the world. *Social Work Education*, pp. 1–17.
- Muoria, E. T. (2023) *SpiceFM. The Situation Room/Interviewer: E. Latiff, N. Okoh, & C. Muga*. SpiceFM.
- Muriungi, S. K., & Menecha, J. B. (2020). Comorbidity Of depression and anxiety among students at the Kenya medical training colleges In Kenya. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 7(8).
- Mwansa, L.-K. (2011). Social work education in Africa: Whence and whither? *Social Work Education*, 30(1), 4-16.
- NACADA. (2022). *National survey on the status of drugs and substance use in Kenya*. <https://nacada.go.ke>
- Newcomb, M., Burton, J., Edwards, N., & Hazelwood, Z. (2015). How Jung's concept of the wounded healer can guide learning and teaching in social work and human services. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 17(2), 55–69.
- Nilsen, A. C. E., Kalinganire, C., Mabeyo, Z. M., Manyama, W., Ochen, E. A., Revheim, C., & Twikirize, J. (2023). Re-imagining social work education in East Africa. *Social Work Education*, 42(2), 169-184.

- Odhiambo, W. (2003). TVETs repositioned to bring about socio-economic change. *University World News: Africa Edition*.
<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20230829005314972>
- Office of Auditor General. (2017). Performance audit report on provision of mental healthcare services in Kenya. <https://www.oagkenya.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/provision-of-mental-healthcare-services-in-Kenya-2017.pdf>
- Oino, P., & Obare, E. (2022). The culture of drug abuse and substance use as a determinant of health outcomes among students in Kenya public universities. *African Journal of Alcohol and Drug Abuse (AJADA)*, 54-65.
- Othieno, C. J., Okoth, R. O., Peltzer, K., Pengpid, S., & Malla, L. O. (2014). Depression among university students in Kenya: Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 165, 120-125.
- Patel, V., Flisher, A. J., Hetrick, S., & McGorry, P. (2007). Mental health of young people: a global public-health challenge. *The Lancet*, 369(9569), 1302–1313.
- Population Reference Bureau. (2008). *Kenya: The demographics of a county in turmoil*. PRB: World and U.S. Population Trends. <https://www.prb.org/resources/kenya-the-demographics-of-a-country-in-turmoil/>
- Pritzker, S., & Lane, S. R. (2017). Political social work: History, forms, and opportunities for innovation. *Social work*, 62(1), 80-82.
- Republic of Kenya. (2012). *Reforming education and training sectors in Kenya*, Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012, 10th Parliament of Kenya. <https://repository.kippra.or.ke/bitstream/handle/123456789/490/Sessional%20paper%20no%2014%20of%202012.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Republic of Kenya. (2022). *Medium Term Expenditure Framework 2023/24 –2025/26*. . <https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Education-Sector-Report.pdf>
- Schmid, J. (2018). Social service workforce strengthening in Sub-Saharan Africa. *British Journal of Social Work*, 48(5), 1351–1369.
- Straussner, S. L. A., Senreich, E., & Steen, J. T. (2018). Wounded healers: A multistate study of licensed social workers' behavioral health problems. *Soc Work*, 63(2), 125-133. doi:10.1093/sw/swy012
- Twikirize, M., & Spitzer, H. (2019). *Social work practice in Africa: Indigenous and innovative approaches*: African Books Collective.
- Wairire, G. G. (2014). The state of social work education and practice in Kenya. *Professional social work in East Africa: Towards social development, poverty reduction and gender equality*, 93-107.
- Wane, N. N., Parsitau, D. S., & Nyokangi, D. (2018). Dangerous spaces: Kenya's public universities as a locus for sexual and gender-based violence—a case study of Egerton University, Njoro Campus. *Canadian Woman Studies Les Cahiers De La Femme*, 32 (1-2). <https://cws.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/cws/article/view/37691>
- Zerubavel, N., & Wright, M. O. D. (2012). The dilemma of the wounded healer. *Psychotherapy*, 49(4), 482.