

## **Elijah Ndungu**

### **Views/Experiences on the Prosowo Project**

The project was very consultative with the various East African partners especially during its inception. During the implementation of questionnaires there was a lot of consultation since there were some questions that were applicable in Kenya but not in Uganda, Tanzania or Rwanda. This made the partners to first assess the applicability of the questions in their own countries thus making the start of data collection take a bit longer than anticipated.

This process of verification of instruments was crucial since a standard questionnaire had to be developed that would accommodate all the aspects required for the research in all the partner countries. After thorough consultation with the East African partners and the Austrian partners a standard questionnaire was approved. This shows the level of collaboration and consultation between the involved partners within the East African region and Austria was very high.

In terms of ground experiences, it is interesting to note that social work is not actually appreciated much as a profession rather it is seen as a charity service offered by volunteer workers in Non Governmental Organizations.

The project was appreciated a lot by the stakeholders on the ground whom I interacted with. For them this was a new dawn in the profession of social work in Kenya whereby a well coordinated research on social work could be done in the East African region. They are eager to see social work profession uplifted in terms of curriculum development and adherence to professionalism through practice.

The partnership program will give the host universities a big boost in staff development through enhancement of social work skills. It will act as an opportunity for exchange of knowledge/idea sharing and experiences from the beneficiaries from Africa in general and the Austrian counterparts. Through the APPEAR program it is hoped that a comprehensive standardized Social Work curriculum will be developed to be used among the East African countries, this will be driven by the research findings of the PROSOWO project, this in itself is will be a milestone towards promoting professional social work practice in the East African region.

In conclusion the APPEAR project gives a big opportunity for the host universities in terms of staff development, enhanced collaboration ties/networking with donor partners and adds impetus to research development for the universities in Africa. It also helps in encouraging cultural diversity through sharing of different cultural backgrounds and practices used in regard to social work interventions and practices. It is worth noting that without such partnership it would be impossible to enhance the capacities of institutions of higher learning in developing countries, more so in research development and acquisition of relevant skills that are needs oriented.