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**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION (CFIF)  
SUPPORTING SOCIAL WORK IN MALAWI (SSWIM)**

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Welcome to the Supporters' Newsletter for Supporting Social Work in Malawi (SSWIM). In this second edition we will provide an update on the social work programme at Chanco, presentations at the Social Work Conference in South Africa, feedback from our Open Meeting in November including a look at our timeline over the last 10 years and continuing discussions on the future direction of SSWIM and CFIF.



### **Update on the SW degree course at Chanco**

There are now 120 students who have joined the social work degree course at Chanco made up of serving District Welfare Officers who are likely to return to their substantive posts, and direct entry graduates, who are usually younger. The College has increased the intake to around 30 Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students a year, with likely further increases. Thirty two students completed their placements in the autumn of 2017 and a second group are now on placement.

The first cohort of students on the social work degree course will be qualifying in 2018 and SSWIM is hoping to send out some representatives to attend the graduation ceremony in June.

Funding has now been secured for the next Practice Educators course at Chanco which will be led by 2 SSWIM members in April 2018. It is hoped that there can be a full evaluation of the Practice Educators course and ultimately of employment options for social workers graduating in 2018.

Colleagues at Chanco are interested in writing their own papers for academic use and SSWIM is looking at how its members or supporters could provide support to colleagues in Malawi with this.

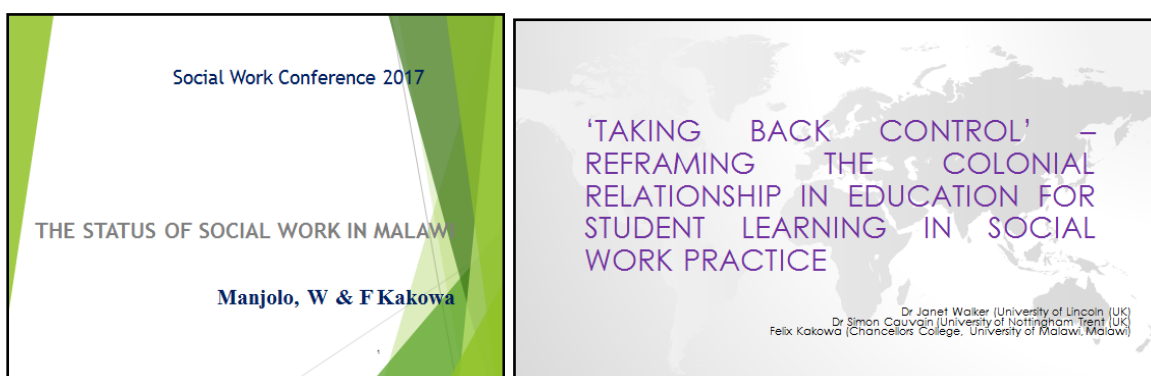
The BSW is now in its fifth year since the development of the curriculum so the content now requires revision and SSWIM is working with Chanco to consider how this might be supported.

There is interest at Chanco in establishing a Masters in Social Work (MSW) programme but there is no capacity at the university to fully deliver the MSW and so this would need a collaborative delivery with another/other University/Universities. SSWIM will continue to have discussions with Chanco about this future aspiration.

### Presentation at International Conference



The Social Work Conference 2017 (ASASWEI-ASSWA-NASWSA-DSD) held in South Africa in October: “**Rethinking Social Work in Africa: Decoloniality and indigenous knowledge in education and practice**” provided a vibrant and useful space to explore social work from an ‘African’ perspective. Attendees examined the implications of social work knowledge, practice, skills and values that have largely been ‘imported’, or indeed ‘imposed’, on developing countries, primarily as a result of the processes associated with colonialism, and considered how indigenous knowledge, as the knowledge systems developed by a community (or indeed country), can be represented in the training and practice of social work.



The conference presented two opportunities for specific papers about social work in Malawi:

The presentation from Willard Manjolo, the current chair of the Malawian Assoc. of Social Workers (MASW) and Felix Kakowa (Chanco University) – “**The Status of Social Work in Malawi**” highlighted some of the progress made since the introduction of professional

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social work education and the challenges experienced to accelerate the process. Among other things, the development of the National Social Welfare Policy was lauded as the major milestone that establishes the political will and provides the policy mandate for social work but has yet to be launched. The presenters also called for support to have a functional National Association of Social Workers in Malawi.

Janet Walker and Simon Cauvain's presentation "**Taking Back Control' – Reframing the Colonial Relationship in Education for Student Learning in Social Work Practice**" looked at the challenges of education in practice in Malawi, and how to mitigate the implications and impact of imposing a model from a developing country to a developed country.

The Conference offered a great opportunity to listen to a range of interesting speakers and meet with people working as social workers, managers, policy makers, researchers and educators in a number of African countries and from across the world.

### **Open Meeting for Supporters' Network**

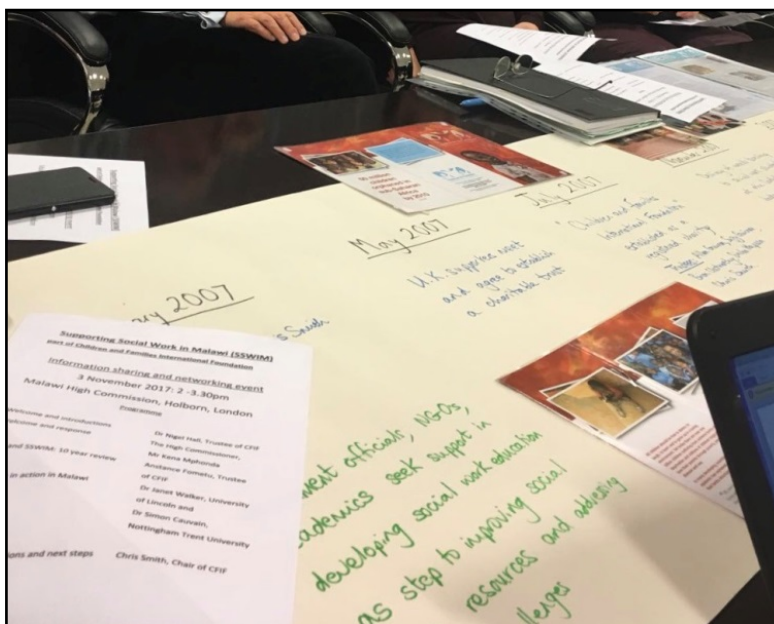


Nigel Hall, His Excellency Kena Mphonda and Chris Smith: Timeline showing the CFIF/SSWIM journey

We were offered a warm welcome by His Excellency Kena Mphonda, the Malawi High Commissioner who joined us during our business meeting on the morning of November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Malawi High Commission to hear about the work SSWIM is engaged in.

Our Open Meeting which followed was attended by 4 interested supporters ( NB. 3 other apologies were noted) and featured a presentation of the CFIF/SSWIM 10 year timeline from the start of CFIF in 2007 which was illustrated with photos, reports and newsletters from stages along the way.

2007- The start of the CFIF timeline



Those attending were provided with the updates reported on in this newsletter and encouraged to think about how they might be able to make any further contribution to the work of SSWIM. There was a very helpful discussion during the meeting about the future direction of CFIF and SSWIM which continued on afterwards between individual attendees.

**Do you have Books to donate?**



Our feedback from Chanco is that books, journals and training materials are still very much needed and we are keen to find a better way of promoting awareness of this to those who might be in a position to donate, such as retiring social workers, universities or college libraries who are updating their stock.

Do contact Chris Smith on [weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk) if you have any ideas about this or have materials to donate. We are grateful to the charity [Krizevac](#) who will send out any donated materials with their regular shipments to Malawi.

**Future direction for SSWIM and CFIF**

Reflecting back on the last 10 years since the formation of CFIF and the development of SSWIM has been a useful exercise and as can be seen from this newsletter SSWIM

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members continue to offer much valued support and input to the development of social work education in Malawi.

We are continuing to discuss the future options for CFIF and SSWIM.

CFIF has been a registered charity since 2007 and there are still 3 original trustees from that time - Chris Smith, Simba Maposa, our Treasurer and Anstance Fometu. Chris Smith is the current Chair of the Trustees and following the meeting in November we were pleased to welcome Erin King from Manchester University as a new Trustee.

Currently CFIF has approximately £2000 in funds, and the running costs of the charity have been pared back to the minimum but still account for over £500 per annum. The charity has a small number of regular gift aid supporters and periodically receives donations, but has not received any significant trust funding for over 5 years. Some of the core trustees may wish to draw back from their current roles and commitments in 2018.

If CFIF is to continue there needs to be a further strengthening of the trustee body and a succession plan in place if the charity is to be maintained or even to grow.

Another option would be for CFIF to cease and for SSWIM to continue to operate as an academic/university based group which could encompass practitioners, and this still needs further consideration. SSWIM is currently the sole initiative of CFIF although other initiatives could be considered if there was the energy and will.

SSWIM comprises a core group of academics and practitioners across the UK who meet three times annually and steer the work with Chanco both through direct work in Malawi and also very much through distance communication and is supported by the Supporters' Network established in 2017.

Our next meeting is being held in Birmingham on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2018 and those who attended the Open Meeting in November 2017 have been invited to attend this meeting.

There will be another Open Meeting held in November 2018 but any individual supporters who wish to become more involved and who may be interested in joining CFIF or specifically SSWIM will be welcomed and should contact Chris on [weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk).