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

Welcome to the Supporter's Newsletter for Supporting Social Work in Malawi (SSWIM). In this third edition we will provide feedback from our meeting in July, an update on the social work educators training at Chanco, news of our Open Meeting in November, our new Trustees and continuing discussions on the role of SSWIM in supporting the development of social work in Malawi.

Update on the SW degree course at Chanco



At our meeting in July we heard from Simon Cauvain from Nottingham Trent University and Janet Walker about their delivery of the most recent Practice Educators programme to 22 Practice Educators over 4 days in April 2018. Students had come from all over Malawi.

An evaluation of this training showed 100% satisfaction with the course with the following representative comments;

“The training was just great. I am now confident to do my job as a PE because I have been fully equipped for the course. Simon and Janet are the best facilitators. Hoping to see them again soon!!”

“Simon and Janet are not just facilitators; they are an inspiration too; they have given me a reason to aim high”.

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“The challenging exercises that we were involved in helped me figure out the best that I can contribute to the development of social workers that will be a passion to their practice.”

The only improvements noted were for more time and an improvement to the venue as the course was interrupted by a number of power failures.

Previous attendees of the PE course now have an established network (WhatsApp group) and will be able to support the recent participants. There are now approximately 40 trained Practice Educators in Malawi and we are hoping to follow up the first cohort to learn about their experiences since attending the course and think further about the peer support that can be established through the identification of Peer Educator Champions.

It is hoped the next PE course will be co-delivered by Janet or Simon with one of the experienced former PE participants or a member of the academic staff in Malawi with another SSWIM member offering a different continuing professional development (CPD) course for a few days



Participants were active in their involvement in learning and in their desire for learning, keen to develop their own practice and support learning in practice for student social workers. They were eager for new information and ideas and enthusiastic about the opportunity to meet social work colleagues from all over Malawi. Teaching sessions were definitely enhanced by their singing and dancing!



Group work was used as a key mode of delivery, modelling best practice in participative education with Janet and Simon. Students were described by Janet and Simon as extremely enthusiastic, very impressive, very knowledgeable, and passionate, being able to think of the ‘bigger picture’, demonstrating pride in the profession and wanting to ‘raise the social work bar high’ and change their country for the better.

Developing the Social Work Profession in Malawi

Malawi is now a member of the International Federation of Social Work and the International Association of Schools of Social Workers and the Malawi Association of Social Workers is being established.

Chanco has won the right to use the title The University of Malawi.

Nottingham Trent University, through its East African Hub may support colleagues in Malawi to undertake a PhD. There is a need for harmonisation of the curriculum for social work across the country; it varies hugely from one university to another and in some establishments bears little resemblance to key social work teaching elsewhere. SSWIM could support a curriculum review and help to achieve a common curriculum within Malawi.

The BSS(SW) is now in its fifth year since the development of the curriculum. The College has increased the intake with around 30 BSW students a year, with likely further increases. There continue to be aspirations for a MSW, but this requires negotiation and partnerships to support collaborative delivery with another/other University/Universities. They would like support for reviewing and developing the process, including potential development of new modules and, reviewing the current curriculum, exploring other approaches to curriculum development and assessment.

The challenge or role for SSWIM is seen as supporting the professionalisation of social work in Malawi, but recognising that without political buy in, the grass roots development can only go so far, and we need to work strategically to support further progress.

Some ideas being explored are to establish a national conference in Malawi to promote social work as a profession, supporting the embedding of best practice through working with a student or social worker in Malawi on a jointly authored article, continued discussion with the High Commissioner in the UK and communicating with key political stakeholders in Malawi, and being part of the task force/board for the professionalisation of social work in Malawi.

STOP PRESS

SSWIM has now been invited to participate in a conference focussing on the Professionalisation of Social Work in Malawi. This will take place in Lilongwe, Malawi in early October and we are delighted that Anstance Fometu and Janet Walker are able to represent us. This feels like a huge step forward in terms of the work of SSWIM has undertaken to date being recognised and most significantly in the development of social work in Malawi.

Research and writing group.

Janet and Simon have had some discussion with Chanco about some joint authoring of articles and peer reviews. There is potential to work with students and social workers in Malawi to achieve joint publications. Ideas being explored are to author a series of practice notes and to put in place a buddy system. Ideally materials produced could then be used on the social work course in Malawi, and we are also aware of an increasing number of African social work authors whose work could be utilised.

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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 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.

Our thanks to Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen for the books they have recently donated.

CFIF Trustee Board

CFIF has been a registered charity since 2007 and there are still 3 original trustees from that time - Chris Smith who is assuming the role as Secretary, Simba Maposa, our Treasurer and Anstance Fometu who has now become the Chair of the Trustees. Nigel Hall continues as a trustee along with Erin King from Manchester University who is now the Vice Chair. A Safeguarding Policy and a Safety Policy have now been established and approved by the trustees.

Currently CFIF has approximately £3000 in funds, and 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.

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 through distance communication and this is supported by the Supporters Network established in 2017. SSWIM has also benefitted from a continuing interest and support from BASW and the Malawi High Commission. We were pleased to welcome a representative from the High Commission to our recent meeting. Three supporters have now become more actively involved in attending the Steering group and we are always looking to see how we can use the skills and experience of our interested supporters.

Trustees would like to further strengthen the governance of the charity by appointing at least one additional trustee and expressions of interest would be welcomed at the next meeting.

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SSWIM Open Meeting

Our annual Open Meeting for interested supporters will be held on **Friday November 3rd 2018** at the Malawi High Commission, 36 St John St, London from **2pm -3.30pm**.

This will be a chance to hear directly from those who have recently travelled out to Malawi to support the work of the university and to hear about continuing developments in social work in Malawi. We hope to have some video footage of students talking about their aspirations.

Please contact Elaine at dibbenelaine@gmail.com if you wish to attend. If you are unable to attend but wish to become more involved or would be interested in becoming a trustee of CFIF or specifically support the work of SSWIM you should contact Chris Smith on weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk.

Follow SSWIM on Twitter



We have now set up a Twitter account so do follow us; we hope to start using this more to let people know what we are up to when we are out visiting in Malawi. Find us on [@MalawiSSWIM](https://twitter.com/MalawiSSWIM).