



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

**Welcome to the Supporting Social Work in Malawi (SSWIM)
Supporter's Newsletter covering our activities during 2021 - 22.**

SSWIM activities during 2021 - 2022

The restrictions imposed by the Covid 19 pandemic meant that any direct visits to Malawi had to be suspended throughout 2021 although regular online communication continued with key people in Malawi.

We continued to provide support from a distance. During 2021 we raised just over £1000 for the provision of PPE for social workers in Malawi, as requested via the National Association of Social Workers in Malawi and we acted as a conduit for the provision of two grants from BASW (British Association of Social Workers) to provide further support to the Children's Corners in the Dedza area and to support online seminars for social workers in Malawi and beyond. We would like to acknowledge and thank BASW for their generous support, which has made such a positive impact and support for social workers and communities in Malawi.

Supporting Children's Corners in Dedza

'Children's Corners' are community spaces for both in and out of school children aged 6 to 18 years. They are a key community structure to protect girls and boys from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, as well as responding to their developmental needs, including HIV impact mitigation. Through weekly participation in children's corners, girls and boys have the opportunity to socialize, play, sing, dance, compose and recite poems and tell stories. The most vulnerable children are prioritized to achieve specific outcomes.

The specific focus of the funding has been to raise public awareness of the safety and efficacy of Covid-19 vaccinations in the district of Dedza, a district in the Central Region of Malawi. The district has a population of 830, 512. The District Council Social Welfare Department has a total number of 10 social workers, 271 Children Corners with a total of 1,325 Children Corner Facilitators. From the 1,325 Children Corner Facilitators, only 382 facilitators are trained while 943 facilitators are untrained. Supported by BASW funding and further support from Children and Families International (a UK based charity), the Mulelewaka Foundation worked in collaboration with the District Council Social Welfare Department to provide training to Children's Corners Facilitators for direct work with children and families. Children Corner Facilitators have been trained in knowledge and skills to ensure that children in the district especially those vulnerable to the impact of HIV and AIDS, sexual exploitation, and early marriages during the pandemic of COVID-19 are receiving high quality services. With the closure of schools due to COVID-19 the training helped facilitators in mitigating the psychological and social issues the children



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are facing which are on the rise in the District. With the insufficient social workers in the District, the trained Children's Corner Facilitators will assist in provide quality social services to improve outcomes for children and their families.



Child Safety Event at the Children's Corner in Dedza March 2022.

African Social Work Conversation Virtual Forum Project: Telling our social work practice stories

This project has been managed by the Social Workers Association of Zambia (SWAZ) on behalf of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) – Africa Region, in partnership with SSWIM. It has supported the development of infrastructure and purchase of equipment to support the Virtual Forum and other objectives.

The Project's primary objective has been to convene webinar conversations with social work practitioners from all parts of Africa to share and document their practice stories to contribute to the narrative on global social work practice. Monthly webinars have been led by social work practitioner and academics around a specific theme and were successfully held and conducted using the infrastructure put in place by the project. Topics have included: *Human Rights Violations amid COVID-19 pandemic in Africa*; *Social Work Voices from the inside*; *Indigenous social work practice in Africa: telling our practice stories amid COVID -19 Intervention*; *African Women Tackling Injustice*; *Ubuntu: I am Because We are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness*; and *Sharing our lived experience of 'Ubuntu': Telling our stories around the evening fire*. Sharing social work best practices from an African perspective has seen attendance from across the region and the globe at large, with the majority streamed live on IFSW Global and Africa Region Facebooks. This has raised the profile of social work profession in the Africa Region. Further it has stimulated the culture of storytelling about social work practice experiences and documentation to contribute to knowledge generation.

Engaging with regional and international bodies has been increased, including the African Union (AU); Southern African Development Community (SADC); East African



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Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to raise the voice of social work and demand for recognition of the profession amongst member states. There has also been contact with the Commonwealth Organization for Social Work (COSW) and the Global Social Services Workforce Alliance (GSSWA) as allies for this advocacy work.

The Social Work Conversation Virtual Forum Project has progressively achieved its aspiration of stimulating African social workers to tell and document their social work practice stories. The African Social Work Conversation Virtual Forum project is reaching many people through its Facebook page and YouTube channels. The Project has also reached out to francophone African Nations. The African Social Work Conversation Virtual Forum Project is proved to be a great success as it has managed to amplify the once silent voices of social workers by stimulating a conversation on telling our practice stories. It is hoped that Africa social work approaches and models will be profiled through the project to the extent that it will contribute to enrichment of global social work narratives.

In November 2021 our chair Anstance Fometu attended the Annual Conference of the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) Africa Region in Rwanda, where she presented a paper on behalf of colleagues in both Malawi and the UK. Dr Janet Walker and Dr Simon Cauvain supported this online.

In 2022 Dr Janet Walker and Dr Simon Cauvain were able to return to spend a week in Malawi in May 2022, offering the following training:

- a two-day training module on Train the Trainers in the delivery of Practice Education Supervisory Training. 17 enthusiastic and committed social workers participated and are now reportedly confident that they are able to deliver future training themselves.



- the same 17 social workers attended a two-day module on Transformational Leadership. The sessions had an emphasis on each individual as a leader in social work practice, in their job role, and team, taking a local and global approach to leadership knowledge, theories and skills.



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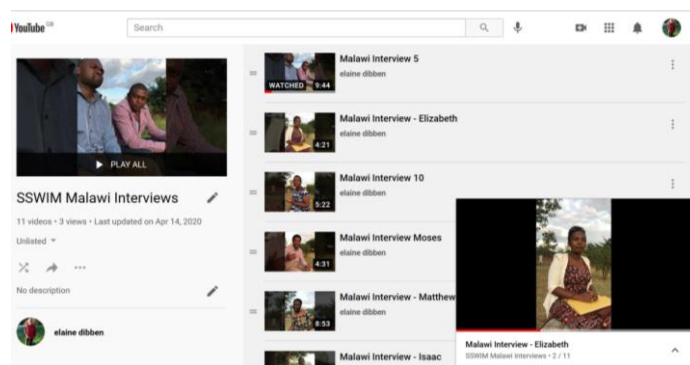
These training events demonstrate our commitment to supporting placement provision and the development of a CPD structure through the National Association of Social Workers in Malawi.

Janet and Simon were also able to undertake field visits to the District Welfare Office in Salima and to a Rehabilitation Centre for Children in Mbalame. These visits will contribute to informing the future work of CFIF.

Interviews with Social Workers in Malawi

We have been recording interviews with social workers in Malawi to share their practice and response to vulnerable people and communities. The interviews we recorded with course participants talking about their motivation to become social workers and the varying roles they have working in their communities back in 2019, are still available and can be seen on our new SSWIM YouTube channel, and we would encourage you to view them using the following link – <https://www.youtube.com/@cfifsswim/playlists>

The students convey a real sense of their commitment to their work and the value of social work in their local communities.



In April 2022 a social work student, James, who is studying at the University of Malawi was featured on The Social Work Series Podcast hosted by Ronald Takudza Matabikwa. You



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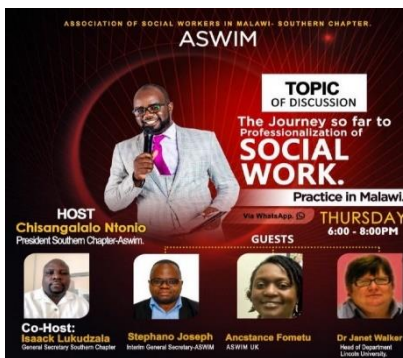
can listen to this 'All the way from Malawi' 10 minute interview here - <https://anchor.fm/ronald-takudzwa-mtatabikwa/episodes/All-the-way-from-Malawi-episode-e1i1bk2>



The Professionalisation of Social Work in Malawi and the development of the Malawi Association of Social Workers.

We have worked closely with NASWIM (National Association of Social Workers in Malawi) which is now a registered membership-based organisation aimed at improving the delivery of social welfare services to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of people. NASWIM has chapters in the northern, central, eastern, and southern regions of Malawi with membership throughout the country, working in both rural and urban areas to support their development.

In March 2021 Anstance and Janet joined a Zoom discussion hosted by NASWIM on the professionalization of Social Work, and in April 2021 SSWIM supported NASWIM in collaboration with the Ministry in holding a preliminary minimum standards workshop attended by 17 delegates from universities and social work practice across Malawi.



We were delighted to be joined at our meeting in November 2022 by the President of NASWIM Mr Chisangalola Ntonio who reported back to us on the developments of NASWIM during 2022, and what is planned for 2023. SSWIM were invited to continue to work collaboratively with NASWIM in current developments and future planning. This includes supporting the work of NASWIM to develop their role and responsibilities as a professional association and as an advocator and supporter of social work and social work development across Malawi.



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SSWIM has provided some financial support to NASWIM so that early 2023 will see the launch of the NASWIM website - <https://aswim.org/>

Research and writing group.

Members of the SSWIM research and writing group have continued to promote and support the development of indigenous social work resources for social workers in Malawi, written by practitioners and academics in Malawi, and have met with Malawian colleagues to plan a programme of writing for journals over the next year.

A chapter is currently being written for the Routledge Handbook on African Social Work with a working title of *Social Work Education and Practice Education, Decolonisation and Ubuntu: Making Connections in Malawi* which will be submitted in March 2023. Other plans include involving the trained practice educators in Malawi in writing about the embedding of practice education in Malawi. There is ongoing discussion about how to gather and analyse stories from social workers and service users and involve them directly in this work. This includes a focus on indigenous knowledge and practice and social workers engagement with communities in Malawi.

How you can support SSWIM

Fundraising

We receive a small number of regular donations from people who have set up a monthly direct debit to support SSWIM's work; we are very grateful for their continuing interest and support and would like to encourage others to consider this way of supporting our work, but we also look for fundraising opportunities. The value of our contribution as a charity is primarily in the time and expertise which our members donate willingly, but we definitely need to increase our funding both to meet the basic maintenance costs of being a registered charity but most importantly to be able to support specific projects in the countries we seek to work with. Do please consider any ways in which you individually, or with friends and colleagues, may be able to support us.

The Value of Books

We have continued to find ways of sending out books, journals etc to Malawi over the last 2 years and it's clear how much these are appreciated once they arrive at their destination.



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Anstance Fometu, Chairperson of Children and Families International Foundation

1000 books donated to Sociology Department from United Kingdom

The Sociology Department received about 1000 books covering different disciplines such as social work, sociology, social research, social psychology and criminology, from United Kingdom through Children and Families International Foundation under the Supporting Social Work in Malawi initiative (SSWIM).

In her remarks, Anstance Fometu, chairperson of the Foundation, indicated that the foundation would like to afford students and staff opportunities for reading and engaging with issues from a global perspective which could then be contextualized to Malawi.

The Department intends to open a library which will house all the book donations by August, 2022.



Article in University of Malawi Faculty of Social Science Newsletter 2022

Our donated books can have quite a journey; the latest set from a retiring social work lecturer were collected from a service station in Wales, have made their way to a garage in Northampton and are now waiting for their final trip to Malawi. Do contact Chris Smith on weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk if you have any ideas about how we can raise awareness of this or have materials to donate.



We are also still keen going forward to explore ways of enabling students and social workers to access online materials which give free access to research and academic publications.

CFIF Trustee Board and the governance of SSWIM

CFIF has been a registered charity since 2007 and currently has 5 trustees - Anstance Fometu, Chair of the Trustees, Christine Mungoshi who is a member of the International



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Committee of British Association of Social workers (BASW), Dr Janet Walker (Visiting Professor (International Social Work) University of Lincoln), Chris Smith, our Secretary and Simba Maposa, our Treasurer. Our Annual Return to the Charity Commission is submitted annually as required, prepared as always with thoroughness by Simba. You can find this on the Charity Commission website, entering CFIF's registered charity number 1122885.

Our current trustees would welcome any expressions of interest from others who might consider becoming a trustee or who have recommendations of others we might approach. In particular the trustees would benefit from having a colleague who is able to bring fund-raising expertise.

SSWIM comprises a core group of academics and practitioners across the UK who meet two or three times annually and steer the work with universities in Malawi, particularly the University of Malawi, Magomare College, and support the Association of Social Workers in Malawi in the development of social work in Malawi. Nottingham Trent University and the University of Lincoln continue to support us through the involvement of Dr Simon Cauvain and Dr Janet Walker.

Nigel Hall

In November 2022 we said a fond and very grateful farewell to Nigel Hall and his wife Norma. Nigel had been a trustee of CFIF for several years, latterly being vice-chair. He and Norma have supported CFIF and SSWIM from the beginning, sharing their experience and knowledge of working in social work across Africa. Nigel's academic and practical experience of social work in the UK, Zimbabwe and several other African countries has been invaluable to the charity. In Zimbabwe Nigel worked at the School of Social Work for 15 years and was Director of Fieldwork Programmes for some of the period; also teaching on a variety of courses. He also worked for an HIV/AIDS charity serving eight southern African countries for 3 years.

Nigel has represented the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) for over 25 years in several capacities, and currently serves as IFSW Global Commissioner for Human Rights. He is also a Board member of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW). Nigel has authored and edited a variety of publications on international social work over the years and has a particular interest in developing social work in southern Africa. Latterly Nigel has taken a lead role for CFIF in supporting the development of the Malawi's Association of Social Work and in the development of Practice Education.

He joined us for his final meeting and was given a box of goodies sourced within the UK but appropriately originating from Malawi, as a token of our appreciation.



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Our Website, Social Media and Supporter's Network

The work of SSWIM is supported by our Supporters Network which was established in 2017. Individual members of the network have offered their support and a small number have become more directly involved over time. SSWIM also benefits from continuing interest and support from BASW and the Malawi High Commission. We are always interested to hear from any of our supporters who would like to become more actively involved with the Steering Group and we are always looking to see how we can use the skills and experience of our interested supporters.

If you would be interested in becoming a trustee of CFIF or specifically in supporting the work of SSWIM you should contact Chris Smith on weltonchris@yahoo.co.uk.