

NEWSLETTER



16th March 2021

1st Issue

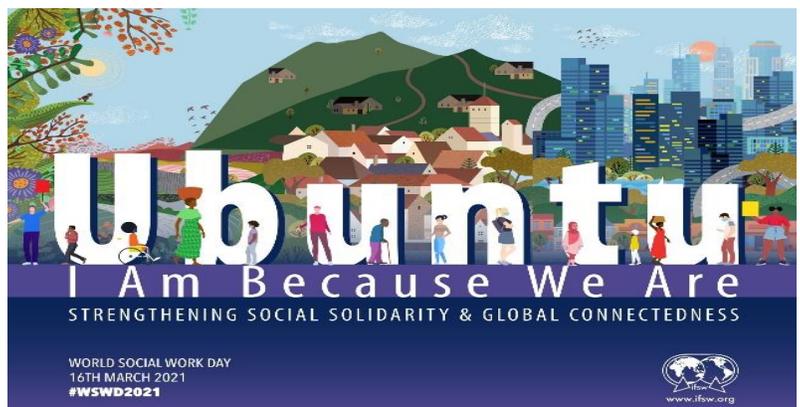


COSW is glad to be among the Commonwealth Organisations that will be taking part in some sessions during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda from the 20th – 26th June 2021. This comes after the CHOGM 2020 was postponed due to the Covid19 pandemic and will now take place as a physical and virtual hybrid. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 independent and equal countries whose Heads of Government meet every two years to discuss common problems and agree shared strategies and goals like development, democracy, and peace.

COSW, working with the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations, is contributing to policy statements to be submitted to CHOGM, including a submission on health and wellbeing. COSW representatives (including Rwanda Association of Social Workers) will participate in the parallel women, youth and civil society fora, making sure that social work is seen and heard at the top tables.

All engagements are guided by the Commonwealth values and principles as expressed in the Commonwealth Charter and coordinated by the Secretariat in London. The Commonwealth Foundation is funded by governments to work with civil society and promote development.

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY - UBUNTU



Every 3rd Tuesday in the month of March marks the World Social Work Day (WSWD) and also a start of the new Social Workers calendar based on the theme for the year. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in collaboration with other Social Work organizations and associations, developed the theme for 2021 of **“Ubuntu: I am Because We Are – Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness”** as the first theme of the 2020 to 2030 Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. As a partner of IFSW, the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) embraced the theme and recognizes Ubuntu as a concept that originates from an Indigenous Zulu community in South Africa (continued page 2)

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER – CHAIRPERSON

It's with great pleasure that we welcome you to the COSW newsletter where we look forward to sharing social work experiences and how together we can help to shape how the world works and make it a better place for everybody.

COSW was created after a consultation meeting that was held in Sri Lanka in 1994, where leaders of social work associations agreed to set up a Commonwealth Organisation to promote social work alongside (cont p2)



Dr. Sylvia Daisy Romanus

WSWD 2021 – Cont.’

which is a member of the Commonwealth. The theme of Ubuntu resonates with the social work perspective of interconnectedness of all peoples and their environments with factors such as supporting those known and not known to you through things such as donations to a charity or offering support to humanitarian organisations being a perfect example happening within our communities.

The theme of Ubuntu speaks into the need for global solidarity and also highlights the value of indigenous knowledge and wisdom. According to Silvana Martinez, IFSW President: ‘it is a message that all people are interconnected and that our future is dependent on recognizing all peoples involvement in co-building a sustainable, fair and socially just future’.

National and international social work organisations across the globe engage in activities that communicate the theme to the rest of community. Due to the continued existence of Covid19 restrictions, many of them resorted to virtual conferences in which social workers will be sharing how we are all responsible for one another and each others needs.

We therefore join the rest of the international community to promote efforts of helping people we don't know since it promotes implementation of social development within the civil society of Commonwealth countries.

Cont. Chairperson of message

80 Commonwealth civil society organisations. COSW is formally accredited to the Commonwealth and is an active member of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations. COSW brings the real experience of social work practitioners into policy debates.

COSW has been active and influential since its formation. The new COSW Board, introduced in this newsletter, is determined to raise the profile of social work during this crucial time of pandemic and climate change. Follow our website and social media to keep up with our activities.

OBJECTIVES

- To promote the education and training of social workers throughout the world for the benefit of the public
- To relieve poverty
- To promote the education of the public in matters of social policy, social organisation and social problems.

GOALS

- To provide a Commonwealth network for information about social work and social development
- To provide support and sharing of technical knowledge and expertise between and

amongst Commonwealth countries and their social workers

- To identify contact people in all Commonwealth countries who will act as liaison persons for interested individuals, groups and organisations within their countries
- To establish a link with Commonwealth organizations with similar objectives in order to pursue common objectives
- To work closely with the International Federation of Social Workers and to promote active involvement of Commonwealth social workers in international social work and social development organisations.

URBANIZATION WITH LIFE

The call by UN-Habitat (with headquarters in Nairobi) to promote transformative change in cities, urban and peri-urban areas and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance and collaborative action, opened an opportunity for COSW to contribute toward this noble cause. Mr. Charles Mbugua (COSW Board member and Former IFSW – Africa Region President) has for the past years been representing COSW on this forum and has greatly contributed in making sure that the social environment is given equal attention to the physical environment.

With increase in climate change and growing impact of the Covid19 pandemic, social workers are compelled to respond to the social challenges people face in these environmental factors they present in their day to day life. Through our representative, COSW is able to avail supportive technical and expert social solutions to that the UN-Habitat in response to the significant challenges cities and urban areas face in the course of development.

More recently, COSW has jointly participated among other partners in the development of the *Call to Action on Sustainable Urbanization Across the Commonwealth* issued by the Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network (CSCN) and now looks forward to this being realized with Commonwealth partners and UN-Habitat.

Equal Access to COVID19 Vaccination

COSW joined the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and more than 20 international organizations representing the global health and social work workforces in a coalition to advocate for the worldwide equitable access to Covid19 vaccines, to increase the health care, public health, social protection workforces and to engage civil societies, patient organizations, and the broader public in the decision-making processes.

As an Accredited Commonwealth Organisation, COSW is bound to uphold the principles in the Charter "... of consensus and common action, *mutual respect, inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and responsiveness*. It therefore appreciates the fact that Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights covenants and international instrument *rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated* and cannot be implemented selectively even in a time as this when the populations are being vaccinated against the Covid19 virus.

The COSW President, Dr. Sylvia Daisy Romanus, welcomed the new coalition with IFSW and thanked them for the key role it leads in advocating for social protection. The IFSW Secretary-General, Rory Truell commented that: 'the joint worldwide workforces of health and social work have bound together to take a stand on equality of health and social protection' and thus noted that 'it will have significant implications for the World Health Assembly, the G20, and every government'. The statement can be found on website:

<https://coswcw.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/cosw-equitable-access-for-vaccine.pdf>

UPCOMING EVENTS.

EVENT	DATE	VENUE/WEB
World Social Work Day	16 th March 2021	
Commonwealth History of Social Work	29 th March 2021	https://www.kcl.ac.uk/scwru/next-meeting
Terry Bemford Memorial Event	12 th May 2021	https://www.basw.co.uk/events/memory-terry-bamford
Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) – Kigali Rwanda	20 th – 27 th June – 2021	https://www.chogm2021.rw

Sylvia Daisy Romanus (India) – Chair



Dr. A. Sylvia Daisy is the Chairperson of Commonwealth Organization for Social Work since September 2020. She is a Social Work educator since 1999 and has facilitated in various institutions such as Nava Nirmana Social Institute, Stella Maris College and Madras Christian College where is an Associate Professor. Sylvia is passionate about networking with people and enjoys working with social work practitioners and academicians. She also serves on different boards such as the Steering Committee, Rural

Job Creation, South India, Confederation of Indian Industry since July 2018, Community Advisory Board at the National Institute for Tuberculosis Research, Indian Council for Medical Research. Sylvia is the author of the book titled “*Marriage and Family*” and has also been the Guest Editor of the “*International Journal on Social Work Management*”. She actively engages in research and has published more than 25 research papers in National and International Journals. Sylvia participates in recruitment of staff for various projects when called upon and she is recognized for remarkable contribution in the Tribal Children Nutrition project 2014 to 2019, Tribal women Entrepreneurship and Empowerment project 2017 to 2019, Chennai Floods Relief and Rehabilitation project 2015, Vardha Cyclone Relief and Rehabilitation Project 2017, COVID 19 relief and Rehabilitation project 2020.

Monique Auffrey (Canada) – Honorary Secretary

Monique joined COSW in 2006, while attending the IFSW World Conference in Munich Germany as the winner of the prestigious Eileen McGowan Kelly Scholarship. She is a registered social worker in Canada having practiced in Nova Scotia and Alberta. She was appointed to the Alberta Family Violence Death Review Committee by the Alberta Government Minister of Child and Family Services in 2017 and sits as an advisory member of the Global Institute of Social Work (GISW). Monique has held senior level positions as Executive Director and CEO of organizations focused on children, families, homelessness, domestic violence and addiction. She completed field work in The Netherlands focusing on asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and researching the psycho-social needs of asylum seekers in Canada. She also worked

for Oxfam and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs as a landmine ambassador where she completed training in Ottawa and Cambodia. Some of Monique's published work include; 1. Blyth, E. and Auffrey, M (2008). ‘Policy on Cross Border Reproductive Services’. Geneva: IFSW. <http://www.ifsw.org/en/p38001484>. And 2. Auffrey, M., Tutty, L.M., & Wright, A.C. (2017) Preventing homelessness for women who leave abusive partners: A shelter-based “Housing First” program in T. Augusta-Scott, K. Scott, & L. Tutty (Eds.), *Innovations in interventions to address intimate partner violence: Research and Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge <http://.routledge.com/Innovation-s-in-Interventions-to-Address-Intimate-Partner-Violence-Research/Augusta-Scott-Scott-Tutty/p/book/9781138692275>

Godfred Boahen (UK) – Honorary Treasurer



Dr Godfred Boahen is the Honorary Treasurer of COSW and is employed by the Church of England as the National Safeguarding Policy and Development

Lead. From 2017-2020, Godfred was the Policy, Research and Practice Improvement Lead at the British Association of Social Workers (BASW). He supported BASW members to develop a global strategy to fund anti-COVID projects led by social workers and participated in the London Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018. Godfred is also an Honorary Research Fellow, University of Birmingham, and researches and publishes in international social work.

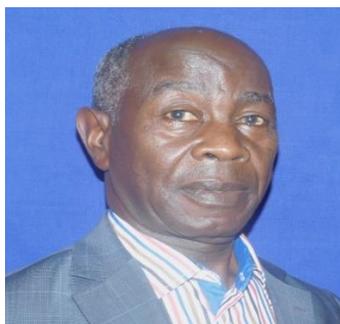
David N Jones (UK) – Main Representative to the Commonwealth Institutions



Dr. David N Jones is the Main COSW Representative to the Commonwealth Institutions and a member of British Association of Social Work (BASW) Council. He has practiced social work since 1974 with extensive national and local government, NGO, and private sector experience. He was President of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) 2006-10 and Global Coordinator of The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (2010-2020). His doctorate researched evaluating the quality of social

services. He is a Trustee of Children and Families Across Borders (ISS-UK) and has published and spoken extensively on social work practice and management in the UK and overseas. David has published a number of publications such as; Jones, D. N. and R. Truell (2012). "The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development: A place to link together and be effective in a globalized world." *International Social Work* 55 (4): 454-472. and Jones, D. N. (2020) "The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development. Fourth report: strengthening the importance of human relationships" Rhinefelden, Switzerland, IFSW <https://www.ifsw.org/product/books/global-agenda-for-social-work-and-social-development-4th-report/>

Charles Mbugua (Kenya)



Charles Mbugua is a front line social work practitioner with long and extensive experience

having worked in other countries in Africa. He is a past president of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in Africa, and former co-chair of COSW. He is the representative of IFSW at UN Habitat and is the co-chair of General Assembly of Partners (GAP)- older persons constituent group

Jan Christianson-Wood (Canada)



(2016-2020) and of the North America Region of IFSW

Janice (Jan) Christianson-Wood, MSW, RSW is a registered social worker in Canada. She is past President of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (2016-

2018) and is a Board Member of the Canadian Association of Social Workers and the Commonwealth Organization for Social Work (COSW). Jan's career has focused on child welfare from front line practice to thesis research on risk assessment in child welfare, and child welfare oversight at the local and provincial level. She was the first social worker hired as a Special Investigator by Manitoba's Chief Medical Examiner.

Juliana Daniel (Barbados)



Juliana Daniel has been a qualified Social Worker for over six years during which she has worked with diverse vulnerable populations including girls and women in Domestic

violence, sex workers, LGBT, and At-Risk Teens. She serves as the Secretary of the Barbados Association Professional Social Workers for the past three years and is a Board Member of the Commonwealth Organization for Social Work (COSW). Her passion is working with vulnerable students within the educational system enabling them to achieve their maximum potential while becoming productive citizens.

Joachim Cuthbert Mumba (Zambia)



Mr Joachim Mumba is a qualified social worker since 2002, with extensive working with local and International NGOs in Zambia. He has been Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer

of the Social Workers' Association of Zambia (SWAZ) since 2005. Joachim served as IFSW Africa Region representative on the Ethics Commission and is currently Vice President of the IFSW Africa Region. He is a Board Member of the Commonwealth Organization for Social Work (COSW). He has spoken on a number of fora on social work practice in Zambia. His main interest is strengthening the governance and financial systems of national associations of social workers in Africa.

K. S. Ramesh (India)



Dr K S Ramesh is one of the steering committee members of Tamilnadu State Professional Social Work Council, faculty and coordinator of the SFL School of Social Work and Social Policy at Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health and Lead of Centre for Social Needs

and Livelihoods at The Banyan. He was a President of Professional social workers' association, Founder Secretary of the alumni association of Madras school of social work, Patron of Journal of School Social work, Mentor for CII-women exemplars, State steering committee member of the National HIV/AIDS bill, contributed to 'TB-HIV' co-infection policy and Drafting committee member for Tamilnadu State Youth policy.

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Naomi Spencer (Australia)



Naomi has been an Australian/Pacific representative on the COSW (Commonwealth Organization for Social Work), Board for eleven years. Currently Naomi works for the NSW Government as a specialist counsellor.

She is Adjunct academic for Charles Sturt University, Convenor of SWITS, Social Workers in the Shoalhaven, sometime largest practice group in Australia, Vice president and longest serving member of NSW Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Branch, Director on National AASW Board for four years. It's important to grow confidence in, build sustainable professional associations and 'share with justice the resources of the earth'. She delights in family and home life.

Teoh Ai Hua (Malaysia)



Teoh was Chair of the Commonwealth Organization for Social Work (COSW) (2014-2020), and currently serving as the Honorary Secretary of the International Federation of Social Workers-Asia Pacific, and represent the region in the Ethics Commission of IFSW, as well as serving as the Honorary Treasurer of the South East Asia and Pacific region of the International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW-SEAP). He is a senior lecturer at the School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy, College of Arts and

Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). He has a degree in Public Administration (UUM) and a MA (Social Work Studies) from University of Kent at Canterbury, UK. His area of interests includes public social services, professionalization of social work, case management and care in the community. He served as the President of the Malaysian Association of Social Workers (2009-2017), member of the Technical Committee to Improve Social Work Professionalism in Malaysia, Special Project Team member for the Social Work Profession Bill, and member of the Management Committee of the Malaysian Council on Welfare and Social Development (MAKPEM). He is also active regionally in promoting the profession.

OKIRIA GERALD – UGANDA – CHIEF NEWSLETTER EDITOR



Okiria Gerald is a Professional Ugandan Social Worker since 2015 from when he offered volunteer service at the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) as a Programs Officer for two years after which he was later elected in 2017 as a board member of NASWU up to date. Currently he works with Compassion International – Uganda where

he offers support to staff working with children and youth efforts aimed at releasing them from poverty. He has also served as the Young Carers Ambassador in East Africa under COSW since 2016 and has embraced his new role (2021) to support the Board of the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW). On the other hand, he is passionate about service, justice and family in the community and occasionally thus offers independent social work services to individuals who would wish to reunite with their families in the diaspora.

FUTURE OF THE NEWSLETTER.

Our plan as the editorial team is to be the channel of projecting information to the wider social work community in all Commonwealth countries and beyond. We therefore believe that you will find forthcoming newsletters equipping practicing social workers to share their experiences in the field of practice at both national and international levels.

The information shared in our newsletter will also come from the Organisations we network with, so that the Social Sector is well equipped and these will include; International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Foundation, Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organizations (IFCO), Commonwealth Health Professional Alliance (CHPA), Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Networks (CSCN) and The International Association of School of Social Work (IASSW) among others.

For any articles you wished featured in our next newsletter and feedback, please email them to geraldokiria@yahoo.com and davidnjones@peopleneedpeople.org.uk.

For details visit our
website

www.cosw.info

Social Media Platforms



<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthOrganizationForSocialWork>



<https://twitter.com/CwlthSocWk>



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTadGT4rwaUsTQdYiyqFgAQ>