

# NEWSLETTER



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20<sup>th</sup> January 2024

## SUCCESSFUL IFSW REGIONAL CONFERENCES- NOVEMBER 2023

### Jenny Frank's Candle Burns Out – Legacy Shines



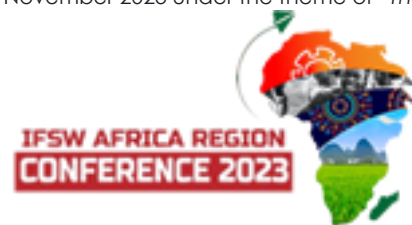
As Jenny Frank's candle burnt out, her legacy glows brighter in the darkest moments. Jenny was an international advocate for young carers and a great friend of COSW. Her dedication was to have young carers recognised as being the experts in their own lives and that their voices, opinions and priorities must be both the foundation and at the frontline of making change. Jenny died in October 2023.

Jenny was for many years the Young Carers lead in the Children's Society (UK), working with the UK Department for Education and Parliamentarians. She attended the first COSW young carer conference in Nairobi in 2006 and continued to work with the Commonwealth project and social work associations in the region. She helped facilitate four young carer 'festivals' in Nairobi, Kenya, modelled on the annual UK events she organised with the Children's Society.

It is from such a generous legacy that a fundraising drive was activated for people to donate in Jenny's memory towards enabling young carers to attend Parliament and to learn about policy, campaigning and Parliamentary affairs. This will enable young carers to meet with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Young Carers and young adult carers, ministers and decision makers to make changes to strengthen support for young carers. The funding will go directly to the young carers' travel, accommodation and resources that they may need to enable them to participate, including replacement care for their family members.

Tributes, donations and gallery of Jenny's life  
Visit [Jenny Frank 1951 - 2023 \(muchloved.com\)](http://www.muchloved.com)

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) regions of Africa and Asia-Pacific organized regional conferences in November 2023 that aimed at maintaining a regionally connected workforce. The Asia-Pacific conference was hosted by the Philippine Association of Social Workers Inc (PASWI) from 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2023 under the theme of "The Sustainable Development Goals Halfway Point: Social Work's contribution to Social Development." In Cebu City, Philippines. Dr. Teoh Ai Hua from Malaysia, a board member of COSW made a plenary presentation on the theme of "Transformative Leadership and SDGs".



The IFSW Africa region conference was hosted by the Nigeria Association of Social Workers (NAoSW) on 22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023 under the theme "Emerging Social Problems in Africa: The Response of Social Work Practice" at The University of Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria. The IFSW Africa Region President, Noel Garikai Muridzo PhD, highlighted the uniqueness in the conference that involved: "... participation of diverse professionals, academics, policymakers and civil society..." giving "it a conference character and richness in debate, information sharing, and interaction of ideas, experiences, and oneness in the quest to work with people to bring about the change they desire in their lives".

Alhaji. Mashood Mustapha, the National President of the Nigeria Association of Social Workers, has passionately steered the social workers association in Nigeria and registered several achievements that have given momentum to advance the social work agenda and advocate for the social work profession, not only nationally but also across the Africa Region. He noted that the conference stood out as an "...important platform to address problems" that social workers need to "collectively seek a new social order that ushers in a better future for Africa and Africans, a future that brings peace, opportunity and prosperity to the continent."

The previous IFSW Africa Conference was held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2021. These conferences have continued to blossom as the platform on which social workers share social work knowledge and experience in both academia and practice arenas. Details of the conference can be found on the conference website <http://www.ifswafricaconference2023.org/>.



On the Left is the IFSW President Joachim Cuthbert and Dr. Teoh with Jane Shears (IFSW Ethics Commissioner) on the right

## Welcome Message from the COSW President

This Newsletter comes at the beginning of 2024 and gives me an opportunity to send best wishes at this festive season. However as I write this short welcome, my home city of Chennai-India is coping with the aftermath of serious flooding. I have been involved with other volunteers in practical social work delivering clean water and basic necessities to several communities. That has reminded me that our work as social workers is never complete, especially as we are called on to respond to increasing climate disasters and growing inequality. It was therefore exciting to share in the recognition of social work delivered by the University of London in an honorary doctorate for our Board Member, David N Jones. We send our congratulations to him and our best wishes to all professional colleagues for a New Year of continued commitment to social justice and social work.

## DR. DAVID N. JONES AWARDED TWO HIGHLY ESTEEMED AWARDS BY BASW AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

Many things have evolved over time, but foundation stones, laid by great social workers like Dr. David N. Jones, endure. 2023 ended on a beautiful note for COSW Main Representative at the Commonwealth, Dr. David N. Jones as he received two highly esteemed awards; the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Lifetime Achievement Award in June 2023 and in November an honorary doctorate from the University of London for his national and international social work activities.

Dr. David N. Jones' BASW award was in recognition of his contribution in roles and service on many committees. He was "actively involved in launching World Social Work Days and worked with BASW to help establish this as a core part of the year. He also helped launch the Diaspora Special Interest Group when Chair the BASW International Committee."

In his appreciation message, David stated "I am pleased to have made my contribution to enhancing and sustaining our global profession. I really appreciate the honour of this lifetime achievement award and send my thanks to BASW Council and all those social workers I have encountered around the world who have shaped my commitment."

The award was presented by the BASW UK Chair, Julia Ross, who said that "David Jones has been a mover and a shaker for social work all his life. And there is no indication that he's slowing down! Please don't David, we all so much appreciate your determination to make a difference for people who value and need social work services. You've achieved this on a national, international and global scale through your many selfless contributions over the years."

It was another special moment in his life when Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, in the presence of the Vice Chancellor Professor Wendy Thomson, awarded University of London honorary degrees and a fellowship to David and 4 others. Among the notable areas for his recognition were the efforts he invested in steering consultations on the

Commonwealth Charter for Young Carers and contributions in Child Protection publications and policies formulated.

David expressed appreciation to the University of London "... for the unexpected honor which is much appreciated." He further encouraged "... mutual understanding and respect for people and environment."

COSW President, Dr Sylvia, said "we are glad that our Board Member Dr. David N. Jones continues to make significant contributions to the profession within and beyond his borders."  
BASW Chair Julia Ross with David N Jones



Back row (from left to right): Dr. David N Jones, Professor Paul Layzell CBE DL, Simon Reeve, Baroness Ros Altmann CBE. Front row (from left to right): Claudia Roden CBE, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Professor Wendy Thomson CBE

For a full report visit: <https://new.basw.co.uk/articles/june-thoburn-david-n-jones-receive-lifetime-achievement-awards-basw-agm>

University of London awards: <https://www.london.ac.uk/news-events/news/hrh-princess-royal-awards-university-london-honorary-degrees-fellowship-five-notable-figures>

## COSW CONTRIBUTES TO THE HEALTH MINISTERS' COMMUNIQUÉ

The Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH) is a technical advisory committee which advises the Commonwealth structures on health and wellbeing policies. Representatives from around ten member states, alongside civil society representatives from regional bodies and Commonwealth Organisations (COs), advise on how best to strengthen health services in Commonwealth countries. The Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) is privileged to be

one of the two CO members in 2022/24 represented by David N. Jones, the COSW Main Representative to the Commonwealth Institutions.

The CACH holds two meetings annually with the September 2022 meeting held virtually and an in-person meeting at Marlborough House in April 2023. The agenda included a review of the CACH structure and efficiency alongside a focus on specific health conditions. CACH also facilitated a draft statement for the Health Ministers Meeting in May 2023.

The ministerial [statement](#) included several references to social services, in part thanks to COSW advocacy, and was adopted by Ministers with minimal changes. They affirmed their 'commitment to achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030 in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) (para 3). Ministers 'welcomed the 2022 CHOGM declaration dedicating 2023 as the Year of Youth' and 'committed to ensure young people's views are integrated in the policy planning process' (para 6).

Several statements were made by ministers about the health and social service workforce, acknowledging 'the fundamental role of the health and social care workforce in delivering and supporting increased access to basic and essential Primary Health Care (PHC) services. As part of this, we recognised the need to ensure greater linkages between, (and) where appropriate the integration of, health and social care services, noting that they are differently structured around the Commonwealth' (para 13).

Ministers 'recognised the pressures on the health and social care workforce since the COVID-19 pandemic' and 'underlined the need to protect and invest in all occupations engaged in health and wellbeing to deliver robust PHC services' (para 11). They 'recognised the shared challenges of human resourcing of health and social care workers' and

'agreed that best efforts be made to ensure that issues such as international migration and the mobility of health workers do not undermine countries' abilities to deliver robust health services'. COSW is considering whether to push for a Commonwealth protocol on migration of social workers.

Finally, ministers noted the recommendations from the Commonwealth Civil Society Policy Forum 2023 '.... that calls on the Commonwealth governments to: ii. adopt the [Commonwealth Young Carer's Charter](#), recognising that young carers should be supported to develop emotionally and physically'.

COSW involvement in several policy areas means that the social policy elements supporting those policies (e.g. education and youth) are made explicit and included in communiqués, making social work more visible and recognising the crucial contribution of social workers.



Members of CACH at Marlborough House – April 2023

## The Commonwealth Year of Youth 2023 and Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting

The year 2023 was dedicated at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2022) as The Year of Youth running until CHOGM in October 2024. This significant year was expounded during the Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) held in London, United Kingdom. The week-long meeting that was originally scheduled to take place in Pakistan in January was later postponed to September 2023 in London due to the serious floods that affected the country. Young social workers were represented by Syed Shah, a Pakistani social worker studying in London, and UK social worker Omar Mohamed.



Oritsé and David Jones at St James Palace, London

It was at the Commonwealth Youth Minister's Meeting that Oritsé Williams was formally recognised as the Commonwealth Young Carer Champion. The JLS Band British singer performed a specially written song for young carers during the Commonwealth Youth Awards at St James Palace to an audience of young people, ministers, and dignitaries, including the Duke of Edinburgh. The lyrics drew on his own experience as a teenage young carer and received an emotional response from on the whole audience. COSW is pleased to be working with Oritsé over the coming year to promote the young carer charter and bring the real lives of young carers to the attention of the Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa in October 2024.

The efforts invested by COSW can be seen in the CYMM ministerial communiqué in which it stated in part: "We welcome the strategies proposed in our roundtable discussions to enhance inclusion and safeguarding of our young people by exploring the use of various policy approaches and tools, such as the young carer's charter ..." (Para 25). COSW representative David Jones was able to address the meeting and thanked ministers for their support.

COSW was allocated a stand during the Commonwealth Expo, which followed the CYMM. This attracted several government representatives who discussed the needs of young carers and the value of the Young Carers Charter, alongside the other priorities of the Commonwealth Children's Interest Group (ComCIG), chaired by COSW. During the Commonwealth Expo, COSW was represented by Syed Shah, newly arrived from Pakistan

and young carer Omar Mohamed, both recently qualified as social workers, alongside international young carer advocate Helen Leadbitter and David N Jones.

After the event, Omar commented on his experience saying: *'It was wonderful to attend the Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting, especially during the Year of Youth. It was inspirational and motivating to hear from the youth present, who are leaders in activities within the Commonwealth, and beneficial to learn about ideas and strategies of becoming more involved in this important work. I noticed key areas of focus such as work around disability rights, gender equality, LGBTQ+ issues, and building partnerships. It was great to represent BASW and COSW at such a global event with shared initiatives and values around building better societies. It felt important to represent young carers, especially from an expert by experience perspective.'*

Syed concluded: *'It was an honour to attend the Youth Ministers' meeting. The representatives of the Commonwealth countries present at the meeting had the opportunity to listen and it was good to hear that all the countries are taking steps to address the problems faced by the youth in the Commonwealth countries. It is very good that the representatives of all countries insist on the implementation of measures for the betterment of youth, noting the growing youth population in Commonwealth countries. The challenges faced by youth should be reduced by joint efforts of every Commonwealth member country. All Commonwealth countries should work together for the betterment of youth. It was great to participate in this meeting from the platform of social work.'*



Helen, Omar, Syed & David at the Expo

### Commonwealth stakeholders take a step on the Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) 2022 in Kigali, Rwanda will always be remembered as one that focused more on children and youth related issues. This therefore triggered children and youth serving organisations and institutions to conduct a [roundtable meeting](#) of government officials, stakeholders and experts in February 2023, to discuss the implementation of the Kigali [Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform](#), one of the four declarations unanimously agreed in CHOGM 2022. The event was hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat Social Development Division in partnership with the Commonwealth Children's Interest Group (ComCIG).

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland noted that *"This is just one of many areas where the Commonwealth can make a real difference, ... we can all work together to prioritise support for, investment in, and reform of child care and protection services – to enable children to live without abuse or discrimination of any kind; to enjoy their civil, political, social and cultural rights; and to flourish as equal, valued and productive human beings, ... We cannot afford to fail our children, so we must give their wellbeing the priority it deserves – and act together to ensure that every child in the Commonwealth is safe, protected and able to reach their full potential."*

The Kigali declaration focuses on ensuring and restoring the rights of children following the COVID-19 pandemic, paying particular attention to the most marginalized and excluded. The leaders stressed the

importance of enabling best practices for learning and sharing between Commonwealth states to implement a holistic and comprehensive approach to tackle violence against children. The roundtable aimed at encouraging collective action and knowledge sharing across the Commonwealth. Commitments were made to phase out orphanages in the Commonwealth and opt for community care of children; to tackle the underlying causes that lead to separation of parents and children, to establish sustainable and effective safeguarding systems and to eliminate child labour in all its forms, including forced labour, trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

Speakers included, Rt Hon Patricia Scotland (Commonwealth Secretary-General), Joseph Kabakeza (First Counsellor, Rwandan High Commission), Mark Waddington (CEO, Hope and Homes for Children - a civil society organisation working with the Rwandan government on the Declaration initiative), David N Jones (Chair of ComCIG), Carolyn Housman (CEO CFAB and secretariat of ComCIG) and Helen Jones (long-serving Commonwealth civil society activist).

Drawing on the expertise and experience of care and protection reform for children and youth among stakeholders from across the Commonwealth, the roundtable identified priority areas for future action and highlighted the need to develop a roadmap for action. There was agreement that the improvement of child care and protection systems must be achieved through empowering and supporting families – acknowledging child protection as an interconnected subject across sectors, including social work, health, education, safety and relationships.

## Samoa the 1<sup>st</sup> Small Island State to Host CHOGM 2024



Secretary-General, President of Rwanda, Prime Minister of Samoa

Samoa, located just south of the Equator in the Pacific Ocean, will be the first small Island developing state from the Blue Pacific to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2024) under the theme “One Resilient Common Future: Transforming our Common Wealth”. The meeting in October

2024 is expected to bring a unique perspective to the table. CHOGM 2024 promises to be a landmark event, uniting Commonwealth nations in their pursuit of resilience, sustainability and a shared future.

The Fa'a Sāmoa, or Samoan way of life, exemplifies collective responsibility, encapsulating values such as respect, dignity, love, protection, and service. This ethos aligns with the principles of the Commonwealth Charter, uniting the Commonwealth Aiga (family) of 56 nations, representing one-third of the global population. These nations, diverse in size and development status, share common beliefs and values, where every member's contribution is significant.

The 2024 CHOGM core pillars will focus on strengthening:

- Resilient democratic institutions upholding human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.
- A resilient environment to combat climate change.
- Resilient economies that support recovery and prosperity.
- Resilient societies to empower individuals for a peaceful and productive life.

COSW will aim to have representation at CHOGM 2024 by local social workers, as in previous years. We will also be working with other Accredited Commonwealth Organisations to make a submission on the four pillars.

### Young carers meet for one voice – international perspectives

Young carers and organisations from around the world came together across two days in June to hear the voices of young carers and organisations that are supporting them. The webinar was initiated by COSW, hosted by the Young Carers Alliance, Carers Trust (UK) and promoted in partnership with the Commonwealth Youth Programme as part of the Year of Youth 2023.

Speakers included Professor Saul Becker (the leading global authority on young carers), Layne Robinson (Head of Social Policy and Development, Commonwealth Secretariat), Orlis Williams (JLS band member and Commonwealth Young Carer Ambassador), Andy MacGregor (Young Carers Alliance), Jenny Frank (young carer advocate), Helen Leadbitter (young carer consultant) and David Jones (COSW). There were also presentations from young carers and organisations supporting them in 14 countries. All the presentations are available without charge at <https://carers.org/home/young-carers-voices>.

### Cross- Learning between Israel Union of Social Workers and Ugandan Social Workers- a positive step towards achieving the Global Social Work Agenda. John Mary Ssekate, National Association of Social Workers of Uganda-(NASWU).

representing all parts of Israel, participated in a one-week cross-learning with Ugandan social workers. The major objective of this visit was to share best practices and listen to inspiring and promising field stories in different domains of social work practice and along the continuum of social protection and care.

This professional engagement symbolized a long-term working relationship and friendship between Israel and Uganda and feeds into the 2020-2030 Global Social Work agenda themes of valuing social work as an essential service, transforming social protection systems, Ubuntu-strengthening social solidarity and global connectedness, promoting diversity and the power of joint social action and co-building an inclusive social transformation.

While in Uganda, the Israeli social workers interfaced with frontline social workers in a mental health hospital setting at Butabika National Mental Health referral hospital, and met social workers in education and research at Makerere University, policy makers at the Parliament of Uganda and social workers in mental health programming at Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative-(REPSI), the organization led by Mr. Michael Byamukama Ntanda who also doubles as the President of the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda.

Other social work agencies where cross-learning took place include; REHORE an urban refugee agency, Africa Renewal Ministries (a faith-based organization and home to both Loving Hearts and Bethany children transitional homes taking care of abandoned minors and other



### Israeli social workers having an engagement with policy makers at parliament of Uganda on May 11, 2023.

Between May 8, and May 15, 2023, a group from the Israel Union of Social Workers led by Inbal Harmoni, the president of the Israel Union; Reut Cohen, Union Director for the Jerusalem District; Dr. Ella, the Head of Quality Supervision at the Israel Ministry of Welfare; and Tami Morez, a senior Israel-East Africa Social Worker, with a team of 26 professionals

children at risk and supporting over 10,000 vulnerable children), Project-Ten, Days for Girls Uganda, and the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda Secretariat. The engagement ended with a social work dinner involving Israeli and Ugandan social workers.

In all social work agencies, social workers in Uganda and their counterparts from Israel shared their unique interventions, experiences, guidelines, policies and social work frameworks along different practice domains. Social workers from both countries compared similarities and differences with a view to strengthening and re-enforcing individual social workers, social work agencies and sister professional bodies.



**Israel social workers meeting at Makerere University and NASWU secretariat in Kampala on May 9, 2023.**



**Israel social workers meeting with Africa Renewal Ministries Team leader Rv. Pastor Peter Kasirivu, where they met abandoned children minors at loving Hearts and Bethany Island in Lake. Victoria on May 10, 2023.**

*"I love Uganda - the climate, her welcoming people with Ubuntu values, green environment, organic food and fruits and unique animals and birds,"* said Tami Morez, one of the Israeli social work trip coordinators.

This Israel-Uganda social work learning experience presents a unique opportunity for the global social work fraternity to continue working and thinking about strengthening professional networks, sharing social work models, innovative tools, frameworks and field experiences in different

domains of social work practice for a well-planned, trained and supported social workforce. The Israel-Uganda social work engagement also opened new discussions around joint research and publications, sharing innovations, and networking in respect to 2020-2030 global social work agenda.

### **Sunny shares his experience of his exposure to Social Work Practice in Eastern and Southern Africa.**

In the summer of 2022, I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree in social work at Keele University. Before undertaking an official social work role in the United Kingdom (UK), I made the decision to travel to Eastern and Southern Africa, mostly for adventure. However, I also desired, if possible, to incorporate social work into my travels. Through the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) website, I contacted the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU). NASWU were very enthusiastic to receive me and offered me a three-month internship which I gratefully accepted.



In October 2022, I arrived in Uganda. In partnership with NASWU's national coordinator, John Mary Ssekate, we outlined a plan which would enable me to gain a full experience of social work practice in Uganda. Over the duration of my placement, I engaged in a number of activities including participation in a mental health awareness webinar campaign, assisting with NASWU's continued professional development training, visits to several non-governmental organisations (NGOs), various community engagements and visits to universities across multiple districts, social worker agencies and universities, like Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPPSI) Africa Renewal Ministries, Compassion International, Edukid/CLIFFORD, Kabale University, Bishop Stuart University, Bishop Balham University, and Kyambogo University

The experience of participating in the internship has been unrivalled to anything I have ever done before. It has enabled me to compare and contrast social work practice with the UK; I was able to offer my knowledge whilst extracting valuable insight from which I will benefit personally and professionally. I now fully embrace the ubuntu philosophy. Special thanks to NASWU and the people of Uganda. You will be forever in my heart!!

### **Regulation of Social Work – COSW launches a series of occasional webinars**

The Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) is planning a series of webinars exploring the different forms of regulation of social work in Commonwealth countries. Many countries are looking at how best to ensure the quality of social work. This series will compare and contrast different approaches.

The first event was held in March 2023 in partnership with the Policy Research Unit in Health and Social Care Workforce, King's College

London. It was an online witness seminar asking 'How did Social Worker Registration in England Come About?' The speakers, including COSW Board member David N Jones, alongside Jennifer Bernard, Daphne Statham and Aidan Worsley, had all played key roles in establishing the regulatory structures in the UK. A transcript of the webinar is available as a free [download](#).

The second webinar examined the creation of a regulatory framework in Sri Lanka (Amarawansa Ranaweera) and the campaign, still in progress, to create a regulatory framework in India (C. J. Paul). Future webinars are planned and will be announced from time to time on the website and social media.

**MIKE – Joins the News Letter Editorial Team**

COSW is pleased to welcome Mike on the Editorial Team. Mike is a dedicated and versatile social worker from Kenya, with a deep commitment to creating positive change in society. The passionate social worker in him has enabled him to serve in leadership and administration positions at the Association of Social Work Educators in Kenya - ASWEK Secretariat and to participate in the Technical Committee for the Social Work Act Professionals bill. His experience has also been grounded in activities such as piloting a School Social Work program and representing

on the advisory committee for a study on group interpersonal psychotherapy in Lebanon and Kenya which has underscored his dedication to enhancing the well-being of individuals. Mike also manages several social media platforms, event planning and branding efforts.

Currently, Mike serves as the Acting Secretary at the Kenya National Association of Social Workers - Rift Valley Branch, where he is dedicated to efficiently running the branch and supporting the organization's regional mission. Simultaneously, he also designed social programs for Lewa Children's Home, led the "Police is My Brother" Initiative, and mobilized resources while supervising social work programs at the Ethel Foundation for the Aged. Beyond the professional endeavours, he cherishes his role in family and community as ways of balancing professional pursuits and life. Through such professional experiences and versatile skill set, Mike seeks to continue making impactful contributions to the field of social work.

These encouraging words for social workers were voiced in the second COSW Policy Forum which was held online on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October in two online parallel meetings embracing all time zones. Both had a similar programme with the same speakers.

**Policy Forum Highlighted Contribution of Social Workers to Commonwealth**

*"The Commonwealth Secretariat is proud of the contribution of social workers.*

*We recognise their crucial role in communities.*

*We need to elevate this work, recognising the key role of social work in basic primary healthcare and in developing resilient and healthy communities"*

Janneth Mghamba (Tanzania), Commonwealth Secretariat Health Adviser

Eminent Commonwealth speakers discussed 'The contribution of the Commonwealth to Global Social Policy' preceded by a brief annual report from COSW Board members highlighting a busy and influential year. The presentations were followed by an outline of the implementation timetable for the new COSW constitutional structure.

The reports from Board Members showcased COSW achievements on such themes as young carers, physical & mental health, childcare law reform, human rights, safeguarding & child protection, involvement of older people, youth work, social development and much more.

Oritsé Williams, Commonwealth Young Carer Champion, poet, performer and member of the JLS Band, contributed the first global broadcast of a new video with his song for young carers. This is available on our website.

Panel speakers included Matthew Neuhaus (Australia)(former Director of the Political Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat), Joachim Mumba (Zambia)(IFSW President), Janneth Mghamba (Tanzania)(Health Advisor for the Commonwealth Secretariat) and Mario Gerada (Malta)(social worker and Commonwealth Foundation Civil Society Advisory Governor). The [press release](#) and video of the event are on the [website](#).

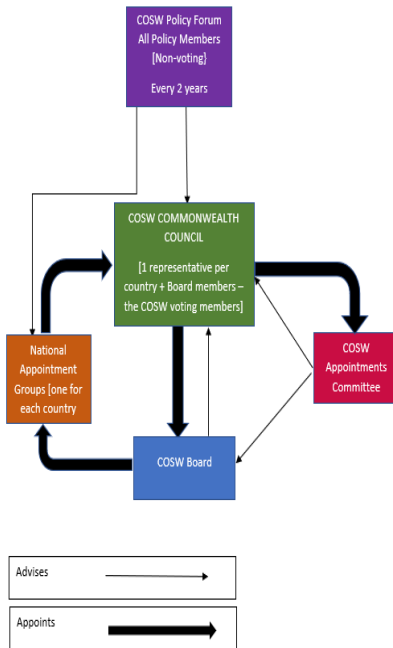
"The Policy Forum highlighted the essential contribution of social workers to Commonwealth member states and communities and the key role of COSW as a civil society partner in the Commonwealth family", concluded COSW President Sylvia Daisy Romanus. **CHECK THE VIDEO LINKS**



Some of the Board members and participants in the Policy Forum

**IMPLEMENTING A NEW STRUCTURE FOR COSW**

COSW has already started the implementation of a new and very different constitution and revised structure, which was approved in September 2023. This includes the creation of a new COSW Commonwealth Council with one representative from each country, a new COSW Board and a new form of associateship for individuals and organisations wishing to show support for social work in the Commonwealth. The new arrangements should be set up and ready to go by October 2024.



A new Global Appointments Committee has already been appointed by the Board and held its first meeting. Members include Morrel Caissie (North America and Caribbean), Nigel Hall (Europe), Charles Mbugua (Africa), Fiona Robertson (Pacific) and Varathagowry Vasudevan (Asia). The Chair is K. S. Ramesh (Board member). The Appointments Committee will oversee the creation of National Appointment Groups to select the national member of the new Council and also the process of selecting Board members.

National associations have a formal role in the process, for the first time; a letter of explanation will be sent in January 2024. The formation of National Appointment Groups is expected to last from November 2023 to April 2024 followed by the process to identify Council members. Advertising for Board members is expected to be launched by April 2024. The new Board and Council take up post in October 2024 and will be introduced in a Policy Forum and General Meeting at that time.

The Associate register for individuals and organisation is planned to open in January 2024. Information about the application process will be published on the website and in social media.

"The new structure increases participation of national representatives and others supporting social work across the Commonwealth. This creates exciting new opportunities and broadens the base of accountability, laying the foundation for the continued growth and development of COSW as the voice of social work in the Commonwealth", COSW President Sylvia Daisy concluded.

**Social workers invited to contribute to survey of working conditions.**



The third IFSW survey of social worker working conditions was launched in October. Social workers are strongly encouraged to respond to the anonymous survey which is now open.

IFSW, in collaboration with Bath Spa University and other institutions, has been shining a spotlight on the often-challenging working conditions of social workers around the globe. Pascal Rudin, IFSW acting CEO, stated, "This research is not just an eye-opener, but it's a call to action. The difficult environments our social workers are plunged into are not just detrimental to their wellbeing but are also undermining their capacity to make transformative impacts in the societies they serve. It's paramount that legal recognition of social work, enhanced management support, and improved pay and conditions be immediately addressed."

COSW feeds results of the survey into continuing dialogues with the Commonwealth Secretariat, advocating for better working conditions for social workers and improved services for individuals and communities.

**COSW condemns abuse of women as strategy in conflicts**

**STOP  
VIOLENCE  
AGAINST  
WOMEN**



As Commonwealth women's affairs ministers ended their meeting in The Bahamas (21-23 August 2023), the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) drew attention to evidence from several conflicts around the world of the targeted abuse of women, including rape, as a conscious strategy of conflict. Using attacks on women to demoralize or destroy a national or cultural group is deplorable. Such ill-treatment is an abuse of human rights and a war crime and should be investigated with the full force of the law.

COSW calls on the Commonwealth institutions and Women's Affairs Ministers to challenge and condemn hate speech and to make full use of national and international law. Those who abuse women, whether through actions or hate speech, must be brought to justice. Read the full statement [here](#).



## COSW contributes to pan-Commonwealth roundtable on implementation of the Kigali Declaration

The Commonwealth Secretariat Social Development Division in partnership with the Commonwealth Children's Interest Group (ComCIG) hosted a [roundtable meeting](#) of government officials, stakeholders and experts in February 2023, to discuss implementation of the Kigali [Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform](#) - one of the four declarations unanimously agreed upon by Commonwealth Heads of Government in Rwanda in 2022. The event was hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat. COSW played a key role in planning.

The Kigali Declaration is an historic agreement among Commonwealth countries that focuses on ensuring and restoring the rights of children following the COVID-19 pandemic, paying particular attention to the most marginalised and excluded. In the Declaration, leaders stressed the importance of enabling best practices for learning and sharing between Commonwealth states to implement a holistic and comprehensive approach to tackle violence against children. The roundtable aimed to encourage such collective action and knowledge sharing across the Commonwealth.



*'We cannot afford to fail our children'*  
Secretary-General says end institutional care.

The Declaration contains commitments to phase out orphanages in the Commonwealth and opt for community care of children; to tackle the underlying causes that lead to separation of parents and children, to establish sustainable and effective safeguarding systems and to eliminate child labour in all its forms, including forced labour, trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

Speakers included, Rt Hon Patricia Scotland (Commonwealth Secretary-General), Joseph Kabakeza (First Counsellor, Rwandan High Commission), Mark Waddington (CEO, Hope and Homes for Children - a civil society organisation working with the Rwandan government on the Declaration initiative), David N Jones (Chair of ComCIG), Carolyn Housman (CEO CFAB and secretariat of ComCIG) and Helen Jones (It's a Penalty).

'This is just one of many areas where the Commonwealth can make a real difference', said Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. 'We can all work together to prioritise support for, investment in, and reform of child care and protection services - to enable children to live without abuse or discrimination of any kind; to enjoy their civil, political, social and cultural rights; and to flourish as equal, valued and productive human beings.'... 'We cannot afford to fail our children, so we must give their wellbeing the priority it deserves - and act together to ensure that every child in the Commonwealth is safe, protected and able to reach their full potential.'

Drawing on the expertise and experience of care and protection reform for children and youth among stakeholders from across the Commonwealth, the roundtable identified priority areas for future action and highlighted the need to develop a roadmap for action. There was agreement that the improvement of child care and protection systems must be achieved through empowering and supporting families - acknowledging child protection as an interconnected subject across sectors, including social work, health, education, safety and relationships.

### David Jones Meets GALCK+ - KENYA



Ivy Werimba and Yvonne Oduor (Galck+) 1

Dr. David Jones in his recent visit to Kenya, met with galck+ in Nairobi, an organisation formerly known as The Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya. This is the umbrella body for LGBTQI individuals and organisations in Kenya. Among issues discussed were progress recognising LGBTQI rights in the Commonwealth and in member states, threats to

and some prominent medical, religious and human rights organisations. Some countries have already imposed such bans and others are taking steps to do so.'

### The contribution of Commonwealth Accredited Organisations

The contribution that Commonwealth Accredited Organisations, like COSW, make in advancing the values and principles in the Commonwealth Charter is a key pillar of the Commonwealth system. To better understand and recognise the contribution Accredited Organisations make, and the value they add in addressing the shared concerns that bind the Commonwealth of Nations, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned an [independent study](#). COSW gave evidence to the inquiry and David Jones was on the panel which launched the report.

personal freedom and safety around the world, the campaign to abolish so called 'conversion therapy', what little is known about the position of LGBTQI persons in the pre-colonial environment and how best to promote LGBTQI rights at international events, such as global conferences.

Galck+ drew attention to a recent research report describing the experiences of people who had undergone 'conversion therapy': ['Shame is not a cure'](#). and setting out why this is a threat to mental wellbeing and identity. The report concludes: 'Given the brutality and trauma of these practices, there is increasing support for a global ban on attempts to conduct so-called conversion "therapy" by UN agencies

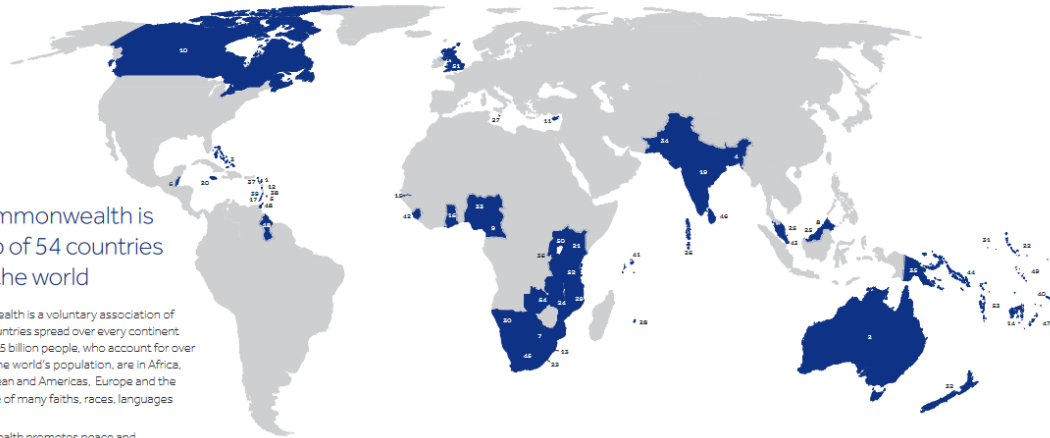
This study is the beginning of a longer-term process to build a systematic and evidence-based understanding of the collective contribution and impact of Accredited Organisations. The study is also intended to draw attention to the potential of Accredited Organisations to play an even bigger part in supporting Commonwealth countries and empowering Commonwealth people in the future to overcome a growing and complex range of socioeconomic and environmental risks.

Commonwealth Organisation For Social Work (COSW) Executive Board			
<p><b>Sylvia Daisy Romanus (India)</b> – Chair</p>	<p><b>Naomi Spencer (Australia)</b> – Honorary Board Secretary</p>	<p><b>Sharon-Rose Gittens (Barbados)</b> – Honorary Treasurer</p>	<p><b>David N Jones (UK)</b> – Main Representative to the Commonwealth Institutions</p>
			
<p><b>Charles Mbugua (Kenya)</b></p>	<p><b>Jan Christianson-Wood (Canada)</b></p>	<p><b>Monique Auffrey (Canada)</b></p>	<p><b>Joachim Cuthbert Mumba (Zambia)</b></p>
			
<p><b>K. S. Ramesh (India)</b></p>	<p><b>Teoh Ai Hua (Malaysia)</b></p>	<p><b>Okiria Gerald – Uganda</b></p>	
			

**MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM.**

On behalf of the Editorial team, I wish to extend appreciation to you, having considered our newsletter as an important source of information. We trust you have found this 6<sup>th</sup> Issue of our Newsletter informative.

We appreciate feedback and any other articles you wish to add in our next issue in 2024 using the contact details on the last page.



The Commonwealth is made up of 54 countries around the world

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent countries spread over every continent and ocean. Its 2.5 billion people, who account for over 30 per cent of the world's population, are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, Europe and the Pacific. They are of many faiths, races, languages and cultures.

The Commonwealth promotes peace and international co-operation, democracy and good governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and the improvement of lives through economic and social development.

These values and aspirations are described in the Charter of the Commonwealth. The Charter expresses the commitment of member countries to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all Commonwealth people. It also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.

MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL	MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL	MEMBER COUNTRY	CAPITAL
1 ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	St John's	21 KENYA	Nairobi	40 SANDIA	Apia
2 AUSTRALIA	Canberra	22 KIRIBATI	Tarawa	41 SEYCHELLES	Victoria
3 THE BAHAMAS	Nassau	23 LESOTHO	Maseru	42 SIERRA LEONE	Freetown
4 BANGLADESH	Dhaka	24 MALAWI	Lilongwe	43 SINGAPORE	Singapore
5 BARBADOS	Georgetown	25 MALDIVES	Kulalumpur	44 SOLOMON ISLANDS	Honiara
6 BELIZE	Belize City	26 MALDIVES	Malé	45 SOUTH AFRICA	Pretoria
7 BOTSWANA	Gaborone	27 MALTA	Valletta	46 SRILANKA	Columbo
8 BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	Bandar Seri Begawan	28 MAURITIUS	Port Louis	47 TONGA	Nuku'alofa
9 CAMBODIA	Yokohama	29 MALDIVE	Malé	48 TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	Port of Spain
10 CANADA	Ottawa	30 NAMIBIA	Windhoek	49 TUVALU	Funafuti
11 CYPRUS	Nicosia	31 NAURU	Nauru	50 UGANDA	Kampala
12 DOMINICA	Roseau	32 NEW ZEALAND	Wellington	51 UNITED KINGDOM	London
13 EBOWATI	Mbabane	33 NIGERIA	Abuja	52 UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA	Dodoma
14 FIJI	Suva	34 PAKISTAN	Islamabad	53 VANUATU	Port Vila
15 THE GAMBIA	Banjul	35 PAPUA NEW GUINEA	Port Moresby	54 ZAMBIA	Lusaka
16 GHANA	Akara	36 PANAMA	Panama		
17 GRENADA	St George's	37 PARAGUAY	Asuncion		
18 GUYANA	Georgetown	38 SAINT LUCIA	Castries		
19 INDIA	New Delhi	39 SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	Kingstown		

The Commonwealth Secretariat (the Secretariat) is the administrative and secretariat of the Commonwealth. It is based in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, and reports to the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Secretariat is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the Commonwealth Secretariat and for the secretariat functions of the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Information correct as of 1st January 2023. This is a live poster.

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