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5th Issue

18th March 2023

WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY 2023



The 3rd Tuesday of March, every year is World Social Work Day and 21st March is the day for this year's (2023) celebration and commemoration. Social workers across the globe engage in advocacy activities. Conferences, workshops, advocacy walks, and media engagement are among those key activities that social workers engage in to advance the profession, and public awareness on the theme. This year's major emphasis is inclusive social transformation based on the theme of year "Respecting Diversity Through Joint Social Action." That was informed by the People's Charter for a New Eco-Social World. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) President, President and COSW Board Member Joachim Mumba encouraged social workers to be part of "... a new sustainable eco-social world,..." if we are "... to bring our local and global experience to make transformative change."

JLS BAND STAR JOINS COSW TO SPEAK OUT FOR YOUNG CARERS

The name Oritsé Williams is no ordinary name in the music fraternity as he is the JLS band star in the UK who has offered his life story to advocate for young carers in the Commonwealth through COSW. The popular music artist, poet, and founder of JLS agreed to be a Young Carer Champion towards popularising the need for the of Young Carer Charter at CHOGM 2024. He spoke with the Editor.

Oritsé noted that he felt "... very honoured having been selected to champion the cause... (Continues next page)



Oritsé Williams with David Jones at Marlborough House in London, Commonwealth Headquarters for the launch of the Year of Youth

for the young carers by the Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work." He further noted that; "For so many years, I felt my mission for championing young carers, raising their voices, amplifying their stories had been a very isolated/solo journey in many ways and now working with COSW fills my heart with so much joy because now I can work with a team who are all advocating for the same cause and mission."

COSW will plan activities with Oritsé and the Commonwealth Secretariat over the months leading to CHOGM 2024 among which so far has been his valued participation at the launch of the Commonwealth Year of Youth at Commonwealth Headquarters on 30th January when he spoke out about young carers. COSW Board Member David N Jones, Oritsé and other COSW guests, among were Oritsé mother and brother, attended the Commonwealth Day service at Westminster Abbey on Monday 13th March 2023.

Oritsé uses such platforms to share his story on how he became a young carer at the age of 12yrs when his mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness that affected her nerve system disabling her from effectively supporting the family. It was at that point that he started taking care of his younger sister – Naomi, and brother – Tami, with whom he teamed up to look after their mother.

The journey to musical stardom with JLS, led to the final of the X-factor and singing at the Queen's Diamond Jubilee concert in front of <u>Buckingham Palace</u>. In 2012 Oritsé created a documentary on Britain's Youngest Carers and after two years in 2014, the documentary was commissioned and aired on Channel 4 with the intention of "creating visual and audio awareness around young carers and the issues that exist." He has written a motivational book for young carers for them to read and give them the confidence in to know that they are extraordinary with hope that all being done is not in vain.

Oritsé's latest documentary on young carers, <u>Kids who care</u> was aired on BBC world radio. During the interview, he shared his experience together with his siblings of taking care of their mother and how she felt receiving care from her children. He shared that, during the challenging time of "... taking care of our mother, my vision was to become a famous musician to make some money while my brother's vision was to become a medical scientist so that he can create a cure for our mother." He noted that they stuck to the promise; he has

become a successful artist who founded the history-making, and record-breaking JLS band, while his brother graduated in biomedical science.

He further noted that "It was difficult to realize that these dreams would come true but the inner resilience coming from caring role enabled us to achieve these incredible things in our lives. My brother went on to be a football coach, has founded a football academy called the Excellence Academy, and is coach for junior players at Arsenal, Westham, and Tottenham. While my little sister went on to being a radio D.J and ...(Continues next page)

Welcome message from the COSW Chair – Dr. A Sylvia Daisy.



I am pleased to welcome you to the 5th Newsletter in our new format. This issue is published in World Social Work Month and linked to Commonwealth Day, illustrating our connection with global social work and the Commonwealth of 56 countries.

In this issue, you will see the range of COSW activities, all undertaken with voluntary commitment aiming to raise the role of social work in responding to the world's social problems. You can read about the value placed on Commonwealth Organisations like COSW in comments by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. You can also see our leading role in bringing together partnerships with other organisations covering health, human rights, and children's issues.

We especially welcome Oritsé Williams, musician, poet, and founding member of the JLS band. He will be working with COSW and the Commonwealth over the coming months, during the Commonwealth Year of Youth, as our Commonwealth Young Carer Champion. We hope his high cultural and media profile will bring the needs of young carers to the attention of thousands of young people and help to secure endorsement of the Commonwealth Young Carer Charter, which has been developed with young carers across the Commonwealth.

I hope you enjoy reading the short articles and also the longer papers in the supplement, which is a new innovation in this issue. We always like feedback so please feel free to communicate to us. Follow our website and social media to get the latest updates.

It's incredible to know that all three of us went on to become something meaningful and great in our lives."

Oritsé recently announced that JLS is reuniting and about to embark on a UKwide concert tour of major venues reaching thousands of fans. He plans to talk about his experience as a young carer during the tour and to promote the need for a Commonwealth Young Carer Charter. COSW will be announcing further joint activities with Oritsé in the months ahead, including a Commonwealth young carer webinar in June partnership with Commonwealth Secretariat. All we can say is - watch this space for more exciting news about the creative



exciting news about the creative From Left Temisan Williams – brother, David Jones, Oritsé Williams (in the middle), Jenny interface of social work and popular music! Frank (International Authority on Young Carers) Rachel Jones (Young Carer supporter) and in front is Sonia Williams – Mother at outside Westminster Abbey.

KING CHARLES III CORONATION SCHEDULED FOR 6th May 2023



An invitation has been extended to the Commonwealth fraternity for the Coronation of King Charles III, the new Head of the Commonwealth. taking place Saturday 6th May 2023. The coronation will be broadcast live by the

Broadcasting Cooperation among other international media. The Coronation will be centered around a solemn religious ceremony, largely unchanged for over a thousand years, at Westminster Abbey, London.

The ceremony will involve traditional and modern elements, reflecting the diverse and multi-faith nature of the Commonwealth. Twelve newly commissioned pieces of <u>music</u> will be performed at The Coronation, showcasing musical talent from across the Commonwealth. Further information is available on the <u>BBC website</u>.

NEW PUBLICATION – COMPARATIVE HISTORIES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORK ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH



People queuing at St. Marylebone workhouse circa 1900 (detail). Welcome Collection

The social work profession has kept developing over time which led to the coming into existence of the Social Work History Network to draw on that experience in informing

contemporary policy

and practice. COSW and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies organised a two-day webinar in March 2022 which included two keynote addresses and 14 presentations on historical developments in social work in all regions of the Commonwealth. These presentations have now been summarised in the latest issue of the Bulletin of the Social Work History Network providing an invaluable perspective on the development of social work in many different countries. Also included are the welcome addresses from the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the Director-General of the Commonwealth Foundation, the Vice-Chancellor of London University, and the Chair of COSW. The Bulletin is freely available.

Change of Roles for 3 COSW Board Members



COSW Board on 4 February 2023 with Oritsé Williams, Young Carer Champion

The COSW Board held meetings on 3rd December and 4th February in which the new Treasurer. Sharon-Rose (Barbados), and the new Secretary, Naomi Spencer (Australia) were appointed. Sylvia Daisy Romanus remains as Chair for the next two years overseeing the implementation of the new constitutional arrangements while Gerald Okiria was appointed as a Board Member having served for 2 years as an ex-officio. The Board received updates on all the matters covered in this newsletter and is overseeing the transition to the new organisational structure.

Special Article from Social Workers in Malawi on Regulation of the Profession.



Stephano Akuzike Joseph General Secretary, ASSWiM

In an effort to lobby for the legislation of Social Work in Malawi, the Association of Social Workers in Malawi (ASWiM) on Friday 19th November 2022 met with the Parliamentary Committee on Social and Community Affairs at an advocacy meeting held at Linde Hotel in Dowa. The aim of the meeting was to engage the Honourable Members to support the passing of the Social Work Practitioners Bill once it is brought to Parliament for deliberations.

Malawi drafted the Social Work Practitioners Bill in 2020 to regulate the practice of social work. The Bill is being touted as a game changer. Social workers in Malawi have been practicing without being regulated and the practice space has sometimes been encroached by practitioners masquerading as social workers, thereby posing a serious risk of endangering the end users of the service.

During the meeting the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Affairs, Honourable Savel Kafwafwa, assured ASWiM that his committee is more than ready to support all the processes that will lead to the passing of the Bill into law. He indicated that, once the Bill is brought to the house for deliberation, he will not

hesitate to lobby the whole House to support it. He also lamented that regulation of social work practice in Malawi should have been done a long time ago, hence the need to hasten the Bill. He told the members that the onus now is on the technocrats in the Ministry responsible, to ensure that in the February sitting, the Bill is on the floor for deliberation by the House.

Speaking earlier during the same meeting, the Board Chairperson for ASWiM Mr. Willard Manjolo thanked the committee for their interest in social welfare issues in Malawi. He informed them that it has been a long-held dream for the Association to see that the practice of social work in Malawi is regulated by the law. He said this will ensure those practicing as social workers are held accountable and regulated. He said social work, just like the medical profession, deals with human beings. Therefore, it is only prudent that the social workers who deal with the clients should only be professionals, a thing which is possible when a regulatory law is in place. ASWiM has been longing to meet members of this committee since 2020 but opportunities to do so were not available. He therefore thanked the chairperson and the entire committee for sparing their time to meet ASWiM.

The President of ASWIM, Chisangalalo Ntonio, thanked the Parliamentarians and the officials from the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, the ministry responsible for the Bill, for supporting all the processes that will lead to the enactment of the Bill into law. The President expressed optimism that this will be done as soon as possible to ensure that social workers in Malawi are regulated by law. The meeting was organized with financial support from the French Embassy.

- ComCIG Makes Progress on the Kigali Declaration

The Commonwealth Children Interest Group, known as ComCIG, has been formed by Commonwealth Organisations to focus on the holistic needs of children. ComCIG is an informal Commonwealth network, alongside the existing Youth Programme and work on education. COSW Board Member, David N Jones, is chairing the Steering Group of ComCIG which is hosted by International Social Service - Children and Families Across Borders.

The first priority of ComCIG is activation of the <u>Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform</u>, which was unanimously adopted by Heads of Government in 2022. This is focussed on the elimination of orphanages, but also includes significant commitments on law reform, health services, child protection arrangements, child safety on roads and in water and eliminating early child marriage. ComCIG provides a framework for cooperation between Commonwealth Organisations on other matters affecting children and includes



COSW Board Member David N Jones joins the Secretary General and representatives of Commonwealth Organisations in a family photo at Marlborough House

organisations such as Parliamentarians, lawyers, doctors, nurses and midwives, trades unions and many others alonaside COSW.

Commonwealth accredited organisations applauded for impact

Commonwealth Accredited Organisations (AOs) took part in The 14th <u>Dialogue</u> with Secretary General Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland on 30th November. COSW was represented by David N Jones who attended the first inperson meeting since the Covid19 pandemic outbreak. The Secretary General, Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC, conveyed her appreciation for the accredited organisations, which span all regions of the Commonwealth. Quoted in the report on the <u>Commonwealth website</u>, Patricia Scotland said:

"The years since we were last together in person have been incredibly challenging. COVID-19 has claimed the lives of 106 million of our brothers and sisters across the Commonwealth. Each is a tragedy, but without the work of many Accredited Organisations, we would undoubtedly have lost millions more.

"You have done so much to support Commonwealth countries, and care for the worst affected... Indeed, in the face of the grave challenges facing our world – from the social and economic impacts of the pandemic, to the impacts of climate change and the tremors of global conflict, the work of the Commonwealth's Accredited Organisations stands tall."

COSW specifically raised the importance of implementing the Kigali Declaration and the need to support The Commonwealth Young Carer Charter.

A full report can also be found in a blog on the website of <u>The Round Table</u>, The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs.

SAMOA CHOGM 2024

COSW Board members are keen to support and collaborate with our Pacific neighbours as they prepare to host the next CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government) and associated meetings.

Launch of the year of the youth





The Commonwealth <u>Year of Youth</u> was launched at Commonwealth HQ Marlborough House on Monday 30th January and runs until 31st January 2024. The Year of Youth 2023 will provide a platform for highlighting work with young people, the role of youth workers and policy relating to children and young people. COSW Board member David N Jones and Oritsé Williams the new COSW Young Carer

Champion attended the launch event at Marlborough House. They both spoke briefly to highlight the Commonwealth Young Carers Charter and the need to focus attention on young carers during the Year of Youth, attracting significant applause and endorsements.

COSW is supporting the Year of Youth and encourages all Commonwealth social work associations and organisations to link relevant activities to the Year. Alongside Oritsé, let's make the Year a period of celebration and fun as well as serious purpose and concrete achievements!

COSW Board Member Appointed Secretary (CHPA) 2023/24



The Commonwealth Health Professions and **Partners** Alliance - CHPA is an alliance of Commonwealth accredited health professional and other practitioner health associations. Members of the CHPA consider that by working together they can more efficiently and effectively

represent and support health professionals in the Commonwealth countries and promote high standards of care and equity in access to care for Commonwealth peoples. The CHPA also considers that by working together they can be more influential in advocating on behalf of Commonwealth health professionals, other health practitioners, and Commonwealth peoples in Commonwealth forums.

The CHPA hosts a policy forum each year to prepare recommendations for presentation to the annual Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting. It is currently the coordinator for the Health & Well-being cluster of the Independent Forum of Commonwealth Organisations (IFCO).

Dr K S Ramesh, Board member of <u>Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work</u> was recently elected the Secretary of CHPA (2023-24) and is responsible for scheduling meetings, maintaining the records, developing partnerships, preparation of reports and periodical communication with members and partners.

First COSW Policy Forum includes social workers from all Commonwealth regions

Over 100 social workers from across the Commonwealth joined the first COSW Policy Forum online on 22nd October 2022. The same event was held twice to ensure that people from all time zones could attend. Board members presented COSW activities and achievements and there was a presentation about the new COSW constitutional structure, which had been previewed in the previous issue of this Newsletter.

A video of both Policy Forums is available on the COSW website.

The 2023 COSW AGM and Policy Forum is scheduled for Saturday 21 October. By zoom. In order to accommodate time zone differences, two meetings are proposed. As a Commonwealth country social worker, the Board welcomes your attendance and contribution. Please check out the COSW website for more information about COSW activities.



Honoured Commonwealth Social Migration Of Social Workers Worker awards

The Policy Forum also saw the recognition of the first Honoured Commonwealth Social Workers who have served COSW and Commonwealth social work in significant roles. The awards can only be made to individuals who no longer hold formal COSW positions. Two awards were made posthumously to COSW founder Anthony Tan (Malaysia) and Terry Bamford (UK), both of whom had been involved with COSW since the first exploratory meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 1994. Other awards went to former Treasurer Fiona Robertson, former Co-Chair and recently retired IASSW Treasurer Tiong Tan and to former COSW Newsletter editor and IFSW Africa President, Nigel Hall. The full citations honouring the awardees will be available on the COSW website. Terry's wife Margaret joined the online event to accept the award on behalf of Terry, together with Fiona, Tiong and Nigel; their acceptance speeches are included in the videos of the two Policy Forums.



Experience And Learning

Many social workers migrate from one country to another every year because of a wide variety of individual decisions. The experience of migration - moving to work in a different country from that where one trained - is profound for the individual (and their family if one is involved). It works well for some, but the previous work experience of the social worker can be ignored or devalued on arrival and settling in can be more difficult than expected.

The COSW webinar on 14th March was jointly planned with the British Association of Social Workers, the BASW Diaspora Special Interest Group and Madras Christian College Department of Social Work (MCC). The keynote address was given by Professor Liz Beddoe (New Zealand) co-editor of <u>Transnational Social Work</u>, the only book on social worker migration. Speakers from India, Nigeria, Barbados, Canada and UK explored the reasons for and experiences of migration and the responsibilities of employers in receiving countries. The webinar highlighted new BASW guidance for employers on induction of overseas qualified social workers.

It is the right of individual social workers to move to the place where their skills are used to best advantage and they have the lifestyle they prefer. However, there are consequences for countries and organisations as a result of migration, in both sending and receiving countries. COSW promotes discussions that ensures that social workers who make a choice to migrate are respected and protected.

Regulation of Social Work – a COSW occasional webinar series launches in 2023

COSW is planning an occasional series of webinars looking into the different ways in which social work is regulated in Commonwealth countries. The first event will be a partnership with the Institute with Kings College, London Health & Social Care Workforce Research Unit exploring the decades long campaign for the statutory regulation of social work in the United Kingdom, which was finally successful in 2000. Subsequent webinars will examine how the campaigns to pass laws regulating social work are progressing in India and Malaysia, and the recent passing of laws regulating social work in Zambia and Nigeria. Further webinars on other countries are also anticipated, including Malawi (see p4).

The regulation of social work brings formal recognition to the social work profession but can also result in tensions between the regulator, the professional association and employers. The webinar series aims to examine these issues from the different perspectives of service users, regulators, professional bodies and employers. Information will be published on the COSW website and promoted through social media. Register for the March webinar here.

'Promoting the Commonwealth Equal Access to Justice Action Plan: Decriminalisation of poverty and status'

The opportunity to participate in this Commonwealth Secretariat Rule of Law seminar at Marlborough House in London was a great first-time experience of engaging with the work of the Commonwealth for recently qualified UK social worker, Omar Mohammad. This insightful and rewarding evening enabled connections and networks to be made between social workers and lawyers across the Commonwealth, with insights into how we can work together to promote shared values of social justice, equality and human rights - and around empowering equal access to justice.

Perspectives from Sri Lanka and South Africa were welcomed to the space and key discussions were around change being possible through activism, the need to address populism and polarisation, and the importance of legal aid. Engaging in this event helped me see the value of many countries within the Commonwealth coming together to share concerns, ideas, and values to promote core values of supporting the people of the Commonwealth to thrive. The welcoming atmosphere has left him with wanting to do more. Omar holds international roles within the British Association of Social Workers and the International Federation of Social Work working with Gerald Okiria (Uganda).

Young Carers – the campaign continues

THE COMMONWEALTH CHARTER FOR YOUNG CARERS



Young carers from across the Commonwealth have developed this Charter, grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Young carers in every country look after someone in their family who has an illness or a disability or other condition. Sometimes they look after the whole family. Young carers are children and young people first and should be free to develop emotionally and physically and to take full advantage of opportunities for educational achievement and life success.

"It is important to involve young carers in all aspects of policy making and decision making. We have a voice - listen to us!"

AS YOUNG CARERS FROM AROUND THE COMMONWEALTH WE ASK THAT WE:

Are listened to and our views and culture are respected.

Understand how we feel and what we need.

- Do not face discrimination as a carer
- or for our family situation.

 Have our physical health and emotional
- needs acknowledged and assessed

 Have a right to an assessment of our needs separate from
- the needs of the person we care for.

 Reina a young carer can be Have the right
 - Seing a young carer can be challenging and sometimes we all need a little support and time out, just to be ourselves and relax.
 - Have the right support given to the person we care for, so we don't have to provide excessive care which impacts on our own h
 - Have practical support and help offered including respite care
 - Are protected from psychological and physical harm.
- Have the right to education, time to focus on our studies and be offered real choices in accessing further education and future aspirations.

 Have the right to relax, play and take

 We want schools to

Adults who work with us should know about who we care for and how it might affect us.

- part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.
- Have a home that is suitable and safe for us and our family.

We want schools to respect and understand the issues we have to deal with at home!

The Commonwealth Organisation for Social Work (COSW) works with others to ensure that social work voices and social concerns are heard in the Commonwealth. Find out more at: www.cosw.info

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COSW is working with several partner organisations to achieve recognition of the <u>Commonwealth Charter</u> for Young Carers at the Heads of Government Meeting in Samoa in 2024. A slightly updated version of the Charter is now available.

COSW has put the Charter on the agenda of the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health, in the activation groups of the Kigali Declaration process and in the Secretary General's 14th <u>Dialogue</u> with Commonwealth Accredited Organisations (AOs). The issue was also raised by COSW and Oritsé Williams at the launch of the Commonwealth Year of Youth.

The Young carers webinar has been planned tentatively planned for 16th June 2023. Hosted by the UK NGO Carers' Trust, and in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat, it will involve presentations from young people in several countries and a focus on the Young Carer Charter and activation of the Kigali Declaration.

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 got this the 5^{th} Issue of our Newsletter informative.

We appreciate feedback and any other articles you wish to add in our next issue in September 2023 using the details on the last page.

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



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.



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