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ASSWA REPORT FOR THE JULY 2020 ONLINE BOARD MEETING

INTRODUCTION

This report covers the key activities for the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa that took place between January 2020 and June 2020. The previous report to IASSW was submitted in January 2020 during the board meeting in Malaysia.

COVID 19 CHALLENGE

ASSWA started year 2020 well with a lot of enthusiasm from social work institutions and colleagues in Africa. However, the Covid – 19 pandemic has since the beginning of the year affected our membership in different ways. Learning in many institutions has been affected with some academic programmes being disrupted midstream. Some corresponding measures undertaken by many universities are as challenging to some students and other stakeholders just as the pandemic itself. Such measures include introduction of online learning amidst glaring socio economic differences thus some students and even lecturers in some institutions cannot afford the online classes due to the cost of internet bundles/internet connectivity, computers or smart phones etc. Other students in some countries have no electricity supply in their homes hence cannot access internet services for online learning. To a certain extent therefore, Covid -19 has not only been a health challenge to many in Africa but a significant transmitter of social economic injustices among some academic populations in our schools.

THE NEW NORMAL – WEBINARS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In order to reach out and stay in touch with our members, ASSWA embarked on a series of webinars focussing on different themes and topics relating to the existing situation in Africa. The first webinar was jointly done by ASSWA and ASASWEI where we managed to have the IASSW president expound more on the role of IASSW in promoting social work education globally. The ASSWA president and the ASASWEI national representative in the IASSW were other speakers in this webinar.

Second webinar was a thought provoking one that challenged participants on where we are as social work academics in Africa. The need to prioritize our African philosophies and other indigenous approaches were discussed and well appreciated in this webinar. Other webinars conducted have touched on social work in the midst of covid-19, Voices from the youth in Africa touching on diverse social work themes and, Social work and Child protection. ASSWA has also been able to reach out to the student population and facilitated student – academic webinars with the next one being on international students' reflections on Nelson Mandela quotes.

ASSWA now has a functional face book page <https://www.facebook.com/ASSWA2020> and a functional whatsapp group for social work educators across Africa. Both have been instrumental in connecting social work academics in the African region.

ASSWA ELECTIONS FOR THE POSITIONS OF PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY

Plans to fill in the positions of ASSWA president and secretary are now on with a nominations committee already in place. Call for nominations for the two positions has been released. The new team will be taking over in October this year.

In this regard, as the outgoing ASSWA president, I wish to thank the IASSW board most profoundly for the support you accorded me during my tenure of office. I am also grateful for giving me an opportunity to serve IASSW in different committees. I look forward for more engagements and partnerships as we move the cause for social work education in Africa and beyond a notch higher.

Respectfully submitted



Gidraph G. Wairire
ASSWA President
10th July 2020