HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND SOCIAL WORK IN ZIMBABWE

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Introduction

The development of social work in Zimbabwe has taken several but related phases. These include customary indigenous phase, missionary phase, colonial-missionary phase, African philanthropists’ phase, independence phase and indigenized-developmental phase. This chapter traces the five phases in the development of the profession in Zimbabwe. Readers will also find information about social work training institutions, professional associations, social work journals and the future of Zimbabwean social work. From time immemorial, social problems for Africans were handled using local cultural indigenous methods. Like many other Africans, people of Zimbabwe have several ways of preventing social ills and ensuring social functioning of their families, villages and societies at large. Before colonization, systems that grew naturally were in place to provide welfare to the vulnerable. Some of these systems were merged with or submerged in foreign ways of welfare with the coming of missionaries, traders and colonialists. Colonisation in the 1890s brought with its numerous upheavals including colonial wars against imperialists. Other challenges created included landlessness due to dislocation of people caused by colonial settlers, and industrialization which eventually created urban centers. The creation of urban centres resulted in another social problem, the migration of people in search of jobs. This led to the urban centres growing rapidly, resulting in several social problems: unemployment, homelessness and overcrowding for black people. For the white population, problems of vagrancy, delinquency and destitution increased started amongst their children and youths. In response, the white settlers introduced a model of social welfare based on western values. To support this model, they hired probation officers from Britain and started training of social welfare staff based on a western curriculum. Initially, the social services were directed at white settlers but later included blacks as urban social challenges multiplied. The increasing urban plight resulted in the emergence of philanthropists. The most prominent of these being Mai (Mother) Musodzi Chibhaga Ayema (1885-1952) and Baba (Father) Jairosi Jiri (1921-1982). In writing this chapter, we revalued devalued histories and identities, including but not limited to acknowledging the role of indigenous methods of promoting social functioning, definitions, contributors and languages. We believe this is important to make social work more relevant to our context.

Five phases in the development of social services and social work in Zimbabwe

Customary indigenous phase

This phase is considered to be customary because social services were provided according to custom and they were indigenous because they did not have foreign influence. This phase was made up of customary, traditional or indigenous social support systems. Social problems were seen as a result of individual shortcomings, evil spells or family failure. Ubuntu was the guiding principle. Ubuntu values the family and community, and theorises that an individual person becomes human only through working with, and contributing to their family and community. Other ubuntu values include hospitality, care for others, being willing to go the extra mile for the sake of another (Samkange and Samkange, 1980).

During this phase, the Shona name used to describe social workers was vabatsiri (helpers). The ‘social worker’ of the day immersed themselves in the presenting problem. They worked largely as community workers and lived with the people and understood problems better. Social services
were provided by *sahwira*, *tete*, *sekurru*, parents, siblings and religious leaders e.g. spirit mediums. Helping was also provided by traditional leaders such as chiefs through a program known as *zunde ramambo* (the chief’s granary) and community members.

Theories that best describe the application of ‘social work’ during this phase include *Unhu/Ubuntu*, communal theory, family theory, African systems theory, African religion theory and others (Mugumbate and Nyanguru, 2013, Mugumbate and Chereni, 2019). Using these theories, the target populations for ‘social work’ included the poor, prisoners, refugees, the distressed, family members, the sick, orphans and others. During this phase, social work roles were diffused in the community, no individual had this ultimate responsibility but the community was the center for problem solving.

The kinds of social services in this phase are still widely practiced in Zimbabwe. For example, the majority of the three million orphans and vulnerable children recorded by UNICEF are in the hands of traditional village-based care givers (Bohwasi, 2020).

**Missionary phase (from 1500 to 1890)**

This phase is termed so because missionaries arrived from western and eastern countries to spread their religious beliefs and values. These Christian and some Islamic religious missionaries started arriving around 1500. Their teachings were resisted because they despised local forms of worship and beliefs, and made their religious books, symbols, institutions, histories and figures superior. They competed amongst themselves, and worked with colonists to conquer locals around 1890. Besides teaching submissiveness using their holy books, they also enticed people using charitable gifts and services like education and health. The started new institutions to advance their goals. These institutions included mission centres that had clinics and schools. The cadre at these institutions was the church leader, mainly a European missionary. The London Missionary Society was one of such institutions. This phase did not end, but got integrated in some way in the colonial phase.

**Colonial-missionary phase (1890-1980)**

This phase is called colonial because it started with the colonization of Zimbabwe by white Europeans. During this period, national and urban social services became more centralised by the colonists with the help of missionaries who had already planted western religious values in most communities. They introduced a Department of Native Affairs to deal with black people and help move colonised communities from their productive land into overcrowded unproductive reserves (Fisher, 2010). In new towns, the administrators were assisted by the church and volunteers to address emerging social challenges.

This period, saw the arrival of probation workers from United Kingdom in 1936, one of them being Fred Carey who contributed to ‘anglicising’ the social welfare system. The main role of these probation workers was to deal with juvenile delinquency, mainly for children of white settlers. Social problems were largely seen as a result of urbanisation and industrialisation and professional services were relegated to Europeans who were living in emerging urban areas. Later, these services expanded to African townships.

It should be recalled that Zimbabwe started to have urban settlements during this period. The first urban settlement could be traced to the Pioneer Column of Colonialists who left Macloutsie...
in present day Botswana (then Buchuanaland) on 28 June 1890 and arrived in present day Harare on 12 September 1890 (this day became Occupation day and later Pioneers day public holiday from 1920 to 1979) (Fisher, 2010). The column comprised an initial column of 180 colonialists led by Cecil John Rhodes of the British South African Company, 200 volunteers and 62 wagons. They were later joined by another group with 110 men, 16 wagons, 130 horses and 250 cattle. The first urban settlements were Forts like Victoria (Masvingo) and Fort Salisbury, which has become the present-day Harare (Fisher, 2010).

During this phase, Ted Rogers, a white Jesuit priest of the Roman Catholic founded social welfare education in Zimbabwe in the early 1960s. Rogers was himself not a trained social worker or social welfare officer although he later trained in social administration. The history of the School Work Training Institution (SWEI) that he founded will be provided later. Training of professionals began in 1966 at Morgan High School, then Westwood, Kambuzuma in Harare and later moved to the current School of Social Work, Chinhoyi Street, Harare.

During this period, social services were funded by the colonial government, municipalities, corporates and donors. Methods utilized were mainly curative, characterized by casework and social welfare. In most if not all rural communities, professional social work did not reach-out, but remained on stage one, the customary phase.

This phase relied on theories of colonialism, apartheid and residualism. Using these theories, the target populations for social work included delinquent white children and youths but also black workers and so-called African vagrants. Practice settings included Department of Social Welfare, municipalities and industries. Methods of social work that applied at this stage included casework and community work. Social work during this phase was marked by segregatory practice, in which delivery of service was on black and white separatist basis, starting at first with no services for blacks, because blacks were expected to reside in the rural areas with only a few employed males being allowed into the urban areas without their families. Urban areas became dormitory corridors for men who came to work for the white populace and retired in their rural areas, without any employment social security.

The separation of families for employment purposes in the urban dormitory corridors created many social problems such as breakdown of marriages, juvenile delinquencies, prostitution among the urban employees who were often scrabbling for the few women who were in employment as domestic workers. In colonial Zimbabwe, indigenous populations relied on their families, extended families, clans and communities for support since social welfare provisions were discriminatory in nature (Moyo, 2007).

**African philanthropists and social workers during the colonial phase**

During the colonial period, the first black do-gooders and philanthropists emerged. Key figures during this phase included individuals like Mai Musodzi and Jairos Jiri. In Mbare, Mai Musodzi opened up a center for feeding stranded African men who found themselves unable to cope with urban life in the then Rhodesia. Jairos Jiri formed the first known black philanthropic association in the early 1940s in Bulawayo which provided skills training to persons with disabilities. The first black social worker, Mqabuko Joshua Nkomo was trained in South Africa, qualifying with a degree in social science in 1952. Nkomo became a trade unionist, nationalist, pan-Africanist and decoloniser. He led the fight against white people and became Vice-President in independent Zimbabwe.
**Independence phase (from 1980 to 2002)**

This is the independence phase because it started at the end of colonial rule in 1980. This phase is made up of social work from independence to when the Social Workers Act was put in place in 2002. Key figures of this phase include the late Professor Edwin Kaseke who was the first black principal of the School of Social Work, Professor Rodrick Mupedziswa, the late Professor Andrew Nyanguru (1945-2014) who was head of the School between 2010 and January 2012. These three social workers were trained at the School of Social Work. Kaseke and Mupedziswa later studied at the London School of Economics (LSE) for their postgraduate degrees. Nyanguru studied at the University of Zimbabwe. Other critical figures at this phase were Josphat Mathe, Nigel Hall, Trish Swift, Helen Tapfumaneyi and Stella Makanya who championed the formation of the National Association of Social Workers Zimbabwe (NASWZ) between 1985-88, the publication of the Journal of Social Development in Africa (JSDA) and the African Journal of Social Work (AJSW) inaugurally edited by Nigel Hall. Particular mention must be to Josphat Mathe, whose tenure oversaw the enactment of the Social Workers Act 27:21 number 9 of 2001. All of them played significant functions in their different roles in the development of NASWZ, such as Joe Mathe (President 1985-95) and later on Helen Tapfumaneyi (President 1995-2000), Nigel Hall (Secretary 1988-2000), Edwin Mapamba (Treasurer 1988-2000), Phillip Bohwasi (vice President 1995-2000). This group of social workers were responsible for setting up the most effective National Association of Social Workers (1988-2000) which, oversaw the enactment of the Social Workers Act 27:21 number 9 of 2001.

In 2001, the Government of Zimbabwe adopted a contextual definition of social work in its first social work law, the Social Workers Act 27:21 (Zimbabwe) First Schedule (Section 4(2). (Government of Zimbabwe, 2001). In the law, social work is said to be a profession that:

> promotes the welfare of human beings and the betterment of human society through the development and systematic application of scientific knowledge of human and societal activities and social services. Professional social workers aim to satisfy the needs and aspirations of individuals and groups at national and international level, while constantly bearing in mind the need for promoting social policy. Their techniques include psychotherapeutic case-work, social-dynamic group-work and planned community intervention (Government of Zimbabwe, 2001). A social worker was defined as:

> ...a person who as his or her profession, assesses, diagnoses, treats and evaluates individual, interpersonal or societal problems through the use of social work knowledge, skills, psychotherapeutic case work, socio-dynamic group work, planned community interventions and strategies to assist individuals, families, groups of persons, organisations and communities to achieve optimum psychosocial and social functioning... (Government of Zimbabwe, 2001).

The Act’s main function was to establish the Council of Social Workers (CSW) whose mandate is to Register and License all practicing social workers. The CSW was established in 2002 with three committees: Finance & Program Development Committee; Membership and Registration; Practice, Regulation and Ethics and Education and Curriculum Development. One of the achievements of the CSW was to start a register of social workers and putting in place important statutory instruments (SI) (by-laws) like Social Workers (Code of ethics), By-laws (SI. 146 of 2012) and Non-Public Service – (Children) Probation Officers (SI. 125 of 2013) (CSW, 2011a, 2014a).
Towards the end of this phase, the School of Social Work became a department of the University of Zimbabwe. It increased its enrolment from the traditional 45 students per year to the current 100 plus student intakes.

**Indigenous-developmental phase (from 2002 to present day)**

Some key figures who contributed at this phase include Kaseke, Mupedziswa and Nyanguru. These social workers advocated for both indigenous and developmental social work. They learned social work, and practiced it before and after independence. There are many others who participated as shown in the last section of this section. This phase has two outstanding but interdependent approaches, developmental and indigenous social work but also increased social work training and internationalization. During this phase, there has been a louder call for decolonisation of social work to come up with indigenised and authentic methods (Kaseke, 1991, 2001; Mupedziswa and Sinkamba, 2014; Hall 1990; Mabvurira, 2018). Developmental social work is seen as the most appropriate method for Zimbabwe’s situation because it builds individual income through improving skills, production, infrastructure, markets, savings, insurance and ecology. This is because imported social work failed to expand to all communities for factors including western values and a lack of fiscal resources. The problems that colonial social work had come to address had multiplied several times, and populations in need of social work services expanded rapidly especially soon after independence (Osei-Hwedie, 1993). Poverty became clearer in both rural and urban areas, with more people moving to urban areas to escape rural poverty. Social workers then proposed developmental social work that seeks to build individual income through improving skills, production, infrastructure, markets, savings, insurance and ecology.

Theories for this phase include social development, indigenization, ubuntu, decolonization, liberation, action research, independence, asset-based, developmentalism, human rights, empowerment, social justice, sustainability, people-centred development and many others.

This phase encompasses international social work characterized by first social work day commemorations in 2012, first social work conference in 2013, first publication of AJSW online in 2013 with Professor Andrew Nyanguru and Jacob Mugumbate as editors, integration with regional and international social work institutions. Zimbabwean social workers like Josphat Mathe and Noel Muridzo became executive committee members of the IFSW (Mugumbate, 2016; Bohwasi 2020). This phase also saw the mass migration of social workers to work in other countries, mainly the United Kingdom (Bohwasi, 2020; Chogugudza, 2009).

More social work training institutions emerged starting with the Department of Social Work, Bindura University in 2010 followed by the Social Work Unit at Women’s University in Africa (Bohwasi, 2020). The opening of other schools of social work has increased the graduate social workers to about 350 per year. It is therefore estimated that Zimbabwe has a total of just about 4500 social workers since 1964, a paltry figure given the need and demand for social work (Bohwasi, 2020).

It is safe to say that Zimbabwean social work is going back where it started, and where it should be. In the beginning, social services were governed by indigenous customs and they were offered in the community. This ensured that everyone had access to forms of helping. This changed with the coming of missionaries and colonialists, who brought western systems. Later, they merged western with local systems, but they were only able to reach communities in towns, and these were mainly white communities. At independence, a focus was placed on reorienting social work
and by 2001, a law was already agreed to regulate social work according to what works in the Zimbabwean context. There was a move towards expanding social work (see next section), and making it more developmental and relevant. By making it more relevant, it returned to phase one, the phase of indigenous social work.

The definition of social work kept involving, although the government of Zimbabwe has not revised its definition. A most recent definition was provided in the AJSW. The definition says:

*Social work is an academic discipline and profession that embraces and enhances long-held methods of addressing life challenges in order to achieve social functioning, development, cohesion and liberation using diverse African indigenous knowledges and values enshrined in the family, community, society, environment and spirituality (AJSW, 2020, p.1).*

While this definition still favours professional social work at the expense of traditional social work, it is strong in that it recognizes the importance of long-held methods of addressing life challenges. It also acknowledges five important elements of Zimbabwean society: family, community, society, environment and spirituality. A weakness is that it does not mention African theories specifically although the word knowledges takes care of this weakness.

**Kaseke’s developmental social work model**

This stage saw a focus and expansion of developmental social work. This model is credited to Professor Edwell Kaseke although others contributed to it. Kaseke (2001a) said social development seeks to ensure that individuals have access to resources necessary for meeting basic needs and in conditions that do not undermine their self-esteem. The pursuit of social justice and egalitarian ideals is at the core of the social development model. According to Kaseke (2001a, p. 4):

*social development emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with a development model that puts undue emphasis on economic growth at the neglect of social factors. Economic growth had not necessarily resulted in an improvement in the welfare of the people. Thus, social development emerged as an attempt to draw attention to the importance of social factors in the development process...The starting point for the social development model is that the modernisation approach has failed to transform developing countries. The benefits of economic development have not trickled down to the majority of the people. Instead the wealth is concentrated in the hands of few people while the majority live in absolute poverty...Thus the social development model represents a shift from the residual (welfaristic) model. A social development model sees the role of social work as that of facilitating social change and ultimately enabling individuals to realise their potential.*

In Kaseke’s developmental social work model, the roles of social workers include creating opportunities for economic productivity (e.g. farming, irrigation, mining, fishing, off-farm income generating projects, self-employment and enterprises); lobbying and advocacy for social justice; mobilising local savings; improving people’s economic productivity skills; mobilising the rural communities to improve infrastructure such as roads, bridges, clinics and schools; assisting communities to develop development projects (proposals, plans, funding and feasibility) and ensuring that communities contribution is valued, pursued and recognized. This means that development is driven from the micro and macro levels, and from the economic and social perspectives.
Social work training institutions

Social work training institutions are usually referred to as Schools even when they are colleges, departments and faculties. At the time of writing this chapter, there were eight training institutions. These are:

1) Jesuit School of Social Work
2) University of Zimbabwe, Department of Social Work
3) Department of Social Work, Bindura University of Science Education
4) Women’s University in Africa, Social Work Unit
5) Africa University, Social Work Unit
6) Midlands State University, School of Social Work
7) Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, Social Work
8) Reformed Church University, Social Work Unit


The first School of Social Services was established in 1964 by the Jesuit Priests of the Roman Catholic Church, through the work of Ted Rogers. The School stated with a certificate course in Groupwork in 1965, followed by a Diploma in Social Work in 1966. The new School of Social Work liaised with the Oppenheimer College of Social Sciences in Zambia and established the first-ever three-year Diploma in Social Work, which was launched in 1966. With the advent of independence, the era created a new wave of enthusiasm resulting in the re-examination of the curriculum with a view to making it more responsive to the new social order and development needs of the people. The new social order was embedded in the government socialist-oriented policies and the school of social work introduced programs as outlined below, which continued to run until the Jesuits handed-over the School of Social Work to become a unit in the University of Zimbabwe Faculty of Social Science in 2000.

University of Zimbabwe (UZ), Department of Social Work

Since 2000 the University of Zimbabwe occupied the Chinhoyi street campus of the original Jesuits School of Social Work before moving to the main campus to establish the current Department of Social Work. UZ is the first State University to be associated with social work education, training and development years back since the School of Social Work was an affiliate College of the University of Zimbabwe. Over the years, since 1964 under the Jesuits authority, the School of Social Work had remained an independent stand-alone School of Social Work. With the handing over to the University of Zimbabwe, Faculty of Social Science, the School lost its independent status to become a Unit under the Dean of Social Science at the University of Zimbabwe. Today the University of Zimbabwe Department of Social Work is located at the University of Zimbabwe’s Faculty of Social Science.
Midlands State University (MSU), School of Social Work

MSU is a State University based in Gweru with teaching campuses in Harare and other smaller towns, like Zvishavane. MSU University took over what was the original campus of the School of Social Work, housed at Chinhoyi Street and formerly the Jesuit site and campus of 1964. The MSU took over the Campus from the University of Zimbabwe through a process facilitated by the Jesuits team of experts as a way to improve the teaching of Social Work and as well as a measure of expanding the number of Universities teaching social work. The MSU School of Social Work remains the only independent School of Social Work, while the rest social work teaching Institutions are Units within Social Science Departments. The MSU School of Social Work opened its doors to social work students in August 2017.

Women's University in Africa (WUA – Social Work Unit)

Women's University in Africa (WUA) is a private institution that was co-founded by two visionaries Professor Hope Cynthia Sadza, a former Public Service Commissioner and Dr Fay King Chung the former Minister of Education in Zimbabwe. Its main campus will be located in Marondera Town, 80km South East of Harare. The university is currently operating from its Harare campus, in Manresa Park at number 549 Arcturus Road. The University has campuses in Bulawayo, Mutare and Marondera. It has also satellite campuses in Malawi and Zambia. Women's University in Africa (WUA) introduced social work in 2010 and set-up to begin training social workers at the level of two-year Diploma in Social Work on a full-time basis. The Bachelor of Science (Honours) Degree in Social Work was introduced in 2017 and is designed as a four years Honours degree full time study.

Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE) – Social Work Unit

Bindura University of Science Education – Social Work Unit opened its doors to offer a degree in Social Work in March 2010. It is a four-year programme being offered under the department of Social Sciences and is currently housed in the Faculty of Science Education. The Social Work Unit endeavors to promote human welfare through education, research and community engagement. The Unit is affiliated to the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) which has over 200 institutions offering training in social work worldwide.

Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) – Social Work Unit

Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) is a private Christian University which started in May 2012. ZEGU is a degree awarding institution accredited by the Zimbabwe Council of Higher Education (ZIMCHE) offering internationally recognized degrees in various faculties. The University established a Social Work Unit in August 2017 and to this date still offered to applicants who posse 5 ‘O’ Level passes or equivalent including English Language and Mathematics with at least 2 A Level passes and a clean criminal record in line with the Social Workers Act (27:21) are enrolled. Special entry will be considered for applicants with a Certificate or Diploma in Social Work from recognized institutions of higher learning or its equivalent.
Africa University (AU) – Social Work Unit

The development of Africa University is a consequence of the growth of United Methodism in Africa. In 1980, Bishop Arthur Kulah of Liberia and Bishop Emilio J. M. de Carvalho of Angola took the lead in advocating for ‘a university for all of Africa’. Their efforts generated a positive response within the United Methodist Church worldwide leading to the idea and the ‘Africa Initiative’ in 1985. Africa University opened a Social Work Unit in August 2017 as a 4-year programme with 6 semesters of taught courses and 2 semesters of internship. Student need a minimum of 120 credit hours to satisfy the requirements for graduation. Their bachelor’s programme is multidisciplinary in nature and borrows selected courses from Psychology, Sociology and Counselling. The students carry out independent research under the supervision of assigned lecturers.

The range of courses offered by the training institutions discussed in this section include certificate, diploma, postgraduate diploma, bachelors, honours, masters and doctor of philosophy degrees offered face to face. No course is currently offered online or by distance mode. All programs include a fieldwork component ranging from a few weeks to one year although this component of learning is not well regulated and field educators (supervisors) are not well supported. Missing courses include doctorate by course work and masters qualifying (MSQ) by coursework. The MSQ is important because it allows those who already have a non-social work degree to pursue a social work career at master’s level. However, the MSQ will be equal in value to the bachelors or honours, and lower than a professional master.

Social work journals and other publications

Generally, one major challenge of social work in Zimbabwe has been its reliance of literature from western countries, mainly Britain and USA (CSW, 2011a, 2016). Besides being irrelevant, the literature is very old, some published in the 60s. This is literature no longer used in the source countries. This is a major weakness because the literature promotes western values, theories, definitions and concepts. However, two journals are published at the moment. These are the JSDA, published by the School of Social Work since the late 80s and the AJSW published by the NASWZ since the late 90s. The JSDA focuses on issues pertaining to the development of Southern Africa from a socio-economic focus. The thrust of the journal refocuses African social work from welfare and individual perspectives of western countries to social development which emphasizes holistic social functioning. The AJSW emphasizes African theories, perspectives, models, philosophies, values and definitions.

Professional social work organisations in Zimbabwe

National Association of Social Workers Zimbabwe (NASWZ)

Is a registered voluntary membership-based, non-partisan, non-tribal, non-racial, non-discriminatory and not-for-profit organization formed in 1988. The Association is an umbrella professional body for Social Workers, giving them a platform to network and share experience to improve their competences to deliver services. It promotes the interest of social workers to
better serve communities. The NASWZ publishes the AJSW, commemorates World Social Work Day through media publicity, street marches and an Annual Social Work Conference. The commemoration of social work day in solidarity with social workers around the world, is also an opportunity to promote social justice in Zimbabwe (Mugumbate, 2016).

**Council of Social Workers (CSW)**

The CSW is a product of the Social Workers Act, 2001. Its mandate is to register, regulate and enforce ethical practice among all social work professionals in Zimbabwe (CSW, 2011a, 2014b).

**Association of Student Social Work Students (ASSWS)**

It was formed in 2011 to deal with matters relating to social work student’s education and training, including field education. ASSWS will run community learning projects around the University, including coordinating charitable visits to vulnerable communities and institutions during the semester. By 2021, it was not still developing.

**Association of Schools of Social Work (ZASSW)**

Formed in 2019 with Dr Mabvurira (UZ) as Chairman of ZASSW and Mr Phillip Bohwasi (AU) as the secretary. The ZASSW was established to foster the following vision: “Excellence in the promotion of social work education, training, research and practice in collaboration with the international partners in pursuit of the goals and mandate of social work in Zimbabwe”. By 2021, it was not still developing.

**The future of Zimbabwean social work**

Earlier sections dealt with the past and present of Zimbabwean social work. This brief section deals with the future. In future, it is important that we have structured Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for qualified social workers to ensure that social workers update their skills and knowledge and contribute to production and dissemination of literature. It would also be important to have at least 75% local content in terms of literature used by students, lecturers, practitioners, clients (clients read by the way) and researchers. This could be achieved is we develop our capacity to research, write and publish our own work in Zimbabwe. On the other side, we need stronger and sustainable institutions, including professional associations, schools and regulating bodies. Being one of the countries that started social work in Africa, it is also time Zimbabwe leads in the expansion and strengthening of social work in Africa. Following on the footsteps of early pioneers of social work like Mai Musodzi, Baba Jairos Jiri and Mqabuko Joshua Nkomo, and the founder of social work education, Father Ted Rodgers and many others who have played a part, the new crop of social workers must carry on with developing an authentic profession to make the future of our social work even brighter. It is safe to say that Zimbabwean social work is going back where it started, and where it should be. In the beginning, social services were governed by indigenous customs and they were offered in the community. This ensured that everyone had access to forms of helping. This changed with the coming of missionaries and colonialists, who brought western systems. Later, they merged western with local systems, but they were only able to reach communities in towns, and these were mainly white communities. At independence, a focus was placed on reorienting social work and by 2001, a law was already agreed to regulate social work according to what works in the Zimbabwean context. There was a
move towards expanding social work, and making it more developmental and relevant. By making it more relevant, it returned to phase one, the phase of indigenous social work. Today, Zimbabwean social work is concerned with making indigenous methods work, and using developmental approaches to address mass poverty.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter the authors covered the history of social services and social work in Zimbabwe. Five phases in the development of social work in Zimbabwe were discussed. These are the customary indigenous phase, missionary phase, colonial-missionary phase, African philanthropists’ phase, independence phase and indigenized-developmental phase. Readers were also provided with information about social work training institutions, professional associations and publications. As already shown the process leading to Zimbabwean social work is made complex by colonialism and still suffer from foreign ideas that dominant literature, teaching content, research methods, theories and methods. However, all is not lost, we have now moved into the phase of true African social work, by essence authentic Zimbabwean social work characterised by use of indigenous social work wisdom, philosophy, theories and interventions but there are still numerous challenges.
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