

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* extends the boundaries of existing research on the special needs and risks faced by vulnerable children, the youth, adults and aged people in society and makes recommendations on how social welfare policies, social work services and intervention programmes could improve the quality of life of vulnerable people in society.

The first three articles offer insights into challenges related to the child-protection system in South Africa, and into the management of street children and youth gang violence. The first article presents its findings on the lack of an overarching strategy for child-protection services, a dysfunctional relationship between government and the non-profit sector, and inadequate resourcing in post-apartheid South Africa. The second article explains how to use a needs assessment and a life-map technique for the development of a life skills programme to promote the psychosocial functioning of street children. The third article reports on a study that investigated youth gang violence among male high school learners and makes recommendations for the management of youth gang violence.

The next article assesses the operation of a housing-based voluntary organisation in a low-income community close to a city and emphasises the need for purposeful financial and advisory support to enable such organisations to address persistent housing needs in the community.

Another article critically reviews the literature on social norms as practised in rural areas and on intimate partner violence (IPV) and its impact on social work practice and policy. Because social norms can either promote or prevent IPV intervention, an integrated approach to addressing IPV against women is proposed.

The next article provides a description of the risks that unemployed day labourers waiting at street corners in a city experience daily and highlights the resilience that they display.

After that, an article advocates the redesigning of geriatric care programmes, policies and philosophies to infuse notions of successful ageing in a particular community with comprehensive and multidimensional geriatric intervention plans.

The last article in the issue describes the perspectives and suggestions of employers to promote the employability of newly qualified graduates and to inform the social work curriculum of the largest open distance-learning university in South Africa.