EDITORIAL

The articles in this issue capture recent research on the special needs and circumstances of students, employees in the workplace, victims in the criminal justice system and victims of human trafficking, female heads of households, young women, female adolescents, and youths in gangs. The articles describe in interesting ways how the findings of these research studies can lead to the expansion and strengthening of social welfare service delivery and welfare programmes.

The first article investigates the use of technology for assessment of the Social Work practical module of fourth-year students within an open and distance-learning institution. The majority of the students have access to computers, but some of them could not access the Internet because of inadequate knowledge of computer usage, lack of financial resources to buy a laptop, and the high cost of commuting to a computer centre.

The next three articles evaluate how social welfare service providers address the specific needs of service users such as employees in the workplace, victims in the criminal justice system, and victims of human trafficking. The first article compares the differences and similarities between employee assistance programmes and occupational social work in practice, and it confirms that the programmes and services rendered by employee assistance programme practitioners and occupational social workers are closely linked to their distinct roles and functions. The second article examines judicial officers' experiences of the inconsistent inclusion of victim impact reports during the criminal justice process and identifies an urgent need for guidelines for social workers to expand the victim empowerment programme. The third article discusses the provision of social services to adult victims of human trafficking in South Africa and reveals that social workers face challenges such as delays in court cases, complicated trauma, security issues and mistrust – all putting service delivery at risk.

Four articles follow, focusing on the need for welfare programmes for female-headed households, young women in high-risk urban communities, female adolescents and caregivers, and youths in gangs. One article concentrates on food security in female-headed households in Kenya and concludes that food consumption in these households is at risk because of food insecurity. The next article examines elements contributing to the resilience of young Setswana women living in a high-risk urban community in the North-West province of South Africa. Religion is a major contributing factor to their resilience in addition to peer mentorship initiatives and social work programmes. The penultimate article succeeds in its aim of deepening understanding of the ways in which cash transfers and caregiver relations and practices work together to reduce sexual risk behaviours among female adolescents. Results of the study underpin the value of social protection as an HIV-prevention modality and endorse investment in

caregiver support programmes. The last article presents the ways that youths on the Cape Flats perceive their reasons for joining gangs and points to individual, family and environmental influences. It concludes by recommending intervention programmes to prevent youths from joining gangs or to assist them in exiting gangs.

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