

EDITORIAL

It is with regret that we announce the resignation of our editor, Prof. Ansie Fouché. For personal reasons, and after careful consideration, Prof. Fouché decided that she could no longer meet the requirements of editing the *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*. We thank Prof. Fouché for her willingness to take on the responsibility, for her investment in the journal during 2017 and for the honourable way in which she resigned. We will miss her and wish her well.

While the Board of the journal searches for a new editor, I will take on the role of interim editor.

This final issue of 2017, which is being published late due to the changes in editorship, comprises four articles that focus on two broad areas of social work: children and education. The first two articles present research on aspects of children's psychosocial development that are typically not central in the minds of social workers, namely birth registration and caregiver illiteracy. These articles seek to broaden the perspective of those working with children to include a wider range of factors that influence their well-being and development. The last two articles deal with important topics regarding the education of social workers, namely the role of community engagement in promoting educational pathways, and the second pillar of the Global Agenda which is promoting peoples' dignity and worth.

Chereni sought to test the empirical evidence in support of the notion that birth registration was essential to avoid the social exclusion of children. Drawing on qualitative research in Zimbabwe, Chereni shows that not registering children's birth gives rise to various forms of social exclusion, which have the potential to harm the psychosocial development of children.

Makunga et al. report on a qualitative study with caregivers and teachers to explore the causes of children's lack of educational advancement. They found that there is a complex set of factors perceived to result in poor educational advancement, but that illiteracy among caregivers was a central factor. Illiteracy hampers the ability of caregivers to support and supervise children's homework, requiring a network of actors to cooperate in creative ways to promote children's educational progress.

Bhagwan explores the higher education topic of community engagement, frequently considered one of the three core functions of academics (along with teaching and research). She argues for a closer weaving together of community engagement (which

is often regarded as a separate activity) with education and research. She advances three key pathways to achieve this, namely community-based teaching, research and outreach.

Finally, **Wessels** provides a conceptual analysis of the key terms in the second pillar of the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development, namely promoting the dignity and worth of peoples. She shows how themes of human rights, social justice, participation and the recognition of diversity contribute in important ways to promote dignity and worth, and makes recommendations for more deeply embedding this in the social work curriculum.

Prof. Adrian D. van Breda
Editor