

Editorial

Readers will note that JSDA has changed Editors. It is only appropriate for the Editor to pay tribute to Ms Brigid Willmore for her hard work in helping to set up this journal and subsequently becoming its Editor. At the same time the Editor would like to assure readers that the maintenance of the tradition of professionalism and high quality standards will continue to be the set goal of this journal. This can only be achieved through the publishing of high quality articles submitted by professionals, the readers. The call for articles is therefore ongoing.

The articles in this issue, in their diversity of subject, pose a challenge for the practising social worker, the social work educator, the policy maker as well as the media - a challenge that advocates change of policy.

Social work practice in Africa is at the cross roads and it takes serious treatment of this challenge for the movement to take the right direction. Mupedziwa's article, in its argument that social work practice in Africa should be more aggressive and relevant to the needs of the country of birth, identifies five challenges that need to be addressed for the profession to be meaningful. He goes further to raise the issue of social work education, which is the backbone of practice, and argues that schools of social work curricula should be designed in such a way that the needs of the country are met by social workers.

Christine Love poses a similar type of challenge for the Botswana Government to address the question of widening sentence options for offenders by introducing probation orders. (There is need to reduce prison intakes.) Cases would be considered on the strength of pre-sentence reports prepared by social workers. The article further highlights the issue of social work training to equip the practitioner with relevant skills.

Nosa Ibie's article, though not exactly concerned with social work practice, poses a similar challenge to media policy makers in Nigeria to come up with a "strategy for genuine local, development-centred cultural preservation for the entire socialisation apparatus," in the process of formulating media policy. Ibie argues that the Nigerian media can help in the country's efforts to preserve their culture once the resolve is made, through assisting the people to come out of the identity crisis created by the imposition of foreign cultural norms that comes with colonialism.

Finally, Ankrah's article offers Uganda, at a time when the country is battling with the Aids epidemic, the chance to make use of social workers, who have taken up the challenge to assist the medical profession. Whereas Aids has previously been viewed as a medical problem, to the extent that the social worker has been excluded, Ankrah argues that the social worker's role now is to attend to the human side of the problem, namely to attend not only to the patients' psychosocial needs, but to those of their survivors as well as indeed the community. The challenge is on schools of social work to provide the necessary training for practitioners.

The appreciation of a country's needs, the effort of coming out of foreign prescribed policies and the accompanying responsibility to create 'homegrown' policies, pose an ongoing challenge to Africa.

Editor

OBITUARY

The Editorial Board of the *Journal of Social Development in Africa* was deeply shocked and touched by the sudden death of the former Editor of the journal, Ms Brigid Willmore, in a car accident in South Africa on Wednesday May 6 1992.

We would like to pay tribute to Brigid's invaluable contribution to the journal as well as her hard work in general. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the members of Brigid's family. To Brigid we say, May your soul rest in peace.