

Editorial

In the last issue of JSDA, we published a small notice of the passing of the former Editor, Brigid Willmore. In this issue, we carry a tribute to her as we felt that this was appropriate, considering the amount of work, and commitment that she had accorded to the journal. Also, it is hoped that a lot of us will have something to learn from her life.

The articles in this issue may cover a wide range of topics, but their focus is on change for the improvement of social work intervention policies and methods. Social work practice in Africa, in Kwaku Osei-Hwedie's words, "must find itself" and this struggle to identify pertinent problems and ways of solving them - in the African context - is ongoing. The profession needs to seek its own identity within the context of its own situations, for it to be understood, let alone taken seriously by all and sundry. Social work in Africa must be able to address the major social problems confronting the region. Edwin Kaseke calls for change or reform in juvenile justice in Zimbabwe, citing the definition of criminal behaviour, age of criminal responsibility, legal representation of the juvenile among others, as areas that require change. He further calls for a leaning towards sympathy to the juvenile rather than a preoccupation with protecting society from the juvenile, for obvious reasons. The judicial system should reform for juvenile justice to be realised. The rights of the juvenile have to be taken into account.

Talking of rights, Gloria Jacques argues that social work supervision should be introduced in order to safeguard the rights of the client, social worker and social work agency. While it is not unique to social work, supervision has a place in social work, because of the nature of the problems that confront social work. There is a shortage of qualified social workers and the profession is relatively young, which makes a case for the introduction and implementation of the institution of supervision, in order to enhance performance.

Ebebe Ukpong brings in a fresh look at the factors that inhibit NGOs' role performance in rural development. He poses a challenge to researchers to unearth these problems through research, and find appropriate management strategies.

Chris Tobayiwa brings in a new approach to research data gathering - using school children as research partners. He suggests, rightly too, that this approach can be very useful if adopted and adapted to suit peculiar research situations.