

Editorial

The articles in this issue cover a wide variety of themes, ranging from specific development initiatives to broader socioeconomic and political issues, such as ethnicity, social security systems, and the impact of government policies on economic growth and differing agricultural modes of production.

Paul Kishindo provides a useful analysis of how community project funding in Malawi has tended to adopt a demand-driven approach, introducing an element of competition in community development, which has in turn led to infrastructural imbalances. Kishindo believes that the major obstacle to this new form of community development is at the initiation stage, so where appropriate leadership from within a community is lacking, there is a need for direct external intervention. Within this context, he suggests ways in which more effective implementation of community development projects can be handled both by government and non-governmental agencies in Malawi.

The article by Sabo Indabawa describes an experimental literacy programme for the disabled set up in Kano State in Nigeria between 1989 and 1990. Indabawa demonstrates through his analysis, that literacy may enable adult destitutes to generate social and economic returns for self-reliance, if there is adequate follow-up. Although the programme never went beyond the first two years of its inception, the author explains how similar initiatives would be very helpful for overcoming destitution among marginalised groups in Nigeria, where street begging is a widespread social problem.

Like Indabawa, Sonja Goedeke presents an interesting project undertaken in Kwa Zulu Natal in collaboration with the University of Natal, to assist guidance educators in providing a mental health service to their students. Goedeke provides an in-depth analysis of education and psychology within the South African context, as well as a detailed description of the Imbali guidance project. She outlines the positive outcomes and the drawbacks to the programme, while advocating community psychology as an important means for serving under-resourced and disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

The article by John Dixon on African social security systems differs in approach, in that it provides a broad overview of system design standards throughout Africa, as compared to those in Latin America. The author ranks the social security systems in 45 African countries, using a comparative evaluation methodology that permits the assessment of national social security intent. He demonstrates how the conventions devised by the ILO on minimum social security standards are useful for making such a qualitative analysis, which aims to extend the existing comparative social security literature.

Edlyne Anugwom presents in his article, a stimulating historical and political analysis of the marginalisation question in Nigeria. He suggests that the creation of a realistic and workable form of federalism, inspired by the American model, may be one way to confront ethnic conflict in Nigeria. Anugwom emphasises that the present attempts at democracy as a sustainable sociocultural formation in the country, will only succeed if perceptions of ethnic marginalisation are directly confronted. He outlines several ways of doing this, so that a new political culture in Nigeria, making adequate provision for diverse group interests, may endure in the future.

The article by Noah Karley provides an economic critique of the impact of government investment on growth and employment in South Africa. The author outlines investment patterns in South Africa in the last two decades, as a prelude to his analysis of how government investment strategies may currently be improved. Karley demonstrates how institutional reforms may also expedite this process, where there is sound economic policy formation and widespread popular support.

The final article by Jilly Ngwainmbi in this issue, discusses the reasons for the persistence of the family farm and the economy of affection in Cameroon. The author presents the findings of the case study she conducted in 1990 in Cameroon, on the impact of state agricultural policies on farming practices and beliefs. Ngwainmbi concludes, like other researchers have done, that the economy of affection persists due to subjective values that Cameroonian farmers attribute to their activities. This article provides, therefore, a theoretical analysis of the economy of affection, as well as concrete examples taken from the case study.