

EDITORIAL

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Social work intervention with families is usually directed at various members in both nuclear and extended families. It is of vital importance for service providers to have fresh knowledge of the needs and concerns of families in order to render effective services to them. This issue of *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* presents research results on the challenges experienced by families and reports on the implications of these findings for social work practice.

The first five articles explore the needs and experiences of grandparents caring for their grandchildren, single mothers employed in the informal sector, fathers receiving social grants, young adults exposed to domestic violence during childhood, and high school learners involved in a school programme preventing violence. The first article offers insights into the experiences and needs of grandparents caring for their grandchildren with a substance abuse disorder and reveals that grandparents may compromise their own social wellbeing as a result of their experience of heightened levels of stress, fear, intimidation, disappointment, shame and financial constraints. The second article analyses the dominant discourse of victimhood related to single-mother families and reveals how single mothers in Germany and South Africa, who are employed in the informal sector, have created a new narrative for themselves beyond a pathological one. The third article examines the role of fathers receiving social grants in decision-making processes in poor rural households, and concludes that they share the power of decision-making with their partners and other household members. The fourth article describes how exposure to domestic violence during childhood influences the child's development in a way that affects their functioning in adulthood, and makes suggestions for social work services. The fifth article determines that a theory-based school intervention programme, designed in line with a developmental social work approach within a stakeholder participation programme, enhances learners' knowledge and positively influences their attitudes towards violence, but does not change their behaviour.

These are followed by three articles that focus on theory for social work practice, the work experiences of social workers, and the reflections of students on their involvement in community engagement projects. One article endeavours to extend and deepen the *ubuntu* concept to strengthen its potential as a theory informing social work practice, and creatively interweaves *ubuntu* with other African ideas in three domains: ethics, sustainable development and ecospirituality. Another article assesses the risk-laden lives of social workers employed by designated child-protection organisations through the lens of the socio-ecological model. The last article in this issue reports on reflections of students and volunteers, involved in service learning projects at a South African university, and identifies issues pertaining to the termination of community engagement relationships; it emphasises the importance of ending community engagement processes more conscientiously than currently happens.

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