Editor's Note

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This issue presents essays on an assortment of topics of interest to social development workers and researchers.

Amoah describes the emergence of safety nets in Ghana beyond what is traditionally included and understood as social protection. Funeral expenses have always been very prohibitive in Ghana, and it is very much considered a necessary expense. Such expenses have driven many households to the brink of poverty. As an institutional response to this predicament, the surfacing of funeral associations in Ghana profoundly directs the existing welfare systems toward a transformative social protection model. Social development theory should benefit from the inclusion of concepts from the transformative social protection model.

Jayasundara, Wanasinghe, Carr, Nedegaard, and Guerrero provide a detailed analysis of the problem of trafficking in Sri Lanka. Trafficking vulnerable persons and subjecting them to inhuman conditions, both physically and mentally, constitutes a crime at all levels of morality and human existence. The authors offer a multistakeholder approach suitable for dealing with many instances of victimization. The paper also provides a social development approach to crime prevention.

Among the many definitions of “social development,” at least one describes it as a series of interventions targeted at improving the well-being of individuals. Brownell, Mercado-Sierra, and Smith skillfully use this approach to social development in assessing the utility of a national program for building capacity among Liberia's ex-child soldiers. The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs launched in 2003 sought to reintegrate a large number of child soldiers who remained marginalized and stigmatized to the mainstream community by enabling them to acquire the necessary skills to become self-supporting members of the majority Liberian community. The case study of the DDR program provides detailed insights into the successes as well as failures of the DDR program from a social development perspective.

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Okitasari, Prabowo, and Santono examine a core issue essential to the successful implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They focus on the organizational inputs necessary for the implementation of complex development programs linking multiple stakeholders toward the achievement of SDGs. They present a number of recommendations based on a case study in Indonesia for the establishment of formal institutional frameworks and rewarding partnership requirements.

Sinha and Thomas provide us with valuable insights into the anatomy as well as the functioning of the microfinance programs in developing countries such as India. They compare the for-profit (FP) microfinance programs with nonprofit (NP) programs and find that FP microfinance programs charged higher interest rates and provided larger loan amounts than NP microfinance programs. Encouraging more NP microfinance programs appear to have both direct as well as generational effects on building women's capacity in the developing countries.

Wei and Stere examine the risk as well the protective factors associated with alcohol use among children and teens. They put to test some of the well-known theories of drug use and find that not all the variables believed to be associated with alcohol use are significant. Drug use is widespread among the youth. Preserving the health of the youth is crucial to social development efforts.

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