

Editorial

# Listen to marginal voices

by

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Working as a social worker in a church, with young unaccompanied refugees or among people who experience violence, in which their geographical background is made relevant, are very different contexts. However, when social workers have to deal with sensitive topics, it is especially important to focus on the understanding of the other as you take into consideration your own background and the start of departure. You might think that working as a social worker in a church, and sharing the same beliefs as the user, might be of help to better understand what is taking place. Yet, this might not always be the case.

In this issue of the JCSW, the authors bring forward different marginal voices. In a secular society, it is almost a contested issue to ask: How does faith contribute to professional social work attitudes and methods? Of what relevance is it to think a user's faith and spiritual values could serve as a valuable resource to harness in social work practice?

Brooke's article about *Professionalism and faith* is a case study of Salvation Army congregational social work in Norway. This is an international Christian church that provides social services in local communities. A community of practice perspective is used to analyse empirical data from a multiple-case study. The article concludes that faith can be part of a professional ethos, by adding important values to a holistic understanding of social work. Faith provided a platform for users and practitioners to collaborate towards the user's regaining of social/community functionality. While some may argue that Faith (from a Judeo-Christian perspective) and the social work profession cannot be integrated, the historical roots of the social work profession, and its core ethics as presently championed, can harmonize (Brown, 2022). In the general clientele community served by social workers, if practice must be inclusive from a contextual perspective, it requires openness to the recognition of the user's faith as essential. Its essentiality is embedded in understanding that the user's encounters, thoughts and actions are partly informed by faith (Moffatt et al., 2021).

Borho's article is entitled *Young, unaccompanied refugees' expectations of social workers and social worker roles*. There are many similarities with a general situation, in which young people approach a social worker. However, these young people living in a country without their parents expect an additional role, in which the social worker

needs to be very observant in learning about the young person's individual expectations of the social worker's roles related to each individual young refugee. Performing these roles, some of which may be formal and others not, is crucial to the effective integration of the young refugees into the larger society (Van Raemdonck et al., 2022). Being a refugee, and at the same time a young person, are both transitional phases. The former is a geographical and cultural identity, while the latter is a biological and personal identity. Though important, this intersectionality, all of which impacts the experiences of the young unaccompanied refugees, also makes contact between them and the social workers difficult for both parties (Hettich & Meurs, 2021).

Ankit writes about *Local self-governments and SDG-16: A case for cross-region marriages in rural Haryana, India*. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 16 is about developing inclusive and peaceful communities, by ensuring inclusive institutions at all levels. This article reveals that if women obtain the possibility to participate in local political processes, transparency and accountability will increase. Therefore, this brings more awareness to the vulnerable and sometimes violent situation of children and women who are excluded because they are from a lower caste, and have moved into the society through cross-region marriages. The place of various classifications of participants in Indian politics is not only at the local level, but an issue that surfaces at the national level (Chauhan, 2008).

Taken together, the articles in this journal touch on marginal voices, such as that of the cross-region bride and her children, professionals and users within a Christian community, as well as the place of social workers serving young unaccompanied refugees whose expectations could be individually different from that of the social worker as a professional.

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