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NOL REVERDA,
SUZAN DOORNWAARD **EDITORIAL**

In our first issue of 2016, we published a call for papers on the decentralization of the welfare state. The transformation of the Dutch and Flemish welfare states is leading to major changes in the way our societies are organized and how social policies and interventions are shaped. However, there is relatively little literature that describes these developments from a more reflective perspective. We therefore invited both social scientists and social professionals to provide in-depth analyses on various themes in relation to decentralization. We have been happy to receive a number of interesting manuscripts on a diverse range of topics from both Flanders and the Netherlands in response to our call. An initial selection of these manuscripts was published in our last issue, and a number of additional contributions are presented in the current issue.

At the same time, learning about social intervention does not only take place within our own context and borders. With a contribution examining partner-related sexual abuse interventions in India and a student article discussing international volunteering with vulnerable children, the current issue provides a perfect demonstration that the field of social intervention encompasses a wide range of topics and geographical areas.

Before we discuss the content of this issue, we would like to announce a change to the editorial board of the *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice*. Yke Eijkemans has temporarily

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left her position as managing editor of the Journal in January 2017. She is succeeded by Suzan Doornwaard, who will now be the principal contact for authors, reviewers, and readers of the Journal.

As part of our call for papers, we start this issue with an article by Paul van der Aa, who is a professor in inclusive work and vulnerable citizens at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences. In his theoretical contribution on the professionalization of labour activation services, Van der Aa argues that the dominant conceptualization of successful professional agency using evidence-based methods does not do justice to the complex challenges and dilemmas that professionals face in their day-to-day practice. After identifying five types of professional challenges in activation practice, he proposes an alternative conceptualization that uses the metaphor of “puzzling over complex issues”, in which professional agency is conceptualized as dealing with five types of puzzles. He discusses the relevance of this conceptualization for research in relation to professional agency as well as for improving activation practice.

The second theme-related contribution is by Jansje van Middendorp, researcher at the R.C. Maagdenhuis Foundation and doctoral candidate at the department of Sociology at Radboud University Nijmegen, Maurice Gesthuizen, lecturer in Sociology at Radboud University Nijmegen, and Roeland van Geuns, professor in poverty interventions at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. The authors report on a qualitative study examining the problems and dilemmas faced by coordinators of “financial self-management projects” (Dutch: *thuisadministratie*), and how these relate to current municipal policy in the field of debt counselling. As a consequence of policy changes, local organizations that provide debt counselling programmes are increasingly reliant on volunteers to provide support for people with administrative and/or financial problems. In financial self-management projects, volunteers are coached by coordinators who function as intermediaries between formal and informal support. The study reveals that coordinators are continually trying to define the borders of the provision of debt support by volunteers. It is argued that these borders need to be clarified and communicated in collaboration with municipal authorities and other organizations within the field of debt counselling.

The third contribution is by Laura van Raemdonck, doctoral candidate at the University of Antwerp and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Michel Tirions, lecturer and researcher at Artesis Plantijn University College Antwerp, Herman Meulemans, emeritus professor at the University of Antwerp, and Peter Raeymaeckers, professor in social work at the University of Antwerp. In their qualitative case study, these authors aim to explore whether and how the Capability Approach (CA) can function as an evaluative framework for social interventions by the Indian NGO Women

Helpline in relation to partner-related sexual abuse. Their findings reveal an empowerment paradox between well-being freedom and agency freedom, stressing the influence of subjective and structural factors on the realization of well-being. The authors conclude that the use of the CA in a social work context is significant because it enables the identification of hidden inequalities which affect the effectiveness of interventions. Additionally, they discuss their insights in relation to social work practice in the Netherlands and Flanders.

The issue continues with a contribution in the Students' Work section. Over the past few years, winners of the HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht's best article award have been offered the opportunity to publish their articles in the Students' Work section. The papers that appear in this section have not been peer-reviewed. Instead, they are published in consultation with the editor-in-chief and the managing editor, and students have the chance to make amendments before finalizing their article for publication. The student publication in this edition is by Sena Ebbers, who recently graduated as a social worker. Her winning article focuses on the concept of "voluntourism" and discusses the challenges of and growing criticism towards international volunteering with vulnerable children.

This issue concludes with our regular Book Review and Innovations in Social Practice and Education sections. In the Book Review section, Hilde Vlaeminck discusses the dissertation by Josje van der Linden, entitled *Ensuring meaningful lifelong learning opportunities for groups at risk*. In addition, Erik Jansen discusses the inaugural speech¹ of Anja Machielse, entitled *Afgezonderd of ingesloten? Over sociale kwetsbaarheid van ouderen* (Singled out or closed in? Speaking of the social vulnerability of seniors).

In the Innovations in Social Practice and Education section, Yke Eijkemans, Amy Berkhout, Evie Jetten and Lieke Kleinsmann present a conceptual approach that aims to expand perspectives on researching the teaching, shaping and enactment of citizenship education. They also describe three qualitative research projects that intend to study these issues in the Dutch primary school system.

Nol Reverda, editor-in-chief

Suzan Doornwaard, managing editor

NOTEN

- 1 Made on 24 October 2016 on the occasion of her appointment as Endowed Professor of Empowerment of Vulnerable Seniors at the University for Humanistic Studies, Utrecht.