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Editorial

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This issue consists of six articles. The first article by Ajwang’ Warriia entitled “Stateless transnational migrant children in South Africa: Implications and opportunities for social work intervention”, examines statelessness in South African migrant children and conducts a literature review to clarify the phenomenon. This research assesses the causes and circumstances that lead to statelessness among South African migrant children. The findings indicate that a large number of migrant children are at risk of statelessness in South Africa. This research contributes to the literature and debates on statelessness in childhood and highlights the potential role of social workers in addressing this important phenomenon. In general, this is South Africa’s first research on statelessness from a social work perspective and shows how transnational migration and national legislation can contribute to statelessness and put children at risk.

The second article by Derek Yu and Joseph Kleinhans is entitled “The impact of inter-provincial migration on the labor market outcomes in two developed provinces in South Africa”. The study used a multivariate econometric analysis with probit regressions on labor force participation likelihood, and Heckprobit regressions on employment likelihood (conditional on labor force participation). The econometric analysis found that, other controlling for other differences in personal- and household-level characteristics, the inter-provincial migrants were about 5% more likely to enter the labor market to seek work and 3% more likely to find work, compared with the permanent residents. According to this analysis both results were statistically significant. The empirical results also suggested that not all the inter-provincial migrants eventually found work in Gauteng and the Western Cape.

The third article is by Fatima Khan and is entitled “Is voluntary repatriation the preferred durable solution? The view of refugees in South Africa”. The study interrogates voluntary repatriation as a possible permanent solution for refugees living in an urban environment, considering the reasons that refugees themselves gave for choosing to return home. The research also incorporates a study which reveals that refugees choosing to repatriate from South Africa are indeed very small in number, despite the vigorous attempts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) at promoting voluntary repatriation. It further reveals that this can be partly attributed to the fact that in an urban setting such as South Africa with a rights-based framework, refugees are often able to better integrate into their host society without the direct assistance of the UNHCR as they would do in a camp-based setting.

The fourth article by Fabian Sebastian Achana and Augustine Tanle is entitled

“Experiences of female migrants in the informal sector businesses: Is Target 8.8 of the SDG 8 achievable in Ghana?” This research examines female migrants in the businesses of the informal sector, and analyzes their interactions with regard to remuneration, basic human rights and health risks, as they navigate their obvious weak and insecure portfolios, attempting to achieve their set aspirations. The study found that most participants intimated that they were often deprived of their health and economic rights, and that they suffered verbal assault, physical harm, sexual harassment and were forced to work even when sick. The study recommends an integrated approach for addressing vulnerable female migrants’ health concerns and social needs. This should include the enforcement of the Ghana Labour Act of 2003 (Act 651), operationalization of the Legal Advocacy for Women in Africa, Ghana chapter (LAWA, Ghana) and collaboration among all stakeholders. The study encourages migrants to join unions with leadership structures in this sector for easy reach and engagement.

The fifth article by Achille Dargaud Fofack and Joel Nkeng Akendung is entitled “The root causes of migration: Why Africans leave their homes”. The aim of this paper is to assess the root causes of international migration in sub-Saharan Africa using extreme bounds analysis (EBA). This econometric method, used to check each variable’s sensitivity and robustness, helped researchers to determine the most important causes of foreign migration in sub-Saharan Africa. This article focuses on the extensive literature on international migration and based on data availability, 27 potential root causes of migration were selected to cover 30 sub-Saharan countries for the period between 2002 and 2016. The result of this study reveals that a large number of determinants and root causes of migration in sub-Saharan Africa.

The final article, presented by Pineteh E. Angu and Thecla Ngwi Mulu is entitled “The changing material conditions of Cameroonian migrants in South Africa: What does this say about an ‘Afrophobic’ post-apartheid state?” This article reflects on the changing material conditions of Cameroonians in South Africa to understand why this “Afrophobic” state is still a key migration destination for Cameroonians. Based on the researcher’s personal exile experiences, observations, and related literature, the study concludes that while many Cameroonian migrants still face many economic challenges or are unable to access economic opportunities due to lack of legal documentation, the lifestyles of most permanent residents and those who have obtained South Africa citizenship tell a different story. In light of Cameroonian migrants’ changing material conditions, the article strongly argues that South Africa, as a constitutional democracy, has always been an attractive migration destination.

I firmly believe that these topics offer researchers, practitioners and students invaluable knowledge. The articles also present insightful suggestions for policy-makers to make informed decisions on migration strategies, initiatives and projects by providing highly credible research evidence from the continent.