# Stories of survival and the importance of resilience in the face of increasing environmental, geopolitical, economic, social and health challenges

## Editorial

Post the shock of COVID-19, the world continues to reel from new health challenges, more frequent and severe weather events - droughts in the northern hemisphere or floods in the southern hemisphere, geopolitical conflicts, energy crises, dramatic increases in cost-of-living pressures and their associated impacts including in housing and homelessness, food security issues and increasing rates of psychological distress. Australia's National Science Agency, CSIRO (2022) notes that we can expect the next twenty years to be volatile marked by a combination of increasingly catastrophic weather events, geopolitical tensions, exacerbated health challenges associated with the post-pandemic world, high levels of psychological distress, increasing rates of chronic disease, an ageing population, a decline in trust in public institutions and explosion of artificial intelligence. In the context of existing, significant social inequalities, while we know that humans have a strong instinct to survive, we can also expect the divide to increase between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' in the face of such challenges. This relates to differences in the ability of different nations to respond to and/or meet these challenges, but moreover, the differences within groups within societies that will continue to be exposed, in particular, the differential impacts on population groups already marginalised will be exacerbated. Accordingly, this issue of the *Journal of Social Inclusion*, highlights stories of resilience, the power of adaption, the disruption of existing power structures and imbalances, and other methods and advances in promoting social inclusion and inclusive societies.

We begin this edition, with an article by Makki Alamdari, Bishop and Makki Alamdari examining the factors for resilience, with respect to both adaption and recovery, among adults who experience mass conflict. Findings from this review of the literature illuminate risk and protective factors, from an ecological perspective, to help minimise the mental health impacts of experiences of war, including the likelihood of engaging in maladaptive behaviours, and moreover, those factors that promote effective integration and social participation following experiences of war. Although the findings regarding factors at the individual and interpersonal levels are most informative, the researchers highlight the gap that exists in the current literature in relation to macro level factors. Given the current conflicts and predicted rise in geopolitical tensions in future decades, the identification of the need for more research, in particular, at the macro levels is significant and a necessity.

Informal economies have become a norm in many emerging countries, leading to a significant increase in informal employment. More than 50% of non-agricultural employment globally, for example, is a part of informal economies. For decades, informal trading has progressively become the main source of income for poor, female populations in Durban, South Africa. Sadly, the end of Apartheid in South Africa did not result in new or better opportunities for the poor because the country's post-Apartheid economy has been riddled with pre-existing financial structural deficiencies.

Bhoola and Chetty examine the experiences and perceptions of economically marginalised food vendors in Durban, South Africa, paying particular attention to female participants. Even with post-Apartheid agenda that focuses on an overall inclusive approach to address

inequality, race is still a predicating factor within the job market. Black African graduates are less likely to be employed than their Indian, White and Coloured counterparts, leaving them with no choice but to engage in informal business as street food traders. In this study the key challenges faced by female street venders are the lack of relevant information, knowledge, and a solid social network to help them navigate the system are illuminated.

Although the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability* and its Optional Protocol was adopted in December 2006, built environments throughout the world, in the main, are still falling short of meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities. In response, the global benchmarking of accessible cities, by Henderson-Wilson, Andrews, Wilson & Tucker, presents a review of the literature to identify what comprises an accessible and inclusive city, and furthermore, identifies key domains or global benchmarks for accessibility and inclusion for people with disability and concordantly, some international examples of good practice. Central to these processes is the active involvement of people with lived experience of disability and need for multisector engagement and collaboration, more broadly. In providing a working definition of accessibility and inclusion, and showcasing some practical examples, it is hoped that these benchmarks can be used internationally to measure changes, over time, including how cities have overcome their barriers to social inclusion.

In further advances to the measurement of key aspects of inclusive societies, Rumping, Boendermaker and Fukkink present the results of their research *Vignettes to measure social interactions among nonparental adults and parents in the neighbourhood: a validation study.* The ancient African proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" has been popularised in contemporary society, however, this article demonstrates that, to date, there has been little attention paid to the role of nonparental adults in parent-child interactions at the neighbourhood level and doing so is important to measuring levels of social support in the community. To this end, the development of the Vignettes Parenting Interactions in the Neighbourhood (V-PIN), and moreover, the establishment of its psychometrics, with good reliability and validity, as reported in this study, represents a valuable contribution to the literature and future researchers examining social support issues in the context of children and families.

In Enari's and Fa'alafi's commentary, they reflect on racism faced by performers of colour in Australia, both on and off stage, from their own, lived experiences. As Pacific Islanders, dancing, singing, and chanting is in their DNA, and performing is more than just entertaining. It is a sacred transmission of historical events and royal familial lineages. Unfortunately, systemic and individual racism in Australia has meant that talented individuals do not feel included in the arts and performing industry. For the Australian performing arts industry is largely Eurocentric and cloaked in colonial values, with the majority of the production crew, performers and content being white. The only roles reserved for people of colour are those the white Australians are not willing to accept or those that maintain or even enhance cultural stereotypes. The authors have had no choice, but to create their own performing platform, Hot Brown honey, as a form of resistance to the racism they experienced both on and off the stage and to create their own performance stories. It is a credit to their resilience that they have been able to shape their story and regain their narrative sovereignty, that is, decolonising the arts for themselves and generations to come.

The stories of the contributing authors can be used to advocate for ways of thinking that underpin the resilience and survival that will be needed to face the challenges ahead. The experiences of minorities in this context, and in particular, for people of colour, as highlighted in this issue are noteworthy. The development of key measures and global benchmarks to track change over time also represent contributions to the field, and more broadly, the promotion of more inclusive societies.

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