

Editorial

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Welcome to the first edition of 2024. This is a wonderful edition which explores significant topics. With contributions from Australia, Nigeria and the UK, the authors offer valuable perspectives on access to justice for marginalised communities, the cultivation of social justice values in students, integrating vicarious trauma training, the impact of clinic on academic performance and the utilisation of Artificial Intelligence in both legal service provision and clinic settings.

We begin with Katie Robertson's article, "The Stateless Legal Clinic: Novel Approaches to Meeting Legal Needs in Australia through Clinical Legal Education" which explores the integration of clinical legal education into the emerging field of "statelessness studies." Specifically, it sheds light on the operation of the Stateless Legal Clinic in the University of Melbourne. This clinic offers legal assistance and education to stateless children seeking Australian citizenship and provides students at the University of Melbourne's Juris Doctor program with hands-on legal experience through an elective clinical legal education subject. By scrutinising Australia's legal framework concerning statelessness, the article analyses the design and function of the clinic. It contends that the clinic presents innovative avenues for enhancing access to justice for marginalised communities often neglected by the legal profession.

Continuing the commitment to improving access to justice, Folakemi Ajagunna and Ibijoke Byron's article "Clinical legal education and social justice: assessing the impact on law students in a law clinic in Nigeria" provides an insight into the University of Ibadan Women's Law Clinic (UI-WLC). This clinic offers pro bono legal aid to economically disadvantaged women in the community who face barriers to justice. The article evaluates the clinic's efficacy in instilling social justice principles in students through their training. The study's findings highlight the positive impact of UI-WLC participation on students' social values. Furthermore, it identifies areas within the clinic's group dynamics that require enhancement to better prepare students for societal engagement.

The subsequent article in this edition also delves into clinical legal education in Nigeria. Authored by Olajumoke Shaebe, Yakusak Aduak, and Matilda Chukwuemeka entitled "Clinical legal education and the future of pro-bono in Nigeria: a guarantee for access to justice for accused persons awaiting trial", focuses on analysing the challenges and potential solutions for expanding legal aid services for this demographic in Nigeria. Employing an interdisciplinary approach, the authors gathered primary data through visits to the Yola and Jimeta medium security correctional centres conducted by the Nigerian Law School, Yola Campus Law Clinic. The study critically assesses the barriers to accessing legal aid despite the presence of available services and offers valuable solutions.

Emma Curryer and Gillian Mawdsley's article "Navigating vicarious trauma: the importance of planning, teaching and delivering vicarious trauma training to support law students and the legal profession" examines the experience of members in the Criminal Justice Clinic (CJC) at the Open University in the UK and evaluates the significance of vicarious trauma training in preserving the mental well-being of both students and staff. Given that their clinic operates exclusively online, issues of isolation are also addressed. The necessity of providing training to support mental wellbeing is emphasised, asserting its crucial role in the success of the CJC and in clinical legal education provision. The article advocates for legal education to acknowledge and tackle the prevalence of vicarious trauma, offering skills to those affected. It suggests measures for integrating vicarious trauma training into clinical legal education to assist students engaged in pro bono projects, emphasising its relevance beyond university into their professional lives. Additionally, the article presents preliminary findings from a small-scale research project on this topic.

Next, we have Francine Ryan and Liz Hardie's article "ChatGPT, I have a legal question? The impact of Gen AI tools on law clinics and access to justice". This study investigates the effectiveness of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools in offering legal advice and information for commonly encountered legal issues. Notable errors and inaccuracies are uncovered in the responses generated by these tools. The article explores the implications of non-lawyers utilising these tools and assesses the risks associated with relying on the advice which is produced. Furthermore, it delves into

the role of Artificial Intelligence in clinical legal education, questioning whether there is a place for responsible integration of these tools in law clinics. The authors argue that the adoption of Generative Artificial Intelligence could bolster the capabilities of law clinics and improve students' employability skills yet emphasises the importance for law schools to remain vigilant about the risks.

To round up this edition, Andy Unger, Catherine Evans, Alan Russell and Matthew Bond's article "Evaluating the academic benefits of clinical legal education: an analysis of the final average marks for five cohorts of LSBU LLB graduating students, 2011-2015" contributes to the ongoing pedagogic debate about the aims and benefits of clinical legal education. The authors investigate whether participation in the Legal Advice Clinic at London South Bank University in the UK positively impacts the academic performance of law students. The article examines the academic records of five cohorts of LLB full-time undergraduates graduating from 2011 to 2015 and determines if students who volunteered at the clinic attained higher grades compared to those who did not. The findings generally indicate that they did.

Finally, we very much look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming IJCLE conference will be held in partnership with ENCLE, themed 'Clinical Legal Education: the creation of knowledge through transformative experience'. The conference will be hosted by the University of Amsterdam on 22-24 July 2024.