Asia–Pacific Special Issue Editorial

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This special issue on the Asia–Pacific region had its genesis in a series of conversations I had with founding editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice*, Gary B. Melton, prior to his passing in 2020. Gary, an intellectual giant, visionary, and mentor to many, had worked on creating the journal to break new ground in the quest to ensure children’s personal security. He was keen to see more research and analysis on the many ways in which children’s safety and well-being were being enhanced around the globe. I was keen to help.

Our shared goal of a focus upon the Asia–Pacific region was not just because it has approximately half of the global population residing in its many countries; rather, we wanted to capture important aspects of the rich diversities found across a region that is rapidly growing and developing economically, and which is estimated to have the world’s largest urban population by 2050.¹ Perhaps more importantly, we wanted to provide a collection of high-quality articles that demonstrated the many ways in which the peoples of Asia–Pacific countries and locations were striving to build their communities and make them stand out as examples of how mobilized community development and institutional responses provide the sorts of social environments where children and young people are protected and enabled to promote better ways of interacting, living, and relating to those around them.

The region consists of people who have a wide array of historical, cultural, ethnic, language, religious-beliefs, and other characteristics; it is both ancient and modern. It has the world’s two largest national populations — China and India — and some of the world’s smallest, such as Samoa and the Solomon Islands. It has large rural migrations and megacities, developed countries and developing ones, and immense wealth and great poverty. Importantly, among its many countries, there are some populations that are rapidly aging (e.g., China, Japan, and Australia), and

¹ See, e.g., Statista (2021) retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/672054/change-in-urbanization-worldwide-by-region/>

Article “Where Is the Village? Care Leaver Early Parenting, Social Isolation and Surveillance Bias” (10.1007/s42448-021-00084-8) was previously published in issue 4:3, pp. 349–371 but should be regarded as part of this special issue

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many more that are decidedly young (e.g., India, Vietnam, and Indonesia). What is evident is that many of the policy frameworks and institutional arrangements adopted by most western nations to protect children and young people do not fit well within much of the Asia–Pacific region because it has quite different ideological and political systems of government. Furthermore, the rapidly growing populations and economies require different approaches to those found in western nations.

This special issue, I believe, captures much of this regional diversity. It includes 11 articles and covers countries including China, India, Pakistan, those who are members of the regional political alliance ASEAN, Australia, New Zealand, and several Pacific Island nations. A host of issues are examined including poverty, inequalities and racially structured policies and practices, disability, religious and cultural influences on policy and legal frameworks, cyber safety, care leavers, system reforms, and interagency relationships. The scope of these issues is broad, and the articles highlight the important part that research is playing in policy and practice developments and the many roles that community members are playing across the region in their quest to increase children's personal security.

The issues and perspectives provided in these articles are indicative of a profound and rapid development with regard to the understandings of the needs and rights of children and young people, as well as recognition of the requirement for policies to be evidence based and congruent with the often-unique contexts in which countries within this part of the globe live. I look forward to the ongoing expansion of the research capacities and capabilities within the region, as such work will undoubtedly underpin the development of effective responses to what are complex issues, systemic arrangements, and processes. To this end, this special issue will be of benefit to those with an interest in the Asia–Pacific region and also other parts of the world. I know that Gary would be proud of the special issue and the role the *International Journal on Child Maltreatment* has played in highlighting the issues being faced and the actions being taken to address them.

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