Editorial

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Our autumn issue of the IJCLE has contributors from across the world, including the US, UK, Nigeria, Kenya and India. Our contributors explore whether clinics can play a role in eradicating statelessness and in improving the accessibility of protective injunctions. The value of clinics in legal aid delivery is also explored, including whether the aspirations match the reality of practice and what lessons can be learnt. Lessons learnt are also explored in the context of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and whether our experiences can strengthen our face-to-face teaching as we return to the classroom.

Firstly, Maryam Idris Abdulkadir’s article provides valuable insight into the role of law clinics in the fight against statelessness by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In a National Action Plan in 2018, the UNHCR set out their strategies and their belief that Nigerians are not aware of the concept of statelessness. In her article Maryam tests their assertion via a questionnaire to target groups. She argues that law clinics in Nigeria can assist the UNHCR in the fight against statelessness and she recommends that clinicians can be the ‘foot soldiers’ and help to gather data through client interviews and outreach activities.
In K Rajashree and Sonika Bhardwaj’s article they share a fascinating exploration of India’s law school legal aid clinics. They map the aspiration of legal aid through an analysis of the key legal education policy documents. They also analyse two institutions by way of a case study to verify whether practices match those aspirations. The article puts forward arguments which are crucial to understanding the gaps between the aspiration and practice.

In Ana Speed’s article she highlights how clinical legal education can be an effective tool in improving the accessibility of protective injunctions. She explores the various models of clinical legal education that may be used to support victims of domestic abuse. Using a case study, she highlights the benefits and limitations of each option for the students and victims and provides an important contribution to the literature in this area. The article provides a valuable insight for clinicians who are considering offering support in this area.

In our Practice Report section Asha Mikinyango and Judith Nguru explore legal aid in the context of the challenges and lessons learnt from practice in Kenya. They provide an important insight into the role of law schools as legal aid providers, drawing a contrast between law schools based in Kenya and South Africa. The article discusses the challenges faced in the organisation and delivery of legal aid services in one law school and concludes by offering very useful advice on the strategies that can be employed to mitigate the challenges.
Finally, Amy L Wallace provides a topical and interesting reflection of experiences teaching Street Law in a virtual environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. The article considers what lessons have been learnt and whether it is possible that some of our experiences of virtual teaching may enhance our teaching when we return to the classroom.

In June 2021, the IJCLE had the privilege of hosting an online worldwide conference in partnership with the Global Alliance for Justice Education and Association for Canadian Clinical Legal Education. We had 466 attendees from over 40 countries (including Malaysia, Afghanistan, Australia, US, Canada, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Ireland to name a few). Although we were unable to all meet in person this year; it was great to see so many attendees make connections, share ideas, discuss the challenges we all have faced and explore how these challenges can be turned into opportunities going forward. Thank you to all those who attended.

Finally, we are very excited that the Clinical Legal Education Podcast is now live. In the first episode our hosts, Elaine Gregersen and Molly Doyle, interview Lydia Bleasdale, an Associate Professor from the University of Leeds, about the importance of understanding your community’s needs and the value of teamwork. If there is anything that our guests cover that resonates with you, or if you wish to discuss the podcasts further, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Elaine or Molly via the twitter account @IJCLE.