Editorial

In this issue, we introduce a new strand of contributions that are focused on careers and opportunities for anthropologists in applied fields, and on issues around the impact of anthropology in public discourse and policy matters. We start with a reflective and analytical account from Pat Caplan, based on her experience of undertaking consultancy work with an NGO. Her article presents something of a cautionary tale, illustrating the complexity of undertaking such work, and the unforeseen challenges and ethical dilemmas that can be presented to researchers. Her case study also indicates well the great value of undertaking such work, as Caplan and her colleague were able to use their depth of contextual knowledge, anthropological theory and methodology to undertake a time-limited study which met the commissioner's brief, while also unfolding the unintended consequences that well-intended interventions in other countries may have. The article provides a useful lesson in why and how anthropologists should undertake such work.

There follows a reflective article by Jude Robinson on her experience of engaging in more participatory research with a community in Liverpool, through thinking from the start about how her own work and the project that she was evaluating should be represented. Following this, Bayla Ostrach highlights how anthropological work in health may help to reveal unintended consequences of major policy changes and the impact of these on individual lives. Finally, an article by Josiane Tantchou examines the experiences of health professionals working in a financially constrained health service in Africa, uncovering how professionals negotiate their way through a highly complex and in many ways dysfunctional health system in order to fulfil their roles. By measuring 'burnout' she illuminates that working in a stressful health-care environment does not necessarily translate into high levels of burnout, if professionals can find a means of autonomy or 'escape' in their work. This adds new dimensions to the field of research on stress and burnout, particularly by developing a case

study in a non-European context. Both these authors also show how bringing together qualitative and quantitative research methods within an ethnographic approach may enhance the analytical as well as political power of research. We also include a report of the first of the events supported by the journal this year. This followed a competitive call for events that communicated the principles of engaged anthropology and was organised by Sajjad Abro and Suneel Kumar from the University of Sindh in Pakistan.

The strand of contributions on careers and impact will be continued by two new editorial board members, Natali Valdez and Samantha Page, who introduce themselves and their plans below:

Natali: My research lies at the intersection of medical anthropology, feminist science studies and public health. My doctoral dissertation is based on a multi-sited ethnographic project that takes place at two clinical trial sites, one in the U.S. and one in the U.K. The clinical trials that I examine are not intended for pharmaceutical drug development; instead, these trials test behavioural interventions of diet and exercise on ethnically diverse obese pregnant women, motivated by an epigenetic theory, which claims that a child born to an obese pregnant women will have a higher risk of developing obesity and diabetes. I focus on the daily efforts of producing, standardising and implementing these kinds of clinical trials in an effort to reduce the risk of obesity in future generations. I explore how the medicalisation of pregnancy and reproduction enables these clinical trials to intervene on pregnant bodies in the name of obesity prevention. The increasing dependence on evidence-based medicine to influence health policy is the issue at stake in the production and standardisation of the clinical trials I examine.

Along with working on my dissertation, I am actively involved in mentoring and building academic communities and opportunities with historically underrepresented students. My approach to mentoring, teaching and research is framed by nurturing long-term committed relationships.

Samantha: I am a health policy consultant who has worked in international health for sixteen years mainly in Africa but also Asia, the Caribbean and the Middle East. I embarked on a PhD programme to gain a more critical and theoretical understanding of the development field in which I was working and recently completed my PhD in International Development. It is a multidisciplinary study covering anthropology, political science, public policy and epidemiology that explores the relationship between policies designed to eradicate HIV/AIDS and one particular sexual cultural practice in Malawi. It uses aspects of a critical ethnographic approach to interrogate how these policies have been reached and specifically which actors have been most influential in shaping them. I am interested in the role of elites in shaping policy and how evidence is used (or not) to inform policies and programmes. I am also interested in the dilemmas faced by consultants working in international development. Apart from my research I also work as a freelance consultant on strategic planning, policy design and implementation, programme management and monitoring and evaluation.

As editorial board members we are interested in discussing matters that are important to *AiA* readers, graduate students and professionals. Throughout the journal we aim to incorporate issues such as:

- Audit cultures that evaluate the value of anthropological work on the bases of utility and 'impact' as opposed to more nuanced systems of value
- Issues of job availability, job security and professionalisation for academic or non-academic positions
- Notions of applying anthropology or making applied anthropological research, including ethical and practical considerations in fieldwork and engaged anthropological work
- Topics related to the gap between research evidence and policy that attend to ethics, dissemination, what counts as 'evidence' and how anthropological theories and approaches may contribute to bridging this gap.

Natali and Samantha will be commissioning and developing comparable articles for future issues, so please do get in touch with them if you are interested in making a contribution.

Christine McCourt, Centre for Maternal and Child Health Research, City University London.
E-mail: Christine.mccourt.1@city.ac.uk

Samantha Page, Health Policy Consultant, U.K.
E-mail: pamelaspape@hotmail.com

Natali Valdez, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine.
E-mail: nvaldez919@gmail.com