

PREFACE

In 2024, we find ourselves less than six years away from the culmination of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 agenda and confronted with the reality that progress against these goals have been slow and stymied by persistent challenges to the delivery, governance and quality of education. The impact of COVID 19 worked to deepen educational inequality and challenge the trajectory of students already in the midst of a learning crisis. Now more than ever education systems are called to prepare crisis response policies to serve as a guide for continuing education through times of disruption, increasing our awareness of the levels of insecurity that surrounds education and the provision of schooling.

For Caribbean educators the task of educational development for the population is made more complex given the existence of colonial residues which frame educational organisation around competition and selection and which condition belief systems and influence classroom practices. These challenges are not unique to the Caribbean and is in fact a feature of developed and developing spaces with a history of colonial contact, conflict and contest. The epistemologies and ontological realities which emerge prefigure practices that also work to hamper the arrival at relevant curriculum reform, equitable distribution of and access to resources and enhanced stakeholder confidence in the quality and relevance of educational experiences.

As the world battles environmental disasters, geo-political hostilities and economic upheavals our teachers, children, leaders and schools become victims of rationalisation as resources are reallocated to areas considered critical to state level responses for survival. The 21st Century has become a political landscape frantically wavering between hope and despair, with sadly too many politicians painting dark pictures. Now we see citizens responding to popular calls to protect and to nationalize and we perceive difference, divergence and the 'other' becoming more ostracised. Education transformation needs to usher us out of hopelessness in response to the need to reduce opportunities for students to become frustrated by a curriculum that does not call on them to use their knowledge to solve the problems of the future. It is a hope that is needed, with teachers engaged in a massive migration as they seek better conditions and with leaders in conflict between abdication and action as they confront rising school violence and dropouts, increasing pressures around student academic under performance and communities losing faith. The picture does appear to be dark.

The papers in this open issue address broadly what is needed for thriving in education. The authors navigate the reader through a range of issues: from a vision for education through reflections on service and the decolonial imperatives for education; to transformative learning and the evocative power of student voice in research; to the advocacy resources available when understandings of cultural heritage are called into being; to the importance of supporting leadership preparation in the face of increased calls for technology enabled learning; to an analysis of teacher beliefs and its impact on

student learning as they transition in education; and, to the challenge of research in small communities and the ethical and cultural challenge of privacy.

Together, this collection calls the practitioner and members of the academic community to account, to strive to promote hope in education and to engender a culture of care in education. The recommendations within are to be treated with urgency by all actors within the education ecosystem.

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