

**FROM TRINI TO KIWI: THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF A CARIBBEAN  
COMMONWEALTH SCHOLAR DOWN UNDER**

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the lived experiences of a Caribbean scholar pursuing a PhD and teaching at the University of Auckland in New Zealand at the turn of the century. First and foremost, the study captures the cultural differences and adjustments that were required in moving from Trinidad and Tobago to New Zealand – a very different cultural space on various levels. Additionally, it will assess the interactions and collaborations with PhD supervisors, education faculty and students at the University of Auckland. The study also focuses on important factors that increased and diminished self-efficacy during the PhD research and writing process. This reflective exploration will also look at the Caribbean support network in New Zealand that made the four-year experience away from home manageable. The role of spirituality and a community of faith in maintaining the focus, purpose, and reaching the accomplishment of this terminal degree was also interrogated. The impact of relationships with African, Asian, Filipino, and Pacific Island immigrants and students which made the immigrant experience enjoyable and contributed to valued understandings as a researcher, tutor and support for other PhD students was analysed. Overall, the paper revealed critical factors that made this academic journey abroad an enriching experience at every stage. This study identified systems of support and mindsets that are conducive to the development, achievement and success of Caribbean scholars in foreign academic environments that are very different from those in their homelands.*

**Keywords:** *Caribbean students, foreign culture, lived experiences, New Zealand*

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