

Introduction

The *Caribbean Journal of Education and Development* (CJED) represents an exciting new venture in academic publishing, emerging from the merger of two well-respected publications: the *Caribbean Journal of Education* (CJE) and the *Journal of Education and Development in the Caribbean* (JEDIC). This journal is dedicated to publishing high-quality, original contributions that showcase both empirical and conceptual research. It focuses on theories, practices, policies, and processes that are relevant not only to the Caribbean region but also to the Caribbean diaspora.

While the CJED retains the core philosophies and practices of its predecessor journals, including the rigorous double-blind peer review process, it also introduces several innovative features designed to enhance its impact and accessibility. Notably, the journal will be open access, meaning that all its content will be freely available to readers worldwide. Additionally, it will be exclusively online, eliminating the constraints of print publication and allowing for more timely dissemination of research findings. Importantly, there will be no publication fees for authors, removing a significant barrier that can often prevent researchers from sharing their work.

Another significant feature of the CJED is its continuous publishing model. Unlike traditional journals that publish issues at set intervals, this model allows for the immediate publication of articles once they have been accepted and finalized. This ensures that new research can be shared with the community as soon as it is ready, keeping the journal's content current and dynamic.

The editors of the CJED believe that these features will significantly increase the visibility of Caribbean scholars' work, making it easier for researchers and practitioners around the world to access and benefit from their findings.

By removing financial and access barriers, the CJED aims to democratize knowledge dissemination and support the growth and development of Caribbean scholarship.

Furthermore, the CJED is committed to fostering robust and stimulating discourse on current issues affecting the Caribbean region. The journal seeks to serve as a platform for thoughtful and impactful discussions that can inform policy and practice in education and development. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to the advancement of the region and support the professional growth of its scholars.

Consequently, the *Caribbean Journal of Education and Development* stands at the forefront of academic publishing with its innovative features and commitment to high-quality research. It is poised to become a vital resource for anyone interested in the educational and developmental issues of the Caribbean and its diaspora, ensuring that the voices and contributions of Caribbean scholars are heard and valued on a global stage.

In conceptualising this inaugural issue, we wanted to ensure that we acknowledged the significant role that both the CJE and the JEDIC have played in supporting research in the Caribbean over the past 50 and 27 years, respectively. We wanted to honour the contributions of all the authors who have published their work in these two journals. So, we invited distinguished Caribbean scholars to select one of their past papers from these journals for reprint, and then to write a new paper which speaks to the role of Caribbean scholarship in our future development. In this issue, the new paper is presented first, followed by the reprint. The reprints were selected to provide readers with insight into the historical and foundational knowledge that underpins past and current research and practices in the region. Each article

was chosen for its enduring relevance and impact on Caribbean educational research and policy. We are deeply appreciative of these distinguished scholars' participation in this project and are delighted to showcase their profound contributions in this first issue. It is our hope that this inaugural issue will inspire further research and dialogue among scholars, policymakers, and practitioners and contribute to the ongoing development and transformation of Caribbean education.

Errol Miller provides a rich account of the historical evolution of key education institutions at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, beginning with the Department of Education in 1952. His paper highlights the inception of the *Caribbean Journal of Education* in 1974, emphasizing the enduring commitment to high-quality scholarship on Caribbean education. It also addresses the challenges and achievements in maintaining these scholarly traditions and pays homage to the Institute of Education Annual. He shares his experiences about the role theoretical "musings" can play when applied to practical applications in the field. Specifically, he relates how his research and scholarship in the field of education over 37 years prepared him for a role that made a huge impact on the development of democracy and democratization in Jamaica.

Zellynne Jennings reviews the history and future directions of scholarly research in Caribbean education, with a focus on publications from 1997-2023 in the *Journal of Education and Development in the Caribbean* (JEDIC). Jennings highlights key research areas such as secondary and higher education, as well as emerging topics such as STEM and special education. The article underscores the need for more studies on COVID-19's impact, technology integration, and achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. It advocates for greater collaboration among Caribbean scholars, and expanded research to include more countries and diverse linguistic groups within the region.

Stafford Griffith emphasizes the vital role of Caribbean scholars in advancing regional development through research. He advocates for prioritizing research alongside teaching in universities to produce high-quality, relevant knowledge. Griffith highlights the need for collaboration between scholars, policymakers, and industry to ensure that research addresses local

needs and supports socio-economic development. He stresses guarding against scepticism towards academic research by maintaining its relevance and impact, and calls for better dissemination of research findings to policymakers and the public.

Lorna Down emphasizes the significant role of Caribbean scholarly research in shaping education policy and practice. Her paper highlights the contributions of notable scholars such as Errol Miller and Hyacinth Evans, and advocates for increased community engagement in research, focusing on environmental education and sustainable development. Down stresses the importance of reflecting on and adapting research roles and responsibilities to address 21st-century challenges; calling for a more inclusive research agenda involving the wider community and addressing issues like self-esteem, social responsibility, and sustainable development to create a just, caring, and sustainable society.

Aldrin E. Sweeney, Hopegay K. Williams, and Lois George revisit four primary considerations regarding future regional efforts toward integrated STEM education policy and practice, as outlined in the 2019 special issue "STEM Education in the Caribbean: Challenges, Goals, and Possibilities" in the *Journal of Education and Development in the Caribbean*. This commentary reflects on progress made in the past 5 years, identifies key roles and responsibilities of STEM education scholars, and offers recommendations for future research, policy, and practice in Caribbean STEM education over the next 5 years.

Jerome De Lisle and Sharmila Harry theorize on the limits of curriculum change in the Caribbean and Global South using integrated evidence from a qualitatively driven, mixed-methods evaluation of the Primary School Curriculum Rewrite (PCR) in Trinidad and Tobago. Their study includes a survey of 454 teachers and a multiple case study of nine schools. Findings reveal acceptable implementation outcomes overall but classify six schools as nonusers, still exploring or reverting to the old curriculum. Core barriers include curriculum imperfections, inadequate training, and increased workload. The authors suggest that effective curriculum change requires improved systems and collective capacity in Caribbean countries.

—**Carol Hordatt Gentles and Lois George**