

Editorial Preface by the Editorial Board Chairperson

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The *International Journal of Educational Development in Africa* (IJEDA) has experienced a steady growth over the years. Recently, IJEDA's face changed as we welcomed the new Editor (Dr Nomanesi Madikizela-Madiya, University of South Africa) and the Associate Editors (Professor Christopher B. Knaus, University of Washington Tacoma, USA; Dr Perienen Appavoo, Open University of Mauritius and Professor Delores Mullings, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada). We also welcomed the Editorial Board members (Professor Velisiwe Gasa, University of South Africa; Professor Richie Moalosi, University of Botswana; Dr Cosmas Mnyanyi, Open University of Tanzania; Professor Anthony Mugagga, Makerere University, Uganda; Dr Gistered Muleya, University of Zambia; and Professor Bekisizwe Ndimande, The University of Texas at San Antonio, USA).

The editorial team members have been busy throughout the year receiving manuscripts and subjecting them to blind peer reviews in order to maintain the quality of the journal. They have taken the journal to new heights by broadening its scope without compromising the tradition of excellence and quality of the publications. IJEDA continues to provide an outlet for quality peer-reviewed scholarly papers on a wide variety of issues related to educational development in Africa. We hope to keep improving the Journal's standard and seeking external recognition by indexing it in recognised databases. With assistance from the review members, the editorial team and our publisher, Unisa Press, we are continuing the growth of IJEDA into the most authoritative journal in educational development. We continue to welcome quality submissions on research driven not only by research literature but also motivated by practical challenges and problems experienced in educational practice.

Furthermore, IJEDA provides a space for forward-thinking authors who approach research and education as pathways towards development and freedom from various forms of systemic oppression. Such research (and education) may not necessarily be explicit about its contribution to the decolonial agenda, but generates knowledge from, and especially with, the marginalised communities. As a departure from Western-



oriented approaches, IJEDA welcomes a variety of scholarly approaches that conceptualise and theorise, illustrate concrete practise or engage in research endeavours that have an explicit justice orientation. This may include research that explores mechanisms for student success in schools and universities amid constraints they encounter, the role of politics in educational development and agential strategies for entrepreneurship in poverty-stricken environments.

One of the great benefits we provide to our prospective authors, regardless of acceptance of their papers or not, is the mentoring nature of our review process. Authors are provided with high quality, helpful reviews that are shaped to assist them in improving their submissions. The constructive feedback to authors is directed at how their work can be improved, rather than on simply identifying its deficiencies. This mentorship goes further to article-writing workshops that we provide to emerging authors. We, therefore, encourage emerging researchers to be part of this developmental exercise. Furthermore, the success of our journal depends directly on the number of quality articles submitted for review. Thus, we request your participation by submitting quality papers for review and encouraging your colleagues to do likewise.

The six articles that are contained in this volume are summarised below.

The first article, by Donkoh, Lee and Donkor, “Educational Development Issues in Ghana in Light of Educational Policy and Planning,” explores setbacks concerning policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation in Ghana. It reports the interference of government in educational practices and its contribution to the retarded development in national educational development. It shows how the Ghanaian government continuously implements educational interventions without consideration of policies and implementation strategies to sustain them. As a result, this article calls for the Ghanaian government to close this gap.

In their article “Economic Challenges and Students’ Persistence at Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University (ZEGU) in Zimbabwe,” Kabonga, Chipamaung and Zvokuomba discuss the impact of economic challenges on students’ sense of self-efficacy, sense of belonging and their perception of the curriculum. Using Vincent Tinto’s persistence framework and human agency perspective, they document how financial difficulties lead to students deferring their studies despite their motivation and desire to complete their university education.

Rangara and Gasa enter the debate in their article “The Availability of Learner Support Services in Selected Open, Distance and e-Learning Institutions,” by introducing the reader to the complexities of distance learning, especially to first entrant undergraduate students. They call upon distance learning providers to sensitise the students on the demands and challenges of distance learning formats so that they can acquire coping

mechanisms. They outline the necessity of viable support services as their study of 272 undergraduate students revealed inadequate student support in open distance e-learning (ODEL) universities.

Matsvange, Mudimba and Sithole, in their article “Parental Perceptions of Male Early Childhood Development Teachers in Khami District, Zimbabwe,” use a case study design to document a qualitative research study about parents’ perceptions of the involvement of males as early childhood development (ECD) teachers. Despite the positive perceptions established about male teachers, some factors such as gender and societal inclinations which cause parents to have fears about the involvement of males as ECD teachers were alluded. Therefore, they recommend that workshops and refresher courses for both parents and teachers should be conducted.

In their article “Agency Curtailed: Implications for the Integration of Environmental Education in Life Sciences,” Munasi and Madikizela-Madiya explore the prospects of integrating Environmental Education (EE) in Life Sciences. Their qualitative research using semi-structured questions found the exam-oriented approach to teaching to be the main factor that curtailed the professional agency of both the teachers and the subject advisor towards promoting practices for the integration of EE in the subject. They highlight the need of continuous professional development of EE teachers.

The sixth and last article in this volume by Magaya and Maphalala, “The Quality of Primary School Teacher Training in HIV/AIDS Pedagogy in Manicaland Province, Zimbabwe,” documents the use of participatory teaching techniques in preparing primary school teachers to teach HIV/AIDS pedagogy. Their study reveals a lack of teacher training to handle sensitive cultural issues in HIV/AIDS teaching and learning. The article recommends that both pre-service and in-service teachers should undergo a structured HIV/AIDS training programme to increase their competence and confidence in teaching this critical aspect.