

## **Editorial**

### **After the Rain Comes the Sun: Hope, Faith, and Healing in a Wounded World**

*Mathabo Khau*  
*Nelson Mandela University*  
[Mathabo.khau@mandela.ac.za](mailto:Mathabo.khau@mandela.ac.za)

As the world grapples with the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus, there is hope that eventually we will achieve herd immunity as vaccines are dispatched to all corners of the world to enable citizens to get vaccinated against the virus. However, the storm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over! There are still people who are against vaccination due to various myths about the contents of the vaccines and their effects on the human body. The challenge that we face is that such myths travel faster, and are more easily believed, than the facts about the different vaccines that have been developed and tested against the virus. While people still wonder whether to vaccinate or not, the virus is wreaking havoc across the globe by mutating and infecting people at an even faster rate. There is already a Lambda variant, which seems to be heralding a fourth wave of infections. In South Africa alone, there were more than 2,8 million cumulative positive COVID-19 cases, with more than 85,000 deaths by mid-September 2021 (National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD, 2021).

Yet, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 virus, life goes on. Education systems across the world are grappling with the challenges of online learning including cyber security, technical challenges, data costs, connectivity issues, social exclusion, depression, and lack of human contact—to name a few. We continue to live in a world where our tears flow daily like the rain in a storm, and our hearts never seem to get time to mend from the brokenness of lost lives and livelihoods. As if that was not enough, the storms created by COVID-19 have escalated the incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) in many contexts. The situation in South Africa got so bad in 2020, that the president announced GBV was the second pandemic in the country. To make a bad situation worse, a total of 23,226 teenage pregnancies were recorded by the Department of Health in the Gauteng province between April 2020 and March 2021, with some mothers as young as 10 years old (Bhengu, 2021).

These statistics demonstrate the negative impact of the pandemic on lives and livelihoods in a country whose economy has taken a serious knock down. What caused such a spike in teenage pregnancies and GBV? Where can girls and young women be safe and protected from such occurrences? If homes are no longer safe spaces for the most vulnerable in society, then how can we protect the places we know that our loved ones love? This situation has scholars asking questions about the effectiveness of school-based sexuality education in the Life Orientation subject in South African schools, the effectiveness of law-enforcement agencies, and the challenges posed by persistent gender inequalities within communities. What is the role of academics, scholars, and education institutions in a world held hostage by COVID-19? Can education be used to heal the world of its brokenness, and is there hope for a better future post the pandemic? While we grapple with these questions, I believe that after the rain, comes the sun—and I have faith that we will overcome the current challenges someday!

In this hopeful spirit, this issue includes a review of the book, *Ethical Practice in Participatory Visual Research With Girls: Transnational Approaches*, edited by Relebohile Moletsane, Lisa Wiebesiek, Astrid Treffry-Goatley, and April Mandrona, which responds to questions regarding ethical practice with vulnerable and marginalised groups. Mathabo Khau notes that the book offers a critical insight into how researchers grapple with questions of methods and tools related to participatory and visual research while placing importance on the lived experiences and agency of girls and women who are often marginalised in their communities. She states that the authors of the book focus on sexual and gender-based violence, which are skewed against girls and women across the world and argues that, despite the numerous protective international treaties that support gender equity and address GBV, the phenomenon continues globally. The book contributes to knowledge about ethical research practice and will be of interest to both emerging and experienced researchers investigating marginalised spaces and people.

Continuing with the positive vibrations, Jarosław Lubiak reports on the conference, *Let's Meet Tomorrow Before the End of Our Time*—a hybrid conference at the Trafo Centre for Contemporary Art, Szczecin, Poland on the 24–28th May 2021. The conference's aim was to reflect on the social and artistic experiments conducted during a research collaboration between Poland, Taiwan, Ecuador, Kenya, Singapore, South Africa, the Netherlands, and South Korea, which focused on developing ways of being together and cooperating in the Anthropocene crisis, especially through digital media. According to Lubiak, cultural differences were one of the two most challenging issues in connecting, relationship building, and being together virtually. The collaboration started in February of 2020 and soon needed to be reshaped to meet pandemic restrictions. A key learning from the conference, according to Lubiak, is that instead of trying to recreate traditional forms of social relations in the virtual sphere, one should invent specific forms of socialising through new but still undeveloped communication technology. He argues that the conference contributed significantly to inventing new protocols for education, art creation and research, and social connectivity through digital technologies. It provided knowledge on how to use a virtual environment to reshape behavioural patterns and enhance creative processes of learning, cooperation, and action.

To enable such processes, we need strong leadership. Thus, the first research article of the issue, by Schnepfleitner and Ferreira, titled “A Leadership Development Programme: A Case Study of Transformative Learning in Qatar,” focuses on transformative learning experiences that change the deeply held beliefs, worldviews, and frames of reference of what it means to be a 21st century leader in Qatar. They present a case study of an executive leadership development programme to identify key success factors or inhibitors that either fostered or hindered transformative learning experiences from occurring. Their research includes in-depth interviews conducted over a 10-month period, and which revealed 11 themes. They did find that the intensity of the programme pushed participants beyond the required state of disorientation necessary for transformative learning and into one of being overwhelmed and stressed.

Once we have strong leadership, there is need for resource mobilisation to enable successful implementation of projects. Mkhize and Davids's article titled, “Towards a Digital Resource Mobilisation Approach for Digital Inclusion During COVID-19 and Beyond: A Case of a Township School in South Africa,” discusses the “new normal” created by the COVID-19 pandemic within educational institutions. They discuss how the transition to online teaching and learning highlighted the economic hardships and deepened the digital divide between the rich and the poor. Educational institutions capable of transitioning to online modes of delivery made the shift, while most of South Africa's schools remained excluded due to lack of technological infrastructure and poverty. Their paper asks the question: “What are the online teaching and learning experiences of school stakeholders?” Based on responses to the question, they developed a digital resource mobilisation theory, which they offer as a viable approach to pursue digital inclusion and social change.

Continuing the discussion on resources, Jasmine Matope's article, "Making Wine Without Grapes: The Case for Quality Teaching With Limited Resources," illustrates the significant role that creative, conscientious, dedicated, motivated, and committed teachers play in guiding, directing, and developing students' thinking, perspectives, and future lives. It highlights the importance of teacher agency in connecting learning to students' lives. It argues that good teachers can employ pedagogical practices that are not dependent on the availability of resources. Matope uses life history to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding their schooling in limited resource contexts, and uses Bourdieu and Fraser's theories to explain his findings. The findings of her research stress that it is the inventiveness, competence, and attitude of the teacher that are the defining factors in the provision of quality education—not merely the availability of material resources.

Although we acknowledge that material resources are not the only resources needed in education, we also acknowledge that the most important resource we have as human beings is our planet, Earth. Muller and Wood remind us, in their article, of the importance of "Raising Awareness of Agency to Address Climate Change: The Do One Thing (DOT) Strategy." They warn that children will suffer most from the effects of climate change. Hence, they argue that environmental education is one way to prepare children to cope and enable them to educate their families and friends about the need to act now to minimise the danger climate change poses. The article presents results from a research project that aimed at integrating education for sustainable development (ESD) into the Grade 7 curriculum, with a specific focus on climate change. Their findings indicate that not only did the learners gain knowledge about the causes and consequences of climate change but the potential of the learners and community members to identify possible actions for change was increased as well. They provide suggestions for how teachers can use the DOT strategy as part of an action research approach to integrating environmental education for sustainable development to raise awareness of local environmental threats and encourage learners and their families to behave in a more environmentally friendly way.

Continuing the conversation on climate action are Berman and Sarra, whose paper is titled, "A Visual Conversation From South Africa: Climate Resilience and Hope for a Green Recovery." They examine how visual art students in South Africa used the pandemic period to imagine a better world, a green economic recovery, and a closer connection with nature and biodiversity. They generate inspirational and resourceful ideas, calling on us to be participatory and inclusive as a fundamental aspect of being human, evoking imagination to create alternative visions in collaboration with others. This article highlights the importance of visual research in providing a foundation for developing collective strategies toward economic and social security and flourishing individually and as community.

Highlighting the importance of community in education are Sathorar and Geduld whose article is titled, "A Critical Approach to University–Community Partnerships: Reflecting on the Diverse Realities." They focus on engagement with the community as a way of enhancing a university's social responsibility through establishing partnerships with the communities it serves. Using a collaborative self-study, they provide suggestions on how to enhance university–community partnerships and propose a critical engagement process to enhance collaboration in engagement projects. They argue that despite legislation and efforts to enhance university community engagement, this remains a contested space where power relations, inequality, and claims to knowledge ownership continue to pose challenges.

Inequality is a challenge across all education systems. Thus, Rens and Louw's article on "Teachers' Experiences in the Implementation of the Life Skills CAPS for Learners With Severe Intellectual Disability" is an important addition to the discussion. It focuses on a participatory process in which the experiences of teachers regarding the implementation of the Life Skills Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Learners with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (SID) in schools for learners

with special educational needs were investigated. Based on the results of their qualitative arts-based discussions, they created opportunities for the teachers to talk and work together to develop a training manual for beginner teachers and form a learning environment that would permit a rich inquiry-based dialogue among the teachers.

The conversation on inequality also touches on gender issues as exemplified by Sadati and Mitchell's article titled, "Narrative Imagination and Social Change: Instructors in Agricultural Colleges in Ethiopia Address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence." These authors highlight the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Ethiopia, and how it is skewed against female students in post-secondary institutions. They used narrative imagination to work with instructors in four Ethiopian agricultural colleges to explore how they understood SGBV issues at their colleges and what they imagined their roles could be in combating such problems. Sadati and Mitchell employed participatory visual methods such as interviews, an interactive storyline development workshop, and cellphilmng with the instructors across several fieldwork phases. Based on this work, they argue for the broadening of participatory methodologies and narrative imagination as frameworks to include in the promotion of art for social change.

Continuing the conversation on the importance of collaboration and participatory visual methods in teaching and learning is Khulekani Luthuli whose article is titled, "Using Photographs and Memory-Work to Engage Novice Teachers in Collaborative Learning About Their Influence on Learner Behaviour." He offers an account of using photographs and memory-work in research conducted by a deputy principal with novice teachers in a South African primary school to help the novice teachers express the uncertainties and challenges they encounter regarding learner behaviour. The article illustrates how novice teachers came to see their critical role in influencing learner behaviour and the value of positive teacher-learner relationships in supporting learner behaviour. It also illustrates how working with photographs and memory-work can facilitate the expression of participants' viewpoints and understandings and intensify educational researchers' learning from and with others in the interests of social change.

Lastly, Athiemoolam student-teachers' understanding of social justice was enhanced through their participation in the theatre-in-education process and its contribution to their learning in the article titled, "An Exploration of Pre-Service Student Teachers' Understanding of Social Justice Issues Through Theatre-in-Education." Data for his study comprised students' written reflections based on their theatre-in-education experiences. The article indicates that students' understanding of social justice in education was enhanced through their participation in their theatre-in-education presentations.

The most important aspect of this edition of the journal is that there is still hope. We might be traversing troubled waters and navigating unknown territories, but we can make it to the end of our journeys if we work together. Perseverance is key!

## References

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