

New Research in Education

Understanding Education in the Seychelles: Digest of Research from Master's in Education Leadership Cohort 1 (2018-2021). Edited by Mats Deutschmann, Olga Klymenko and Justin Zelime. University of Seychelles Press, 2022.

This is a landmark document. It was published online on the date of the launch of UniSey's newest research hub, the Education and Socio-Economic Research Institute (ESERI), under the direction of Associate Professor Olga Klymenko. It is also something of a landmark because it is just the second title from the University of Seychelles Press. One way and another it is an ambitious document to produce at such a busy time.

Congratulations are in order not only for the three editors, Mats Deutschmann, Olga Klymenko and Justin Zelime but, not least of all, for the graduates of the Master's programme in Education Leadership, provided in association with the University of Mauritius. In fact, most of the publication is composed of digests of student research, 'book ended' by commentaries by the editors.

Education, in any country, is always a hotbed for research. So much depends on a successful system, allowing for the fact that what is 'successful' is itself a topic for debate. Of added interest in this case is the fact that the eleven authors of the various digests are themselves already headteachers and other senior personnel in education. Their ideas are born of experience as well as fresh academic insights.

The various digests are grouped into four themes: inclusive education, supporting learner achievements, family involvement, building and supporting teacher competencies. This offers a representative cross-section of current debate in education and, like a good taster menu, the digests offer a sense of what is involved and a desire to find out more.

In a thoughtful conclusion, the editors point to examples of good practice but also to gaps between government policies and what teachers are trying to do on the ground. Some of the teachers bemoan a lack of resources but what is new in that? Everything is relative and, while the education budget in Seychelles is way below that of Scandinavian countries in particular, there is more that can surely be done with what is available. Bureaucracy, timeworn procedures, and insufficient communication are sometimes more important impediments. Or lack of research. As, for example, understanding better how to support learners who have

limited proficiency in the medium of instruction, or how the negative effects of noisy and hot classrooms can impact on learning. Of course, there is only so much that teachers can do in these respects, in the absence of support and action by politicians.

It is a sign of frustration as well as aspiration that the book concludes with a plea from the heart of everyone concerned with education: 'look after our teachers!'. ESERI is the new kid on the block and let us hope it breaks new ground, shrugging off routine responses and encouraging radical research that might lead to real change. This book is a promising start and, one hopes, a stimulus to go much further. Bon voyage!

The link to the publication is: <https://unisey.ac.sc/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ESERI-UniSey-Press.pdf>