

Editorial

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The year 2015 has been an eventful year all over the world, but most especially in the Muslim world. In this year, calamities that began much earlier have resulted in massive trauma in many Arab and Muslim states. We have witnessed the mass exodus of millions of refugees from countries like Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and so on. This dislocation, in addition to the permanent trauma it causes, especially on the children, is bound to have longlasting social and educational implications. This brings to bear the necessity of reflecting upon the social aspects of education in a Muslim society.

While this volume of *IJES* is in no way intended to be thematic, some of the papers somehow have a bearing on the current situation of the world, especially the Muslim world. It is a fact that the main players in the upheavals have nothing to do with education. In the long-run, however, it is we educators who will bear the burden of restructuring hearts and minds. This necessitates a futuristic vision of education. The papers in this volume are in no wise futuristic. Nevertheless, they deal with perennial educational issues upon which a futuristic vision for the reconstruction of Muslim society may depend.

The first paper by Yousef Rahath argues for the necessity

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of considering the social vision of Islam in formulating Muslim education. In the face of challenges and calamities, and the longstanding degeneration of Islamic learning and practice, there is a tendency among many Muslim to reduce Islamic learning to the ritualistic aspects while neglecting the transformative vision of Islam. This paper is timely considering the difficult times Muslims are going through.

The second paper by Fatmir Shehu and Bukuri Zejno, deals with an important and yet again timely topic of the participation of Muslim women in the public sphere, both in education and work. This issue has contemporary relevance considering the exodus of Muslim families to the western world, fleeing from unrest at home. This has re-opened age-old debates of the extent to which Muslim women can participate in public activities. The long debates among the rigid traditionalists and feminists positions are discussed, with the authors giving a balanced recommendation.

Central to discussion about education is the issue of quality. The quality of educational institutions and systems depends on the quality of the people working in them. In this regard, the third paper by Aisha Al-Araimi and Azam Othman discusses perceptions about the effectiveness of training programs for educational leaders in the Sultanate of Oman. While governments are allocating more funds for the training and continuous professional development of educational leaders, it would be a waste if those programs do not achieve the intended objectives. While this is a case study of a single Muslim country, the lessons we learn from this paper are useful motivation for conducting similar studies in other Muslim countries.

Related to the issue of educational quality assurance, the fourth paper by Musa Matovu discusses the important area of assessment. Governments and private individuals are investing a

fortune in creating opportunities for higher education. The first line of assuring that the students actually learned what they set out to learn is the assessment system. With the current outcry about the mismatch between graduates of institutions of higher learning and the requirements of the job market in most countries, there is a call to reconsider the entire higher education value chain. Most important in this value chain are the assessment systems and practices employed.

The fifth and sixth papers deal with the all-important area of psychometrics. While educational researchers use various instruments for assessment, diagnosis, and research purposes, there is a dearth of research instruments based on Muslim beliefs and experiences. The fifth paper by Mustafa Tekke and Nik Ahmad Hisham Ismail is an attempt to develop and conduct preliminary validation of an Integrative Islamic Personality Inventory (IPI). The significance of this inventory lies in its multidimensionality and being grounded in authentic Islamic scholarship and validated empirically on a population of practicing Muslims. The sixth article by Hafsa Mzee Mwita, Syed Alwi Syahab, Mohamad Sahari Nordin, and Ainol Madziah Zubairi takes two important instruments developed in the west and assesses their psychometric properties when applied to a Muslim population. The instruments in question are the Self-Handicapping Questionnaire (SHQ) and the Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ).

As we enter 2016, we hope that our readers continue to search for solutions to the perennial educational problems our societies are facing.