CHAPTER 3

Wrestling with the Notion of Leadership and Teacher Involvement
Understanding Caribbean Teachers' Myths and Beliefs within Global Perspectives

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Abstract

As developing nations continue to provide children with high-quality education, they too struggle to understand the notion of leadership and teacher involvement within the sector. This study is part of a Car-

ibbean cross-national project on leadership in the early childhood sector funded by the government of Trinidad and Tobago and The University of the West Indies. A survey of 721 early childhood teachers in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados provided data on their myths and beliefs about leadership. Key findings debunked the notion that teachers believed that only positional leaders can lead within ECEC settings. Intuitive understandings of the potential of distributed leadership were analysed. Global myths and beliefs were scrutinised. Global understanding and possibilities for qualitative research across borders were identified. A conceptual framework is offered for global advancement and support for teacher leaders from developing countries.

Keywords: early childhood education and care, leadership, myths, beliefs, Caribbean teachers, island states

Introduction

Current issues affecting the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector around the world have led the research community to be concerned about the demands of leadership and its impact on the education sector. Researchers have noted that quality leadership is inseparable from the context and effectiveness of the day-to-day management and perceptions of a centre's environment (Roberts, Crawford, & Hickmann, 2010; Sanduleac & Capatina, 2016; Sheridan et al., 2009). Yet leadership remains an elusive phenomenon. As researchers, we still grapple with a definition of leadership that imbibes the very culture within which each country operates. ECEC[1] is closely intertwined with social relationships, inherent beliefs, and experiences. This chapter will focus on the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the Commonwealth nation of Barbados, both small developing states in the Caribbean. The data described within this chapter were based on a survey of 721 ECEC teachers. The study examined their beliefs/ myths, which are so often espoused within our wider global ECEC community too. One of the questions from the larger study, which this chapter will address, is: What were the beliefs of early childhood teachers in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados as they relate to leadership in ECEC settings? Answering this question may provide a measure of clarity as we tackle the intricacies of leadership and teacher involvement around the world.

Leadership is hereby referred to as 'activities tied to the core work of the organisation that are designed by organisational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, or practices of other organisational members' (Spillane, 2006, p. 11). Researchers argue that nurturing leaders is an important task for the advancement of high-quality administration and programming in the early childhood sector (Waniganayake & Sims, 2018; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This position is further strengthened by Rodd (2013), who argues that 'effective leaders possess the insight and ability to perceive both the explicit and implicit needs of a situation requiring leadership and adapt their style in ways that engage and empower others to respond and contribute to positive outcomes for young children, and the early childhood sector' (pp. 33–34). Therefore, if it is assumed that teachers within the education sector can be affected by the myths associated with leadership and their very own beliefs and notions of leadership, then could these elements have consequences for the quality of care, learning, and administration in early childhood environments? More importantly, are these elements impactful on the larger field of nation-building and community advancement in small island states?

As researchers continue the struggle of defining leadership in a constantly changing world, the value of leadership remains constant. It can also be argued that administrators continue to rely on the expertise of teachers to lead and improve the quality of service within early childhood settings (Crawford et al., 2010). But is this fact or intuitive assumption? It is imperative that we know the role of teachers in the important task of leadership. According to Barth (2007), Crowther et al. (2002), and Ebbeck and Waniganayake (2003), teacher leaders have a clear vision and seek to transform ideas into everyday approaches for action and perseverance. Furthermore, teacher leaders continue to be described within international research (Gabriel, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet, 2014) as being able to create a culture of teamwork and to promote professional learning. This argument is further strengthened by Caribbean research (Logie, 2013a), which found that varying perspectives of leadership existed within early childhood environments. Therefore, if effective management of change is to occur within early childhood settings, it is important to delineate the beliefs and practices of staff within the sector and further understand the potential and behaviours of our teaching staff.

Highlighted within current research is the discussion as to whether leaders are associated with a special position or office. The results from this study proffer that the above notion may well lead to gross restrictions on the ability and potential of teachers in the classroom.

The paucity of research in the Caribbean on teacher leadership, particularly in the early childhood sector, was a key factor influencing the conduct of this study; the other factor was the need to contextualise issues affecting leadership. The purpose of this cross-national study, therefore, was to explore teacher leadership (beliefs and myths) within Caribbean territories and examine those findings within global perspectives.

The Notion of Teacher Leadership

Despite the challenges associated with defining teacher leadership, research by Crawford et al. (2010) argues that administrators are more and more willing to rely on the expertise of teacher leaders to enhance the quality of service given to children and families. Because of the benefits strong leadership could bring to early childhood environments, it is important to understand the myths and beliefs of teachers as they relate to their involvement and ability to lead within their respective centres.

International research strongly suggests that teacher leaders often have a clear vision that can be articulated to other members within the workplace (Barth, 2007; Crowther et al., 2002; Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003; Heikka & Suhonen, 2019). Teachers were found to translate their vision into practical strategies (Crowther et al., 2002) for action by setting goals and monitoring the progress towards the attainment of such goals. They were committed to setting goals (Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet, 2014), and persistently confronted obstacles (Barth, 2007; Crowther et al., 2002).

In highlighting the contributions of teacher leaders, Thornton (2010) expresses the view that 'teacher leaders serve as mentors and encourage their peers; they influence policies in their schools; they assist in improving instructional practice; and they help develop leadership capacity and retention of other teachers' (p. 36). Teachers who are leaders maintain focus on the school's curriculum and on lifelong learning for themselves, and more importantly they understand what works within their environment (Bowman, 2004; Halttunen, 2013;

Halttunen et al., 2019; Helterbran, 2010). Studies have also found that teachers who believe in leading from within the classroom can bring about change and promote democratic school environments (Barth, 2001). However, for teacher leadership to be successful, the school context—according to Harris (2003)—must be one that promotes collaboration and shared leadership. The question is, do teachers believe they are given the opportunity to influence policy and lead the various operational aspects of their school environment?

The Context

The study focused on nurseries in Barbados, as well as government-owned preschools, kindergartens, childcare centres, and day-care centres in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, both English-speaking countries. All centres under study catered to children aged three to five and were funded by the governments of their respective countries.

Trinidad and Tobago

Trinidad and Tobago is the southernmost twin island republic in the Caribbean. With a population of approximately 1.4 million, the republic is close to its target of universal early childhood education. Currently, there are 175 government and government-assisted early childhood centres that cater to approximately 16,000 children aged three to five (Ministry of Education, Trinidad and Tobago, 2018). The study focused on government and government-assisted centres staffed by trained ECEC teachers with tertiary level Bachelor's in Education degrees or staff members with the minimum qualification of a Certificate in Early Childhood Education.

Barbados

The Commonwealth nation of Barbados is home to a population of 283,000. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2018), there were 6127 children aged three to four years within the education sector. Early childhood education in Barbados developed out of the need for mothers to seek employment. Further expansion of early childhood services, increased numbers of public nurseries, and early childhood teacher training continued after the country's independence in

1966. It must be noted that Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago both have a high literacy rate.

The Sample

The study gathered data from a wide range of respondents within government and government-assisted centres in Trinidad and Tobago and within nurseries in Barbados. The sample consisted of 721 ECEC female teachers—five hundred and ninety-seven (597) and one hundred and twenty-four (124) across rural and urban districts in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados, respectively. District educational coordinators from Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados were contacted to assist with the distribution of the surveys. Using a purposive sampling strategy, the coordinators were able to distribute questionnaires among the teaching staff of the various ECEC centres/nurseries/preschools/kindergartens/day-care centres within both countries. All early childhood teachers from the various government day-care nurseries within Barbados were approached to complete the survey. Of the total one hundred and thirty-eight (138) teachers across the six (6) districts/parishes in Barbados, one hundred and twenty-four (124) participated in the study. This represented 89.9 per cent of the total population of teaching staff in the government early childhood sector. In Trinidad and Tobago, 57 per cent (597) of the total number of early childhood government and government-assisted teachers (1047) across all eight (8) educational districts completed the survey.

Within the sample, 373 were over the age of 40 (51.7 per cent), and of these, 23.9 per cent were between 50 and 60 years of age. There were 346 (48 per cent) under 40 years of age. Two respondents did not complete the survey. The findings indicated there was a fair balance between those under 40 and those over that age.

Of the respondents in Trinidad and Tobago, 21.7 per cent had attained secondary and post-secondary level certification as their highest level of education, 73.2 per cent had completed tertiary level education, and 0.2 per cent had obtained community college certification. About 2.3 per cent had gained certification outside of the field of education.

Within the Barbados sample, 71.8 per cent of teachers had completed secondary and post-secondary education as their highest level of certification and 6.5 per cent held undergraduate degrees, having

completed tertiary level education. Roughly 7.3 per cent of this sample had obtained certification at the community college as well as certification outside the field of education (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Highest attainment of female teacher respondents by country.

Level of education	Trinidad, valid percent	Barbados, valid percent
Secondary	14.2	37.9
Post-secondary	7.5	33.9
University	73.2	6.5
Community College	0.2	7.3
Other	2.3	7.3
No certification	2.6	7.1

The Instrument

For this study, The University of the West Indies developed a Perception of Leadership and Practice Survey (PLPS). It consisted of thirty-two (32) structured, unstructured, and scalar response items, which gave a deeper understanding of teacher beliefs on leadership practice within the sector. The survey provided data on government-assisted nurseries, ECEC centres, and kindergartens. For the purpose of the study, the above centre types were collapsed into either government (fully government owned) or government-assisted centres in both countries. Data on staff certification, professional status, and educational attainment were also gathered. Survey questions also focused on teachers' thoughts on leadership within their workplace as well as their perception of myths related to effective leadership expressed within the international research. Additionally, the survey provided teachers' perception of challenges to becoming a leader in the workplace as well as their notion of teamwork and power relationships. Teachers were asked to answer Likert-style questions on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements. Standard ethical research procedures were applied.

Findings and Discussion

The Position Myth: I Am the Leader Therefore I Lead

Maxwell (2005) reflected on the following: 'If I had to identify the number one misconception people have about leadership, it would be the belief that leadership comes simply from having a position or title' (p. 4). The questions one must ask as we seek enlightenment on what are the true elements of leadership are these: Does one's position at the top make you a leader? Does Maxwell's observation permeate the school culture in developed and developing countries? Because of the importance and impact of leadership on the provision of quality ECEC services in any workplace, it is certainly a notion that needs further attention.

When teachers were asked about their views related to the Position Myth, interestingly, 88.4 per cent across both territories disagreed with the following statement: I can't lead if I am not the chief administrator. Only 7.7 per cent of teachers/practitioners believed the statement (see Table 3.2). There was a non-response rate of 4.3 per cent, while 3.9 per cent of respondents had no opinion.

Results Defy the Statement

It has been argued within the literature that the person who has been given the position (within these settings the chief administrator, head of centre, or principal) typically has the new opportunity to lead. Maxwell (2011, p. 41) argues that 'most of the time when people enter a leadership position they do so because it was granted or appointed by some other person in authority'. Maxwell further proffers that this is the upside of the position, as it offers an opportunity for the positional leader to gain the respect of their staff. Moreover, he argues that leadership must be earned and cultivated and will only be successful when the authority of the leadership position is recognised. Additionally, Maxwell (2011, p. 42) notes that 'the best leaders promote people into leadership based on leadership potential, not on politics, seniority, credentials or convenience'. Arguably, a leadership position is an invitation to grow as a leader. Similarly, Rodd (2012) posits that an environment does not always need a positional leader to effectively guide the work within a teaching environment and that leadership could be distributed among its staff.

Table 3.2: The Position Myth: Teachers' responses.

Myth	Strongly disagree	Dis- agree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	Response rate
	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent
I can't lead if I am not the chief adminis- trator (n = 690)	43.2 (298)	45.2 (312)	3.9 (27)	4.9 (34)	2.8 (19)	93.4
Power resides with the princi- pal (n = 650)	15.4 (100)	32.6 (212)	10.9 (71)	27.1 (176)	14.0 (91)	90.2

When asked if power resided with the principal, the study found that 48 per cent of teachers did not believe that statement to be true (illustrated in). By comparison, 41.1 per cent of teachers agreed, while 9.8 per cent had no opinion on the statement. Just under 10 per cent (9.8 per cent) did not respond to the question. Because there were strong views on either side of the above statement, this area of study needs further investigation. It certainly begs the question—what is the connection between power, position, and leadership?

The Destination Myth: When I Arrive at the Position of Leader Change Will Happen

Intuitively, within our settings and in conversations with ECEC teachers around the world, there appears to be a belief that a Destination Myth exists. Is it that teachers or staff in ECEC believe that they must arrive at the position of head teacher/principal or designated leader to have influence over policies, staff, and their present curricula? Does this Destination Myth exist within the Caribbean education sector? Do ECEC teachers blame their challenges and ability to reach their potential within the sector as an element of not being given the opportunity to lead and bring about change? This research study explored those concerns by questioning assumptions, beliefs, and views of practitioners within the region.

The surveyed early childhood teachers—when presented with the following statements—consistently challenged them, exposing and

debunking the Destination Myth: 1.) 'When I become the chief administrator/head practitioner I'll no longer be limited' and 2.) 'I cannot reach my potential if I am not the chief administrator/head practitioner'.

When teachers were asked if becoming the positional leader would allow for unlimited opportunities for change and success, only close to a quarter (20.9 per cent) of the sample agreed with the statement. Findings aligned with those of Maxwell (2005), arguing that good leadership is learned in the trenches and extending the argument that 'if you don't try out your leadership skills and decision-making process when the stakes are small and the risks are low, you're likely to get into trouble at higher levels when the cost of mistakes will be high' (p. 9). Therefore, leaders should grapple with daily situations and embrace the possibility for errors along the way. These results indicate that Caribbean teachers believed it is a mistake to dream that one day when you gain the top position you will be able to lead and fix the challenges that occur within the setting (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: The Destination Myth.

Myth	Strongly disagree	Disa-gree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	Response rate
	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent
When I become the chief administrator/ head practitioner I'll no longer be limited (n= 665)	30.8 (205)	48.3 (321)	12.0 (80)	7.2 (48)	1.7 (11)	92.2
I cannot reach my potential if I am not the chief administrator/head practitioner (n = 688)	49.9 (343)	44.0 (303)	3.1 (21)	1.6 (11)	1.5 (10)	95.4

The finding was further strengthened and supported with 646 teachers (93.9 per cent) of the 688 respondents disagreeing with the following statement: 'I cannot reach my potential if I am not the chief administrator/head practitioner'. Only 21 (4.6 per cent) agreed. There were 21 (3.0 per cent) who had no opinion. Of the 721 teachers surveyed, 33 (4.6 per cent) gave no response. Early education teachers therefore debunked the Destination Myth, as many agreed with Maxwell's (2011) assumption that one can indeed prepare for leadership. The Caribbean study findings also concur with Maxwell (2005) that if you want to succeed you need to learn as much as you can about leadership before assuming a leadership position. Maxwell further argues that 'good leaders will gain in influence beyond their stated position' (p. 11).

Among ECEC teachers globally, there may be a perception that influencing others is a key element of leadership. Furthermore, it can be argued that within any organisation, the staff typically appear to be persuaded by and follow either a person given the title or a person of influence. Influence is the ability of an individual to impact someone's ideas or to move someone into one direction of either thought or action (Maxwell, 2011, 2005; Sinek, 2017). In the 21st century, a leader might well be the 'influencer' of an organisation, if one is to use social media terminology.

In wrestling with the notion of strong management and administration, Kivunja (2015), Rist et al. (2011), Urban (2008), and York-Barr and Duke (2004) all point to the importance of good leadership as a critical element in bringing about change. Strikingly, within this Caribbean study, 529 or 78.7 per cent disagreed that they as ECEC teachers have the necessary power to lead and bring about change within the centre, while 14.6 per cent agreed that teachers did at present have leadership power within the centre. Only 6.7 per cent of respondents had no opinion on the issue, while the non-response rate was 6.8 per cent (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Early childhood teachers' belief/view on present ability to bring about change.

Belief/View	Strongly disagree	Disa-gree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	Response rate
	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent (n)	Valid percent
I have the necessary power to lead and bring about change within the centre (n = 672)	29.9 (201)	48.8 (328)	6.7 (45)	9.5 (64)	5.1 (34)	89.0

Typically, ECEC teachers within the study believed they could also be administrative leaders if given power. As posited by Heikka and Hujala (2012), respondents believed that leadership duties ought to be shared (82.8 per cent). The majority (92.8 per cent) of teachers shared the view that 'ECEC teachers ought to be given opportunities to lead in the nursery / day care / school / centre', while only 2.8 per cent disagreed, 4.4 per cent held no opinion, and 5.4 per cent did not respond. On the statement that '[a]n individual ought to feel free to take on leadership roles', 537 (80 per cent) of ECEC teachers surveyed agreed. Only 9.2 per cent did not support this view, while 10.7 per cent had no opinion and 6.9 per cent did not respond to the question.

When ECEC teachers were asked to rate their views on the statement that '[c]o-workers ought to be encouraged to accept leadership roles in the classroom', 92.7 per cent agreed, 1.9 per cent disagreed, 37 teachers (5.4 per cent) held no opinion, and 4.4 per cent did not respond. However, respondents believed that they were not given opportunities to lead, with only 6.2 per cent of the teaching staff of the view that they gained the opportunity to develop their leadership skills. As defined by Rodd (2012), leadership is the product of the effort of a group of individuals and is linked to the elements of shared or collaborative effort. These staff members indicated through their beliefs that shared leadership would allow them to adapt to the ever-changing educational sector. Although the study did not specifically ask for the nature of the leadership role (be it pedagogical, administrative, or that

of community activists), respondents held strong views on leadership. There was an overwhelming belief that respondents were ready to take on leadership roles if given the chance. This latter finding needs further examination.

Teacher Leadership Begins with Self-Confidence and Opportunity

As noted earlier, Heikka and Hujala (2012) argued that strong leadership not only provided new knowledge within an environment but offered a sense of control and power to those within the ECEC environment to bring about change. When asked whether [l]eadership responsibilities ought to be shared', 87.8 per cent of respondents believed that they should, 2.6 per cent disagreed, 4.2 per cent did not share an opinion, and 5.5 per cent did not respond to the statement. Likewise, 85 per cent of teachers supported the view that '[a] leadership team is more effective than just one leader', only 8.4 per cent disagreed with this view, 45 teachers (6.5 per cent) stated that they had no opinion about the statement, and 4.6 per cent gave no response. More than half (58.5 per cent) of teachers shared the view that '[l]eaders don't just share tasks; they also gain power from their actions'. However, 23.8 per cent disagreed with that statement, while 111 of the respondents (16.9 per cent) had no opinion and 62 (8.6 per cent) did not respond. When asked about the statement that '[l]eadership ought to be shared even though there is a team leader', 601 or 88 per cent agreed. Only 6.1 per cent held the opposing view that leadership should not be shared if there is a team leader. A small number of teachers (5.9 per cent) expressed no opinion, while there was a non-response rate of 5.3 per cent.

Teachers—No Need to Wait

Teachers are very often drawn into the ring of governance to tackle administrative or pedagogical issues, thereby finding themselves leading the charge for change to correct institutional faux pas or challenges within the ECEC sector. A key finding of the study was the existence of teachers' confidence and belief in their ability to effectively lead and solve issues within the sector, if given the opportunity to do so. Teachers believed they were capable of leading from their classrooms, as

91.5 per cent and 74.2 per cent respectively in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados responded 'Yes' when asked: 'Do you think preschool practitioners can be effective leaders?' Only 7 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago and 0.8 per cent in Barbados responded 'No'. There was a non-response rate of 7.8 per cent and 25 per cent in Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados respectively.

When asked '[i]f a centre had a team leader, should leadership responsibilities still be shared?' 83.4 per cent of teachers agreed that it should. At the same time, 91.1 per cent of respondents also agreed that all decision-making should be shared. A strong argument can be made for distributed leadership in some form within these ECEC centres.

Moreover, teachers consistently argued (82.8 per cent) that ECEC staff who are assigned the preparation of classroom activities can undertake leadership roles. The position that teacher leadership should be nurtured and that teachers should be included in the decision-making process is supported within current literature (Davitt & Ryder, 2018; Brewer, Okilwa, & Duarte, 2018; Halttunen, Waniganayake, & Heikka, 2019). There is therefore no need to wait—rise to the occasion and lead.

Key Challenges

As we wrestle with what are the important elements of leadership as well as how our views impact the very ecosystem we live in, we must define our role in society. Do we wish to lead or to follow, and do we believe in an egalitarian notion of interdependence and pedagogical and administrative support for our co-workers through teamwork? Another question that must be answered is this: Can ECEC teachers, regardless of whether they live in small island states or a financially evolved nation, lead and assist in the provision of quality education within the sector? That elephant in the room is hereby acknowledged and answered by teachers within these Caribbean islands. Yes, they can. However, challenges will exist within each setting or ecosystem as it continuously adjusts to the nuances and experiences each member brings into the workplace. Here are key challenges that affect us globally.

1. Inability of the positional leader to share or distribute leadership roles. Researchers have argued that there is evidence of environments where teachers are distrusted (Berg et al., 2013; Heath & Heath, 2010;

Sinek, 2017). In small island states—where the principal/positional leader has gained the position of power through longevity in the post, or certification, or favour—it is difficult to relinquish roles to others, as the position is seen as a privilege and/or entitlement.

With a note of caution, Danielson (2007) and Denee and Thornton (2017) argue that distributed leadership should not be viewed only as a chance to share perceived onerous or less attractive roles to lessen the burden on the positional leader. The authors suggest that distributed leadership should be viewed as the provision of opportunities for all within the environment to develop leadership competencies within a culture of teamwork. Similarly, Sinek (2017) supports this view, stating that:

> The more energy is transferred from the top of the organisation to those who are actually doing the job, those who know more about what's going on on a daily basis, the more powerful the organisation and the more powerful the leader. (p. 184.)

Caribbean research also concurs that:

> In order to reap the benefits of shared leadership in early childhood settings, there is a need for the positional leader to develop the leadership capacity of employees and provide support for them as they execute new leadership roles. (Logie, 2013b, p. 239)

2. The nature of teaching as a profession. By its very definition, teaching could be viewed as a two-dimensional occupation. You teach in the classroom and your assessment as a quality practitioner is based on your ability to teach within the parameters of the curriculum and to carry out your classroom responsibilities as required. However, this assertion may lead classroom teachers to function 'in silos', and the practice may not lead to successful quality learning environments that attempt to: a) provide opportunities to lead; and b) stress resilience and adaptation to change. Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet (2013) argue that leadership must be managed carefully, particularly in environments where staff members are inexperienced and may need support.

According to Helterbran (2010) and Mettiäinen (2016), teachers must overcome the 'I am just a teacher' syndrome, re-examining their roles and functions and bringing new enthusiasm within the workforce. A more robust three-dimensional approach to the ECEC profession should perhaps be considered whereby leadership mentoring

and training play an integral part in a teacher's daily professional life. Another obstacle on the path to leadership among teachers may be their fear of taking the initiative to lead and their belief that it is just not their job to do so (Sanduleac & Capatina, 2016; Thornton, 2010). In small island states, particularly those within the Caribbean, there is typically a stereotypical perception of the ECEC teacher as the 'nice Miss'/'Auntie' within the classroom. Current research (Lipsky, 2010; Waniganayake & Sims, 2018) suggests an additional role for ECEC teachers as street-level bureaucrats. This would allow teachers to position themselves as leaders with professional authority to make decisions on a day-to-day basis. Further qualitative research on leadership is needed to clarify global teacher beliefs and how they impact on dynamic, quality ECEC environments.

Conclusion

The struggle towards quality leadership continues. Across the world, whether in small island states or in larger developed economies, teacher agency and professional influence are currently viewed as valued and essential components of the education sector. Teachers within this study forcefully argued that they have the potential to lead if given the chance to do so. Harris and Jones (2019) argue that the idea of teachers as co-constructors of educational change and policymaking is long overdue. Harris and Jones further note that 'funding may disappear overnight, political support may wane, policy-makers' interest may be side-tracked, but the enormous potency of teacher leadership remains, endures and survives' (p. 125). While differences in the Caribbean appear within government policies, budget allocations, and the national understanding of the cultural context of leadership, hope remains strong for teacher leaders within these small island states.

Notes

1 Known in the Caribbean as the Early Childhood Care and Education sector—ECCE.

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