

# Obstacles to change in teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago

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*This article describes part of a transition process in teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago. After assisting the University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) in the development of a four-year Bachelor of Education program that replaced the previous system of two-year in-service training at Teachers College, I describe the contested, complex process of reform in the teacher education system in Trinidad and Tobago. Three major obstacles blocking this transition process were: traditions within the society; an underlying neo-colonialist and hierarchical mentality; and, political circumstances. A neo-colonialist theoretical framework is used to analyse the obstacles to curriculum change in the context of Trinidad and Tobago.*

*[Keywords: teacher education, curriculum change, neo-colonialism, developing nations, educational policy]*

In the summer of 2006, I spent six weeks as a visiting professor at the new University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT), in the role of consultant for the development of a Bachelor of Education program. As teachers had previously been trained in-service for two years in Teachers' College, the idea of a four-year university degree program for teacher education was faced with resistance. During this change process, I began to understand this resistance from the perspectives of the teachers, teacher educators, and Ministry of Education administrators I worked with, thus, the claims in this article are often based on their statements or attitudes as I perceived them, as well as on the evidence I saw while visiting schools and teachers' colleges. This article describes the contested, complex process of reform in the teacher education system in Trinidad and Tobago, and some major obstacles blocking this transition process.

## **Situating Trinidad and Tobago**

The islands of Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation in 1962. The population is described as 40% of Indian origin, 37.5% African, 20.5% Mixed, and 2% European, Chinese, Syrian, and other origins (Infoplease, 2011). As a result of a decreasing birthrate and high levels of emigration, Trinidad and Tobago has the lowest population growth rate in the Americas (CIA, 2011). A history of slavery and indentured labour from two different source countries has left a population somewhat

divided in an economic and cultural sense. Since they began as indentured labourers rather than slaves, it is primarily the Indo-Trinidadian people who are landowners in a nation whose population is 87.8% rural (United Nations Statistics Division, 2011). The two major political parties are also divided along ethnic lines; the United National Congress (UNC) being predominantly Indo-Trinidadian and the People's National Movement (PNM) being predominantly Afro-Trinidadian. According to some accounts, this racial and socioeconomic divide transfers into the education system, where ethnic and religious groups generally do not mix (Garcia, personal communication, July 13, 2006). The family names of the top 100 students in the national elementary graduation test, called the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA), as reported in the local newspaper (Matroo, 2007a), were overwhelmingly of Indo-Trinidadian origins.

### **History of education in Trinidad and Tobago**

As a former British colony, Trinidad and Tobago has an education system patterned after the structures and practices of commonwealth countries (George, Mohammed & Quamina-Aiyejina, 2003). Most public schools in Trinidad and Tobago are government assisted, run by various religious dominations but financially supported by the government. After five years of primary school, all students write the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) to gain places in secondary schools. Previously, only students scoring above 30% on SEA went to secondary schools, but since the institution of universal secondary education in 2000, students scoring below 30% are placed in an alternative program called the Secondary Special Forms Program (SSFP) and given a remedial curriculum. The University of the West Indies, based in Jamaica, has a campus in Trinidad, and there is also a Seventh Day Adventist tertiary institution called the University of the Southern Caribbean. Traditionally, public school teachers have been trained for two years at the two Teachers' Colleges in Trinidad.

In recent years a consensus for educational reform has been gaining ground in Trinidad and Tobago, as evidenced in a series of policy papers produced by representatives from the Teachers' Colleges (1999), a National Advisory Committee in Education (2004), and the Ministry of Education (2003, 2005a, 2005b). In their interim report for policy direction in teacher education, the sub-committee on primary and early childhood care and education propose "interactive, collaborative and dynamic exchanges to prepare teachers to develop a community-based education whose practitioners exhibit professionalism and engage in praxis based on research" (National Advisory Committee in Education, 2004, p. 18). The Ministry proposes a student-centered, activity-based pedagogy within a dynamic curriculum of collaboration (Ministry of Education, 2005a). In a discussion paper submitted by the Teacher Professional Development Unit of the Ministry of Education, there is an unequivocal tone of the need for dramatic change.

In planning for changes in restructuring and transforming the system of teacher education and development, it will not be enough to simply address the current deficiencies in the system. The plan must also factor in understandings about new trends and developments in learning, in education, in society and the professional

development of teachers in particular if we are to achieve developed country status in Trinidad and Tobago. (Ministry of Education, 2005b, p. 19)

## **THE CHANGE PROCESS**

Based on the educational policy framework (Ministry of Education, 2005b) submitted in April 2005, the national political Cabinet approved the transition of the Teachers' Colleges to the new University of Trinidad and Tobago with a four-year bachelor's degree program in education. Educational reform became a major political issue in the nation. Several committees were formed to work on the transition process of teacher education, although their constitution was contested. For example, in meetings between the Ministry of Education and the Trinidad and Tobago Unified Teachers' Association (TTUTA), there was much controversy over the membership of a cabinet appointed committee working on this transition. While a working committee was formed by the university to develop a new curriculum for Teacher Education, the very individuals from the Teachers' Colleges and the Ministry of Education on this committee expressed uncertainties and concerns to me about the logistical, economic, temporal and spatial aspects of the change. Teacher educators expressed distrust toward both the Ministry of Education and the University of Trinidad and Tobago because they received no information about the changes taking place. The teachers and teacher educators I worked with on this committee saw this lack of information as a secret conspiratorial process of change, although, I believe, it was also due to confusion and the lack of an organized plan for change at the highest levels of the two government ministries involved. I found it difficult to make any progress creating a new program for teacher education in committee meetings where members were more concerned with their employment status than curriculum issues.

### **Obstacles to change**

Aside from the inevitable reluctance to changing the status quo, and the problematic lack of any accreditation body responsible for approving teacher education programs and certifying public school teachers, there were several obstacles to this major change in the teacher education system in Trinidad and Tobago. In a domain as public and political as education, the media portrayed views of academic, political, and lay people, and was particularly influenced by the strong opposition of the teachers' union (TTUTA). Another important factor affecting the quality of the education system, common to almost all countries but more acute in developing countries, was the general economic situation and lack of resources for education, which accounts for some of the weakness of the education system in Trinidad and Tobago. I describe the three main obstacles to this process of change as traditions within society, an underlying neo-colonialist mentality, and political circumstances.

### **Traditions and norms**

One of the biggest obstacles to change was accepted traditions and norms within society. Some of these norms exist due to economic and political realities that would

be difficult to change. Some are vestiges of an evolving education system that has come a long way in a relatively short post-colonial period, yet still has a long way to go to reach “developed status by the year 2020” (Ministry of Education, 2005a, p. 17).

**Status of teachers.** Public school teachers do not enjoy a high social or economic status in Trinidad and Tobago. This is also the case in many other Caribbean islands (Brown, 1992; Hall & Marrett, 1996; Warrican, 2009). Particularly primary teachers, who begin working as untrained teachers simply by paying a nominal fee to be registered as a teacher (GRTT, 2008) eventually obtaining two years of in-service preparation, remain at a much lower wage rate and status than secondary teachers, who also begin teaching pedagogically untrained but with a bachelor’s degree in a content area. The idea of offering a four-year Bachelor of Education degree for both primary and secondary teachers, without requiring secondary teachers to have another undergraduate degree, was unacceptable to the lay people and education experts I spoke with. Although assistant teachers are apparently in probationary positions to be mentored, in reality, the principals are powerless to discipline recalcitrant teachers at any level due to the bureaucratic constraints of the centralized authority of the Ministry of Education (Brown & Conrad, 2007). In 1997, 1,646 (about 23%) of primary teachers were untrained (Ministry of Education, 2003, p.6). Percentages of untrained primary teachers have been even higher in other countries in the region, such as Belize (47% in 1996) or Dominica (54% in 1996) (Jennings, 2001). In Trinidad & Tobago, there was consensus among all stakeholders involved to provide the opportunity for pedagogical training for all remaining untrained teachers, and to require pre-service training for future new teachers, but the long-standing tradition of allowing untrained teachers to work in schools in significant numbers could not be immediately reversed. In the Caribbean region, the obstacles of planning and implementation continue to be significant, and the need for well-qualified teachers and administrators is pressing (King, 2009).

**Scholarly culture.** Teacher educators explained that in the Teachers’ Colleges, aside from hours spent in traditional lectures, there was very little expectation of reading and research by students. When conceptualizing change, most committee members had the goal of spreading out the existing two-year curriculum over three years, and were not convinced of the necessity of a four-year program. According to teachers and teacher educators I worked with, the lack of a scholarly culture of enquiry and research is not unique to the Teachers’ Colleges, but is common to the public school system and other educational institutions. For example, in the library of a Teachers’ College, inquiring about academic journals, I was only shown a small section of magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Newsweek* with sporadic issues, the most recent dating about five years back. When asked if the library still receives these magazines regularly, the librarian explained that in Trinidad one does not actually receive very many issues because of theft. There were no academic journals and no computers functioning online in this library. This lack of resources demonstrates that little funding had been allotted to update the library resources of this college. The dated materials used by the teacher educators (mostly from the 1970s) may have been partially due to

the difficulty of obtaining current resources. Teacher educators explained that students are not expected to buy textbooks for courses because they are too expensive.

These limited resources in Teachers' Colleges are only one example of the broader issue of a lack of scholarly culture. In general, traditional pedagogical methods have been dominant, such as the memorization of notes with no opportunities for critical inquiry and teacher-centred teaching based on exams, and the lack of participation and low levels of social inclusion skills by teachers do little to improve the situation of underachievement (A. Layne, Jules, Kutnick, & C. Layne, 2008). A teacher-centred approach with copious notes for memorization limits opportunities for student-initiated questions, so that the development of critical thinking skills is seriously reduced (Jennings, 2001). There is a vicious cycle of students being unprepared to enter secondary school, and teachers being unprepared to teach basic literacy skills that students have not previously acquired (Warrican, 2009). As Jennings candidly observes:

The trainee teachers themselves were taught in school by teachers who saw themselves as knowledge givers. Because they were never imbued with a spirit of self-directed learning, they expected their college lecturers to continue in like vein. Furthermore, even trained teachers report a perception amongst their students that, if they are not giving notes, they are not really 'teaching'. This is something that has been in the system for so long that it has become embedded in the culture. Similar observations have been made in other developing countries. (Jennings, 2001, p. 124)

This lack of scholarly culture is entrenched in didactic practices of teacher dominance and student passivity. A teaching and learning tradition that is not supportive of student participation and inquiry has become culturally embedded, and has "a resilience that is almost independent of changes in government, major curricular reforms or even changes in teacher training" (King, 1989, p. 45, cited in Jennings, 2001). Jennings states that

As long as policy makers continue to perceive problems in education as purely a teacher training issue, without addressing the more fundamental causes of the problem, which are invariably rooted in the economic, social and cultural fabric of the society, then attempts by teachers' colleges to bring about reform will have little effect. (Jennings, 2001, p. 132)

**Part-time studies.** Another economic reality that has fostered a tradition making it difficult to accept this new four-year Bachelor of Education degree is that of part-time studies. Apart from the wealthy elite, people in Trinidad and Tobago who have finished secondary school cannot afford to study full-time without earning an income. Due to the nature of the labour market, the culture of part-time student jobs or summer student jobs does not exist as it does in North America. The norm is to work full-time and study part-time in the evenings, leaving very little time for reading and research outside of the evening hours spent in class. Although university tuition is covered by Government Assistance for Tuition Expenses (GATE), and there are no

costly textbooks to buy, it is still inconceivable for most adult Trinbagonians to study full-time. Inadequate economic resources, a limited supply of trained teachers, and constraints on the possibility of full-time teacher training are serious issues also in several other Caribbean countries (Hall & Marrett, 1996).

The economic circumstances and accepted traditions in society such as part-time study, a lack of scholarly culture, a two-year teacher training curriculum, the tradition of hiring untrained teachers, and the low status of teachers in Trinidad and Tobago all foster an attitude of resistance to dramatic changes in the system of teacher education. Another major obstacle to this change process is the residual neo-colonialist mentality pervasive at all levels of society.

### **Neo-colonialism**

Although Trinidad and Tobago has been politically independent since 1962, the education system retains many colonialist structures, particularly in its centralized hierarchy (Brown & Conrad, 2007). British curriculum Ordinary Level and Advanced Level exams from Cambridge are still the only entry path to university studies in Trinidad. While there is a Caribbean equivalent of Cambridge Ordinary Levels called Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and an Advanced Levels equivalent called Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), these Cambridge exams or their Caribbean counterparts heavily affect the secondary school curriculum in Trinidad and Tobago, as courses are taught almost exclusively to prepare students for these exams. The results of neo-colonialism are evident in this society living under the effects of a foreign colonialist culture without fully realizing the far-reaching details that influence so many aspects of their societal structure. A lingering dependency on a colonialist system is central to neo-colonialism, defined as “economic and social relations of dependency and control” (Lomba, 1998, p. 6). A major intellectual response to neo-colonialism is the school of postcolonialism, developed by theorists such as Fanon, Memmi, Said, Spivak, and Bhabha. Postcolonial theory challenges the legacies of colonialism and creates a space and a voice for the subaltern (Spivak, 1985); those colonized people “in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality” (Fanon, 1967, p. 18); people who are made to see themselves as *other* (Fanon, 1965). Postcolonial theory is a politics and a philosophy of activism contesting disparity, and a conceptual reorganization of perspectives of knowledge (Young, 2003). In his postcolonial critique on education in Trinidad, London (2003) calls for a reconsideration of assumed histories and structures. This theoretical approach is helpful in analyzing the obstacles to change in the education system in Trinidad and Tobago, as the long-reaching influences and lingering effects of a foreign, colonial system are not being widely recognized and openly challenged in the current process of educational reform.

**Failure rates.** The success rates in the British curriculum exams are unfortunately extremely low, and the results of the previously mentioned Secondary Entrance Assessment exams are also disturbingly low, fluctuating between 22 and 28% of

students scoring below 30% on the test (Ministry of Education, 2005c). Aside from these finishing results from primary school, even the first years of school seem to be wrought with failure for many students in Trinidad and Tobago. Results of the National Test instituted for Standards 1 and 3 (primary grades 1 and 3) showed a below benchmark performance (failure) rate of 60-70% (Ministry of Education, 2005c). There is widespread lament about the extremely high failure rates at primary and secondary common exams, but the blame is usually placed on the students, their dysfunctional family structures, incompetent or irresponsible teachers, or the under-funded education system.

Daily we are confronted by newspaper reports about the deteriorating standards of performance at both primary and secondary levels of the school system. Increases in repetition rates, especially at the primary level, the low level of achievement of a significant number of children at the SEA exams at the primary level and consequently a large cohort of children entering secondary school totally unprepared, low levels of achievement at the secondary level and the increase in school violence continues to worry all citizens. This has raised questions about the commitment and competence of teachers and consequently their preparation for teaching. (Ministry of Education, 2005b, p. 42)

Since the formal education system began as a colonialist endeavour, a precedent has been established which is hard to break. The only norm that people conceptualize is the one they have always known, whether it is suitable or not. However, another Ministry of Education document does recognize the negative effects of neo-colonialism: "This situation is compounded in a society in which vestiges of neo-colonialism continue to plague the traditional educational system, and its psychological consequences manifest themselves in perennial failures amongst disenfranchised segments of the population" (Ministry of Education, 2005a, p. 18). It is important to note here that although failure rates within this system are extremely high, the education system is still successful as seen in the adult literacy rate in Trinidad (98.0%), which compares favorably with the rate of developed countries such as Australia, Canada and the U.S. (99%) (United Nations Development Programme (2011).

**Exclusivity.** One inevitable facet of neo-colonialism is exclusivity, and the educational system in Trinidad and Tobago is exclusive in several ways. A very low percentage of students succeed in this system, which is, in itself, evidence of the exclusivity of a system precluding the failure of the majority. Although successful students are not reaping the benefits of exclusive private schools, the quality of the public schools they attend is significantly superior to the majority of public schools. About three-quarters of the public schools in Trinidad and Tobago are government assisted, managed by religious denominations but given financial assistance by the state, meaning that the government pays the teachers' salaries and 75% of capital costs (Ministry of Education, 2003, p. 3). These assisted schools have the right to select their students based on their own criteria, thus allowing the best of them to choose the best students. Prestige schools maintain their superior results on the common exams by admitting

only the students with the most potential to succeed; in primary schools based on the socioeconomic level of their families, and in secondary schools based on the students' results on the common Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) exams. Although there are some other criteria to fulfill, such as the religious affiliation of the students, the elite prestige schools continue to perpetuate their excellent standards through exclusive entry requirements (Rambhajan, 2007). Families are strongly encouraged to give donations to such schools, therefore increasing their existing advantages by providing them with better resources.

Another aspect of the exclusivity of the school system is the curriculum adopted throughout the system. True to the pedagogical wisdom of the colonial epoch, a behaviouralist approach is endorsed, focusing on rote-learning, memorization, and regurgitation of *the right answers* on high stakes, formal final examinations. The curriculum remains rigidly subject-centered rather than student-centered, as teaching to exams is the norm and, indeed, the necessity in such a competitive, hierarchical system (Spence, 2007; Rambhajan, 2007). Similar concerns are important issues in other Caribbean nations as well (Donnelly, 2006). Although this type of approach is still used with great success in many parts of the world, the Ministry of Education in Trinidad & Tobago has the goal of a student-centered, collaborative, dynamic curriculum for all students (Ministry of Education, 2005a). The exclusivity of the public school system, in general, relates directly to the system of teacher education, not only, because the teachers are preparing to teach within such a system, but also, because the very curriculum of teacher education follows the same philosophy. In the two Teachers' Colleges, teacher candidates followed fourteen courses simultaneously, with 45-minute classes back to back five days a week, allowing little time for the culture of scholarship previously discussed. The common exams come down from the Ministry of Education, complete with invigilators who come to the Teachers College to number desks, run stop-watches, and supervise the exams. As there is virtually no focus on academic research, classroom action-research, or even current academic texts in teacher education, it is unlikely that change will occur naturally from within the existing system.

**Race/class/gender divisions.** Neo-colonialist settings can also encompass a complex intersection of race, class and gender relations. Although many Trinbagonians are quick to self-identify as *we people*, discounting racism as a nonexistent problem in their islands, there are clearly barriers between ethnic neighbourhoods not easily crossed in terms of socioeconomic opportunities. While many ignore issues of individual and systemic racism, others acknowledge it as a growing problem (Boodan, 2007). Apparently, it would be nearly impossible to abolish the segregated, exclusionary government assisted denominational schools, because most citizens would not allow their children to go to school with people of other ethnic and religious origins (Garcia, personal communication, July 13, 2006). Major organizations in the country, including social, religious, educational and political institutions, have one dominant ethnic representation.



In terms of class divisions, the society is blatantly divided along socioeconomic boundaries. Wealthy neighbourhoods are gated and guarded, and appear as a stark contrast to the poor neighborhoods surrounding them. Although there are expensive sports cars in the streets, and apartments in the best neighbourhoods of Port of Spain rent for over U.S. \$ 2,000 per month, many families do not have refrigeration or indoor plumbing and 21% of the citizens live below the poverty line (Central Intelligence Agency, 2011). Among the lowest of 15 income groups categorized by the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago, 43% of households have running water, 60% have electricity, and 47% have a fridge (Central Statistical Office, 2001b).

Although gender equity is an issue in any country, socioeconomic and cultural effects of neo-colonialism allow deeply entrenched gender roles to persist. There is much concern expressed for the male students who achieve significantly less academically than female students (De Lisle, Smith & Jules, 2005; Matroo, 2007b; Richards, 2007; Jankie, 2007), with theories of the lack of male representation among school teachers often cited as the source of this problem. The image of Caribbean male identity portrayed in the music media is one of violence and blatant discrimination against women. The absence of the father in the family unit is a unique factor of Caribbean society (Gregory, 2006). Single female headed households account for one third of all households in Trinidad and Tobago, and poverty in these female-headed households is more widespread (Ministry of Social Development, 2005). Although women head one third of households in the Caribbean, many are in service occupations in the lowest income brackets, and are heavily affected by the social stratification of Caribbean society (Gregory, 2006). The Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago statistics from the 2000 census indicate that 38.4% of the labour force was female, while 61.6% was male, and that female unemployment was 14.4% in 2001 while male unemployment was 8.6% (Central Statistical Office, 2001a). United Nations statistics reveal similar unequal rates of economic participation in 2008, with employment for males at 77.6%, and for females at 54.7% (United Nations Statistics Division, 2011).

In her study on Afro-Caribbean women academics, Gregory (2006) cites examples of sexism and classism in academia in Jamaica and Trinidad, including barriers to career advancement and disrespect for feminist research. In the University of Trinidad and Tobago in 2006, professors and administrators were almost exclusively male, while secretarial staff was exclusively female. Sexual harassment was an issue of concern in this work environment, and sexist practices went unquestioned as cultural norms. Tacit conceptions in regards to gender equity, racism, classism, colonialist curricula, exclusive schools and inappropriate exams from a colonial legacy have become “inscribed in and through culture...[and] have become naturalized in everyday social life” (Trueba & McLaren, 2000, p. 54) within the norms of citizens’ beliefs, attitudes and practices in Trinidad and Tobago.

### **Political obstacles**

Along with cultural traditions and neo-colonialist attitudes, a third set of obstacles to change in the education system is of a political nature. Although there was a great

desire and consensus for educational reform from all stakeholders, the political expediency demanded by the People's National Movement government was, in many ways, an obstacle to what could have been a more reasonable pace for these changes to occur. Political will alone is not sufficient to effectively drive a change process that is by nature complex and multi-faceted. While budget restrictions were not an issue of concern, the lack of qualified individuals appointed to specific tasks was a challenge. People at the highest administrative levels in the Ministry of Education and the University of Trinidad and Tobago expected staff, who were already overworked in their fulltime positions, to create a curriculum for a new university program and oversee the complicated logistical transition. Government officials who mandated the transition from one ministry to another, under the auspices of the new university, apparently did not realize either the scope of the task or the contestation to be faced from the union, media, and the University of the West Indies.

As previously mentioned, the teachers' union was the major political force opposing this change process. Their political motivation in preventing a new teacher education program at the University of Trinidad and Tobago was obvious due to their loss of membership and power. Media coverage focused on teacher educator and teacher protests, as well as the lack of transparency in the transition process. Another political factor enabling the media and union to find fault with the process was the disorganization and lack of communication between the two government ministries involved: the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTT). Both of these organizations were unwilling or unable to release information on such important details as the employment status of the teacher educators, the financial support of teacher candidates sent to follow the new Bachelor of Education program, the destiny of the cohort of teacher candidates half-way through their two-year teacher preparation, or the future fate of the existing physical locations of the Teachers' Colleges. Finally, the other university in Trinidad and Tobago, the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies (UWI), was another political obstacle to the new teacher education program at the University of Trinidad and Tobago. Their current diploma and degree programs were threatened with the appearance of this new program. In fact, professors and administrators from the UWI were strikingly absent in the process of creating a new teacher education program.

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

The summer of 2006 was the beginning of a complex, contested process of change for teacher education in Trinidad and Tobago. The first cohort of the new program did begin in autumn 2006, although the four-year curriculum was not entirely finalized when it began. The teachers' union was concerned about policies for upgrading the in-service teachers and teacher educators, as there are pressing needs for professional development among these educators, in regards to daily attitudes and behaviours such as student/teacher relationships and curriculum delivery. The teacher educators who staffed the former Teachers' Colleges began teaching the new UTT four-year program in the same buildings as the former Teachers' Colleges, and there was some concern

that, along with keeping the same physical teaching spaces, they retained much of the old curriculum.

Reflecting back on the path of this change process, it is perhaps not surprising that so many of the curricular, pedagogical, and logistical details remain unresolved. The complex and contested change process involves too many politically charged issues to be resolved quickly and easily. Although a national consensus for change in the education system was evident throughout Trinidadian society, from the political will of the highest levels of government, the education professionals within the various bodies of the Ministry of Education, the more progressive component of teacher educators and public school teachers, and even among the general public as evidenced anecdotally and in newspaper articles, the logistics of agreeing on the nature of the changes and implementing them remain highly complicated. The way forward, as suggested by the National Advisory Committee in Education (2004), posits teacher education as a “catalyst for change that contributes to preparing teachers to transform society into one that respects diversity, promotes social justice, democratic values and aesthetic principles and in so doing contributes to the shaping of policy on education” (p. 17). On the path toward changing teacher education and eventually the whole education system to become more inclusive, the current national political will for change will have to be accompanied by other changes in aspects of Trinidadian society such as norms and traditions, vestiges of neo-colonialism, and political obstacles.

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