

## **At Crossroads**

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Disrupted and reshaped by a global pandemic, education, like many other social institutions, is at a crossroads. The Covid-19 crisis has exposed the fault lines of normal times, and educators confront systemic inequities of which education is often a part (rather than a solution). Those who have access to material resource, educational support, and political capital are not just less affected by the global crisis than their peers; they have even thrived academically and professionally during the pandemic. My family and I belong in the group whose privileges were more pronounced during the pandemic, in spite of all the panic and a few inconveniences. Public education is unlikely to see greater investment in the public interest; instead, increasing privatization within public institutions is likely going to be one of the responses. More of the same.

Student demographics are going to change, both among domestic students and international students, as academic institutions respond to the impacts of the pandemic. Their needs and challenges are likely to require different approaches than formalized systems are used to. Are we willing and ready to change and adapt to mobilize our energies and privileges as educators for our students and for society? As “work life” balance and boundaries blur, so will the nature of work and the value of educational preparation for professional careers for our students. Resistance to change will clash again with shiny new fads in response to change for its own sake. How are we going to respond to the conflicting impulses left behind

by the pandemic (behind in the sense that most countries will be vaccinated by the end of this year)? What new agenda of research, approaches in pedagogy, and commitments to service will we adopt and advance—based on the lessons we learned from the global crisis?

In the community outside, we are witnessing a global moral crisis where rich countries are vaccinating their citizens while other countries with less resources are waiting their uncertain turn as dead bodies pile up. There is no serious collaborative global effort to curb a mutated virus that might render the current vaccines ineffective; even the pragmatic possibility of vaccinated countries having to start at square one does not seem to prompt sufficient action beyond the nationalistic frame of mind. Even a pandemic that killed millions in an era of vast scientific advancements and information access did not make the world consider adding layers to the way the human world is organized.

And it is amidst a global moral crisis that we are working as educators, much more aware and sensitive that we too are implicated in the organization of the human world, whether it is of education where we work or life and community where we are divided by rich and poor countries, by borders that are irrelevant to the cause of saving human lives against a deadly virus. How are we going to pursue a more ethical/moral, just, and equitable practices within academe?

The authors in this issue have grappled with the above condition and questions as they focus on a range of important topics about higher education. Writing from Turkey, Ghana, Nepal, India, the US, and the UK, they share perspectives from their contexts and disciplines. With their contribution, this journal has grown further in reach and rigor.

As editor, I am grateful to the many reviewers who have selflessly supported the journal by providing thoughtful critique and suggestions to the authors. Members of the editorial team, as well as advisors, also deserve much respect for their time and dedication (in spite of the tough times).

I hope that readers will find one or more articles in this issue worth a careful read. I hope you will also share the articles and consider submitting your own manuscript for future issues. Thank you!