

The book cover features a vibrant, multi-layered illustration. At the top, a light blue sky with white clouds contains the title text. Below this, a horizontal line separates the sky from a landscape. The landscape includes a green field in the foreground, a colorful city skyline in the middle ground, and a large, stylized figure of a person's head on the right. From the mouth of this figure, a black road with white dashed lines winds through a colorful, abstract landscape of houses and buildings. The entire cover is framed by blue and red triangular corners with white dashed lines.

# **PARTNERING** for **TRANSFORMATION** in **SCHOOLS** and **BEYOND**

**= Community-Engaged Learning =**  
**in Peace, Social Justice, and**  
**Human Rights Education**

**Sandra Sirota, Amy Argenal,**  
**and Maria Hantzopoulos, Editors**

## "Steelpanning" Decolonial Peace Education

### Grassroots Peacebuilding Through Restorative Circles

*Hakim Mohandas Amani Williams, Kyle Bushell,  
LaToya Williams-Mohammed, Sheirané Beckles,  
Carlene Donald, and Kerrie-Ann Gayadeen*

*Pan is making music wherever you go and whatever you find. So you see the whole business of ingenuity, of imagination, of software to make the system work, is central to the civilization. (Best, 2001, p. 19)*

*Summon the already vibrantly extant life-force to indefatigably co-make every world, until every entity is free. (Williams, H. M. A., 2025)*

#### INTRODUCTION

The steelpan is a musical instrument that was gifted to this world by formerly enslaved Africans in Trinidad & Tobago (TT). Successive colonial administrations outlawed linguistic, spiritual, and cultural practices of the enslaved, and yet our people persisted. Jamaican poet Olive Senior (1994), writes with a quiet yet hopeful defiance in her poem "Meditation on Yellow": "I want to feel: you cannot tear my song from my throat, you cannot erase the memory of my story, you cannot catch my rhythm." Despite the many attempts to brutally extract the very life force from enslaved Africans, we held onto our ingenuity and imagination. Using discarded oil drums, our people made and eventually fine-tuned a musical instrument. This is the spirit we wish to harness in our work in TT: that despite the legacies of colonialism, slavery, and indentureship, we continue to cocreate.

In this chapter, we are using steelpan as a verb, similarly to Christopher Small's (1999) notion of "musicking," which characterizes music as a verb

"Steelpanning" Decoloni

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We, the authors, : a coordinator at Faith a professor, reflecting on ourselves and those professor) has facilitat shops invite participat how to conduct one th object called a talking respond to prompts th We believe that RCs, a ate a much-needed spe pasts, pursue healing, ciety where everyone ti community-engaged p which we steelpan for t

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TT has one of the (about 44 per 100,000) Unsurprisingly, there is a system is partially a col exams are placed in sec these prestige schools h: are religiously affiliated; tional independence, pr mits them to reserve 20

and not a noun, as a relational activity in which meanings of our world are cocreated and coarticulated. We therefore construct "steelpanning" as the persistence to create something—even under duress—from that which has been denigrated and discarded, to grow beauty out of seemingly barren "hideousness," to channel the many rhythms of our ancestors to rehumanize each other, from the bottom up.

We, the authors, are a parent, a teacher and her two former students, a coordinator at Faith Foundation (a nongovernmental organization), and a professor, reflecting on the impact of restorative circle (RC) workshops on ourselves and those around us. Hakim (the U.S.-based/Trinidadian-born professor) has facilitated RC workshops for several years in TT; the workshops invite participants to experience an RC as well as over time learn how to conduct one themselves. In RCs, participants sit in a circle, use an object called a talking piece (which operates like one mic-one voice), and respond to prompts that the facilitator (called a Circle Keeper) has created. We believe that RCs, and the philosophies and energy behind them, can create a much-needed space in TT where Trinbagonians<sup>1</sup> can reflect on their pasts, pursue healing, and reimagine ways in which TT can become a society where everyone thrives. We characterize our use of RCs in grassroots community-engaged peacebuilding as decolonial peace education (DPE), which we steelpan for our context.

#### TT CONTEXT

Trinidad and Tobago—two small islands off the coast of Venezuela—became independent in 1962 and a republic in 1976. Both islands have had different Indigenous and colonial histories. This nation of 1.3 million people is incredibly diverse ethnically, culturally, and religiously. There are descendants from the First peoples, African enslaved persons, Indian and Chinese indentured laborers, Syrians and Lebanese (who were fleeing religious persecution from Greater Syria), and Europeans. TT, because of its oil and natural gas-based economy, is considered a high-income developing country, yet about a fifth of the population is considered poor or vulnerable to poverty (World Bank, 2024).

TT has one of the highest per capita homicide rates in the world (about 44 per 100,000), linked often to the drug trade and gang warfare. Unsurprisingly, there is considerable violence in schools. The dual education system is partially a colonial product. Top-performing students on national exams are placed in secondary schools that are called "prestige schools"; these prestige schools have significant social capital because many of them are religiously affiliated; were built in the colonial era; and just before national independence, protected their status via the Concordat,<sup>2</sup> which permits them to reserve 20 percent of their student placements for whomever

## CHAPTER 4

Kyle Bushell,  
Irané Beckles,  
Ann Gayadeen

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they choose. (See Williams 2013, 2016a, 2017 for more detail on this form of structural violence in the TT educational system and how it maintains a class-stratified society.) Many other students are placed in underresourced schools, which were created in the postindependence era to accommodate rapid educational expansion.

### Why Restorative Circles in Trinidad and Tobago: Grounded Methodological Approaches

Hakim was born and raised in Laventille, a historically socioeconomically disadvantaged community. For his doctoral studies, he conducted research in 2009/2010 at one of the underresourced schools (SSS) to document and analyze the structural violence of the educational system. It is out of this research that he decided to offer RC workshops for students, teachers, parents, and community workers (not all of whom were/are connected to each other, since Hakim has worked with different communities). Hakim met Kerrie-Ann, Sheirané, and Kyle at SSS and LaToya and Carlene at an NGO (Faith Foundation).

The data that inform this chapter come mainly from reflections that each of us (the coauthors) created. Hakim has fine-tuned the RC workshops (and data collection from them) over a period of several years (spanning 2016 to 2019). Hakim's work is now including culturally affirming methodologies (Nakhid et al., 2023); such methodologies, by centering local ways of knowing and being because of their intrinsic value, are not measured against Eurocentric coloniality. Hakim believes that the way forward (for his research) is through building with Trinbagonians at the grassroots level.

### A HYBRIDIZED THEORY FOR A HYBRIDIZED PEOPLE

Trinbagonians are a very diverse people, with Indigenous, African, Indian, Syrian, Lebanese, Chinese, and European influences. The theoretical framework behind DPE therefore represents us, as a people, well. The framework pulls together theories (explained below) related to critical peace education, decoloniality, dynamical systems, restorative practices, and maroonage, and it builds on prior work: Williams's (2016a) systemic restorative praxis as a model for social change, constituted by three R's: reflect, repair, and reenvision; Fontan's (2012) writing on the need to decolonize peace and conflict studies; Williams's (2021, 2023) and Williams and Bermeo's (2020) sketching of decolonial peace education, and decolonial human rights and peace education, respectively.

- *Critical peace education*, beyond focusing on eliminating all forms of violence and creating systems and environments in which every-

- one can thrive, rec their lives and thos
- *Decoloniality* critic to modernity (also "lingering colonial healthy alternatives
- *Dynamical systems* systems, characteriz self-organization; it in an interconnected "Positive attractors negative feedback l
- *Restorative practic* communities; they dialogue, active list (Valandra & Hokš
- *Maroons* are enslav the Americas, and and forests (Price, disobedience, disru

Taken together as a theor education, which is a tool to facilitate resubjectificat being treated as an object three R's described above lence, critical capacity bui (in community) alternativ

DPE is all at once a the ue, and a form of activism. peace education, decolonia maroonage, DPE centers ti tors + healing + freedom d which encourages oppress "dream" of bold new futi and community healing, processing of trauma, mo boldly envisioning more ju

### Individual Author Reflectio

In preparation for our pre Association (IPRA) confe chapter, we responded to

one can thrive, recognizes that people have agency to transform their lives and those around them (Bajaj & Brantmeier, 2011).

- *Decoloniality* critiques the ways in which coloniality is linked to modernity (also see Williams, 2016b, for a theorization of "lingering colonialities") and pushes us to "delink" and imagine healthy alternatives (Mignolo, 2011).
- *Dynamical systems theory* is used to describe behavior of complex systems, characterized by nonlinearity, patterns, feedback loops, and self-organization; it encourages us to look at things systemically and in an interconnected way and not just by their constitutive parts. "Positive attractors" can be created over time to blunt or undo negative feedback loops (Ricigliano, 2011; Vallacher et al., 2010).
- *Restorative practices*, ages-old, existed in many Indigenous communities; they focus on power sharing, trust building, healing, dialogue, active listening, empowerment, and humanization (Valandra & Hokšila, 2020).
- *Maroons* are enslaved persons who fled plantation life, across the Americas, and built communities in mountaintops, swamps, and forests (Price, 1979). The spirit of maroonage is one of disobedience, disruption, and reimagination.

Taken together as a theoretical framework, it constitutes decolonial peace education, which is a tool for formerly/neo colonized peoples and their allies to facilitate resubjectification (i.e., becoming more fully human instead of being treated as an object or property) (Williams, 2023). DPE is about the three R's described above: rehistoricizing current structural forms of violence, critical capacity building, empowerment and healing, and visualizing (in community) alternative imaginaries.

DPE is all at once a theory, a tool for both analysis and intervention, a value, and a form of activism. Based on the combined theories related to critical peace education, decoloniality, dynamical systems, restorative practices, and maroonage, DPE centers transformative agency + delinking + positive attractors + healing + freedom dreaming. (See Kelley, 2004, for freedom dreaming, which encourages oppressed Black peoples to build community and together "dream" of bold new futures.) DPE facilitates intrapersonal, interpersonal, and community healing, acknowledging and embracing ancestral wisdom, processing of trauma, movement toward mind-body-spirit wholeness, and boldly envisioning more just and sustainable futures (Williams 2023, 2021).

#### Individual Author Reflections

In preparation for our presentation at the 29th International Peace Research Association (IPRA) conference in TT (Williams et al., 2023) and for this chapter, we responded to the following prompts:

- How did the RC workshops impact/benefit us?
- How did we use that skill/knowledge?
- How can this kind of work be used across TT?

Hakim was the cochair for the IPRA 2023 conference; it was the first time it was held in the Caribbean region, and the panel presentation that we planned was the first time that members from different RC workshop groups had ever assembled. Below are edited excerpts from our responses to the aforementioned prompts.

*Sheirané* (former student at SSS):

I was in the training as part of a young leaders group. We got one-on-one and special training on how to help us and other students deal with conflict, how to help and not escalate. It was very hands-on. We went on field trips, which was really good because many of us never went to those places in TT, such as to waterfalls, hiking, the bird sanctuary, long bus rides, and seeing different statues. We went out to dinner, and got to experience things you wouldn't usually get in your family.

The program opened my mind a lot. I don't think the same anymore. I was very shy and not outspoken; I didn't express my opinion because I didn't think it mattered. I used to just adjust to suit whatever situations come my way and whatever opinion I had, I kept it to myself. I had believed that once people around me are happy then it's fine with me, but I wasn't acknowledging myself at all. I realize that I was killing myself, not allowing myself to breathe. I got to understand personal space, being able to voice opinions, being expressive but in a polite way, that you don't always have to act out. That humbled me a lot. I am very calm in certain situations. I admit that I do act out as an adult, but in a respectful way but with descriptive words. As an adult in the working world, no matter who my supervisor is, I humble myself then I ask lots of questions. In doing so, I know how to operate with this individual, instead of being blunt and them having an idea about me that might not be correct.

People around me are now very comfortable. Most spaces I go, people find me approachable, friendly, and my energy is kind of warm; you can come vent to me. I like peace and quiet and my own time. I don't like conflicts. I do get irritable so I tend to calm myself and try to help the situation to calm down so I can be able to contribute toward it, or I would leave it, then add my views after. We had learned that in the restorative circle, it's like a space where everyone shares their opinion, then we could discuss a solution to a problem. If someone is really upset, give people breathing lessons, deep breath in, deep breath out, help them to be calm. Most people are not welcoming and don't care about those things. Not everyone is open-minded and open to change. This will educate you and help you through life with your family at home and personally.

This program opened my cal. I overthink with my emot dies down, I do share my tho has literally changed my life c a lot of compromising; it's jus perspectives because not ev I use it almost every day. Sor mind I have now because of t

I do reflections; I reflec have done it differently so t this program is still with me digging deep and finding yo live for betterment. You leav will definitely do the circle v voice, but kids have rights. I them, you will raise monster tity. You want your kids to be my niece for a few years. I t her to stand up to bullies, n and diligent and pays attent presence leave a mark. I did I let my light shine and reali like to give off.

In conversations, I will e built in a day. The country i primary school, we can impr time they get to secondary s Ras Shorty I say in his song selor, and make these work building where parents can ent development opportunit info is at their fingertips, so t It will always be with you.

*Kyle* (former student at SS 2023):

Sir, I appreciate that a l of all you get me to open u l'm improving myself every teaching other people to lo because of you sir; I will ma

On my journey to be a y riences I will forever apprec on the journey. We went or

This program opened my mind to so many things especially like being logical. I overthink with my emotions. I might not share in the moment, but when it dies down, I do share my thoughts about how you made me feel. This program has literally changed my life completely, because even in relationships, there is a lot of compromising; it's just like a journey. I learn to take different angles and perspectives because not everyone is the same. The skill set was very helpful. I use it almost every day. Sometimes I even use silence. I respect the peace of mind I have now because of this program.

I do reflections; I reflect on what happened yesterday and how I could have done it differently so the next day I address it and make changes. So this program is still with me. It's so positive. It's not toxic. This is about you digging deep and finding yourself: your greater you! Every day you strive to live for betterment. You leave a legacy, a mark. It's also a generational thing; I will definitely do the circle with my kids. People used to say kids don't have a voice, but kids have rights. Lots of things affect kids and if you don't address them, you will raise monsters, who are insensitive, who don't know their identity. You want your kids to be able to come to you to talk about anything. I had my niece for a few years. I took her in; she was like a little me. I encouraged her to stand up to bullies, not loudly but to question them. She is outspoken and diligent and pays attention. She doh' miss nothing! I more or less let my presence leave a mark. I didn't train others but that's how I influence others. I let my light shine and realize that this person is different. That's the effect I like to give off.

In conversations, I will elaborate and discuss certain things. Rome wasn't built in a day. The country is going through a lot but if in each school, from primary school, we can improve as a society. So many kids are damaged by the time they get to secondary school, so we should start at a tender age like how Ras Shorty I say in his song. We should have someone like a guidance counselor, and make these workshops a mandatory part of the curriculum, have a building where parents can come to them and do classes after school. Different development opportunities. This generation of kids are into technology so info is at their fingertips, so teach them young. The training will grow with you. It will always be with you.

Kyle (former student at SSS) (a combination of responses from 2020 and 2023):

Sir, I appreciate that a lot: you have been a great teacher to us and most of all you get me to open up for the first time in my life; it was unbelievable. I'm improving myself every day, challenging myself to be a better person, and teaching other people to look at things differently. And all this was possible because of you sir; I will make you proud sir.

On my journey to be a young leader, it was one of the most amazing experiences I will forever appreciate. I met some amazing people and school mates on the journey. We went on adventures around our country, it was awesome;

we all learnt some things about our country that we didn't ever know of and for that it was such a memorable experience for us.

The leadership program really speaks of everything that young people go through in their lives, even the things that we struggle with as youths. The program helped me to forgive, to have faith and to trust. There are things I have struggled with for years and for that I'm so grateful and proud of myself. Everyone in the program spoke of their pain and with doing so we learned more about each other and that brought us closer as young people.

I have used my skills to speak wisdom into youth about how we are on the wrong path and how we struggle with painful past experiences because I can relate and help with the wisdom that was passed on to me. I guess we can say I teach younger people about mental health and push them to stand up for themselves in any situation.

The leadership program can transform Trinidad because a lot of our young people are lost and have no one to help them on the right path. I imagine this program touching every youth in Trinidad; the country will be a better place for all.

*LaToya* (parent in the Faith Foundation program):

Dr. Hakim taught me about restorative circles and their techniques and how proactive it can be in building communication skills. There is a significant change in the way I communicate with others, and I really listen and pay attention to a person's opinion and feelings. I have used the skills to help with disagreements in my group by asking what happened and allowing everyone to say how they feel on the matter and how we can best move on. During activities, we spoke about how things were affecting us, whether personally or environmentally. All of this fosters connectivity in the group as we see each other four days per week. I see it as a form of restorative therapy with my group.

Restorative circles can be used to help with some of the crimes that's taking place in my country. A simple disagreement has led to a lot of people being murdered. Today's generation doesn't know about proper communication and problem-solving skills. No one takes the time to listen, and when things get bad, they resort to violence. I think restorative circles should be taught in schools, and if we start from the ground up, we will have people equipped with the tools needed for communication and problem solving.

*Carlene* (program manager at Faith Foundation):

These are my personal reflections on the benefits of restorative circles:

1. They helped me to frequently check in with myself.
2. The ability to understand myself makes it easier to manage unpleasant situations.

"Steelpanning" Decolonial

3. I've understood and not react.

4. I've learned to

5. I've learned to clearly that people do

6. I forgive easily

7. I redeem love

8. I get along with

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*Kerrie-Ann* (teacher at

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I really felt like this Education to help with of restorative circles in the approach toward circles provide a space to share perspectives, and circle, participants are promoting inclusivity develop crucial social growth and success in group that we started safe environment that to address conflicts and not only gain a deeper sense of belonging widely contribute to build students with the tools out their lives.

3. I've understood the importance of attentively listening, to respond and not react.
4. I've learned to foster open communication; being direct but with respect.
5. I've learned to accept what is and to move on without malice. I see clearly that people do just what they have learned.
6. I forgive easily.
7. I redeem love and gratitude each day.
8. I get along with people no matter their character or behavior.

I see steelpan and music as a way of RC as well; you have to listen and play when it's your time to, and at the end, you have a harmonious sound.

*Kerrie-Ann* (teacher at SSS who worked with Sheirané and Kyle):

I remember the day I first met Dr. Hakim Williams. I had recently started teaching at SSS. On our introduction, I was excited to have deeper conversations with him, to learn more about his research and ideas. The passion he felt for his planned research was very evident.

Our time together with the students created such a unique bond between us and the students. I saw the kids go from shy to outspoken and better equipped to handle situations that they would have previously shied away from. The entire experience gave them a new outlook on what it was to be heard and appreciated and to listen and communicate better. Even in my personal life with my own kids, I actively try to use the techniques taught by Hakim and I can see the impact at home. Sometimes in the midst of me being upset my daughter would say "mom, you need to let us be calm and speak so we can hear each other."

I really felt like this is a program that should be adopted by the Ministry of Education to help with all the conflicts and miscommunication. The integration of restorative circles into a secondary school setting marks a significant shift in the approach toward conflict resolution and community building. Restorative circles provide a space that allows students to engage in meaningful dialogue, share perspectives, and foster empathy among their peers. By sitting in a circle, participants are encouraged to listen attentively and speak respectfully, promoting inclusivity and ensuring equal participation. As a result, students develop crucial social and emotional skills that are essential for their personal growth and success in future endeavors; I have seen this firsthand with the group that we started this study with. Moreover, restorative circles create a safe environment that encourages honesty and vulnerability, enabling students to address conflicts and challenges collaboratively. Through this process, they not only gain a deeper understanding of themselves but also create a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Restorative circles undoubtedly contribute to building a positive and supportive school climate, equipping students with the tools necessary for building peaceful relationships throughout their lives.

*Hakim* (researcher who worked with students, teachers, parents, and staff at SSS and Faith Foundation):

I was born and raised in Trinidad, in a socioeconomically depressed community called Laventille. I grew up afraid of violence, and poverty perhaps added to that fear. I focused intensely on education and seeking leadership opportunities. It was the exposure to that that helped me realize the immense potential I had within me. I have seen, via my research in TT, that there are many youths who are written off by the educational system and the society at large; the only difference between lots of those youths and myself are exposure and opportunity.

I wanted to not only offer RC workshops to students, teachers, parents and community leaders, but to offer youth leadership workshops, to inspire them with my life story, to demonstrate that they too had agency to transform their lives. Simply put, I wanted them to feel human, within a society that too often views many youths as monsters, or lazy, or stupid.

I received training in RCs in New York City over a weekend many years ago and decided that I wanted to offer them to youths, especially those who grew up in areas similar to Laventille. I have been incredibly blessed to work with Sheirané, Kyle, Carlene, LaToya, Kerrie-Ann and others. TT society is indeed beset by lots of crime and financial uncertainty, and yet these awesome collaborators are attempting in their own ways to change the landscape, to change how we relate to each other, not as an "other" but as a being worthy of dignity and respect. There is a lot of trauma in TT and the RCs provide a space for people to unpack their trauma (if they so choose) and to begin a journey of healing. I do truly believe that when we pursue healing, when we begin to unlearn unhealthy ways of being in the world, that we are then able to see the world differently; RCs help us to care more deeply for self and for others. And it is those micro-revolutions (Williams, 2025) that can slowly create ripple effects.

### STEELPANNING PEACE

*Peace is therefore understood within liberal frameworks that clearly influenced our way of seeing peacebuilding and international cooperation for development. It is a colonial hegemony, which tends to erase the endogenous process of non-violent conflict resolution. (Avoine & Durán, 2018, p. 68)*

Cuban-born scholar Antonio Benítez-Rojo (1997) argues that because the Caribbean is at once "supersyncretic" (many mixtures) and "hyper-fragmented" (many divisions), it is polyrhythmic, and possesses its "own textuality," and therefore cannot be analyzed through a Western lens. Steelpanning decolonial peace education involves reclaiming that which has

been denigrated, by : world.

In using RCs, w selves, to help us co (above) are varied by personal shifts; findi edging other people's problem-solving skill honesty and vulnerz ments. These may se ciety, we are attempt are at the base of any is by using our gifts use decolonial theor ing, understanding t the current interpret

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been denigrated, by also using our own ways of knowing and being in the world.

In using RCs, we are able to reclaim forgotten parts of our ancestral selves, to help us cocreate a peaceful TT. The themes from our reflections (above) are varied but intentionally interconnected: healing; intra- and interpersonal shifts; finding voice/agency; forgiveness; helping others; acknowledging other people's humanity; deep listening to others; communication and problem-solving skills; disrupting hierarchies between teacher and student; honesty and vulnerability; sense of belonging; and creating safe environments. These may seem like simple things, but in a neocolonially violent society, we are attempting to humanize ourselves and each other; relationships are at the base of any kind of systemic work to build peace. Steelpanning DPE is by using our gifts and skills to experiment and innovate, over time. "We use decolonial theory that considers daily actions as the basis of peacebuilding, understanding that 'peaces' are multiple and require reflection beyond the current interpretation of 'liberal peace'" (Avoine & Durán, 2018, p. 63).

While some research does show that small interventions are sometimes insufficient in making systemic and sustainable change (Ricigliano, 2012), we persist with the understanding that decolonial work has to be allowed time to take root and grow. These "daily actions" that we engage in (with the tools that we have been developing) are akin to what Scott (1989; 1990) calls everyday resistance or infrapolitics, and what Williams (2025) calls decolonial microrevolutions. (See Lilja & Vinthagen [2018] for a typology of resistances, and Vinthagen and Johansson [2013] for a theorization of resistance studies.)

In detailing infrapolitics, Scott (1990) states:

The circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible, as we have seen, is in large part by design—a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power. (p. 183)

This grassroots-based, community-engaged peacebuilding as decolonial peace education can be considered a prefigurative praxis (Williams et al., 2024); in other words, building and implementing in the present some elements of more just and sustainable tomorrows.

We are working at the grassroots level but with an eye on the systemic (national, regional, and international; see Kamatsiko [2015] for a discussion of the need for vertical integration among all these layers and a case study on how it can be better coordinated). In keeping the grassroots and the systemic in mind, we engage in what Freire (1970) calls praxis: a combination of critical reflection and action to create a feedback loop. For example, after Hakim visits TT to offer the RC workshops, we usually stay in touch (via WhatsApp) in case we need resources or advice when some of us conduct our RCs here in TT; Hakim then returns a year later, and we discuss the

work we have done, answer any questions that might have emerged, and receive “refresher” workshops, because we are continually learning.

We are focusing on the grassroots level because it is too often dismissed in peacebuilding. Peacebuilding scholar Séverine Autesserre (2021) argues that both top-down and bottom-up are important but that the bottom-up needs more investment since people on the ground often know what they want. And what we want is a Trinbagonian society free from all forms of violence, and also a place where everyone does thrive. This co-liberatory, community-engaged, grassroots-level work is our steelpanning DPE; it is not static but dynamic and evolving. Think of it as the Trinbagonian body politic, with its polyrhythms, musicking our own peace.

*Un-uprootable*  
 With  
 Your  
 Rigid  
 Neck  
 Craned  
 Upward,  
 You  
 Saw  
 Not,  
 Familiar  
 Flora.

buT  
 intimately underfoot,

is an unending sprawl of roots,  
 centuries intricate.

we've been digging so deep, from the very beginning,  
 that we are now,  
 un-uprootable.

the lush era of the underground never left us.  
 (Williams, H. M. A., 2024)

## Participatory Liberatory Ed

Melissa Ar

*The PAR project gave me a chance to actually join and participate in the investment because not only did I also found out that I was about the things that are critical to community college students.*

The quotation above illustrates action research (PAR) process and issues of educational equity. The quotation illustrates a process of the PAR process: building on her own learning and leadership action on social issues. In this research as both a critical research for liberatory education, students as critical research.

We are three scholar-dissertation research who are at the University of California and Multicultural Education in San Francisco. We share a commitment to pedagogies (Duncan-Andrad) of liberatory education—that is, teaching that challenges structural inequalities and material change (Freire, 1970). We chose to conduct PAR with our students and our deans and lectively with them.