EDUCATION
TRANSFORMATION
IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

A DISCOURSE OF HOPE

EDITED BY ILHAM NASSER

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ADVANCING EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES
BOOK SERIES

Editor Ilham Nasser

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PREFACE

THE ADVANCING EDUCATION IN MUSLIM Societies (AEMS) is an initiative of the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). For the past few years, the IIIT has invested in empirical research, to add to many years of theoretical scholarship and to contribute to the agenda of reform in Muslim societies. Along with that, two additional methods of dissemination came to life: (1) The *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies* and (2) The AEMS book series with a focus on in-depth investigations, reflections, and analysis of educational themes pertinent to Muslim societies and communities.

AEMS is an aspiration and a long-term goal of the IIIT.[1] It is part of a larger effort to reform education in general and to share the lessons learned with others, especially in the Global South, or what international agencies call "lower income countries" (Adamson et al., 2016). AEMS also responds to the global reform effort that goes against the current approach to education as an "ideological package" of reform ideas (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002). This includes, for example, the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) of privatization, standardized testing, accountability, and school choice.

The GERM's rationale is based on economic investments in the private and corporate sectors of education, and the resulting reforms are typically driven by top-down policies and imports from developed countries (Adamson et al., 2016). For example, Chile imported the neoliberal (free market) model of education developed in the United States to improve education through competition and school choice (Castro-Hidalgo & Gomez-Alvarez, 2016). Such scenarios, however, have often been criticized for how school choice disproportionately benefits wealthier communities, as opposed to those living in poverty.[2]

A closer historical examination of reform efforts' timelines, specific to Muslim societies, is important but is beyond the scope of this book. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the contributions of many Muslim scholars, such as those in Egypt and other countries who called for reform of education in general and more specifically Islamic education (Gesink, 2006). The further examination of the impact of the GERM on Muslim societies and the ways international aid is determined is also an important component of reform that may provide the historical, geopolitical, and social contexts for advancing education.

More specifically to the organization and its efforts to contribute to the dialogue, the IIIT has been both an agent to achieve and promote the goals of reform and a leading academic and research institution charged with renewing Islamic thought through the integration of knowledge (IOK) in the social sciences. The IIIT made an intentional refocus on the AEMS as a core framework that guides the theoretical, empirical, and organizational aspects of the institute. The initiative closes the circle of more than thirty-five years of theoretical work to the applied research and thereby shares the knowledge widely and acquires a voice in the discussion on reform initiatives and the IOK. AEMS comes as a "theoretical discourse as well as to generate data-driven research that represents the highest levels of intellectual integrity" (Alwani & Nasser, 2019, p. 30). The book series comes as a critical component to advance this vision.

RATIONALE

Reform of education in its broadest sense requires forces coming together to improve education systems as well as educational policies and leadership. It also necessitates long-term planning and flexible designs, including the involvement of multiple stakeholders to impact policies, curriculum, and teaching practices. With full awareness of the enormous tasks that a reform agenda entails, AEMS views education as a platform for addressing the status quo and the larger geopolitical environments to explore ways in which education can play a role in infusing values and empowering individuals and groups to pursue those as part of their personal development. Hope, in this case, is a research construct as well as a value that grounds the empirical research plans of AEMS and contributes to its future orientation.

Finally, AEMS contributes to educational thinking that is authentic and culturally appropriate. In contexts such as Muslim societies of today, where

religion is central to the state, a thorough and sensitive approach is critical. For example, schooling typically includes Islamic studies as a distinct subject within or as an integrated part of school curriculum, indicating its centrality to education and importance to local communities and what they deem important (Nasser et al., 2019). Thus, it is as important to equip Muslim youths with tools and skills founded in faith and religion to respond to modern pressures. This edited book contributes to the dialogue on ways to answer the question of how to prepare youth in Muslim communities for the twenty-first century. This is done by providing examples of and a closer look at educational initiatives that have promise in their authenticity and focus on change. It serves a critical role in making stakeholders such as teachers, families, and policymakers aware of the whole-person approach by enriching the brain as well as the spirit and instilling hope into the teaching and learning spaces of educational institutions.

The goals of AEMS are what inspired this book. The following are the main objectives of the initiative.

- Contribute to the IOK intellectual discourse and its interface with academic disciplines in Muslim societies' educational systems. The initial interface with academic disciplines and educational systems will be through the adoption of the Universal Quranic Values approach.
- Provide evidence-based knowledge on advancing education in Muslim societies. Eventually, it will be expanded into other possible ways to interface the IOK's theoretical framework with the empirical aspects of AEMS.
- Recommend policies that engage governments, nongovernmental organizations, and universities, among others, in ways to transform education systems and advance people's well-being so they can participate proactively in building their societies and a civilization of peace and prosperity for all.
- Advocate for a developmental approach that is relevant to Muslim youths, schools, universities, families, and communities at large.
- Contribute to preparing a new generation of Muslim intellectuals, educators, and academics for research and teaching careers engaged with AEMS's major initiatives.
- Forge a universal intellectual discourse on the IOK and its Universal Quranic Values as a paradigm (Alwani & Nasser, 2019, p. 32).

A BOOK ON HOPE IN EDUCATION

This edited book responds in many ways to the need to shift the educational discourse in Muslim societies from a deficit to a strength-based orientation where youth and their prior knowledge, emotions, and faith are integrated. Learning from authentic experiences and innovations that are grounded in local realities may serve Muslim societies well and provide new and future knowledge to a larger audience of educational experts, policymakers, and government officials, among others. This is especially relevant to counter the heavy reliance on measuring impact based on rankings and performance on international assessments, where only a few of the Muslim majority societies make it. Even those who do, however, are usually at the bottom of the ranking. For example, on an overall best countries rating list, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Saudi Arabia appeared on the list of best countries in overall education (2019), but they only ranked 23, 31, and 32, respectively.[3] Furthermore, these assessments provide a partial evaluation of educational attainment because of their focus on achievement and not necessarily on the education of the whole person.

This volume contributes to a larger body of knowledge gathered on innovative and unique educational programs and research from various contexts around the globe. Quite a few books address Islamic education with a focus on Islamic sources of thought, theory, and practice, whereas this book expands on and provides an in-depth examination from multiple educational lenses utilizing Islamic education, in some cases, and teaching and learning contexts in pre-K through higher education in others. The book examines initiatives relevant to and inspired by local academics and practitioners in the field of education. It invites the larger education community to engage in dialogue and collaborative critical analysis of the future of education to serve the next generations around the globe.

As the first volume in this series, this book achieves the following goals:

1. Highlight asset/strength-based educational approaches by presenting initiatives in Muslim contexts where religion and religious education are used to instill hope.
2. Identify indicators and conditions needed to implement successful educational interventions and document those as they are expressed in curriculum, pedagogy, policy, and educational settings (the formal and nonformal).
3. Examine system-wide case studies that promote promising agendas with a focus on future generations.

4. Provide resources for educators looking for innovative methods
   to reform education.
5. Bring out the voices of researchers in Muslim contexts, especially
   educators.

This book argues for a hopeful education that is transformative, active, and innovative. It does not preach for hope in its most naive way but rather is a call to action and a critical examination of what works and what does not, only to change the status quo. Of course, this process is best guided by influential others in a person's life.

This book is divided into five parts and ten chapters, with contributors providing diverse perspectives and insights based on fields of expertise to reach a wide audience in the education world and beyond. The first part lays out the framework and the relevant theories and research on the topic of hope in education. The first chapter presents a general overview of the literature on hope and provides a framework for transformative learning to examine and operationalize hope in different educational contexts. The chapter explores the multiple definitions of hope and clarifies that hope in this edited volume is not defined in only one way or by one methodology and discipline. It also highlights that hope is not about optimism but is about adopting an orientation that is grounded in proactive living and achieving one's best potential.

Chapter 2, by Nuraan Davids, addresses Muslim education and ways it can encompass hope as one of the messages of Islam. The author takes us into an exploration of the South African context and Muslim schools to show how hope may be a vehicle for a better trajectory in education. Drawing on the seminal ideas espoused by Freire and hooks, the author argues that if Muslim education is to address divisions and marginalization both within and beyond its communities, then such an education cannot be remiss of hopefulness. To this end, the chapter offers a reimagined account of Muslim education—one that looks at hope as transcending human ruptures and dissonances, and that advances a cosmopolitan, human connection and resonance.

The second part of the book highlights higher-education contexts of learning. The four chapters (3–6) provide insights, questions, and reflections from different social and cultural contexts and environments. In chapter 3, Mualla Selçuk describes her work with student-teachers in a religious education program in Turkey using the multiple names of God to build their core values and beliefs and to find meaning in humanity. She focuses on one name of God: Al-Fattah (الفتاح) to guide the students into self-reflections based on her conceptual clarity model (CCM) and connects that with the aspiration for

hope. Based on this pedagogical experiment, Selçuk asserts that hope requires three qualities: flexibility, imagination, and innovation. She ends with reiterating the messages of hope to the future generation of learners who can create change through social responsibility and a deeper understanding of the names of Allah (God) and their faith. One of the main messages of chapter 3 is that hope is a disposition and a stance, and it is necessary for Muslim education. Hope empowers teachers of religious education to be messengers and decision-makers, elevating the role of teachers to that of educators who impact the lives of their communities.

Chapter 4 discusses programs and case studies in higher education focused on students' learning journeys and, more specifically, on those of Muslim women and the empowerment of their gender identities in a Malaysian context. The chapter points out the hegemony of globalization, fear of change, and the function of working for hope as a solution. Suhailah Hussien highlights the importance of transformative pedagogy as a methodology to initiate dialogue among students on issues of identity, gender, and culture. She led students through in-depth discussions as female and Muslim educators at a university in Malaysia.

Chapters 5 and 6 highlight programs focused on reform through teachers' professional development. They draw from two case studies in Palestine and Egypt focusing on in-service teachers: one that was led by the government of Egypt and the other by an international nongovernmental organization in Palestine. Both chapters make recommendations on innovative methods and models that may ensure quality and take into consideration the local contexts. Both chapters also highlight the utilization of research and program evaluations as ways to document impact and provide evidence-based solutions to educational problems such as teacher qualifications and professional growth.

Chapter 5 is a participatory empirical study evaluating a model of professional development in Palestine (the West Bank and Gaza). It looks closely at a program targeting early-childhood teachers who went through intensive professional development training that lasted for a complete academic year. The study examines teachers' scores on a classroom climate checklist to explore the classroom environments of teachers who participated in the professional development program. The authors of this chapter recommend methods to empower teachers as agents of change and hope. They also describe a field-tested program for professional development—an issue that has been disputed, especially its effectiveness at transforming the teaching profession and empowering teachers.

Chapter 6 discusses teacher development efforts and professional growth programs taking a top-down approach from Egypt. It examines the schooling culture as a factor in school reform and highlights the importance of teachers' buy-in, input, and understanding of reform agenda (when reform is imposed), while also planning learning that shows promise and inspires transformation. The author documents teachers' responses to one of the reform programs grounded in the implementation of the multiple intelligences approach to learning and teachers' understanding of this approach as it is implemented in traditional learning contexts.

The fourth part of the book includes three chapters that take a close look at hope in schooling in K–12 environments. Chapter 7 sets the stage in K–12 by presenting a model that invites young students to think about the future in hopeful and positive ways. The model presented may be adapted to Islamic schooling contexts and applies to various social and political contexts. The chapter presents a model of hope education that engages students in an appreciative inquiry cycle to promote a future orientation that is positive and might be a catalyst for change in many societies and contexts.

Chapters 8 and 9 examine Islamic schools in the United States. Chapter 8 provides a close look at Islamic living, spaces, and schooling in North America and juxtaposes them with the modern secular lives of students in the United States. In-depth interviews present the views of teachers, administrators, and parents on the balancing act of Islamic education and secular education, and the interface of both with technology as it relates to students and their learning. Chapter 9 takes a closer look at a specific curriculum of an Islamic school and the ways these educators implement a transformative and hopeful curriculum and pedagogy models. The chapter takes a close look at materials, routines, and pedagogy, and how these incorporate hope and universal values. The uniqueness of this chapter is that it focuses on religious education as a model for student-centered pedagogy and religious identity formation for Muslim students in the United States.

In the fifth and final part, authors Shelley Wong and Tyrone Pits contribute final reflections as two Christian scholars of color in the United States. In chapter 10, they use an interfaith lens to find commonalities and lessons learned among the various contributions of this volume. They provide a critical analysis and synthesis to this edited volume utilizing their experiences and scholastic work to identify the powers at play in recent realities (whether educational or political) as well as identifying alliances and forces of hope for Muslims and non-Muslims. The chapter reviews the ideas and underpinning theories of the hope literature in a way that summarizes the messages of the edited volume.

The authors bring theoretical concepts as well as the research on hope to the forefront of this book in a way that appeals to a large audience of educators, policymakers, and concerned citizens of the world. It leaves us with further research questions and ideas necessary to deepen the understanding of the discourse of hope as it relates to Muslim societies and the Global South.

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NOTES

1. For further information on AEMS, see www.iiit.org.

2. Excerpts of this section were published in "Mapping the Terrain of Education," *Report of IIIT*, 2018–19.

3. Overall best countries rating, USNews.com, https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/overall-rankings.

PART I

EDUCATION, HOPE, AND
MUSLIM SOCIETIES

ONE

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ADVANCING EDUCATION IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES THROUGH A DISCOURSE OF HOPE

An Introduction

ILHAM NASSER

A young and proud fourteen-year-old Arab teenager sat in front of me while her mind and eyes were focused elsewhere. She had spent more than an hour glued to her phone without interacting with anyone. I looked at her and attempted to start a conversation, hoping to get her to open up and speak about her career goals in life. "What are your aspirations for the future?" I asked. She looked up and replied, "To immigrate and live in the West!" I asked why, and she responded firmly, "To have a future of happiness."

INTRODUCTION

In significantly distressing situations, virtues such as dignity and creativity are often quickly crushed. A people's positive and shared visions of themselves and the future of their society become lost, victim to the weight of the reality around them. This depressing situation marks life as experienced by many Muslim people and Muslim societies across the world. As a result, today we are witnessing that without a sound and unifying vision, nations "cast off restraint" and focus on survival, with cultures and societies simply existing to "survive and not thrive" (Teeffelen, 2007, p. 17). This is especially true since 2020, when the whole world was hit with the COVID-19 pandemic. The necessity of staying in survival mode feeds into the psyche of Muslim youth, especially when a general feeling of skepticism and helplessness hangs heavily in the air, in addition to a perceived collective sense of hopelessness and disappointment. In some cases, Muslim youth see immigration as the only way out, a means to escape the bitter realities of their local existence and the wider socioeconomic conditions of their societies. As they search for a better life and

3

future, their despair-based perspective becomes outwardly centered, with a focus not on investing in their community but on escaping its grip, as they see it, and leaving it all behind. Skalli (2004) claims that Muslim youth are "in revolt against their own sense of powerlessness in the face of all the global forces that threaten their religious and cultural identity" (pp. 43–44). The globalization of our world and the hegemony of global trends pose even greater challenges for Muslim youth trying to adapt and remain hopeful. Countering this discourse of negativity and powerlessness is the hope education offers—the inspiration behind this edited volume. It is believed that hope can serve as an antidote to despair, functioning as a strong, psychologically protective factor for adolescents facing adverse conditions (Valle et al., 2006).

Thus, in the face of economic, political, health, and educational declines, it is vital that Muslim societies adopt agendas of hope—proactive and innovative, sweeping widely across the many sectors of society—to break the cycle of depression that lack of progress brings and to galvanize energy for finding viable solutions. Education, in this context, becomes an ideal public forum for instilling hope, rallying people, and challenging uncertainty. Education is often considered a safe space to promote and legitimize certain policies and approaches, and hope is both a concept and a measure that can be easily promoted with no one raising objections against it. Translating hope into practical steps and programs in the educational sphere is, however, a much harder enterprise and, in many cases, one too challenging to operationalize. A key reason for this is that educational transformation is a long-term process and rarely shows immediate gains, and where quick fixes usually do not work (Lewis & Young, 2015). The Egyptian public educational system (see chapter 6 on Egypt reform efforts) is a case in point; evidence indicates that despite significant funding by international agencies, investment has not paid off, and the situation has become so dire that many students resort to private tutors for their education. Those who cannot afford private instruction suffer education of substandard quality (El-Bilawi & Nasser, 2017), and income disparity is thus reflected in education disparity. This has been an ongoing struggle in many Muslim societies.

What is true of Egypt is also true of other Muslim societies. Despite financial investments by international development agencies, educational systems have not seen adequate and prolonged funding in countries that need it most. Pakistan, for example, receives a large amount of aid for infrastructure and curriculum reform, but it is not adequate to the task. The net impact on the Pakistani educational system is so small that people cannot see these programs offering hope for success (International Crisis Group, 2014). According to Ball

(2008), this may be due in some cases to the narrowing down of the goals of education. He concludes that "the social and economic purposes of education have been collapsed into a single, overriding emphasis on policymaking for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social and spiritual purposes of education" (pp. 11–12). In the current political and economic environments in Muslim societies such as in the Middle East, it seems fitting to pay attention to education as a vehicle to advance hope and to encourage a positive future orientation. It is also equally important to change the public discourse from one of helplessness and despair to one of future-oriented growth and activity. Improving early-childhood education and increasing enrollment for girls and young women are some areas of learning where Muslim societies have made progress, but these cases are not well documented and have failed to produce measurable long-term gains. assessing effective educational initiatives and frameworks and analyzing reasons behind their success may provide a catalyst for positive educational outcomes and better targeted funding. Investing in education and highlighting promising initiatives may also send out a message of hope and encouragement for future generations as well as for educators.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) emphasize education as a major achievable aspiration. This should motivate governments and funding organizations to prioritize education and use it as a mechanism for hopeful change that is embedded in advocacy for human dignity, social cohesion, and justice. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) tried to operationalize these goals by implementing a "Happy Schools" curriculum that sought to address the well-being of learners as a top agenda item in global policy (UNESCO, 2016, p. 10). The authors of the UNESCO report suggest that well-being correlates positively with better learning by sharing evidence from the work of The International Positive Education Network (IPEN, https://www.ipen-network.com/). We also have seen examples of governments paying attention to and promoting the well-being of citizens, as when the United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched a ministry of happiness and positivity[1] and Bhutan declared itself to be a happy country.[2]

Socioemotional education has been increasingly recognized as a promoter of well-being, especially as a critical component in achieving academic success (Durlak et al., 2011; Elias & Arnold, 2006) and has been linked to success in higher education (Chemers et al., 2001) as well as in professional lives (Heckman & Kautz, 2012). According to Chemers et al. (2001), hope, considered to be an indicator of wellbeing, highly correlates with academic self-efficacy and academic achievement in college students. Unfortunately, in the last decade

and in many contexts, schools have been placing greater emphasis on literacy and math skills as the bases for curricula and assessment (McMurrer, 2008), using standardized testing in elementary and secondary education (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Labaree, 2014), while ignoring the overall well-being of students and promoting initiatives in socioemotional development. This is despite a growing body of empirical research that suggests that socioemotional education improves grades and overall avoidance of unsafe behaviors by equipping students with skills that help them navigate their school experiences holistically (Durlak et al., 2011; Zins et al., 2004). Hope, as discussed in this book, is an important catalyst for an integrated education system that encourages well-being as an important element of overall educational achievement and productivity.

Based on a review of previous literature and multiple definitions of the term, we define *hope* as an orientation to pursue innovation and critical thinking as well as to promote creativity and initiative. This definition is not inclusive, but it provides a starting point, as one of the objectives of this volume is to present and examine diverse views on hope and to present multidisciplinary approaches to its understanding and implementation. Nevertheless, we attempt to give hope more weight in transformation because we recognize its potential and the need for its critical inclusion in education in Muslim societies. Of course, this approach may differ from the way others examine hope, and as such a brief review of representative definitions may explain our choices. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, we use the term *hope* in everyday speech to refer to "1) trust or reliance; 2) desire accompanied with expectation of obtaining what is desired or belief that it is obtainable" (Benton, 1971, p. 1089). Hope has meaning beyond academics, including cultural, spiritual, social, and philosophical orientations and perspectives (Krafft, 2018). In some approaches, there is the tendency to use hope to glorify the past and/or to accept the unknown while also expressing optimism. Weingarten (2010) argues that hope is not about an ideal concept or perfection; rather, it encompasses the dreams, visions, wishes, and values of people. In other words, hope is grounded and real, and it focuses on what is possible. It also has deep cultural connotations and can be a catalyst for bringing people together in a shared space. Following the tragic events of 9/11 and the subsequent war on terror in the United States, for example, the message communicated widely and increasingly was one of hope for a better future to counteract the mood of fear and anxiety. In troubling times, it is important to keep open the space of interconnectedness, a place where hope lies (see chapter 10).

Others, such as Zournazi (2002), define hope as the pursuit of societal justice and as a virtue that has implications in politics, economies, and societies.

Freire (1997) and Snyder et al. (2005) describe hope as an expectation for things to change for the better, and Simon (1992) reiterates this further by emphasizing that "hope is a commitment to responsibility" (p. 4). According to Freire, humans seek hope in order not to despair; it is hope that acts as the "necessary impetus in the context of our unfinishedness" (1972, p. 64,). In this volume, multiple authors refer to Freire's work, aware of the complex nature of hope and its multifaceted aspects, while using Freire's methods of reflection and dialogue to advance transformation. Most notable is that they articulate a definition of hope that is multidimensional, active, and future oriented as well as inclusive because hope should not be limited to one view, one orientation, and one faith. On the contrary, the objective in this introduction to hope literature and approaches is to widen definitions, examine scholarship, and provide space for exploration of an Islamic teaching perspective as well as an interfaith and international one.

Historically, the concept of hope has been interwoven with classical traditions and cultural rituals, some rooted in Greek mythology, such as the story of Pandora's box, in which hope is the only comfort remaining for humanity once the box has been opened and all its evils have been released into the world (as told by Snyder & Lopez [2007]). Leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi have found hope in their belief in the intrinsic goodness of human nature. Gandhi's message, his pedagogy of hope, was to educate people on alternatives to violence, to offer them real possibilities for transformation. He hoped that they would respond positively (Grey, 2007, p. 15). In some religious doctrines, such as in Christianity, hope is a "divine virtue, with God as the first source and the final target of hope" (Krafft, 2018, p. 3).

In Islam, hope is rooted in doing good deeds and finding meaning beyond a materialistic life. It has cognitive as well as affective meanings that are embedded in the belief in spiritual transcendence, which is also true of other major religions (Krafft, chapter 7). The Quran is filled with phrases that acknowledge human experiences and the ease of falling into despair. Both the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad invite people to put their faith in God and rely on Him for relief when facing hardship and challenges. Verse 2:155 of the Quran illustrates the idea very clearly, stating: "Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits of your toil but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere."[3] Hope is to be sought throughout life, with people placing their trust in God and living their lives on a moral and ethical basis, as good human beings.

Several of the authors in this volume elaborate more on the Islamic roots of hope and explain that the Arabic translation of hope in religious scripts is *raja*

(الرجاء), which is an important inward element behind worship in Islam. It refers to hope that proceeds from God consciousness, *taqwa*, and the love of God. The word *raja* appears frequently in the Quran and the Sunnah, and *raja* is considered one of the greatest manifestations of the heart. Although amal is the Arabic word for hope, *raja* is understood to capture a wider range of meanings. *Raja* is often defined as "opposite to despair" (see chapters 2, 3, and 4). It is an idea that very clearly adds the intentional and purposeful dimensions to hope. This also illustrates that hope (*amal*) is static, while wishing and working toward a better future (*Raja*) is more proactive and long term (in Arabic, a formal difference between the two terms is that a*mal* can be plural, i.e., *amaal*).

Hope as a research construct is complex and operationalized in multiple ways. Major theorists in positive psychology such as Snyder et al. (1991) have defined hope as having positive expectations toward the future. Additionally, it involves "having positive expectations, anchored by future goals, and possessing perceived 'will' and 'ways' for reaching these goals, even when faced with obstacles" (Alverson, 2014, p. 10). Snyder et al. (2002) also defined hope as a dynamic motivational and cognitive power toward reaching one's goals. Snyder (2002) came up with a widely used theory of hope and measures of hope, which stemmed from his definition of the concept as "the sum of perceived capabilities to produce routes to desired goals, along with the perceived motivation to use those routes" (p. 8). According to Snyder's theory, there are two elements to hope: a will and a way. Snyder (1995) refers to these as a pathway and agency and asserts that both are needed to produce high hope. Snyder's theory emphasizes the importance of cognitive as well as motivational engagements to achieve hope. These predictions have been studied and are well documented in a variety of contexts, and according to Feldman and Kubota (2015), Snyder's is among the most thoroughly researched and conceptualized theories on hope.

Krafft (chapter 7), however, argues that Snyder's theory has limitations because of its emphasis on the cognitive and motivational aspects of hope. As Krafft states: "In Snyder's theory hope is conceptualized as an iterative cognitive process. The emotional and the existential-transcendental dimensions play a subordinate or no role at all" (chapter 7). Further, along with other authors in this volume (see chapters 2–6), Krafft emphasizes the importance of empowerment and action in hope and a future orientation to education. This similar understanding stems from different roots, such as in-depth reading and understanding of the Quranic message for transformation (chapters 3–4), or hope stemming from Islamic schooling (see chapters 8 and 9).

To attest to the complexity of the term, Webb (2012) claims that there are "twenty-six theories of hope and fifty-four definitions" (p. 398). When asked

what hope is, all will agree on its importance, but an array of disciplines will claim its definition, including psychology, philosophy, theology, and the cognitive sciences, to name a few. Webb suggests that "hope is best understood as a socially mediated human capacity with varying affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions" (p. 398). Webb (2012) outlines five modes of hope that are relevant not only to psychology, which is the focus of this volume, but to the philosophy and theology of hope. These are "patient, critical, sound, resolute, and transformative" modes (p. 398). Patient hope is future oriented and positive and appreciates the pathway to a better life and an unplanned objective, while critical hope is centered on a future that is unpredictable and new. According to Giroux (2001), critical hope is about moving forward with a future orientation and an eye for what is missing. In this case, the role of the educator is to open spaces for possibilities and to take responsibility "to show the way" (Webb, 2012, p. 404).

Sound hope is a mode of hope that is calculated and planned to avoid disappointments and too much risk. It is the focus on possible losses versus gains. Webb's fourth mode of hope (2012) is resolute hope. Resolute hope is self-regulated and oriented toward the achievement of goals through willpower and self-empowerment, a perspective that helps the educator level the hope playing field and foster high hope in students. This view is supported by the work of Snyder (2002), who highlights the importance of providing high-hope versus low-hope learning environments (p. 250) and the role teachers play to motivate high-hope students. According to Webb, the last mode is the transformative one, which goes beyond the individual setting goals and moves toward his changing reality to pursue hope. It is the advocacy and mobilization for a better way of being (see chapter 4 for more on transformative hope in higher education). Transformative hope is political and action-oriented. Freire's (1972) concept of *conscientization* is the discourse of transformative hope. It is the belief that we have the strength despite obstacles and hurdles to change the world and education (p. 81).

There are several constructs related to hope that are important for such a discourse. These include, for example, the willingness to learn and a sense of well-being (Lazarus, 2006). Dufrane and LeClair (1984) and Frank (1968) articulated the critical role of hope in instigating therapeutic change and other types of action. Snyder's work also brought attention to the importance of hope for constructs such as optimism and self-efficacy that are goal oriented and cognitive. Further, Snyder et al. (1991) suggested an important element of hope, which is the perception of successful agency to achieve one's goals. According to them, "the agency component refers to a sense of successful determination in meeting goals in the past, present, and future" (pp. 570–571).

The roles educators play in instilling a pedagogy of hope have been further elaborated by philosophers and transformative educators mentioned earlier. All agree, though, that awareness of the power mismatch between teachers and students is a first step toward teaching in a nonoppressive way, in which the teacher initiates and reciprocates in dialogue and criticality with the student. Students in this scenario come to realize their humanity and, as a result, become critical citizens with the potential to effect change in themselves and their own communities (hooks, 2003). According to hooks, the classroom context, when used creatively, may generate hope. The K–12 curricula, higher-education case studies, and pedagogy reflections described in this volume elaborate further on this process.

Tamashiro's (2018) transformative education model proposes that a stage of discomfort precedes transformation. The learner experiences a dilemma and engages in reflections and reconstructions to reach transformation, but this transformation cannot occur without hope. This volume attempts to disrupt and renew faith in education and its power to transform. Table 1.1 describes the typical process that may be applied in a learning situation.

The model ignites this willingness and ability to transform, but it is not a specific program. Rather, it intends to provide a framework in which to read this

Table 1.1. A Transformative Learning Process

Stage 1	**Disorienting dilemma:** A situation that perplexes a person and poses a situation that requires action. The classroom in schools or higher-education institutions can provide a safe environment to struggle with a dilemma.
Stage 2	**Questioning and deconstruction:** The way forward to addressing a dilemma must involve a process of questioning that will result in strengthening existing views and tendencies or replacing them with new ones, hence the deconstruction followed by the reframing and restructuring.
Stage 3	**Reframing and restructuring:** This is a reflective process with a mentor in a teaching and learning situation, such as is discussed in this volume.
Stage 4	**Shift in consciousness:** This is the beginning of forming a new way of thinking that is based on a strong foundation and in-depth contemplation.

Note. Adapted from Tamashiro, R. (2018). Planetary consciousness, witnessing the inhuman, and transformative learning: Insights from peace pilgrimage oral histories and autoethnographies. *Religions, 9*(5), 148.

volume. Various chapters introduce educational models for interacting with students to instill a positive future orientation among the next generations. After all, hope in schooling has been connected to academic achievement, life satisfaction, and flourishing. Hope flourishes in environments that are supportive and provide social relations that are positive (Eraslan-Capan, 2016), and the opposite is true regarding hopelessness. In Eraslan-Capan's study (2016), it was found that among university students, strong negative correlations existed between hopelessness and social connectedness and flourishing (p. 936). In addition, hope is suggested to mediate between a sense of purpose and life satisfaction (Bronk et al., 2009). This confirms Snyder's (2002) assertion that students who are high on hope will find multiple pathways to achieve their goals and be motivated to realize them. This is the place and these are the mechanisms whereby teachers and higher-education instructors can be intentional with their learners.

In Muslim societies, this approach to instilling hope has a grounding in Islamic teaching and verses, but it also has a basis in the cultural contexts and traditions of many Muslim majority societies, including those described in this volume. Contributing authors have expressed their own ways of addressing hope within various Muslim contexts utilizing writings from other religions and approaches, including those prevalent in critical Western literature. It is important to mention that the authors of this edited book are also not naive enough to think that "hope" is the only path to reform of education and the transformation of societies. The idea here is to examine hope as part of an integrated system considering diverse approaches and research findings in relation to the learning environment and the broader cultural context, to highlight what is hopeful in Muslim societies, and to discuss ways we can manage, coordinate, and further hope and foster what is in effect a critical factor for the well-being of Muslim youth and society.

At the time of the final editorial work on this volume, the whole world is experiencing unprecedented conditions of isolation and fear because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Millions of students are out of school, and economies around the world are struggling with high unemployment (United Nations, 2020). The situation in low-income communities and among ethnic minorities and refugees is alarming (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2020) and will require global campaigns and many years to repair. The world is in despair and chaos (the full impact of the pandemic is yet to be learned, including increased violence and discrimination against marginalized groups) and is desperately in need of mandates and an agenda for a hopeful future that is planned and systemic. This book is of tremendous value in

its ability to set this new agenda of transformation and better living for the future, partly because the work is multidimensional and multidisciplinary and appeals to a large audience. Further, hope in education is both contextualized and localized so it contains a global (or global to local) approach to education and a transformative agenda that stems from a close examination of theories, pedagogies, and philosophies. The chapters that follow describe programs, strategies, and case studies to expand on the ideas described and highlighted in this introduction.

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NOTES

1. "Happiness," the United Arab Emirates Government Portal, https://government.ae/en/about-the-uae/the-uae-government/government-of-future/happiness.

2. Andrew Buncombe, "Is Bhutan the Happiest Place in the World?" *Independent*, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/healthy-living/is-bhutan-the-happiest-place-in-the-world-6288053.html.

3. Several chapters in this edited volume elaborate on this.

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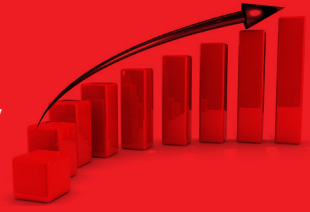
"This book not only questions current understandings of Muslim education but urges readers to (re)think more radically what it means to bring critical hope to societies."
—YUSEF WAGHID, Stellenbosch University

Hope is a complex concept—one academics use to accept the unknown while also expressing optimism. However, it can also be an action-oriented framework with measurable outcomes.

In *Education Transformation in Muslim Societies*, Muslim scholars from around the world offer a wealth of perspectives for incorporating hope in the education of students from kindergarten through university to stimulate change, dialogue, and transformation in their communities. For instance, though progress has been made in Muslim societies on early education and girls' enrollment, it is not well documented. By examining effective educational initiatives and analyzing how they work, educators, policymakers, and government officials can create a catalyst for positive educational reform and transformation.

Adopting strength-based educational discourse, contributors to *Education Transformation in Muslim Societies* reveal how critical the whole-person approach is for enriching the brain and the spirit and instilling hope back into the teaching and learning spaces of many Muslim societies and communities.

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