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Editorial: Leadership education for social responsibility

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Editorial on the Research Topic
Leadership education for social responsibility

"*Leadership education for social responsibility*"—This Research Topic of *Frontiers in Education* reimagines leadership practices, emphasizing non-traditional approaches that make leadership education more accessible and inclusive. It advocates for integrating diverse cultural frameworks and practices that reflect true leadership in a multicultural and multiethnic world. Scholars have pointed out that traditional models of leadership often overlook alternative forms of leadership, as well as the people through whom it manifests, including collaboration, interconnectedness, embodiment, cultural approaches, feminist perspectives, grassroots movements, and others (Fisher and Robbins, 2015; Gambrell, 2017; Taylor et al., 2015; Nieto-Valdivieso, 2022). These approaches, when addressed, are typically confined to specialized courses or training that remain inaccessible to many outside academic circles.

In contrast, this Research Topic proposes expanding our understanding of what defines an educator, learner, or learning environment. By doing so, we open new avenues for innovation in thought-leadership, teaching methods, community engagement, and practices that prioritize equity, diversity, and inclusion across societal domains. Our exploration centers on the social responsibility of leadership, emphasizing its broader impact and the need to move beyond conventional paradigms.

Leadership involves one having the ability to encourage, guide, and inspire others in achieving a goal or carrying out a mission. This concept is often viewed from a Western, traditional perspective. Leadership education programs (whether institutionalized or not) have usually focused on conventional ideas of leadership where one person guides or supports others. However, we propose a broader perspective. We believe that leadership education is not only a form of social responsibility for both those who practice and teach it but also an essential component that transcends sectors. In this broader context, leadership becomes a civic duty, contributing to the betterment of society as a whole.

Thus, this Research Topic of *Frontiers in Education* explores the evolving landscape of the social responsibility of leadership in contemporary society. This Research Topic brings together original works that challenge traditional models of leadership and proposes innovative, inclusive, and socially responsible frameworks for social responsibility of leadership practices in various sectors, cultures, ethnic groups, and organizations.

This Research Topic consists of the following themes:

1. **Professional learning communities that support underrepresented educators**: this article explores the role of professional learning communities (PLCs) in empowering educators from marginalized populations. It highlights how these communities can help

educators develop essential skills to foster problem-solving, promote discovery, and encourage knowledge construction among students. Contributors argue that PLCs offer a collaborative model that creates an educational climate rooted in shared, equitable learning experiences, where all voices are valued, and diverse perspectives are embraced.

2. **Models and frameworks for student academic access**: another key theme centers on challenges among minority students that impede both their academic excellence and career progression. A couple of articles examine how responsible ethical leadership and a critical relational approach in the curriculum can enhance students, fostering an environment where they can succeed and thrive.

3. **Educational programming and policymaking**: the third theme explores pedagogical methods, engagement, inclusion, and the empowerment of Black women in higher education. These articles highlight Afrocentric theories that provide pathways for overcoming barriers, regardless of their origins, and fostering leadership development in Black women.

Together, these themes provide a comprehensive view of how leadership, when practiced with an emphasis on social responsibility, can transform societies, organizations, and systems. The issue not only challenges existing paradigms but also proposes actionable strategies for developing educators and learners, in other words—leaders, who are committed to creating positive social impact.

Through a rich combination of theoretical insights and practical applications, this Research Topic contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic relationships between leadership, social responsibility, and societal and global change.

We would like to extend our deepest appreciation to all the contributing authors whose work is featured in this Research Topic of *Frontiers in Education*. Their dedication, research, and thoughtful insights have contributed to a meaningful dialogue on "*Leadership education for social responsibility*." Without their invaluable contributions, this Research Topic would not have been possible.

We also wish to express our gratitude to our distinguished guest editors, whose expertise, guidance, and tireless efforts in reviewing and curating the papers have been instrumental in shaping the content of this volume. Finally, we would like to thank the entire editorial board and reviewers for their continued support and for providing constructive feedback that has enriched the quality of the work featured here.

The social responsibility of leadership education encompasses a range of critical perspectives and actions that contribute to improving individuals, the community, and society. Therefore, our positioning concerning leadership education must meet the

dynamism and significance of contemporary practices, theories, concepts, policies, and education methods.

We believe that education and effective leadership are downstream of the obligations of all institutions of society; therefore, we recommend future research explore:

1. Understanding community leadership among non-profit organizations, churches, and underserved groups.
2. Instruments and methods for measuring the effectiveness of leadership education programs.
3. Intersection of followership and leadership within corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs.
4. Leadership education among adult learners outside of higher education institutions.
5. Using community-engaged practices and methods to co-create knowledge in leadership education.

We encourage scholars, practitioners, students, laypeople, corporate professionals, parishioners, government, and more to engage in this discussion of the social responsibility of leadership. If the goal is to nurture the holistic development of educators and learners alike and create inclusive and equitable environments, your voice, perspective, approach, and ideas are valuable to this Research Topic.

Author contributions

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Publisher's note

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