

EDUCATION REIMAGINED: LEADERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA



وايز
wise

شبكة وايز للجميع
ALL-IN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4
INTRODUCTION	6
PART A: THEMES	9
THEME ONE: THE NEW LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE	10
THEME TWO: THE ART OF WITH: TEACHERS AS LIFELONG LEADERS	20
THEME THREE: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP NETWORKS	25
AFTERWORD: TRANSFORMATIONAL NETWORKS	30
PART B: ARTICLES	31
SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS IN POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY	32
WELLBEING FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP	34
ESCUELA NUEVA AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING	36
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: A PATH TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALISATION	38
LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS: A COLOMBIAN PERSPECTIVE	40
LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS: A KENYAN PERSPECTIVE	42
THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR SUPPORTING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN MOROCCO	44
MINDSETS MATTER: EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP POST-COVID-19	46
LEADERSHIP ECOSYSTEMS: A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP	49
NEW LEADERSHIP FOR NEW TIMES	52
AUTHORS	54

ISBN 978-0-6454278-1-3

© 2022 Centre for Strategic Education, Victoria.

The Centre for Strategic Education welcomes usage of this publication within the restraints imposed by the Copyright Act. Where the material is to be sold for profit then written authority must be obtained first. Detailed requests for usage not specifically permitted by the Copyright Act should be submitted in writing to:

The Centre for Strategic Education
Mercer House, 82 Jolimont Street,
East Melbourne VIC 3002

Produced in Australia by Centre for Strategic Education,
Mercer House, 82 Jolimont Street, East Melbourne VIC 3002

EDUCATION REIMAGINED: LEADERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA

A WISE ALL-IN SPECIAL PUBLICATION

This is an impressive collection of articles from a highly experienced group of education professionals, from across multiple geographies.

The context is the anticipation of post-COVID-19 life.

The COVID-19 disruption to the world's social, economic and political conditions has given rise to the reimagination of education and the building of leadership for a new era.

This WISE ALL-IN special publication bears witness to the critical role of leadership in promoting and enabling student and system-deep learning. The collection reveals the centrality of education leadership in the life of communities, for individual and collective wellbeing, and for a sustainable future, locally and globally.

The authors' contributions advance our understanding of how educational leadership can address an enlarged concept of equity – serving social cohesion and economic prosperity.

The publication is in two parts.

Part A consists of three Key Thought Pieces that address the agreed themes adopted by the WISE ALL-IN Network as the focus of network collaboration over 2021. The themes include: 1 – developing a global capabilities framework that informs the growth of future leaders; 2 – teacher and team leadership, and the development of a leadership-oriented education workforce; and 3 – the leadership of networks, clusters and communities.

The Foreword and Introduction to Part A provides a framing for the Collection. The Afterword suggests a direction of travel for the ongoing work of WISE ALL-IN.

Part B consists of a selection of articles, some directly related to the three Themes explored in Part A, others taking up everything from transversal considerations to single issues. These papers are designed to stimulate further thought and discussion on 'leadership for a new era' – informed by insights from research, policy and practice, and with a deliberate bias towards innovation and experimentation.

THANK YOU

Appreciation is extended to members of WISE ALL-IN Working Groups and to contributing authors for their commitment to this endeavour, and sincere thanks to the WISE ALL-IN Team for their guidance and support.

EDITORS

Anthony Mackay
Neil Barker
March 2022

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

The WISE Agile Leaders of Learning Innovation Network (ALL-IN) was established in 2017, as an **action-oriented global community of practice** of educational leadership experts – including academics, program providers, practitioners and policy makers – who research, design and advocate for high-quality school leadership policies that prepare and support school systems in educating the learners of today and the future.

Research has shown that school leadership is one of the most important influences on student learning, and thus, a critical factor for improving the life and educational outcomes of children and the broader economic conditions of nations. However, despite strong empirical evidence showing the importance of investing in school leadership, actual investment by governments and systems has declined in the last two decades. This, coupled with a seismic shift in how we think about learning and schooling in the face of an ever-changing future, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, has left many schools and systems deficient in the necessary leadership to nurture future-fit educators and learners as they navigate a path of increasing uncertainty.

ALL-IN seeks to increase the quantity of **future-fit school leaders** to support schools and systems in their transitions toward resilient and future-thriving learning environments that maximise learner outcomes and wellbeing, for a brighter, more equitable, and inclusive future for our children and our world.

ALL-IN'S THEORY OF ACTION

Over the next five years, ALL-IN commits to achieving its mission through **three strategic pathways**:

- 1) research
- 2) program support, and
- 3) advocacy

with a deep and intentional focus on supporting the development of school leaders in under-served contexts, as well as incubating emerging school leadership programs and research aimed at closing systemic equity gaps to improve outcomes for all children.

THE CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED

- Rigorous evidence on school leadership practices and impact in more marginalised, under-served contexts – including in the developing world and in non-OECD countries – is limited, and investment and access are not sufficient to meet the research and programming needs to equip schools, systems and governments with the necessary frameworks to design and implement high-quality, contextually relevant leadership development programs at scale.
- In addition, there is narrow understanding of the definition of leadership and the types of leadership roles that can exist throughout an education ecosystem and benefit learner outcomes. This includes what leaders need to know – particularly considering the uncertainty brought about by multiple, concurrent global pandemics, including public health crises, systemic social injustice, economic inequality and climate change – to be 'future-literate' or lead the future of learning.

Since our first meeting of ALL-IN in 2017, with the support of Simon Breakspear as a co-founder of this community, there has been immense momentum within our growing community to come together and find new ways to collaborate, exchange ideas, and innovate. We met in Accra, New York and Paris, and our last physical meeting was in Doha in 2019. Our focus over this first phase of network growth has been building a community of practice, sharing research, and developing case studies and new frameworks, with a particular interest in the global south and non-OECD countries.

Two years ago, COVID-19 hit us, not only in education but in all sectors, so like most of the world we shifted our work to the digital sphere and, through our close partnership with Salzburg Global Seminar and Anthony Mackay – and also through the great work and participation of our ALL-IN community – we hosted a number of the *Education Disrupted, Education Reimagined* convening series.

Through these convenings we shared narratives, stories and case studies of leadership in practice, leadership under pressure, and leadership in transformation. We began at the frontline of disruption, in April 2020, and ended at the precipice of reimagining, at our September convening.

Then we had our March 2021 convening, with a focus that we should expect more shocks, and that the future will always surprise us with multiple crises and changes. Key themes that emerged from this discussion were the need to lead for equity and for change, to advocate for the most under-served among us, and to amplify new voices and paradigms in the leadership space. This also aligns closely with the new ALL-IN strategy that we launched in December 2020.

This special publication focuses on the work of our three ALL-IN thematic working groups, who came together throughout 2021 to consider research, policy and practice into

- 1) developing a global capabilities framework that informs the growth of future leaders
- 2) teacher and team leadership, and the development of a leadership-oriented education workforce
- 3) the leadership of networks, clusters and communities.

The authors in this publication argue that there is significant opportunity for reimagining education and creating leadership for a new era. The publication introduces readers to a blend of practical experience, programs and initiatives, together with a series of theoretical propositions for improving leadership in schools and networks, and across systems. The breadth of experience and thinking evident in this publication is testament to the commitment and hard work of our network members. I thank them for their passion for creating leadership that can impact global education outcomes, and for sharing their thoughts with us.

Dr Asmaa Al-Fadala

Director of Research, World Innovation Summit for Education

INTRODUCTION

Most days after school, my 11-year-old and I settled in for our quick post-school ritual: tea and a chat about our day. Our debrief usually starts with the gossip – of course – followed by his take on more important events of the day. Last week, sparked by a playground incident, he shared his concern that racism and sexism often influence the distribution of praise and punishment. Next, he bemoaned the fact that he was not learning anything new because too much preparation for the SATS (the upcoming national Year 6 tests) was making school 'really boring'.

As he sipped his tea, he paused and quietly reflected: 'Why is everyone pretending life is back to normal? School expects us to walk through the door and be all happy and fine. What we are learning feels like it doesn't matter in real life and life is NOT normal.' Then, he peppered me with questions about the – at the time, threatened – conflict in Eastern Europe and England's decision to abandon all COVID-19 protection when cases remain high. While there is much we disagree about – bed and screen time, for example – our chat made me realise I share my 11 year-old's frustration and worry about inequality, our collective wellbeing and the pressures we are all facing to 'return to normal'.

When I was invited to get an early glimpse at and to introduce *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era*, I expected two things. One, a brilliant collection of contributions from educators and leaders around the world. Two, I imagined the authors' reimaginings would arrive as countries simultaneously stepped out of the COVID-19 shadows. As expected, the editors have curated a powerful collection of provocations and insights

Three main themes shape the publication: the importance of developing and embracing renewed leadership capabilities; the centrality of teacher leadership to inform practice and policy; and, finally, the power of networks to shape patterns of learning, communication and innovation across schools, communities and education systems.

for leaders, policy makers and academics alike.

Unfortunately, as early 2022 dawns, many countries are contending with COVID-19 outbreaks and civil unrest, and war and persistent social inequality remain omnipresent. Early 2022 does, however, provide the strongest of possible arguments for systems that nurture and support credible and innovative leaders who can unite communities and countries, while simultaneously creating safe and equal access to learning, opportunities and prosperity for all.

So, from this vantage point, I am deeply thankful to the authors who share their insight to reimagine leadership from where we are now: 2022. *Education*

Reimagined proffers strategies for and examples of leaders for our new era, driven by a fierce commitment to recalibrating our imbalanced systems. The authors skilfully acknowledge that adults, as well as students, need care and trust to re-establish their sense of efficacy and motivation. Each contribution, in its own way, touches on the need for leaders, formal or informal, to acknowledge the interconnectedness of their communities and the power of their policy contexts. Strikingly, throughout, the importance of responsive, agile, collaborative governance from all levels of the education system is demanded.

As this publication is succinct and purposeful, my role is simply to reflect upon and tender a few threads to perhaps guide your own reading and reimagining of the structural, policy and role-based step-change educational leaders deserve. Three main themes shape the publication: the importance of developing and embracing renewed leadership capabilities; the centrality of teacher leadership to inform practice and policy; and, finally, the power of networks to shape patterns of learning, communication and innovation across schools, communities and education systems.

Developing a global capabilities framework that informs the growth of future leaders reaffirms the importance of leaders' will and ability to thrive in complex conditions. The authors acknowledge, thankfully, that this takes practice! Drawing on global evidence, a quartet of proposed leadership capabilities underpins the importance of career-long learning, conceptually anchored by notions of flourishing, complexity, agency and equity. Pandemic-magnified social inequities demand that educational leaders contend with increasingly polarised and wounded communities. The new era, therefore, requires leaders who recognise the opportunities for securing teaching and learning outcomes, while supporting the wellness of students and adults in their schools, organisations and communities.

Teacher and team leadership, and the development of a leadership-oriented education workforce, crystallises the importance of systems and structures that respectfully acknowledge and amplify teachers' unique skills and insights. System-level and school-level improvement strategies failing to harness teachers' wisdom and commitment will never reach their intended potential. Contributors carefully argue for time and space to understand and support educators' pandemic-influenced grief, health and wellness. Whether formal or informal, teacher leadership is recognised as a unifying priority: schools and systems must urgently create conditions that ensure teachers feel valued, efficacious and heard, to secure their longer-term commitment to remaining in the profession.

Leaders require time, energy and patience to engage in a process requiring leaders to: identify potential and willing partners; find commonalities that seed relationships; and risk initial collaborations that – if successful – foster trust and confidence.

Finally, **the leadership of networks, clusters and communities** acknowledges the growing impossibility of successfully leading in isolation. The authors champion the value and necessity of networks in post-pandemic educational recovery, while reinforcing that working within and leveraging can create flows of essential, yet previously inaccessible, knowledge, expertise and resources. However, leading and learning across networks requires crossing intellectual, organisational, geographical and often temporal boundaries. Leaders require time, energy and patience to engage in a process requiring leaders to: identify potential and willing partners; find commonalities that seed relationships; and risk initial collaborations that – if successful – foster trust and confidence.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As the teams curated *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era* over the last six months, global political, health and social realities have shifted in ways that seemed impossible even weeks ago. However, the authors' proposed solutions provide sustainable ambitions for leaders, teachers and networks that will stand the test of time. Their collective call: systems and networks that support educational leaders who can navigate complexity with confidence and wisdom, while ensuring equitable access, learning and prosperity for students and communities. Recognising the essential nature of leadership as a practice, beyond roles, that exists within and outside schools, contributors provide stepwise progressions and examples, which remind us that leaders need practice and support to sustain their belief that there are better ways and brighter futures ahead. Much food for thought, for all of us.

More personally, as I prepare for the imminent return of my 11-year-old, I am bracing for his reflections on realities of school today. Before I put on the kettle in anticipation of our daily debrief from the 'front lines', I have a few reflections based on life in London and the themes emerging from this publication. I am profoundly optimistic about our shared leadership futures and hope we can continue, across our many countries, to support and provide the space for leadership to flourish. My reflections are offered with a hand (sanitised and distanced, of course) to say thank you for everything our educators have done to keep our children and communities afloat, and to ensure our steps toward our new era are safe, inclusive and sustainable.

Reflections

The prevalence of exhaustion

Throughout the pandemic, schools have demonstrated that great change, at scale and speed, is possible under specific short-term conditions. However, as the scale and pace of 'build back better' rhetoric accelerates, we are observing that our educators, students and communities are exhausted. Sustaining and improving our education systems rests on the shoulders of our school-based educators. As such, their health and wellbeing must be paramount to any leadership development and expectations. As many leaders and teachers are dangerously close to burnout, new initiatives prioritising educator health and wellbeing are, I believe, more likely to pay longer-term dividends.

The power of tweaks vs overhauls

Innovation and grand ambitions are powerful but, to many, big changes will seem so far out of reach that educators' disinterest, disengagement and avoidance may result. As this publication has embraced the need for adults in our schools to be respected, supported, and presented with career-long opportunities for learning and engagement, I hope we can also prioritise the power of small steps. The power of small, sequential tweaks to our current ways of working will, in my opinion, greatly outlast the overhauls.

The importance of healing

The members of each generation carry forward the experiences and wounds from their childhood and young adulthood. As hard as it will be, simply acknowledging that the pandemic is not over and talking about how things may be different at home – for students and teachers alike – may be a small step toward our collective healing.

The equity imperative

Even our students are highly attuned to spotting bias. They may not have the words to describe it as such, but the pain of being treated unfairly lingers. As educators, challenging our own ability and will to develop our skills for identifying and addressing bias in our teaching, hiring, promotion and community work is essential for building resilient teams, schools and communities. Leaders have varying levels of awareness and comfort with issues of race, gender, nationality and ability, as a start. Any leadership and networking initiative harnessing the power of student and educator experience, creating safe space to identify where and when bias interrupts learning and leadership will be essential. As leaders and educators, we owe it to ourselves and to future generations to spot the opportunities for learning, especially with some whose views are different from our own, to create the new era championed in this publication.

Dr Karen Edge

UCL Centre for Educational Leadership
IOE UCL's Faculty of Education & Society

THEMES

**THEME ONE:
THE NEW LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE**

**THEME TWO:
THE ART OF WITH: TEACHERS AS LIFELONG LEADERS**

**THEME THREE:
THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP NETWORKS**



THEME ONE: THE NEW LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE

Jenny Lewis, Global Director of Policy and Leadership, Forever Learn, and
Dr Nadine Trépanier-Bisson, Director of Professional Learning, Ontario Principals Council

As this new decade begins, much has changed in education and for that matter society, as COVID-19 and its short-term and long-term impacts continue to redefine our greater purpose, and the ways we live, learn and work, including who with, when and how. For many nations this has meant rebuilding core sectors of government, and some have set a brave reform agenda around new worlds of learning and work, to enable their current and future generations to thrive. Other nations have focused on micro adjustments and moderate improvements to sectors affected by COVID-19, and have considered their current growth trajectory as one that will serve future needs. Globally, however, it cannot be ignored that previously defined roles and responsibilities, and the boundaries that codify traditional public and private

sectors, have been challenged, and some would say changed forever.

COVID-19 has laid bare the reality of pre-pandemic inequities in education, health, social and economic circumstances of large populations of K-12 students, in both emerging and developed countries. The pandemic necessitated abrupt transitions to remote learning and work, and this has revealed that schools and workplaces were not technically, pedagogically nor andragogically ready, a decade on from the emergence of Industry 4.0 – Fourth Industrial Revolution (Saavedra, 2020).

COVID-19 also spotlighted broken education structures and legacy systems more suited to the Third Industrial Revolution. Traditional management and teaching models, lockstep timetables, high-stakes assessments, and a system that does not develop a digitally literate 4.0 workforce and society-ready graduates, are evidence of a fractured system called education (Saavedra, 2020). Although Industry 4.0 was to provide the necessary disruptions that new technologies and their applications could create

in the public and private sectors, it was apparent that a focus on meta efficiencies did not account for the people it was supposed to serve, and opportunities to improve economic, education and social outcomes were and are sadly lacking (Davies, 2015; Nahavandi, 2019).

As Industry 4.0 pioneers and technology leaders begin to address Industry 4.0 human costs, by building from its strengths to co-create human-centric solutions, so too are they traversing to the next industrial revolution – now recognised as Industry 5.0 (Nahavandi, 2019; Skobelev and Borovik, 2017). Industry 5.0, or Society 5.0 as it is more aptly named, moves the focus of organisational reform to solving social problems with the assistance of an integration of 4.0 intelligent devices, intelligent systems, and intelligent automation. The aim is to bring people back to the workplace and to create new places and spaces that cater for learning, unlearning and relearning, in newly defined metrics that go beyond industrial reform (Bernick, 2017). COVID-19 has thrust the world into finding new ways of interacting and responding to the challenges of the Society 5.0 revolution.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres in May 2021 noted that the crisis has shone a spotlight on the irreplaceable value of schools and teachers in our societies, and warned that

... if we are to avert a generational catastrophe, reduce inequalities and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, then we simply must prioritize and protect education ... and use the recovery to narrow education divides, expand digital connectivity and reimagine education.

Reimagining education requires new frames of leadership to navigate the unprecedented challenges of this current era, Society 5.0. Educational leaders will need capability and adaptive expertise to co-create and navigate complex adaptive systems; effectively manage emerging knowledge informed by multiple platforms (emergent intelligence); and facilitate empathy-led consensus in making decisions that benefit the lives of many (evergetics) (Bernick, 2017, p 309). These leaders will need the capability to lead an emerging 5.0 education profession that demonstrates a sophisticated and values-centred approach in the way they collaborate with peers, staff, students, and the community they impact.

Recognising this challenge, WISE ALL-IN members have researched the literature and current evidence of practice, and have drafted four global capabilities

that provide an aspirational professional learning pathway for future educational leaders.

A capability approach is **future-oriented** and is generally perceived as an open model, supporting continuous development. There is a spectrum of **capability as opposed to either a threshold of 'capable or not capable'** or a neat scale of progressively increasing capacity (Bernick, 2017, p 38).

Capabilities provide a

blending of leadership knowledge, skills and competencies, mediated through a number of human qualities, attributes or dispositions, such as, confidence, intuition, practical wisdom, emotional intelligence, a sense of spirituality, good judgement, and other X factors, demonstrated successfully in practice in challenging and changing contexts and circumstances, and sustained over time.

(Duignan, 2007; Nagarajan and Prabhu, 2015)

Reimagining education requires new frames of leadership to navigate the unprecedented challenges of this current era, Society 5.0.

An important implication of the approach presented here is that leaders need to **develop their own capabilities and those of others, in order to enhance the capacity of their organisation to flourish in an uncertain environment.** An underlying assumption of this argument is that the development of personal and organisational capabilities, in an uncertain and complex organisational context, requires leadership artistry that is unlikely to emerge from the acquisition of a generic set of competencies gained through training or apprenticeship models.

In drafting these capabilities, Network members hope to generate discussions within and between leaders and organisations whose mandate it is to support leadership development. In the absence of a leadership framework, the capabilities can serve as the building blocks of a framework. Where a leadership framework is already in use, the capabilities can be considered alongside the framework: to what extent are the future-ready capabilities reflected in the current framework? How can each capability be applied as an amplifier for existing elements of the framework?

Summaries of the Four Capabilities

Here we outline the capabilities in an exploratory way. They are posited for discussion and consideration, and we are advocating their future testing and validation. Following these outlines, we provide more detailed explorations as a way to explore them more fully. We welcome further discussion.

Capability 1: Envisioning Flourishing Futures

High-performing educational leaders are student-centred and have formed a compelling vision for a flourishing future, in which their students, staff and community can succeed. They are prepared to decisively pursue opportunities that make a positive difference, and are courageous and determined in dealing with the status quo, the unfamiliar, and the unpredictable. They are futures-oriented, and lead with a strategic mindset, applying intelligent, reflective and empathetic judgement in current, as well as emerging, challenging situations (Duignan, 2007).

High-performing educational leaders are conscious of their personal and professional agency, as well as the agency of organisations.

Capability 2: Managing Dynamic Complexity

High-performing educational leaders are system thinkers who demonstrate capacity in understanding and seeing the world as dynamic complex systems. They understand that decisions and resulting actions for one part of their learning ecosystem may have dramatically different effects for other parts of the ecosystem, increasing dynamic complexity immediately and long-term (Senge, 1990).

Capability 3: Developing Agency in Self and Others

High-performing educational leaders are conscious of their personal and professional agency, as well as the agency of organisations (Bieneman, 2011), as they seek to develop collective agency and bring about transformational change. Through personal, professional and collective agency, high-performing educational leaders create circumstances that foster change regardless of their environment, by managing the people and the resources to support change.

Capability 4: Fostering Equity

The 'Fostering Equity' capability positions high-performing educational leaders as individuals who disrupt current practices to create equitable environments for students and school staff, thereby causing social change in their schools and, by extension, in their communities. Considering the increasing centrality of equity in education globally, it is then a chief concern that school leadership and policy makers develop a shared practical understanding of what equity means and its implications for educational policy and practice (Sahlberg and Cobbold, 2021).

Leaders, who must deal with unfamiliar problems in unfamiliar situations, will need to develop flexible mindsets and frameworks and reach beyond the unquestioning application of predetermined procedures, practices and competencies (Stephenson, 1999). It is our hope that the four proposed capabilities will support ongoing global discussions that create opportunities for new conceptual frameworks for leadership development, which will better serve society as it moves forward in Society 5.0.

More detailed exploration of the capabilities

Capability 1: Envisaging Flourishing Futures

As noted above, high-performing educational leaders are student-centred and have formed a compelling vision for a flourishing future in which their students, staff and community can succeed. They are prepared to decisively pursue opportunities that make a positive difference, and are courageous and determined in dealing with the status quo, the unfamiliar and the unpredictable. They are futures-oriented, and lead with a strategic mindset, applying intelligent, reflective and empathetic judgement in current, as well as emerging, challenging situations (Duignan, 2007).

These leaders are active members of an emerging 5.0 education profession that demonstrates a sophisticated and values-centred approach in the way they collaborate with peers, staff, students, and the community they serve (Nahavandi, 2019). They are guided by their values, beliefs, and an authentic moral purpose that enables them to lead through times of complexity with mindfulness and humanity (Rooney et al, 2021; Pompper, 2018). They are active learners and continually iterate, adopt and adapt new knowledge and skills, and critically reflect upon their personal qualities and preferred practices, and how these impact others, recognising that people embrace change differently (Nagarajan and Prabhu, 2015).

High-performing educational leaders are adaptive and cultivate an inspiring and authorising change culture, where change is not viewed as disruptive but as 'potentially re-energising and re-organising opportunities' (Johansen, 2017). They recognise context and continually scan and interpret their learning ecosystem, guiding others to make sense of the opportunities and challenges as they co-create an inspirational student-centred future (Hannon and Mackay, 2021). They create enabling spaces for shared leadership, where teaching and non-teaching staff, students and community collaborate, share practice, co-lead and co-learn as they co-construct a theory of change that illuminates possibilities (Campbell et al, 2015).

These leaders spend time in the co-designing of this compelling vision and collaboratively guide school and community members to address the complexity of educational challenges, with contagious passion and excitement that unifies everyone (Caldwell, 2019). They understand power and create efficacy and empowerment among school and community members, so that they are active in co-designing and

achieving of desired standards that achieve equity and excellence (Bernstein and Linsky, 2016).

These leaders recognise that multiple perspectives will emerge and that they may need to compromise and, with humility, lead the design of alternative pathways to achieve desired outcomes (Duignan, 2020). They recognise the complexity and unpredictability of emerging futures and the boundaries of formal systems in which they serve.

Authentic change requires time, empathy, tolerance, honesty and trust building, to make visible personal values, alliances and risks, as desired change is discussed and achieved.

They are critically conscious of the policy, social and cultural ecosystem in which they lead, and are continually 'rethinking, reimagining, and transcending those systems to ensure a transformative future for those they lead' (Young et al, 2017).

High-performing educational leaders apply evaluative inquiry and continue to test the significance, coherence and sustainability of programs, strategies and policies through each stage of change processes. This includes continually viewing problems from an adaptive perspective, recognising that leading transformational change can be challenging, contentious and complex. They use a number of tools to identify, describe and engage creatively in strategic problem solving. Using inquiry-centred practices that enable teams to apply design thinking (Young et al, 2017) and anticipative learning (Bussey et al, 2017) in solving complex authentic problems, leaders create spaces for ongoing dialogue and make time for knowledge discovery, sharing and creation with school and community members (Breakspear, 2017; Halbert and Kaser, 2013).

Authentic change requires time, empathy, tolerance, honesty and trust building, to make visible personal values, alliances and risks, as desired change is discussed and achieved. These leaders continually consider the capacity of school and community members to accommodate new ways of thinking, working and behaving, and build strategies to ensure individual and team success (Stephenson, 1999). Together they build a new and shared narrative that continues to describe their flourishing future and the journey still to be travelled.

Capability 2: Managing Dynamic Complexity

High-performing educational leaders are system thinkers who demonstrate capacity in understanding and seeing the world as dynamic complex systems. They understand that decisions and resulting actions for one part of their learning ecosystem may have dramatically different effects for other parts of the ecosystem, increasing dynamic complexity immediately and long-term (Senge, 1990).

High-performing educational leaders understand that traditional management practices are not designed to address dynamic complexity.

These leaders effectively manage this dynamic complexity and strategically reframe their learning ecosystem holistically, as interconnected and 'intentional webs of relational learning which are dynamic, evolving, and enable greater diversity' (Ramirez and Wilkinson, 2016; Hannon and Mackay, 2021). They investigate the patterns within these webs and carefully consider new networks and pathways to achieve desirable and compelling outcomes that 'connect people to their own and each other's humanity' for the greater good (Fullan, 2019).

They see the dynamics of major interrelationships underlying emerging and long-term challenges, and the change processes required to create balance, sustainability, and new possibilities (Heimans and Timms, 2018). These leaders create new places and spaces that cater for learning, unlearning and relearning in newly defined metrics, with the assistance of intelligent devices, intelligent systems and intelligent automation to solve current and emerging challenges (Skobelev and Borovik, 2017).

High-performing educational leaders continually use systems thinking, because aspects of the learning ecosystem can and do break down. They are able to synthesise disconnected aspects of the organisation, and work with others to make sense of what is and what is not working, and why. These leaders have a tolerance for the ambiguous, recognise change is continuous, and provide the conditions for people to collaborate, critique, and participate in dialogues to navigate these complex systems and emerging situations to create the preferred outcomes (Grosser, 2017).

They recognise that their learning ecosystem has a diverse community that represents different age groups, cultures and ethnicities, who hold varying beliefs and values, and may or may not have full understanding of current events, relationships or emerging challenges. These leaders embrace and empathise with these multiple perspectives and create reciprocal flows of influence and feedback, continually bridging, combining and aligning activities whilst building stakeholder engagement. They encourage new cultures of nonlinear thinking and problem solving, and know when to accelerate or pause to maximise or minimise organisational and personal impact (Hodgson, 2020). They recognise that they will need to navigate multiple pathways to engage their learning ecosystem, using finite resources to achieve agreed, well-defined goals (van Wijck and Niemeijer, 2016).

High-performing educational leaders understand that traditional management practices are not designed to address dynamic complexity. They recognise that implementing managerial tested routines informed by the status quo may not be adequate as they begin forecasting future scenarios for the learning ecosystem they lead (Senge, 1990). They continually explore new and different networks and relationships to navigate unanticipated disruptions, consequential responsibilities, and emerging system and community expectations. They have developed an interdisciplinary approach and agile strategies to inform collaborative high-impact decisions and the resulting impact for those they serve (Gurvich, 2018; Knyazeva, 2020; Ramirez and Wilkinson, 2016).

These leaders strategically reframe emerging challenges through jointly determining outcomes, participating in agile and courageous sequences of leading and learning, and building foundational collective accountability for the expected and unexpected outcomes (Fullan, 2019). They create the structures and synergy that maximise higher levels of trust in which diversity and shared responsibility thrive.

High-performing educational leaders understand that developing capability in managing dynamic complexity is reciprocated in the co-creation of a thriving culture in which every member can explain 'how we do things around here'. More so, these leaders begin to attract those who are prepared to commit to a preferred future and become part of the interwoven and dynamic learning ecosystem in which they have chosen to serve (Martin, 2006; Knyazeva, 2020).

Capability 3: Developing Agency in Self and Others

Agency has been defined in different ways by different authors, as well as within and between disciplines (Eteläpelto et al, 2013). Even within the context of education, agency has yet to be clearly and unanimously defined. For the purposes of identifying agency as a capability of high-performing educational leaders, three manifestations of agency are considered: personal, professional, and collective. High-performing educational leaders are conscious of their personal and professional agency as well as the agency of organisations (Bieneman, 2011), as they seek to develop collective agency and bring about transformational change. Through personal, professional and collective agency, high-performing educational leaders create circumstances that foster change regardless of their environment, by managing the people and the resources to support change.

Through personal, professional and collective agency, high-performing educational leaders create circumstances that foster change regardless of their environment, by managing the people and the resources to support change.

Personal agency is the human ability to pursue activities and goals aligned with one's values (Frost, 2006). High-performing educational leaders are the primary actors of their lives and exercise their leadership as full members of society engaged in economic, social and political arenas (Sen, 2004). The exercise of influence occurs through their ability to work within existing relationships to leverage power as a means of supporting transformative change. In taking positions, high-performing educational leaders outwardly present their identity, values and beliefs (Sen, 2004). Within their leadership roles, they exercise free will in carrying out intentional actions that impact students (Sen, 2004) with a clear and deep understanding of the school's context (Brewer et al, 2020). Developing the depth and breadth of their agency augments the potential impacts of high-performing educational leaders' actions to move beyond an impact on students toward an impact on organisational and social structures, such as the school or district and the broader community.

High-performing educational leaders face several challenges, including responding to pressure for strong individual leadership, reacting to authoritarianism in hierarchical organisations, being accountable, and dealing with de-professionalism caused by policy (Clarke and Dempster, 2020). They respond to these challenges using professional agency. Their professional agency manifests through character traits that interact with one another to support transformational change: courage, transcendence, drive, collaboration, humility, humanity, integrity, temperance, justice, accountability and judgement (Seijts and Gandz, 2018). Specifically, high-performing educational leaders demonstrate professional agency through their influence, their decisions or choices, and taking a position, all within existing structures (Green and Pappa, 2021).

Through the continuous development and leveraging of their personal and professional agency, high-performing educational leaders empower staff as productive members of a team, working together toward improvement, and thereby allowing others to develop their own agency and allowing the group to develop its collective agency. Collective agency empowers teams to work together in support of future-based change. High-performing educational leaders manage relationships, coordinate resources, empower staff and develop integrative thinking proactively, as a means of achieving greater collective efficacy. Through collaborative processes and the mobilisation of individuals' personal and professional agency, high-performing educational leaders address challenges that contribute to the achievement of common goals. As they develop context-specific personal and professional agency, in themselves and others, high-performing educational leaders demonstrate proactivity in bringing about meaningful change within individuals and for their organisation (Caniëls et al, 2017).

Through a confident and intentional use of agency, high-performing educational leaders apply a variety of people-leadership skills, to draw attention to the importance of how the local context and relevant data interact in a social context. They leverage the individual agency of self and others as a means of supporting organisational adaptability and renewal, while fostering the use of a growth mindset and encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their own leadership development (Clarke and Dempster, 2020).

High-performing educational leaders create opportunities for themselves and others to develop together the skills associated with the use of agency for transformational leadership: collaboration, ethical decision making and risk assessment. They continuously look for ways in which to improve student outcomes and student wellbeing. High-performing educational leaders use regular reflective practice to inform the development of agency in all its forms (personal, professional, and collective). They continuously monitor their environment and resources, to be able to act early and understand where they can appropriately exercise power or influence for the greater good. In addition, high-performing educational leaders engage in collaborative practices with new and existing stakeholders, as a means of growing collective agency.

Capability 4: Fostering Equity

The 'Fostering Equity' capability positions high-performing educational leaders as individuals who disrupt current practices to create equitable environments for students and school staff, thereby causing social change in their schools and, by extension, in their communities. Considering the increasing centrality of equity in education globally, it is then a chief concern that school leadership and policy makers develop a shared practical understanding of what equity means and its implications for educational policy and practice (Sahlberg and Cobbold, 2021).

The concept of equity in education has evolved over time to a broader understanding, including multiple facets of students' identities and contexts (Jurado de los Santos et al, 2020). Equity has a dual objective: equity of outcomes, such that individual students have equal access to education opportunities that allow them to become active members of their communities (adequate education); and such that students who share an identity and social context can achieve similar outcomes (equality of outcomes) (Shields, 2020). The social change, or creation of equitable environments, will look different based on the leadership context (Shields, 2020). However, in all cases, fostering equity requires the deconstruction of current knowledge frameworks that maintain oppressive policies, procedures and practices, and replacing those constructs with more equitable ones (Shields, 2016).

Our vision of the ideal world is changing as technology allows us to see and hear more about the inequities in the world (Jarvis, 2006). While equity

gaps existed before the pandemic, recent reports indicate that COVID-19 has widened inequity gaps in education (Hough, 2021; de Klerk and Palmer, 2021). The pandemic offers an opportunity to transform learning environments (Azorin, 2020). There is an ongoing call for social justice action that '[promotes] the realisation of a world where all members of a society, regardless of background or procedural justice, have basic human rights and equal access to the benefits of their society' (Hemphill, 2015). High-performing educational leaders understand that ensuring the success of each student, regardless of their circumstances, is the moral imperative underlying this capability. They adopt an activist stance that supports the many facets of equity (for example, racial, gender-based, economic, sexuality, neurodiversity) for the common good. By focusing individual and collective energy on the common good, high-performing educational leaders become activists on behalf of students and staff who are underserved.

By focusing individual and collective energy on the common good, high-performing educational leaders become activists on behalf of students and staff who are underserved.

Fostering equity as an activist leader requires a multi-faceted approach in which high-performing educational leaders work with a variety of stakeholders to create more equitable learning spaces, as a means of leading the community to a new, better version of itself, thus bettering the larger society. High-performing educational leaders can foster equity by understanding that school development lies at the centre of external forces, which can support or hinder the creation of equitable environments (valid and reliable evidence, policy-based inclusion and equity principles, community involvement and administration) (Ainscow, 2020). To begin the process of fostering equity, high-performing educational leaders collaborate with the school community to conduct an environmental analysis, as a means of understanding local inequalities. With that information, they can work collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a plan that will address the individual and social equity challenges (adequate education and equality of outcomes).

As part of their leadership practice, high-performing educational leaders develop a praxis approach where they balance reflection and action in each of five dimensions: personal, interpersonal, communal, systemic, and ecological (Furman, 2012). Reflection can occur in isolation through various means or can occur in a collaborative, social context with other education actors and stakeholders. The actions of high-performing educational leaders who seek to foster equity must be deliberate, such that they deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge frameworks; address inequitable power distribution; consider individual and collective good; focus on justice

and democracy; emphasise global connections and interdependence; balance hope and critique; and demonstrate moral courage (Shields, 2020). Reflection should both precede and follow actions, and should include reflecting on how their own identity and power impacts the actions they set in motion for the creation of sustainable equitable learning environments. High-performing educational leaders create and support positive social change at the school, system or community level, by aligning their vision and actions with the dual objectives of equity: adequate education and equality of outcomes.

References

- Ainscow, M (2020) 'Promoting inclusion and equity in education: Lessons from international experiences', *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, **6**, 1, p 7–16. doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587.
- Azorín, C (2020) 'Beyond COVID-19 supernova. Is another education coming?', *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, **5**, 3/4, p 381–390. doi.org/10.1108/JPCC-05-2020-0019.
- Bernick, M (2017) 'After robots take over our jobs, then what?' Accessed at forbes.com/sites/michaelbernick/2017/04/11/after-robots-take-over-our-jobs-then-what.
- Bernstein, M and Linsky, M (2016) 'Leading change through adaptive design', *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, **14**, 1, Winter, p 48–54. Accessed at research.beautifulfund.org/wp-content/uploads/Leading_Through_Adaptive_Design.pdf.
- Bieneman, P D (2011) 'Transformative leadership: The exercise of agency in educational leadership', in C M Shields (Ed), *Transformative Leadership: A Reader* (**409**, p 221–237), Peter Lang AG. Accessed at jstor.org/stable/42981307.
- Breakspear, S (2017) *The leadership imperative: Designing systemic approaches to school leadership development*, CSE Seminar Series Paper 270, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne.
- Brewer, C, Okilwa, N and Duarte, B (2020) 'Context and agency in educational leadership: Framework for study', *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, **23**, 3, p 330–354. doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2018.1529824.
- Bussey, M, Song, M M and Hsieh, S H (2017) 'Anticipatory imagination as a tool for rethinking engineering education', *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education and Practice*, **143**, 4, 02517004. Accessed at ascelibrary-org.ezproxy.usq.edu.au/doi/full/10.1061/%28ASCE%29EI.1943-5541.0000342.
- Caldwell, B J (2019) 'Visionary leadership in the search for certainty', *Australian Educational Leader, Leading with Vision and Voice*, **41**, 3, p 12–15.
- Campbell, C, Lieberman, A and Yashkina, A (2015) 'Teachers leading educational improvements: Developing teachers' leadership, improving practices, and collaborating to share knowledge', *Leading & Managing*, **21**, 2, p 90–105.
- Caniëls, M C J, Semeijn, J H and Renders, I H M (2017) 'Mind the mindset! The interaction of proactive personality, transformational leadership and growth mindset for engagement at work', *Career Development International*, accepted, 3. doi.org/10.1108/CDI-11-2016-0194.
- Clarke, S and Dempster, N (2020) 'Leadership learning: The pessimism of complexity and the optimism of personal agency', *Professional Development in Education*, **46**, 4, p 711–727. doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1787196.
- Davies, R (2015) 'Industry 4.0: Digitalisation for productivity and growth (Briefing)', *European Parliamentary Research Service*, PE 568.337.

References (continued)

- de Klerk, E D and Palmer, J M (2021) 'Resetting education priorities during COVID-19: Towards equitable learning opportunities through inclusion and equity', *La Pie*, **39**, 1, p 12–28. doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v39.i1.2.
- Duignan, P (2007) *Educational Leadership: Key Challenges and Ethical Tensions*, Cambridge University Press.
- Duignan, P (2020) *Leading Educational Systems and Schools in Times of Disruption and Exponential Change: A Call for Courage, Commitment and Collaboration*, Emerald Group Publishing, Bingley, UK.
- Eteläpelto, A, Vähäsantanen, K, Hökkä, P and Paloniemi, S (2013) 'What is agency? Conceptualizing professional agency at work', *Educational Research Review*, **10**, 1, p 45–65, Elsevier Ltd. Accessed from learntechlib.org/p/197411/.
- Frost, D (2006) 'The concept of "agency" in leadership for learning', *Leading & Managing*, **12**, 2, p 19–28. Accessed at educ.cam.ac.uk/networks/lfll/projects/pastprojects/DF%20art%20Agency.pdf.
- Fullan, M (2019) *Nuance: Why Some Leaders Succeed and Others Fail*, Corwin, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Furman, G (2012) 'Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs', *Educational Administration Quarterly: EAQ*, **48**, 2, p 191–229. doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11427394.
- Green, C and Pappa, S (2021) 'EFL teacher education in Finland: Manifestations of professional agency in teacher educators' work', *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, **65**, 4, p 552–568. doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2020.1739128.
- Grösser, S N (2017) 'Complexity management and system dynamics thinking', in S N Grösser, A Reyes-Lecuona and G Granholm (Eds), *Dynamics of Long-Life Assets: From Technology Adaptation to Upgrading the Business Model* (p 69–92), Springer, Cham, Switzerland. Accessed at [416486_1_En_5_Chapter_69.92 \(springer.com\)](http://416486_1_En_5_Chapter_69.92.springer.com).
- Gurvich, J (2018) 'Principals' perceptions of regional networks', *Leading & Managing*, **24**, 1, p 47–58.
- Guterres, A (2021) Opening message to the UNESCO online conference *One Year into COVID: Prioritizing Education Recovery to Avoid a Generational Catastrophe*. For the conference report, see unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000376984.
- Halbert, J and Kaser, L (2013) *Spirals of Inquiry for Equity and Quality*, BC Principals and Vice-Principals Association, Canada.
- Hannon, V and Mackay, A (2021) *The future of educational leadership: Five signposts*, CSE Leading Education Series, Paper 04, August 2021, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne.
- Heimans, J and Timms, H (2018) *New Power*, Macmillan Publishers Australia.
- Hemphill, B (2015) 'Social justice as a moral imperative', *The Open Journal of Occupational Therapy*, **3**, 2. doi.org/10.15453/2168-6408.1150, p 2.
- Hodgson A (2020) *Systems Thinking for a Turbulent World: A Search for New Perspectives*, Routledge, New York.
- Hough, H J (2021) 'COVID-19, the educational equity crisis, and the opportunity ahead', Brown Center Chalkboard, 29 April. Accessed at brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/04/29/COVID-19-the-educational-equity-crisis-and-the-opportunity-ahead/.
- Jarvis, P (2006) 'Beyond the learning society: Globalisation and the moral imperative for reflective social change', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, **25**, 3, p 201–211. doi.org/10.1080/02601370600697011.
- Johansen, B (2017) *The New Leadership Literacies: Thriving in a Future of Extreme Disruption and Distributed Everything*, Berrett-Koehler, Oakland, CA.
- Jurado de Los Santos, P, Moreno-Guerrero, A-J, Marín-Marín, J-A and Soler Costa, R (2020) 'The term equity in education: A literature review with scientific mapping in web of science', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, **17**, 10. doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17103526.
- Knyazeva, H (2020) 'Strategies of dynamic complexity management', *Форсайт*, **14**, (4 (eng)).
- Martin, M J (2006) *That's the Way We Do Things Around Here': An Overview of Organizational Culture*, Digital Commons@University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

References (continued)

- Nagarajan, R and Prabhu, R (2015) 'Competence and capability: A new look', *International Journal of Management*, **6**, 6, p 8.
- Nahavandi, S (2019) 'Industry 5.0 – A human-centric solution', *Sustainability*, **11**, 16, p 4371. Sustainability | Free Full-Text | Industry 5.0 – A Human-Centric Solution (mdpi.com).
- Pompper, D (2018) *Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability, and Ethical Public Relations*, Emerald Publishing, Bingley.
- Ramírez, R and Wilkinson, A (2016) *Strategic Reframing: The Oxford Scenario Planning Approach*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Rooney, D, Küpers, W, Pauleen, D and Zhuravleva, E (2021) 'A developmental model for educating wise leaders: The role of mindfulness and habitus in creating time for embodying wisdom', *Journal of Business Ethics*, **170**, 1, p 181–194.
- Saavedra, J (2020, 30 March) *Educational Challenges and Opportunities of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic*, WorldBank Blogs.
- Sahlberg, P and Cobbold, T (2021) 'Leadership for equity and adequacy in education', *School Leadership & Management*, p 1–23. doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2021.1926963.
- Seijts, G H and Gandz, J (2018) 'Transformational change and leader character', *Business Horizons*, **61**, 2, p 239–249. doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2017.11.005.
- Sen, A (2004) 'Elements of a theory of human rights', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, **3**, 2, p 315–356. Accessed at lib.uwo.ca/cgi-bin/ezpauthn.cgi?url=http://search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/elements-theory-human-rights/docview/60678333/se-2?accountid=15115.
- Senge, P M (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Doubleday, Currency, New York, p 71–72.
- Shields, C M (2016) *Transformative Leadership in Education: Equitable and Socially Just Change in an Uncertain and Complex World* (2nd ed), Routledge, New York.
- Shields, C M (2020) *Becoming a Transformative Leader*, Routledge, New York.
- Skobelev, P O and Borovik, S Y (2017) 'On the way from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0: From digital manufacturing to digital society', *Industry 4.0*, **2**, 6, p 307–311. Accessed at 307.full.pdf (stumejournals.com).
- Stephenson, J (1999). *Corporate Capability: Implications for the Style and Direction of Work-Based Learning*, Research Centre for Vocational Education and Training, University of Technology, Sydney.
- van Wijck, P and Niemeijer, B (2016) 'Scenario planning meets frame analysis: Using citizens' frames as test conditions for policy measures', *Futures*, **77**, p 28–44.
- Young, M D, Anderson, E and Nash, A M (2017) 'Preparing school leaders: Standards-based curriculum in the United States', *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, **16**, 2, p 228–271.



THEME TWO: THE ART OF WITH: TEACHERS AS LIFELONG LEADERS

Joe Hallgarten, Chief Executive,
The Centre for Education and Youth, UK

East London, UK; November 2020; 10am. Three Grade 3 classes start their literacy lessons. In the first, a teacher is there alone, live-teaching to the homes of thirty self-isolating children. In the second, all children are in class, taught by a self-isolating teacher from her living room. The third classroom is the old normal; a teacher and his whole class, in class. Later, staff involved would meet online to share and refine their practices for the following day, whatever permutations that might bring.

Same month, similar line of longitude, a few thousand miles south. Thousands of students throughout Sierra Leone tune into 'Rising on Air' Radio for their daily learning, with lessons created and broadcast by classroom teachers.

Explore almost anywhere in the world and you will find similar stories. The concept and reality of teacher leadership was not caused by a virus. However, COVID provided new needs, opportunities and examples, fuelled partly by the pedagogical and connective powers of increasingly pervasive technologies. Adaptations to new contexts went from the unimaginable to unworkable, to possible, to normal. Teacher leadership rose like a phoenix rising from the ashes of torched accountability systems, partly emancipated by the abandonment of student and teacher assessments, and school inspections. Governments stepped back, and educators stepped up to lead, in and beyond their classrooms, creating what the World Bank described as 'a different teaching experience where teachers have had rapidly to adapt, be creative and shift roles'.¹ As Tal Sebell Shavit, a physics teacher in Massachusetts, asserted, 'The pandemic allowed me to see that we have many more teacher leaders than anyone thought.'

Teacher leadership is a slippery term, with multiple definitions. Our working group at Education Reimagined eventually agreed on this definition:

(Largely class-based) educators enacting influence through relationships beyond the scope of their own classroom that result in changes in pupil learning, professional practices and/or organisational outcomes.

Whilst the concept may appear uncontroversial – who could publicly disagree? – at a system level, active support for teacher leadership is often superficial and, at worst, contradictory.

Whilst attempts, such as in Singapore, Shanghai and Finland, to create formal 'teacher leader' roles are valuable with important insights, our emphasis was on what the International Teacher Leadership Initiative describes as 'non-positional teacher leadership' – those educators who, despite spending most of their time in classrooms and despite the lack of a job title with formal authority, still actively seek to influence practices and policies beyond the classrooms they teach in. Aligned with the new thrust towards 'hybrid learning', perhaps Margolis' concept of a 'hybrid teacher' can serve a useful definitional purpose – a teacher with a deliberate split screen, who aims both to impact on the learning of those she teaches, and potentially on the practices of those adults beyond her classroom – including teachers, parents, communities and networks. One working group member described how a teacher leader 'sees a gap or issues in the march towards the attainment of learning outcomes and acts to change the situation, usually taking others with them'. As Hanah Ramahi, a school principal in Ramallah, Palestine, argues,

... teacher leadership can mobilise all teachers in the drive towards educational reconstruction, regardless of position, status or authority ... where locally relevant and problem-based knowledge is co-built by teachers themselves and not mandated by authority figures or delivered by external experts

(Ramahi, 2018, p 2).

This reflects Education International's recent call to perceive 'leadership as a principle – and not merely a position' (Education International, 2020).

OECD's TALIS data is clear, that the mechanisms are mutually reinforcing between opportunities for teacher collaboration, their sense of efficacy, and their perceived ability to influence school-level or system-level policy decisions. Interesting gaps emerge, especially in particular countries such as England, between how headteachers perceive teachers' autonomy over, for instance, curriculum decisions, and teachers' own perceptions of this autonomy from the chalkface. So, the case for action is clear.

Whilst the concept may appear uncontroversial – who could publicly disagree? – at a system level, active support for teacher leadership is often superficial and, at worst, contradictory. Many governments, agencies and systemic frameworks for teacher development pay lip service to the idea of teacher leadership, seeing it as the icing on the cake of a high-performing school system, rather than a route to achieving high performance. The 'mandate to good' mentality remains strong. Across the world, professional learning for teachers appears to be taking a 'technical turn'. Teachers are offered increasingly precise training on specific pedagogical techniques. Some are even given scripted lessons to teach from. Whilst this has some use, it can breed cultures of compliance over curiosity. Will teachers be enabled to identify and make the changes that are pertinent to their own challenges and moral purpose? Will they want to stay in a profession that appears to value the technocratic and reliable over the developmental and unpredictable? As Mackay et al argue,

... too few national systems prepare and support teachers sufficiently with the right working conditions that let them engage in decision making and fuel innovative practices. Looking across nations, though, everything needed for a system of teacher leadership that can transform schools is being done somewhere.

(Berry et al, 2021)

York-Barr and Duke suggested that 'Intentional and systematic efforts to support the capacity of teachers and principals to share in school leadership functions appear to be severely lacking' back in 2004 (p 288). Since then, little appears to have changed.

As an ALL-IN working group, we believe that such a system-level development of teacher leadership is our 'best bet' to both improve and narrow gaps in education outcomes, and respond to the challenges of a 'pandemic-forever' world. Our 'theory of enquiry' – worthy of research and programmatic interventions, as well as advocacy – is that a collectively empowered educator workforce, with a mandate and responsibility to lead, can also contribute to three wider goals:

1. **Our understanding and practice of developing a far broader range of outcomes for young people.** Our education world is littered with failed or stalled attempts to systematically introduce so-called '21st-century skills' – a wider range of character and learning dispositions – into pedagogies, curricula and assessments. This is one agenda where, if carefully curated, teachers can lead on behalf of the systems they are part of.
2. **A more rapid advancement of female, gender-responsive leadership.** Given that our 'formal' leaders remain stubbornly male, but our teacher workforces are increasingly female, offering classroom teachers informal leadership opportunities could catalyse female influence over school policies and practices.
3. **The values and practice of democratic participation.** In the Balkans, for instance, Hertscam's program for educators modelled this 'normalising [of] more participative modes of decision making' (Frost, 2021). This reinforces what Webber and Okoto describe as 'the centrality of teachers and education systems in the development and nurturing of civil societies' (2021, p 12).

These hypotheses feel worth testing, now. The pandemic appears to have weakened many governments' legitimacy to enact hierarchical, centralised school reform, and has provided an opportunity for other kinds of leadership to make their claim and flourish. We need to understand (through research), enact (through programs), and promote (through advocacy) the systemic conditions, policies, environments and cultures that enable teacher leadership to flourish and make as much difference as possible. As the OECD's Andrea Schliecher asserts,

... enlisting [teachers] in the design of superior policies and practices ... requires a carefully crafted enabling environment that can unleash teachers' and schools' ingenuity and build capacity for change.

(Petrie et al, 2020)

A systemic approach to crafting such an environment should be based on the following design principles:

a) Accept and embrace the politics and power dynamics of a shift to teacher leadership.

All conversations about education are ultimately conversations about power. While leadership capacity may be infinite, the space to enact this capacity is finite. For teacher leadership to be successful, others in authority positions above them are going to have to surrender some of that authority.² This can be a challenging – even job-threatening – conversation, but without such dialogue, the practice of teacher leadership is likely to be a tokenistic bauble, rather than a catalyst for deeper transformation.

b) Place emphasis upon collective teacher leadership.

An atomised version of individual teacher leadership is as much of a problem as any other kind of 'hero leadership' – collaboration must be baked into systems for prioritising teacher leadership. This is where COVID can become, as Hargreaves and Fullan assert, 'a catalyst for deepening professional capital' (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2020). The growing popularity of state-supported professional learning communities in countries as diverse as Australia, Estonia, Kenya, Rwanda and the US points the way to structured collaboration as a driver of teacher leadership.

c) Design approaches to school principal recruitment and development that encourage and enable them to create the conditions for teacher leadership to thrive.

Such an approach needs to ask fundamental questions about the nature of leadership in schools – possibly moving from the orthodoxies around 'distributed leadership' (which assumes that school leaders will devolve powers where trust has been built) to one of 'polyarchic leadership' (where school leaders' starting assumption is that power influence should be as decentralised as possible).³

d) Design approaches to teacher recruitment, development and evaluation that build the confidence and capacities to enact leadership across their professional life-course, regardless of role or experience.

The 'Teach for All' movement has leadership as core to its model, but is generally designed for a particular kind of 'academically élite' graduate. If we believe that all educators are capable of leadership beyond their classrooms, this should be encouraged from the first day of their training to the last day they are in the classroom. My experience leading HertsCam International Leadership programs revealed the leadership potential of teachers in the final years of their career, who can leave behind vital pedagogical legacies if given structured opportunities to do so. More reflective, collaborative approaches to teacher evaluation, such as those seen in Finland and Singapore, can also be a driver for different kinds of teacher influence.

e) Ensure that any teacher leadership-focused programs take a far more rigorous approach to understanding their impact.

Three decades ago, Little wrote that 'The prospects for teacher leadership [will] remain dim if no one can distinguish the gains made for students' (Little, 1988). Despite decades of programs, research and advocacy, there is still very limited understanding of impact, beyond the impact on the practices and behaviours of individual teachers. Whether teacher leadership enables greater teacher influence or, more importantly, supports improved outcomes, still feels at 'proof of concept' stage. Across all areas

of education, globally, our 'standards of evidence' bar appears to be rising. For teacher leadership to gain genuine traction and sustainability, programs' approaches to evaluation need to become much more robust.

If we believe that all educators are capable of leadership beyond their classrooms, this should be encouraged from the first day of their training to the last day they are in the classroom.

f) Design education innovations to encourage rather than fear teacher leadership and agency as they go to scale.

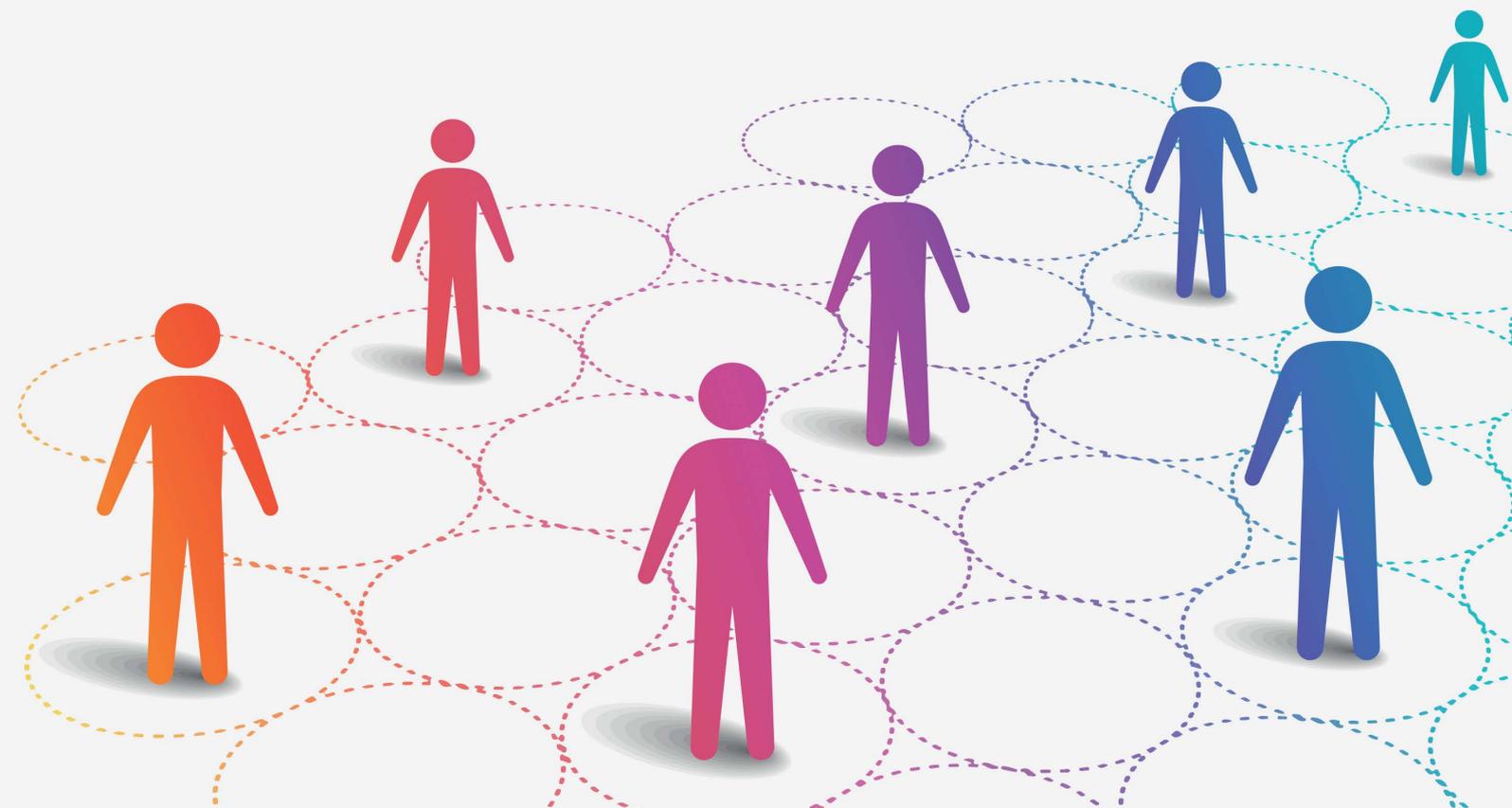
This final principle speaks to the dynamic WISE community of 'edu-preneurs' – those seeking to achieve impact through scaling a particular innovation across a large number of schools. The desire for 'high fidelity' to an innovation's principles and methods is understandable, but flawed. The process of teaching and learning is, even in an ed-tech context, a fundamentally human and humanising experience. Innovators need to become genuinely 'open source' – to develop processes, systems and cultures that embrace the fact that their interventions are likely to be adapted and hacked as they transfer to hundreds of thousands of classrooms. If carefully designed, this provides huge opportunities for teachers to use these innovations to exert influence beyond their classrooms.

Endnotes

- 1 [worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2021/01/22/urgent-effective-action-required-to-quell-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-worldwide](https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2021/01/22/urgent-effective-action-required-to-quell-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-worldwide)
- 2 Mohammed Elmeski, in his article in this report, *The time is right for supporting teacher leadership in Morocco*, argues that it is 'critical to identify the structural, organisational, political and cultural factors impeding the maximisation of teachers' leadership potential.'
- 3 I will explore the potential application of 'polyarchic leadership' to education in a future paper for the CfEY – www.cfey.org. See wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/investigating-the-links-to-improved-student-learning.aspx for a short explanation. In addition, Neil Barker's *Leadership Ecosystems* article, later in this report, explores an approach for collaborative leadership in schools.

References

- Berry, B, Darling-Hammond, L and Mackay, A (2021) *Teacher Leadership for Whole Child Education: A Global Perspective*, SC-TEACHER of the University of South Carolina, Columbia SC.
- Education International (2020) *Save our Future. Averting an Education Catastrophe for the World's Children*. Accessed at saveourfuture.world/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Averting-an-Education-Catastrophe-for-the-Worlds-Children_SOF_White-Paper.pdf.
- Frost, D and Vranješević, J (2021) *Researching Non-positional Teacher Leadership in the Western Balkans*. Paper for conference available on request.
- Hargreaves, A and Fullan, M (2020) 'Professional capital after the pandemic: Revisiting and revising classic understandings of teachers' work', *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*. Accessed at emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JPC-06-2020-0039/full/pdf?title=professional-capital-after-the-pandemic-revisiting-and-revisingclassic-understandings-of-teachers-work.
- Little, J W (1988) 'Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership', in A Lieberman (Ed) *Building a Professional Culture in Schools*, Teachers College Press, New York.
- Petrie, C, Aladin, K, Ranjan, P, Javangwe, R, Gilliland, D, Tuominen, S and Lasse, L (2020) *Spotlight: Quality education for all during COVID-19 crisis*, HundrED Research Report #1.
- Ramahi, H (2018) *Teachers Leading School Improvement and Education Reconstruction in Palestine* (Doctoral thesis). doi.org/10.17863/CAM.25022.
- Webber, C and Okoko, J (2021) 'Exploring teacher leadership across cultures: Introduction to teacher leadership', *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership*, **6**, 1/March 2021.
- York-Barr, J, Duke, K (2004) 'What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship', *Review of Educational Research*, **74**, 3, p 255–316. [doi:10.3102/00346543074003255](https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074003255).



THEME THREE: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP NETWORKS

Jean-Pierre Mugiraneza, Lead – Leadership for Learning, Education Development Trust, and
Susan Douglas, CEO, the Eden Academy, and Senior Education Advisor, British Council, UK

INTRODUCTION

The importance of school leadership in creating outstanding organisations has been acknowledged and understood for many years (Leithwood et al, 2006 and 2019; Day et al, 2009; Marzano et al, 2005). Indeed, Odhiambo and Hii (2012) claimed that leadership in schools was 'more important than ever', but 2020 was a year like no other. On 25 April, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO (2021) reported 165 country-wide closures of schools, with 82.9 per cent of the world's enrolled pupil population

affected, totalling over 1.45 billion learners. Worldwide, policy makers and school leaders were grappling with very new and significant challenges, which are requiring greater agility, flexibility and innovation.

In these unprecedented times, the potential of networks, collaborations and partnerships beyond a single school was thrown into sharp relief. Used effectively, they can provide emotional and practical support, opportunities to share learning and expertise, and, beyond crisis management, offer general school improvement support, particularly to schools that are struggling (Armstrong, 2015; Chapman, 2015; Mujijs et al, 2010).

In this article, we offer two case studies that reflect the potential power of these networks from two strikingly different contexts – Rwanda and England.

CASE STUDY ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORKS OF SCHOOL LEADERS IN RWANDA

In the last two decades, Rwanda's success in strengthening good governance, reducing poverty, promoting home-grown solutions, improving living standards, establishing the rule of law, and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women has helped the country to rebuild (Republic of Rwanda, 2020). Nowadays, Rwanda is investing hugely in human capital development to ensure access to high-quality basic education. Among other initiatives in the education sector, Rwanda aims to ensure school leaders are well trained and accountable for improved learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2018). Evidence from Rwanda's education system before (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009), during and after school closures because of COVID-19, showed that school leaders needed to create social capital by collaborating together through structured networks. This case study demonstrates the power of those school leader networks in Rwanda.

In Rwanda, the Professional Learning Networks of school leaders are empowered by five enablers, namely creating trust, strengthened relationships among school leaders, effective collaboration, robust leadership, and result-driven accountability among school leaders. Because of these enablers, the school leaders' networks are powerful remedies that helped schools to improve their performance.

Creating trust among school leaders

Professional Learning Networks for school leaders provided opportunities to set clear purpose and objectives, aligned with the system's challenges. Through their networks, school leaders weigh the system priorities and set targets for improvement. According to one school leader from the northern province of Rwanda, who is a regular participant in a monthly cluster-level Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting,

Our networks helped education officials and school leaders to share their experiences and to identify areas for school improvement. In our cluster, we do PLC monthly, we have created a shared vision for all schools, we have learned more about our daily responsibilities. More importantly, the PLCs helped to prepare for school re-opening.

Strengthened relationships among school leaders

The networks provided the social capital that allowed school leaders to work collaboratively over time, and to exceed what any of them could accomplish alone. Through their networks, school leaders could access and use resources from their colleagues. They make aspects of their work accessible to others and expose their ideas and intentions to one another. A school leader from the western province of Rwanda confirmed that

... in PLC meetings, head teachers share their leadership practices and challenges and take practical action points which later positively affect school leadership style and teaching/learning activities.

In Rwanda, the Professional Learning Networks of school leaders are empowered by five enablers, namely creating trust, strengthened relationships among school leaders, effective collaboration, robust leadership, and result-driven accountability among school leaders.

Effective collaboration among school leaders

The networks enable school leaders to collaborate and share ideas and practices, particularly when it involves school improvement. They can organise joint planning activities to review their school improvement plans. They discuss and take decisions on which objectives to focus on in their schools. School leaders from the western province of Rwanda explained the power of networking through their cluster level PLC, as follows:

... before attending PLCs, I was like an island in an ocean, however being together with other members of the same profession, it was my best times to share with them: knowledge, best practices and challenges we meet in our daily life at school level, as well as measures to be taken in order to overcome those challenges.

Robust leadership

School leaders are the custodians of the leadership of the networks. Whereas experienced leaders are appointed as leaders of learning to coordinate the network activities, other leaders are assigned other specific roles in the network. This strategy has promoted ownership. The National Leader of Learning (NLL) trained on Leadership for Learning said

I am a 10-year experienced school leader. I am also the NLL in my sector. Through our networks at cluster level, I help my colleagues to understand principles and standards for an effective school leadership. More importantly, my colleagues share data and information related to their performance. There is always much to learn from each other.

... the collaboration and support between head teachers is an educational imperative reform that must be sustained; head teachers have to recognise that they are not alone in searching for solutions for improving teaching and learning processes with increased student achievement.

Leaders are held accountable by their colleagues for poor school performance. It is imperative for school leaders, if needed or asked for, to explain to each other why they act as they do.

Results-driven accountability

School leaders' networks strengthen accountability for improved learning outcomes in schools. Leaders are held accountable by their colleagues for poor school performance. It is imperative for school leaders, if needed or asked for, to explain to each other why they act as they do.

To summarise, the networks of schools' leaders were powerful in enabling them to work together for a common purpose. Networks facilitate professional cooperation and communication, to strengthen school leaders' skills and practices needed for school improvement and, thus, allow collective action for pupils' learning outcome improvement.

A CASE STUDY ON COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND (H1)

Education policy in England has focused significantly on the creation of a range of networks and partnerships between schools since 2000 and, in particular, 2010. Although the landscape is now complex, with partnerships varying in breadth and depth, increasing numbers of schools are operating collaboratively within Academy Trusts, single legal entities responsible for the outcomes from a group of schools. In August 2021, around 78 per cent of secondary schools and 37 per cent of primary schools were academies, between them educating over 55 per cent of the school population. Interestingly, research from both Ofsted (Muijs and Sampson, 2021) and the University of Nottingham (Day et al, 2021) demonstrated that Trusts had proved themselves to be robust and resilient structures during the pandemic, noting they created the conditions for teachers and leaders to work together in deep and purposeful collaboration to advance education for public good.

To give an example of the benefits that collaboration across a group of schools might provide, the rest of this article outlines one innovation undertaken at The Eden Academy Trust. The Trust comprises seven schools, which specialise in meeting the educational needs of children and young people with a range of learning difficulties, including those who may have autism and physical or sensory needs. The Trust employs a team approach and works closely with families and carers to meet the needs of all their young people by combining the very best of educational and therapeutic practice. As a direct result of collaboration between schools and the creation of a central team offering school improvement, therapeutic, family and professional support services, all schools are now judged as being good or outstanding (despite two of the schools previously being rated as inadequate).

Although the schools cater for pupils with a wide range of needs, in order for children to access and engage in their education most successfully, the Trust believes that therapy from three disciplines – creative, physical and communication – should form part of the provision on offer. Originally, the recruitment and retention of these therapists were

managed individually by each school, a situation which raised several challenges. Firstly, with only a finite number of positions available in any one school, the scope for career progression was limited, leading to high staff turnover. Secondly, this lack of career progression led to initial difficulties in recruitment, meaning schools could often face delays of weeks or even months with vacant posts, during which time children would not receive the therapies to which they were entitled. Finally, as each small special school was operating independently, economies of scale meant that budget pressures often meant recruiting junior therapists rather than senior therapists.

Although the case studies offered here come from strikingly different contexts, we propose they ... share the common purpose of improving student outcomes, whilst also suggesting a degree of autonomy in headteachers finding innovative and creative solutions to common challenges.

The Trust's senior leadership team realised that efficiency and value for money should, and could, be improved, and commissioned an external review into the provision of therapies across the trust. The review recommended centralising the process for recruiting, employing and deploying therapists. This included the development of a single pay structure as, under the existing systems, there was a variety of arrangements (including 'spot contracts' and variable hours contracts, for example). In addition, as these contracts did not allow progression, both in terms of pay and management responsibility, a further recommendation was made to develop a central career structure for all therapists at the trust. This was implemented over a period of two years, with a service-level agreement being drawn up between schools and the therapy team, outlining the provision that would be delivered to each school.

The changes proved to be a great success. They led to cost savings in recruiting therapists (in part due to greater retention), better coordination among therapists across the trust, and better long-term planning throughout the operation as a whole.

The therapies team benefitted from a guaranteed and predictable income stream, which gives it the flexibility to deliver a high-quality service, while the schools know that for a fixed and known expenditure they will have a reduced administrative workload and a guarantee of their therapy needs being met to a high standard. The provision of a clear career progression path has also been important. Individuals can now see that there are numerous paths for development across the trust as a whole, whereas previously they were restricted to having to wait for a lesser number of opportunities to become available in their individual schools. This has led to a reduction in staff turnover.

Alongside this growing stability, an increase in the efficiency of the therapies team has also been seen. The number of instances when pupils have missed therapy sessions due to a shortage of trained professionals has dropped significantly and the therapies team has also been able to expand its service, now providing therapy for students from the wider London area, who are placed in schools outside of the Trust. This provides just one example of how collaborating outside of one school can create more effective ways of working, with the purpose of ultimately impacting on pupil outcomes.

CONCLUSION

In considering the power of networks and the role of the school leader outside of their organisation, members of the WISE ALL-IN global community of practice have been reflecting on the work of Daniel Pink (2009) and, in particular, the role of autonomy, mastery and purpose within his triangle of intrinsic motivation. Although the case studies offered here come from strikingly different contexts, we propose they can be tied together through this academic model. Both, for example, share the common purpose of improving student outcomes, whilst also suggesting a degree of autonomy in headteachers finding innovative and creative solutions to common challenges. Importantly, they illustrate the possibility of improving the skills of those who lead through professional collaboration, thus improving provision. Put simply, this trifecta – purpose, autonomy and mastery – may well have the potential to disrupt education in a way that will allow us to address not only our current challenges, but also the challenges that lie ahead.

References

- Armstrong, P (2015) *Effective School Partnerships and Collaboration for School Improvement: A Review of the Evidence*, Department for Education, London.
- Bhandari, H and Yasunobu, K (2009) 'What Is Social Capital? A comprehensive review of the concept', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, **37**, p 480–510. 10.1163/156853109X436847.
- Chapman, C (2015) 'From one school to many: Reflections on the impact and nature of school federations and chains in England', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, **43**, 1, p 46–60.
- Day, C, Sammons, P, Hopkins, D, Harris, A, Leithwood, K, Gu, K, Brown, E, Ahtaridou, E and Kington, A (2009) *The Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes*, Department for Children, Schools and Families, London.
- Day, C, Taneva, S K and Smith, R (2021) 'System leadership in disruptive times: Robust policy making and enactment in School Trusts'. Accessed at cstuk.org.uk/assets/pdfs/QR_system_leadership_in_disruptive_times_report_2021.pdf.
- Leithwood, K, Day, C, Sammons, P, Harris, A and Hopkins, D (2006) *Seven Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership*, National College for School Leadership, Nottingham.
- Leithwood, K, Harris, A and Hopkins, D (2019) *Seven Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership Revisited*, Routledge, Abingdon.
- Marzano, R J, Waters, T and McNulty, B A (2005) *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA.
- Ministry of Education (2018) *Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018/19–2023/24*, Republic of Rwanda, Kigali. Accessed at mineduc.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Mineduc/Publications/ESSP/1_Education_Sector_Strategic_Plan_2018_2024.pdf.
- Muijs, D and Sampson, K (2021) *The Trust in Testing Times: The Role of Multi-Academy Trusts During the Pandemic*. Accessed at educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2021/01/19/the-trust-in-testing-times-the-role-of-multi-academy-trusts-during-the-pandemic/.
- Muijs, D, West, M and Ainscow, M (2010) 'Why network? Theoretical perspectives on networking', *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, **21**, 1, p 5–26. DOI: 10.1080/09243450903569692.
- Odhiambo, G and Hii, A (2012) 'Key stakeholders' perceptions of effective school leadership', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, **40**, p 232–247.
- Pink, D H (2009) *Drive*, Riverhead Books, New York.
- Republic of Rwanda (2020) *Vision 2050 – Building the Rwanda We Want*, Republic of Rwanda, Kigali. Accessed at minecofin.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Minecofin/Publications/STRATEGIES/Vision_2050/English-Vision_2050_Full_version-Web.pdf.
- UNESCO (2021) *Education: From Disruption to Recovery*. Accessed at en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse#schoolclosures.

AFTERWORD: TRANSFORMATIONAL NETWORKS

The Lonely Century (2021), by Noreena Hertz, is full of fascinating data and analysis about individualism, isolation and loneliness. One of the cultural trends that she talks about in the book is how from the 1980s onwards words like 'we', 'us' and 'our' have been supplanted by 'I', 'me' and 'myself' in pop song lyrics. Hertz connects this with neoliberalism and the gradual dominance of what she calls an 'I-centric' way of seeing the world. It is an interesting proxy, cultural indicator, and is true in pop song lyrics in many languages around the world.

The Agile Leaders of Learning Innovation Network (ALL-IN), as with almost all other purpose-oriented networks, exists because we can achieve more when we go beyond an I-centric way of seeing the world. As we collectively move beyond the pandemic and all of the disruption that it has caused to our shared and individual lives, as well as our education systems, there are many encouraging signs that greater cooperation and celebration of our interconnectedness will be more important than individualism, moving forward.

Every piece in this special publication is the outcome of collaboration, and many of them have education collaboration as their subject. Effective, purpose-driven networks like ALL-IN can offer members different kinds of energy in challenging times: emotional energy (through connection); spiritual energy (through shared purpose); and mental energy (through stimulation and collaboration).

Networks are also invaluable for helping each of us develop new mental models for seeing the world differently. Mental models can help us reframe problems, to transcend the need to only choose between bad options. Networks can also create space that allows for collaboration, the exploration of new ideas, and the sharing and adaptation of insights and practice from one context to another.

A positive outcome of the last two years is that a lot more of us are now very comfortable developing meaningful relationships with people we have never met in person. This is helping to create the conditions in which networks can flourish. Networks can be incredibly decentralised. Power is not concentrated in any one area, so they are liberating and empowering and consistent with other macro trends in many of our societies. Online networks can also create more equity of opportunity for participation. There can remain issues, such as access and the time zone biases for when the network meets, but they are fairer in other ways, such as when the time commitment is spread out rather than concentrated.

If we are entering a post-pandemic era of enhanced collaboration and collective effort, where new insights and breakthrough solutions to long-standing challenges will come from collectives rather than the cliché of the lone genius, then networks such as ALL-IN will play a vital role.

There are many encouraging signs that this new way of thinking about the world is becoming more prevalent. Amanda Gorman, the first Youth Poet Laureate in the USA, became famous around the world for her reading at Joe Biden's inauguration. In a review of her poetry collection *Call Us What We Carry*, published soon after the inauguration reading, the Hong Kong poet Kit Fan makes the excellent observation that while the first-person singular appears very infrequently in the book, 'we', 'us' and 'our' occur more than 1,500 times. Our values are shifting – the pandemic has forced many people to think differently about how they work and who they collaborate with. Purpose-driven networks will help shape and sustain the solutions and innovations that will define a wide range of issues over the decades ahead.

Dominic Regester

Program Director, Salzburg Global Seminar

ARTICLES

SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS IN
POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

WELLBEING FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP

ESCUELA NUEVA AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:
A PATH TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALISATION

LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS:
A COLOMBIAN PERSPECTIVE

LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS:
A KENYAN PERSPECTIVE

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR SUPPORTING TEACHER
LEADERSHIP IN MOROCCO

MINDSETS MATTER: EFFECTIVE SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP POST-COVID-19

LEADERSHIP ECOSYSTEMS: A WHOLE-SCHOOL
APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR NEW TIMES

SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS IN POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Azad Oommen, Co-founder, Global School Leaders, and **Dewi Susanti**, Senior Director of Research, Global School Leader

'Please reopen the schools. Children are so worried about their studies. They don't have smartphones so physical classes are needed in rural areas with safe precautions,' wrote a school leader in his response to the Global School Leaders (GSL) 2021 Annual Pulse Survey.

In order to understand the needs and concerns of school leaders as school systems look to reopen, we collaborated with partners and organisations in 24 countries to conduct the survey. A total of 11,667 educators, 3,763 of whom are school principals, self-selected to participate.

When the survey was circulated in July 2021, only 16 per cent of schools had opened. By the end of November 2021, UNESCO reported that more than 38 million primary and secondary students globally still did not have access to in-person learning.

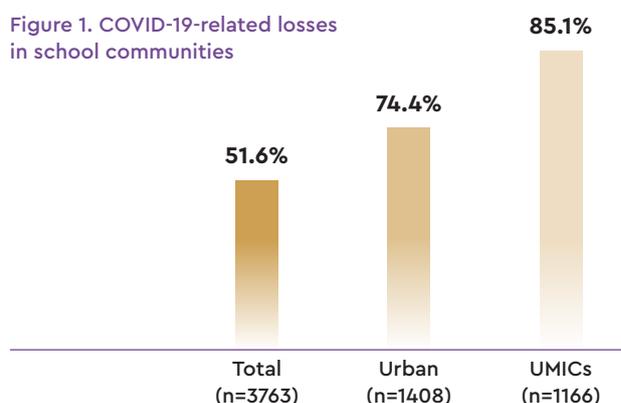
As schools reopen, 55 per cent of 3,763 school leaders in our survey worried about learning loss. The situation is particularly concerning in low-income countries, where only one in four students has access to technology. Although the majority of school leaders (83 per cent) had reopened schools sooner, they also reported teachers utilised fewer strategies to reach students. Schools in low-income countries also reported a much higher level of student dropouts, at 69 per cent, more than double compared to those in lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries.

We were struck by the high-level loss of lives reported by one in every two school leaders. The rate is even higher in upper-middle-income countries ...

In contrast, the average school leader found ways to adapt to the many challenges their communities faced. They reported teachers collaborated with parents (54 per cent), shared learning materials through online platforms like WhatsApp (48 per cent), and organised remote learning (40 per cent).

We were struck by the high-level loss of lives reported by one in every two school leaders. The rate is even higher in upper-middle-income countries, where 85 per cent of school leaders reported loss of lives in their school communities (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. COVID-19-related losses in school communities



As a result, the majority of school leaders in these countries (89 per cent) were concerned with the health and safety of their teachers and students, double that of those in low-income countries. Many of them (60 per cent) were also worried over parents or guardians who had lost income due to the pandemic, compared to 37 per cent in lower income countries.

We also found similar differences between urban and rural schools. School leaders in urban areas reported 74 per cent of students experienced loss of life in their families due to COVID-19 (Figure 1), compared to 24 per cent in rural schools; 79 per cent of urban school leaders were concerned about the health and safety of their teachers and students, more than ten percentage points higher than those in rural schools. School leaders in urban areas also worried over parents/guardians who have lost income due to the pandemic, at 63 per cent compared to 46 per cent in rural schools.

Although leaders from private schools constitute a smaller group (13 per cent), compared to government schools in our survey, some of our findings are quite alarming, and merit additional study: for example, 58 per cent of private school leaders reported financial challenges, more than three times what was reported from those in public schools. Another 58 per cent reported student dropouts, more than twice that of those in public schools. Finally, 43 per cent of private school leaders could only reach out to less than half of their students, almost double that of public schools.

As highlighted in the 2020 GSL Annual Pulse Survey, engaging school leaders to support students and families helps ensure learning continues at home. Throughout the pandemic, our team has been inspired and encouraged by how school leaders stepped up to meet the various needs of their school communities. As one school leader stated: 'we offer free physical, social and emotional wellbeing counselling to teachers, parents, and students.' However, we must recognise that school leaders also need support to continue leading and fulfilling their communities' various needs during crises.

Based on the voices of principals, we have four recommendations for policy makers and organisations supporting low-income and middle-income school systems.

1. Proactively address mental health challenges caused by loss of life in school communities.
2. Address learning loss by equipping schools with different strategies: conduct remedials individually and in groups; use online/offline/hybrid resources; and collaborate with parents.
3. Prioritise and differentiate supports based on the school system contexts and resources: by income levels; by geographical densities; and public vs private.
4. Ensure low-fee private schools are provided with safety nets during recovery.

The challenge, as stated earlier, is to understand both the capabilities required of school leaders and the interplay between school leaders, policy makers and support organisations.

Endnote

1. We grouped the respondents' countries based on the World Bank's categorisation. The Low-Income Countries grouping in this survey consists of Rwanda, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau.

WELLBEING FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Daniela Labra Cardero, General Director,
AtentaMente Consultores AC

INTRODUCTION

The role of teachers is more multi-faceted as they enact leadership roles not only within the classroom, but also in other areas of the education system. More strain can come from these extended functions, so it is crucial to provide teachers with the means to cultivate skills that can help them navigate challenges and opportunities, and also flourish. Developing social and emotional competency in a systemic approach can foster teacher wellbeing, improve student learning and wellbeing, and enhance teacher leadership capacities.

WELLBEING FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP

A central aspect not just to teachers but to all human beings is wellbeing. Wellbeing is a skill and can be learned like any other skill (Dahl et al, 2020). As we think about education for the 21st century and the role of teachers and other educators – teaching the young to develop healthy habits of mind, knowledge about themselves, self-care and caring for others and for the planet – we need to consider that those who teach these skills should be the first ones to have them and model them (Educating for Wellbeing, 2021).

When we talk about teacher professional development and ongoing training, facilitating the mindsets and social and emotional competencies that foster wellbeing must be central.

During the pandemic, teacher leadership shone forth, particularly in their leading learning in a challenging novel context, with little certainty and, in many instances, a disarticulation of the education systems trying their best to respond to the circumstances.

Teaching is stressful and has been increasingly so: a 2020 survey of 5,000 teachers found they are overwhelmed: anxious, fearful, worried, sad (Brackett and Cipriano, 2020). We ask them not only to teach their subject matter, but also to lead the change in learning, in school systems. Is their leadership fundamental to help education respond to present and future challenges in a way that can prepare the young for crises? Yes, but also to be able to live satisfactory lives and thrive, helping and caring for others and regenerating the planet. What can we offer them to be better prepared?

First, there is a strong need to emphasise their wellbeing as part and parcel of the education system. When we talk about teacher professional development and ongoing training, facilitating the mindsets and social and emotional competencies that foster wellbeing must be central.

The education system has left wellbeing as a side track, hoping it may come as a secondary effect of schooling. This omission has high costs in the lives of educators and children alike. The pandemic has evidenced the fact that lacking the capacity to have a healthy relationship with oneself, others and with life's challenges – such as isolation, stress, illness, loss and the unknown – in an ever more uncertain world, is an onerous oversight. We can learn from the current mental health crisis and strive to uproot its causes.

Research has shown that social emotional competency (SEC) – knowing oneself, regulating emotions, questioning one's own thoughts in an open and caring manner, building healthier, care-based relationships with oneself, others and the environment – not only helps people achieve life goals and is central to academic learning (Weissberg et al, 2015), but also builds resilience (EducationLinks,

2020) and can be the basis for ethics and democracy (Rodriguez et al, in press; Devaney et al, 2005). More so, SEC is a crucial asset to educator-leaders as they work together to face unknown and increasingly more complex challenges (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009).

Secondly, teachers cannot carry the weight alone: we need a systemic approach to wellbeing in education, not just in making it a central goal, but also involving and fostering it as a skill in all levels of the system.

For example, principals are second in influence to learning (Leithwood et al, 2020). They too, can benefit from developing their capacity for emotional wellbeing, fostering caring relationships and collaboration while participating with teachers, other educators, students, parents and the community, to build a shared vision for wellbeing within schools and school systems (Senge et al, 2012).

If we want teachers to be able to build positive classroom and school climates that can protect students from toxic stress and help them learn, and also want them to exert their leadership across the system, we are not only talking about highly capable teachers in the pedagogical and classroom organisation arena, we are also talking about persons that can give emotional support, understand and work with their biases, collaborate, learn together and be examples for others.

We need to give teachers and all educators the space and time to develop these underlying capacities for teaching and leading in today's world (Cann et al, 2021). As teachers are better able to develop their own wellbeing, they can be better leaders and better models of these capacities for students.

References

Brackett, M and Cipriano, C (2020) *Teachers Are Anxious and Overwhelmed. They Need SEL More than Ever*. Accessed at edsurge.com/news/2020-04-07-teachers-are-anxious-and-overwhelmed-they-need-sel-now-more-than-ever.

Cann, R F, Riedel-Prabhakar, R and Powell, D (2021) 'A model of positive school leadership to improve teacher wellbeing', *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, **6**, p 195–218.

Dahl, C J, Wilson-Mendenhall, C D and Davidson, R J (2020) 'The plasticity of well-being: A training-based framework for the cultivation of human flourishing', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, **117**, 51, 32197-32206.

Devaney, E, Utne O'Brien, M, Tavegia, M and Resnik, H (2005) 'Promoting children's ethical development through social and emotional learning', *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2005, **108**, p 107–116.

Educating for Wellbeing (2021) *Educating for Wellbeing*. Mexico. Accessed at HundrED.org. hundred.org/en/innovations/educating-for-wellbeing-ew.

EducationLinks (2020) *Fostering Resilience During COVID-19 through Social and Emotional Learning*, USAID. Accessed at edu-links.org/learning/fostering-resilience-during-covid-19-through-social-and-emotional-learning.

Jennings, P A and Greenberg, M T (2009) 'The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes', *Review of Educational Research*, **79**, 1, p 491–525.

Leithwood, K, Harris, A and Hopkins, D (2020) 'Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited'. *School Leadership and Management*, **40**, 1, p 5–22.

Rodriguez, E, Labra D, García B and Chericoff, L (in press) *Etica Para el SXXI: Una Guia Práctica para Promover el Buen Vivir, Construir Relaciones Sanas y Promover el Bienestar Social*, Secretaría de Educación Pública, México.

Senge, P M, Cambron-McCabe, N, Lucas, T, Smith, B and Dutton, J (2012) *Schools that Learn (updated and revised): A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares about Education*, Currency.

Weissberg, R P, Durlak, J A, Domitrovich, C E and Gullotta, T P (2015) 'Social and emotional learning: Past, present, and future', in J A Durlak (Ed) *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice*, Guilford Publications, New York.

ESCUELA NUEVA AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

Santiago Rincón-Gallardo, Chief Research Officer, Michael Fullan's team, **Laura María Vega-Chaparro**, Head of Community Connections, Fundación Escuela Nueva Volvamos a la Gente, and **Vicky Colbert**, Founder and Director, Fundación Escuela Nueva Volvamos a la Gente

INTRODUCTION

Education leadership will have to be reimagined so that education becomes an effective vehicle to activate and nurture the capacity of children, youth and adults to learn to be, learn to know, learn to do, and learn to live with others. This requires schools to engage teachers and students explicitly in leading the transformation. Escuela Nueva (EN) has been doing just that for five decades, by turning powerful philosophies and models of student-centred education into simple, actionable practices that develop children's joy, curiosity, and capacity to learn and collaborate, providing access to high-quality education in the most remote communities in Colombia and abroad.

Learning continuously and facilitating the continuous learning of others is key to the leadership needed now and in the future.

LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We can expect massive disruption to the ways in which families, societies and organisations operate for the next several years. We must prepare our young people to successfully navigate uncertainty, find purpose, and better the world. Effective leadership will be about maintaining a relentless focus on the learning and wellbeing of young people

while navigating uncertainty. Below we describe three key leadership practices that need to be cultivated, and discuss how EN is doing this with young people, educators and leaders alike.

Forging unity of purpose

Preparing our children and youth for the future will require arduous work, especially under high levels of uncertainty in our world. Our best bet is to support leaders to find and connect to their why – and to learn how to help others do the same. EN understands education as a way to transform and improve society. It emphasises: (i) understanding reality, (ii) identifying ways to improve it, (iii) taking action. This emphasis permeates the everyday work of those involved with EN – students, educators and leaders. Everyone involved in EN centres their work on a simple, inspiring and actionable vision of learning and the conditions that help it flourish. A relentless focus on creating conditions for deep, powerful learning among students in the most remote communities helps forge unity of purpose unlike anything else.

Leading learning

Leading in times of uncertainty requires agility, adaptability, resourcefulness and compassion. Learning continuously and facilitating the continuous learning of others is key to the leadership needed now and in the future. A key principle of EN is 'learning by doing', and this applies the same to students and to adults as well, both of whom learn to collaborate, learn and lead by collaborating, learning and leading, refining their skills over time, with support from others.

The most effective way to develop lead learners is direct exposure to and experience in the very environments, and with the same pedagogical practices, that are expected in classrooms and schools. EN does this with teachers and students alike. Teachers learn to transform their practice by experiencing as students first EN's learning

environments and pedagogical practices. Another key feature of EN's training model is that it is job-embedded – it uses the practice and improvement plans of leaders, in their own context, as the key raw material to examine, learn from, and refine over time through continuous learning.

Leadership development, as any other complex skill, begins with simple and concrete behaviours that evolve over time and with practice.

Developing capacity for improvement and collaboration

This involves creating productive environments for the learning and growth of all those involved, building and furthering their capacity to collaborate effectively, both internally and externally, to best serve the learning of children and youth. EN promotes cooperation between and among students and adults. Peer tutoring is core to the EN model.

As for school-community collaboration, EN's Learning Guides, for example, support learning application with families and community members. The Student Government encourages students to positively impact their school and their community.

Nobody knows exactly what lies ahead or what a perfect program for leadership development looks like. For this reason, it is important to develop programs that are open ended by design, refining them iteratively by constantly examining what is working and what is not. Still, two important lessons can be distilled from EN. First, to promote positive and transformative leadership requires a systemic approach. This involves the design of processes and strategies at multiple levels, whose combination creates opportunities to (i) develop and practise basic and complex skills, (ii) co-construct specific knowledge, and (iii) act as a transformative leader. Second, any program for leadership must be deeply connected to the realities of the school, its community, its students, and its teachers.

Leadership development, as any other complex skill, begins with simple and concrete behaviours that evolve over time and with practice. This is what EN, with its systemic approach and rich pool of strategies, does. Young people and adults in EN are supported to grow at their own rhythm and with the depth they can handle. The key to EN's success is having a coherent and systemic pedagogical approach that is grounded on a simple, inspiring and practical understanding of how and why humans learn best.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: A PATH TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALISATION

Chantal Kabanda Dusabe, Strategic Advisor in School Leadership for VVOB – Education for Development

INTRODUCTION

There is strong consensus within the international education community that effective school leadership is key to leverage the broader education workforce for better learning and more resilient education systems. However, school leaders' roles and responsibilities are often still too contained to administrative or supervisory activities. The shift towards instructional leadership at school level can be facilitated through the professional development of school leaders to undertake instructional leadership and by providing the necessary tools, and by strengthening decentralised educational leadership capacity.

RWANDA IMPORTANT ACTIONS

In Rwanda, the government set out on a path in 2008 to firmly institutionalise such effective, instructional school leadership with the support of [VVOB – education for development](#).

Five important actions (in somewhat chronological order), over the course of nearly 15 years – not an unusual length of time for nationwide scaling – have led to this success and can inspire similar endeavours.

1. Set up a dedicated unit within existing structures

To **consolidate and sustain progress already made** in pilot projects on school management and administration before 2008, Rwanda's Ministry of Education and VVOB began looking at how and where to set up a department responsible for school leadership more broadly.

In 2011, this collaboration led to the formal establishment of the School Leadership and Management Unit within the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB). The unit is mainly

responsible for the quality of school leadership and management in basic education and, more specifically, for continuous professional development, peer learning, and the monitoring and evaluation of school leaders. A taskforce on school leadership, co-chaired by REB and VVOB, coordinates efforts of all partners in the education sector.

2. Define a common framework for 'effective school leadership'

One of the first major accomplishments of the Unit was the formulation and introduction of evidence-based [professional standards for school leaders](#):

- Creating strategic direction for the school
- Leading learning
- Leading teaching
- Managing the school as an organisation
- Working with parents and the wider community

These five standards describe in detail the key roles, responsibilities, functions and necessary competences to be an effective school leader. They set a common framework for the recruitment, assessment, certification and professional development of school leaders.

3. Invest in accredited professional development of school leaders and government officials

In 2013, work began on developing a **system to extend professional development to school leaders and government staff at a decentralised level across the country**, taking into account the abovementioned five standards.

VVOB, REB and the University of Rwanda-College of Education (UR-CE) joined forces to design two continuous professional development (CPD) modalities. These were

- a CPD diploma course on Effective School Leadership, aimed at equipping school leaders with the competences needed to fulfil their roles. By 2021, around 3,000 school leaders had successfully completed the program, officially accredited by UR-CE.

-
- additional CPD support in professional learning communities (PLCs) of school leaders, aimed at bridging the gap between the theory, policy and practice of effective school leadership, and at creating a forum for sharing good practices. By 2021, VVOB had trained close to 400 government officials at a decentralised level, to facilitate these PLCs and coach the school leaders participating in them.

4. Reach more school leaders online

As points 1 and 2 show, scaling is about more than 'reaching numbers'. However, numbers are important, especially if the issue at hand impacts many individuals, as effective leadership does. When it comes to reaching many people, ICT-mediated learning has some obvious advantages. The government of Rwanda is also keen to harness the power of ICT.

In 2019, VVOB **redeveloped the original training programs for school leaders for delivery in a blended modality by UR-CE lecturers.** Future and current school leaders who want to obtain a diploma in Effective School Leadership can now learn the content online from their workplace or at home through a user-friendly interface. The limited face-to-face sessions are dedicated to deepening the understanding of the content through peer learning and interactive exercises, with offline alternatives for contexts of limited connectivity.

5. Promote distributed leadership in schools

As effective teaching is the school-based factor with the greatest direct impact on learning outcomes, VVOB and REB also **look to teachers to take up leadership roles.**

School-based mentors and school subject leaders, for example, are teachers selected by their peers to act as teacher leaders: they are expected to show personal leadership in professional development; they coordinate school-based CPD; they support new teachers; they stimulate reflection through lesson observations and feedback; and they are general coaches and mentors to support their colleagues in becoming better teachers.

The support of the school leader for the school-based mentor remains, however, a key determinant for successful teacher leadership.

Through this trajectory of institutionalising effective school leadership at different levels, VVOB started building an evidence base to demonstrate that the model 'works' and to gain eminent support within Rwanda – **and across the African continent.**

LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS: A COLOMBIAN PERSPECTIVE

Andrea Escobar Vilá, Executive Director, Fundación Empresarios por la Educación, Colombia

INTRODUCTION

Colombia is a multi-diverse country in geographical, economic and socio-cultural terms. Its educational system has a decentralised model that gives autonomy to local territorial entities and allows the participation of the educational community in order to meet the needs of different contexts.

Faced with such diversity, there is a growing demand of 19,387 public schools, serving 9,928,065 students, to improve learning quality – a responsibility that ultimately falls on school leaders. Likewise, the demand for quick responses in dynamic and changing situations occasioned by COVID-19, exposed more strongly the need to strengthen the leadership of school principals, beyond their pedagogical and administrative management skills, creating the need to lead in uncertainty and contingency.

IDENTIFYING AND FACING THE CHALLENGES

Maintaining trust among school members, developing curricular innovations to reduce learning gaps, and managing resources to improve physical conditions, have been some of the challenges successfully addressed by those school leaders who have worked collaboratively to identify problems, solve them and collect learnings in order to share them with others. This accelerates responsiveness among colleagues.

The impact that school leaders have on improving their educational communities was a marginal and not very visible issue in Latin America, until a few years ago. However, school principals' leadership as a lever for the improvement of education has been developed and studied for more than 12 years by the Fundación Empresarios por la Educación¹, through

the implementation of innovative initiatives for the training and accompaniment of nearly 2,400 school principals in all areas of the country, such as the Educational Leadership Network and the program Rectores Líderes Transformadores (RLT). The program RLT had an impact evaluation that evidenced significant transformations, not only in the personal and professional development of school principals, but also in learning and school environments. This became evidence of the importance of the leadership of school principals as the second most influential aspect in the transformation and strengthening of the quality of education.

Part of the evidence collected indicates that school leaders require training strategies that are not conventional compared to those offered by formal education. In this way, networking has been strategic in addressing the challenges of leadership, showing benefits such as the following.

- 1. Mitigating school leader loneliness:** In Colombia, it is not common for school leaders to meet and share their experiences, knowledge and mistakes, in order to learn and strengthen their management. For this reason, many of them say that working within the Educational Leadership network allows them to break their technical and emotional loneliness.

I felt the accompaniment and that is what networking means, interacting and sharing, knowing that we are not alone and that we can help each other to lift our spirits ... this feeds our spirit, I leave with a lot of hope.

Ilse Yaneth Palomeque, School Principal
IE Técnico Industrial Diez de Mayo, Cali

- 2. Identify and manage experiential knowledge:** The networks purposefully organise the sharing of tacit knowledge found in the experiences of solving school problems. Learning from victories and mistakes is a shorter way to strengthen the leadership and management capacity of those school leaders who have not yet gone through the challenges or the experiences narrated, minimising the learning curve.

I have a lot of optimism and expectations because this is a collective in which we can share experiences, learn from each other and I find this experience very interesting.

German Chapeta, Coordinator

Escuela Normal Superior de Bucaramanga-Santander

- 3. Support in the articulation between intermediate leaders and school principals:** Networking allows the principals of a territory to organise their proposals and have a proactive dialogue with the teams of the education secretaries and local governments, in order to build solutions that are relevant to the context.

These spaces lead us to think about the importance of organising ourselves collectively to identify what our department, our municipality really needs, and also because we can always propose more relevant improvements.

Elizabeth Castillo, Coordinator

IE La Fonda Patía, Cauca

The voices of school leaders give us an important insight into the benefits of networks. They express that the network allows them to feel heard, accompanied and as part of a collective, which is crucial in difficult times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. School leaders also affirm that networks provide a frame of trust and security that recognises the humanity, vulnerability and ability of each individual leader, in order to collectively build solutions that enhance the school's conditions.

In addition, networks offer an opportunity for school leaders to work in collaboration with local governments and influence public policy. Thus, networks can become relevant actors in the territories that safeguard the interests of the educational community.

School leaders ... affirm that networks provide a frame of trust and security that recognises the humanity, vulnerability and ability of each individual leader, in order to collectively build solutions that enhance the school's conditions.

Endnote

1. Empresarios por la Educación (ExE) is an independent knowledge network, created by a business alliance with the purpose of influencing the education sector of Colombia, through data analysis and monitoring public policies in education.

LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS: A KENYAN PERSPECTIVE

Ng'ang'a Kibandi, Advocacy and Development Director, Dignitas

INTRODUCTION

Networks and clusters within education have emerged because of a number of influencing factors that are a reaction to changes within educational governance structures. These changes have led to a strategic move from old individualised ways of working to a more collaborative and consultative way of engaging with systemic educational issues. In Kenya, for example, clusters of organisations have come together with different key themes and objectives in mind, with an agenda to learn, consolidate evidence and influence policy.

NETWORKING DEVELOPMENTS IN KENYA

I am privileged to lead the Kenyan chapter of RELI (Regional Education Learning Initiative), an East African network that is thriving, with 28 organisations here in Kenya – all geared towards improving learning outcomes, the ultimate focus of all education network activity, and enhancing the learning experiences of children in Kenya. The platform has proved to be highly impactful as a learning platform, where different organisations come together to learn from each other and build each other's capacity in different facets of the education sector.

One such example is the **Assessment of Lifeskills and Values East Africa (ALiVE)** where RELI organisations from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are developing, with a clear agreed focus, an open-source East Africa-specific life skills assessment tool. The ALiVE program is conducting household assessments on the current state of life skills in East Africa, among both in-school and out-of-school adolescents aged 13 to 17 years.

RELI team in a collaborative learning session



The initiative focuses on four competencies, namely, Self-awareness, Collaboration, Problem Solving, and Respect. The evidence will be used to raise awareness on these competencies and improve learning outcomes across the region.

Additionally, the current educational reforms and COVID-19 interruptions have presented unique opportunities for this organised network to engage key education duty bearers (Ministry and semi-autonomous education agencies), providing informed opinions, carrying out joint research, and gathering experiential learning evidence to best support education within the country. The growing confidence to engage state actors is evident in the different thematic groups in which the organisations are brought together, pegged to their interests and expertise. The groups include Learner-Centred Teaching, Equity and Inclusion, and Values and Lifeskills.

The gains outweigh the pains as the path to success is not always rosy, but leading such a network is extremely complex, sensitive, and requires one to be thoughtful as well as tactful. In my tenure I have learnt a few things that make this very noble position of leadership one that is enjoyable and exciting. Some lessons that continue to make this journey of growth fulfilling include the following.

1. Appreciation and consensus on the common vision/goal and, most critically, the focus on who the overall beneficiary is, are all important. When that vision is not easily understood or appreciated by all, but a majority remain focused, even those that take some time to buy in slowly change.
2. A network's life and success is also dependent on the values and rules of engagement upheld by the members. Earlier on it is important to establish a membership charter for 'enforcement'.
3. It is important to remain alive to the fact that the gains of collaboration outweigh those of competition.
4. Education policy duty-bearers appreciate consolidated, organised and well-structured, informed evidence that is credible and demonstrates appropriate scope/coverage to inform decision making and shifts in practice. Most importantly, there is greater strength in co-creation.

To learn more about us, check us online at reliafrica.org or on Twitter @RELIAfrica.

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR SUPPORTING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN MOROCCO

Mohammed Elmeski, Senior Policy Advisor on the Reform of Educational Systems, Consultant

INTRODUCTION

Morocco stands at the cusp of an historic demographic transformation of its teacher workforce. By 2030, almost fifty per cent of the current population of 284,843 teachers are projected to retire. In response, the Ministry of Education will be recruiting and training 200,000 public school teachers by 2030. The calibre, knowledge, skills and leadership dispositions of the new workforce will shape the country's human capital development in years to come.

THE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

The window of opportunity for teacher leadership is political as well as demographic. On 7 October 2021, a new majority government was sworn in. Its principal mandate is to implement the New Model for Development (NMD) (Special Commission for the New Development Model, 2021), Morocco's roadmap for inclusive growth through 2035. Investment in strengthening teacher preparation and motivation tops the NMD K-12 reform agenda. The appointment of the Chair of the NMD Royal Commission as the Minister of Education and Early Child Education signals political will to follow through on the education improvement strategy. Borrowing the proverbial 'luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity', the demographic and political opportunities seem real. However, preparation will entail coherent politics, policies and practices that liberate teachers' potential to act as frontline leaders in the implementation of the NMD education plan.

The educational leadership literature indicates that all else being equal, teachers' agency, motivation and leadership are enabled, or stunted, by myriad factors,

including organisational leadership, professional autonomy, professional challenge, professional identity, school culture, collaboration, self-efficacy, sense of belonging and relatedness, system and school support, and parent and community engagement (Kim and Loadman, 1994; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Harris and Muijs, 2004; Muijs and Harris, 2003; Skaalvik and Skaalvik, 2011; Salifu and Agbenyega, 2013; Ramberg, 2014; Viseu et al, 2016; and Wenner and Campbell, 2017). Similar teacher leadership considerations were discussed in the proceedings of the 27th conference of the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE) in 2007. Belhiah (2007), for instance, calls for promoting distributed leadership to tap teachers' diverse capabilities in improving learners' outcomes.

In Morocco, fostering school autonomy through school development projects (SDPs) has been a fixture of the government education reform agenda since the 1990s. Nonetheless, system evaluations continue to highlight the discrepancy between policy discourse lamenting teachers' apathy about engaging in school improvement (Elmeski, 2012), and weak systems of support to promote school-based leadership (High Council for Education and Training, 2014; Thompson et al, 2017). To avoid the traps of wishful thinking and the risks of disillusionment in yet another grand vision with unchecked feasibility assumptions, it is critical to identify the structural, organisational, political and cultural factors impeding the maximisation of teachers' leadership potential. This will help inform customised strategies to empower teachers to develop their identity as leaders, and will strengthen their efficacy to create meaningful, differentiated and inclusive learning opportunities for all students.

To conclude, Gandhi's famous quote that 'whatever you do for me but without me, you do against me' is a critical reminder that walking the talk of investment in teachers' motivation is intertwined with a leadership culture that is committed to the genuine engagement of teachers as co-leaders of school improvement. This is a process that requires system leaders to be ready to listen, build trust,

engage in genuine stakeholder engagement, and clarify assumptions about roles, responsibilities and needed capacity, to strengthen teacher leadership. This is usually a messy process but, compared to the disastrous and debilitating downward spiral of disengaged learners, watched by apathetic and disaffected teachers squandering instructional time in dysfunctional schools, the current demographic and political windows of opportunity cannot be missed.

... walking the talk of investment in teachers' motivation is intertwined with a leadership culture that is committed to the genuine engagement of teachers as co-leaders of school improvement.

References

- Belhiah, H (2007) 'Toward a new conceptualization of teacher leadership in Moroccan schools', in M Hassim and A Chaibi (Eds), *Leadership and Values in Language Education: Proceedings of the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE) 27th Annual Conference 2007* (p 45–55), MATE. Accessed at academia.edu/2468358/TOWARD_A_NEW_CONCEPTUALIZATION_OF_TEACHER_LEADERSHIP_IN_MOROCCAN_SCHOOLS.
- Elmeski M (2012) *Decentralizing School Governance: A Policy Analysis of Partnership Between Parents and Public Middle Schools in Morocco*, University of Minnesota.
- Harris, A and Muijs, D (2004) *Improving Schools through Teacher Leadership*, Oxford University Press, London.
- High Council for Education and Training (2014) *Ataqirru atahlili: Tabiqu lmithaq alwatani littarbiya watakwin 2000–2013: Almuktasabat, almu3iqat, wa tahadiyat [Analytical report: The implementation of the National Charter for Education and Training 2000–2013: Achievements, Barriers and Challenges]*. Accessed at: [ين طول قاشي م ل ا ق ي ب ط ت : ن ي و ك ت ل ل ا و ة ي ب ر ت ل ل \(csefrs.ma\)](http://www.csefrs.ma).
- Kim, I and Loadman, W E (1994) *Predicting Teacher Job Satisfaction*, Ohio State University, Columbus.
- Muijs, D and Harris, A (2003) 'Teacher leadership – Improvement through empowerment? An overview of the literature', *Educational Management and Administration*, **31**, 4, p 437–448.
- Ramberg, M R (2014) 'What makes reform work? School-based conditions as predictors of teachers' changing practice after a national curriculum reform', *International Education Studies*, **7**, 6, p 46–65.
- Ryan, R M and Deci, E L (2000) 'Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions', *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, **25**, 1, p 54–67.
- Salifu, I and Agbenyega, J S (2013) 'Teacher motivation and identity formation: Issues affecting professional practice', *MIER Journal of Educational Studies Trends and Practices*, p 58–74.
- Skaalvik, E M and Skaalvik, S (2011) 'Teacher job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession: Relations with school context, feeling of belonging, and emotional exhaustion', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, **27**, 6, p 1029–1038.
- Special Commission for the New Development Model (April 2021) *Annamouthajo attanmawiyu aljadidu: Tahiru taqati wa sti3adatu thiqati litasri3i wathirati attaqadumi wa tahqiqi arafahi lijami3 [The new model for development: Liberating energies and regaining confidence to speed up progress and achieve welfare for all]*. Accessed at [م ا ع ل ا ر ي ر ق ت ل ل ا . p d f \(csmd.ma\)](http://www.csmd.ma).
- Thompson, R, Tekeu, R, El Bouazzaoui, H, Benyamna, S, Tamer, B, Baidada, M, Echhotbi, M, Guedira, A, Ezzaki, A, Ennasri, I and Moustaghfir, K (2017) *Human and Institutional Capacity Development Assessment of the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education, and Scientific Research*, United States Agency for International Development, Morocco.
- Viseu, J, Jesus, S N D, Rus, C, Canavaro, J M and Pereira, J (2016) 'Relationship between teacher motivation and organizational variables: A literature review', *Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto)*, **26**, p 111–120.
- Wenner, J A and Campbell, T (2017) 'The theoretical and empirical basis of teacher leadership: A review of the literature', *Review of Educational Research*, **87**, 1, p 134–171.

MINDSETS MATTER: EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP POST-COVID-19

Rosie Connor, Global Director, BTS Spark, and **Alyssa Gallagher**, Head of Education Programs, BTS Spark North America

INTRODUCTION

The job of a school leader is relentless. It is fast-paced, ever-changing and increasingly subject to accountability measures. A typical school leader needs to be skilled in instructional leadership, human resources, conflict resolution, child development and psychology, while also able to play the role of inspirational cheerleader and to be the face of the school for staff, students and community. All of this was true before March 2020 when COVID-19 shut down or pushed most schools online. Hopefully, COVID will soon be in our rear-view mirror, but global uncertainty is likely to remain. Given our new VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world, school leadership is more important than ever.

In new research from Hannon and Mackay (2021), leadership is identified as a key societal lever in creating the future that humanity needs. Education is desperately in need of the kind of transformation that will require impact at two levels – internal and external. The internal dimension relates to the transformation of self. This transformation of self is about nurturing and developing new mindsets through targeted professional development.

Education is desperately in need of the kind of transformation that will require impact at two levels – internal and external.

‘INTERNAL’ TRANSFORMATION OF SELF

‘Mindsets’, ‘dispositions’ or ‘personal leadership resources’ – regardless of the exact terminology, many school systems and education thought leaders are increasingly realising that effective school leadership calls on school leaders to embrace and embody critical mindsets. There is increasing acknowledgement that capability frameworks can help to steer school leaders’ reflective practice and professional development, but that upskilling school leaders through capability-building professional development is not enough. Great school leaders don’t simply have great capabilities, they also model key mindsets and are open to developing their mindsets in order to enhance their capacity to lead and impact organisational outcomes.

School leaders need to be both great instructional leaders and great people leaders. As empathy and vulnerability researcher Brené Brown says, ‘Who you are is how you lead.’ School leaders need opportunities to develop who they are as a leader. They may need to learn to empower others, to develop more empathy or to learn to be more inclusive in how they lead – all essential mindsets and skills that are rarely developed in traditional professional development programs for school leaders.

Mindset work must sit at the heart of leadership professional development because mindsets are crucial to shifting behaviour, and behaviour drives impact and results. Too often in transformation efforts well-intentioned leaders jump straight into changing behaviour. At best, these efforts yield short-term limited change; at worst, they yield top-down directive changes that are unlikely to be sustainable. Why? The people implementing the behaviour change have not had the opportunity to shift their thinking, so the behaviour change won’t stick. They have not engaged in developing new mindsets, and they also need to work at adjusting their existing mindsets.

CRITICAL MINDSETS FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

So, if mindsets underpin changes in leadership practice, what are the critical mindsets for school leaders? BTS Spark, a global not-for-profit initiative dedicated to coaching and developing school leaders, has developed a curriculum of school leader mindsets – arguably, the first ever developed from research evidence and focused specifically on educational leaders. The curriculum, originally researched by Connor and Hirani (2019), comprises thirty-three mindsets, grouped into four broader areas (see Figure 1):

1. **Be:** These are mindsets about an individual's resourcefulness, confidence and ability to stay calm, open and empathetic in any situation.
2. **Relate:** These are mindsets about relationships with other people. They include influencing, building trust, having difficult conversations, collaborating, and empowering others to lead.

3. **Inspire:** These are mindsets about direction, change and purpose. They include creating a vision, leading change, creating shared purpose and leading in uncertainty.
4. **Think:** These are mindsets about solving problems in a new way and looking beyond the obvious. They include diversity of thinking, challenging the way things are done and futures thinking.

As a school leader, you will undoubtedly encounter situations which challenge you in each of the four domains – when you are asked to be the face of a new change (*Be*), required to collaborate with people you find difficult (*Relate*), need to lead teams through uncertainty (*Inspire*), or implement new methods of teaching and learning (*Think*). In fact, these struggles are not unique to leaders, they are ongoing human struggles.

Also, how do you support school leaders to embrace new leadership mindsets? Our short answer to this may appear too glib, as this is complex work! Suffice it to say here that one-size-fits-all leadership programs will not scratch the surface. Individuals instead need personalised support, from professional coaches experienced in transformational leadership coaching.

Figure 1.



'EXTERNAL' TRANSFORMATION OF ORGANISATIONS AND SYSTEMS

A leader's impact should never be underestimated. Once leaders model a new behaviour as the result of a mindset shift, the impact can be huge. Others will take notice and this has the power to begin a bigger cultural shift. While individual mindsets are a natural starting point, organisations have mindsets too and these mindsets run across culture. The same coaching tools and strategies that work for individuals work for organisations as well.

Acknowledging the importance of mindsets as a critical component of professional development for education leaders is crucial to the ability to transform our school communities in the way they need. If we are going to transform systems, we must transform ourselves, and that work begins with mindset.

References

- Brown, B (2018) *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*, Vermilion, London.
- Connor, J and Hirani, K (2019) *The Four Greatest Coaching Conversations: Change Mindsets, Shift Attitudes, and Achieve Extraordinary Results* (Illustrated ed), Nicholas Brealey, London.
- Hannon, V and Mackay, A (2021) *The future of educational leadership: Five signposts*, CSE Leading Education Series, Paper 04, August 2021, Centre for Strategic Education, Melbourne.

LEADERSHIP ECOSYSTEMS: A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Neil Barker, General Manager, Neil Barker
Education | Arts | Leadership | Strategy

INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines an approach for developing an integrated system of leadership in a school: an approach that systematically focuses attention on collectively improving school and student outcomes – the development of a leadership ecosystem that is contextualised, intentional, integrated and self-improving.

ABOUT A LEADERSHIP ECOSYSTEM

Leadership in schools is critical for improving student outcomes (Seashore et al, 2010; Robinson et al, 2008), but how much time do schools spend discussing their collective leadership approach? Schools and school systems focus significant effort and resources on developing school leaders and building effective leadership teams, but spend little time developing approaches to leadership that bring together all the leadership activity at a school.

There is significant opportunity to improve the impact of leadership in schools by being more explicit about what leadership looks like – what it stands for, what it is focused on, and how it will operate at a school. By investing intentional effort in developing an agreed whole-school collaborative leadership approach there is huge potential for school communities to create integrated self-improving ecosystems of leadership.

Natural ecosystems have successfully operated across our planet for millennia – creating comprehensive, coherent and integrated systems of operation. Using an ecosystem model to develop a school's leadership approach provides an opportunity to create a system of leadership aligned to local needs, interests and aspirations – an

inter-connected system to guide formal and informal leadership practice, process and effort across a school. It provides school leaders with a framework to guide their leadership activity and it provides the school community with an opportunity to hold leaders to account for the way in which they lead.

A leadership ecosystem provides an opportunity to create a more coherent whole-school approach to leadership, a system that will encompass all leaders and all leadership activity – individual, collective, formal, informal, positional and non-positional leadership, practised by principals, teachers, education support staff, students and parents.

A leadership ecosystem can ensure that leadership is shared more broadly across a school and that it is owned and understood by that school community. There is significant evidence about the impact of collective leadership (Hmieleski, 2012; Bolivar et al, 2013; as cited in Pont, 2020; Angelle and DeHart, 2016) and, by involving the school community in the development and operation of a leadership ecosystem, a school will be well-placed to realise the benefits of that collective leadership effort.

A leadership ecosystem can empower teacher leaders to contribute more effectively to the school's leadership effort by explicitly embedding them in the system, and giving them power and licence in the context of an agreed approach to leadership. As Mary Parker Follett argued – in her work in the early 20th century on management theory – collective leadership is 'power with others rather than power over others' (as cited in O'Neill and Brinkerhoff, 2018).

A leadership ecosystem can empower teacher leaders to contribute more effectively to the school's leadership effort by explicitly embedding them in the system, and giving them power and licence in the context of an agreed approach to leadership.

Ecosystem leadership elements

To assist schools to develop a more collective approach to leadership, five key ecosystem leadership 'elements' are identified here, as follows.

- 1. Leadership context – the internal and external nature and circumstances of the ecosystem.**
Every school is different, and its leadership approach should reflect local conditions. Understanding and building a leadership approach that accounts for internal and external school circumstances creates the foundations of a leadership approach that is aligned with the needs, interests and aspirations of a school community.
- 2. Leadership vision and principles – the overarching purpose and foundational principles of the ecosystem design and operation.** Creating a shared vision of and principles for leadership at a school creates clarity for both leaders and followers about what leadership stands for and how it operates at the school.
- 3. Leadership processes – the interconnections and systems within and beyond the ecosystem.** Developing clear, effective, consistent and agreed leadership processes ensures that leadership practice at the school is effective, efficient, comprehensive and coherent.

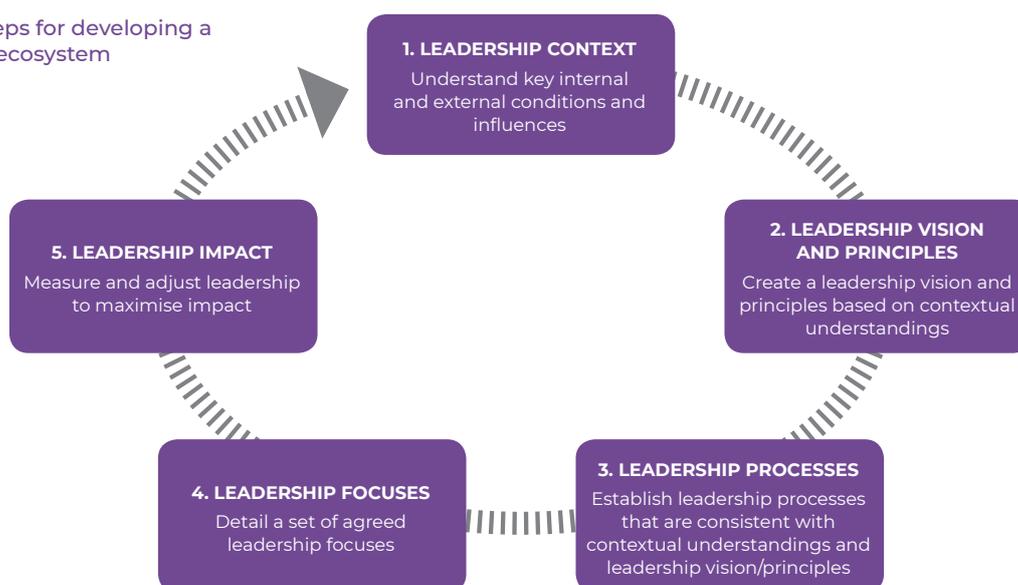
- 4. Leadership focuses – the emphases and priorities of the leadership ecosystem's operation.** Detailing a set of agreed leadership focuses ensures that leadership effort is focused on the things that matter for the school and broader community.
- 5. Leadership impact – the outputs and outcomes that result from the ecosystem's efforts.** Understanding, managing and improving leadership inputs and outputs provides a framework for resourcing, developing, measuring and improving leadership performance and impact. It ensures that the leadership system is self-improving.

Ideally a leadership ecosystem should be developed collectively by a school community to ensure that it is aligned with the needs, interests and aspirations of that community, and that it has broad acceptance and ownership. **Figure 1** provides an overview of the key steps for creating a leadership ecosystem.

When schools develop agreed, coherent, collaborative and systematic whole-school approaches to leadership, they are better placed to improve school and student outcomes. Leadership ecosystems that align with each school's unique context can help engage, connect and guide all leaders and leadership activity at a school.

Imagine the power of a coordinated approach to leadership that systematically focuses its attention on collectively improving school and student outcomes – a leadership ecosystem that is intentional, integrated and self-improving.

Figure 1. Steps for developing a leadership ecosystem



References

- Angelle, P S and DeHart, C A (2016) 'Comparison and evaluation of four models of teacher leadership', *Research in Educational Administration & Leadership*, **1**, 1, p 85–119.
- Bolívar, B, López Yáñez, J F and Murillo, J (2013) *School Leadership. A Review of Current Research Perspectives*. Accessed at repositorio.uam.es/bitstream/handle/10486/661078/liderazgo_bolivar_RF_2013.pdf?sequence=1.
- Hmieleski, K M, Cole, M S and Baron, R A (2012) 'Shared authentic leadership and new venture performance', *Journal of Management*, **38**, p 1476–1499. Accessed at pdfs.semanticscholar.org/149c/f4edfe28afca6cc3697a2122a64554ebdf3b.pdf.
- O'Neill, C and Brinkerhoff, M (2018) *Five Elements of Collective Leadership for Early Childhood Professionals*, Red Leaf Press, St Paul, MN.
- Pont, B (2020) 'A literature review of leadership policy reforms', *European Journal of Education* 2020, **55**, p 154–168. doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12398.
- Robinson, V M, Lloyd, C A and Rowe, K J (2008) 'The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types', *Educational Administration Quarterly*, **44**, 5, p 635–674.
- Seashore Louis, K, Leithwood, K, Wahlstrom, K and Anderson, S (2010) *Learning from Leadership Learning: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, Wallace Foundation, New York.

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR NEW TIMES

Sean Slade, Head of Education, North America, BTS Spark, and **Denise Barrows**, Director of Education, UK, BTS Spark

INTRODUCTION

These past 18 months have required school leaders to lead through an unprecedented period of change and uncertainty. What is also changing is the realisation that such 'change' will become commonplace. We are leaving the static education industry of the twentieth century and entering a time when change itself becomes routine.

The coronavirus pandemic upended almost every aspect of school at once. It was not just the move from classrooms to computer screens. It tested basic ideas about instruction, attendance, testing, funding, the role of technology and the human connections that hold it all together. A year later, a rethinking is underway, with a growing sense that some changes may last.

'How the pandemic is reshaping education',
The Washington Post, 15 March 2021¹

NEW SKILLS AND MINDSETS FOR LEADERSHIP

The skills and, just as importantly, the mindsets needed to lead through change and uncertainty are not typically developed via traditional instructional leadership. While a focus on instruction and pedagogy remains important, the skills and mindsets that enable transformational leadership will become essential for schools to thrive in more changeable environments.

School leaders will need to grow as change leaders, inspiring their teams by building a sense of shared purpose that creates optimism for a future that they are building together, by mobilising their people and creating the conditions to enable others to succeed.

They will need to equip their staff to move to productive action in the face of evolving challenges, and ensure that change occurs not only in the classroom but across the whole school.

These new leaders will not be those who feel constrained by traditional structures or expectations or disempowered in the face of change. Nor will they be ones who seek out stability and rely on the status quo, but rather the ones who can themselves create the clarity needed to act, who seek solutions and embrace the uncertainty. They will be the leaders who focus on

- **multiplying perspective** – taking the broader view of an issue and of the potential outcomes
- **emotional connection** – bringing emotion and empathy back into leadership and into decision making
- **seizing momentum** – being prepared to adjust or alter course rather than remain stuck in a predetermined path or process
- **sensing the future** – being open to new ideas, solutions and processes, and testing them quickly
- **your ego** – being comfortable with 'I don't know' and putting ego and the traditional leader role aside.

(Adapted from MESSY School Leadership, BTS Spark, 2020)²

As our world becomes more Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) we must grow and develop school leaders who are more comfortable in this context and understand how it can impact on others and their own personal resourcefulness. We will require leaders who are able to navigate the uncertainty, adjust and adapt quickly, and bring others along with them. We will need to shift from more transactional leadership models to more human, people-focused and collaborative approaches to leadership, and this should be mirrored in the way we grow and develop our school leaders.

These human-centred attributes are at the heart of effective networks, where their strength comes from the interactions and the relationships developed. According to Jean-Pierre Mugiraneza and Susan Douglas (The Power of Leadership Networks, in this report), successful networks are able to

- create trust among school leaders
- strengthen relationships among school leaders
- develop effective collaboration among school leaders
- display robust leadership
- be results-driven or purpose-driven.

These attributes echo the Disruptive Triangle framework of Mastery, Autonomy and Purpose, being discussed by WISE ALL-IN as part of their Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era deliberations. They focus our attention on the purpose of our actions and help build the agency and self-efficacy of the group itself. The strength of a network comes from people themselves and their ability to share ideas and learn from across the network. Learning from others, proposing ideas, and actionable research are all hallmarks of effective networks, where learning takes place across and between networks' members.

We must harness this lateral energy of collaborative leadership that emerged between schools during COVID, and actively support its continued development, both across networks and also within individual schools.

In addition, one positive coming out of the pandemic is that many educators and many schools have had, either by choice or by need, to form networks and reach beyond their traditional support systems. The closure of schools and the isolation of teachers somewhat ironically forced many to ask for and offer help, from and to others. This now provides an opportunity that should be maximised, and these formative networks encouraged to grow and expand. We must harness this lateral energy of collaborative leadership that emerged between schools during COVID, and actively support its continued development, both across networks and also within individual schools. In both contexts, much deeper levels of trust and shared purpose, across teams and between leaders, will unlock new levels of leadership partnership and possibility. These will be the foundations that equip our schools and our educators for the next crisis, or the ongoing volatility of our 21st century world.

This will not be the only crisis we face as a society or as a profession. It may not be a pandemic that confronts us, but the future is guaranteed to be filled with more unpredictability. The leaders and their schools that thrive will be the ones that have established a new form of leadership – not a rigid top-down hierarchy of decision-making – but rather one based on the true messiness of leadership.

'The case for embracing messy leadership in schools', EdSurge, 7 July 2021

Endnotes

1. [washingtonpost.com/education/2021/03/15/pandemic-school-year-changes/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/03/15/pandemic-school-year-changes/)
2. bts.company/en-au/spark/our-resources
3. edsurge.com/news/2021-07-07-the-case-for-embracing-messy-leadership-in-schools

AUTHORS

Jenny Lewis
Nadine Trépanier-Bisson
Joe Hallgarten
Jean-Pierre Mugiraneza
Susan Douglas
Azad Oommen
Dewi Susanti
Daniela Labra Cardero
Santiago Rincon Gallardo
Laura María Vega-Chaparro
Vicky Colbert
Chantal Kabanda Dusabe
Andrea Escobar Vilá
Ng'ang'a Kibandi
Mohammed Elmeski

Rosie Connor
Alyssa Gallagher
Neil Barker
Sean Slade
Denise Barrows
Asmaa Al-Fadala
Karen Edge
Dominic Register
Anthony Mackay

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: THEMES

THEME ONE: THE NEW LEADERSHIP LANDSCAPE

Jenny Lewis, Global Director of Policy and Leadership, Forever Learn

Dr Nadine Trépanier-Bisson, Director of Professional Learning, Ontario Principals' Council

Jenny is an experienced school and system leader, and co-author of several national and regional professional capability and standards frameworks that have informed the growth and development of teachers and school and system leaders. She provides leadership, coaching and facilitation roles for education systems to develop innovative and sustainable practices to cultivate flourishing schools.

Nadine has been an educator in Ontario, Canada for over 20 years in a variety of roles. Currently, she is the Director of Professional Learning for the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC) and the Chief Operations and Leadership Officer for International School Leadership (ISL). She has recently completed her EdD at Western University.

THEME TWO: THE ART OF WITH: TEACHERS AS LIFELONG LEADERS

Joe Hallgarten, Chief Executive, The Centre for Education and Youth

A former teacher, Joe has over 20 years' experience of leading and influencing change through his work at a wide range of high-profile organisations, including the Institute for Public Policy Research and the RSA, and work for the DfE, London 2012 and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Between 2018–21 he worked as principal consultant on global education with the Education Development Trust and as a school leader in Tower Hamlets, London.

THEME THREE: THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP NETWORKS

Dr Jean-Pierre Mugiraneza, Lead – Leadership for Learning, Education Development Trust

Susan Douglas, CEO, The Eden Academy, and Senior Education Advisor, British Council, UK

Jean-Pierre is the Leadership for Learning lead at Education Development Trust. He is an educationist and economist practitioner able to influence sustainable change across the full spectrum of education provision through designing and leading the implementation of education programs at large scale. He has more than 10 years of experience in senior leadership across a wide range of national and international organisations, including the University of Rwanda, Save the Children, World Bank, VVOB and the Education Development Trust.

Susan is the Chief Executive Officer of the Eden Academy Trust and Senior Adviser for Schools at the British Council. She has been a teacher and headteacher as well as holding key roles at the National College of Leadership and Teaching Leaders. As CEO, Susan was instrumental in the founding and development of the Trust. As Senior Adviser at the British Council, Susan provides sector expertise and advice to educational programs involving ministries of education and practitioners across approximately 50 countries.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: ARTICLES

SUPPORTING SCHOOL LEADERS IN POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

Azad Oommen, Co-founder, Global School Leaders

Dewi Susanti, Senior Director of Research, Global School Leader

Azad is the co-founder of Global School Leaders (GSL), a non-profit that develops effective school leadership to improve the learning of students from marginalised communities around the world. Azad has a Master's in Public Affairs from Princeton University and a Bachelor's in International Economics from Georgetown University.

Dewi is the Senior Director of Research at GSL, where she leads the program and ecosystem research on school leadership in low-middle-income countries. She holds a Master of Education from Harvard University and a Master of Architecture from the University of California at Berkeley.

WELLBEING FOR TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Daniela Labra Cardero, General Director, AtentaMente Consultores AC

Labra is the General Director at AtentaMente, a Mexican NPO dedicated to bringing wellbeing tools to education through social and emotional learning (SEL). She is an expert in SEL curriculum development and SEL leadership instruction for educators and has participated in nationwide and statewide SEL teacher training in Mexico.

ESCUELA NUEVA AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

Santiago Rincon Gallardo, Chief Research Officer, Michael Fullan's team

Laura María Vega-Chaparro, Head of Community Connections, Fundación Escuela Nueva Volvamos a la Gente

Vicky Colbert, Founder and Director, Fundación Escuela Nueva Volvamos a la Gente

Santiago is an education consultant and Chief Research Officer at Michael Fullan's team. He supports efforts to liberate learning in educational systems around the world. His most recent book is *Liberating Learning: Educational Change as Social Movement*. Santiago holds a doctoral degree in education from Harvard.

Laura is a Colombian psychologist with an EdD from Teachers College in International Educational Development. She has experience in her country's educational sector in the areas of research and evaluation, public policy development, teacher training, and teaching. Since 2015 she has coordinated FEN's community of practice.

Vicky holds many accolades, including Laureate of the first Yidan Prize for Education Development (2017) and 2013 WISE Prize for Education. A sociologist from Javeriana University in Colombia and Stanford, and former Vice Minister of Education of Colombia, she co-authored the world-renowned Escuela Nueva model and has pioneered it from all her professional spheres, transforming learning in resource-strapped regions of Latin America and beyond.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: A PATH TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALISATION

Chantal Kabanda Dusabe, Strategic Advisor in School Leadership for VVOB – Education for Development

Chantal is the Strategic Advisor in School Leadership for VVOB in Rwanda. She provides strategic advice and technical support to VVOB and partners in relation to school leadership support in Rwanda and beyond in Africa. She also co-chairs the school leadership task force in Rwanda.

LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS: A COLOMBIAN PERSPECTIVE

Andrea Escobar Vilá, Executive Director, Fundación Empresarios por la Educación, Colombia

For more than 15 years, Andrea has been dedicated to education, working from different fields such as developing school content, technology, innovation and media. She is a psychologist from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana with a specialisation in strategic marketing from Colegio Estudios Superiores de Administración and in consumer psychology from Universidad Konrad Lorenz.

LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS AND CLUSTERS: A KENYAN PERSPECTIVE

Ng'ang'a Kibandi, Advocacy and Development Director, Dignitas

Ng'ang'a's passions are in research, MEL, advocacy and programming, giving him a broad range of expertise in over 8 years of experience in the education sector. Currently, he leads Advocacy and Development at Dignitas and is also the current country lead to a network of education actors within Kenya under RELI (Regional Education Learning Initiative).

THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR SUPPORTING TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN MOROCCO

Dr Mohammed Elmeski, PhD, Senior Policy Advisor on the Reform of Educational Systems, Consultant

Mohammed has a PhD in comparative international development education and program evaluation from the University of Minnesota. He has extensive international experience in education policy, practice, and systems change. He is currently a Senior Education Policy Advisor for three government agencies in Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific.

MINDSETS MATTER: EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP POST-COVID-19

Rosie Connor, Global Director, BTS Spark

Alyssa Gallagher, Head of Education Programs, BTS Spark North America

Rosie has over two decades' educational leadership experience, advising the UK's National College for School Leadership before leading the launch of the Principal Standard for the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Rosie is founder of BTS Spark, a global not-for-profit initiative providing professional leadership coaching support to school leaders.

Alyssa enjoyed a successful career as a teacher, principal and assistant superintendent before authoring two books on design thinking. As co-head of BTS Spark America, she partners with school districts to offer leadership programs that support school leaders to leverage the capability and creativity of everyone on their teams.

LEADERSHIP ECOSYSTEMS: A WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Neil Barker, General Manager, Neil Barker Education | Arts | Leadership | Strategy

Neil is the former Director of the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership in Melbourne, Australia. Over 38 years he has worked in juvenile justice settings, specialist and primary schools, in education policy and as a school principal. Neil currently provides support for a range of education and leadership projects and initiatives. He is a Fellow of the Australian Council for Educational Leaders.

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR NEW TIMES

Sean Slade, Head of Education, North America, BTS Spark

Denise Barrows, Director of Education, UK, BTS Spark

Sean is a global education leader, speaker and author. He is the Head of Education at BTS Spark, North America, focused on developing the next generation of school leaders. He is an SEL expert for NBC Today and has worked with global entities including OECD, UNESCO, HundrEd, GELP, T4 and WISE.

Denise leads BTS Spark in the UK, overseeing the implementation of leadership development, coaching capability and wellbeing solutions. Her career has spanned the non-profit and philanthropic sectors, including with the Mercers' Company and Paul Hamlyn Foundation, fostering innovation, change and improved practice within the education system.

FOREWORD

Dr Asmaa Al-Fadala, Director of Research, World Innovation Summit for Education

Asmaa Al-Fadala is the Director of Research and Content Development at WISE. She is also a visiting fellow at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, USA. Dr Al-Fadala has twenty years of professional experience in K-12 education and higher education. She is widely published in the field of educational leadership and policy, and recently published the book *Qatari School Leadership Portraits: Lessons Learned from Education for a New Era Reform*. Dr Al-Fadala holds a PhD and MPhil from Cambridge University, UK.

INTRODUCTION

Dr Karen Edge, UCL Centre for Educational Leadership, IOE UCL's Faculty of Education & Society

Karen Edge has worked as an educator, researcher and advisor globally for over 25 years. She is currently an academic at UCL Institute of Education, having previously served as UCL's Pro-Vice Provost (International) from 2016–19. Karen has led collaborative research projects in over 30 countries, exploring leadership, teacher motivation, retention, generational theory and system-level design and change. She has delivered hundreds of academic and professional keynotes in over 25 countries.

AFTERWORD

Dominic Regester, Program Director, Salzburg Global Seminar

Dominic Regester is a Program Director at Salzburg Global Seminar, where he is responsible for designing, developing and implementing programs on education, conservation, and the future of cities. Prior to this he worked for the British Council for 14 years on global citizenship education, teacher professional development, and education collaboration. He works on a broad range of projects across policy, philanthropy and international development, including as the Executive Director of Karanga: the global alliance for Social Emotional Learning and Life Skills, as a Director at Amal Alliance and a Contributing Editor to Diplomatic Courier. He holds two Masters degrees, an MA in Chinese studies from the School of Oriental and African studies in London and an MA in Education and International Development from the Institute of Education at University College London.

COORDINATING EDITOR

Anthony Mackay, AM

Anthony Mackay is CEO and Board Co-Chair of the Washington DC-based National Center on Education and the Economy. He was Inaugural Chair, Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership AITSL; Inaugural Deputy Chair of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority ACARA; immediate past Chair Australian Council for Educational Research ACER and immediate past Deputy Chair of the Education Council New Zealand.

Anthony is Deputy Chancellor, Swinburne University, Melbourne, Australia; Honorary Senior Fellow of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne; and Visiting Professor to the International Centre for Educational Enhancement, University of Bolton, UK. He is Co-Chair of Learning Creates Australia.

Anthony is cofounder of the Global Education Leaders Partnership (GELP), and Foundation Board Chair of the Innovation Unit Ltd, England; an Expert Advisor to OECD/CERI; Consultant Advisor to Asia Society's Global Cities Education Network; and Senior Fellow IBE/UNESCO. He is also the Moderator of the Annual International Summit on the Teaching Profession; and Moderator of Ministerial Sessions and Key Debates at the Annual World Innovation Summit on Education (WISE).

