

# EDUCATION REIMAGINED: LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION

Leading into the Emerging Future

وايز  
Wise

شبكة وايز للجميع  
ALL-IN

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# INTRODUCTION

Numerous crises are going on in our world today: health, climate change, and access to quality education, and this was already true before COVID-19. These crises affect how we teach, what we teach, and the skills we'll need now and in the future.

As a result, there is a growing global movement for educational transformation and an international agreement that young people need to be prepared for a complex and dynamic future. Because of this, we require a transformation agenda rather than a reform strategy. Reform starts with the process and improves the system; transformation begins with values and mindset and changes the purpose of the system. **Reform produces a better version of the existing system; transformation produces a different system.**

We require a system that enables students not only to prosper in the face of the present challenges but to respond effectively to the unpredictability of the future. We must reconsider the design of what we teach and how we teach, by involving educators and learners as co-designers of learning. Giving teachers and school leaders the autonomy to lead learning is necessary for putting transformation into reality. This means focusing less on reform and incremental improvement – it means casting a vision for a new direction, empowering and leading those across the system to a not-yet fully known future. It means transcending to a new destination. **This is transformational leadership.**

we require a transformation agenda rather than a reform strategy.

Today, many leaders are thinking about how to change the educational system. As they transition from the COVID-19 school closings to a new normal of living with a pandemic, education ministers worldwide are working to rebuild better. The Transforming Education Summit (TES) will be held at this year's general assembly gathering, according to the UN secretary-general (United Nations, undated).

Given all these challenges, what is emerging is a unified vision of change in the educational system. Together, we provide perspectives on change from the WISE Agile Leaders of Learning Innovation Network (ALL-IN) community ([wise-qatar.org/all-in/](http://wise-qatar.org/all-in/)). Since 2017, ALL-IN has had the privilege of bringing together a global community of people who share a commitment to supporting schools and systems in their transitions toward resilient and future-thriving learning environments that maximise learner outcomes and wellbeing. This is so that our children and the world can have a brighter, more equitable, and more inclusive future. This publication has 23 case studies with lessons learned, research evidence and findings. They showcase innovation in leadership, policy and practice on how emerging models teaching and learning can be developed and led from the inside-out – and demonstrate the power of distributed empowerment and transformative leadership.

This publication is a continuation of our previous work on Education Reimagined. In March 2022, we launched the *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era* report (Mackay and Barker, 2022). According to the authors of that March 2022 publication, there is a significant opportunity for reimagining education and developing leadership for a new era. The report introduces readers to a blend of practical experience, programs, and initiatives and a series of theoretical propositions for improving leadership in schools, networks, and across systems. The breadth of experience and thinking evident in this publication is a testament to our network members' commitment and hard work.

Through this publication, our goal is to enable all stakeholders interested in pursuing system transformation to learn from our collective work. There is certainly no one size fits all approach, and we are all on a journey of continuous learning about the complexities, nuances, opportunities and insights on what it takes to transform systems. In short, our goal is to broaden the discussion and the awareness of what is emerging from the field.

At this moment, when education leaders, policymakers and funders, in every context, are making decisions about how to transform learning and education, we want to offer solutions from the ground up. This publication invites education system leaders and decision makers to reconsider the role of teachers and school leaders, and to think differently about what we are aiming for and how to get there.

This publication is for any education leader or stakeholder interested in outlining a transformation path in their country or educational authority, such as a state or district. It is also intended for civil society groups, donors, academics, and anyone interested in national development via educational leadership development and the role of innovation. In this publication, we offer a transformational agenda focusing on three key themes of

1. *emerging leadership skills and capabilities*
2. *teacher and team leadership, and*
3. *the power of networks and clusters for transformational change.*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THREE THEMES: LEADING FOR DEEP CHANGE

This report builds on the foundational concepts and themes put forth in the first report in the Education Reimagined Leadership series *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era*, (Mackay and Barker, 2022), which included

1. the fundamental and dramatic shifts in our world that now require **an emerging set of skills and capabilities**, which are critical to leading educational systems into this complex and reimagined world
2. how **teacher leadership** emerged, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, to demonstrate the powerful influence teachers have in their roles in driving and directing innovative solutions for modern educational needs, and
3. the **impact of leadership networks** for deeper supports and swifter shifts than could otherwise be possible.

In this second report we extend those ideas further by sharing powerful examples and case studies from educational contexts around the world, which are already demonstrating exemplary pathways to modern, transformative leadership.

The first theme, **Applying a global capabilities leadership framework that informs the growth of future leaders**, brings to life the four core capabilities outlined in the first report, *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era*, which were

1. envisioning flourishing futures
2. managing dynamic complexity
3. developing agency in self and others, and
4. fostering equity.

A more detailed unpacking of these capabilities can be found in the first report but, in essence, they represent the ability to have deep awareness of oneself, others and emerging futures in our complex, global landscape, fostering a culture that cultivates agency in individuals and equity, and the ability to manage the forward direction of the organisation while facing increasingly dynamic complexity.

The leadership capabilities need to be developed, collectively and constantly, in oneself and others, serving both the current challenges and anticipating future opportunities. The case studies serve as a powerful stimulant to the imperative for ongoing exploration of the reimagined leadership we need for a New Era of Learning for a flourishing human future.

The second theme, **Teacher and team leadership: Developing school wellbeing and adaptability**, explores the definition of teacher leadership and the benefits of teacher leadership through seven case studies, from India, Kenya, Rwanda, Qatar, United States of America and the United Kingdom. The seven case studies in this section highlight the importance of teacher leadership on the learners, and how it affects systematic changes. The case studies also explore the role of transformative leadership in teaching during COVID-19. Some of these cases highlight the engagement with parents and communities, teacher-school leader collaboration and integration of technology in teaching, as important tools to deal with the challenges of COVID-19. Finally, this section explores the role of a teacher in enhancing partnership in education, between teachers with other teachers, students, administrators, parents and the community.

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Across these cases, we see the following insights as catalysts for transformative leadership.

- The impact of **role modelling** and a transformative teacher must be supported in their 'whole' development, just as a leading teacher moulds a student in various aspects of life, such as intellectual, emotional, social and technological perspectives.
- **Training and development** are essential elements to equip teachers to adopt teaching pedagogies, such as play techniques, experiential learning and empathy-based pedagogies.
- Teachers need to **understand diversity** and recognise their biases, which in turn help to inspire creativity, unlock empathy and nurture life skills amongst their students.
- **Collaborative teaching** and the use of ICT are essential to support transformative practices.

Finally, the third theme, **The Leadership of networks, clusters and communities beyond the scope of a single school or education system**, is built around a series of case studies of education networks that are operating at a state, national, regional or global level.

The networks featured in these case studies are:

1. Regional Education Learning Initiative
2. The Connection
3. Whole Child Development for Displaced Learners Network
4. Communities of Practice
5. Global Education Leaders' Partnership
6. International Professional Development Association
7. Global Cities Education Network
8. EdEco Initiative
9. Karanga: the global alliance for social emotional learning and life skills
10. Africa Voices Dialogue
11. The NetEdu Project Learning Ecosystem Tool for Regional and National Government
12. Teach for All

They range from the very well-known and well-established to much younger initiatives. However, one thing they all have in common is a strong desire to forefront peer learning, exchange and collaboration. The opening section offers some anecdotal reflections as to why this is becoming an evermore important component of education transformation and what it might mean for the future.

The cases included here intentionally span a wide range of context and demographics, to explore how these dimensions play out and resonate in similar ways. We invite the reader to reflect on the nature of these dimensions across the case studies, and ways in which they may parallel your own context.

#### **Dr Asmaa Al-Fadala**

Director of Research, World Innovation Summit for Education

## **Reference**

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# CASE STUDIES

## CASE STUDIES A:

APPLYING A GLOBAL CAPABILITIES LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK THAT INFORMS THE GROWTH OF FUTURE LEADERS

## CASE STUDIES B:

TEACHER AND TEAM LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING SCHOOL WELLBEING AND ADAPTABILITY

## CASE STUDIES C:

THE LEADERSHIP OF NETWORKS, CLUSTERS AND COMMUNITIES BEYOND THE SCOPE OF A SINGLE SCHOOL OR EDUCATION SYSTEM

# A.

## **APPLYING A GLOBAL CAPABILITIES LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK THAT INFORMS THE GROWTH OF FUTURE LEADERS**





# INTRODUCTION

In this set of cases, we look at how this collection of 'Applied Leadership Capabilities' serves to advance our shared commitment to leading transformed education systems. Each case takes the four Global Leadership Capabilities mentioned previously from our first report *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era* (Mackay and Barker, 2022) – (1) *Envisioning Flourishing Futures*, (2) *Managing Dynamic Complexity*, (3) *Developing Agency in Self and Others*, and (4) *Fostering Equity* – which together represent a powerful framework for action.

Whilst the setting, the context, genesis, motivation and particular purpose of the cases obviously differ, each case provides an appreciation of the intended influence and impact of the work – the desired **shift** from leadership that intentionally or unintentionally reinforces 'business as usual' to leadership creating the conditions for transforming the way we go about powerful learning for all.

The inclusion of both case-specific questions and cross-case questions is designed to encourage reflection on the vital importance of equipping leaders with the capacity to codesign preferred futures of learning and work – human centred with equity for all – intended to care for self, others and the planet.

This is the collective power of the cases – revealing that leadership focused on supporting the agency of all stakeholders and partners will create a system, an **eco-system** – mutually reinforcing of the learning environment at every level.

The cases provide multiple lenses – to the wider learning system and to the setting of particular learning places. They provide perspectives on the process of developing leadership capabilities and on the execution of capabilities in practice.

The four cases include

1. Educational leadership for future-ready learning: The Singapore case
2. Developing future leaders: The British Columbia case
3. Personalised professional learning, transforming aspirational leaders: The Qatar case
4. Transformative leadership: A United Nations case

Whilst the focus of the cases is largely on the learning phase of K–12 and school principal leadership, there is also reference to the importance of continuous learning across phases and leadership at multiple levels across the system. Building on the deeper articulation of the global leadership capabilities in our first report, these cases exemplify how these capabilities have been leveraged and developed in real-world contexts.

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# A1. EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR FUTURE-READY LEARNING: THE SINGAPORE CASE

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**David Ng Foo Seong**, National Institute of Education, Singapore and **Louka Parry**, The Learning Future

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## Introduction

Singapore has performed well in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). International standards remain important, but Singapore schools have taken steps to incorporate future-ready learning and values into the curriculum. The following useful definition for future-ready learning, by Ng, Wong and Liu (2019), broadens the definition of educational success.

*A successful education system is able to develop future-ready individuals who will continue to learn (knowledge) beyond graduation, take on future lifework (competencies), and thrive (values and wellbeing) in a changing society and environment.*

Thriving in a changing society implies being able to experience, interpret, and influence the world in the best possible ways of living. Confucius called this 'dao, yi and junzi', which is a shared vision of human excellence.

Therefore, a practical frame to adopt for reframing educational leadership for transforming education in Singapore is to integrate **future-ready learning** (also see Kaempf, 2022) with **human-centredness**, as follows.

1. Development of competencies (21st Century Competencies) and holistic qualities ('dao', 'yi' – appropriateness disposition and ability to do what is right).
2. Learning of content (knowledge) and moral values ('junzi' – think, feel and act with compassion, love and benevolence).
3. Achievement of standards and social-emotional wellbeing.

This short case note illustrates Singapore's systematic process to transform education through the Ministry of Education's mission, leadership development and how school leaders lead and transform learners for the future.

## System policies

Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) mission is to shape the future of the nation by shaping the learners who will decide the future. The MOE formulates and implements education policies and initiatives in service of this mission.

Policies such as the Framework for 21st Century Competencies and Learner Outcomes, Values in Action (VIA), and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) provide clear directions to multiple levels of the system (leaders, teachers, learners, parents and communities). SEL, for example, is integral to the education framework for 21st Century Competencies and taught within the Character and Citizenship Education curriculum. Resources such as frameworks, toolkits and information brochures are readily available for schools and parents, in their partnership, to develop the whole person. This systemic approach provides clear emphasis on the equitable and holistic development of learners for whole-school approaches for all 360 primary and secondary schools in Singapore.

## Development of educational leaders at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore

School leaders play critical roles in leading schools to achieve educational success, as defined by the MOE's mission and leaders. The National Institute of Education, Singapore, supports this mission by providing leadership development for school leaders.

The Leaders in Education Programme (LEP) develops education leaders for principalship. It is a seven-month, full-time programme, that cultivates each leader's mindset and identity, and enables them

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to think and operate in more complex, systemic, strategic and interdependent ways. The Programme also deepens its strategic focus on future-ready curriculum, where school leaders prototype an innovative curriculum idea. Specifically, leaders are to envisage what the school and the curriculum could be in three–five years' time. At the completion of the Programme, school leaders move to various leadership roles in the system, where many will be appointed as school principals.

### **School leadership in developing future-ready learners**

The principal of Yusof Ishak Secondary School (YISS) is a graduate of the LEP. Her school is also the Centre for Teaching and Learning Excellence and provides onsite professional development of progressive teaching methods to teachers. The school's mission is to develop future-ready learners in both competencies and values, and she leads her school to integrate this mission into both the philosophy, practice, and programmes of the school.

Additionally, the 'Future-ready Leaders Programmes', comprising 'Applied Learning Programme' (ALP) and 'Learning for Life Programme' (LLP), provide meaningful and authentic contexts. These platforms enable leaders to apply domain knowledge, values

it is imperative to find the right balance between functionalist learning ... and development of human excellence

and competencies. These programmes also develop 'Future-ready Habits' such as inquisitiveness and ideation. The ALP, 'STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) for the Strategic Development of a Sustainable and Smart City,' serves to equip learners with the skills and dispositions (dao, yi) of right actions, persistence, dedication and passion, as Leaders for Tomorrow. The Learning for Life Programme, 'Nurturing Honourable Leaders for Tomorrow,' provides myriad opportunities to nurture an Honourable (junzi) Leader who is compassionate and at the same time decisive.

The Character and Citizenship Education Framework provides authentic scenarios to integrate social emotional learning, strengthen mental health and promote cyber wellness into all school programmes. The current effect of COVID-19 has put a heavy strain on learners' and educators' mental health, and provided real-life learning challenges for all. Also, SEL is a key recovery strategy for wellbeing, while also supporting academic performance (Parry, 2019). The school's weekly curriculum and co-curriculum include learning moral values through contemporary issues such as online media, lifestyle, race and religion.

YISS's programmes are unique but also exemplify the common approach adopted by all primary and secondary schools in Singapore in its future focus. The integrated approach of human-centred development, with pragmatic competencies learning, seeks to shape learners to be future-ready.

### **Conclusion**

An education system can only be successful if it is able to develop the whole person, including its leaders. Singapore's case highlights the importance of the development of 'future-ready competencies' – dao, yi, junzi – and social emotional wellbeing. School leaders must endeavour to seek deeper understanding of the macrocontexts (economy, society and environment) and align strategic directions for education. All these imply that school leaders need to adopt vision, mission and practices that put the human-centredness and emerging macrocontexts as focal points in changing leadership, teaching and learning practices. The Ministry of Education's initiatives and policies are illustrative of Singapore's desire to move away from a focus on achieving standards through exams and more towards holistic learning.

As Singapore school leaders continue to lead future-ready learning, it is imperative to find the right balance between functionalist learning (knowledge, competencies, standards) and development of human excellence (dao, yi, junzi). Further research in this area, giving agency to learners, teachers, parents and the community, will help leaders make informed decisions to lead this transformation as a shared educational journey.

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### Key reflection questions

- *The shift from teaching to learning must include a wider set of relationships among learners with teachers, peers, families and communities. How do school leaders create platforms for co-agency that promotes participative and supportive relationships that help learners to be future-ready learners?*
- *Future-ready learning underscores the importance ascribed to contexts – economic, social and environment. The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development similarly emphasises the importance of contexts and advocates actively engaging learners with nature. Nature is not just a resource to be exploited but must be responsibly managed in sustainable development and living. How do school leaders shift the mindset of learning (achieving standards) to learning about oneness with the environment, society and economy?*
- *Holistic learning will have potential tension, such as stress experienced by learners in attaining standards and achieving wellbeing. How do school leaders and teachers find the right balance in holistic learning?*

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## A2. DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS: THE BRITISH COLUMBIA CASE

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**Dr Nadine Trépanier-Bisson**, Ontario Principals' Council® and **Dr Jordan Tinney**, retired superintendent of Surrey Schools, BC

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The years since March 2020 not only have presented a transformational opportunity in learning and leadership, but have underscored the necessity for leadership to be positioned for an increasingly uncertain future. Incremental improvement, and optimisation of a system, will not serve us in creating a sustainable and equitable future for all learners. We need to re-examine the capabilities and qualities required to lead in the future and to redesign our leadership development to match the needs of the coming generations of adults who are the children in our schools today.

Historically, leadership development has been viewed as term-specific programs often targeted to those who are seeking to move to positions of increased depth and breadth of responsibilities and influence, or who are new to the role. If we are to transform our systems and structures, we must also transform leadership development into ongoing, flexible and personalised professional learning that develops the self and mindset, along with the technical capabilities of new roles. Our priorities for leadership have changed, and so must our leadership development programs.

Our priorities for leadership have changed, and so must our leadership development programs.

At the top of the list of priorities for our changed focus on leadership development is the creation of a sustainable future for our environment and our societies. The pandemic, shaken global economies, and the ongoing impact of global climate change, are creating a series of challenges that are having a direct influence on us all. The children and youth of today must address these challenges as they lead us into the future. This means that our education systems must respond with a compelling vision to meet those challenges. The vision for future-ready

schools needs to respond with two fundamental changes. The first is a deep commitment to equity for all learners. The second is the urgent need to care for our environment and to create a sustainable future.

The demand for a renewed and refined focus on equity is essential, especially since the pandemic has highlighted and widened the gap between those who benefit the most from our current system and those who remain most vulnerable. In addition, the voices for intolerant and divisive societies have been fuelled by a growing discontent with systems and leadership. This combination of a growing gap and divisive rhetoric means that our leaders must focus on equity and build confidence in systems where all students have a sense of belonging and engage in powerful individual and collective learning.

The second fundamental change in our vision is the urgent need to care for our environment. The signs are everywhere around the globe: **we cannot respond with incremental change – we need to transform the mindset of leaders at all levels, and we require changes in practices and power structures to address the global crisis.** The people who will address these changes are the children in our schools today. The leadership of our schools must design and maintain the conditions for the creativity, ingenuity and innovation required for a sustainable future. This requires learning environments where, amongst other priorities, students learn in flexible environments, develop agency in themselves and others, become increasingly aware of their identity and of the social contexts in which they exist, and are able to make connections between those elements as future citizens.

In British Columbia (BC), leadership standards and subsequent leadership development programs are meeting this new vision. A newly designed set of leadership competencies, designed for system leaders but applicable to leadership at all levels, begins with a focus on stewardship of the future. The competencies are also designed to begin with a focus on self – the mindsets, qualities and attributes needed to lead in today's educational ecosystems, with equity and future sustainability at the heart. From **self**, the framework moves to **teams** and **systems** as leadership influence grows and spreads.

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In Surrey, BC, all leaders who are new to the role, and continuing into their first two years of formal leadership, are matched with experienced mentors. Guided by this supporting relationship, participants then explore a series of sessions and practical applications. These sessions explore and refine leadership through case studies and experiences in compassion, contextual literacy and adaptive leadership, all while focusing on equity.

The Surrey leadership development program includes a hybrid option with both face-to-face and online learning. The coming phase of the program includes using the online platform to create a personal learning portfolio to share with mentors and colleagues. As an extension of this online professional learning portfolio, the District is exploring how they may use micro-credentialing to identify and track the progress of leaders. Rather than completion of an entire program, the use of micro credentials allows individuals to celebrate and demonstrate their growth and learning over time, in a series of modules that build their professional competencies.

Also to come is partnering cross-district with other schools, where leaders share with a peer colleague the specific points of inquiry for the school and supporting evidence. The peer critiques the plan and offers supportive questions and suggestions. This peer-review of school goals, which is initiated within the leadership development program, will extend beyond the two years. The peer review process, which is coupled with the ongoing mentorship and leadership development, is central to the district's pursuit of equity for all students and, in particular, those who are most vulnerable. In addition, all participants in the program receive in-depth training related to racial equity, privilege and bias, which is deepened through application and discussion in the other aspects of the leadership development program.

This peer-review of school inquiries also changes the power structures in the district. Rather than supervising senior administrators coming to review and analyse school plans and goals, the peer review process generates shared accountability for the success of all schools, between and amongst colleagues. Such power shifts are necessary to grow system-wide shared accountability. In the traditional hierarchical power structures, a small few are seen to hold discrete components, and they (and individuals) in a system, responsible for its success, will not achieve the results we need for the success of all students.

While the relationship between peers is critical, so too are the relationship and skills of the assigned mentors. Each mentor receives targeted training in the skills of coaching, so that the relationship is not one of advisor/mentor, it is coach/enabler. The goal is to refine and hone the personal and professional skills and attributes of the participants in the program, thereby building agency in one another.

The professional learning journey supports aspiring and new leaders as they develop future-ready educational ecosystems. The program is holistic, in that it develops new mindsets, changes the power structures and provides flexible opportunities for personal growth. In Surrey, our belief is that if we change the mindsets beginning with the self, individual leadership qualities and attributes will spread not only across the system, but deep within our schools, as we work to design engaging learning environments for all children. We believe that training in racial equity and bias, ongoing mentorship with skilled and trained mentors, a combination of face-to-face and online learning, the development of ongoing professional learning portfolios, authentically shared accountability with peers and colleagues, and a system of micro-credentialing, are ways to transform our entire system, one cohort at a time.

### Key reflection questions

- *This case study outlines components of a leadership development program that supports the creation of future-ready learning environments for all students. How does any one of the components (training related to racial equity and bias, ongoing mentorship, face-to-face and online learning, ongoing professional learning portfolios, authentically shared accountability with peers and colleagues, and micro-credentialing) contribute to transforming leadership development programs?*
- *How does leadership development in your context contribute to the transformation of learning?*
- *How would you describe the current condition of leadership development in your organisation as it relates to transforming education, and what is one small change you could make to better align leadership development programming with future-ready leadership?*



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## A3. PERSONALISED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, TRANSFORMING ASPIRATIONAL LEADERS: THE QATAR CASE

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**Dr Joanna Moe**, Qatar Ministry of Education and  
**Amira Al Maáyerji**, Qatar Ministry of Education

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### Context and introduction

This case study looks through the lens of a professional learning program for aspiring educational leaders in Qatar. It explores how the learning outcomes, design features and learning journey of participants can be mapped to demonstrate the leadership capabilities in action, despite being offered in different languages and educational contexts.

Qatar is a relatively small country, with a diverse approach to supporting learners and leadership development. Both authors work in Qatar, providing professional learning for educators. However, the educational systems and contexts within which they work are different. The Training and Educational Development Centre (TEDC), within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE), provides professional development for 200+ local, Arabic-medium public school faculty. The Education Development Institute's (EDI) mandate, as part of the Qatar Foundation (QF), is to lead professional learning for educators to support their growth within international curriculum schools.

Programs that aspire to be transformational, responsive forms of professional learning, encourage educators to have agency and be leaders over their own learning.

EDI offers the seven-month Program for Aspirational Leaders and Managers in Education (PALME), in both English and Arabic medium. EDI has facilitated this program for educators in both educational systems. The program came out of an identified need for leadership teams to improve their data-

informed decision making. The PALME is designed for middle leaders to support them in growing their data literacy, leadership dispositions and reflexive practice. The learning outcomes align to the different leadership standards of the MoEHE and QF. This means the design of the program allows it to be applicable and facilitated across different educational systems locally. This case study explores whether the design also allows it to be used for participants to grow the dispositions identified in the global leadership capabilities.

### What role does professional learning play in building leadership knowledge, skills and capabilities?

The ultimate goal of professional learning for leaders of learning is to create more effective systems, ways of working and pedagogies, in order to maximise every student's learning and growth. These new pathways require a shift in more traditional forms of professional learning designs. Programs that aspire to be transformational, responsive forms of professional learning, encourage educators to have agency and be leaders over their own learning.

These designs need to provide authentic opportunities to shift cognitive, as well as emotional capacity, through iterative, collaborative practice, action and reflection, so that participants can navigate the complexity of their educational context (Netolicky, 2020; Learning Forward, 2022).

The PALME is designed to equip aspirational leaders of learning with the skills and mindset to create and lead a culture of evidence-informed inquiry, to improve student learning and growth. The program leads participants through acquiring what Fullan (2022), names 'contextual literacy', so that they can deeply understand the culture and context that they are serving in. Using inquiry, action and reflection, participants engage in building a collaborative adult learning community, around a focus of practice, unique to their context.

## How do the learning outcomes of the PALME align with the leader capabilities?

Each pillar of the program has key questions to be addressed by participants, knowledge and skills to be acquired and behaviours that are demonstrated through application. These pillars are designed to support the learning of educators in the capabilities needed to lead learning communities effectively (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Mapping of leadership capabilities to the learning outcomes of the PALME**

Leadership Capabilities	Learning Outcomes of the PALME
Envisioning Flourishing Futures	<b>Pillars</b> Learning Community
Managing Dynamic Complexity	Data Literacy Inquiry, Action Reflection
Developing Agency	<b>Dispositions</b> Aspiration
Fostering Equity	Attitude

### Envisioning flourishing futures

This capability is embodied in the 'learning community' and 'aspiration' pillars of the PALME. The program strives to ignite the active learning of a participant and their internal desire and motivation to engage in iterations of improvement. The aspiring leader's role is to empower their learning community to work collaboratively in strategically gathering and analysing data, deciding a theory of change, applying shared practice, reflecting and making adaptations as new data emerges. The participant critically reflects on the process, the potential impact of decisions they make with their team, as well as their role in leading a learning community. This is then presented to their own school leaders in a learning journey exhibition, thereby engaging more of the learning community.

### Managing dynamic complexity

A key pillar in the PALME is the focus on deeply understanding the complexity and challenges within a specific context, and using that understanding to make decisions and take action through a cycle of 'inquiry, action and reflection'. The theory of change is that through this data cycle, the participant can lead their team and use their 'data literacy' to consider new pathways, pedagogies and collaborations that will ultimately support student growth. The program encourages this work to be collaborative, so that learning communities work together, with the participants' leadership, to bring multiple perspectives, adjust practices and systems, make decisions and address the dynamic and ever-changing complexity of the focus of practice.

The program intentionally recognises the importance of a holistic 'learning community' that goes beyond the specific context. Workshop sessions are structured to have participants share, provide feedback and find solutions together. Garnering multiple perspectives gives participants alternatives, solutions and ideas in unpacking and addressing their focus of practice.

### Developing agency in self and others

The 'aspiration' pillar of the PALME offers participants an opportunity to build their personal, professional and, through their learning community, collective agency and efficacy. The program starts with the aspiring leader using their personal and professional agency by deciding their focus of practice. They build agency and efficacy in both themselves and others as they determine with their team how they will address the context-specific focus of practice, what data will be collected and make collaborative decisions on adaptations to achieve the changes and improvements they are seeking.

Throughout this process, participants critically reflect on their team dynamics and relationships and how they can best support, influence and exercise leadership to find solutions and create change.

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## Fostering equity

While currently the PALME does not explicitly focus on equity, the 'attitude' disposition requires participants to demonstrate the belief that action, based on evidence-informed inquiry, and reflection as a way of working, promotes clarity and growth. Being able to recognise within the learning environment what needs changing, can be used as a way of determining oppressive policies and practices. The collaborative action and reflection cycles have the potential to deconstruct and replace those inequities with more equitable learning environments. This is an area for further development within the program design.

## Implications and reflections

The leadership capabilities provide pathways for professional learning designers to create programs that support aspiring leaders of learning to grow capabilities as future focused leaders. The PALME, as a professional learning design, supports participants in having agency to personalise their learning, for their own growth within their specific context. The focus on participants leading inquiry cycles, with a wider collaborative learning community, allows for the learning design to be facilitated and applied across different educational contexts and languages. The program is not only fit for practice within the different educational contexts of Qatar, it demonstrates how intentional professional learning designs can model global leadership capabilities in action.

### Key reflection questions

- *How does this case connect with professional learning designs for aspiring leaders in your context? How is it the same? How is it different?*
- *What suggestions do you have that would strengthen this professional learning design?*
- *How might professional learning for aspiring leaders intentionally contribute to equity, inclusion, anti-racism and anti-oppression?*

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## A4. TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP, FLOURISHING FUTURES: A UNITED NATIONS CASE\*

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**Dr Claudine Rizkallah Aziz**, UNICEF and **Jennifer Lewis**, Forever Learn

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\* This is a multi-lateral project representing stories curated from several studies. It is informed by the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan.

*Education is a fundamental human right, central to the dignity and empowerment of individuals, to driving sustainable development, and to building peace. Any solution to the world's problems starts with education, the greatest tool we have to fulfil and grow human potential.*

UN Secretary-General António Guterres,  
29 June 2022 press.

### Context and introduction

The human tragedy occurring across several continents at this time has forced the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to now cast monthly data to illuminate the plight of millions of refugees globally. May 2022 data shows that for the first time in our history more than 100 million people are forcibly displaced, with more than 12 million displacements occurring in the first half of this year. An estimated 50 per cent of these displaced people are children below 18 years of age and approximately 400,000 children are born into a refugee life each year. Approximately 10 million displaced people reside in refugee camps and most of these camps are in developing countries. This case, informed by the Lebanon Crises Response Plan, represents a multi-lateral project through stories curated from several studies, which captures the lived experience of several local educators and community members who have committed to supporting the families and children living in these camps, with the support of local and international agencies. Their aim is to provide nurturing and an education that enables them to thrive in the most challenging of circumstances.

Adeela teaches elementary children at her local community public school in a rural village that is neighbour to a decade-old refugee camp, where an ever-increasing population of displaced people struggles to live from day to day in tents provided by United Nation agencies. Many children from the camp now attend the afternoon shift at Adeela's school, under a UN and local government and community program.

Adeela often came across children from the camp as they walked to school and listened to their conversations as they shared their fears and challenges about the struggles of school and in the camp; she noticed that these children were regularly absent and feared that school was another burden to carry in their young lives.

Adeela shared her reflections with her school principal, as they both had previously co-led collaborations with NGOs, school staff, children and the community, to enable refugee children to enrol the previous year. In meetings they had collectively shared beliefs and concerns, always mindful of the humanitarian crises at their doorstep. Although they both agreed that the initial decision had been well considered, there continued to be a disconnect for those they were trying to serve.

Believing deeply in the transformative impact of education, Adeela reflected on what might be a more relevant and equitable learning environment for these children, recognising they came from different countries and had experienced complex and catastrophic experiences that had caused their families to be displaced. She began to make sense of the disconnected aspects of school for these children and considered how she might engage others in conversations to co-create systems that might enable these children to thrive. She also reflected upon her values, personal qualities and preferred practices for teaching, as she carefully considered what needed to change in herself and the school, and with the local community, on behalf of these children.

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From the principal's and Adeela's points of view there was a need to disrupt current policies, procedures and practices, to create more equitable learning and wellbeing places for children, their parents, and the wider community.

With a small team of teachers, community members and the children themselves, Adeela created new spaces in which the children could play, learn, rest in quiet, private places and talk with a friend about their challenges, recognising that stronger and more effective changes would be made through student empathetic listening for understanding. These focused conversations became part of the classroom daily routines and enabled Adeela to capture each child's reality from their perspective. In time she met with their parents to better understand each child's circumstances and the best ways to help them thrive.

She encouraged the children to express their preferred futures in words and drawings that they felt comfortable to share with the principal and camp leader. This helped to surface underlying and emerging challenges that had not been fully understood, and informed the change processes required to create balance, sustainability and new possibilities for not only the children but also the community in which they were now engaging. It was important to continue to understand these children were navigating two very different complex worlds – camp and village – and now was the time to create new belonging places and spaces that could provide routines of learning, unlearning and relearning around the things that mattered.

The principal encouraged Adeela to explore new and different networks, and to develop an interdisciplinary, agile approach to inform collaborative high-trust, high-impact decisions. Together they formed a larger coalition of the willing who began strategically reframing current and emerging challenges, and collaboratively determined equitable outcomes, building collective accountability for the expected and unexpected issues still to evolve (Fullan, 2019; Gurvitch, 2018). This became about **cultivating shared leadership, personal and collective agency**, and connecting people to their own and each other's humanity for the greater good (Sen, 2004; Bernstein and Linsky, 2016; Campbell et al, 2015).

Children's conversations also revealed parents living in the camps could not read or write and they worried about their ability to support their child's education. These parents highly valued education and were ready to do whatever it would take to help create opportunities, but felt equally disempowered along with their children.

Adeela discussed this opportunity with the principal and parent coordinators, and the idea of hosting foundational literacy and numeracy courses, and providing opportunities for parents to volunteer at the school, were over-subscribed within a week. The significant number of parents who signed up for the foundational literacy course energised Adeela to seek support from a local NGO to offer extra foundational literacy and numeracy sessions for parents at school and in camp, and this continues today.

Adeela also met with her principal to discuss effective strategies to engage camp administrators to create support groups at the camp, with the help of volunteer parents and older siblings. The camp administrators welcomed the school's initiative and informed Adeela that there was a community centre at the camp, equipped with computers that could be accessed for parent and children learning programs.

Considering the volume of the digital content provided freely and offline by international NGOs, Adeela talked to the principal to explore the possibilities of curating digital interactive content, adapted to the school curriculum, which could be used in both the school, community and camp computer labs. She discussed this with the ICT teacher to understand the technicalities and enlisted other teachers, high school students and community members to facilitate programs.

Adeela arranged for camp and local youths to be trained by the international NGO not only to support the running of the centre but also to provide homework support for children. She asked for mothers and fathers to volunteer in the community centre in the mornings and afternoons, to assist children to complete learning and social wellbeing tasks.

Adeela's capacity to build collective agency and efficacy, empower teams to work together in support of future-based change and, along with her principal,

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to manage the complex relationships through well-defined goals and resourcing, has meant life-changing opportunities for the children and their families (van Wijck and Niemeijer, 2016; Hodgson, 2020). Adeela's commitment to understanding the complexity of the children's circumstances, and her belief in the power of education to create a better future, created unanticipated momentum.

The children's success became everybody's concern. Children at the school and at the camp now had access to better learning resources and opportunities, and camp youth were now trained with ICT, pedagogical and administrative skills. Teachers learned to use, select, curate and assign

interactive digital content, and both the school library and refugee camp centre were enriched with additional books and resources for children and parents to access. It takes a transformative leader to promote leadership and agency for the common good.

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 (Stephenson, 1999).

Together, this community built a new and shared narrative that continues to ensure promising futures in which all children can thrive.

### Key reflection questions

- *What aspects of this case are common to all school leaders?*
- *How might you use this case and the capabilities in your context to inform flourishing futures for every child?*
- *How has the leadership in the case contributed to equity, inclusion, and liberty?*
- *What are some current leadership problems of practice where the application of the capabilities might provide some new insights in your context?*

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# INSIGHTS, IMPACT AND EVOLVING QUESTIONS

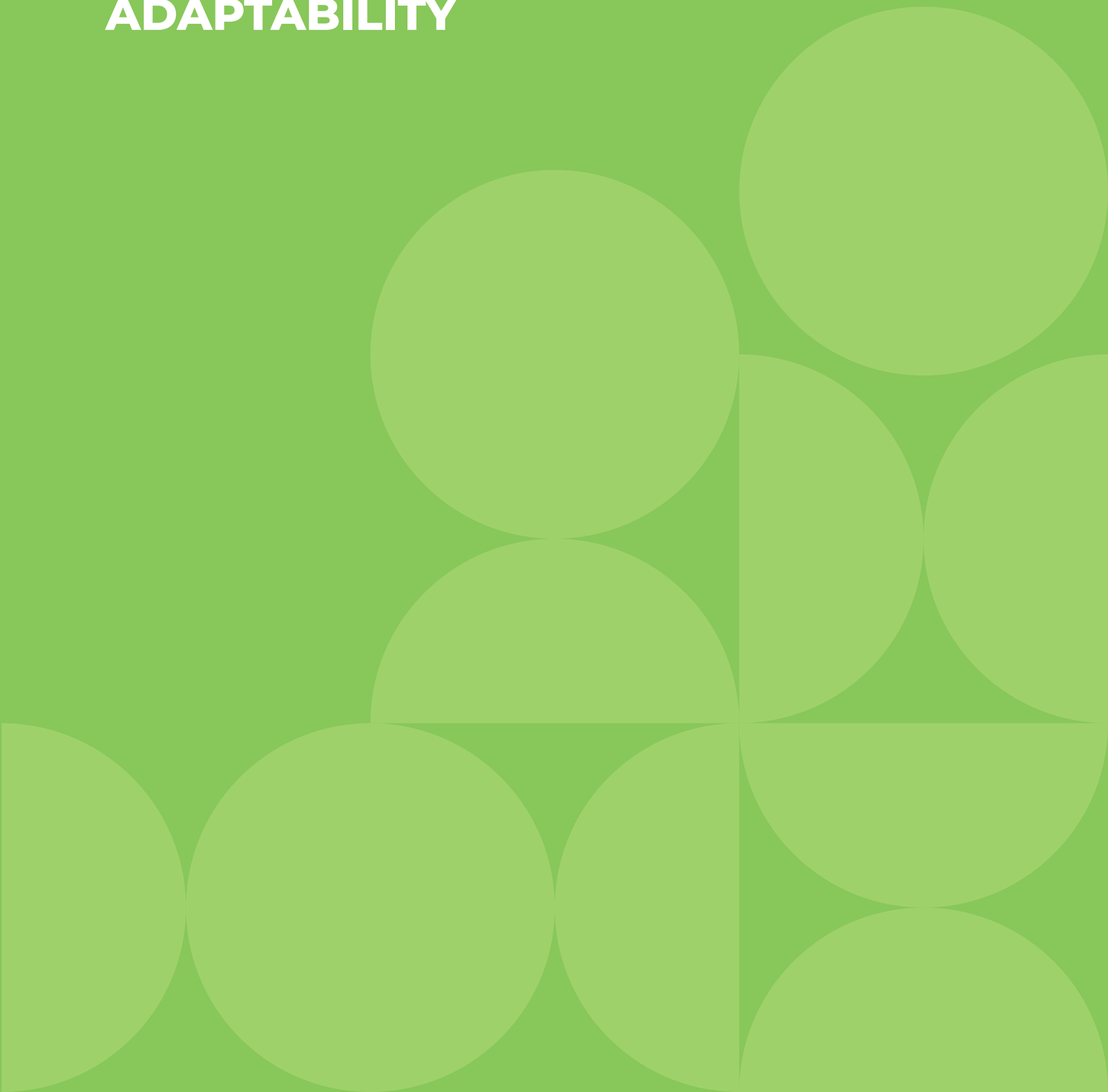
These cases collectively have given us a rich picture of the emerging capability-based educational leadership across multiple geographies – and illuminate a number of key dimensions, including

- leadership designed to **influence, enable and support** what we are focused on – namely the transformation of learning – that is beyond a focus on reform, optimisation, and incremental improvement
- how leaders are acquiring and exercising the capabilities to enable and promote the **deep learning** of educators and learners
- 'Leadership for a New Era', which involves **shifts** – mind shifts, structural shifts, shifts in practice and shifts in power
- leadership in support of deep learning, which addresses human centredness, the whole person, the connection between learning and wellbeing and the interdependence of the cognitive, social and emotional dimensions of learning
- that the 'four leadership capabilities in action' impact on the **system** at multiple levels, designed to promote **equity – deep learning for all**
- '**leadership in action**', which serves as a **catalyst**, an **accelerant**, an **expander** and an **amplifier** – that is, it has the potential for spread and diffusion – to nurture a healthy learning eco system, and
- these forms of leadership are related to **self-change** – that powerful, authentic leadership emerges from **leading oneself** ahead of seeking to lead others.

**Anthony Mackay**

# B.

## **TEACHER AND TEAM LEADERSHIP: DEVELOPING SCHOOL WELLBEING AND ADAPTABILITY**



# INTRODUCTION

In *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era* (Mackay and Barker, 2022), Hallgarten concedes that teacher leadership is a slippery term, with various definitions. Hallgarten defines teacher leadership as the process in which educators influence through relationships and interactions beyond their scope in the classroom. This influence changes organisational outcomes, professional practices, and pupil learning. There are several benefits of teacher leadership. For instance, teacher leadership can drive educational reconstruction regardless of the teacher's status, position, or authority (Wenner and Campbell, 2017). Moreover, teacher leadership can transform schools and communities around the school due to their informed decision-making skills.

Teacher leadership is known to foster education transformation, as detailed in *Education Reimagined: Leadership for a New Era* and in the following case studies. The seven case studies highlight the importance of teacher leadership and educational transformation. First, educational transformation influences learners and is also a powerful tool in effecting systematic changes. For instance, through *Teacher Development Program (TDP) by Dream A Dream*, teachers gain transformative skills that help them to integrate life skills into their education. Moreover, teachers gain knowledge that will help them identify their biases and improve their pedagogical approaches.

The *Rwanda Learning Partnership* case study explores the role of transformative leadership in teaching during COVID-19. In this case study, the teacher is critical in providing continuous learning, even during the pandemic, through engagement with parents and communities, teacher-school leader collaboration, integration of technology in teaching, and sharing information to targeted vulnerable learners. Consequently, the case study proposes strengthening existing Communities of Practice (COPs) to ensure maximum collaboration of teachers and other educational stakeholders. The *Teachers Learning Together* study in Rwanda and Kenya explores the importance of a distributed leadership structure (decentralisation). The author explores how teacher

collaboration measures such as delegation catalyse systems change and transformative leadership.

The *Rwanda Learning Partnership* and the *Arab Teacher Leadership* case study shows how teachers used technology to share learning materials with their learners during the pandemic. The interviewed educators reported how they shared resources with their learners through WhatsApp, as others developed a YouTube channel. From the case study, problem solving and critical thinking are essential elements of transformative education. Consequently, through ICT, teachers became transformative leaders during the pandemic. In teacher leadership and student leadership in the Qatar case study, the use of technology to support teacher and student leadership in Qatar is demonstrated. The author discusses how teachers in Qatar continue to support students during holidays by sharing short educational videos; the same was applied during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the fifth case study, *New Teacher Leadership for New Times: In Anaheim, CA; Surrey, BC; Tacoma, WA; and Kenya*, the authors refer to teachers as the 'agents' of change. If students interact with teachers almost daily, teachers play a cardinal role in transforming the learners into all-around citizens. For instance, teachers being role models for students, it is expected that teachers' virtues are copied by their learners. However, the authors warn that for teachers to develop an agency mentality toward students, they (teachers) must be agents of change. In the case of study six – *Teacher Leadership for Whole Child Education* – transformative education is identified as a tool for developing a whole teacher. By the whole teacher, the authors mean technologically alert teachers who respect other peoples' cultures, appreciate diversity and inclusion, and have mastery of the subject matter.

Finally, case study seven *Teacher Leadership and its Development: Insights from the United States* explores the role of a teacher in enhancing partnership in education, which means collaboration between teachers with other teachers, students, administrators, parents and the community.

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# B1. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (TDP) BY DREAM A DREAM, INDIA

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**Daya Raja Sajeevan, Sreehari Ravindranath and Vishal Talreja, Dream A Dream**

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## Overview

Teachers are amongst the most influential players in the education system, and they influence many children at a time. This makes them a powerful pivot to effect systemic change. Dream A Dream's Teacher Development Programme (TDP) positions the teacher at the core and integrates life skills gradually and comprehensively into the education system. The 'Arc of Transformation' framework adopted in the Programme aims to transform teachers from their traditionally defined roles into more authentic, non-judgemental and empathetic educators, who can hold safe spaces for children – and especially for those from adverse backgrounds. The experiential learning approaches, play techniques and empathy-based pedagogies allow teachers to recognise their own biases, and understand adversity and its influence on students. This helps teachers to unlock empathy and inspire creativity, and motivates them to nurture life skills amongst their students. Hence, TDP focuses on transformative experiences and experiential learning, and engages teachers for six–eight months through four Life Skills Facilitation workshops. The participants progress through four stages in each of these modules and learn how to explore and express their creative potential. They observe and understand the learning pattern of students, develop facilitation skills, engage and empathise with students, and understand adversity in the process. Ultimately, they learn how to celebrate their role in a young person's life.

## From insight to response

Initiated in 2011 in Bengaluru, India, Dream A Dream's Teacher Development Programme was started with an insight developed over ten years of work with young people from vulnerable backgrounds in India. The insight was that a caring, trustworthy adult

relationship positively impacts the life trajectory of young people, specifically those who have experienced adversity in their formative years. The Programme envisions teachers as facilitative leaders who are caring and trustworthy adults in the public education system capable of building safe spaces for the students. TDP does this by creating transformative experiences for teachers through an innovative pedagogical approach that imbues creativity, empathy and life skills and instills in them the mindsets, values and skill sets to create an empowering learning environment and to extend a reliable relationship to the students who are from diverse backgrounds.

Moreover, TDP is also a response by Dream A Dream to the felt need in teacher education in the country. Though several teacher education efforts were initiated post-independence in the Indian education space by the state and civil society organisations to reform the school educational experience, a majority of them were solely focused on subject pedagogy – overlooking the impact of teacher mindsets on student outcomes. By shifting teachers from the role of content deliverers to facilitative leaders, they have personnel who are authentic, non-judgemental, and empathetic – creating avenues to unlock leadership, creativity, empathy, trustworthiness, care, non-judgemental attitude, authenticity, and joy in teachers.

Over the years, TDP has trained 35,000 teachers in hundreds of partner schools across five Indian states, impacting approximately 875,000 students per year from low-income communities. TDP celebrates the role of teachers in two-day Life Skill workshops, spread over six–eight months. These are delivered by trained facilitators with a maximum thirty participants to ensure quality engagement and feedback. The workshops are facilitated through creative processes using play, art, music, dance and theatre, which help teachers connect with themselves, their peers, and the students. At various stages of the workshop, the facilitators create experiences and reflective spaces for teachers to connect deeply with themselves

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– their belief systems, values, implicit biases, past experiences – its relationship to their role as teachers, and the impact it has on their students, classroom climate and other stakeholders they work with. By relating to oneself and peers in a non-judgemental empathetic setting, participants begin to embrace their life journeys and recognise the reasons behind their behavioural patterns, which provides an opportunity to reflect and challenge themselves. This transformative experience equips them with awareness, values and skills to be facilitative leaders in their school environments, creating empathetic spaces for their students.

Each workshop of the TDP has distinct modules with specific outcomes, such as self-awareness; understanding of early childhood development; developing deep listening and authentic validation skills; redefinition and celebration of the teacher's role through experiential learning and strength-based facilitation; and integration of life skills in subject content delivery through practice facilitation. The curriculum is based on The Arc of Transformation (AoT) framework, adopted from the Creative Empowerment Model of Partners for Youth Empowerment (PYE Global) and is contextualised, based on the socio-cultural needs of the community. The AoT is based on the simple principle that when an individual has a deeply transformative experience that shifts their mindset or helps them challenge a previously held belief or value system, then that transformation takes root in the individual, becoming a part of their identity, making it impossible to go back to who they were before the transformative experience. Creative risk taking is the core tenet of the Arc of Transformation, where at each phase participants are encouraged to take a new creative risk.

The key competencies developed by teachers through TDP include self-efficacy, emotional regulation, risk taking, and skills of creative facilitation, effective communication, listening, validation and facilitation with empathy, which are integral to the Core Foundations proposed by the OECD Learning Compass 2030. These competencies, which make the backbone of the facilitative leadership approach, acquired through transformative experiences, when implemented, shift the nature of the classroom climate from that

of a traditional authoritarian one to a creative and democratic one where belongingness of each student is nurtured. Thus, this approach creates a transformative classroom and school environment for students, which prioritises equity. Without mention, these competencies also enhance personal wellbeing in teachers and help them connect better to their role in students' lives apart from teaching. Furthermore, this also has a positive cascading effect on the relationships with parents and the larger school community, improving the overall health of the institution.

Creative risk taking is the core tenet of the Arc of Transformation, where at each phase participants are encouraged to take a new creative risk.

Post-TDP workshops, teachers are provided with ongoing support for a year, via regular classroom observations, co-facilitations and one-on-one feedback. The LSAS scores of participants' students are collected pre-training and post-training, 12 months apart, to assess PDP's impact in classrooms. An independent study reveals that TDP positively impacts teacher efficacy, student-teacher relationship, student engagement, teacher effectiveness and student outcomes in social-emotional learning.

The emphasis on 'holistic learning and development of 21st century skills' in the New Education Policy (2020), success of the Happiness Curriculum in Delhi, and the challenges in classroom behaviour management due to the pandemic induced distress, have created an increased interest in TDP among government officials and other stakeholders in education.

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## B2. RWANDA LEARNING PARTNERSHIP: INSIGHTS ON SCHOOL AND SYSTEM LEADERSHIP DURING COVID-19

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**Katie Godwin**, The Education Commission and  
**Charlotte Jones**, Global Head of R&D, Education  
Development Trust

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### Overview

A learning partnership was developed between WISE, the Education Commission and Education Development Trust, and the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) – which was already focused on improving the country's school leaders – to undertake rapid research on school and system leadership during COVID-19. The aim of the project was to

1. shed light on the role that effective school and system leaders played during school closures and reopening, in mitigating inequalities for the most vulnerable
2. ascertain what essential leadership skills, competencies and behaviours leaders demonstrated to promote equity in delivery during and after the crisis, and
3. contribute to the emerging body of evidence of case studies in school leadership in the Global South.

These findings suggest that clarifying and defining the role of caregivers in student learning and wellbeing, including caregivers of vulnerable children, is key to continued learning in a crisis.

A mixed methods approach for the research was used, and included

1. a literature review, identifying key challenges and promising practices for leaders during COVID-19
2. surveys and interviews of school leaders, parents, students as well as district and sector officials, and
3. deep dives into multiple case studies of schools identified as 'bright spots' for promising practices and unique strategies to reach the most vulnerable.

### Findings

The findings suggest three overarching ways in which leaders were able to provide learning continuity and other support during closures and reopening, especially for the most marginalised. These are

1. engagement with caregivers, communities and other sectors
2. school leader and teacher collaboration, and
3. tracking, sharing information and providing targeted support for vulnerable learners.

#### Engagement with caregivers, communities and other sectors

We found school leaders going to great lengths to reach out and support caregivers in the community; 83 per cent of school leaders surveyed said they worked with parents to help provide continuity of learning for students during school closures. Almost all of the leaders surveyed used engagement with community leaders as the number one way to minimise dropout (85 per cent). More than half of all school leaders engaged with community groups, including a disability group and reading campaigners, and most schools collaborated with health workers to reach out to vulnerable learners during closures and to coordinate reopening plans. (See Figure 1 for the range of questions asked and responses received.)

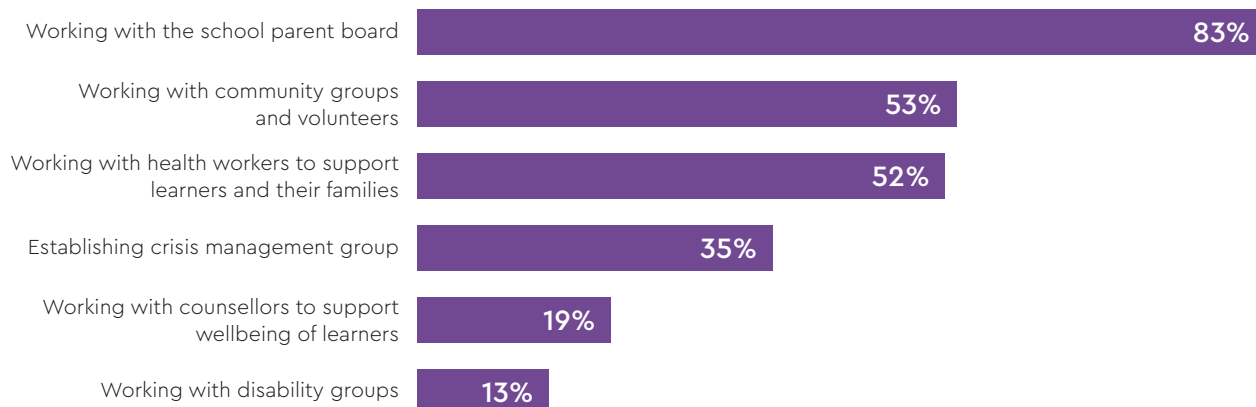
These findings suggest that clarifying and defining the role of caregivers in student learning and wellbeing, including caregivers of vulnerable children, is key to continued learning in a crisis. The role of leaders and teachers must also be clearly outlined and communicated so they can effectively guide caregivers to support their children's learning. More specifically, strengthening school leaders' role as facilitators of engagement with caregivers and the community, and establishing collaborative mechanisms (such as working groups) at the local administrative level, could help meet the full range of needs of vulnerable children in a holistic way.



Figure 1. Questions to and responses from school leaders

**Q. SCHOOL LEADERS:**

**How did you utilise community expertise by working with any of the following groups or individuals during school closures? (Please select all that apply, N=100)**



**School leader and teacher collaboration**

Head teachers mentioned delegating more to teachers as a result of the school closures, with teachers needing to take initiative in their local areas to support continuity of learning. 19 per cent of school leaders said they were comfortable with delegation as a skill, and 54 per cent said they delegated to teachers during school closures. We heard about teachers supporting one another, especially through professional learning communities (Communities of Practice) established prior to the crisis to share resources and plan for reopening. One school created a formal online space to facilitate teacher collaboration, while others used informal platforms such as WhatsApp. School leaders also relied heavily on one another as a resource. The majority of school leaders surveyed engaged with a school leader organisation or network during school closures (90 per cent) and after reopening (93 per cent), where they primarily shared plans to support learners and logistical preparation for school reopening.

These findings suggest that strengthening school leaders' role as facilitators of teacher leadership could help to leverage existing teacher collaboration. Promoting existing Communities of Practice (COPs) and giving teachers more ownership of them could also ensure maximum relevance of these groups in addressing challenges and opportunities at the local level.

**Tracking, sharing information and providing targeted support for vulnerable learners**

Some of the school leaders surveyed targeted support for specific groups of vulnerable learners: 35 per cent focused on those at risk of dropping out, while 22 per cent focused on those from poor families, and 15 per cent on girls who may have remarried, become pregnant or given birth during closures. Some schools mapped the location of the most vulnerable learners during closures, and teachers living in nearby communities provided targeted support. This included provision of written materials and reproductive health support for girls. In preparation for school reopening, teachers and other school staff visited households to encourage learners to return to school. Some school leaders shared information with local authorities to facilitate follow up for learners who did not report to school when they reopened.

Full reference for the RLP Report: Al-Fadala, A, Ameny, D, Fitzpatrick, R, Godwin, K, Kirby, J and Korin, A (2021). [educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Rwanda-Learning-Partnership-report.pdf](https://educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Rwanda-Learning-Partnership-report.pdf)

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## B3. TEACHERS LEARNING TOGETHER: RESEARCH ON COLLABORATIVE TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN KENYA AND RWANDA

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**Katie Godwin**, The Education Commission

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### Overview

*Teachers Learning Together* is an ambitious ongoing research study (2018-22) looking at the impact of different models of teacher collaborative learning in two large-scale programs in Rwanda and Kenya, led by Education Development Trust. Communities of Practice (CoPs) place the teacher at the centre of educational reforms. However, sparse evidence exists on how to make these teacher network structures effective at scale in low resource settings, or on the role of system-level actors in facilitating these experiences, such as itinerant pedagogical coaches.

This study looks at the features of effective CoPs, with an explicit research focus on the relationship between teacher collaborative learning and different kinds of leadership, for example the role played by teachers as leaders, and by coaches, head teachers and subject leaders. It compares two delivery models: a cluster-based delivery model in Kenya and a school-based model in Rwanda. The endline was undertaken shortly after schools re-opening following the COVID-19 pandemic and looks in particular at the role of teacher and leadership networks during the crisis. Endline results are forthcoming, with highlights available in a think piece published by IIEP-UNESCO and EDT.

### Description of the two interventions: Cluster-based versus school-based CoP

In Kenya, the CoPs are cluster-based, with 100 CoPs operating across 500 schools, as part of the Girls' Education Challenge-Transition program (Let Our Girls Succeed). CoPs are held at cluster level, composed of a network of four or five adjacent schools. Teachers meet once per term and meetings are flexible and reflective to address emerging challenges. They combine mathematics and literacy teachers. The CoP is facilitated by an instructional coach, who also works with teachers on a 1:1 basis.

The coach identifies key challenges and good practice before each CoP, supporting teachers to discuss their practice. There is currently no major accountability role for school leaders in the model. However, teachers are obliged to report to their head teachers after CoP meetings. Monitoring of CoPs is realised by regional coordinators and senior coaches.

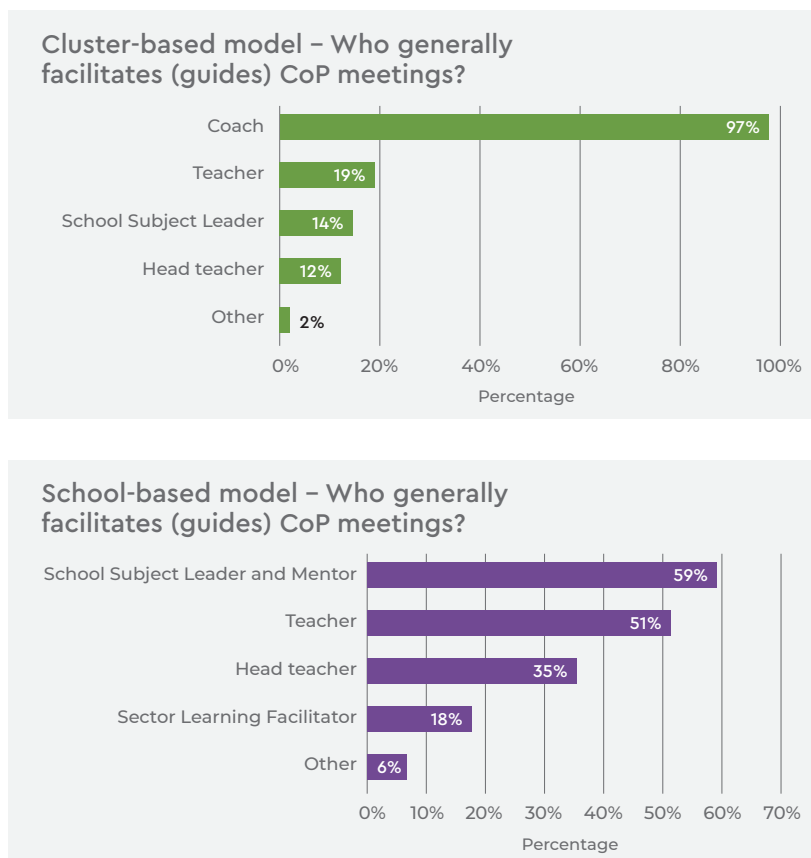
In Rwanda, the CoPs are school-based. There is a mathematics and an English CoP in each of the 2,500+ schools (5,000+ CoPs in total), as part of the Building Learning Foundations program. Teachers meet three times per term and are led by teachers themselves, supported by the facilitation of school subject leaders. CoPs meetings are highly structured, following guided activities in the toolkit (which is distributed by the program). Head teachers are accountable for monitoring the performance of CoPs and ensuring meetings are held appropriately.

### Initial findings

The initial study looked at the role of leaders and leadership in enabling teacher collaboration. The following key findings emerged from the baseline analysis.

1. Leadership from actors 'outside' the teacher Communities of Practice was important in sparking positive change. This support for teachers came from a matrix of different actors depending on the context, including head teachers, coaches and subject specialists.
2. The nature of teacher leadership and head teacher leadership evolved over time, with teachers taking more ownership of CoPs as they matured, and head teachers standing back.
3. Even during COVID-19, CoPs continued because of the relationships and trust already established, and were used to facilitate regular check-ins between school leaders and teachers and share information and strategies for supporting vulnerable learners and help girls return to school and catch up on learning (Miller, Hancell and Jones, forthcoming).

**Figure 1. Who are the leaders and facilitators in cluster-based (Kenya) and school-based (Rwanda) CoPs?**



**Leadership from actors outside the teacher CoPs was important in supporting CoPs to flourish** (see Figure 1).

We find that the cluster-based and school-based CoPs have different governance and leadership structures. In the cluster model, instructional coaches play a dominant role as the main facilitator and subject leader. In contrast, we find that in Rwanda more diverse actors at different levels are involved in CoP leadership: teachers, school subject leaders and head teachers.

Preliminary findings from the baseline analysis show that the role these leaders play is important: we see a positive correlation between CoP facilitation quality and the self-reported impact of Communities of Practice on teacher instructional quality. In line with wider international evidence, this suggests that facilitation quality may be a key dependency for getting good outcomes from investment in CoPs. Similarly, head teacher engagement in CoPs is important: there is a statistically significant positive correlation between head teacher engagement and CoP impact in both contexts.

**No one size fits all for leadership inputs: Different leadership inputs may be needed as teacher collaborations mature**

In Rwanda it was possible to study the influence of leadership at different stages of CoPs' maturity, as the program 'rolled-in' the CoPs in successive waves over time. Qualitative analysis shows a clear maturity model in action, with teachers taking more leadership over time, accompanied by changes in head teacher contribution. Informed by this, the study explored two different leadership styles of head teachers (directive and facilitative), based on the frequency of the head teacher engaging with CoPs and in giving teacher feedback.

For less mature CoPs, directive school leadership styles had a positive correlation with CoP impact, while, for more mature CoPs, it was the opposite: directive leadership had a negative association. This suggests teachers may benefit from directive head teacher inputs when CoPs are struggling, but strong supervision may stifle teacher collaboration when CoPs are more established. In other words, although head teacher input is instrumental, there

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is the danger of too much involvement as CoPs mature, which may obstruct their functioning. This is consistent with the literature on collaborative learning, which emphasises the importance of high-quality subject-specific facilitation.

**Professional networks for leaders build strong foundations of trust that facilitate resilience**

The peer group model in Kenya is based on equal respect and a 'giving and receiving' culture – recognising that every leader has something to contribute, and every leader has something to learn. This approach has led to higher levels of trust and engagement across the CoP clusters – critical for the resilient solutions which emerged.

these case studies show the benefits of investing in distributed leadership structures, where several actors can serve as change agents to catalyse effective teacher collaboration.

In the Kenya program, all school leaders agreed that knowledge learnt from cluster meetings helped with teaching while adhering to COVID-19 protocols, and 98 per cent reported that the experience of attending these meetings before the pandemic was helpful in supporting learning recovery after school re-opening (Miller, Hancell and Jones, forthcoming).

**So what?**

In conclusion, these case studies show the benefits of investing in distributed leadership structures, where several actors can serve as change agents to catalyse effective teacher collaboration. This is an important entry point for policymakers wanting to catalyse systems change and to build learning systems. In our case studies, these actors were mid-level leaders, such as head teachers and coaches, who played a key role in nurturing the group dynamics for effective collaboration.

More detailed information on the research findings can be found at [riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/JONES.pdf](https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/JONES.pdf). Full reference: Rossignoli, S, Ameyia, D, Jones, C, Kamana, D, Tiganescu, A and Kudenko, I (2020) *Teacher Collaborative Learning at Scale: Governance and the Role of School and System-Level Actors*, July. [riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/JONES.pdf](https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/JONES.pdf)

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## B4. LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT TEACHER AND STUDENT LEADERSHIP: VOICES FROM QATAR

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**Rania Sawalhi**, Qatar Foundation

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### Introduction

Arab countries face huge pressure due to globalisation, international demands and competition in education. Therefore, many of these countries have launched educational reforms that share many characteristics, identified by Akkary (2014) as large-scale, top-down strategic plans, mandated through policies at the national level of school governance (El-Baz, 2009; Al-Banai and Nasser, 2015; Al-Fadala, 2015).

In most Arab countries, governments launched educational reforms, which their societies saw as the government's responsibility, and individuals only implemented them. This view is deeply rooted and reflected in each country's reform and educational systems. Akkary and Rizk (2012) describe how stakeholders, including teachers in Arab countries, see reform as something that happens **to** them and that they should wait passively, and that being proactive and introducing new ideas is too risky. 'Teachers see no reason to become proactive agents of change in their institutions' (p 20).

### About the project

Since 2017, as part of WomenEdMENA events and research projects, we interviewed more than 160 teachers in public and private schools in Arab countries, exploring teachers' perspectives and experiences towards teacher leadership and agency before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (Arar et al, 2022; Chaaban, Arar, et al, 2021; Chaaban, Sawalhi, et al, 2021; Chaaban and Sawalhi, 2019; Sawalhi, 2019; Sawalhi and Chaaban, 2019).

Interestingly, the findings shared several themes, although the data was collected in different settings and times. Data revealed the following.

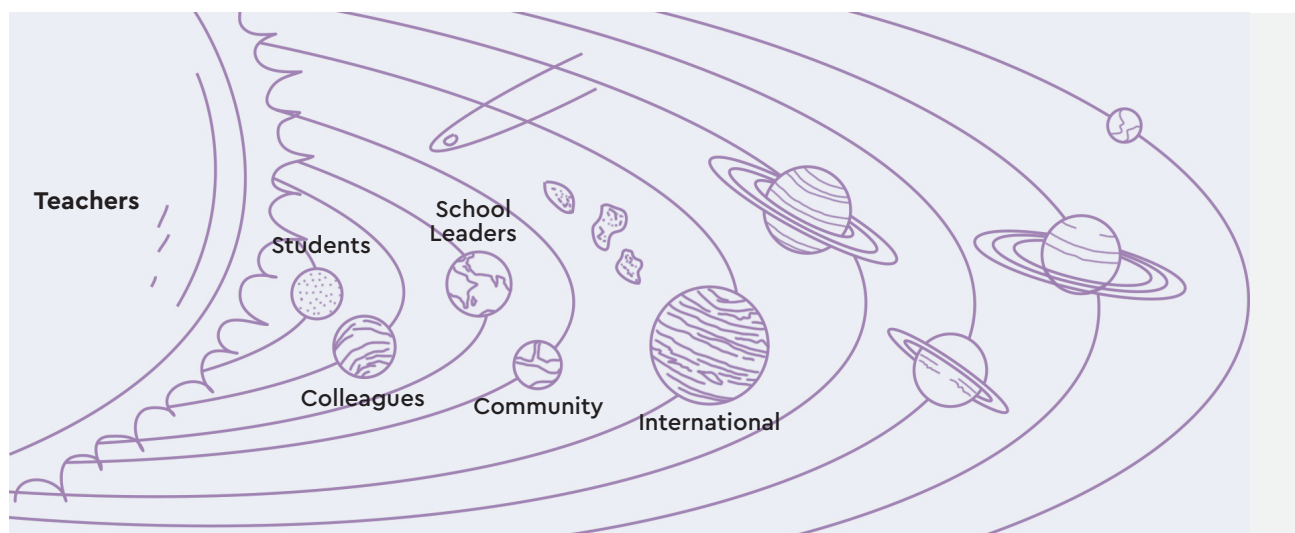
1. Most teachers do not consider their leadership practices part of school leadership, and think this is part of day-to-day practice, regardless of whether their practices are formal and upon the principal request or non-formal or non-positional role, such as supporting other teachers and parents.
2. Teachers value the teachers who are leading social activities, such as social events or helping in fundraising activities to help one of their colleagues; however, this theme during COVID-19 was not presented in teachers' comments and experiences. The transition to online learning during COVID-19 school closures, and thereafter, necessitated new models of teacher learning. For instance, teachers were able to refine their leadership skills by resorting to a number of online professional learning opportunities, such as workshops, conferences and webinars, in addition to accessing a multitude of articles and interacting with teachers from around the world through various social media platforms (Hartshorne et al, 2020). Thus, professional learning manifested as teachers' self-motivated and self-regulated activities – as they engaged in the surge of online learning opportunities, offering them the time and space for both synchronous and asynchronous interactions, the opportunities to reflect on issues of practice both individually or in collaboration with colleagues, and a customised learning experience that directly supported improved pedagogical practices and student learning (Gudmundsdottir and Hathaway, 2020).
3. Interviewees during COVID-19 were focused on developing both their own and their colleagues' skills to deal with the new tasks. Remarkably, teachers interviewed before COVID-19 highlighted the role of being Murabi (developing the whole person) as they shared examples of initiatives related to parents, community, and mainly students, while this was not mentioned during COVID-19.
4. All the teachers highlighted the need to improve their use of technology before and during COVID-19.

Interviewed teachers shared many examples of how they tried to find solutions and launch initiatives. Most of these examples were personal efforts, such as sharing resources via WhatsApp and meeting with others to share best practices. Two of the interviewees (twin teachers) shared that they developed a YouTube channel to provide resources for teachers during the pandemic, focusing on values and advanced use of technology. Furthermore, they designed training courses to train teachers in person and online, to help them develop their resources, which led the Ministry of Education team in their country to ask them to train other teachers and develop resources for the students. This channel became a fundamental resource for so many teachers, students and parents that approximately a hundred thousand people from across the world have benefited from the channel (according to YouTube views). They were constantly following the updates and keen to know when the next video would be published. What confirmed this level of turnout is that they received a supporting message from a specialist in the Ministry of Education, declaring that the individual observed the utility of the videos in each attendance to teachers' lessons. Additionally, the Ministry of Education asked the two teachers to create a series of videos for the whole early childhood-curriculum, in both Arabic and English languages.

Teachers mentioned that 'Teacher leaders are like an octopus: they multitask, and they try to change and develop many things in schools and outside schools'. Another teacher mentioned that 'Those teacher leaders are like diamonds. They cannot hide their radiance, knowledge, skills and daily practices.' This orbit model (see Figure 1) considers that all teachers can practise leadership in different areas and aspects, according to their expertise, which differs according to everyone. Certain conditions, including infrastructure and training opportunities, as well as heavy workloads and levels of principal's support, could hinder leadership for learning opportunities.

According to Berry et al (2020), many teachers have found ways to 'incubate novel pedagogical and policy ideas, test them for effectiveness, pivot when needed, and spread them to their colleagues' (p 11). Thus, these distinctive approaches to pandemic pedagogies (Hollweck and Doucet, 2020) required teachers to lead pedagogically more innovative, engaging and student-centred approaches than commonly used processes of knowledge transmission and summative assessments (Teräs et al, 2020).

**Figure 1. Orbit model demonstrating how teachers can influence many circles at the same time (from Sawalhi, 2019).**





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## B5. NEW TEACHER LEADERSHIP FOR NEW TIMES: CASE STUDIES AND THEMES IN ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA; SURREY, BRITISH COLUMBIA; TACOMA, WASHINGTON; AND KENYA

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**Dr Barnett Berry**, University of South Carolina, **Natalie Fensterstock**, UCLA, **Anthony Mackay**, Centre for Strategic Education, **Peter Moyi**, University of South Carolina, **Marisa Saunders**, UCLA and **Sean Slade**, BTS Spark

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### Overview

The global pandemic disrupted the schooling of young people across the world, exposing the deep wounds in education systems. Yet at the same time, the pandemic created both a felt need and a wide range of opportunities to reinvent education in ways that attend to the whole child and the whole community, opening up new roles for teachers and how they lead with administrators in recreating schools as institutions.<sup>1</sup> The 2022 International Summit on the Teaching Profession, a venue for ministers of education and union leaders across the globe to come together, focused on reconfiguring schools as learning hubs, where partnerships with community partners accelerate **'whole-child education'** – where cross-sector partnerships support every child leading their own learning, prepared for an uncertain and volatile future.

Whole-child systems of education require teachers and school leaders to grow together as change leaders, building a sense of shared purpose and creating the conditions to enable students and families, as well as their colleagues (in and out of school systems), to succeed.

Our lessons in new teacher leadership for new times emerge from case studies conducted by a team of researchers from the University of South Carolina and UCLA in Anaheim, CA and Surrey, BC; and by BTS Spark, in Surrey and Tacoma, WA, as well as across several schools in Kenya via the Dignitas Project. Here are five key lessons from our two separate, but tightly related efforts.

### Key lesson 1. Student and teacher agency – not one or the other

In Anaheim and Surrey, we found that teachers support students to lead their learning, in large measure, because administrators trust them to do the same. The work of teacher leadership is rooted in student voice, and an 'asset-oriented approach' to almost everything – from the process of creating professional learning communities in BC to building a new model of community schools in California. During our research, one BC administrator noted the following.

*Trust is the key word there. We don't have some hidden agenda here, where administrators force things on teachers. So, the process is always quite collaborative. We always say, here's an idea, or the ideas come from the ground – one or the other.*

In both districts teachers reported being freed of teaching in rigid, scripted ways. A California teacher asserted the following.

*We innovate and lead because we do not have a hard curriculum here. It is not about the (standardised) test. This is why we spend more time helping students brand themselves with their own learning.*

the pandemic created both a felt need and a wide range of opportunities to reinvent education in ways that attend to the whole child and the whole community, opening up new roles for teachers and how they lead with administrators in recreating schools as institutions.<sup>1</sup>

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## Key lesson 2. Mindset shift to a ‘Whole Teacher’ approach

A shift in mindset has been fundamental in setting the conditions for these changes to occur. Often, the mindset shift occurred during the initial phases of the initiative and boosted direction, although for several districts, including Surrey and Tacoma, the leadership development was a continuation of the adoption of a Whole Child approach to education. A change in mindset towards the role of teachers in school transformation was needed, to formulate a change in behaviour and subsequently a change in process and action.

All districts demonstrated a commitment to developing and supporting the whole teacher, acknowledging the importance of authentically nurturing the wellbeing of those who teach young people. This included a focus on wellbeing, the development of teacher leadership, greater collaboration and mentoring. In Surrey, a helping teacher said the following.

*Our district does invest in the whole teacher as well. So we can't, as teachers, you can't do a whole child if you don't have a whole teacher, right. So there are aspects that our district does that help develop and support for the whole teacher – from mindfulness training to supporting us in making design structures for our learning and the tools we use.*

Surrey, at the start of the pandemic in 2020, engaged in a BTS Spark coaching journey focusing on the wellbeing of the school and district leaders. The *Wellbeing: Surviving to Thriving* program targeted mindsets and skills to boost both individual as well as collective wellbeing and, in doing so, improve the culture and climate of the school.

Additionally, there was an appreciation of the type of relationship between **school leaders** (district leaders, principals, assistant principals, lead teachers) and **teachers**, and a recognition that these roles were pivotal in establishing the educational and professional credibility of any initiative.

Similarly, at Tacoma Public Schools, a low income, diverse district outside of Seattle, the focus initially was on educator wellbeing. While Tacoma has had a Whole Child approach to education in place, district wide, since the mid 2010s, it continues to direct more professional learning towards the Whole Educator.

Administrators in Anaheim and Surrey reported that each of their districts have begun to cultivate a critical mass of system-thinking teachers – approximately 25 per cent – who seek to break up boundaries between the disciplines, use performance assessments to gauge student engagement and learning, and no longer just teach subjects, but rather the whole adolescent. Innovative teachers in both districts report that many more teachers, with the right supports, could lead as they do. The challenge now, for both districts, is

1. to ensure that innovative teaching spreads systematically, every teacher can teach in ways so every student has purpose and agency, and
2. new school designs are established so teachers can lead their own learning.

## Key lesson 3. Informal teacher leadership as a driver for innovations for the whole child

Both Anaheim and Surrey have placed a priority on establishing non-positional leadership roles. Neither school district has a tightly defined career ladder for teachers, where their leadership is defined only by a formal role. In fact, teachers not only viewed themselves as leaders but as ‘instigators’, to capture what teachers leaders did – not supervising, administering, or even traditional forms of instructional coaching. They see teacher leadership as an act of developing students who are ‘excited about learning’ and creating conditions for their colleagues to do so as well. District administrators did not expect teachers in coaching or leading roles to work with colleagues in a tightly defined manner. As one Surrey helping teacher said,

*We'll have conversations together about ... what are the collective needs of our students, and what are some strategies ... I never would want to come in and (say) you need to do X, Y and Z in this way because that's ... not going to be authentic for that teacher.*

Another said, ‘We lead alongside (with our colleagues) through the growth process’. Peer learning is paramount, as lines of distinction between the leadership of administrators and teachers have begun to blur.

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## Key lesson 4. Intentional processes for learning and leadership

Top-level administrators talk about professional learning and leadership simultaneously. It seems professional learning does not count if one does not share it with someone else. If these districts offer new curriculum programs, teachers are expected to adapt them, not **adopt** them. These districts use student achievement data in assessing outcomes, but they value inquiry, reflection and curiosity in the use of the data.

Both districts have worked towards creating intentional processes for teachers and administrators to learn collectively – which often leads to their development as systems thinkers. Programs are introduced as strategies to consider, not scripts to follow. One California teacher noted, 'They do not drop things on us ... they give us opportunities to learn and use the program'.

Surrey has set aside four per cent of its budget for highly trained, permanent substitutes to be available so full-time teachers can have opportunities to leave their classrooms in capable hands while they develop and incubate new ideas in service of student engagement, voice and learning. In both districts, administrators see their primary role as buffers for teachers – clearing away barriers for them so they can develop their collective efficacy. Teachers report it is in these collaborative spaces where they develop a systems mindset and where they learn to be effective collaborators with each other and a growing number of business partners and allied professionals in their communities.

The work being undertaken in the schools in Kenya, via the Dignitas Project, is similar. School leaders are being coached on their leadership development and, in particular, how they can bring teachers along with them as collaborators. The work is seen as fundamental in developing leaders' and the school community's ability to adapt and shift with needs as they arise.

## Key lesson 5. Rethinking partnerships and policies

Each of these school systems has developed a wide range of partners for both student and teacher development – including businesses, nonprofits and local colleges of education. They are developing a 'systemness' approach – realising the need to accelerate coherence and reduce fragmentation. However, we have found that much work needs to be done. For example, we learned that teaching evaluations can be more like a rote checklist, but could be used as a tool to identify the different expertise, interests and passions of teachers as leaders in deeper, more equitable learning. In California, there are inspiring inklings of how teacher evaluation is supporting teachers as action researchers, fuelling their development as leaders. Innovative teachers – including those who have created school farms (Anaheim) and classes in leadership for their students (Surrey) – talked about how, under the right conditions, so many of their teaching colleagues could lead like they do. Rethinking partnership and policies can spur the scaling up of a system of leading teachers.

Top-level administrators talk about professional learning and leadership simultaneously.

Drawing on the inspiration of the work of Charles Leadbeater (2022),

*It is impossible for students to develop agency unless teachers themselves are agents, trusted by the school and the wider system to craft and design learning with students.*

These cases can serve as an anchor for developing a systems of leading teachers for whole child teaching and learning that every child deserves.

## Endnote

1. Examples of those reinventions across the US are described in Darling-Hammond, L (2020) *Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond*, Learning Policy Institute. [restart-reinvent.learningpolicyinstitute.org/](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/)

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## B6. TEACHER LEADERSHIP FOR WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

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Over the last year, our team has been conducting two exploratory district-level case studies (one in California and the other in British Columbia) to document the role of teacher leaders in spurring a system of deeper, more equitable student learning and whole child education.

The districts were selected because of their respective commitments to deeper, student-led learning and community schooling, and teachers as leaders. While the study has focused on the district as the unit of change, our attention has been on high schools, which have proved to be most impervious to the serious transformation of teaching and learning.

While still under development, the cases have surfaced substantive enactments of **teacher-led learning and leadership**. Teachers have developed 'radical collaboration' by building their digital spaces on Facebook or Teams. Other teachers have created a hybrid, interdisciplinary summer school curriculum that 'blew up the bell schedule' and produced 'amazing results' for some of the district's most high-need students. Others turned a small school garden into a four-acre farm where students learn about science via project-based learning that is developing entrepreneurial skills while also addressing the fresh-food desert reality of the school's immediate neighbourhoods.

How did teachers develop these skills? How did they come to learn and lead? As part of our preliminary analyses, we have identified six themes anchored in the commitment and actions of top-level district leadership and organisational processes developed and sustained over several years.

### Theme 1. The indelible link between student-led learning and teacher leadership

Teachers support students to lead their learning, in large measure, because administrators trust them to do the same. The work of teacher leadership is rooted in student voice and an 'asset-oriented approach' to almost everything – from the process of creating professional learning communities in BC to building a new model of community schools in California. One BC administrator noted the following.

*Trust is the key word there. We don't have some hidden agenda where administrators force things on teachers. So the process is always quite collaborative. We always say, here's an idea, or the ideas come from the ground up – one or the other.*

In both districts, teachers reported being freed of teaching in rigid, scripted ways. A California teacher asserted the following.

*We innovate and lead because we do not have a hard curriculum here. It is not about the (standardised) test, which is why we spend more time helping students brand themselves with their learning.*

### Theme 2. Establish non-positional leadership where teacher leaders are seen as 'instigators'

Neither district had a well-defined career ladder for teachers, where a formal role defined their leadership. Teachers did care to view themselves as leaders. Instead, 'instigator' was used to capture what teachers' leaders did – not supervising, administering, or even traditional forms of instructional coaching. They see teacher leadership as developing students who are 'excited about learning', and creating conditions for their colleagues



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to do so. District administrators did not expect teachers in coaching or leading roles to work with colleagues in a tightly defined manner. As one BC helping teacher said,

*We'll have conversations about ... what are the collective needs of our students, and what are some strategies ... I never would want to come in and (say) you need to do X, Y, and Z in this way because that's ... not going to be authentic for that teacher.*

Another said, 'We lead alongside (with our colleagues) through the growth process.'

### **Theme 3. Creating intentional processes for teachers to learn collectively often leads to their development as systems-thinkers**

The high schools in both districts, for the most part, are organised in traditional ways: eg, the bell schedule and classes organised by single subjects in 55-minute periods. Also, neither district comes close to creating collaborative time for teachers, which is typically found in top-performing education systems in Finland and Singapore.

However, both districts have created intent processes for teachers to lead collectively, and programs are introduced as strategies to consider, not scripts to follow. One California teacher noted, 'They do not drop things on us ... they give us opportunities to learn and use the program'.

The BC district has set aside four per cent of its budget for highly trained, permanent substitutes to be available, so full-time teachers can have opportunities to leave their classrooms in capable hands. At the same time, they develop and incubate new ideas in service of student engagement, voice and learning. In both districts, administrators see their primary role as buffers for teachers – clearing away barriers so they can develop their collective efficacy. Teachers report it is in these collaborative spaces where they develop a systems mindset and learn to collaborate effectively with each other and a growing number of business partners and allied professionals in their communities.

### **Theme 4. Rethinking the role of (and resources for) school-university-community partnerships and teaching evaluations in developing leading teachers**

Each of these districts has developed a wide range of partners for student and teacher development – including businesses, nonprofits and local colleges of education. Innovative teachers and administrators often serve as adjunct faculty in preparing new educators for their districts. However, their roles in higher education seemed disconnected from any comprehensive strategy to recruit and prepare educators for whole child education. In addition, neither district uses its teaching evaluations to identify teachers' different expertise, interests and passions as leaders in deeper, more equitable learning. In California, teaching evaluations seemed somewhat of a rote checkpoint, although there were inspiring inklings of teachers being supported to develop action research projects as a form of evaluation. Teachers in both locales wanted to see more formal identification of teachers who are and could be leading. BC teachers discussed that teaching evaluation should focus more on helping other teachers improve and change their practices.

### **Theme 5. Supporting strategic collaboration among teachers and administrators where learning and leadership are intertwined**

In both districts, top-level administrators talk about professional learning and leadership simultaneously. Professional learning does not count if one does not share it with someone else. If these districts offer new curriculum programs, teachers are expected to adapt, not adopt them. These districts use student achievement data in assessing outcomes, but they value inquiry, reflection and curiosity in the use of the data. One BC helping teacher noted the following.

*Our district values and communicates the importance of inquiry. What's happening? Is anything I'm doing having an impact, how do I know? When teachers and administrators collect and use evidence, they are more willing to lead, or even have more understanding of 'the why' because they've been part of that inquiry process all along the way.*



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## Theme 6. Developing the whole teacher

Both districts demonstrated a commitment to developing and supporting the whole teacher, acknowledging the importance of authentically nurturing the wellbeing of those who teach young people.

The BC district has developed its wellbeing survey, and one California teacher leader has created a Maslow Hierarchy of teacher needs. Both districts value informal mentoring of colleagues. One teacher asserted the following.

*Our district does invest in the whole teacher as well. So we can't, as teachers, you can't do a whole child if you don't have a whole teacher, right? So there are aspects that our district does that help develop and support the whole teacher – from mindfulness training to making design structures for our learning and the tools we use.*

Administrators report that each of their districts has begun to cultivate a critical mass of system thinking teachers – approximately 25 per cent – who seek to break up boundaries between the disciplines, use performance assessments to gauge student engagement and learning, and no longer just teach subjects, but also the whole adolescent. The challenge now, for both, is to ensure that every teacher can teach in ways so every student has purpose and agency as well as the whole child support necessary to lead their learning.

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## B7. ONGOING ATTENTION TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND ITS DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM THE UNITED STATES

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**Dr Shelby Cosner**, Center for Urban Education Leadership at the University of Illinois at Chicago

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I have had the great fortune of being a professor in one of the largest cities in the US, Chicago, over the last almost 20 years. Over this timeframe, I have had the opportunity to conduct research in a number of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to learn about the work of teacher leaders – particularly work that teacher leaders in literacy coordinator roles took on in a manner that was shared (Burch and Spillane, 2003; Datnow and Castellano, 2001) with the administrative leaders (principals, assistant principals) in these schools. Although some CPS teachers had been engaged in teacher leadership, both formally and informally, for decades (eg, Kelleher, 2002; Stoelinga, 2006), in the early 2010s a growing number of teacher leaders in CPS were being engaged more formally with the leadership and facilitation of teacher teams – such as grade-level teams at the elementary level or department/course teams at the secondary level.

Research suggests that collaboration and instructional inquiry are school-wide cultural elements that provide important organisational supports for the collaborative use of data by teacher teams

What was the key work of these teacher teams – work I should note that has largely persisted with teacher leader support (initially through more formalised roles, like literacy coordinators, but increasingly in an ongoing manner by individual members of the team informally serving as team leader) – as an element of CPS teacher team meetings up to the present day? In a nutshell, teacher teams in CPS have for many years had designated weekly meeting time during the school day. By the

early 2010s, many teacher teams were beginning to use some of this meeting time to engage in a very specific kind of collaborative learning routine. In these instances, teacher teams would collaboratively make sense of student assessment data in ways that would inform their instructional inquiry and instructional efficacy considerations, their own learning needs and subsequent learning experiences, and ultimately their future instructional practices. I had an opportunity to study and report findings on the work of such teacher leaders over several years (Cosner, 2011a; 2011b; 2012; 2014).

Findings from these studies shed important light on school-level actions by teacher leaders, largely supplementing and extending those of administrative leaders, as these collaborative learning routines were initially being introduced in some CPS elementary schools. Actions to cultivate specific attributes of the school's culture were regularly taken both by teacher and administrative leaders. Research suggests that collaboration and instructional inquiry are school-wide cultural elements that provide important organisational supports for the collaborative use of data by teacher teams (Earl and Timperley, 2009; Nelson, 2008). In studied schools, culture building occurred as teacher leaders discussed the importance of collaboration and instructional inquiry with their peers, and as they positively reinforced teachers' collaborative, inquiry-oriented efforts.

Findings from my research in CPS also suggest that teacher leaders, whose roles provided time for them to meet each week with specific teacher teams, played an important leadership role within teacher teams. Among other things, these teacher leaders took actions that helped teams repurpose their team meetings, as spaces for teacher collaboration and inquiry. Teacher leaders also played a key role in developing more formalised team meeting agendas that regularly included these collaborative learning routines as a part of the team meeting agenda.

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Additionally, teacher leaders also facilitated these learning routines, oftentimes using discussion protocols when these routines occurred during team meetings. During teacher team meetings, these teacher leaders also tended to pay attention to the challenges experienced by individual teams as they attempted to enact these new routines, and they took intervening actions to address these challenges. In some instances, for example, this necessitated that teacher leaders help teams establish and enforce team norms.

Taken collectively, this research confirmed the importance of teacher leadership to the introduction of these new collaborative learning routines. Even more importantly, however, teacher leadership has figured prominently in the improvement work in CPS over the last decade. Now some ten years later I am watching Chicago Public Schools expand their attention to teacher leadership. In addition to recognising the importance of teacher leadership within teacher teams, there is increased attention to the schoolwide contributions of teacher leadership. This finds expression as CPS makes a deep investment in developing and engaging teacher leaders as a part of school-level leadership

teams. Such teams, which are expected in every CPS school, are populated by both administrative and teacher leaders and are tasked with leading the school's ongoing efforts to improve instruction and student learning.

The school district's strategy for cultivating these teams is multifaceted. Initially the district developed a rubric that makes the work of such leadership teams more explicit to members of the leadership team. The district has also recently provided developmental experiences for school leadership teams, as well as more targeted developmental experiences for administrative leaders, who are tasked with cultivating such school-level leadership teams in their schools. Principal supervisors, called Network Chiefs in CPS, are also being developed to work jointly with school leaders to support their work with engaging and cultivating these leadership teams in their schools. Clearly, in this context, the work of teacher leaders is multi-faceted and has potential for operating at various levels (school-level; teacher-team-level) within schools. The design and provision of various developmental experiences and tools to support this work is likely to be vital if teacher leadership is to have the envisioned impacts.

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# INSIGHTS, IMPACT AND CONCLUSION

Across these cases, we have seen a number of themes. First is the impact of **role modelling**. Role modelling teaching is an approach where educators inspire students through their deeds, attitudes and ideas. In case study B5 (New teacher leadership for new times in Anaheim, CA; Surrey, BC; Tacoma, WA; and Kenya), where teachers are agents of change, the authors show how transformative teachers enable learners to copy positive attributes such as confidence, positivity, integrity, perseverance, and fairness. Similarly, case study B6 (Teacher leadership for whole child education) proposes that a transformative teacher must be 'whole'. A leading teacher moulds a student in various aspects of life, such as intellectual, emotional, social and technological perspectives.

Across these cases we also see *training and development* are essential elements, particularly in case study B1 by Dream A Dream. This case study encourages teachers to enroll in TDP, which helps to equip teachers with more knowledge. For instance, the authors argue that teachers who have undergone TDP have acquired skills that help them gradually integrate life skills into the education system. Accordingly, the case study shows the impact of TDP in transforming a teacher from a traditionally defined educator to a modern teacher who applies student-centred approaches in teaching. Such teachers are transformative leaders in enabling learners to acquire higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving and critical thinking.

Moreover, by applying **life skills**, as discussed in cases B1 and B7, teachers educate learners on emerging issues such as sexuality, environmental sustainability, and pandemics. The cases also shared how teachers

adopt new teaching pedagogies, such as play techniques, experiential learning, and empathy-based pedagogies. These approaches allow teachers to understand diversity and recognise their biases, which in turn help teachers to inspire creativity, unlock empathy and nurture life skills amongst their students.

**Collaborative teaching** is another central theme explored in these case studies, where the teacher includes all the stakeholders in the education sector, such as fellow teachers, school administrators, students, and parents. For instance, in the case studies involving the use of ICT during a pandemic, a collaboration between teachers, parents and students is evident. The teacher would send assignment or learning materials to the parent's phone as the parent assists the student (son or daughter) in completing the assignment. Case study B3 explores the importance of distributed leadership structure (decentralisation). By decentralisation, it means a positive collaboration between teachers and management. Collaboration between colleague teachers could be applied during team teaching or joint lesson preparation. This collaboration is a catalyst for transformative leadership.

Finally, the role of **technology** is central to supporting transformative practices. Several case studies, including B4, B5 and B6, give an insight into the application of technology in the teaching and learning process, particularly during the pandemic. Technology offers virtual learning opportunities where teachers and students do not meet face-to-face, and is a critical element of transformative education.

**Dr Asmaa Al-Fadala**



**THE LEADERSHIP OF  
NETWORKS, CLUSTERS AND  
COMMUNITIES BEYOND THE  
SCOPE OF A SINGLE SCHOOL  
OR EDUCATION SYSTEM**

# INTRODUCTION

This section is organised around twelve short case studies of interesting, regional, national or global education networks. Some of them are well-established, others are in their infancy. For reasons of space we have restricted the case studies to a largely narrative description of who they are for and what they do. There is more information about each of them and their impact on the ALL-IN website. Seven of the networks have a global focus, two are focused on Australia, and three are African-focused.

In this introduction we would like to offer some anecdotal ideas and impressions about why it feels like there has been such a proliferation of education networks in the last few years.

Learning happens within a complex ecosystem, which cannot be centrally controlled. Many networks are built around practitioners sharing approaches and insights, because behavioural change in the classroom occurs more often than not through practitioners learning from each other, rather than a new policy.

At a macro level, the increase in education networks feels consistent with a much wider societal reaction in the 21st century, across many countries and cultures, to the individualism and competition that characterised a lot of neo-conservative government policy in many parts of the world in the last few decades of the previous century. Even before the pandemic there was a definite movement towards greater connection and collaboration across many areas of life. This coincided with

important new systems thinking and understanding of interconnectedness and dependency, all of which creates a culture in which collaboration and cooperation are prioritised. One of the powerful manifestations of this can be seen in the Sustainable Development Goals, which are very much a shared global effort.

Specifically at the level of practice, expansion of networks feels like a natural consequence of three other significant trends.

The first trend was the move towards decentralisation of education in many parts of the world. Networks, either informal or ministry-encouraged, are a reaction to this and a way of rebuilding or re-catalysing collaboration across schools and education stakeholders. They also offer opportunities (as is clear in several of the case studies) for collective action around policy reform. This is similar to lessons from community organising and wider, long overdue shifts in where power sits within education systems.

The second factor, which came up in several discussions, was the impact of PISA (the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment) on a systems view: the ability to compare across systems has come to act as a spur for a focus on whole-system improvement, which requires collaboration within the system.

The third trend is a reaction against a more top-down style of reform, which seemed to be a feature of several large-scale reform movements in the early 2000s and ultimately did not deliver the outcomes that were intended. Learning happens within a complex ecosystem, which cannot be centrally controlled. Many networks are built around practitioners sharing approaches and insights, because behavioural change in the classroom occurs



more often than not through practitioners learning from each other, rather than a new policy. Networks are an important tool for systems and practitioners to learn from a more relational, ecosystemic, organic way of thinking and implementing change.

As a great many national systems are beginning to think about profound transformation, in keeping with the United Nation's Transforming Education Summit in September 2022 and the work of UNESCO's International Commission on the Futures of Education, the role of education networks – which

support the exchange of ideas, collaboration where appropriate and shared learning – has never been more important.

The twelve case studies that follow offer a range of models for how networks can be developed and evolve (and see Table 1). As already said, this is not presented by any means as a complete set of networks, but rather as a selection of some of the possibilities.

**Table 1. 12 Education network case studies**

	Name of Network	Geographic Focus
1	Regional Education Learning Initiative	East Africa
2	The Connection – Social Ventures Australia	Australia
3	Whole Child Development for Displaced Learners Network	Global
4	Communities of Practice	Victoria, Australia
5	Global Education Leaders' Partnership	Global
6	International Professional Development Association	Global
7	Global Cities Education Network	Global
8	EdEco Initiative	South Africa
9	Karanga: the global alliance for social emotional learning and life skills	Global
10	Africa Voices Dialogue	Africa
11	The NetEdu Project Learning Ecosystem Tool for Regional and National Government	Global
12	Teach for All	Global

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# C1. REGIONAL EDUCATION LEARNING INITIATIVE (RELI)

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**Ng'ang'a Kibandi**, RELI Country Lead (KENYA)

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*'IRON SHARPENS IRON': Mantra behind the success of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI)*

## Introduction

'Iron sharpens iron' is a rather common phrase, coined by one of the immediate RELI county leaders to speak to one of the key pillars under which RELI is built and which speaks to the objective of transforming organisations. RELI was formed in 2017 and over the last five years has established the following three key objectives.

1. Transformation of organisations: Through becoming self-learning organisations that learn to transform through experiences, we aim at making organisations into high-functioning vehicles of regional change.
2. Creating evidence of what is working: We believe in sharing our learning with our peers and the world, to make sure that successes are repeated rather than mistakes. We achieve this through focused learning events, webinars, videos and blogs.
3. Engagement with policy: Our aim, through generating evidence-based policy implications from our work, and collaborating with policymakers and influencers, is to achieve a brighter future for our region's children.

## About the initiative

In our most recent engagement, CSOs from RELI engaged MoE officials, including KNATCOM (Kenya National Commission) UNESCO representatives, to generate a position paper towards the Transforming Education Summit convened by the UN Secretary General. An invitation to engage more intentionally, moving forward, resulted from the acknowledgement and appreciation that RELI is a well-coordinated network, committed to ensuring all children receive quality education, regardless of race, colour, creed

or ability. Speaking to this vision as a network, the following are some of the lessons that have aided our growth.

- After five years of RELI, it is clear that education agencies within each participating country want to improve the services they provide for their key stakeholders (our children). They are willing to adopt best practices supported by evidence that is well coordinated and organised, and which demonstrates wideness of scope in terms of reach. RELI achieves this through its vast network of members in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.
- We recognise the power of stories and meaningful conversations as a tool of advocacy. In a different era CSOs would come together to organise demonstrations to voice their concerns. Times have changed and through RELI we take on a more subtle and intentional approach of lobbying for the right of education of the children within the East African region. This involves leveraging our connections to ensure we have conversations with the right policymakers, which also fosters an environment where CSOs are informed of changes and plans in a timely manner. Collaboratively collected evidence is leveraged.
- Well-coordinated networks are a resource that can leverage a global audience and it is important for networks to leverage like-minded synergies. RELI is intentional in its collaborations with other existing networks, such as Elimu Yetu in Kenya, to leverage a larger audience, voice and position within the education space. This stance has opened up conversations and opportunities to participate in national and regional events that inform policy practice within the region.
- The greatest lesson of all is that there is power in networks, that learning experiences amongst organisations sharpen intervention, and learning experiences amongst networks both add value to the agenda of transformation and attract the right audience.

More information can be found at [reliafrica.org](http://reliafrica.org)

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## C2. THE CONNECTION: UNPACKING THE CONNECTION SVA COLLABORATIVE NETWORK DESIGN FOR SYSTEMS

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**Suzanne Cridge**, Director Education, The Connection

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### Introduction

Education is a complex human interaction. Leadership within education systems is a significant human responsibility. Extraordinary work happens when the strengths of diverse human expertise and knowledge are connected. These are the moral imperatives underpinning great education.

### About the initiative

The Connection is an initiative of collaborative networked potential that can build opportunities for efficient transformation in education. It provides for systems-wide practice – transformation that is sustained and is embedded within the systems and led through both grounded actions and the decisions of practitioners' leadership through their empowerment. While the necessity of great quality teaching is uncontested, great leaders are often overlooked as the enablers, or may be seen even as disablers of great quality teaching simply with one ill-informed decision. Leadership investment is often untapped and is an astute leverage point across global systems.

The most creative and successful work happens when committed professionals are collectively challenged and empowered to pool their expertise, knowledge, and resources.

The Connection design emerged from a premise that all young people in Australia deserved access to an education to support them to both thrive in life and community. The work started with a challenge in 2013 to codesign a systems response to an entrenched wicked issue, the inequity of education outcomes based on socio-economic disparities entrenched across Australian education.

### In the beginning

In 2013, eight outstanding schools were identified from a long list across three Australian states initially, as providing 'better than most' outcomes for their traditionally 'underserved' learner cohorts. Social Ventures Australia (SVA) invested in these schools for a five-year period, with the endeavour of uncovering, within an evidence frame, what their secrets of success were. While the resource of the extra 'cash' provided was useful, it became very clear quickly that money was not what mattered most. What became abundantly clear was the value of collegiate connection, relationships, trust, a shared moral purpose – which was fuelled by shared endeavour, then underpinned by honest exchange of pooled expertise and knowledge – that was the real prize and motivation to engage.

### What have we learned since 2013?

The power of the collective can never be underestimated. The most creative and successful work happens when committed professionals are collectively challenged and empowered to pool their expertise, knowledge, and resources. The more diverse the group, the more dynamic the outcome. Education was never meant to be conducted in silos of isolation or as a spectator sport where one size fits all or actions can be retrofitted to solve every challenge.

- Why isolate excellence and better practices within systems and leave it to chance for leaders to find expertise they need by luck, as in current pervasive system design?
- How do we identify then unleash these invaluable leverage points and assets in successful education practice across schools, and within systems, to influence broadly, effectively and efficiently?
- How do we empower education leaders, experts in their own community, to amplify and accelerate collective action for collective systems impact?

These were the guiding questions that set The Connection up for powerful networking collaboration design.

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The notion of social network theory, as described by Professor Alan Daly from the University of California, resonates strongly with what we have learned. Alan says of the work,

*... not only is it helping students achieve greater levels of outcomes in attendance, engagement, perceptions of their learning ... but also enabling teachers and administrators to find their work even more exciting, engaging.*

This is the story of The Connection SVA.

In 2022, The Connection has evolved to a living ecosystem and an influencing example of 69 networked school communities across three Australian states, and it is growing. It is a convened interaction point, built with an intentional culture of trust and no hierarchical structure.

The exciting impact potential for rethinking education systems' design, based on collaborative networks, is not rocket science, but more about thinking through how we leverage human connection for the purposes of accelerating better education outcomes, and designing systems that are fit for purpose and responsive. Connection through purposeful network design is how we will deliver and amplify actions for education equity, excellence and human flourishing across global systems.

Every global citizen deserves access to an education to support them to thrive in life and community.

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## C3. THE WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT FOR DISPLACED LEARNERS NETWORK

**Illustrating the role of networks in advancing the agenda of education transformation in a displacement context**

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**Corinna Nawatzky**, Program Associate,  
Salzburg Global Seminar

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### Introduction

Displacement ruptures the social fabric of childhood, removing children from their communities and significantly increasing their risk of experiencing hunger, bullying, gender-based violence and long-term hardships, such as unemployment and depression. In many contexts, education is one of the only systems of support that remains in their lives, making it crucial in developing the socio-emotional skills to navigate change and uncertainty.

The Whole Child Development for Displaced Learners Network recognises the unique role education plays in the lives of refugee children, and promotes the inclusion of psychosocial support (PSS) and social and emotional learning (SEL) in education programs for displaced learners.

Through connecting with and learning from others, one is enabled to challenge the status quo and move towards real transformation.

### About the network

Established in October 2021 by Salzburg Global Seminar, in partnership with Porticus under their All Eyes on Learning initiative, the network connects funders, intergovernmental agencies, civil society, policymakers and educators, to create and sustain a commitment to whole child development in contexts of conflicts and crisis. While the network has three main areas of geographic focus – Latin America, East Africa and the Middle East – many members also bring a cross-regional perspective, facilitating an ecosystem approach that connects local and global insights.

Today, the network operates through several different channels. As examples, the 30+ core members meet online every six weeks to discuss and explore critical issues; a series of public roundtables was organised in March 2022, and other outputs such as an eBook are planned.

With these activities, we believe the network plays an important role in advancing the agenda of whole child development and, ultimately, (education) systems transformation. It does this in the following three ways.

#### 1. Framing a common language and goal

The network offers a space to identify key challenges in the sector and develop a common language around those. In the spirit of 'Name it to tame it', many members have reported this lack of alignment to be a key struggle, which a network has the capability of addressing.

#### 2. Facilitating communication and trust across stakeholders

As the world becomes more and more interconnected, we need to move away from individualistic to more collective thinking, in order to achieve sustainable change. In that, trust is crucial and can only be achieved through genuine communication and exchange. A network like the Whole Child Development for Displaced Learners Network offers an almost intimate space to accomplish this.

#### 3. Challenging the status quo

Lastly, and ultimately based on the two prior points, the network provides the room to leave one's own 'bubble' and look beyond the existing. Through connecting with and learning from others, one is enabled to challenge the status quo and move towards real transformation.

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## C4. COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: AN APPROACH FOR EMPOWERING SCHOOL NETWORKS

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**Neil Barker**, Co-Founder and Co-Director, LERNA and  
**Lisa Black**, Co-Founder and Co-Director, LERNA

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### Introduction

In 2015 the Department of Education and Training in Victoria, Australia re-established a system of networks across its government school system. This initiative involved schools being placed in geographic networks of approximately 25 schools.

The approach is typical of central government 'top-down' policy approaches, with one difference – the initiative included the development of advice and professional learning designed to empower networks to control the manner of their collaborative efforts.

### The Communities of Practice approach

The initiative focused on the development of an approach to networking – a Communities of Practice (CoP) approach – with a strong emphasis on the word 'approach'. It was developed as a way of working – in fact, it was described as 'the work'. Design and implementation were the responsibility of the Department's then leadership centre – the Bastow Institute of Educational leadership (Bastow), and involved extensive consultation with school leaders, and regional and central office staff.

A number of key drivers underpinned the approach – networks should

- identify shared opportunities to work directly together to improve student outcomes, amongst network schools or across networks
- empower schools to lead policy narratives across the system, by working collaboratively to scale up local ideas and successes

- facilitate professional learning by the profession for the profession

*... the journey from (a) great to excellent (education system) serves further to enhance the educators' responsibility for looking after each other's development ...*

(Mourshed et al, 2010)

- engage staff across schools, not just principals.

Bastow developed a number of resources, advice and support to assist school networks, including

- a network self evaluation matrix, based on then literature about effective collaboration between schools (see [academy.vic.gov.au/learning-resources/cop-self-assessment](http://academy.vic.gov.au/learning-resources/cop-self-assessment) for an updated version)
- an evaluation approach to track network development across the system
- extensive support materials (see current resources at [academy.vic.gov.au/learning-resources/communities-practice](http://academy.vic.gov.au/learning-resources/communities-practice))
- on-going professional learning for Network Chairs, the Network Executive and Senior Education Improvement Leaders (SEILs), and
- the provision of experienced principal consultants to support network development.

Leading and supporting the development of networks across a school system was complex and evolved over time. Our reflections regarding the development of this system of networks include that

- network chairs were challenged by having to lead their peers – professional learning was adjusted to include work on 'leading by influence'



- 
- established networks that had operated prior to this initiative initially scored themselves highly on the rubric and, as they dug deeper, found there was significant room for improvement
  - sharing data between schools was hard at first and improved as trust between the schools was established
  - basing a network on geography did not always work and, whilst the advice supported engaging with schools across networks, this was rarely enacted in the early stages of the initiative
  - networks of shared work developed within the larger networks, to work on specific school improvement focuses (often three to five schools), and
  - a network of 25 schools is very large, and the shared work often became administrative rather than a focus on improved student learning.

Improvements to any system or model must be integrated into the fabric of the system pedagogy for the change to be sustained over the long term. The CoP approach aimed to 'build the collective efficacy of principals to strengthen and align effective practice to improve outcomes of all students in the network'. This work takes time, requires high levels of professional trust from policymakers, school principals and system leaders, and the courage of all actors to stay the course and not move on to the next 'big thing'.

Improvements to any system or model must be integrated into the fabric of the system pedagogy for the change to be sustained over the long term.

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## C5. THE GLOBAL EDUCATION LEADERS' PARTNERSHIP (GELP)

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**Kathe Kirby AM**, Executive Director, GELP

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### Introduction

The Global Education Leaders' Partnership (GELP) is a global network of education leaders developing and implementing education innovation and transformation. The network, drawn from 17+ countries, includes leaders of education systems, institutions and capacity-building organisations.

GELP began in 2009 when a group of education system leaders from ten countries around the world came together to question what societal, environmental and technological change meant for our school systems, in terms of why, what and how we educate. These leaders agreed to work together to transform their systems so that every learner can survive and thrive in the 21st century.

### About GELP's work

GELP is anchored by annual convenings in cities throughout the world, where education jurisdictions have invited GELP to catalyse education innovation and transformation in their own domain. In 2020 GELP expanded to bi-annual online and hybrid gatherings, to further strengthen and sustain the network.

GELP was seeded as an initiative of Innovation Unit UK and is currently administered by the Centre for Strategic Education, Australia. Major funding partners have included Cisco Systems, the Gates Foundation and Koshland Innovation Fund.

GELP is internationally influential through research, thought leadership, convenings and on-the-ground consultancy. GELP began in 2009 with the concept of 'Education 3.0' and developing system roadmaps for education transformation. In 2013 the GELP community of education system leaders contributed to a book, *Redesigning Education: Shaping Learning Systems Around the Globe* about what it takes to transform education systems when the context in which they have flourished fundamentally alters.

GELP system leaders identified a clear set of models and practices that together form a 'roadmap' to the future, backed up by the practical lessons drawn from their experiences.

In 2015 GELP focused in on new education leadership models and learning ecosystems. In 2021 new education purposes, such as education for human thriving and flourishing, and designing and embedding local learning ecosystems, have shaped the agenda of convenings – including the first GELP hybrid event, in post-industrial Doncaster, UK, where local education stakeholders worked with international counterparts to develop a Talent and Innovation Ecosystem.

As noted above, now including members from 17+ countries, GELP is a global 'network of networks' bringing together diverse international initiatives, whose goal is to transform education to meet the needs of the future. GELP network partners include OECD, The Brookings Institution, Learning Planet, WISE, Learning Creates Australia, Asia Society's Global Cities, Deep Learning for New Pedagogies, the Global Futures Foundation, the US National Center for Education and the Economy, Dream A Dream, India, plus many others. GELP international events have been held in the USA, Canada, China, Australia, Republic of Korea, India, Finland, Brazil, South Africa, New Zealand, Israel, Russia and the United Kingdom, and will be held in Singapore in October 2022. For in-depth reports on GELP convenings see [gelponline.org](http://gelponline.org)

As we hurtle through the third decade of the 21st century, the pressure for radical change to mainstream education is becoming ever more urgent, and images for what that future might look like are emerging and coalescing – but there is a problem. There is no version of this complex, exciting new world of learning that can arrive fully operational and ready to open for business on Monday morning. Supporting education leaders to develop that new world of learning is the challenge GELP seeks to address.

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## C6. THE INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IPDA)

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**Dr Paul Campbell**, Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change

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### Introduction

The International Professional Development Association (IPDA), founded in 1968, currently has more than 400 members across 17 countries.

IPDA members are united in their desire to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Professional Learning and Development across professional and geographical domains, which includes allied health, law and NGOs, and policing.

### Aims and work

The aims of IPDA are to

- support and promote professional development and learning of education practitioners and across practitioner contexts
- stimulate independent critical discussion about policy and practice through networks
- facilitate and disseminate research and scholarship related to professional development and learning
- have international reach and global conversations, connecting practitioners and practitioner educators across borders, and
- actively engage with other groups with a commitment to practitioner learning.

To facilitate collaboration, joint working, professional learning and collaborative research, within and across the association, IPDA has supported the growth of regional associations. Currently, there are regional associations in Australia, Cymru (Wales), Scotland, England, Ireland, Palestine, Hong Kong, India and the USA. Associations have their own elected committees, with the chairs of those committees represented on the IPDA international committee, which oversees the overall work of IPDA.

Regional associations lead work within and across regions, connected to the aims of IPDA and the

broader thematic work that is brought together at the annual IPDA International Conference. In recent years, the focus of this work has explored *'Reimagining our futures together: The role of professional learning'*, exploring disruptions and emerging transformations, pedagogies of cooperation and solidarity, the transformative work of practitioner educators, and education across different times and spaces. In addition, IPDA has focused on *'Marginalised voices in contemporary times: Addressing inequities through professional learning and education'*.

The IPDA annual conference provides a unique opportunity to engage with a wide range of practitioners, policymakers, and researchers who are involved in leading professional learning and furthering a more nuanced understanding of its complexities.

In addition, the variety of formats and platforms, utilising the best of hybrid formats, enables participants and members to hear from speakers through podcasts in advance of the conference, engage in person and online with attendees and speakers, and plan for collaboration and joint working, centred on areas of shared interest.

In between conferences, the activity led by regional associations includes practitioner-scholar forums, workshops, researcher development activity, twitter chats and structured conversations. In doing so, all those with a stake in the leadership of professional learning and development are able to come together across professional and geographical contexts to connect, learn and share.

In a time period characterised by change and uncertainty, an association like IPDA – which brings together professionals from across disciplines, sectors and locations – enables creative and innovative responses to the challenges of our times. In doing so, new ways of understanding, leading and enabling professional learning across professional domains and contexts is possible.

For more information see [ipda.org.uk](http://ipda.org.uk)

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## C7. THE GLOBAL CITIES EDUCATION NETWORK (GCEN)

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**Heather Singmaster**, Director of the Global Cities Education Network, Digital Promise Global

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### Introduction

The Global Cities Education Network (GCEN), an initiative of Digital Promise Global, is a unique international learning community of city school systems from around the world. School systems are rethinking the knowledge and skills students need for success, as well as the educational strategies and systems required for all children to achieve them. Urban school systems are at the locus of change in policy and practice – at once the sites of the most critical challenges in education and the engines of innovation needed to address them.

### GCEN aims and work

GCEN seeks to share promising practices to develop system responses to systemic education problems, ultimately improving education for all students. A critical element of high-performing school systems is that they not only benchmark the practices of other countries, but also systematically adapt and implement these practices within their own cultural and political contexts. GCEN is intended as a mechanism for educators and decision makers to collaboratively dream, design and deliver internationally-informed solutions to common challenges with which education systems are currently grappling.

Working with Digital Promise Global staff and experts around the world, teams of high-ranking school systems and officials from cities across the globe collaborate to identify common, high-priority problems, research best practices, and then develop effective, practical solutions that can be adapted to varying cultural and political contexts. This happens through annual symposia as well as smaller working

groups focused on specific educational topics, such as social emotional learning and learning differences, professional development for educators, equitable school systems, career and technical (vocational) education, and more.

Equity has been a particular area of focus within GCEN since its inception, as school systems rethink the knowledge and skills students need for success, as well as the educational strategies and systems required for all children to achieve them, especially students who have been historically and systemically excluded. Multiple symposia have explored different cities' approaches to ensuring equity, including a comparative study of the Network – presented in Seattle – which focused on improving opportunity gaps for culturally and linguistically diverse students. In subsequent meetings, there was an exploration of Toronto's approach to expanding high school success and system-wide strategies to embrace diversity; Shanghai's approach to educating migrant students; and Denver's approach to career and technical education as a pathway to future-ready education for all students.

The Network members have emphasised repeatedly that they find great value in peer discussions and the focus on implementation of policies and practices across the various districts, digging deeply into how to support students with diverse needs and backgrounds from different angles. As a result, we have increasingly focused GCEN meetings on the cities' experiences and expertise, integrating external knowledge while ensuring that we are focused clearly on practice and peer discussion, including utilising working groups and the process of improvement science.

The Global Cities Education Network is currently open to expanding to new members.

For further details, contact [hsingmaster@digitalpromise.org](mailto:hsingmaster@digitalpromise.org)

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## C8. THE EDECO INITIATIVE, SOUTH AFRICA

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**Dr Robyn Whittaker**, Kaleidoscope Lights

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*Building the relational conditions for a national learning ecosystem approach in South Africa.*

### Introduction

The EdEco Initiative takes place under the auspices of the DBE-E3 – the South African Department of Basic Education's flagship innovation program for supporting Entrepreneurial Mindset, Employability and Lifelong Education – as well as learners' critical competencies within South African schools.

The goal of the Initiative is to support the visualisation, mobilisation and connection of actors in the South African Education System, within an environment of trust and relationality, thus laying the foundation conditions for a functional, collaborative and relational national learning ecosystem.

### The work of the Initiative

Alongside their global counterparts, the South African Department of Education has been grappling with how to introduce the critical learning competencies (character, citizenship, collaboration, communication, creativity and critical thinking) into the South African education system. One of the fundamental difficulties in doing this is that most education systems, with South Africa's being no exception, are based on archaic models of vertical control, and the transfer of knowledge and skills is managed in a deeply hierarchical way. To achieve the kinds of education outcomes fit for an uncertain future, education systems need to transform to allow for fundamentally more humanised, experiential and individuated approaches to learning. Such a transformation requires a reconfiguration of the underpinnings and philosophical approaches to the exercise of education. This includes a shift in the ability of the actors within the education sector to

operate collaboratively and coherently towards the transformation of education, and to understand their synergistic roles within the education and societal ecosystems, such that learners are equipped for the future with what are now commonly referred to as '21st Century Learning Skills (Critical Competencies)'.

Embarking on this kind of journey is both urgent and necessary, but also daunting, and this work is relatively uncharted in the South African context. While existing models to support this type of transformation are in existence, introducing these into the South African education space requires intent, effort and a consistent commitment to bringing new and generative thinking to progressively larger numbers of actors, to enhance the levels of acceptance and willingness to work in this way. It is this transformation of thinking and approach that we are seeking support through the EdEco Initiative.

To achieve the kinds of education outcomes fit for an uncertain future, education systems need to transform to allow for fundamentally more humanised, experiential and individuated approaches to learning.

In November 2020, DBE, through its E3 program, in partnership with Kaleidoscope Lights, held a multi-party stakeholder dialogue to assess whether there was an interest, appetite for, and perceived value in embarking on a process to visualise, connect and enhance the relational network and functionality of the South African education ecosystem. Many of the participants in this dialogue opted to engage in an ongoing experimental process to move towards a deeper level of connection and education ecosystem coherence.

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As a result, in February 2021, DBE-E3 and Kaleidoscope Lights embarked on a process to co-initiate, co-sense and co-evolve a model to deepen levels of trust, connection, collaboration and ecosystem emergence within the South African education sector, using a variety of systems change modalities. We named this process the EdEco Initiative.

Participants in the EdEco Initiative were drawn from multiple different sectors, including civil society, education NGOs, business, philanthropy and public private partnerships. As the project has progressed, the number of participants has grown from 16 to 80, with new partners joining via a 'porous border' approach.

The specific projects undertaken by the group to facilitate the development of trust and relationality between actors include

- annual participation in the Presencing Institute's u.lab 2x program, which delivers curriculum and training for participants on the Theory U model of social systems transformation
- consistently held, regular weekly convening sessions, which are open to all interested in the process, and in which a wide variety of dialogic, community-building and relational processes are used to foster deeper levels of connection, understanding and insight

- intermittent in-person and virtual workshops, with a specific focus on fostering trust-based partnership, collaborative work, and connection between actors, and
- Deep Dive exercises to understand the work of sector partners, deepen insight and support shared reflective capabilities on what is occurring in the education sector.

In the coming months we will be expanding the scope of work to include workshops to convene 'meta-node' actors (network activators and conveners doing similar work in aligned but sectorally different spaces), which are necessary for expanding into a more comprehensive understanding of a national learning ecosystem.

The key value of this work lies in its attention to the relational substrate, levels of trust and wellbeing of the human connections of those focusing on the work of transforming the education landscape. Our goal is to foster increased system capacity for generating higher levels of connection, relationality and trust; thus our hope is that the participants in this process will increasingly replicate the approach in their own environments.

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## C9. KARANGA: THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AND LIFE SKILLS

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**Dominic Regester**, Director Education, Salzburg Global Seminar; Executive Director, Karanga

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### Introduction

A karanga is a call out in welcome in the Maori language. The idea of developing a network of networks to support social and emotional learning (SEL) and life skills was developed over two Salzburg Global Seminar programs about SEL in 2018/2019. A number of the participants felt very strongly that social and emotional learning was a key part of the educational response to multiple challenges that many societies around the world were grappling with. These included issues like how to build connections across fractured and polarised societies, how to help young people prepare for work in economies that are rapidly changing, addressing the global learning crisis and addressing the global mental health crisis.

We believed then, and still believe, that context-specific social and emotional learning and life skills programs have a valuable role to play in helping all young people prepare for life and work in the century ahead. Context is really important with SEL, but there are certain reasonably common barriers to implementing SEL programs that every education system grapples with. Three of the most common of these include

- the fact that SEL is and has been largely absent from most teacher training programs, which means there is a strong need for investment in the current work force
- the fact that curricula around the world are overcrowded, so how and where can new content and approaches be introduced?, and

- the question of how to achieve effective assessment of SEL and life skills, as most school systems are organised around high-stakes end-of-year kinds of assessment, which does not work for measuring SEL development.

There are huge numbers of SEL programs around the world, many of which have found answers to some or all these barriers. What there wasn't at the time was a space for those that wanted to share learning and insight, explore collaboration and work across national borders to improve SEL programs.

### About Karanga as an alliance

From the outset we wanted Karanga to be a global alliance that would welcome into its fold anyone interested in SEL, who was willing to share and learn. We were lucky that one of the co-founders is Maori and so we were able to learn about the idea of karanga and then get permission to use a Maori word to name the alliance. Karanga now has an active steering committee representing more than a 100 different organisations, from over 60 countries. These range from well-established SEL organisations like Dream A Dream, CASEL or Committee for Children, to much smaller organisations working to support nascent SEL initiatives in their countries. In all cases they come together in a spirit of openness, humility and a willingness to share and learn. The steering committee meets on a monthly basis. There are also special interest groups that look at the intersection of SEL and other issues, such as Early Childhood Development, Peace Building, or regenerative education.

Interest in Karanga continues to grow, membership is free and it is open to anyone working in SEL; learn more at [karanga.org](http://karanga.org)



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## C10. AFRICA VOICES DIALOGUE: A SPACE FOR THE VOICES OF AFRICA'S EDUCATORS, LEARNERS AND COMMUNITIES TO BE SEEN, HEARD, AND LOVED

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**Dr Robyn Whittaker, Andrew Wambua** and  
**Dr Abdelaziz Zohri**, Co-Founders and  
Co-Directors, Africa Voices Dialogue

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### Introduction

Africa Voices Dialogue (AVD), founded in July 2020, presents a novel approach to facilitating conversation, learning, sharing of innovation and experience, and the development of connection, courage and agency amongst a historically marginalised demographic of the education community.

The primary intention of the organisation is to create a highly dialogic platform for educators, learners and community members (including those in research and policy development) across the African continent, to be 'seen, heard and loved' – to connect and share their lived experiences, and for the African experience and narrative to be amplified both across and beyond the continent.

The goal of the organisation is to foster a powerful learning, support and advocacy network that has deep relevance to the issues faced by Africa, and can, in addition to connecting participants, generate and activate opportunities for the experiences and learnings of the education community on the continent to be more effectively amplified into the global arena. Africa Voices Dialogue is committed to working in effective partnership with like-minded organisations, particularly those based in Africa, to support this objective and to foster deep and relevant learning.

### AVD's work

Since its inception, Africa Voices Dialogues has hosted nine dialogues and six workshops. Each session profiles a different country on the continent, and different education, youth development and community engagement strategies. The platform reaches at least 900 participants, most of whom are based in Africa, and has seen participation from at least 35 different countries on the continent. In addition to the dialogues themselves, Africa Voices Dialogue has facilitated wide amplification of participants' voices through regular presentations at international conferences, as well as through written articles and research publications.

Africa Voices Dialogue is witnessing a rapid evocation and activation of learning community sub-groups which have a passionate interest in one or more of the issues affecting the continent, or which are relevant to providing effective, contextually useful approaches for Africa. Two such 'hubs' or networks are

- The AVD Heritage and Equity Network
- The AVD Peacebuilding Network

Additionally, the organisation is hoping to support existing and emerging researchers on the continent through partnership with other research organisations, and through the development of an AVD Research Network.

The platform encourages respect and appreciation for the lived experiences of this learning community, as well as amplifying highly innovative but often relatively 'invisible' voices, with a common belief that it takes a team to raise student achievement. Africa Voices Dialogue supports connection, relationship and shared learning, as essential components for the generation of a continental learning ecosystem capable of shifting the level of agency and action for effective education in Africa.

For more information see [africavoicesdialogue.africa](http://africavoicesdialogue.africa)

# C11. THE NETEDU PROJECT LEARNING ECOSYSTEM TOOL FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

**Professor Jordi Diaz Gibson**, Ramon Llull University Blanquerna and **Dr Robyn Whittaker**, Kaleidoscope Lights

## Introduction

The NetEdu Project is a global coalition of academics, practitioners, researchers and thought leaders committed to understanding and developing tools and practices to support the evolution of learning ecosystems as a new system delivery model for education. Currently, 30 universities, 10 school networks, 20 leading educational organisations, and more than 15 administrations and policymakers are involved in this project, impacting more than 18 countries. The NetEdu Project is hosted by Blanquerna (Ramon Llull University in Barcelona, Spain).

NetEdu's commitment is to support the cultivation and growth of place-based learning ecosystems – schools, communities, cities and nations – that enhance learning and wellbeing for all students and community members, expanding and strengthening the collaborative relationships between diverse local

and international actors and widening opportunities for all. The aim of the NetEdu Project is to contribute positively to weaving the transition from standardised educational systems to humanised, caring **learning ecosystems**, which enhance whole human learning, wellbeing and equity.

## The work of the NetEdu Project

The NetEdu Project strives to work at the nexus of systems transitioning towards generative models, specifically within the space of education and learning (see Figure 1).

The NetEdu Project defines learning ecosystems as the social conditions and opportunities that a specific place offers for individual, collective, lifelong and lifewide learning. These conditions and opportunities are mediated by a diverse and extensive network of relationships between people, organisations, policies and practices from different disciplines, sectors and system levels that are inherently interdependent in the provision to all children and young people with the wellbeing, knowledge, skills, attitudes, tools and equitable opportunities to reach their full learning potential and thrive together.

Figure 1. Powerful shifts in the field of Systems Change



Source: Signal Report, 2021

## Current projects include

### ■ The UNESCO NetEdu Learning Ecosystem Tool for Regional and National Government

This UNESCO-supported initiative has as its goal the development, prototyping and implementation of a tool, method and process for use by national education ministries, governments and regional government coalitions, which will allow them not only to visualise, but to evolve their national and regional learning spaces to become highly functional learning ecosystems. This tool and process is intended to go far beyond the technical mapping of stakeholders within the system, and support the understanding and active facilitation of dynamic relational energies, connection and trust amongst learning ecosystem stakeholders. The tool is designed

according to the evolutionary principles seen in emerging biological ecosystems, and recognises the dynamic nature of emergence and inter-relationality (see Figure 2).

### ■ The School Weavers' Tool

A research-based, free, online and glocal tool for use by school leaders and school communities aimed at starting and supporting a collective transformative process of the whole school community. The tool focuses on fostering connection and shared insight and understanding, within which caring relationships within the local school ecosystem ground the change efforts. The tool also supports school actors to better connect with the larger learning ecosystem, thus expanding learning opportunities for all (see Figure 3).

Figure 2. Illustration of biological and learning ecosystems

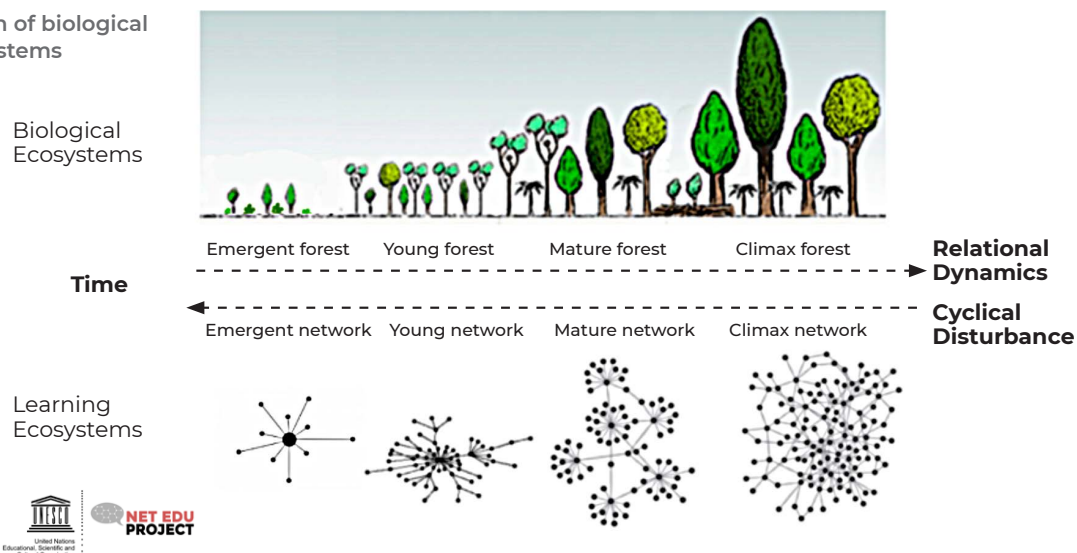
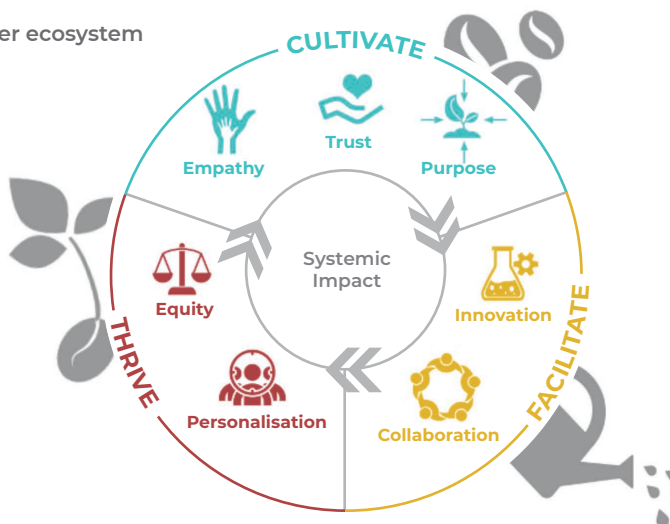


Figure 3. Connections within the larger ecosystem



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# C12. TEACH FOR ALL: GLOBAL NETWORKED LEARNING TO GROW LOCAL NETWORKED LEADERSHIP TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

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**Alex Beard**, Senior Director Global Learning Lab, Teach for All

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## Introduction

In Delhi, a new policy made a quarter of private school seats freely available to the city's poorest children, but children from under-resourced communities were not taking up the seats. In England, when the pandemic suddenly shut schools, there was no system in place to support children to learn from home. In the region of Áncash, high in the Andes in Peru, children were struggling to learn as the system struggled to reach them. Despite the many strengths to these education systems, they do not always manage to serve all kids well. That is why we must look to the power of networks to enhance the efforts of our systems.

## The work and aims of the Teach for All network

Over 15 years, the Teach For All network has grown to include partner organisations in 60 countries, and close to 100,000 teachers, school and system leaders, and social entrepreneurs who have participated in their programs. The efforts of those organisations and leaders has taught us that progress in our systems and communities does not only come from the thoughtful design and effective delivery of interventions within the education sector, but depends too on the leadership of local actors at all levels of local ecosystems. That is why the 60 organisations that comprise our global network cultivate collective leadership in order to strengthen local ecosystems. Purpose orients systems, leadership mobilises them, and networks ensure that shared action is being taken towards a clear shared purpose.

So in Delhi, Tarun Cherukuri launched Indus Action with other colleagues from the Teach For India network, using grassroots organising and advocacy to ensure hundreds of thousands of the city's children now access those free private school seats. In England, a network of 40 teachers, many of whom met through Teach First, spent two weeks of the first Easter holidays of lockdown creating a free online school that was used daily in the pandemic by more than 1 million students. In Áncash in Peru, a network of Enseña Perú staff and alumni launched Efecto Áncash, a collective action initiative involving the ministry, a local corporation, school leaders, teachers, parents and students, which in five years has rapidly improved outcomes for the region's 4,000 students.

progress in our systems and communities does not only come from the thoughtful design and effective delivery of interventions within the education sector, but depends too on the leadership of local actors at all levels of local ecosystems.

Our experience shows us that it is these networks of local leaders that mobilise systems. The networks have the following four key characteristics.

- Members are united by a clear shared purpose, to work for greater equity for young people.
- They have a shared experience, at least two years of teaching in low-income communities.
- They have leadership potential and are on a path to influencing change, individually or collectively.
- They are connected to one another through a network of relationships and mutual support that has a multiplying effect.

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Organisations across the Teach For All network deliberately nurture these four attributes.

Our experience also shows us that these networks of local leaders mobilise systems most quickly and effectively when they are embedded within a collective global network of like-minded leaders pursuing similar goals and learning from each other as they go on. Teach For All deliberately fosters a global networked learning approach to accelerate learning across these local leadership efforts.

The global network is built on a similar set of characteristics, which are

- shared purpose and values
- deep interpersonal relationships across borders
- elevating learning and insights drawn from particular local contexts, and
- a culture of learning rooted in evidence.

As at the local level, this global networked approach complements the more linear systems of evidence generation, knowledge dissemination, and policy design and delivery, which currently characterise global efforts. Local and global networks of leaders can mobilise the transformation of our local and global systems.

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# INSIGHTS, IMPACT AND EVOLVING QUESTIONS

The networks featured in these case studies operate at a scale that would have been unimaginable at the beginning of this century. Looked at collectively, they also demonstrate a strong recognition on the part of policymakers, researchers, school leaders, teachers and civil society organisations working in education, of the importance of sharing insights and collaborating. This trend looks set to continue in the years ahead and is, in many ways, a rare positive outcome of the disruption and chaos caused by COVID-19. The scale and complexity of the education crisis facing many, if not all, education systems around the world, requires collaborative ecosystemic solutions, and networks seem like a valuable tool for achieving this.

They are also still relatively under-researched and the working group had a collective desire to see more research into the design and impact of different kinds of networks. As the concept gains momentum and attracts more investment (private, philanthropic and public) there is a moral imperative to establish more of an evidence base for how, why and when education networks should be established.

**Dominic Regester**





# INSIGHTS: THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF DEEP CHANGE

*What is leadership and the role of leading when the global and local landscape is shifting so rapidly? What does it mean to lead for transformation? To lead communities into complex and unknown futures – and therefore complex and not-yet-defined shifts? What is the nature of leadership in complex systems like education when the shifts we know we need to make now are so dramatically different to how we have done things in the past?*

The complexity of our modern landscape, and the nature of deep and rapid shifts that are needed, has made clear that the era of one individual setting the vision and pathway for an organisation is no longer tenable – nor the most effective way for those in that complex system to navigate their way to their thriving future. The case studies put forth offer us powerful examples of what different models of leadership, and mechanisms for supporting those different models, can look like – even in complex challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic response.

The previous sections offer us a powerful indication of what schools, education systems and learning ecosystems are already doing to model leadership for ongoing innovation and transformation in our increasingly shifting global landscape. A number of key themes and attributes may be drawn from these examples – important distinctions that we can, and should, learn from.

## LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATION

The call for innovation in education is not new. In fact it is decades old. Yet the nature and shape of the innovation needed today is different from ever before. An orientation of leadership for innovation reorients a leadership team and organisation towards a new horizon – an unknown destination. It sets sights and sails, to possibilities, potentials and what could be. Being able to effectively lead organisations in this way requires a focused type of leadership – **Innovation Leadership** – which has been defined as

*... the ability to inspire productive action in yourself and others during times of creation, invention, uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk.*

(Cone, 2019)

These Innovation Leaders understand trends and opportunities to guide a strategy on how their organisation will create evolved products and services that best serve their clients.

Innovation Leadership is hallmarked by the following aspects.

- **Self-awareness and growth mindset** – This is about knowing one's strengths, weaknesses and blind spots; embracing learning and failure as part of that journey; seeking feedback and support for impact rather than trying to do it all on one's own.
- **Embracing ambiguity and taking risks** – This is about seeing and taking an opportunity to define a new pathway over fearing the unknown.

- **Facilitating a culture of trust and safety** – Risk-taking and learning are only possible, and effective, in an environment that feels safe to take those risks. Innovation culture is inherently relational, and leaders work to cultivate those relationships and culture first, over outcomes.
- **Encouraging play, design and experimentation, and empowering innovators** – Good innovation comes from playing with ideas, purposefully designing possible solutions, testing them for feedback, and adjusting as needed.
- **Prioritising learning** – Innovation cultures are learning cultures. Innovation is the natural result of setting goals in a culture that understands how to learn collectively and grow into the future.

leading for innovation is about what might be possible, leading for transformation is about how do we get there.

Innovation and design-based practices have been shown to be powerful tools for helping organisations navigate towards their desired modern approach to teaching and learning (van den Berg and Slegers, 1996; Sutch et al, 2008; McCharen et al, 2011; Groff et al, 2021).<sup>1</sup> They are mindsets, skillsets and organisational practices that have been used across industries to produce more effective and meaningful experiences and outcomes at scale (CITE).

Ultimately, Innovation Leadership is about cultivating a culture that is dynamic, design-oriented, and oriented on learning at all levels – learning about what works best for your learners, for your community, and in an ongoing fashion in response to our complex, changing world.

Doing that effectively requires building first and foremost on a foundation of trust. As Sir Ken Robinson so wisely taught us,

*The role of a creative leader is not to have all the ideas; it's to create a culture where everyone can have ideas and feel that they're valued. So it's much more about creating climates.*

(2011)

## LEADERSHIP FOR TRANSFORMATION

While innovation is critical for exploring – and, more effectively, defining – possibilities, it does not inherently lead to transformation. In fact, more often than not, it can clear to a wide distribution of modern and effective practices (or not). This means that even when we see organisations making the critical shift to an innovation mindset and approach, far too often these innovations land in a variety of places, often not creating a coherent and transformed experience for the end user (or in this case, the learner) (CITE). To state this very plainly, innovation practices and purposeful work are absolutely an essential component of any modern organisation. In many ways, however, innovation is just the starting point. The destination is leveraging those innovation and innovation practices to ultimately land organisations into a newly and coherently designed and defined way of supporting modern shifts and needs. In this way, leading for innovation is about what might be possible, leading for transformation is about how do we get there.

Just as our education systems must make fundamental shifts to prepare learners for a complex, dynamic, skills-based world, so too must our approach to cultivating education system leadership be across all levels of the education system. The cases here put forth the following core set of attributes of these adaptive, impactful approaches.

### ■ Mindset shift – in individuals and the organisation

Throughout all the case studies, we saw the recurring theme of the need and power of a shift in mindset – one oriented to towards whole child development, whole teacher development, and ultimately towards whole organisation/ learning community development into a future direction. It is a mindset shift from reform to design, from problem solving to cocreating. This is a mindset shift in individuals in the organisation, and ultimately the entire learning community all together.

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## ■ Cultivating new skills

Building on the foundational skills needed for all learners today that are increasingly cultivated in many learning environments such as communication, collaboration, etc.,<sup>2</sup> key skills and capabilities are critical for navigating this new complexity. While our traditional understanding of leadership skills still applies, new capabilities are needed for navigating for transformation, including

1. envisioning flourishing futures
2. managing dynamic complexity
3. developing agency in self and others, and
4. fostering equity.

## ■ Agency and experimentation

When vision and direction is no longer solely beholden to the primary leader of an organisation, empowering individuals within the organisation to have agency and co-design on how to adapt, change and thrive in new ways, becomes essential. Individuals and teams across the organisation need to feel they have agency and support to do this. True agency must inherently include the ability to take risks, to feel safe to fail because collectively everyone values the learning and improvements that come from that experience.

## ■ Centralised and decentralised support

Agency, experimentation and ongoing growth needs support at all levels. The case studies highlighted the importance and impact of both centralised and top-down supports, as well as decentralised or distributed resources and supports. Collectively navigating to an unknown future and emerging destination is a formidable task, and supports for such a course – for example, coaching programs and access to resources and time/space to experiment – all serve as 'interstitial glue' to help make systemic change possible.

## ■ Scaling successes

Experimentation, new and improved designs and possibilities, then need to be able to scale and embed as part of transforming to new systems. Scaling and expanding does not happen naturally – in fact there are often many inherent barriers preventing it from doing so (Kirkland and Sutch, 2009; Groff and Mouza, 2008). Transformational leadership sets up the change structures to enable this to happen purposefully for coherent systems change.

## ■ Alliances for learning, collaboration and transformation

A powerful catalyst and tool in the transformation toolbox is in the form of networks and collaborations. Schools can often be isolated and school leadership can often be a very lonely path. Collaborations are a key driver for transformation, which must be addressed at a leadership level. Networks can be an incredibly powerful way for organisations and systems to benefit from collective wisdom and insights but, perhaps even more critically, is the momentum that results from conversations and collaborations outside your organisation. In the messy, uncertain, unknown pathways to our desired futures, networks, communities and alliances are an often underutilised but increasingly critical mechanism for transformational leadership and systems transformation.

## Endnotes

1. You can learn more about Innovation Leadership, Innovation Labs in Education, and how to leverage innovation practices to effectively design for our evolving world at [wise-qatar.org/embedding-innovation-labs-in-schools](http://wise-qatar.org/embedding-innovation-labs-in-schools)
2. Often called the '4 Cs' or '6 Cs', these are increasingly considered the core competencies upon which a broad skills and competencies approach is built in modern education. See [michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Education-Plus-A-Whitepaper-July-2014-1.pdf](http://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Education-Plus-A-Whitepaper-July-2014-1.pdf)

## E.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The dramatic shifts and challenges happening in our world, along with the insights and impact of emerging approaches to leadership in this landscape, invite and require a continued and deeper conversation on leadership for transformation.

As Frederic Laloux framed so eloquently in *Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*,

*... in the last several hundred years we have achieved incredible progress in education ... and yet, the current way we run organizations has been stretched to its limits.*

(2014)

While our world's future may seem increasingly uncertain, volatile and complex, we are also able to increasingly benefit from the insights and impact from pioneers exploring effective strategies and pathways to new learning environments and educational ecosystems for our modern world.

These case studies and the emerging body of work on Transformational Leadership is providing the field of education with an increasingly significant approach that warrants further research, development, and support for teachers and leaders in education around the world. We must be able to step out of our former paradigms and concerns, which are often too limited in scope and approach, to more systemically and effectively meet the needs of modern learners in a coherent way.

### LEADING INTO OUR UNKNOWN FUTURE

While the future has always been somewhat unknown, it is clear that our world is headed into increasingly complex challenges and rapidly shifting landscapes, which will challenge ongoing generations to navigate successfully. Policymakers, ministries of education and systems leaders need to consider seriously the macro and future-oriented view of not only where their educational systems are headed but, most crucially, the enabling conditions they are creating to cultivate an empowered, diversified and strategic approach for their education system to navigate their way into the most effective future for their learners.

Our current landscape of education, and the world today, invites all education leaders to reflect on the following questions.

- *What is your innovation strategy?*
- *How does leadership development in your context contribute to the transformation of learning?*
- *How am I supporting our school culture to embrace and leverage an innovation mindset?*
- *How might we empower our teachers, learners and community to be the lead innovators, and help design and implement our innovative pathway to learning at our school in 2022 and beyond?*

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- *What tangible steps are you taking to intentionally cultivate Transformational Leadership – through cultivating new capabilities, teacher and team resources, and external networks and alliances – in your organisation or system?*
  - *What stands in the way of that?*
  - *Who can you collaborate with?*
  - *What is one thing that makes you hopeful about the future?*

While the examples provided here offer meaningful insights and hope on what is possible going forward, it is only useful to the extent that we leverage this knowledge. Systems need our active engagement to make these shifts happen. Only through our awareness and intentional, collaborative steps towards innovative change, can we create the thriving educational systems our children need for their future.

It is our intention to continue to pursue deeper understandings on the power and potential of Transformational Leadership at all levels, and we look forward to continuing the conversation with you.

**Jennifer Groth**

Coordinating Editor



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Jennifer is a learning researcher, designer and engineer, whose work focuses on redesigning learning environments and education systems. She is the founder of Learning Futures Global, which supports organisations around the world in designing for modern learning and system transformation. In 2020–21, she was the Innovation Fellow at WISE, where she led the development and implementation of the WISE Innovation Hub. Previously, she was the Chief Learning Officer and Global Head of Education for Lumiar Education, co-founded the Center for Curriculum Redesign, and was a Fulbright Scholar (UK) while serving as the Technology SME on the OECD Innovative Learning Environments project. She has spent much of her career doing leading-edge work at MIT on innovative pedagogies, systems engineering in education, and game-based learning environments; she holds a PhD from the MIT Media Lab and EdM from Harvard University.

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Dominic is Director, Education and Director of the Centre for Education Transformation at Salzburg Global Seminar, an independent non-profit that challenges current and future leaders to shape a better world. He is also the Executive Director of Karanga: the global alliance for social emotional learning and life skills, a Director at the Amal Alliance and a Senior Editor for Diplomatic Courier.

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Anthony is immediate past CEO and current 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 co-founder of the Global Education Leaders' Partnership (GELP), and Foundation Board Chair of the Innovation Unit Ltd, England; an Expert Advisor to OECD/CERI; and Consultant Advisor to Global Cities Education Network. 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).

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Amira Al Ma'ayergi is a Senior Training Programs Planning Specialist at TEDC (Training and Educational Development Center) MOEHE (Ministry of Education and Higher Education) in Qatar. Amira has over 30 years of experience in the field of education. She started her career as a teacher in private, public and scientific schools. She later held leadership roles both as a coordinator and Vice-Principal Academic in an independent school. She has earned a Master of Educational Administration from University of New England in Australia.

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Dr Claudine Aziz is in her 30th year in the field of education. She served as teacher, principal, researcher and consultant at national and global levels. She is certified for concept-based curriculum and instruction, and for instructional design. Under consultancies for UNICEF, she has coordinated country-level projects related to teacher professional development (TPD), curriculum design, assessment, content review and inclusion. She has also co-authored published studies around TPD, SEL and principalship.

## **NEIL BARKER**

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Neil is the former Director of Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership. He has more than 40 years' experience in the education sector as a teacher and principal, and in system policy work. As the co-founder and a Director of LERNA, Neil is leading development of high-quality online professional learning. His book on collective leadership will be published later this year.

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Alex leads the Global Learning Lab for Community Impact at Teach For All, a network of organisations in 60 countries working to transform education by growing the collective leadership of more than 100,000 education leaders. He wrote *Natural Born Learners*, and has contributed to BBC Radio 4, *The Guardian* and *Financial Times* on the future of education.

## **DR BARNETT BERRY**

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Barnett Berry is a scholar activist whose career has focused on advancing the teaching profession to accelerate a more equitable system of public education. His books, *TEACHING 2030* and *Teacherpreneurs: Innovative Teachers Who Lead But Don't Leave*, frame a bold vision for teaching's future. Barnett, a UofSC professor in the USA, also serves as a Senior Research Fellow for the Learning Policy Institute.

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Lisa has over 30 years of experience working at all levels in public education; schools, region and central office, and, most recently, at the Bastow Institute of Educational Leadership in Victoria, Australia. With a background in teaching and school leadership, Lisa led the development of a broad range of education initiatives, including Communities of Practice. In 2019 Lisa was awarded an Australian Council of Educational Leaders Victorian Fellowship.

**DR PAUL CAMPBELL**

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Paul, originally from Scotland, is Vice Principal of an international school in Hong Kong. He is also a Scholar Practitioner Fellow at the Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change (APCLC) hosted at the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK). Paul is also Chair of the International Professional Development Association (IPDA) and Co-Chair of the ICSEI Educational Leadership Network.

**DR SHELBY COSNER**

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Shelby Cosner is a Professor and Director of the Center for Urban Education Leadership at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). For many years, she co-led the principal preparation program at UIC – one of just several programs to be identified as an exemplary program by the University Council for Educational Administration. She is an international expert on leadership preparation/development.

**SUZANNE CRIDGE**

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Suzanne is an experienced educator in practice, research and leadership, and an Australian Sir Winston Churchill Fellow. Suzanne's experience includes leading national education initiative Citizen Schools in New Mexico USA and volunteering for the United Nations. Suzanne led the Innovation Program at the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership and the design of the collaboration network, The Connection, SVA.

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Jordi is an edupreneur with a systemic and research background, interested in cultivating and weaving learning ecosystems for a better world, as an interdisciplinary dialogic space for deep social and educational change in holistic systems within regions, communities, schools and humans. Jordi teaches in the Education Degree in FPCEE Blaquerna, and leads the NetEdu Research Practice Partnership.

**NATALIE FENSTERSTOCK**

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Natalie holds a MA in Social Sciences and Comparative Education from the UCLA School of Education and Information Studies and a BA in English from Wake Forest University. Her research focuses on reducing the barriers to learning for our most vulnerable youth populations and on promoting whole child education initiatives in community school settings. Natalie taught middle and high school English, coached new teachers in the Bay Area in California, and engaged with fellowships in education policy and advocacy.

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**KATIE GODWIN**

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Katie is the Research Lead for the Education Commission's Education Workforce Initiative (EWI). She oversaw development of EWI's global flagship report and leads EWI's research and reform efforts on the education workforce with several countries. Katie holds a Masters of Education in International Education Research and Policy from Vanderbilt University and completed Columbia Law School's graduate program at the Center for Public Research and Leadership.

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Charlotte has 15 years' experience as a change management and organisation design professional, working as a teacher, management consultant, researcher and architect of a ground-breaking music education program in the UK. At Education Development Trust Charlotte uses her expertise to advise on education system change and the design of high-impact education reform programs for donors, charities and ministries of education globally. Along with her team, she provides advice on teacher workforce development, inspections and accountability, as well as school collaboration, and works closely with clients to transfer knowledge and build long-term reform capacity.

**NG'ANG'A KIBANDI**

Advocacy and Development Director – Dignitas, Country Lead Kenya, Dignitas Project and RELI

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Ng'ang'a has a passion for MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation and Training), Advocacy and Programming, in which he has acquired over 10 years' expertise in the education sector within East and Southern Africa. Currently, he leads Advocacy and Development at Dignitas and is also the current Country Lead of a network of education actors within Kenya under RELI (Regional Education Learning Initiative).

**KATHE KIRBY AM**

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Kathe's career spans teaching, teacher education, policy and leading innovation. She was Executive Director, Asialink and Asia Education Foundation at The University of Melbourne from 1993–2015 and is currently Executive Director, Global Education Leaders' Partnership; Principal Consultant, Centre for Strategic Education; Education Consultant, Australian Learning Lecture; Board Director, Education Services Australia and Education Specialist, Papua New Guinea-Australia Secondary Schools initiative.

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Jenny is an ALL-IN member and 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.

**DR JOANNA MOE**

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A practitioner at heart, Joanna is driven by curiosity, passion and values around social justice in education. She brings solution-focused thought leadership to complex educational environments and specialises in bilingual professional learning designs for educators and adults in global settings. Her research interest is in examining the opportunities and challenges for learning leaders in transcultural educational landscapes and systems.

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**PETER MOYI**

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Peter's research aims to use sociological theory to understand school leadership practice and its impact on educational enrolment and attainment – particularly in how past and current local, national, and international contexts influence school leadership practice. Fundamentally, he seeks to understand how structure and agency influence leadership practice in the United States and countries in sub-Saharan Africa. He currently sits on the board of the Comparative and International Education Society and is the Associate Editor of the International Journal of Educational Development.

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Corinna Nawatzky is a Program Associate at the Salzburg Global Centre for Education Transformation, working to influence systems transformation efforts by developing new approaches to critical and emerging issues, including social, emotional and creative skills, psycho-social support and wellbeing, ecological education, language of instruction and education leadership.

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David Ng is Associate Professor and Associate Dean of Academic Quality at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University Singapore. He provides overall leadership, management and improvement in academic, student and programs quality. He also leads in the planning, review and effective implementation of the Strategic Planning Academic Quality's initiatives that guide future strategic directions of the institute.

**LOUKA PARRY**

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Louka Parry is an award-winning educator, futurist and strategist who works globally to transform education through leadership, wellbeing and innovation. He is Founder and CEO of The Learning Future and Founding Executive of Karanga: the global alliance for social emotional learning and life skills. Named a Top 100 Innovator for Australia, he holds two Masters degrees and speaks five languages.

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Sreehari is a passionate researcher and educator, with a mission to re-imagine education in India. He is specialised in pedagogies of social and emotional learning and wellbeing, education in emergencies, and thriving in Adversity.

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Previous to her work with Dream A Dream, Daya has worked as a teaching fellow in a low-income school with Teach For India. Her research interests include education and child wellbeing.

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**MARISA SAUNDERS**

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Marisa's primary areas of research focus on K-12 transformation efforts aimed to address longstanding educational inequalities. Her research explores teacher leadership and retention. She has 20 years of experience leading qualitative and mixed-methods studies and has worked with school-, district- and state-level teams to study, identify and improve the impact of transformational high school reform efforts. She has authored a number of publications and books including *Multiple Pathways to College, Career and Civic Participation and Learning Time: In Pursuit of Educational Equity*.

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Rania Sawalhi has more than 20 years of experience in K-12 and higher education. She has won a number of awards such as the ICSEI/JPCC 2020 Innovation Award, and has a range of research published in peer-reviewed journals. In addition, Rania is a co-founder of Eduenterprise a non-profit organisation registered in the USA, has launched the Educational Leadership Lab, applying a design thinking approach, and launched Rushd educational leadership coaching e-platform. She is a co-founder of WomenEdMENA, and co-coordinator ICSEI Educational Leadership Network.

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Heather Singmaster is Director of the Global Cities Education Network (GCEN) at Digital Promise Global. Her work focuses on international best practices and integrating global competence into Career Technical Education (vocational education) programs, as well as state and national policy. Heather leads the Global Cities Education Network (GCEN), a network of international cities focused on best practice sharing in education.

**SEAN SLADE**

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Sean is a global education leader, speaker and author, with three decades of experience across five continents. He serves as Head of Education at BTS Spark, North America, as well as SEL expert for NBC Today, advisor for OECD's Future of Education and Skills 2030, ambassador for HundrED, judge for T4's World's Best School Prizes, and a founding member of the UNESCO Chair on Global Health and Education.

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Vishal co-founded Dream A Dream along with 11 others. Vishal has co-authored four papers with Dr David Pearson and Dr Fiona Kennedy, related to life skills in the Indian context. Vishal is an Ashoka Fellow, an Eisenhower Fellow, an Aspen Fellow and a Salzburg Global Fellow. He is a Board Member at Goonj. Previously he has been the Founder Director of Unltd India and Board Member of PYE Global and India Cares Foundation. He is an Executive Committee Member of Karanga and co-founder of The Weaving Lab. Vishal has been recognised as an 'Architect of the Future' by the Waldzell Institute in Austria and as 'Innovator of the Year' in 2019 by HundrED.



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**DR JORDAN TINNEY**

Dr Jordan Tinney is recently retired superintendent of one of Canada's largest school districts in Surrey, BC. Serving previously on three other boards, he knows places large and small, rural and urban. With a PhD in Curriculum, a Masters in Leadership, and a certified Executive Coach, Jordan now serves leadership and education as a strategic consultant and coach.

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Andrew is a Kenyan scholar at the Institute of Educational Sciences, University of Heidelberg, Germany. He is a co-founder of Africa Voices Dialogue – an organisation that serves as a convening space for educators, learners and communities across the African continent and beyond. Andrew serves on the boards of International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI) and Journal of Professional Capital and Community (JPCC).

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Robyn is passionate about understanding and enabling the environments within which deep collaboration and the development of functional and relational impact eco-systems can take place. She has a long-standing interest in education and community cohesion, and the role that community leaders play in enabling positive growth and societal wellbeing. She co-founded Africa Voices Dialogue in 2020 as a space for the voices of Africa's educators, learners and communities to be seen, heard and loved. It has proved to be a powerful platform for developing and deepening an understanding of how deep collaboration can be fostered, and how a strong African learning ecosystem can be fostered.

**DR ABDELAZIZ ZOHRI**

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Abdelaziz is a co-founder of Africa Voices Dialogue – a convening space for educators, learners and communities across the African continent and beyond. He is passionate about fostering and supporting thriving, connected ecosystems, through dialogue and collaboration. He is also passionate about developing critical thinking and leadership for an interdependent world. Abdelaziz has a PhD in Education Sciences and is a university professor and a personal and professional development coach.



