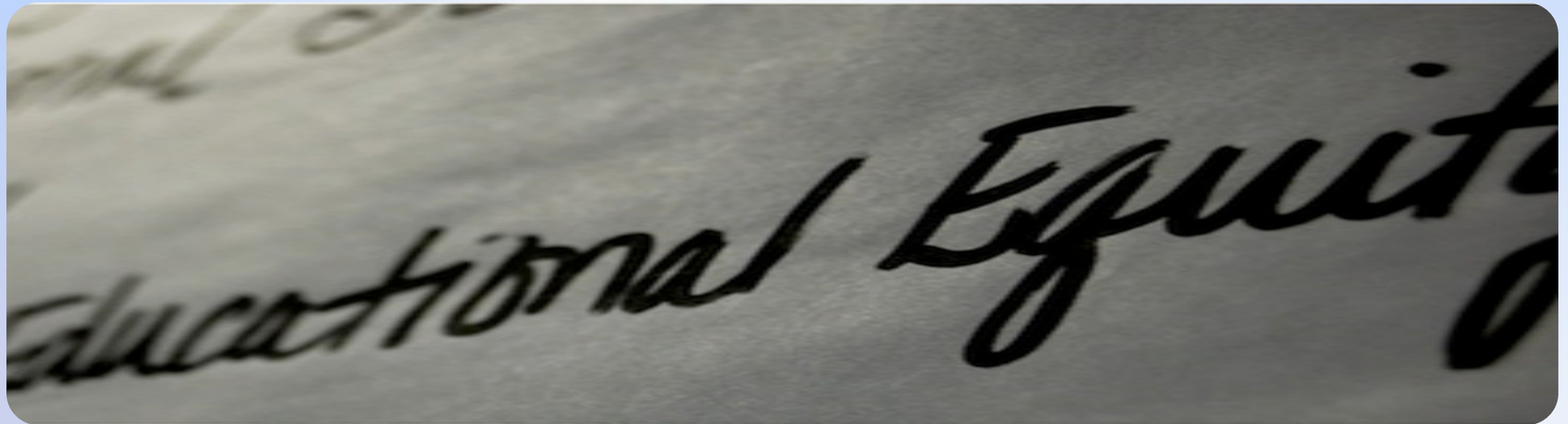


The EPNoSL Toolkit

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR EQUITY AND LEARNING



European Policy Network on  
School Leadership



# School Leadership for equity and learning

## The EPNoSL Toolkit

European Policy Network on School Leadership

2015

This publication is one of the outcomes of the work conducted in the context of the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) project.

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# School Leadership

*for equity and learning*

## Introduction

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## → The basic premise of the School Leadership Toolkit

The European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) is a Europe-wide network which engages a wide variety of policy communities, professional, academic communities and school communities and aims to respond to the **needs for school leadership policy reflections and planning** in a great variety of school systems and traditions.

“ The design of the School Leadership Toolkit is based on the assumption that **there is no unique road to policy development on school leadership for equity and learning**. There are different ways for EU Member States to achieve an advanced level of school leadership policy development for equity and learning. ”

No single policy analysis approach or policy reflection tool is expected to be perceived as useful by all stakeholders involved, or be relevant to all policy making contexts and school systems. Therefore, **the School Leadership Toolkit adopts a reflective, critical and argumentative perspective**, taking into account different understandings and approaches to public policy analysis and action.

## → Purpose and use of the School Leadership Toolkit

The purpose of the School Leadership Toolkit is to provide **policy makers, school authorities, schools, researchers and leadership training institutes** with the tools to reflect upon, identify challenges and prioritize areas for policy action to **support and enhance school leadership for equity and learning**.

Furthermore, the School Leadership Toolkit is designed to support analyses of the **ways different school leadership policies and programs interplay and influence the overall capacity of school leaders** and their schools to effectively and persistently address equity and learning challenges in their schools.

### The road to the School Leadership Toolkit

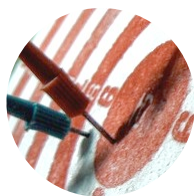
The School Leadership Toolkit was created on the basis of a wide-range of activities undertaken by EPNoSL, which include:

- in-depth **reviews** of the literature on school leadership and its relationship to equity and learning,
- papers and other contributions from internal and external **experts and policy makers**,
- **research** conducted by the network partners (e.g. surveys, case studies, etc),
- the **discourse** that took place in webinars, forums, workshops, conferences, networking and other peer learning activities organised or supported by EPNoSL in several EU countries, and
- **validation** activities on the design and utility of the School Leadership Toolkit.



### Who is the toolkit for?

- Those involved in **educational policy** who are responsible for or influence leadership development and school improvement in school education.
- Those **leading change in schools**, including head teachers, principals and others in leadership roles within schools.
- The **research/academic communities** interested to work on key school leadership areas that are of high interest both to policy making communities and to school leaders.
- The **developers/providers of school leadership training programmes**, focusing to support school leaders on how to create school cultures that value diversity, combat exclusion, and promote fairness and high learning achievement.



### What is the toolkit for?

- To help you **learn about school leadership for equity and learning**.
- To stimulate reflection leading to practical ideas for supporting and **developing school leadership policies for equity and learning in schools**, in ways relevant to your policy context.

The School Leadership Toolkit aims to **help school leaders** identify areas where they need to improve on their competencies and daily practice.

It further aims to offer them a wider policy perspective to strategically orient, plan and implement initiatives that have the potential to **create school environments that help all students, irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural background, gender, health condition or family circumstances, to develop to the best of their abilities**.



### What's in it?

- There are **8 toolsets** focusing on a wide range of policy areas and policy approaches that **support reflection and policy planning on school leadership for equity and learning**.
- The toolsets include **textual and audio-visual materials** designed to support the development of a better understanding of a specific school leadership policy area or approach (e.g. through definitions, good practice examples, etc).
- Include maps depicting the status of EU countries on various **indicators related to school leadership policies** (e.g. school autonomy).
- Offer **tools for organizing reflective activities** on a wide range of issues related to school leadership.
- Provide **recommendations** on how to promote school leadership policies on equity and learning.
- Provide **resources for further reading**.

## How it might be used



### Reflect upon

*Study the toolkit materials (texts, videos, diagrams, maps etc) and use its tools to reflect upon:*

- State-of-the-art research results on school leadership for equity and learning.
- Good policy practices in promoting school leadership capacity aiming to address challenges of equity and learning in schools.
- How you might support the development of school leadership policies for equity and learning in a school, a number of schools or across a school system.



### Kick-start dialogue

*Use it to kick-start dialogue, as a resource with colleagues to develop ideas together about:*

- Your understandings of school leadership for equity and learning.
- Practical changes you can make to support the development of school leadership for equity and learning in a school, a number of schools or across a school system.



### Stimulate Ideas

*Select the toolsets (or parts of them) most relevant to your concerns and context to stimulate ideas on:*

- How school leadership might be of help to promote equity and learning.
- How in your context school leadership for equity and learning can be developed and supported.

## 1.1 School leadership from the perspective of equity & learning

Equity and learning achievement are the most critical challenges leaders in European schools are faced with in everyday school life. Despite differences in the ways school systems are structured and in the legislative frameworks under which schools operate in Europe, the common ground upon which the education of our children is rooted is composed by:

- ✓ the **ideals of fairness and inclusion** for all, irrespective of their race, nationality and gender, their economic, social or cultural background, their sexual orientation or health condition, and
- ✓ a **strong commitment** in supporting children **learn and develop to the best of their abilities**.

The **School Leadership Toolkit** is, therefore, focusing particularly in facilitating policy reflections and planning that aim to empower school leaders in their efforts to create those school conditions which ensure that all children, without exclusions, learn and develop to the best of their abilities.





## The perspective of equity

Typically, in educational leadership and management discourse it is policy makers or family/society factors that are cited as maintaining inequality, and staff in schools depicted as constrained by the context within which they work. However, this is a misleading assumption.

### Schools and school staff also play a part in creating, maintaining or increasing inequality. How?

- School leaders who attempt to shift school priorities and practices in fundamental ways usually **encounter a good deal of resistance** from teachers and from parents. Teachers may argue, for example, that dismantling tracking jeopardises teaching their subject, or any other subject.
- School leaders who enroll students who are seen by others as “problematic” risk **parents' reactions to avoid their school**. Flight from schools with a high percentage of immigrant students has been noted in different countries.
- School leaders sometimes face a **belief that some children are not educable or only educable with great difficulty**. The children of immigrant families or of minority ethnic groups are more likely to be seen as having special needs than are other groups, reflecting deeply embedded prejudices that link being perceived as different with being less able.
- Leaders themselves are not immune from such beliefs. Those who, for example, give entry preference to learners with higher attainment, or who allocate the most inexperienced teachers to classes of those perceived as lower ability, **are enacting inequality** (Lumby, 2013).

## The perspective of learning

According to Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2008), although we lack evidence in sufficient amounts and of sufficient quality to serve as powerful guides to policy and practice on school leadership, **there are some quite important things that we do know from previous school leadership research**, which can provide the ground for a number of strong claims on school leadership:

- **School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning** (leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization).
- Almost all **successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices**: a) Building vision and setting directions, b) understanding and developing people, c) redesigning the organization, and d) managing the teaching and learning programme.
- The ways in which leaders apply these leadership practices -not the practices themselves- demonstrate **responsiveness to the contexts in which they work** (apply contextually sensitive combinations of the basic leadership practices described above).
- School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their **influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions**. School leadership has a greater influence on schools and pupils when it is widely distributed.
- Some patterns of **distributed leadership** are more effective than others (high levels of influence from all sources of leadership).
- A small handful of **personal traits** explains a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness (such as open-mindedness, readiness to learn from others, flexibility, optimism, persistence).

## 1.2 Public policy on school leadership

The promotion of reflections and policy planning on school leadership policies for equity and learning has to be based on clear and unambiguous terms about what we mean by "**public policy on school leadership for equity and learning**".

### ➔ How can public policy on school leadership be defined?

Public policies on school leadership commonly include:

- the central or regional/state **strategies on school leadership** (related, for example, to autonomy, or the preparation of school leaders),
- the **institutions that authoritatively determine, implement and enforce public policy** affecting school leadership,
- the **funding priorities, and the programmes or the projects**,
- that governments and government agencies have put in place to control and steer leadership in schools, and
- the existing **legislative framework and relevant regulations** (e.g. regulations regarding the selection procedures of school principals).

### ✓ **Public policy on school leadership as a course of government action**

Based on the above, public policy on school leadership can be defined as:

“ a **course of action** taken by governments and their agencies with the goal to directly (and also indirectly) **shape leadership practices in schools**. The choice of not taking action by a government can also be considered as a form of public policy, given that it does not do anything to change the status quo regarding school leadership. ”

It is important to understand public policy not only as laws, regulations, strategies, programmes or projects but also as discourse and as an emergent phenomenon. Public policies on school leadership can be understood as a **discursive terrain** upon which some conceptions, rules of logic and enactments of school leadership and school management are privileged while others are considered as irrelevant or outdated.

## ✓ Public policy on school leadership as discourse

Based on the above, public policy on school leadership can be defined as:

“ the **policy discourse that serves as a resource for ideas, metaphors, concepts** etc. which is utilized by stakeholders and policy makers in the process of interaction that formulates school leadership policy problem identification, policy planning and implementation. ”

## Implications

The two conceptions of public policy on school leadership described above have an important implication on the design of the School Leadership Toolkit.

The implication is that the **School Leadership Toolkit** is designed to **enable policy reflections and planning** concerning the requirements for policy developments on school leadership both at:

- the level of laws, programmes, projects etc., and
- at the wider level of policy discourse(s) that take place within and between various stakeholder groups, such as school communities, professional associations, academics and researchers.

## ➔ School leadership as a solution to the policy problems of equity and learning achievement in schools

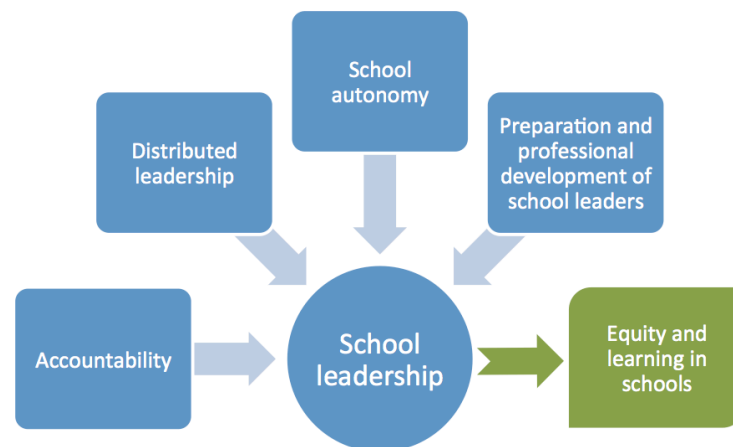
A major challenge in school leadership policy development is to clarify what is the **policy problem(s) space** upon which policy reflections and planning should be oriented.

**School leadership can contribute to the solution of the policy problems of equity and learning achievement in schools** across Europe.

In turn, leadership in European schools (its quality and effectiveness) is a policy problem on its own, affected by various factors (e.g., professionalism of school leaders, room of manoeuvre they have to manage and lead their school, etc) which demands policy solutions. The European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) has identified a number of potential policy solutions, focusing particularly on the areas of **school autonomy, accountability, distributed leadership and the preparation and professional development of school leaders**. Each one of these policy areas also may represent a different policy problem that requires its own policy solutions.

**Equity and learning in schools are likely to have different characteristics as policy problems, depending on the national or regional context they are observed.** For example, the causes of these problems may be somewhat different from national to national context and different factors may affect them in ways that are unique to each context. All policy problems have their own context-specific characteristics. As a consequence,

“ the policy solutions aimed to improve the quality and effectiveness of school leadership have to be responsive to the idiosyncrasies of specific national or regional contexts. ”



*Figure 2.A:* School leadership as a policy solution to equity and learning achievement in schools depends on policy solutions in other interrelated policy problem areas

## The “wicked” nature of the problems of equity and learning achievement in schools

A second major challenge in school leadership policy development is **how we conceptualize the nature of the problems of equity and learning achievement in schools** and on this basis **the nature of the proposed policy solutions** that the School leadership Toolkit aims to facilitate reflections upon.

Both learning achievement and equity in schools represent what Rittel and Webber (1973) named “wicked” problems and Ackoff (1974) “messes”.

“ *Wicked* are educational and wider social and economic problems which are not easily definable and the information policy makers need to solve them depends heavily on the political ideas they have on solving them. ”

For example, if we accept that **part of the problems of equity and learning achievement in schools is lack of quality school leadership** then **“improved school leadership”** is a solution to the problem of equity. As a next step, if we agree that lack of quality programmes for preparing school leaders is one of the deficiencies of the system causing problems of equity and low achievement in schools, then **“improved school leadership training programmes”** may be the locus of solution, and so on.

However, **it is difficult to expect that solutions to the problems of equity and learning achievement in schools**, such as more room for manoeuvre to schools, or more training on leadership, **will solve them once and for all**. This is because their causes are complex and as problems they continually evolve and transform; thus the search for their definition and resolution never ends.

Furthermore, **in democratic societies stakeholders should always be able to argue for their case and therefore no solution can be considered as an “end solution”**. Overall, we cannot speak of an optimal policy solution to these problems but about better or worse policy solutions framed by an evolving public discourse. It is also difficult to fully evaluate how good a policy solution has been unless sufficient time has passed so as to be able to deeply understand its impact, and its intended and unintended consequences.

**Every solution to the problems of equity and learning in schools**, such as “improved school leadership”, after being implemented, **cannot be easily corrected or altered**. For example, the effects of an ineffective training programme for school leaders will follow them for a long time. It is difficult to “undo” what these individuals have learned or did because of their training. It is also impossible to take back the resources that have been invested to train them.

A major aim of the School Leadership Toolkit is to facilitate reflections upon **what policy makers and stakeholders believe about the nature of the problems of equity and learning achievement in schools and of the proposed solutions** and what are the implications of such understandings for the development of policy initiatives on school leadership.

## 1.3 School leadership policy goals

The School Leadership Toolkit for equity and learning is designed to facilitate policy reflections and planning on a set of policy goals and policy action lines that have been identified as more critical in the promotion of school leadership policies across the European Union (EU).

### Central School Leadership policy goals

Based on in-depth **reviews** of the literature on school leadership and its relationship to equity and learning, papers and other contributions from internal and external **experts and policy makers, research** conducted by the EPNoSL partners (e.g. surveys, case studies, etc), the **discourse** that took place in webinars, forums, workshops, conferences, networking and other peer learning activities, three policy goals were identified as most central to promote school leadership for equity and learning in all school systems across EU.

The three **most central school leadership policy goals** for all education systems in EU to achieve are:

- ✓ The promotion of an enabling school leadership environment for equity and learning.
- ✓ The promotion of school leadership capacity building for equity and learning.
- ✓ The promotion of research on school leadership for equity and learning.

A major **criterion for selecting the specific policy goals and the action lines** is that all of them can to a great extent be directly shaped by national governments and competent educational authorities through their decisions. The three highly interrelated policy goals and action lines proposed constitute **a coherent system that addresses constraints and challenges to achieve effective school leadership policies** that are faced to a greater or lesser degree by all school education systems across the EU.

For each of the policy goals a number of **action lines** are proposed to become the focus of policy intervention in the form of policy measures, investments, programmes, data generation and monitoring mechanisms. Furthermore, there are identified a number of **factors** that have been found to play a critical role **in the implementation of school leadership policies**.

## ⚡ Policy goal #1: The promotion of an enabling school leadership environment for equity and learning

The promotion and establishment of an enabling school leadership environment is the foundation for school leadership policies that address effectively challenges of equity and learning performance. The policy goal of the promotion and establishment of an enabling school leadership environment can be achieved through policy action on the following, **highly interrelated policy action lines**:



### School Autonomy

An enabling school leadership environment is reflected in the **room for flexibility and autonomy granted to schools and school leaders** for making important decisions that aim to identify and respond to concrete school needs in relation equity and learning challenges.



### Distributed leadership

The **distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities in the context of autonomy** empowers all school stakeholders to engage in collaborative initiatives that aim to combat inequalities and to improve learning performance for all students.



### Accountability

Accountability mechanisms need to be enhanced to promote **trust between school stakeholders**, and more broadly to promote the **transparency and legitimacy** of school-based decisions, particularly those affecting equity and learning issues.

## **Policy goal #2: The promotion of school leadership capacity building for equity and learning**

School leadership is not confined to the formal boundaries of the school head's (or board's) responsibilities, roles and actual practices. **Leadership is often exercised by a wide range of school actors** such as influential teachers, parents or students with a strong interest on school matters, school staff with connections to the local community, etc.

The above stress the need for a conceptual shift in understanding school leadership, from the position, roles, responsibilities, traits and capacities of individuals holding formally assigned leading roles in a school to **leadership as a function inside schools**. Such a conceptual shift consequently calls for a policy shift which goes beyond the training of school heads (or principals) to emphasise **whole school capacity building**.

Devising a school leadership capacity framework may be based on **a range of pathways which can scaffold school leadership capacity building for equity and learning**, focusing particularly on policies related to:

### **The establishment and/or upgrading of the school leaders' system of initial education and training**

Policy making should ensure that prospective school teaching and management staff participates in **pre-service training programmes** that emphasise on everyday challenges related to equity, and, even more importantly, on **planning and implementation of strategies targeting inequalities in access, opportunities, and learning outcomes among school children**.

The relatively neglected dimension of equity in school leadership training programmes, makes it important to **(re)design curricula and activities that integrate methods and techniques for promoting fairness and inclusion in school practice**.

### **The promotion of continuing professional development on school leadership for equity and learning**

As a set of general principles, policy makers are advised to consider encouraging the delivery of school leadership programs and activities that:

- Aim to develop school leaders' capacity for **critical reflection**, substantiated by evidence, on the conditions and factors influencing teaching, learning, and equity in their local, school context.
- Promote a **holistic approach of school leadership**, incorporating the attainment of both equity and learning achievement goals in a balanced way.
- Acknowledge the **variety of perspectives, experiences, knowledge, values, ways of learning**; in short, stimulate the recognition of difference (El Haj, 2007).
- Target whole school leadership capacity building, focusing on **democratic, collaborative and innovative school leadership methods**.



## **Policy goal #3: The promotion of policy evaluation research on school leadership for equity and learning**

Policies and initiatives are often shaped and crafted not on the basis of research evidence but simply on the beliefs and commitments of policy-makers and their advisers. However, **sound research evidence** can offer invaluable support to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of school leadership policies and identify emergent needs for policy planning.

### **Research for policy planning**

At the level of policy planning, sound empirical evidence can be proved of great help to **top and middle-level policy makers as well as to school leaders**, to, for example,

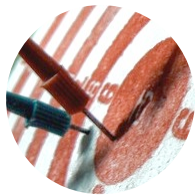
- ✓ identify areas where targeted policy initiatives are mostly needed and orient policy priorities to address challenges of equity and learning in schools, and
- ✓ identify existing good leadership practices that effectively tackle school-level inequalities in access, opportunities, treatment, and outcomes among children and improve learning performance for all.

### **Research for policy implementation**

The **complexities involved between policy planning and implementation** need to be better understood in order to ensure that the intended outcomes are indeed realised. Therefore, research evidence that would inform formative and summative evaluation of specific policy initiatives is of great importance.

## 1.4 Critical factors in school leadership policy

Critical factors in policy implementation aimed to empower school leadership for equity and learning can be considered as those necessary **building blocks** of a specific strategy or policy initiative upon which the achievement of the intended policy goals is highly dependent.



### Political commitments and priorities

Within the wider context of political debates over how to distribute limited public resources, **it is important that governments clearly recognise the critical need to combat inequalities** in access, opportunities, treatment and outcomes of schooling and prioritise measures, among them on school leadership development, that are aimed to address these challenges.

**School leaders have their own share in minimising or exacerbating the effects of socio-economic inequality and exclusion in their schools.** It is their determination to minimise these effects that is the foundation of action for equity and improved performance in schools.



### Financial resources

The level of spending, the sources of funding, the processes through which funding is becoming available to schools and **the flexibility with which school leaders can use school funds to promote equity and learning** are particularly important parameters to policy implementation.

The challenge for policy-makers is to **ensure that persisting economic problems do not become an overwhelming obstacle for the establishment of an enabling school leadership environment.**



### Policy coherence

In order to promote equity and learning in schools there should be a **deepening of sectoral coordination between education policies and other government policies** that target to improve the quality of life in the most socio-economically disadvantaged regions and communities through, for example, welfare policies, employment policies, LLL policies etc.

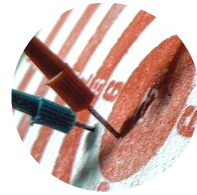
**At school level, policy coherence needs to be established through coordinated leadership action** which aligns the school's mission, its plans, priorities and spending, the curricula, professional development and other school activities to the needs for the promotion of equity and improved learning performance for all.



### Policy ownership

**Policy ownership can be conceptualised as a (perceived) state of belonging to, and responsibility for, the implementation of a strategy or initiative.** A dispersed, rather than a top-down, model of implementation is more likely to ensure that various stakeholders (e.g. school leaders, parents, pupils and local authorities) view policy as benign, rather than an alien interloper (Bagley and Ward, 2013).

Policy ownership at school level can be greatly enhanced through distributed leadership and the **widening of participation of school level stakeholders in decision making and in implementation** of policies and projects aimed to promote equity and learning.



### Empowerment and trust

Policy ownership is supported and enhanced by the sharing of power between different stakeholders. **Policy empowerment and trust in different “key actors” shapes the degree and the nature of their involvement in the implementation of a policy or initiative.**

In school systems where power is more widely shared and devolved it is likely that the implementation of policies targeting to promote school leadership for equity and learning will be handled more smoothly and successfully than in highly hierarchical systems.



### Believing in inclusive schools

**School leadership policies aiming to promote equity and learning for all in schools may be sidetracked on the ground by individuals or groups with racist, sexist, xenophobic, or other beliefs and practices** that in effect promote the marginalisation and exclusion of vulnerable groups of pupils and their families from quality schooling.

Public policies on school leadership that are aimed to promote fairness and inclusion should be supported by coordinated policy actions that strengthen wider societal beliefs about the values of tolerance, acceptance of difference and respect of others etc.

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# School Autonomy Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 2.1 Questions for policy reflections on school autonomy

These questions illustrate diverse aspects of autonomy in education. The categories are necessary to reflect upon, when determining what kind of autonomy of leadership is present and what opportunities for equity and learning should be developed.

**School autonomy** is a term used to indicate that schools and school-level actors have been given some room for manoeuvre to take their own decisions in managing schools and dealing with everyday equity, teaching and learning challenges, and that constraints from the outside - and inside - are reduced to the necessary and legitimate frames, values and norms.



### Autonomy

#### *Conception preferred*

- Decentralization of decisions within the educational system from state to school, preferably with bureaucratic and management arguments.
- Self-governance/privatization, with public-private and market place arguments, establishing single school executive boards, accountable to state.



### Governance

#### *Logics preferred*

- Market mechanisms: choice, competition, top down leadership.
- Bureaucratic need for control and transparency.



### Power

#### *Forms preferred*

- Structural power like budget and legislation.
- Social technologies (e.g.: test, benchmarks, protocols).
- Discursive power through recommendations, comparisons, soft governance.

“ There are many reasons for changes in patterns of decision making and responsibility, and they vary from country to country. The **most common reasons to decentralise decision making** are increased efficiency and improved financial control; reduced bureaucracy; increased responsiveness to local communities; more creative management of human resources; improved potential for innovation; and the creation of conditions that provide better incentives for improving the quality of schooling. ”

- [OECD \(2012\), Education at a Glance 2012: OECD Indicators, p.500.](#)



## Issues

*To be decided upon*

- School frames: Budget, staff management, operations.
- School content: Aims and curriculum are centralized, national.



## Room for maneuver

*Forms preferred*

- Actors deliberating, negotiating and thus participating in construction of premises for decision making.



## Responsibility for equity and learning

*The level that should be placed*

- National level, responsible for societal frames and aims, like social justice in access and effects of education.
- Local level, responsible for community frames and social justice.
- School level, responsible for treating everybody fairly, equitable and for education and teaching.

## 2.2 Indicators on school autonomy

Indicators on school autonomy and related data that allow for **cross-country comparisons** can be a valuable tool for policy makers across Europe who plan to introduce reforms affecting the decision-making powers of schools. Currently, such indicators and data are provided by OECD (through PISA, INES and TALIS surveys) and the European Commission (through Eurydice).



### Simple indexes and composite on school responsibility over curricula and assessments

*(OECD 2013, PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV)*

School principals were asked to report whether "principals", "teachers", "school governing board", "regional or local education authority" or "national education authority" have a considerable responsibility for the following tasks:

- **Establishing student assessment policies**
- **Choosing which textbooks are used**
- **Determining course content**
- **Deciding which courses are offered**

See Figure IV.4.3 at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932957346>

### Decision-making levels for setting salaries, allowances and supplementary payments

*(Eurydice 2014, Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2013/14)*

#### ➔ Decision-making levels for setting teachers' and school heads' basic statutory salaries in public schools

Decision-making levels for salary allowances for teachers and school heads regarding: Further formal qualifications, Further CPD qualifications, Positive teaching/management performance appraisal, Additional responsibilities, Geographical location, Teaching/coordinating classes with pupils/students with special education needs or challenging circumstances, Participation in extracurricular activities, Overtime.

### Simple indexes and composite on school responsibility for resource allocation

*(OECD 2013, PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV)*

School principals were asked to report whether "principals", "teachers", "school governing board", "regional or local education authority" or "national education authority" have a considerable responsibility for the following tasks:

- ➡ **Selecting teachers for hire**
- ➡ **Firing teachers**
- ➡ **Establishing teachers' starting salaries**
- ➡ **Determining teachers' salaries increases**
- ➡ **Formulating the school budget**
- ➡ **Deciding on budget allocations within the school**

See Figure IV.4.2 at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932957346>

### Decision-makers on teaching and on human resource matters in primary and general (lower and upper) secondary education (ISCED 1, 2 and 3), 2011/12

*(Eurydice 2013, Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe)*

#### ➡ **Teaching content and methods**

Curricular content of optional subjects, teaching methods, choice of school textbooks, grouping of students for learning activities, choice of internal assessment methods.

#### ➡ **Staffing and human resources**

Selection for teaching vacancies, Selection for substituting absent teachers, Dismissal of teachers, Duties and responsibilities of teachers, Selection of school head.

#### ➡ **Teachers' role in the national testing of students**

National tests to inform decisions about students' school careers, National tests for other purposes.

#### ➡ **Teachers' involvement in the grade-retention process**

Making a proposal, Consultation, Forming a decision, Automatic progression.

## Who Makes Key Decisions in Education Systems? *(OECD, Education at a Glance 2012, Indicator D6)*

This composite indicator is aimed to show where key decisions are made in public institutions at the **lower secondary education level** (2011 OECD-INES Survey on Locus of Decision Making, experts' panels). The data focus on **46 types of key decisions**.

### Level of Government at which Different Types of Decisions are Taken about:

#### ➡ Organization of Instruction

School choice, School attended, Pupils' school careers, Grouping of pupils, Choice of textbooks, Choice of software/learningware, Instruction time, Teaching methods, Assessment of pupils' regular work, Assistance to pupils.

- See data table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932668527>

#### ➡ Personnel Management

Hiring, Dismissal, Duties, Conditions of service, Fixing of salary levels, Influence over the career.

- See data table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932668527>

#### ➡ Planning and Structures

Creation or closure of school, Creation or abolition of a grade level, Designing programmes of study, Selection of programmes of study offered in a particular school, Selection of subjects taught in a particular school, Definition of course content, Setting of qualifying examinations for a certificate or diploma, Credentialing.

- See data table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932668546>

#### ➡ Resource Management

*Allocation of resources to the school*

Teaching staff, Non-teaching staff, Capital expenditure, Operating expenditure, For principal professional development, For teacher professional development.

*Use of resources in the school*

Teaching staff, Capital expenditure, Operating expenditure, For principal professional development, For teacher professional development.

- See data table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932668546>

## **Responsibility for leadership activities**

*(OECD, Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 -TALIS)*

The percentage of lower secondary education principals who report that the following individuals or entities (Principal, Other members of the school management team, Teachers, School Governing Boards, or Local municipality/regional, state, or national/federal authority) have significant responsibility for the following tasks:

- ➡ **Appointing or hiring teachers**
- ➡ **Dismissing or suspending teachers from employment**
- ➡ **Establishing teachers' starting salaries, including setting payscales**
- ➡ **Determining teachers' salary increases**
- ➡ **Deciding on budget allocations within the school**
- ➡ **Establishing student disciplinary policies and procedures**
- ➡ **Establishing student assessment policies, including national/regional assessments**
- ➡ **Approving students for admission to the school**
- ➡ **Choosing which learning materials are used**
- ➡ **Determining course content, including national/regional curricula**
- ➡ **Deciding which courses are offered**

See data table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933043606>

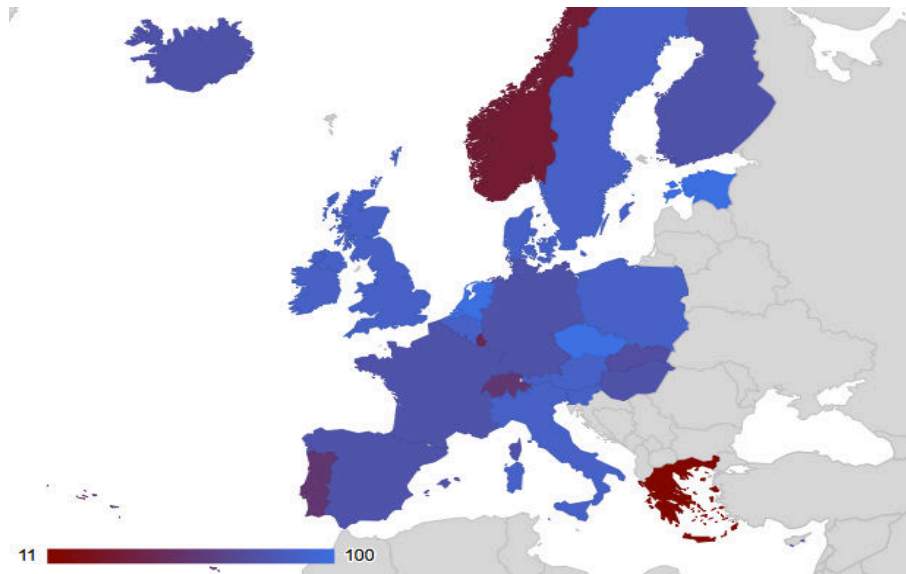
## 2.3 Data on school autonomy

Sound policy planning on school autonomy for equity and learning needs to **take into consideration research-based evidence** on the level of autonomy schools have to take decisions that may affect equity and learning.

### Indicator on school autonomy in the organization of instruction

Map 1: Percentage of decisions on the **organization of instruction**\* taken at school level in public lower secondary education

(Source: OECD, *Education at a Glance 2012*).



\*Including: School choice, School attended, Pupils' school careers, Grouping of pupils, Choice of textbooks, Choice of software/learningware, Instruction time, Teaching methods, Assessment of pupils' regular work, Assistance to pupils.

See data table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932668527>

In most European countries, lower secondary education schools have a lot of autonomy regarding decisions on the organization of instruction. However, in **Greece**, most of the decisions are taken at central or regional level (44% and 22% respectively). In **Luxembourg**, the majority of decisions are taken at central level (56%). In **Portugal**, 44% of the decisions are taken at central level.

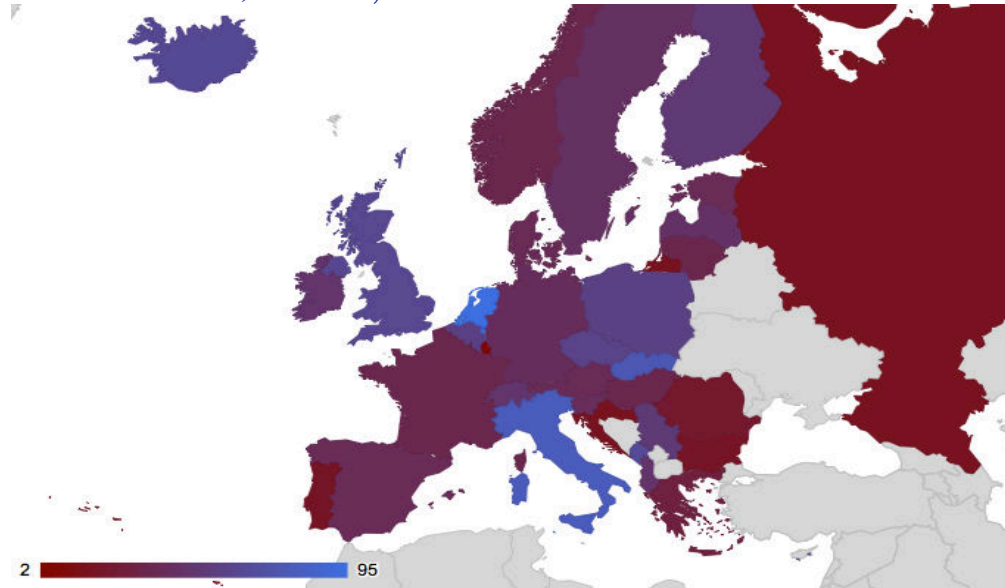
➡ In **Greece, Luxembourg and Portugal** policy makers could consider measures that would offer to lower secondary schools more room for manoeuvre to decide upon the organization of instruction. Such measures are anticipated to help schools provide **more targeted teaching and learning experiences** to students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds or students with special abilities.

## School autonomy from the perspective of school principals

### Indicator on school autonomy in student assessment policies

Map 2: Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported that only "**principals and/or teachers**" have a considerable responsibility for establishing student assessment policies

(Source: OECD 2013, PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV).



NOTE: OECD average: 47%.

See Figure IV.4.3 at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932957346>

According to the 2012 OECD PISA results, more than half of the European countries are below the OECD average (47%) regarding the share of students in secondary education schools whose principals reported that they have, together with the teachers, considerable responsibility for establishing student assessment policies.

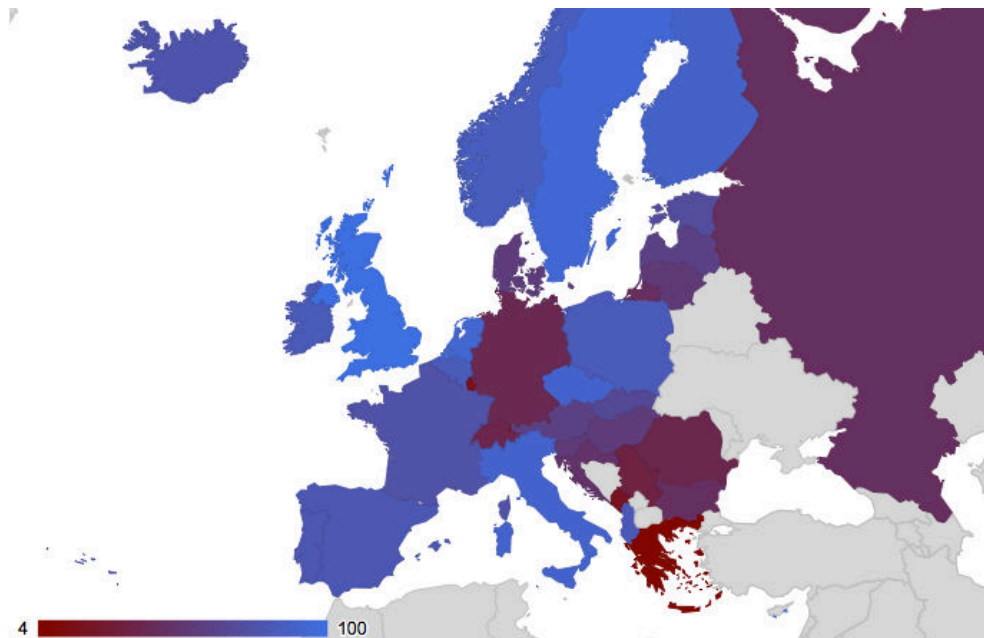
➡ In many European countries, such as **Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Luxembourg** and **Portugal**, policy makers could consider measures that would offer to secondary schools more room for manoeuvre to decide upon their student assessment policies. Such measures are anticipated to help schools implement **methods of assessment of learning outcomes that are adapted to the characteristics and needs of students** from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds or students with special abilities.



### Indicator on school autonomy in choosing textbooks

Map 3: Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported that only "principals and/or teachers" have a considerable responsibility in **determining course content**

(Source: OECD 2013, PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV).



NOTE: OECD average: 65%.

See Figure IV.4.3 at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932957346>

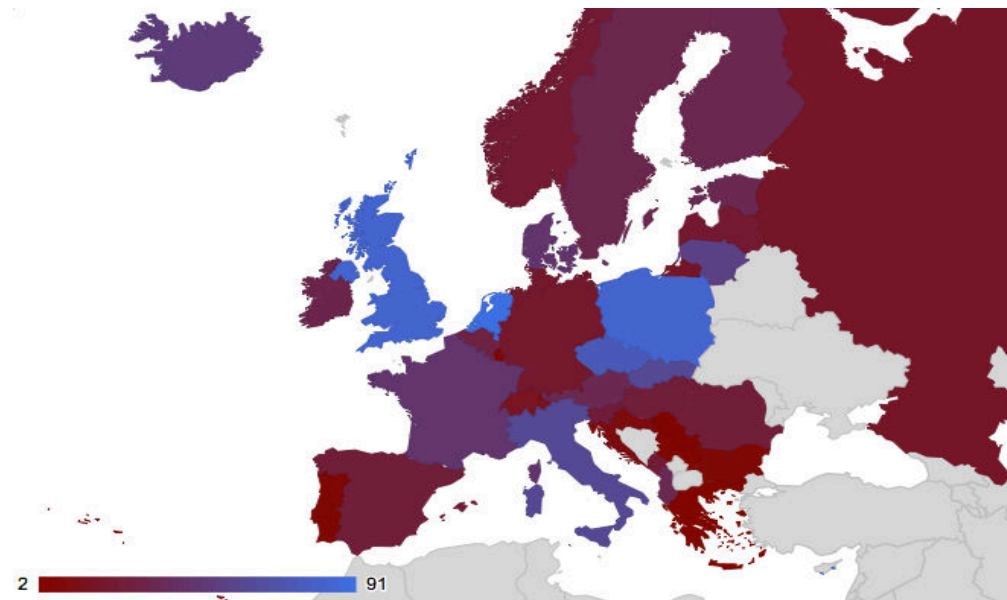
According to the 2012 OECD PISA results, some European countries are well below the OECD average (65%) regarding the share of students in secondary education schools whose principals reported that they have, together with the teachers, considerable responsibility in choosing which textbooks are used.

➡ In some European countries, such as **Greece, Romania, Germany, Luxembourg and Bulgaria**, policy makers could consider measures that would offer to secondary schools more room for manoeuvre to decide upon what textbooks they are going to use for teaching and learning. Such measures are anticipated to help schools choose **textbooks that are highly relevant to the characteristics and learning needs of students** from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds or students with special abilities.

## Indicator on school autonomy in determining course content

Map 4: Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported that only "principals and/or teachers" have a considerable responsibility in **determining course content**

(Source: OECD 2013, PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV).



*NOTE: OECD average: 40%.*

See Figure IV.4.3 at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932957346>

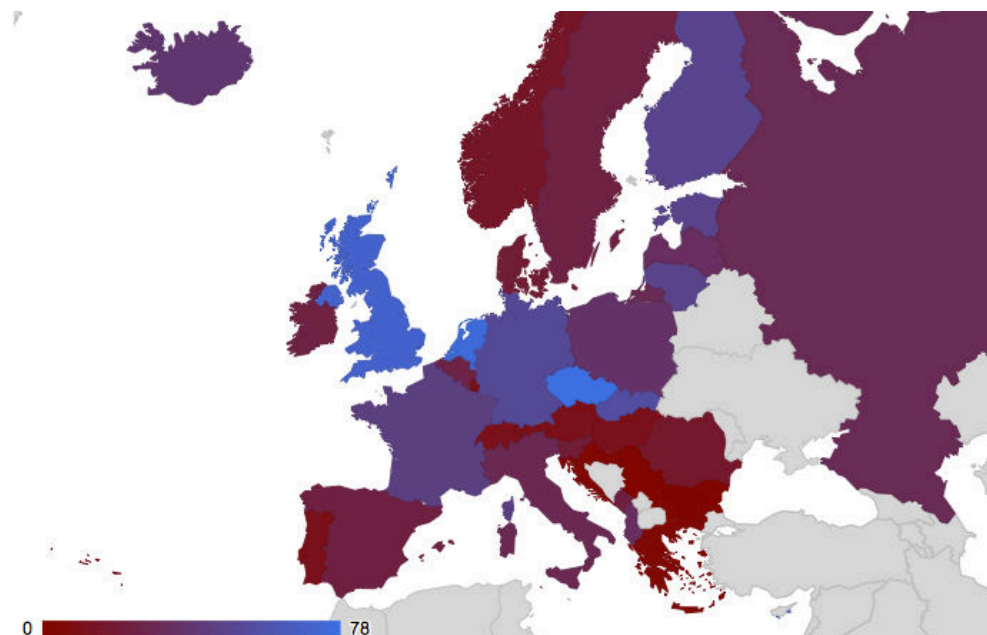
According to the 2012 OECD PISA results, most of the European countries are well below the OECD average (40%) regarding the share of students in secondary education schools whose principals reported that they have, together with the teachers, considerable responsibility in determining course content.

➡ In many European countries, particularly in **Greece, Portugal, Luxembourg, Croatia** and **Bulgaria**, policy makers could consider measures that would offer to secondary schools more room for manoeuvre to decide upon the course content. Such measures are anticipated to help schools choose **course content that is adapted to the learning needs of students** from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds or students with special abilities.

## Indicator on school autonomy in determining which courses are offered

Map 5: Percentage of students in schools whose principals reported that only "**principals and/or teachers**" have a considerable responsibility in **deciding which courses are offered**

(Source: OECD 2013, PISA 2012 Results: What Makes Schools Successful? Resources, Policies and Practices, Volume IV).



NOTE: OECD average: 36%.

See Figure IV.4.3 at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932957346>

According to the 2012 OECD PISA results, most of the European countries are well below the OECD average (36%) regarding the share of students in secondary education schools whose principals reported that they have, together with the teachers, considerable responsibility in deciding which courses are offered.

➔ In many European countries, particularly in **Greece, Portugal, Bulgaria, Austria, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, Croatia and Denmark**, policy makers could consider measures that would offer to secondary schools more room for manoeuvre to decide upon which courses are offered. Such measures are anticipated to help schools choose **courses that are adapted to the learning needs of students** from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds or students with special abilities.

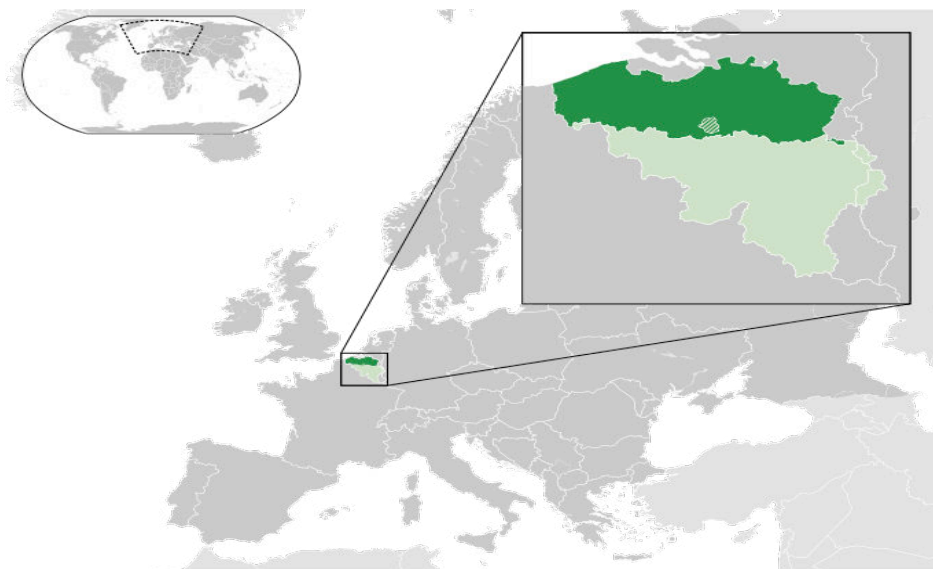
## 2.4 Examples of good practices on school autonomy for equity and learning

### Building collaborative partnerships between schools (Flemish community school system in Belgium)

Communities of schools are collaborative partnerships between schools from the same geographical area. The **objective of the communities of schools** is to make schools work in collaboration by sharing resources, to rationalize supply of courses and to promote cost savings across schools.

The Flemish authorities promoted the creation of communities of schools by allocating additional staff to them. The schools of a community must consult and **decide collectively on the use of additional funding**. They may equally distribute the resources among themselves, allocate more resources to disadvantaged schools, and/or use some of the resources to appoint a community-level co-ordinating director.

Some of these communities of schools have created a post for a full-time coordinating director of the community, they have agreed on a common process for selection of students, negotiated common working conditions for teachers and **created curricula for students with special education**. In some cases communities of schools also provided a structure and platform for **knowledge sharing and collective action** among school leaders and teachers.



The **added value of school communities** includes:

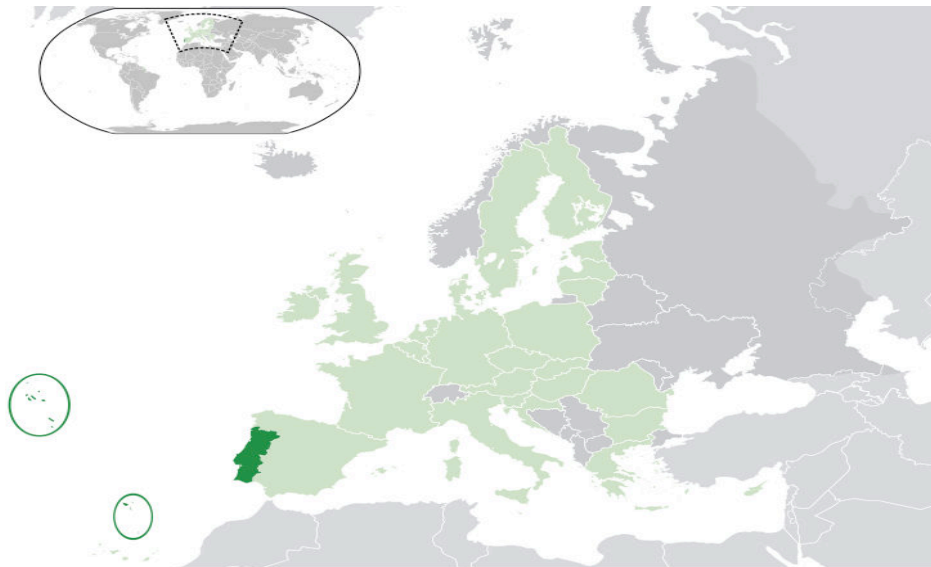
- better administration,
- more efficient use and distribution of human and financial resources,
- better harmonization of study programme provision, and
- improved student guidance.

➡ School leaders have made use of the community structure to establish mechanisms for peer support, **school leaders of successful schools share best practices with more disadvantaged schools**, and the coordinating-director of the community takes on a coaching and mentoring function to provide guidance for principals.

## Schools with "autonomy contracts" (Portugal)

In countries such as Portugal where schools are traditionally used to be highly controlled by the central education authorities, the process of widening further the room for manoeuvre for schools can be built upon already established and successful school autonomy reforms.

Evidence provided by the Inspectorate Report on the External Evaluation of Schools (2011-2012) shows that schools with "autonomy contracts" stand out by monitoring and analyzing systematically their results, and implementing improvement strategies. **Leadership and management is the domain getting the best ratings.** When comparing the ratings of schools under autonomy contracts with all the other schools evaluated in the same year, the percentage of very good ratings is systematically higher in schools under autonomy contracts.



“... there exists a strong expectation that **contracts in autonomy** [in Portugal] will **strengthen the capacity for decision-making** in areas of importance such as curriculum management, human resources and finance.

... school autonomy does not simply strengthen the decision-making power of the school manager, but also **reinforces the independence of middle-ranking leaders** such as curriculum coordinators, class heads, teachers working on curriculum management within their own area and in the development of competencies of autonomy, initiative and student innovation.”

- [Improving School Leadership, Country Background Report for Portugal, Ministry of Education, 2007, p.36](#)

## 2.5 Enhancing school autonomy

**Critical political issues** that need to be considered in order to develop and implement a school autonomy policy that actively promotes school leadership for equity and learning:



### What kind of school autonomy?

*School autonomy policies for equity and learning should specify:*

- what decision-making areas school autonomy should be widened (or even narrowed down),
- for what purposes is autonomy granted, and
- what should be the appropriate mechanisms (accountability systems, overarching frameworks, standards) through which school autonomy can be controlled or counterbalanced.

➡ As a general principle, policy makers need to ensure that policies on school autonomy are contributing in practice to an enabling school leadership environment that is based on **trust** in the **professionalism of school leaders** and on **mutual understanding**.



### Avoid over-regulation

Policies that grant more autonomy to schools and in parallel promote **over-regulated and bureaucratic accountability systems can limit the room for manoeuvre school leaders need to promote equity and learning in schools.**

➡ Do we need school leaders spending more and more time reporting to educational authorities and doing administrative work or school leaders who devote most of their time organizing school life in order to promote equity and learning?



### Targeted professional development

Among the implications of policies that widen school autonomy is that **the work of school leaders becomes more demanding and complex.** Therefore, reforms that introduce more decision-making powers at school level should be accompanied by targeted professional development opportunities for school leaders and changes in the curricula of programmes that prepare future school leaders.



## What kind of autonomy reforms?

In school systems with relatively low school autonomy in decision making domains directly related to equity and learning such as pedagogy, learning content and assessment methods, there is more pressing need to consider reforms.

➡ Policy makers should consider granting schools more autonomy to choose **school books**, and deciding on **instruction time** (e.g., in Greece, Luxemburg and Slovakia).

➡ Policy makers should also consider reforms that give more power to schools to influence decision making on the **selection of subjects to be taught** in a particular school and the definition of **course content** (e.g., in Austria, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Luxemburg and Spain).

➡ More power should also be given to schools to influence decisions upon the allocation of resources for school leaders' and teachers' **professional development** (e.g., in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain).



## The pace of autonomy reforms

The pace with which reforms that grant more autonomy to schools are introduced, is a critical factor in their implementation. Particularly **in school systems with a long tradition of centralization in decision making and relatively low school autonomy, changes in the governance of schools should be introduced in a gradual manner** so that schools become more capable to cope with their new tasks and responsibilities.



## The workload of school leaders

The widening of the distribution of school management tasks is a policy option that can help school leaders to deal more effectively with an increased workload. **Routine administrative tasks** can be transferred to non-teaching support staff in order to leave school leaders with more time to deal with issues that are closely related to learning and equity.

## 2.6 Further reading

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Supporting Document 1: Indicator-based analysis on school autonomy:  
[http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting\\_documents/doc1.pdf](http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting_documents/doc1.pdf)



# School Accountability Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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### 3.1 Introducing the toolset

- ✓ This toolset proposes a **broadened definition of accountability** and presents ways for school leaders to develop their work in this direction.
- ✓ All recommended tools are aimed to enhance the capacity of school leaders to **create a school environment that promotes both equity and learning.**
- ✓ This toolset covers **four main ways** through which school leaders may address the demand for accountability for equity and learning.

#### ➔ What do we mean by accountability?

“ The obligation of an individual or organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner. It also includes the responsibility for money or other entrusted property. ”

#### Background

The **accountability concept was introduced in the educational systems worldwide when comparisons between school results became common.** Accountability has been the dominant feature of school reforms in schools in North America, England, Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands since the late 1980's.

International pupil assessment tests such as PISA, TIMMS and PIRLS represent the growing benchmarking trend between countries worldwide and the reform pressure in many school systems goes under the headline 'Accountability'. Inspired by the “literacy and numeracy” slogan, **the hunt for accountability aims at a narrow interpretation of what successful schooling should be.** The problem embedded in these endeavours to measure the quality of schooling is that it does not cover important aspects of the concept.

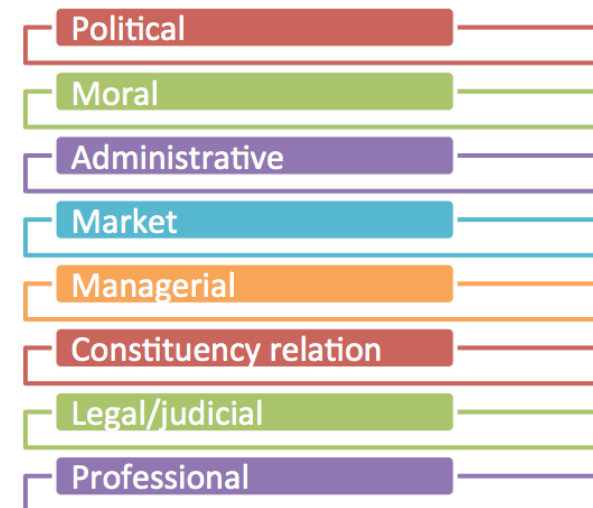


Figure 3.A: Types of accountability

## The suggested tools

The four suggested tools for accountability improvements are:



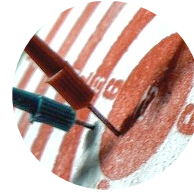
### Accountability concerning social and civic objectives

The need for **schools not only to display their academic results** but also the way schools are accountable concerning the social and civic objectives.



### Social background

Especially the parents' background has a **strong impact on the pupils learning** and the school results.



### Pupil achievement

Schools must develop a **focus both on high marks for student and a pass in all subjects for all students.**



### Inflated school marks

In some schools marks are inflated. Systems must be developed to **calibrate mark levels** in relation to national tests or other sources.

## 3.2 Academic and social/civic accountability

The discussion of the accountability of schools is **predominantly focused on the academic objectives** and it **often neglects the social ones**. Effective schools have been seen as those that use resources effectively and deliver high academic results (Samdal et al. 1999; Good & Brophy 1986) while the concept of **successful schools** often has been used for **schools where the development of all sides of a child's skills and personality dominate**.

### Effective schools and school leaders

An effective school and an effective school leader are most often understood as an organization and a leader that can achieve results concerning the pupils' cognitive development.

Many countries have introduced tests whose results are analyzed at school, municipality or national level. School authorities and researchers have dealt with the issue of **how a school and its leader(s) can be effective in reaching high academic standards**.

**Comparisons between schools and countries based on assessment results** in basic subjects are frequent (PISA, TIMMS, etc.), and it has increased the governments' strive to develop more effective school leaders, schools and school systems. However,

“ very few if anyone have tried to study school effectiveness from the perspective of the pupils' development in the social and civic areas, even though most curricula have something to say about the role of schools in the upbringing of children in these respects. The concept accountability should be broadened and tools for assessing schools and school leaders' work with social and civic objectives should be developed. ”



## ➔ Social and Civic Objectives: the case of Sweden

The social task of the Swedish schools under the heading **Norms, Values and Personal development** can be divided into two main categories:

➔ **Social Objectives.** First we have what one might call social objectives that imply issues regarding **social relations, justice, equality** but also **creativity** and the development of a **critical mind**.

➔ **Civic objectives** . The other main category is civic objectives. Civic objectives refer to civic education with the aim that the **pupils should be able to work and function within a democratic society**. They should understand how basic democratic principles work and practice in everyday situations in school. A democratic climate in the classroom helps pupils learn and develop in relation to CO (Perlinger et al. 2006).

The **social objectives** are questions on a micro level, having to do with **people in their social interaction**. The **civic objectives** on the other hand deal with questions on a higher level. These are **more comprehensive questions regarding democracy and the society we live in**.

One of the things pointed out in the Swedish curriculum is the understanding that one of the school's primary tasks is to foster children to be capable to live and participate in society (Lpo94). The students are, in some way, part of a socialization process that is ongoing through their stay at school. This socialization or experience of going to school may change the pupil/individual in a lasting way. **Pupils by attending classes, participating in decision-making, interacting with other pupils and teachers, develop their intellectual abilities and shape their social values for life** (Kingston et al. 2003). This socialization should make it easier for this pupil to understand his/her role in the school and be a part of the society that he or she is living in.

“ Social and Civic Objectives shall not be understood as two totally separated objectives and in certain areas they have common subject areas such as the ambition that pupils shall learn tolerance and compassion. **The social and civic objectives should act as a moral/social compass** that can be a guiding tool for pupils in their participation in private and public relationships (Quigley 2005). ”

## Social objectives

Key words for the work with social objectives in Swedish schools are **individual freedom, integrity, equality and justice**. In the Swedish education act it says that the schools should actively work for **gender equality** and they should work **against bullying, racism and all other forms of insulting behaviour**.

Other issues that are pointed out in the curriculum are the pupils' ability to be **creative** and their **critical awareness**. Dan W. Butin (2005) points out that educating social foundations has to be based on discussion and challenges.

As is stressed in the curriculum, one of the most important things in social education is **to make pupils critically aware and ready to take part in a discussion**. The school shall not be a repressive institution; on the contrary it should strive for an environment where pupils can be part of an open discussion and actively participate (Butin 2005; Selberg 2001).

“ All forms of harassment, racism and intolerance shall be dealt with by open discussions, knowledge and active efforts. ”

## Civic objectives

All nations have an interest in fostering young individuals so that they can function as **citizens** in the society in which they are brought up. In this way one can say that **the school system is building a culture for citizenship** which is beneficial not only for the political system but also for the society as a whole (Torney-Purta et al. 1999).

You might think that the Civic Objectives have especially to do with constitutional knowledge: how a country's democratic system functions, how the political system is constructed and what the political power structure looks like. This is partly the case.

The Civic Objectives are also about the **pupils' possibilities to have influence over their work in a structural meaning**. Pupils have to learn that they can influence and change the conditions in their own school (Englund 1994).

It is reasonable to think that a pupil who has received a good civic education should not only know the political structure in the country that she or he lives in. It is also reasonable to believe that she or he has developed traits such as **tolerance and compassion**, which makes the pupils capable of participating in political and civil life (Quigley 2005). **Therefore pupils should, on the one hand, learn to work in democratic forms and, on the other, learn the basis of democracy in a society.**

“ The school should be a forum where pupils can learn about democratic work in a broad perspective and at different levels. ”

## How to assess social and civic objectives

In a project entitled "**Structure, Culture, Leadership – Prerequisites for Successful Schools**" at Umeå University (Höög & Johansson 2011, 2014a, 2014b) a questionnaire for pupils was developed based on the items from the “Norms, Values and Personal development” part of BRUK. The questionnaire has 52 items and was tested in a pilot study of four schools with 157 students. The final questionnaire was answered by 2128 students in the 9th grade in 24 Swedish schools in 12 different municipalities.

**A mean score for each school was calculated indicating how the schools performed in the social and civic area.** This measure was then compared to the schools' academic achievement and the following fourfold table for the 24 schools was produced. The questionnaire has also been used in Stockholm schools and is now developed to be used in the ISSPP project on underperforming schools.

The variable approach to accountability – the focus on academic or social objectives or both - could be expressed in the following table (Höög & Johansson 2011, 2014a, 2014b).

		ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES	
		WEAK	STRONG
SOCIAL/CIVIC OBJECTIVES	STRONG	ONLY SOCIAL/CIVIC	BOTH ACADEMIC & SOCIAL/CIVIC
	WEAK	NEITHER SOCIAL/CIVIC NOR ACADEMIC	ONLY ACADEMIC

*Figure 3.B: Assessing social and civic objectives*

An accountable school is the one to the upper right that is successful in relation to both academic and social/civic objectives. Below this school you find those schools that only are accountable concerning the academic objectives. To the upper left schools that are successful in the social/civic areas are placed and below you find schools that are underperforming in both respects. **When working with school improvement different strategies have to be developed for these four types of schools.**



### 3.3 Academic accountability and social justice

In performing academic accountability, two different academic outcome measures may be used:

- ✓ the first is the **school's average academic performance as this is indicated by pupils' marks in exams** and
- ✓ the second is the **proportion of pupils in a school that score above a minimum level of performance** (e.g. get a "pass", or "leaving certificate" etc) in curriculum subjects.

A proficient school can have a **high average academic performance** but at the same time a **high share of low attaining pupils**.

On the other side, a less proficient school can be one where **all pupils perform above a minimum acceptable level** in all subjects, but their **marks are quite low on average**.

If the vision for a good school is that both targets should be met (i.e. high marks on average at school level and in parallel all pupils performing above a minimum academic standard), **none of these schools can be considered to be socially just**.

“ One can find schools that are **focused more on pupils with good chances to get high marks, failing to cater for the needs of low attainers.**”



## Keeping a balance between pupils' average marks and the share of pupils with "pass" marks or above

Academic accountability requires that schools emphasise on improving the academic performance of all pupils irrespective of their prior attainment levels. This means that schools should strive to help weak students perform above a minimum academic standard set by educational authorities and in parallel support better attaining pupils perform even higher.

In the chart on the right, the average pupils' marks for School A and School B in Sweden are similar (around 202 points). However, **using average school marks as the only measure of academic accountability would be hugely misleading.**

**School A is academically much more successful than School B** because almost all of its pupils manage to perform above the minimum standard of performance set by the Swedish educational authorities. In contrast in School B almost half of its pupils are low attainers. This finding suggests that in this school pupils are divided between a high share of low achieving pupils and a small share of pupils with exceptional performance.

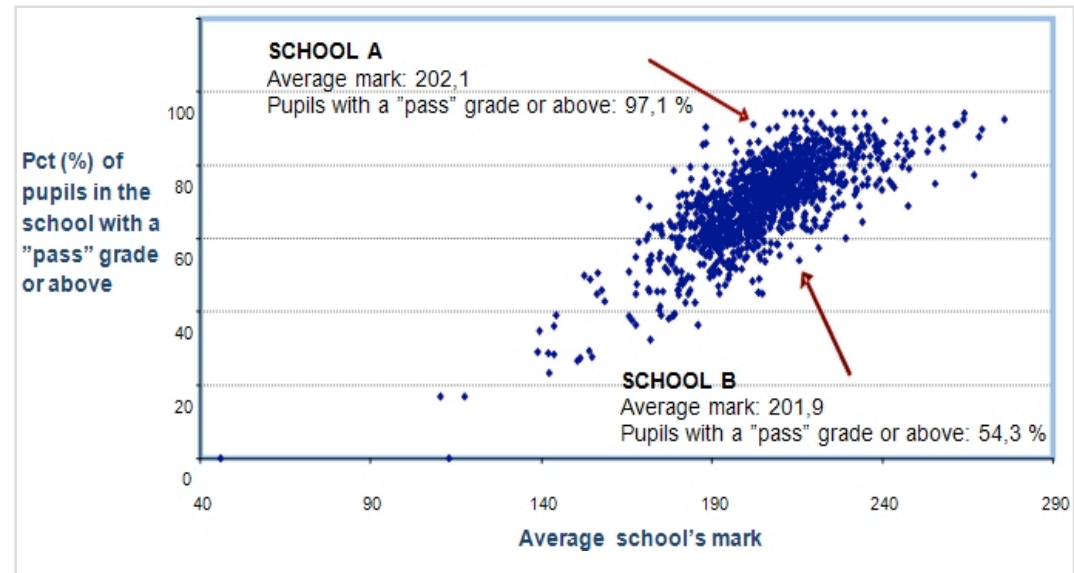


Figure 3.C: Average marks for all Swedish compulsory schools by share of pupils with "pass" marks or above

### 3.4 Accountability and the school's socioeconomic situation

There is a common understanding that **school results are related to differences in socioeconomic situation (SES) of the pupils**. Therefore school accountability measures should factor in the socio-economic background of their pupil intake.

The **Swedish National Agency of Education** has developed a data system that calculates **the results a school should have (both average marks and share of pupils above the "pass" threshold) taking into account its SES** concerning the number of boys, the number of immigrant pupils and the parents' mean educational level (1-3 scale).

A residual is calculated that shows the **divergence between the mean result of all schools grouped according to pupil intake and each school in the group**. If the residual is positive, your school performs better than the average school in your group. If it's negative your school performs worse.

An accountable school should perform at least as good as the average school with similar pupil intake (in terms of its SES), while a successful should perform better than expected in relation to schools with similar pupil intake.



In the table below from the SALSA data base shows how schools differ concerning these two important outcomes.

School	Year	% boys	Pupils with foreign background			Parents' mean educational level	School's actual average marks/share of pupils with a "pass" or above	School's expected average marks/share of pupils with a "pass" or above	Residual for average marks	Residual for share of pupils with a "pass" or above
			% born abroad	% born in Sweden	% that arrived last 4 years					
School A	2013	61%	-	-	1%	2,18	242/92	240/92	2	0
School A	2012	61%	8%	20%	-	2,31	242/93	228/85	14	8
School A	2011	65%	4%	29%	-	2,23	240/89	232/87	8	2
School A	2010	53%	7%	19%	-	2,26	250/88	231/87	19	2
School B	2013	44%	-	-	15%	2,05	180/44	190/58	-10	-14
School B	2012	56%	37%	54%	-	1,92	169/33	190/52	-21	-19
School B	2011	60%	28%	66%	-	2,09	202/54	207/59	-5	-5
School B	2010	60%	22%	47%	-	2,06	179/43	199/61	-20	-18

Table 3.D: How two Swedish schools differ in their academic performance taking into account the pupils' SES

As shown on Table 3.D, School A achieves over expectations, given its pupil intake, both concerning its average marks and its share of pupils with a "pass" or above (see last two columns). School B's results are below expectations in both marks and passes. School B also has low actual academic performance and is in need of special support.

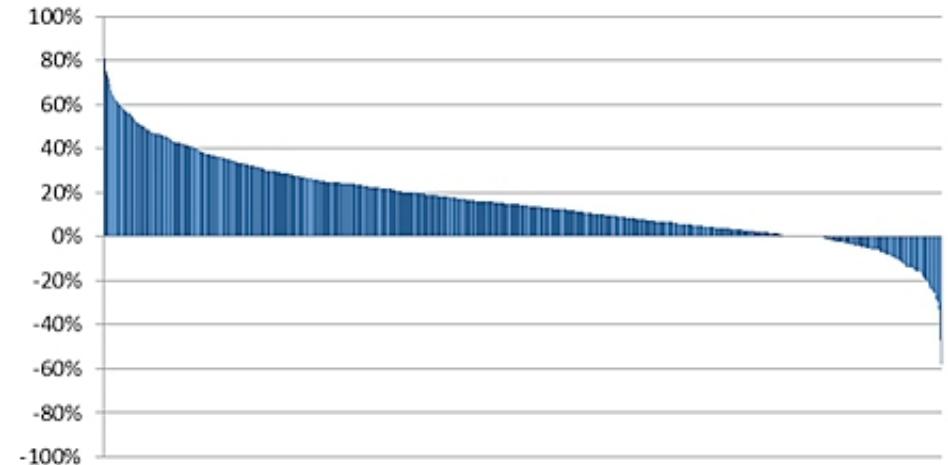
### 3.5 Mark's inflation: the relation between national tests and marks

The Swedish National Agency for Education has as one of its missions to assess the differences between the national tests and the school marks that pupils get when they leave school in the 9th grade (compulsory school). The purpose of the national tests is to support an equitable and fair assessment and grading.

A critical finding is that there are **large differences between test national test results and school marks** in the Swedish and English language, in Mathematics, in Biology, in Physics and in Chemistry. There are also large differences between schools on how they act in this respect.

**In some schools some 80% of pupils get a higher school mark than their score on the national test in mathematics.**

The reason for these discrepancies is that **the marking procedures and the definition of proficiency necessary for a certain mark varies between teachers and schools**. We can use the term **marking culture** to describe the process that leads to the result shown on the chart. In the schools to the right side of the chart, national test scores are close to pupils' school marks. In the schools to the left side, the national test results have less weight on pupils' school marks.



*Figure 3.E: The discrepancies between national test results and school marks in mathematics (9th school grade in 1371 Swedish schools, 2013).*

\* The discrepancies are calculated through a subtraction of the percentage of pupils who get a higher mark than their scores on the national test with the percentage of pupils who get a lower mark than their scores on the national test. This is called a net effect

Pupils who get a better school mark on a core subject than their respective score in the national test, will find that **their level of knowledge is below what is required for advanced studies**. They also might find that some of their fellow pupils with lower school marks are more successful in meeting the new demands.

Secondly, **pupils from schools with “inflated” marks have more opportunities when applying to higher education institutions**. This creates further problems because higher education institutions will be faced with the need to lower the necessary standards for teaching and learning in specific courses or programmes.

## 3.6 Recommendations

To increase a school's ability to form an organization where equity and learning characterizes its accountability, school leaders should be trained to develop a systematic quality assessment process that includes:

- ➡ An assessment of school results that places emphasis on both academic and social/civic objectives. The school assessment should propose ways to improve the aspects of a school's mission that are under-developed.
- ➡ An assessment of school results concerns both pupils' marks and the share of pupils with a "pass" or above. It proposes strategies to narrow the gap with the national test results and to support pupils with different readiness to learn.
- ➡ An assessment of school results concerning school marks' inflation, through comparisons with national (or international if available) test scores that can calibrate the marks given at the school. It proposes ways to develop teachers' abilities to mark pupils' performance in relation to their actual knowledge.
- ➡ An assessment of school results concerning the way the school performs in relation to expectations based on its pupil intake (socioeconomic situation). It proposes strategies to live up to what is expected from all stakeholders.



Supporting Document: Indicators on School Accountability.

[http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting\\_documents/accountability.pdf](http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting_documents/accountability.pdf)

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# Distributed Leadership Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 4.1 Introducing the toolset

The toolset has been designed to support the development of **school cultures** which are underpinned by the belief that **everyone is capable of learning**. Such a culture means that each person in the school is treated as a valued person with skills, expertise and experience that they can contribute to the development of the organisation and of the individuals within it. It is a culture in which deep and holistic learning is valued, new ideas are liberated and collaboration is actively encouraged.

“ Distributed leadership is fostered in a school culture that views leadership as emergent and participatory, and is explicitly committed to core values of equity and democratic citizenship. ”

**One way of helping to create this culture is through the development of distributed leadership for equity and learning (DLE).** Developing distributed leadership in itself does not automatically put the values of social justice and democratic citizenship at its core, which are essential to this kind of school culture. Equity, which includes these values, needs to be made an explicit part of the purpose of distributed leadership. DLE does this, and hence it is DLE which is the topic of this toolset.

### Purpose, focus and use of the toolset

✓ The purpose of the toolset is to **help policy-makers and practitioners develop and implement policy that supports distributed leadership for equity and learning** in schools.

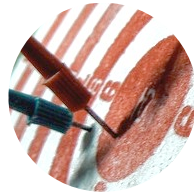
“ Grounded in a participatory culture, distributed leadership practice becomes the natural core of a school’s activity. The development of such a culture relies on the collaborative development of shared goals based on the essential ideas and values of distributed leadership. ”

The toolset is designed on the basis of the following questions:



### Who is the toolset for?

- Those involved in **educational policy** who are responsible for or influence leadership development and school improvement in school education
- Those **leading change in schools**, including headteachers, principals and others in leadership positions within schools



### What is the toolset for?

- To help you learn about distributed leadership for equity and learning
- To stimulate reflection leading to practical ideas for supporting and **developing distributed leadership for equity and learning in schools**, in ways relevant to your context



### What's in it?

- An explanation of what distributed leadership for equity and learning is and why it is important
- Ideas on how distributed leadership for equity and learning can be **developed, sustained and evaluated**

## How it might be used



### Learn about

Read the toolset to learn about:

- Distributed leadership **for equity and learning** (DLE)
- How DLE can support leadership development and student learning in schools
- How **you might support the development of DLE** in a school, a number of schools or across a school system



### Kick-start dialogue

Use it to kick-start dialogue, as a resource with colleagues to develop ideas together about:

- Your **understandings** of distributed leadership for equity and learning
- Practical **changes you can make** to support the development of distributed leadership for equity and learning in a school, a number of schools or across a school system



### Stimulate Ideas

Select part of the toolset most relevant to your concerns and context to stimulate ideas on:

- How distributed leadership for equity and learning **might be of help**
- How **in your context** distributed leadership for equity and learning can be developed and supported

## 4.2 What is distributed leadership for equity and learning (DLE)?

Leadership is a characteristic of an organisation as a whole, not just the individual actions of the few who are labelled 'leaders'. Distributed leadership is based on the proposition that whatever we may think, the reality of life in organisations is that leadership is the outcome of lots of people's actions and interactions. The power of senior leaders is mediated by what people do, or do not do, across the organisation.

“ DLE is leadership which is enacted by everyone in the school, emerges from a supportive set of organisational features and works for inclusive, holistic learning. ”

DLE includes leadership by students, teachers and support staff, each of whom brings their unique skills, ideas and experience, and emerges from a particular combination of supportive organisational features.

### Supportive organisational features



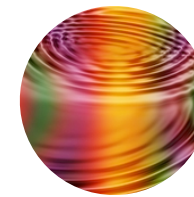
#### A participatory culture

A culture that views leadership as emergent, values participation and has an **explicit commitment to core equity and democratic values** of inclusive participation and holistic growth and well-being



#### An enabling institutional structure

An institutional structure that facilitates and supports leadership from **across all parts of the organisation**



#### An open social environment

A social environment in which **people are valued for what they each individually bring to the work of the organisation**, and positive relationships between people across status and other organisational boundaries are readily established to initiate and develop change

## Core values of equity, democratic citizenship and holistic learning

Distributed leadership for equity and learning involves explicit **commitments to core values of equity and democratic citizenship**, which includes the development of deep and holistic learning. This is a **defining characteristic** of distributed leadership for equity and learning. For DLE to work fully, the importance of these core values should be recognized and shared widely in the school.



### Core values

- **Inclusive participation**, so that the voice of all is heard and valued, and critical questions are asked systematically and continually about who has fewer opportunities, whether based on racial, sexual, cultural or other **forms of discrimination that work against equity**
- **Holistic growth & well-being for all**, anchoring distributed leadership in a deep and holistic understanding of human growth that frames learning



### Equity

The absence of **discrimination and unfair power differences** that mean that some people are unable to participate and be heard, are not given respect, are economically deprived and are blocked from developing their full capabilities.

➡ The absence of these kinds of discrimination and inequalities promotes inclusive, holistic learning.



### Deep and holistic learning

Learning that develops cognitive and emotional abilities, skills for employment, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual capabilities, an understanding of democratic citizenship and appreciation of values such as justice and tolerance, and fosters the ability to **reflect and learn continually throughout life**.

## Degrees of distributed leadership

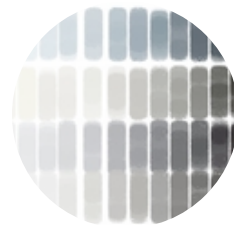
“ Distributed leadership can exist side by side with formal hierarchical relationships. DLE is not a feature an organisation either possesses or does not possess, but is a characteristic that can be present to a greater or lesser extent: in other words, there can be degrees of DLE. ”

It is helpful to see these degrees of DLE as stretching along a continuum. At one end, DLE is fully developed and in its most democratic form: this is the same as **democratic leadership** based on a model of holistic democracy. At the other end, the opposite of DLE is what we call **rigid hierarchical leadership** (RHL).

### Rigid hierarchical leadership

This is an **inflexible model of leadership** which concentrates power and influence in one person or a small elite at the head of a steep hierarchy, **relies on control, fear and top-down communication** (mainly one-way transmission of ideas, information and instructions) to make things happen, and defines learning as success in narrow, standardised tests.

➔ Some schools may have leadership which is exactly like the rigid hierarchical leadership described in the box. Many schools will have some but not all of the characteristics of rigid hierarchical leadership. Some may have begun to develop a more distributed approach to leadership. Most schools will have scope to introduce or to develop further distributed leadership. Few schools will have introduced distributed leadership for equity and learning.





### 4.3 Why do we need distributed leadership for equity and learning (DLE)?

Successful organisations recognise the wealth of leadership capacity across the organisation and make sure to tap into this. DLE can help schools respond to major **policy challenges** they face - being **accountable for learning**, enabling **innovation** and promoting **democratic citizenship**.

“Much research challenges the idea that organisations can rely on the 'one great leader' to solve problems. For sustained success, organisations cannot depend on one person, or even a small group of people, to provide ideas, inspiration, a sense of direction and innovation for improvement.”

Research studies have been carried out in recent years that throw light on the benefits of distributed leadership and what helps it to work well. It is difficult to identify the effects of a complex process like distributed leadership in organisations that are affected by a variety of factors and changes. It is possible, nevertheless, to conclude from research findings that **distributed leadership, in the right conditions, can help in meeting the challenges of learning, innovation and citizenship**.

➡ Research on private companies and other organisations globally finds that when ‘we grow and develop, and we become innovative, energized and stimulated’ and work co-operatively, ‘we are able to create the positive energy that gives us joy and adds values to our companies’.

This research directly challenges the idea that commanding and controlling others is the best way to run an organisation. Where organisations are creative and working well, "rather than be commanded, employees choose to develop important relationships with others, and rather than be controlled, they actively choose to make their time available to [a] **collective sense of purpose**" (Gratton, L., 2007, Hot Spots. Harlow: Pearson Education, p.46).

Distributed leadership is therefore a model of leadership that attracts a great deal of interest, for all kinds of organisations including schools. There are good reasons for policy-makers in education to commit themselves to developing or enhancing DLE in schools.

# Major policy challenges

## Challenge #1: Learning

The most fundamental challenge for schools is to be as effective as possible in terms of supporting students' learning. Integral to distributed leadership for equity and learning is a **commitment to facilitating deep and holistic learning**.

➡ Deep and holistic learning is about developing cognitive and emotional capabilities and skills required for employment, and about nurturing people's ethical, aesthetic and spiritual capabilities: that is, their sense of what is right morally and those things in life that nourish the senses and give a sense of purpose and inspiration. It includes developing an understanding of **democratic citizenship and appreciation of values such as justice, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, mutual understanding and a concern for the welfare of others**. It is also about fostering the ability to reflect on and understand how one learns so that people continue to learn throughout their lives.

Much of the pressure on schools is due to the accountability agenda which focuses on improving measurable achievement.

The real challenge for schools in relation to learning is more complex than the accountability agenda, however. **Learning is not equivalent to measurable achievement through tests and examinations**. The challenge for schools is to **enable learning that is deep and promotes the growth of the whole person**.

This type of learning can take place at the level of students, of staff, the school and the system. In other words, it is helpful to see it as multi-level learning.

Distributed leadership for equity and learning can promote multi-level learning, at the student, staff, school and system levels.

### Accountability pressures

**Schools systems are being held more accountable than ever before**. As a result, intense pressure is placed on those who make, implement and interpret policy at all levels of these systems. The politicians and civil servants in national ministries are **under pressure, because of international assessments such as PISA**, and feel the need to make sure that schools are held accountable for students' learning and achievement.

Those at regional and the middle levels of national education systems experience the pressures of being held to account and being responsible for the success of their schools. School leaders, teachers and other staff - as well as students and parents - feel the force of national and regional expectations and interpret policy on the ground, translating it into everyday practice.

Where distributed leadership for equity and learning works well, it increases:



### Capacity - mobilizing knowledge, expertise and energy

Capacity is increased, i.e. more people at all levels are actively engaged in improving learning and more people are involved in improving their skills.

- Distributed leadership means that the **leadership capabilities** of staff not in senior positions and of students are developed and can be **harnessed** to improve learning
- Distributed leadership also helps **develop the senior leaders of tomorrow**. Teachers and other staff can develop their leadership skills, increasing the pool of potential senior leaders



### Co-operative learning

People are enabled to work together and to share experience and ideas. Research finds that co-operative learning, where it is organised well, is the most effective form of learning.

➔ **Distributed leadership enables learners to work together and share experiences and ideas.**



### Motivation and commitment

Staff and students are more enthusiastic and committed to the school and the activities undertaken to achieve its core purpose

## Challenge #2: Innovation

People are more likely to be innovative where there is distributed leadership for equity and learning, sharing new ideas and working together to test and learn from new practices.

**Collaboration and the involvement of people from different organisational levels and contexts** (in the case of a school - students, teachers, support staff, senior leaders, etc.) are **integral to creating innovative cultures** in all kinds of organisations. New ideas and practices are evaluated from differing perspectives and therefore have a better chance of being improved and working well.

Research suggests that staff and students are more likely to be innovative where distributed leadership operates. This is because in a distributed leadership culture, people are encouraged to:

### High expectations to innovate

Schools are expected to be innovative as organizations and to educate students so they will become the creators and innovators of the future. **Promoting creativity and innovation is a driving aim on the policy agendas** of nations, the European Union and global bodies. This results in the second challenge for schools, that is, high expectations to innovate.



### Share and develop new ideas and knowledge

New ideas can be discussed from **differing perspectives** and new knowledge can be **more easily diffused** across the school system.



### Try out new practices and learn from these

Distributed leadership can result in **more ideas being tested in practice** and more lessons learned about what works well in what school contexts.



### Involve a range of people in developing and evaluating new practices

Collaboration and the **involvement of people from different organizational levels and contexts** (in the case of school - students, teachers, support staff, senior leaders, etc.) are integral to creating **innovative cultures** in all kinds of organizations.

## Challenge #3: Democratic citizenship

DLE gives experience of living in a way that advances equity and puts into practice the values of democratic citizenship.

A third challenge for schools is to promote democratic citizenship and an appreciation of values such as justice, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, mutual understanding and a concern for the welfare of others.

DLE provides opportunities for active learning about democratic citizenship. It can make practices such as **collaboration, participation, discussion and learning from others' viewpoints** part of the everyday life of the school for staff and students.

Hence, where it works well, DLE encourages democratic citizenship through:



### Experiential learning about social justice & democracy

DLE allows students to experience in practice what democratic citizenship is like. Through this, students can learn what it means to respect in day-to-day life values such as justice, tolerance, mutual understanding and a concern for the welfare of others, and to ensure that no-one is excluded from opportunities to participate and learn.



### Transparency in decision-making

Distributed leadership can ensure **greater transparency in decision-making as compared to rigid hierarchical leadership**. Hence it can greatly promote democratic ethos and a culture of accountability in schools.

### High expectations about participation and transparency in decision-making

Democratic citizenship is especially important as **communities change and become more diverse**, as people's expectations rise about **participation and transparency in decision-making** and as they become more prepared to challenge injustices and the decisions of the powerful.

## 4.4 Factors influencing distributed leadership for equity and learning (DLE)

Research shows that there is a number of factors important for distributed leadership to work well:



### Co-ordination and planning

A strong degree of co-ordination and planning of roles, expectations and modes of working



### Cohesive culture

A cohesive culture, which has shared goals and values



### Core purpose: learning for all

A focus on the core purpose (learning for all), so that a strong link is created between leadership and learning



### Capacity building

Capacity building for distributed leadership for equity and learning, which involves **developing the capabilities of staff and students** to be involved in leadership and the capacity of senior leaders who need the capabilities to develop and support distributed leadership for equity and learning.



### Internal accountability

Effective internal accountability, so that staff and students feel committed to making changes work, and senior leaders are **open and transparent about decisions** and in that way are accountable to others in the organization.

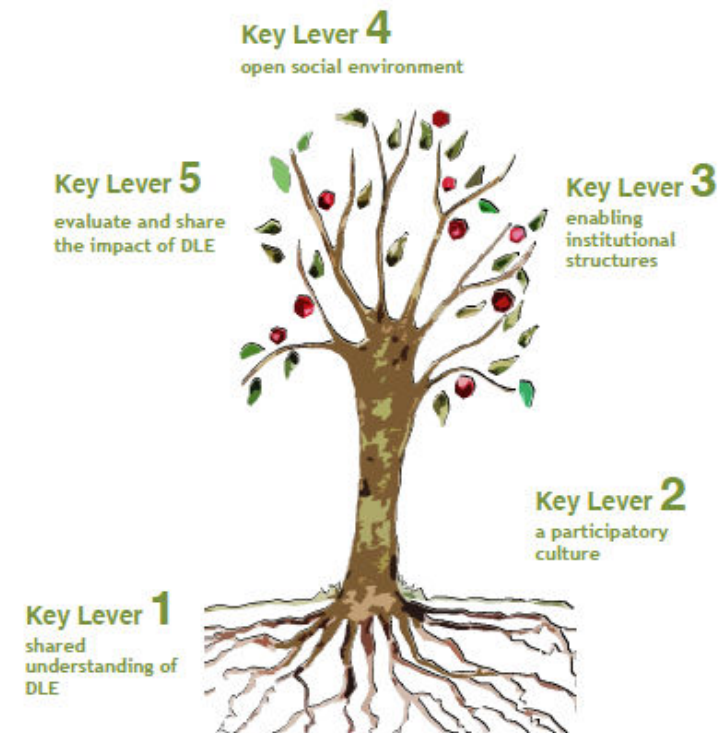
## 4.5 How can distributed leadership for equity and learning (DLE) be developed and supported?

“ The development of DLE is a social process that involves facilitating a shared understanding of what DLE means, developing a culture, institutional structures, and social environment that enable DLE to become an active part of school life, and evaluating how DLE is working so that it can be continually improved. ”

Five key levers work together to support the development of distributed leadership for equity and learning in action

Each of the five key levers links to a tool which a possible starting point for policy-makers and school leaders to begin or continue dialogue around DLE and to translate this dialogue into **action which transforms leadership and learning in schools.**

\* The metaphor of a tree is used in this section to illustrate the complex interaction and mutuality of the five key levers in supporting the development of DLE. The image reminds us that new initiatives need to be rooted in well-prepared ground. Equally, in order to bear fruit, developments need to be nurtured. They may not always flourish immediately but, with time and attention, can grow strong.



The DLE tree

## **Key lever #1: Facilitating the development of a shared understanding of DLE**

The first key lever in the development of DLE is the facilitation of a **clear and shared understanding of the concept itself**.

“ For DLE to work well, leadership needs to be seen differently. DLE **is not a feature which an organisation either possesses or does not posses**. Instead it is an organisational characteristic which can be present to a greater or lesser extent. ”

Policy makers have a key role to play in facilitating a **shared understanding of DLE**. This understanding could arise from a briefing session, where headteachers and other senior leaders are told what DLE is. It is more effective if senior leaders and others are enabled to develop their own understanding of DLE through discourse and debate. The initiation and facilitation of such a forum is itself an example of DLE practice, where professionals are given the opportunity, space and guidance to collaborate to extend their professional understanding of DLE.

Distributed leadership for equity and learning is leadership which is enacted by everyone in the school and which **emerges from a particular combination of organisational features**, namely:



### **A participatory culture**

A culture that views leadership as emergent, values participation and has an **explicit commitment to core equity and democratic values** of inclusive participation and holistic growth and well-being



### **An enabling institutional structure**

An institutional structure that facilitates and supports leadership from **across all parts of the organisation**



### **An open social environment**

A social environment in which **people are valued for what they each individually bring to the work of the organisation**, and positive relationships between people across status and other organisational boundaries are readily established to initiate and develop change



## Key lever #2: A participatory culture for DLE

The second key lever in the development of DLE builds on the first and focuses on the development of a **participatory culture**. Culture is about the ideas and values that people share in an organisation and which influence everyday behaviour. The second key lever involves taking steps to build a set of shared ideas and values that support DLE. These ideas and values include valuing leadership from all parts and levels of the school and an explicit commitment to inclusive participation and holistic learning.

Some people might think that DLE is wholly about changing structures, such as reducing hierarchy and implementing systems that spread responsibility. If DLE is understood solely like this, however, the extent to which leadership can be distributed is limited.

**DLE needs to be continually cultivated and nurtured in supportive ideas and values that people genuinely share and are committed to.** Looking at it in this way, developing DLE is rooted in a greater understanding of how things get done, how the various interactions between people bring about an end result and what values are most important in distributing leadership in inclusive ways that benefit learning.

“ Culture is about the ideas and values that people share in an organization and which influence everyday behaviour. Some people might think that distributed leadership is wholly about changing structures, such as reducing hierarchy and implementing systems that spread responsibility. If distributed leadership is understood solely like this, however, the extent to which leadership can be distributed is limited. ”

In a participatory culture for DLE:



### People view leadership as emergent

People view **leadership as arising from ongoing flows of interactions** across the organization and its hierarchy, not simply the actions of the single leader or small leadership elite.



### Participation is valued

Participation is valued through leadership from all parts and levels of the school, and its power in effecting school improvement acknowledged. As part of this,

- **questioning** is valued and encouraged
- **innovation** is seen as central to personal and professional growth

➔ Distributed leadership needs to be continually cultivated and nurtured in **supportive ideas and values that people genuinely share** and are committed to.



### Core values of equity and democratic citizenship are explicit commitments

Aspirations to core values of equity and democratic citizenship are explicit commitments and their importance is recognized and shared by all. This means a commitment to:

- **inclusive participation**, so that the voice of all is heard and valued and **critical questions** are asked systematically and continually about who has fewer opportunities, whether based on racial, sexual, cultural or other forms of discrimination that work against equity
- holistic growth and well-being for all, anchoring distributed leadership in a deep and **holistic understanding of human growth that frames learning**

## Key lever #3: Enabling institutional structures for DLE

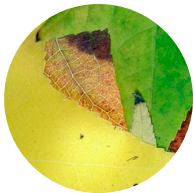
The view of DLE offered in Key lever 2 highlights the importance of cultivating cultural conditions which allow leadership practice to grow. Structural changes can work in tandem with such cultural changes to support this development. The third key lever focuses on the development of **institutional structures that support leadership from across all parts of the organisation**. This means taking steps to make changes that help to create enabling institutional structures.

Institutional structures include **roles, procedures and working arrangements** (such as teams and committees), as well as **allocation of resources** and the **opportunities offered for professional development and training**. These can have a powerful impact on how people connect and work with one another.

Institutional structures that enable DLE need to encourage inclusive involvement and maximum communication of ideas from all, by:

- ✓ **spreading leadership opportunities beyond formal senior roles** to enable different sources of expertise and perspectives to influence the organisation's work, development and innovative change,
- ✓ facilitating flexible, collaborative working relationships across traditional boundaries and hierarchies,
- ✓ tending towards the creation of **flatter hierarchies**.

Examples of change that helps create enabling institutional structures include:



### **Widening membership of committees, teams and working groups**

This includes enabling ad hoc working groups to be set up easily by staff and/or students that bring together different people relevant to an initiative, and creating forums through which ideas, research and learning can be shared



### **Allocating resources in ways that support DLE**

This includes allocating resources that help staff and students to develop capabilities in leadership, collaborative working and innovation and to try out innovative ideas



### **Supporting formal and informal teacher and student leadership roles**

This includes giving more responsibilities and scope for initiative to middle leaders, and developing and recognising the role of teacher leaders and student leaders

## Key lever #4: An open social environment that supports DLE

The types of relationship which characterise a school are a key factor in how well DLE works in practice. The fourth key lever is the development of an open social environment which supports DLE. This means **being open in how you relate to people**, recognising and valuing the contributions which everyone makes to achieving the purpose of the school and showing through your actions that the **boundaries** within the school **are not rigid**.



### Foster respect for all

Fosters respect for all, as people and **for what each person uniquely brings**, with people supporting each other in their learning and professional development.



### Develops a sense of trust and belonging

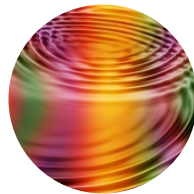
Develops deep-rooted relationships and a shared identification with the community of the school

An **open social environment** is one in which **people are valued** for what they individually bring to the work of the organisation, and in which **positive relationships** between people across status and other organisational boundaries are readily established to initiate and develop change. This is nourished and sustained by the culture and institutional structures in Key Levers 2 and 3, and creates the conditions for DLE activity



### Fosters co-creative and co-operative attitudes

Fosters co-creative and co-operative attitudes, as well as **confidence, independent-mindedness, autonomy and openness** within agreed principles and shared goals



### Develops flexible and open ways of working

Has flexible and open ways of working that involve 'boundary spanning' across groups, functional divisions and departments

“ A social environment with **fluid relationships** helps to create the conditions in which people at different levels in the formal hierarchy can share ideas, give feedback to each other and take initiatives. In this way, leadership can arise from all parts of the organisation. ”

## Key lever #5: Evaluating and sharing the impact of DLE

The final key lever in the development of DLE is the development of appropriate ways to evaluate and share the impact of DLE. Evaluation often focuses on the collation of numeric attainment results and the attempt to attribute such results to particular interventions. It is important that we do things in schools which impact positively on students' learning. However, it is not always easy to know which of the many things we do has had this positive impact. Numerical indicators are not the only nor necessarily always the best indicators for evaluation. Evaluation of DLE needs to:



### Be participatory

Evaluating distributed leadership for equity and learning needs to **involve staff and students**, but also other school stakeholders



### Focus on inclusiveness

Monitor how far distributed leadership for equity and learning in practice is inclusive, so that **inequalities can be tackled**



### Examine the degrees of DLE and hierarchy

Recognise that developing DLE is a journey and that schools will have both hierarchy and open social relationships, so evaluation examines the **degrees of DLE** and hierarchy in a school



### Prioritize holistic learning

Monitor the learning DLE promotes, to make sure that DLE is **fostering learning** that is deep and holistic

**To understand the impact of DLE we need to consider how we conceptualise the the term 'evaluate'.**

This term needs to describe a process in which we:

- clarify what we are trying to achieve e.g. a participatory culture, enabling institutional structures and an open social environment to support DLE,
- identify success indicators which will help us to see if these things are happening,
- use these indicators to support the development of illuminative data gathering and ways of analysing these data,
- interpret what is learned from these practices to judge the degree to which we have achieved our stated aims,
- develop ways of sharing what we have learned with all stakeholders.

## 4.6 Tool #1: How near to distributed leadership for equity and learning (DLE)?

Tool #1 provides a way of exploring what DLE means through the process of discussing and deciding where to place a school on a continuum. Here is a reminder of how DLE is defined:

“ Leadership which is enacted by everyone in the school, emerges from a supportive set of organisational features and works for inclusive, holistic learning. ”

### Ways to use it

The tool gives short descriptions of leadership in three fictitious schools: A, B and C. These descriptors are ideal types and schools are not expected to fit wholly into one or another. Users of the tool are asked to think of a school they know and consider:

- ✓ Which of these school descriptions comes nearest to it?
- ✓ What elements of DLE are present and absent in each of the descriptions? The descriptions are not exhaustive, so you will need to consider what else you would need to know about the schools to answer this.
- ✓ Where would you place the school you are thinking of on a continuum from ‘rigid hierarchical leadership’ to ‘fully DLE’?

There is no one set of right answers to these questions. Tool 1 is intended to help policy-makers and school leaders develop an understanding of DLE by stimulating discussion around the meaning of DLE. There are many ways in which Tool 1 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

#### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #1 in joint discussions or group work with school leaders in which policy-makers and school leaders together work collaboratively to **develop an understanding of distributed leadership for equity and learning.**









#### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #1 to facilitate **discussion with colleagues** in their school about meaning of distributed leadership for equity and learning.

## The three scenarios

- ➔ Which of these school descriptions **comes nearest** to it?
- ➔ What elements of distributed leadership for equity and learning are **present and absent** in each of the descriptions? The descriptions are not exhaustive, so you will need to consider what else you would need to know about the schools to answer this.
- ➔ Where would you place the school you are thinking of on a continuum from 'rigid hierarchical leadership' to 'fully distributed leadership for equity and learning'?

School A	School B	School C
<p><i>In my school,</i></p> <p> leadership is viewed as the responsibility of the headteacher and senior leadership team.</p> <p>These colleagues have all of the power and influence in the school. Other staff can give their views but these are sought in formal settings such as staff meetings. Suggestions may then be acted on or not by the Senior Leadership Team. Students are not included in any leadership activity within the school.</p> <p><i>Instead,</i></p> <p> we focus on getting them to achieve at the highest possible level in our national standard tests (or other types of exams).</p>	<p><i>In my school,</i></p> <p> the way we view leadership is changing.</p> <p>In the past we have looked to our headteacher to take all the decisions.</p> <p><i>Now,</i></p> <p> we are beginning to explore ideas of distributed leadership.</p> <p>This is already beginning to have an effect on the school. More people are giving their ideas and acting on these ideas to improve the school. These still tend to be people who have formal roles such as subject leaders but we are trying to move away from this to involve ordinary teachers.</p> <p><i>However,</i></p> <p> students do not yet have a leadership role in our school.</p>	<p><i>In my school,</i></p> <p> leadership is viewed as the responsibility of all.</p> <p> All members of the community are invited not only to share their ideas but also to put these ideas into practice.</p> <p>Because of this, changes to the school are often led by teams comprising of students, teachers and support staff. The culture of the school supports the potential success of this kind of improvement process.</p> <p><i>Overall,</i></p> <p> we value everyone equally.</p> <p>Those who have named leadership roles have a clear strategic job to do and so does everyone else. Together we work to make the school the best it can be for our students and ourselves to grow and learn as whole people.</p>



## 4.7 Tool #2: How do we need to think differently about leadership?

Tool #2 provides a stimulus for discussion around the importance of shared ideas and values in a participatory culture that best supports DLE and what developments in school culture might be desirable:

“ The intention of Tool #2 is to facilitate **genuine dialogue, rather than a top-down approach**. Policy-makers may use the tool to stimulate discussion, amongst themselves and amongst school leaders, of values which support inclusive participation and learning that is wider than achievement measured by narrow accountability tools. ”

### Ways to use it

The tool invites people to think of a school they know and consider **what the dominant ideas and values are about leadership in the school**. Like Tool #1, it incorporates a continuum as a way of exploring the different views and assumptions relating to leadership and how these relate to DLE.

There are many ways in which Tool #2 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

#### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #2 in a similar way to Tool #1. That is, it could be used in **joint discussions or group work with school leaders** in which policy-makers and school leaders together work collaboratively to develop an understanding of participatory culture and **what changes in school cultures might be desirable**.

#### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #2 to facilitate **discussion with colleagues** in their school about the **ideas and values that are important in a DLE culture** and what implications this could have for the culture of their school.



## Reflect on the following two sets of statements

Users of the tool are asked to reflect on the two sets of statements. Think of a school you know and **what the dominant ideas and values about leadership in the school are.**



### **Leadership is seen as what the senior people in the school do**

Anyone not a senior leader who tries to exercise initiative or have a say in decisions, is overstepping the mark and trying to have an influence that they should not.

By far the most important value is getting as many high grades as possible in national tests and/or other types of examinations.



### **Leadership is seen as coming from people across the school, whatever their formal position**

The participation and views of everyone in the school are valued and recognized as important contributions to school improvement.

A commitment to advancing equity, democratic citizenship and holistic learning is an explicit, shared part of the school's values.

In the school you are thinking of

- Which set of statements best describes the culture of the school, or, if neither, what statements about leadership and values would better describe the ideas and values about leadership that are most influential in the school?
- Where would you place the school on the culture continuum?
- Does this lead you to think that the culture of the school needs to change to make it more participatory? if so, in what ways would you like to see it change?



## 4.8 Tool #3: Who has access to enabling structures?

Tool #3 provides a way to reflect on the institutional structures that are available to enable leadership, compare their availability between groups and consider how these institutional structures and their availability might be improved.

“ Tool #3 can be used by policy-makers in discussions or group work with school leaders to facilitate shared reflection on the institutional structures that are available in different schools to enable distributed leadership for equity and learning, how their availability and usefulness compare between different groups in schools and how these institutional structures and their availability might be improved. ”

### Ways to use it

There are many ways in which Tool #2 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

#### For policy-makers



Policy makers may use the tool to explore ways in which they can support the development of enabling institutional structures in schools - that is, structures that are more open and less rigidly hierarchical, and so **spread leadership opportunities** and facilitate flexible, collaborative working relationships across traditional boundaries and hierarchies.

#### For school leaders



School leaders may use the tool to facilitate **reflection on the institutional structures** that are available to enable distributed leadership in their school, how their availability and usefulness compare between different groups in the school and how these institutional structures and their availability **might be improved**. This could be done with staff and students as to include their perspectives could to see where it coincided with and differed from those of school leaders.

## Reflect on the availability of the institutional structures

Users of the tool are invited to reflect on the availability of the institutional structures (on the left hand side of the table) for each group (along the top of the table) and how well they work for that group. Each institutional structure for each group can be rated by putting 1, 2 or 3 in each cell.

1 = available & works well  
2 = available & needs improving  
3 = not available

Institutional structures	Students	Support staff	Teachers	Middle leaders	Senior leaders	Headteacher/ principal
Formal committees	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Informal working groups	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Professional development opportunities	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Procedures through which new ideas can be developed	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Chances to lead or co-lead projects	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Resources to try out and research innovations	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Procedures/meetings to share ideas & projects with the rest of the school	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3
Procedures/working groups that enable collaboration across departments	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3	Rate 1,2 or 3

Table 4.A: Availability of institutional structures

## 4.9 Tool #4: What kinds of relationships do we experience and want?

Tool #4 is intended to stimulate discussion about the **creation in schools of an open social environment** - that is, one in which people are valued for what they each individually bring to the work of the organisation, and where positive relationships between people across status and other organisational boundaries are readily established to initiate and develop change.

### Ways to use it

The tool gives a number of **representations of relationships within an organisation** which users of the tool are invited to reflect upon and consider what they mean for them, which are apparent in their school and which would be best for distributing leadership and benefiting learning and inclusion.

There are many ways in which Tool #2 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

#### For policy-makers



Policy makers may use the tool in discussions or group work with school leaders to facilitate shared reflection on **patterns of relationships** that presently characterize schools, and in what ways they may be developed to support DLE.

#### For school leaders



School leaders may use the tool to facilitate shared reflection on patterns of relationships that presently characterize their school, and in what ways they may be developed to support DLE. This could be done **with staff and students so that their perspectives could be included** to see where it coincided with and differed from those of school leaders.

## Different ways of representing relationships

Users of Tool 4 are invited to look at the different ways of representing relationships below and consider what kind of relationships they illustrate. Then consider these questions:

- ✓ Which of these do you recognise as representing relationships in your school?
- ✓ What do you feel about these relationships in your school? Positive, negative or indifferent - and why?
- ✓ How do you feel they could be changed for the better in your school?
- ✓ How would any changes in relationships help to distribute learning and promote equity and holistic learning in the school?
- ✓ You may like to suggest additional groupings which you believe merit discussion and draw these below or on a separate sheet.



## 4.10 Tool #5: An evaluative framework

Tool #5 is a simple evaluation framework that may be used as a starting point for evaluation of the **extent to which development of DLE has progressed**. It is a way of considering each of the previous Key Levers in turn.

“ The tool could provide a basis for discussions between school leaders to compare their experiences and share practices that have helped. Schools working together can support and challenge each other, providing an external perspective to help evaluation. ”

### Ways to use it

Like all the tools, Tool #5 can be adapted to local needs and contexts. These are two suggestions:

#### For policy-makers



Policy makers may use the tool with school leaders to consider how DLE is progressing in schools and **what kinds of support schools might find useful**.

#### For school leaders



School leaders may use the tool as a starting point for evaluation in their school of the development of DLE. Different people or groups could **take responsibility for different aspects of the evaluation**, with results and reflections being brought together for wider discussion.

Schools may also work with a partner school or schools to support and challenge each other and bring an external perspective on each school's evaluation..

## Reflect on how distributed leadership is progressing in your school

Users of the tool are invited to reflect on various dimensions of distributed leadership in their school and discuss further actions for improvements.

Evaluation sheet			
Key Levers	What are we trying to achieve?	What are the indicators of progress & success?	What data help us to tell where we are?
Shared understanding of distributed leadership			
Participatory culture			
Enabling institutional structures			
Open social environment			

Key Levers	How much progress have we made?	What should we do now to make further progress?	Who will take the action needed?
Shared understanding of distributed leadership			
Participatory culture			
Enabling institutional structures			
Open social environment			

*Table 4.B:* Evaluation sheet: How is DLE progressing in your school



## 4.11 Further reading

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# Educating School Leaders Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 5.1 Questions for policy reflections

The effectiveness of **school leadership capacity building** is reflected upon how well school leaders can adapt to their new roles and how competent they can become in co-designing and co-implementing policies for equity and learning in their school, as well as in encouraging the establishment of participative, democratic school cultures.

Reform policies can only be coherently integrated into the life of schools and classrooms, if a capacity building approach for professional school leadership pays attention to system-wide change which tries to deal with the following questions:



### Reducing complexity

How can the complex decision-making structure be disentangled and the different demands of central and regional/local interests brought into balance?



### Coordination

How is it possible to coordinate communication and actions both of policy and practice among the different levels of the system?



### Learning context

How can a learning context be created which aims at influencing the pattern of how professionals go about changing their organizations?

“ A school’s leadership capacity for equity and learning can be defined as the **collective ability** of a school to harness the potential of processes and dynamics of the school system, the school and its members, **to generate and lead coordinated action** that **addresses effectively challenges of equity and learning.** ”



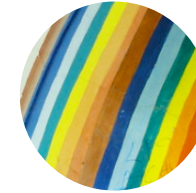
### **Energization**

How can the system be energized by more individual and organizational empowerment?



### **Connections for learning**

How can leadership be more closely connected with learning by creating better conditions for student achievement?



### **System-wide change**

How can professional development create system-wide culture change and be linked with the improvement capacity of the actors on the different horizontal and vertical levels?

## 5.2 School leaders' development indicators

Indicators on the preparation and professional development of school leaders and related data (such as their selection, career advancement and succession) that allow for **cross-country comparisons** can be a valuable tool for policy makers across Europe who plan to introduce **reforms affecting the quality of school leaders**. Currently, such indicators and data are provided by OECD (through PISA and TALIS surveys), the European Commission (through Eurydice) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (through the TIMSS survey).



### Principals' professional development activities and barriers

*(OECD, Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 -TALIS)*

A set of questions in the [TALIS questionnaire](#) offers indicators on school principals' participation in continuing professional development (CPD) activities, as well as perceived barriers to participation.

### Participation in CPD activities (during the past 12 months) (q.7)

(Yes or No & duration in days)

- In a professional network, mentoring or research activity
- In courses, conferences or observational activities
- Other

### School's professional development plan (q.20)

(Yes or No)

- I worked on a professional development plan for this school

### Barriers to participation in CPD activities (q.8)

(Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)

- I do not have the **pre-requisites** (e.g. qualifications, experience, seniority)
- Professional development is too **expensive/unaffordable**
- There is a lack of employer support
- Professional development conflicts with my **work schedule**
- I do not have time because of **family responsibilities**
- There is **no relevant** professional development offered
- There are **no incentives** for participating in such activities



**Status of continuing professional development for school principals**

*(Eurydice 2013, Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe)*

**Academies and/or training programmes for school leadership**

*(Eurydice 2013, Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe)*

**Professional experience and training required to be a school head**

*(Eurydice 2013, Key Data on Teachers and School Leaders in Europe)*

**Status of continuing professional development for school heads from pre-primary to upper secondary education (ISCED 0, 1, 2 and 3), 2011/12**

(Professional duty, Necessary for promotion, Optional)

**Existence of specific academies and/or training programmes for school leadership (ISCED 0, 1, 2 and 3), 2011/12**

(Specific training programmes/academies, No specific training programme)

**Professional experience and headship training officially required to be a school head (ISCED 0, 1, 2 and 3), 2011/12**

(Professional teaching experience, +Administrative experience, +Training for headship, Teaching qualification only, Training for headship only)

**Countries requiring a minimum period of compulsory training before or after appointment as school head, 2011/12**

(Before appointment, After appointment, No headship training required)





### **Formal education of school principals**

*(OECD, Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 -TALIS)*

### **Engagement in continuing professional development for school principals**

*(Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study 2011, School Questionnaire, 4th and 8th grade)*

#### **Principals' formal education (q. 6)**

(Completed Before, After, Before and After, Never after taking up a position as principal)

- School administration or principal training programme or course
- Teacher training/education programme or course
- Instructional leadership training or course

#### **Time spent on professional development activities for school principals (during past 12 months) (q. 15)**

(Not time, Some time, A lot of time)

## 5.3 Data on school leaders' development

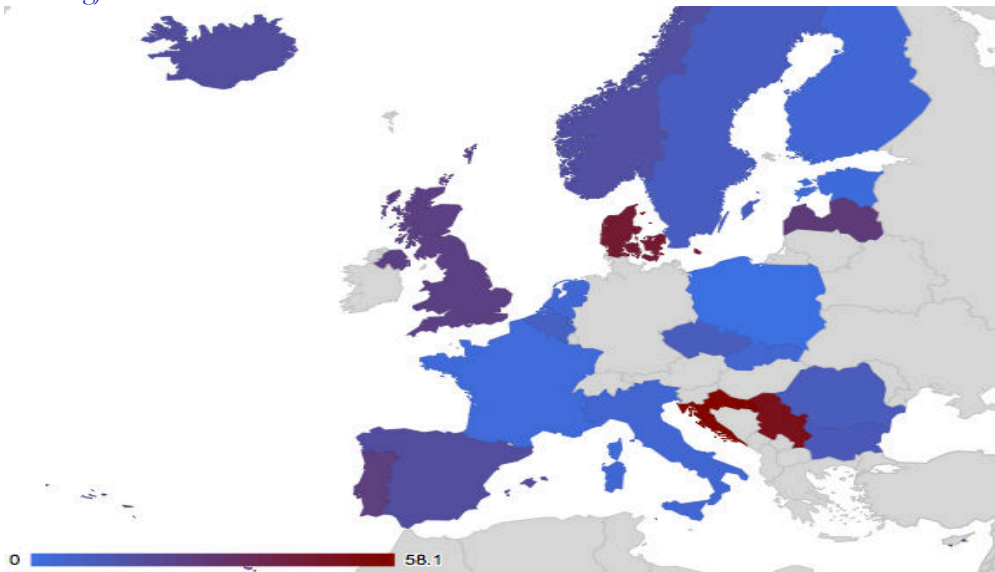
Sound policy planning on the preparation and professional development of school leaders for equity and learning needs to take into consideration research-based evidence on their engagement (past and present) in leadership capacity building and the factors affecting it.

### School principals' formal education

#### Indicator on the formal education of school principals

**Map 1: Percentage of principals who report that they have never participated in a school administration or principal training programme or course (Lower secondary education)**

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).



NOTE: OECD average: 15.2%.

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

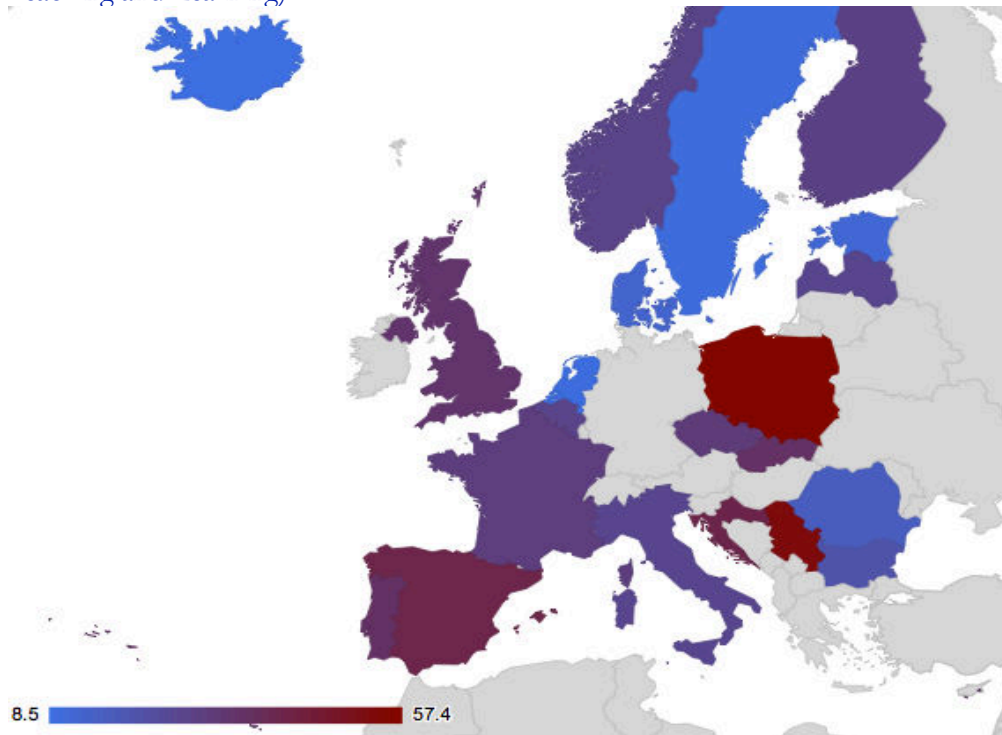
See Table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933043891>

According to the 2013 OECD TALIS results, some European countries are well below the OECD average (15%) regarding the share of principals in lower secondary education schools who have **never participated in a formal school administration or principal training programme or course**. This is particularly true for **Croatia, Denmark, Latvia, Portugal, England (UK) and Spain**.

## Indicator on the formal education of school principals

Map 2: Percentage of principals who report that they have never participated in instructional leadership training or course (Lower secondary education)

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).



NOTE: OECD average: 22.2%.

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

See Table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933043891>

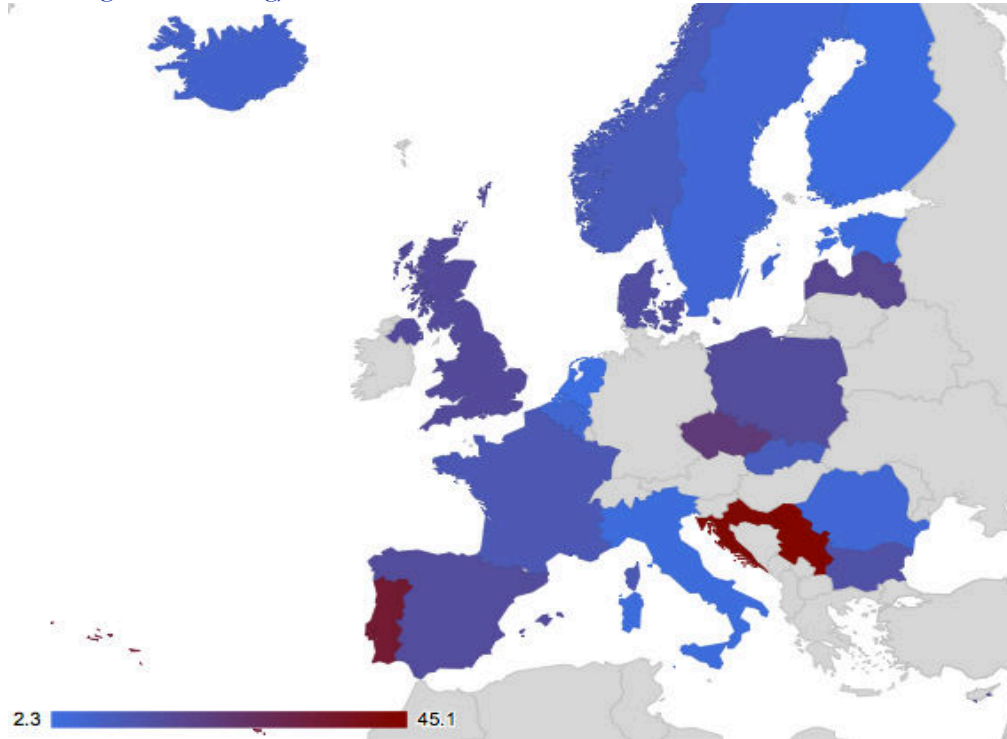
In most EU countries participating in TALIS, **at least 1 out of 4 principals** in lower secondary education schools report that **have never participated** in **instructional leadership training or course**.

➡ The quality of school leaders could be greatly enhanced by **policy measures supporting leadership capacity building programmes focusing on how to lead and support others in their pedagogic practices**, particularly on issues of equity and learning.

## Leadership training index (no or weak leadership training)

### Map 3: Percentage of principals who report having received no or weak leadership training in their formal education\* (Lower secondary education)

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).



NOTE: OECD average: 12.3%.

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

See Table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933043948>

\* The leadership training index was constructed from the following variables: i) school administration or principal training programme or course, ii) teacher training/education programme or course, iii) instructional leadership training or course. Responses indicating "never" were coded as zero (0) and responses indicating that the training had occurred were coded as one (1). Each respondent's codes were summed to produce the following categories: 0 (no training), 1 (weak leadership training), 2 (average leadership training) and 3 (strong leadership training).

According to the 2013 OECD TALIS results, in many European countries the share of principals in lower secondary education schools with no or weak leadership training is well above the OECD average (12,3%).

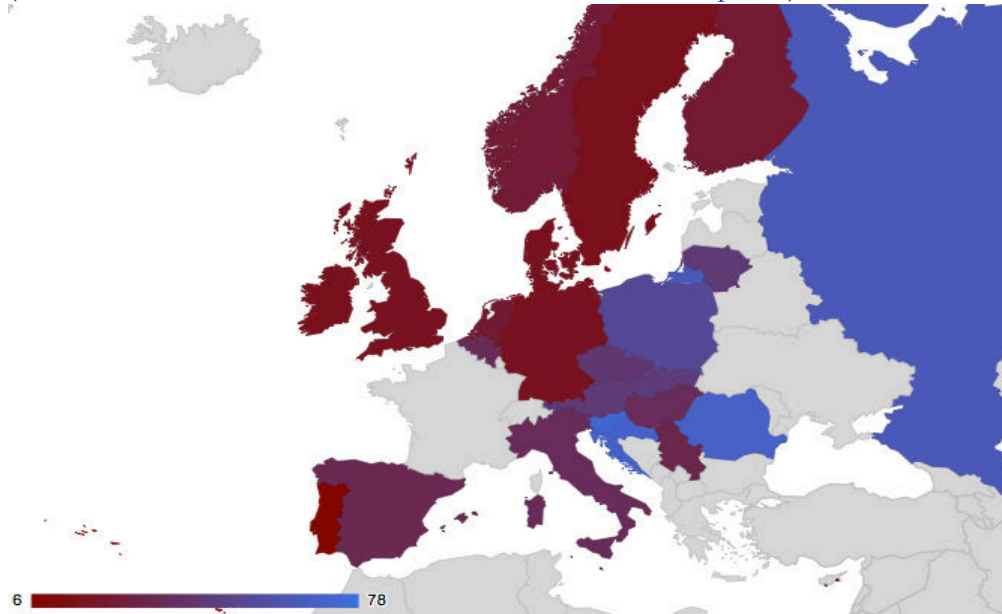
➔ In some European countries, such as **Croatia, Portugal** and the **Czech Republic**, policy makers could consider measures for the development of the leadership capacities of principals who currently have no or rather weak prior formal education related to their duties and responsibilities to manage and lead their schools.

## Engagement of school principals in professional development activities

### Indicator on the engagement of school principals in professional development activities

Map 4: Percent of students whose principals reported that they spend “A Lot of Time” in professional development activities specifically for principals (school grade 4)

(Source: TIMSS 2011 International Results in Mathematics, p. 258) .



NOTE: International average: 39%.

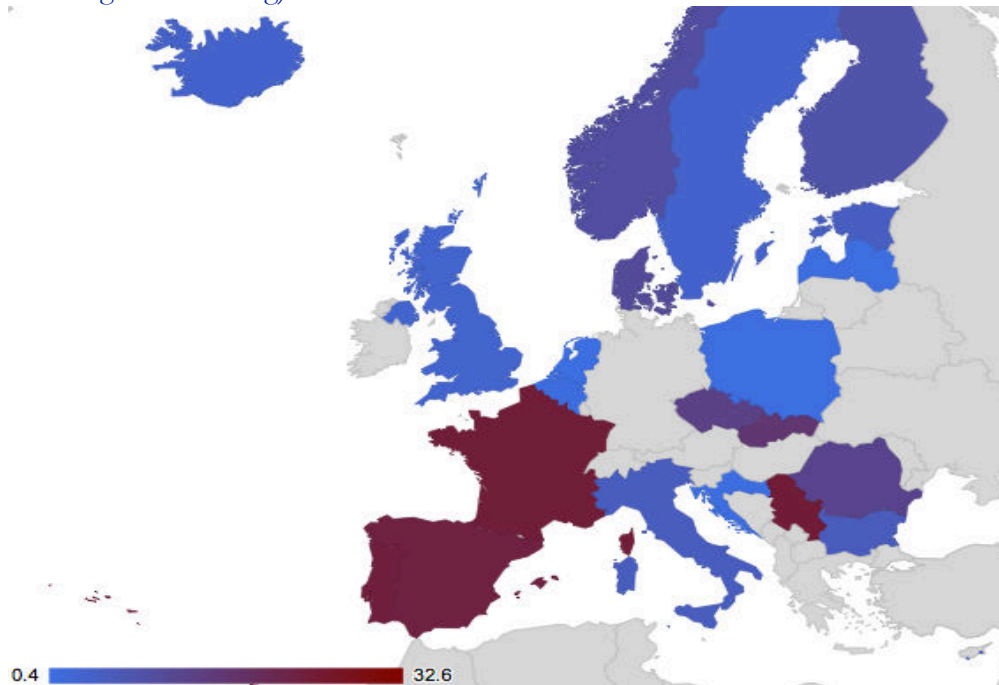
The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data are from England only (Northern Ireland, 23%).

According to the 2011 IEA TIMSS school survey, in many European countries, particularly in **Portugal, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland** and **England (UK)** only a small share of pupils are enrolled in **primary schools** where their principals report that they spend "a lot of time" in professional development activities specifically for principals.

## Indicator on the engagement of school principals in professional development activities

**Map 5: Percentage of principals who did not participate in any professional development in the 12 months prior to the survey (Lower secondary education)**

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).



*NOTE: OECD average: 9.5%.*

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

See Table at: [dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044043](https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044043)

According to the 2013 OECD TALIS results, some European countries are well above the OECD average (9,5%) regarding the share of principals in secondary education schools who report that they did not participate in any professional development in the 12 months prior to the survey.

➡ In some European countries, such as **Portugal, Spain** and **France**, policy makers could consider measures that would encourage more school leaders engage in professional development activities.



## Indicator on the engagement of school principals in professional development activities

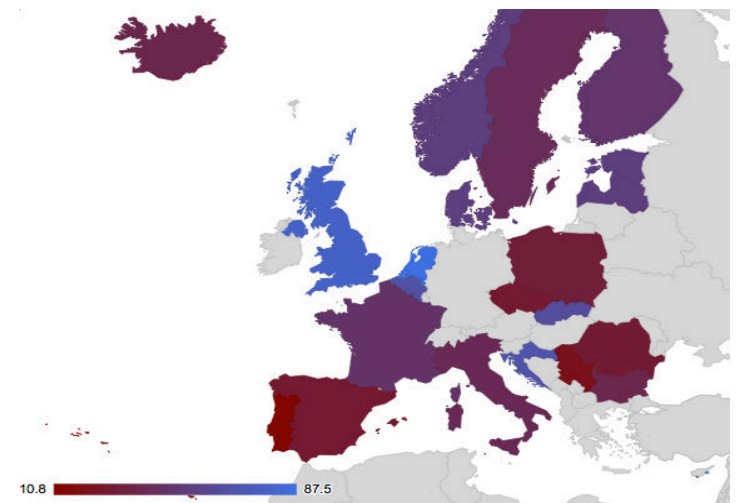
**Map 6: Percentage of principals who participated in a professional network, mentoring or research activity in the 12 months prior to the survey (Lower secondary education)**

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).

NOTE: OECD average: 51.1%.

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

See Table at: [dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044043](https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044043)



## Indicator on the engagement of school principals in professional development activities

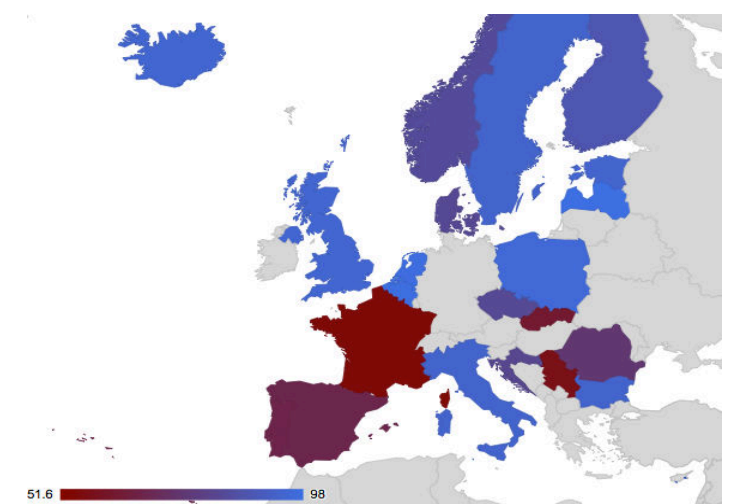
**Map 7: Percentage of principals who participated in courses, conferences or observation visits in the 12 months prior to the survey (Lower secondary education)**

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).

NOTE: OECD average: 83.4%.

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

See Table at: [dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044043](https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044043)

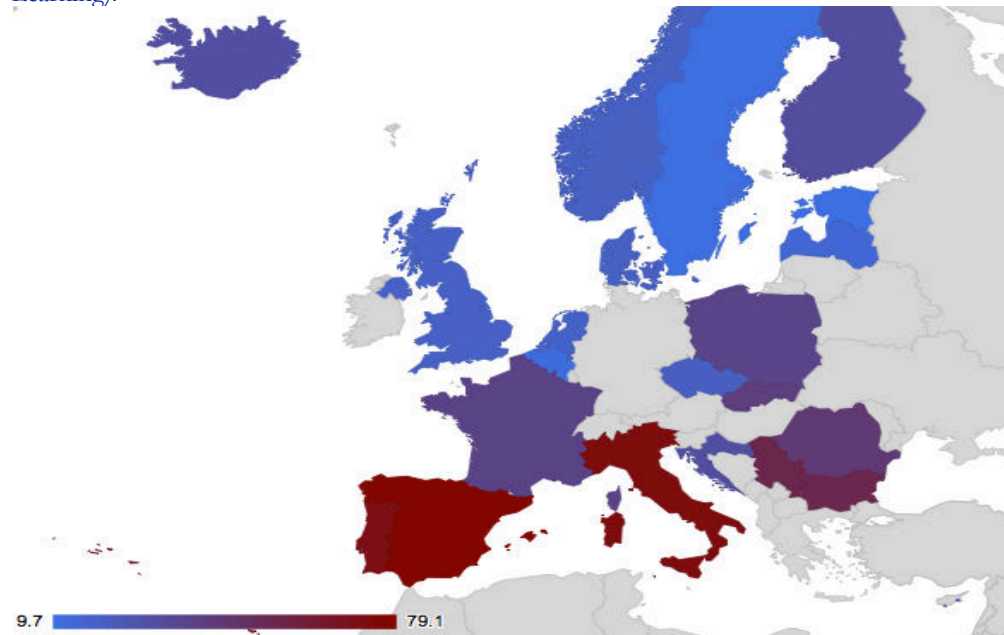


## Barriers to principals' participation in professional development

### Indicator on the perceived barriers to participate in professional development activities

**Map 8: Percentage of principals who "agree" or "strongly agree" that they have no incentives to participate in professional development activities (Lower secondary education)**

(Source: OECD 2014, TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning).



NOTE: OECD average: 35.4%.

The Belgium data on Flemish community only. The Great Britain data on England only.

See Table at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933044062>

According to the 2013 OECD TALIS results, in some European countries, such as Portugal, Spain, Italy and Bulgaria the majority of principals report that the lack of incentives is a barrier to participation in professional development.

➔ Policy makers should consider the establishment of a **coherent, varied and flexible set of explicit incentives** for current and prospective school leaders for participating in leadership study programmes and undertaking CPD activities for equity and learning.

A comprehensive framework can combine **direct monetary incentives** (such as salary increases or additional allowances paid within the same occupational grade), **career advancement/retaining incentives** (promotion to a higher occupational grade, retaining the same occupational grade), and **time compensation** (paid leave, time off).



## 5.4 Examples of good practices on educating school leaders for equity and learning

### The Leadership Academy (Austria)

The Leadership Academy (LA) in Austria, established in 2004, offers a good example of leadership training programme, blended with knowledge sharing activities, which brings together, under a common leadership capacity building framework, school heads, middle management staff, members of school inspectorates and central government staff. The mix of professionals from various levels in the management of the school system that work in learning groups is considered the key to professional development and to reforming the whole school system in Austria. The programme is **not compulsory**. The concept was that it should be so interesting and challenging that everyone would think that **"this is something that I have to participate in"**.

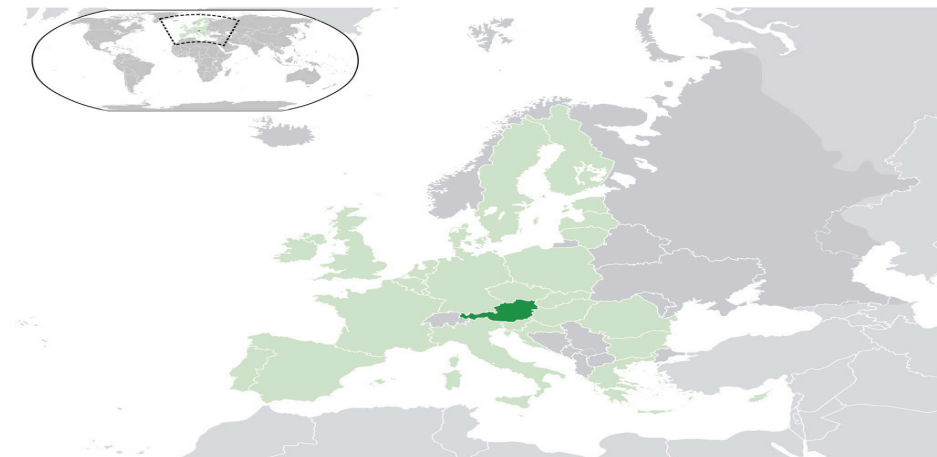
This approach has worked very well so far because of positive word of mouth. The LA operates on the basis of some ideas. The basic one is:

- **"take people out of the school system hierarchy** and put them together in a more dynamic setting where each participant leaves behind the perspective of his/her formal position in the hierarchy".

*This is considered as key to mutual understanding.* Another idea is:

- **"work in large groups**, do not just train individuals".

*This is aimed to help participants develop a sense of community that shares a common purpose: to change the whole system.*



#### The principles that govern the work of the academy are:

- Involve all types of schools and all levels of the system (connect horizontal and vertical system levels)
- Work with the whole system in large group arrangements (max. 300 leaders from all over Austria)
- Build networks rather than a new building site
- Create a mind-set for sustainable change
- Develop both the person and the system
- Create system thinkers in action (theoreticians & practitioners)
- Reflect and connect (personal professional peer support)
- Connect leadership with learning

## The National School Leadership Training Programme (Sweden)

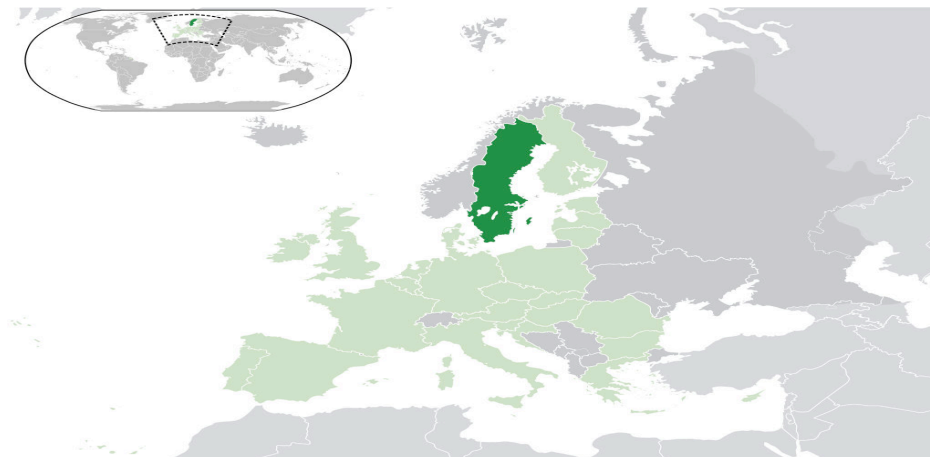
The Swedish National Agency for Education, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, commissioned six universities in 2009 to run a new National School Leadership Training Programme.

This programme is based on a set of goals-standards, corresponding to what the Agency defines as the head teacher's tasks, roles, and responsibilities, that are organised in three broad knowledge areas:

- **legislation** on schools and the role of exercising the functions of an authority,
- **management** by goals and objectives, and
- leadership

The programme **lasts 3 years** and includes 36 meeting days. The participants are expected to use 20% of their time studying.

It is **offered for free**, but the participants' organizations pay housing costs, travel, study materials etc. For head teachers appointed after March 2010 it is **compulsory to complete this programme** within four years (school heads are not required to have a teaching degree, although teaching is the most common background of head teachers). Head teachers and deputy head teachers appointed prior to 2010 are not required completing it but they can also enrol.



➡ New cohorts enter the programme twice annually; in May 2013 about 5.700 principals and deputy principals were enrolled and of these about 1.900 had successfully completed the programme. This is approximately **60% of all 8.000 principals and deputy principals** in schools in Sweden.

## 5.5 Building a Competency Framework

“ A Competency Framework on school leadership is a model that broadly defines the **accepted or excellent levels of performance of school leaders.** ”

In many education systems in Europe, although the duties, responsibilities and tasks of school leaders are usually stipulated in official documents, one can find only scarce references to the competencies that school leaders should acquire in order to have a positive impact on the quality of education. Yet, the development of a **professional competency framework for school leaders can have many beneficial uses.** It can:

- ✓ Help school leaders reflect on their everyday practice and **identify areas for further improvement.**
- ✓ Orient current and aspiring school leaders to **professional development** activities.
- ✓ Contribute to the establishment of shared understanding regarding **what it means and what it takes to be an excellent school leader** between policy makers, school leaders, teachers, parents, students and the society at large.
- ✓ Provide the ground for the development of **professional standards** for school leaders.
- ✓ Guide **curriculum development** and **accreditation** of school leadership programmes/activities.
- ✓ Support the development of **recruitment criteria** and **evaluation frameworks** for school leaders' appraisal.
- ✓ Promote the coherence and comprehensiveness of school leadership policy.

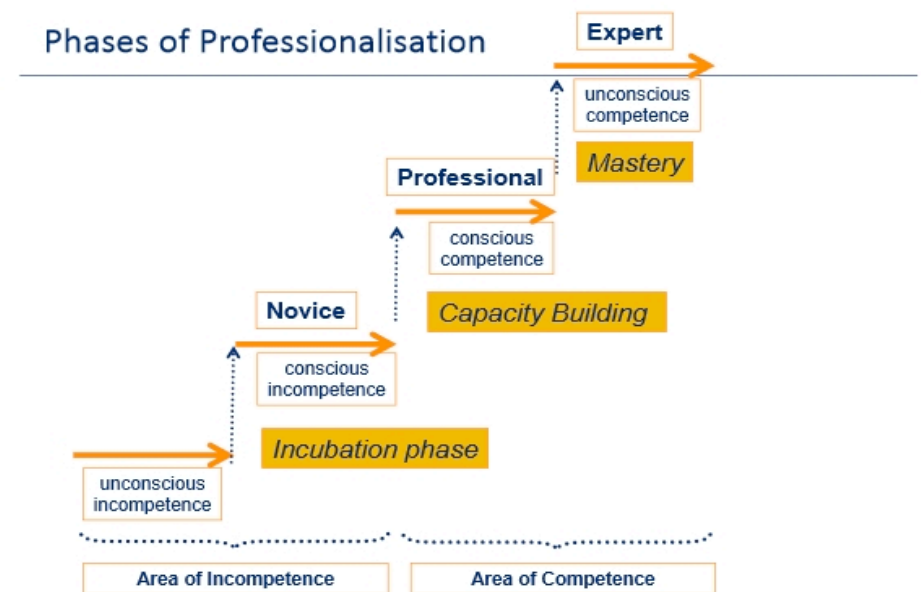


Figure 5.A: Phases of Professionalisation

## The Central Five: The Building Blocks of a Competency Framework



### Leading and managing teaching for equity and learning

#### *Key descriptors*

- School leaders ensure that teaching lead to the **improvement of learning achievement**.
- School leaders establish a **culture of feedback and evaluation** with a view to improvement.
- School leaders ensure that curricular activities meet the **demands of all learners**.
- School leaders critically engage teachers with **research** to improve their teaching.
- School leaders work towards achieving an **inclusive learning environment**.

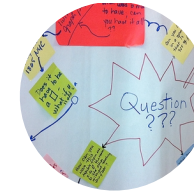
➡ The core purpose of schooling is **learning for all**. The role of the headteacher is to create a **supportive learning environment** and to ensure that the resources of the school are directed to that purpose.



### Leading and managing change for equity and learning

#### *Key descriptors*

- School leaders communicate the **school's vision** which is based on **shared values** and aiming at improving current practice for equity and learning.
- School leaders pursue a **strategic approach** in their daily activities by offering manageable steps to everybody to fulfil the school's goals.
- School leaders **respond flexibly to the challenges** involved in the process of change.
- School leaders create an environment which is open to change and establish **constructive relationships** with the actors involved.
- School leaders **share their leadership** with other staff and build **trust** in their own and others' capabilities.



### Leading and managing self for equity and learning

#### *Key descriptors*

- **Self-reflection and self-evaluation:** School leaders critically reflect upon their personality, behaviour and actions, and (when necessary) revise their decisions.
- **Interpersonal development:** School leaders continuously improve their interpersonal strengths and seek to overcome weaknesses.
- **Professional-leadership and managerial development:** School leaders keep up-to-date professional knowledge and strengths to be able to set up and reach the vision and goals of the school.
- **Ethical and moral development:** School leaders recognize moral and ethical stances in relation to education, adopt professional ethics and accept responsibility.
- **Effective communication and commitment:** School leaders communicate effectively and show their deep commitment to the education and development of students, teachers and themselves.



## Leading and managing others for equity and learning

### *Key descriptors*

- **Inspirational leadership:** School leaders inspire, motivate and encourage school staff and students and promote their positive approach to challenges in education.
- **Team-building and distributed leadership:** School leaders create, coordinate and participate on effective team working based on various form of shared/distributed leadership.
- **Professional development:** School leaders ensure professional development of people based on recognition of needs and requirements of the staff, school and stakeholders.
- **Communication and shared decision making:** School leaders make decisions, solve problems and manage conflicts (recognizing and valuing others' considerations and different social and cultural viewpoints).
- **School climate and moral aspects:** School leaders develop a positive climate and culture supportive of knowledge-sharing and reaching common goals keeping moral and ethical stances in leading others.



## Leading and managing the institution for equity and learning

### *Key descriptors*

- School leaders manage equitably and effectively the school's resources in compliance with legal requirements.
- School leaders **enhance the school's public image** emphasizing its efforts to promote equity and learning.
- School leaders ensure effective time management.
- School leaders **manage processes in a transparent way**, making sure they meet regulations and guidelines.
- School leaders engage internal and external partners without exclusions.

➔ The headteacher needs to ensure the establishment of agreed values within the school. Establishing the school's vision, developing a strategy for its implementation and clarifying the mission are key components of the role and function of the headteacher.

## 5.6 Recruitment and career of quality school leaders

Reform policies on how school leaders are recruited and selected and on the career paths available to them are critical to school leadership capacity building. The **policy challenge** is to design and support **innovative, transparent mechanisms for recruiting and selecting school leaders**, design **attractive career development opportunities**, and establish **replacement procedures that ensure a balance between school continuity and change**.

 **Policy planning should focus on ensuring that:**



### **Prioritizing competencies**

Specialized leadership training as well as relevant skills and competences outweigh other criteria in the recruitment of school leaders.



### **Transparency and impartiality**

There are established transparent and impartial procedures in the selection of school leaders.



### **Flexible career paths**

School leaders' career paths become more mobile, allowing principals to move between schools as well as between leadership and teaching and other related careers.

“ The selection, recruitment, preparation and retention of the most competent staff for leadership positions in education institutions, and the provision of favourable conditions for their professional development, are accordingly of crucial importance and require careful attention by decision makers. ”

- [Council conclusions on effective leadership in education, Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting, Brussels, 25-26 November, 2013](#)



## Succession planning

The procedures for the replacement of school leaders include succession planning (pro-actively encouraging other staff - particularly within the same school- to develop leadership skills), as well as a process of consultation with school stakeholders as to strike a balance between continuity and change in relation to the existing school culture and mission.



... there are times when we see an almost complete change of a generation of school leaders. That is why for many countries the question of finding and recruiting the right people in larger numbers comes before selection or succession. **I believe it is a task of policy makers to use focused measures to make sure that those most suitable are supported in becoming school leaders.**

It has to become a common task of experienced school leaders, school inspectors and policy-makers to encourage teachers and support them with the right programmes so that they can tackle the challenges of the 21st century. Assessments and coaching can play a key role in that.

- Bernd Jankofsky,  
Head of Department School and Staff Development,  
State Institute for School and Media Berlin-  
Brandenburg (LISUM)



## Incentives

Attracting highly qualified and motivated individuals to become school leaders require the establishment of a comprehensive incentives framework (including direct monetary incentives, career advancement/retaining incentives, time compensation etc).

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Supporting Document 2: Beyond the reach of leading: exploring the realm of leadership and learning:  
[http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting\\_documents/doc2.pdf](http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting_documents/doc2.pdf)



Supporting Document 3: Educating school leaders for equity and learning: a review of the state of affairs in 15 EU countries:  
[http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting\\_documents/doc3.pdf](http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting_documents/doc3.pdf)



# Teacher Leadership Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 6.1 Introducing the toolset

The toolset has been designed to support the development of teacher leadership in **school cultures with a flat hierarchy** which are undergoing transformation, oriented to equity and learning as the theory of action driving their work with all students. Such deep cultural change requires schools to become **learning organizations**, in which all professionals see themselves as learners and in which highly effective professionals are recognized and leveraged for improving school quality.

“Teacher leaders are highly effective **teachers who accept responsibility beyond classroom instruction** for a task or function which contributes to quality development at their school. These teachers act as leading professionals, drawing upon external and experiential knowledge **to continually improve their practice** with a focus on equity and learning. They are sources of inspiration for their colleagues and ambassadors for their schools.

By taking on a teacher leadership role, **teachers “break ranks” and become visible to colleagues as leaders**. Where teacher leadership is new, “breaking ranks” in the flat hierarchy typically found in school cultures commonly results in irritation, on a spectrum from speaking up and attracting attention to designed intervention and resistance. ”

### What is teacher leadership?

Teacher leadership is visible in a teacher’s informal and formal role-taking and role-making. Teachers who act informally or formally as teacher leaders take on four roles:

- ✓ **as teachers** they are oriented consistently to the achievement of their students,
- ✓ **as professionals** they continually develop their own practice in relation to current external and experiential knowledge with a focus on effectiveness,
- ✓ **as role models** they inspire colleagues and have a positive influence on others' development, and
- ✓ **as ambassadors** they communicate the vision and goals of their school internally and externally.

Teacher Leadership is a central strategy in Austria’s lower secondary school reform. Among others, the new role of “Lerndesigner” positions teachers in each school as teacher leaders with specific expertise in teaching and learning related to the new mandate and the reform goals of equity and excellence.

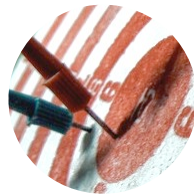
## → Purpose of the toolset, its focus and main uses

- ✓ The purpose of the toolset is to help school developers, school leaders and practitioners develop and implement structures, routines, tools and roles that support the development of learning schools.
- ✓ The specific focus of this toolset is the **development of teacher leadership** as a key strategy for school quality, measured by advances in equity and learning.
- ✓ The toolset is designed on the basis of the following questions:



### Who is the toolkit for?

- Those involved in **school development** who are responsible for guiding school quality development
- Those **leading change in schools**, including regional inspectorates, school principals and teacher leaders



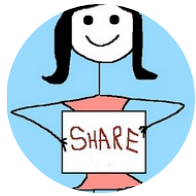
### What is the toolkit for?

- To help learn about **teacher leadership as a school development strategy** oriented to equity and learning as the theory of action driving practice
- To stimulate reflection leading to practical ideas for supporting and **developing teacher leadership in schools**, in ways relevant to your context



### What's in it?

- An explanation of **what teacher leadership is and how it can foster schools as learning organisations**
- Ideas on how distributed leadership can be **implemented in schools**, how teacher leaders can be **supported** and how school quality evaluation tools can be used to **foster shared leadership**



**To share knowledge and expertise about:**

- Teacher leadership **for equity and learning**
- How teacher leadership can support **shared leadership and student learning** in schools
- How you might support the **development of teacher leadership** in a school, a number of schools or across a school system



**To use it as a resource about:**

- Your **understandings** of teacher leadership
- Practical **changes you can make** to support the development of teacher leadership in a school, a number of schools or across a school system



**To stimulate ideas on:**

- How to **energize teacher leadership in your school**
- How to **deal with deal with resistance to change**

## 6.2 Questions for policy reflection

The toolset has been designed to support the development of teacher leadership in **school cultures with a flat hierarchy** which are undergoing transformation, oriented to equity and learning as the theory of action driving their work with all students. Such deep cultural change requires schools to become **learning organizations**, in which all professionals see themselves as learners and in which highly effective professionals are recognized and leveraged for improving school quality.

### ➔ Questions for policy-makers



#### Empowering teachers

How can schools be encouraged to **identify and empower teacher leaders as change agents** for equity and learning?



#### Supporting teachers

What kind of support, such as **professional development, cooperation, networking** do teacher leaders need to be successful in fostering equity and learning within the social architecture of their schools?



#### Structures and tools

What structures and tools encourage school leaders to share leadership with teacher leaders to establish a **participative school culture** and to focus meaningfully on equity and learning?



## 6.3 Tool #1: Identifying the sleeping giants of teacher leadership

Tool #1 provides a stimulus for discussion around the **existing school structures** and **social architectures** that may support or hinder the development of teacher leadership.

“The intention of Tool #1 is to facilitate **genuine dialogue** and **systematic analysis** on teacher leadership in schools.”

There are many ways in which Tool #1 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #1 for **analysing school structures and functions on the policy level and identifying needs for policy development to foster teacher leadership.**

### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #1 to facilitate discussion with colleagues in their school about the existing **social architecture** and to **identify colleagues who act as teacher leaders** even if they currently are not seen as such.

## **Reflect on the following questions**

Think of a school you know and discuss on what are the formal structures and functions on the basis of which teacher activities are performed and what may be the social architecture around which change and resistance to change is dynamically constructed.

**What official functions exist at our school? Who has these functions?**

**Which of these functions is connected to special qualifications?**

**Which functions are provided with compensation and in what form (lesson-free work time, additional payments, etc.)?**

**Which of these functions are filled by professionals acting as teacher leaders?**

**Are there others at our school who act as teacher leaders (i.e. as excellent teachers, professionals, role models and ambassadors)? Who are they? What do they do?**

## 6.4 Tool #2: The three energies

The 3 Energies is a potential analysis, i.e. a systematic, open and future-oriented investigation of available human resources, with the goal of **discovering hidden potential in an organization**. The goal is to discover unused potential in one's school and discover strategies for how this potential can be activated by focussing on three energies that are key to success in schools: **Professionalism, Vision, and Relationships**.

There are many ways in which Tool #2 may be used. Here are two suggestions:



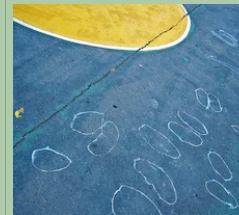
Figure 6.A: The 3 energies

### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #2 for **guiding policy decisions related to school autonomy, human resources and professional development**.

### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #2 to **identify unused potential in their schools**.



### Step 1: Identify the visible

Make a drawing or list of staff members at your school.

- Who has what function(s) in our school?
- Who has what roles?
- Who has particular qualifications or expertise?



### Step 2: Identify the invisible

- Who is missing?
- What are their interests?
- How do they contribute to our school?
- What makes their eyes sparkle?



### Step 3: Identify the staff members

Group the staff members into the three energies: **Professionalism, Vision and Relationships.**

- Who is (potentially) the source of each energy?
- To what degree are the three energies in balance?



### Step 4: Synthesise and think forward

- What have we discovered about our staff?
- How can we integrate those whose potential is not yet available to our school?
- What needs to be done to balance the three energies?

## 6.5 Tool #3: Framing roles

Teacher leaders need to be skilled in switching contexts and roles when they communicate with others. One way to foster awareness of contexts and roles is to regularly ask the question, “**What hat am I wearing right now?**” or “**Am I working in the system right now or am I working on it?**” This last question helps to frame the role.

“ School leaders (principals and teacher leaders) consciously suspend past experiences, constructs, personal perceptions and pre-judgements to work systematically in an inquiry mode. The principle underlying the inquiry is: Each of us is important and has an important contribution to make in our school. ”

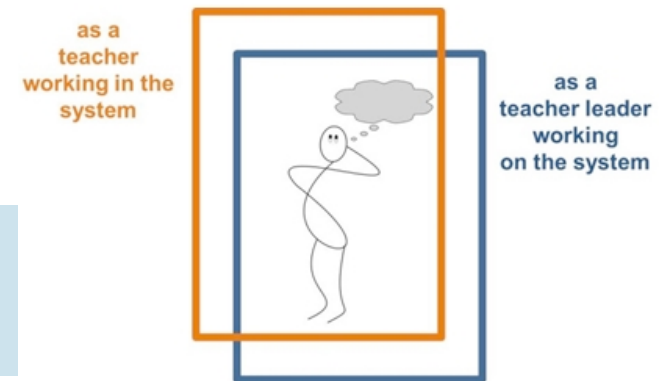


Figure 6.B: Framing roles

There are many ways in which Tool #3 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #3 to **clarify policy regarding teacher leader functions.**

### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #3 to **facilitate discussion with colleagues about the role of teacher leaders.**

## For teacher leaders



### Step 1: How does it feel when...

Present the frames and discuss the differences with others. How does it feel when:

- I am working as a teacher *in* the system?
- I am working *on* the system as a teacher leader?



### Step 2: How do the situations differ? Share with others...

- Identify three situations in which it is clear that you are working *in* the system.
- Identify three situations in which it is clear that you are working *on* the system as a teacher leader.



### Step 3: How clear is your role? Share with others...

- Are there situations in which the role is not always clear?
- What strategies do you have to clarify your role in those situations?

## For collegial dialogue



### Step 1: How does it feel when...

Present the frames and discuss the differences with others. How does it feel when:

- The teacher leader is working as a teacher *in* the system?
- The teacher leader is working *on* the system as a teacher leader?



### Step 2: How do the situations differ? Share with others...

- Identify three situations in which it is clear that the teacher leader is working *in* the system.
- Identify three situations in which it is clear that the teacher leader is working *on* the system as a teacher leader.



### Step 3: How clear is teacher leader's role? Share with others...

- Are there situations in which the teacher leader's role is not always clear?
- What strategies do you have to clarify the teacher leader's role in those situations?

## 6.6 Tool #4: Spectrum of irritation

Schools typically have flat hierarchies. **When a colleague breaks ranks and takes on the role of teacher leader, he or she has already caused some irritation.** As a result, it is essential that teacher leaders are aware of their impact on others and are supported by the school leadership, particularly when teacher leadership and shared leadership are just beginning to change a school's culture. It can be helpful for teacher leaders to analyse their activities and behaviours along a "spectrum of irritation".



There are many ways in which Tool #4 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #4 to **clarify policy regarding teacher leader functions.**

### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #4 to **facilitate discussion with colleagues about the role of teacher leaders.**



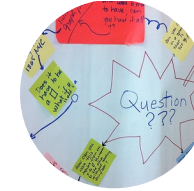
### Step 1

- List activities you plan in the near future in your role as a teacher leader.



### Step 2

- Estimate the level of irritation each activity might cause and place it on the spectrum of irritation, from drawing attention to causing resistance.



### Step 3

- Discuss your analysis with other teacher and/or school leaders.
- How can the activity be most effectively initiated?
  - If an activity will inevitably lead to resistance, what can be done to manage the situation?



## 6.7 Tool #5: My P-Group

“My P-Groups” is a tool for **identifying and working in a structured and focused manner with colleagues who are sources of positive energy**. P-Group work is structured as a professional learning community. It is based on the principle of self-choice as a way to support new teacher leaders in role-taking and role-making, in particular in schools where teacher leadership is just beginning to emerge and its role and function are not yet clearly defined.



There are many ways in which Tool #5 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

P-Groups

### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #5 to **clarify policy regarding teacher leader functions**.

### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #5 to **facilitate discussion with colleagues about the role of teacher leaders**.

## Steps of a P-Group activity

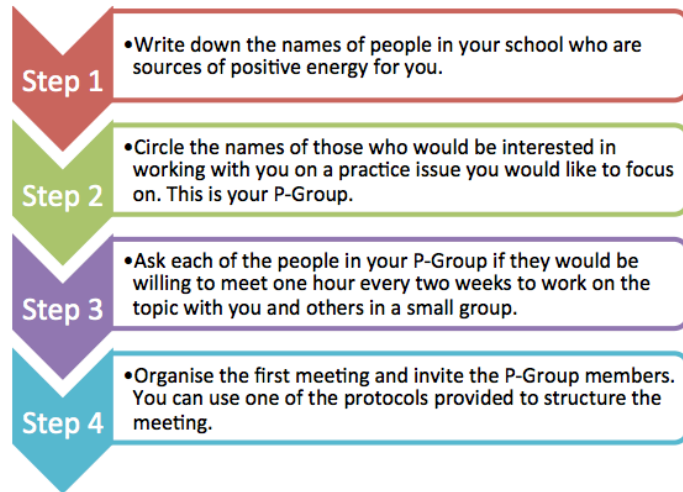


Figure 6.D: Steps of a P-Group Activity

## Suggested topics, materials and organization of a P-Group activity (60-minute session)

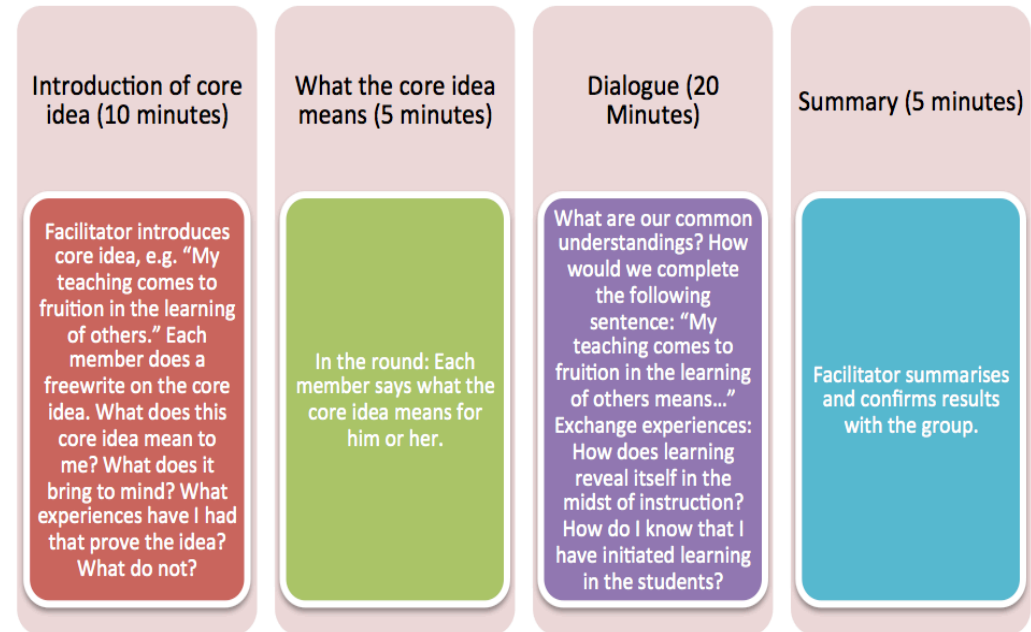
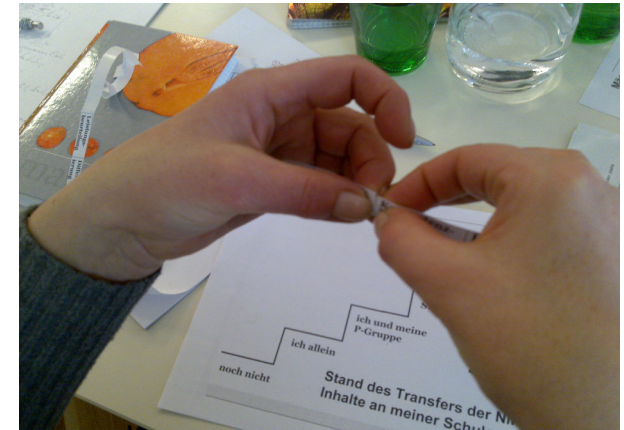


Figure 6.E: Organisation of a P-Group activity

## 6.8 Tool #6: School walkthrough

The School Walkthrough is a tool for **criteria-based school development** focused on key development areas in school improvement. Each rubric materialises and operationalises the norms, values and practices in regard to diversity, competence, backwards design, flexible differentiation, assessment and mindfulness of learning, resilience fostering school culture, as well as digital competence, team teaching and shared leadership, which is shown here as the most relevant tool for establishing teacher leadership.



There are many ways in which Tool #6 may be used. Here are two suggestions:

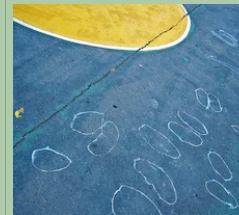
Working with school walkthrough

### For policy-makers



Policy-makers could use Tool #6 to **provide schools with orientation for school quality development.**

### For school leaders



School leaders could use Tool #6 to **facilitate discussion with colleagues about the role of teacher leaders and to assess what is working well and what can be improved in the school culture.**

## Suggested steps of a school walkthrough activity

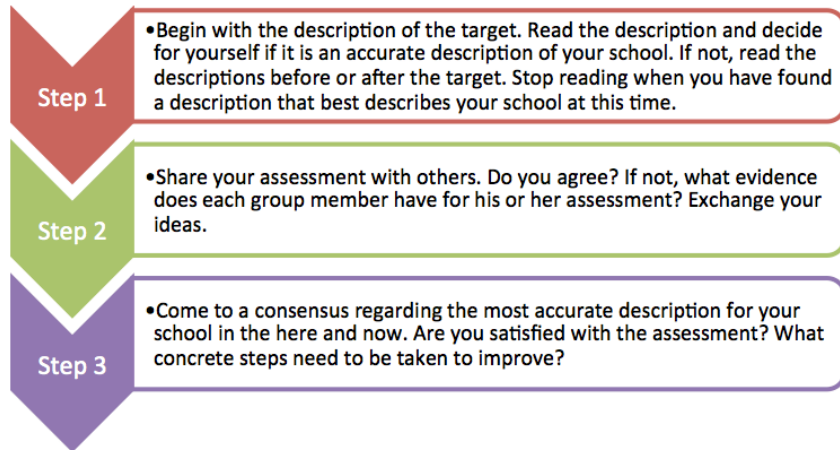


Figure 6.F: Steps of a walkthrough activity



Identifying unused potential



Exploring roles through improvisation

 **A school walkthrough activity example: Focus on shared leadership**

Table 6.F	Not yet	Beginning	Developing	Target	Innovating
<b>Clarity of roles</b>	Leadership is connected to principal's personality and/or function. There is a flat hierarchy among teaching staff; the autonomy-parity pattern is evident in the dynamics among staff.	Roles and responsibilities are assigned by the principal, whereby the criteria for decision-making regarding assignments are unclear. Role-taking and role-making are partially evident.	The principal uses teacher leadership to support essential development areas in the school. The role and responsibilities of each teacher leader is clear for all and teacher leaders are supported by the principal.	A leadership dynamic is perceptible in several areas of the school. Most staff members see their own responsibility in regard to the school's success. They understand their roles and functions. Teacher leaders drive development and quality improvement.	A leadership dynamic is present throughout the school and everyone is engaged in school development and quality. Roles and functions are assigned democratically according to transparent criteria including qualifications, strengths and skills.
<b>Communication</b>	A culture of isolation dominates in the school. Communication is limited to top-down information.	Communication occurs irregularly based on need or coincidence.	Communication is organized and regular. A variety of communication channels and structures ensure that everyone is informed. Structures and routines for making decisions are in place.	Horizontal and vertical communication occurs regularly and ensures that all staff members are engaged.	Particularly effective colleagues are recognized for their achievement and take on teacher leadership roles based on identified need.
<b>Balance</b>	The "usual suspects" carry the burden for school development within their personal sphere of activity.	Several colleagues voluntarily share responsibility for the success of the school, primarily through projects and topic-based team structures.	Teacher leaders have a circle of influence limited to their personal relationships and/or a particular circle of development-oriented colleagues.	Teacher leaders have a circle of influence encompassing all members of staff. All are involved in instructional development and exchange their experience regularly. A culture of mutual respect and recognition for individual strengths and skills is evident. All Staff members see themselves as learning professionals.	Teacher leaders are adequately compensated for their additional work. Working relations among all professionals are founded on mutual respect and recognition.



# Promoting Collaboration Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 7.1 Issues for policy reflection

In the context of European education policies and school performance, all stakeholders and mainly policy makers, need yet to respond to some sensitive issues:



### Who are the school stakeholders?

Who are the school stakeholders, what structures exist for their collaboration in each European country, and how are they performing their role?



### Leadership and social capital

What school leaders do to build their partners' social capital?



### Information needed

What kind of information on the education delivery processes do the different stakeholders need, so that they may be involved in the discussion of the schooling issues?



### Equality of access to information

What information the post-bureaucratic school has to provide to guarantee equality of access in “readable” form to different stakeholders?



### Social justice issues

Are social justice issues taken into account in the analysis of teaching provision and learning quality?

## 7.2 Stakeholders or partnership?

Conceptually, this question falls both within the problematic of school autonomy and within stakeholders' capacity to support positive relationships through different networks and to fully participate in school improvement policies.

### Stakeholders in education

In everyday language stakeholder is "... a person or company that is involved in a particular organization, project, system, etc. especially because they have invested money in it. Ex: the government said it wants to create a stakeholder economy in which all members of society feel that they have an interest in its success". (*Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary. New 8th edition*).

“Stakeholders” in education, as defined by the “Great School Partnership” in the *Glossary of Education Reform*, "is anyone who is involved in the welfare and success of a school and its students, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, community members, school board members, city councillors and state representatives." It is a concept that **considers as stakeholder everyone who has something 'at stake' in the education process**. That definition stresses the word "involvement" which needs to be further specified. Two other two words "welfare" and "success", are quite problematic and would need too a definition, considering the welfare state failures and the controversial discourses about school success, particularly when these are exclusively reduced to student results in standardized tests.

In the context of the schools' organization and structuring for promoting learning, the concept of "**Stakeholders**", or more appropriately, "**Partners**" (the ones that share the responsibility for the education process) involves the **teachers, the students, the parents, the policy makers, the school administration authorities** (local, regional and state/national), the **teacher training agencies**, and **academics/researchers** within their role to analyse, interpret and unveil the meanings of undertaken actions.

In the contemporary societies **students** have gained relevance as partners, from the moment they were given voice and empowered, their participation increased and expanded to the most different areas. The same could be said concerning **media as constructors of perceptions and public image**, which schools usually forget to use for their own benefit to inform the wider public on their needs and achievements. Furthermore, the **citizens** as taxpayers, within their right to information, and interest in the outcomes of school education, should also be considered as stakeholders.

Nevertheless, in a school leadership context where school autonomy is an axiom, school leaders have to involve the above listed groups into leadership activities in different fields, depth and forms. These may require **family/school cooperation** (meaning students and parents, and sometimes even grandparents or other individuals undertaking guardian responsibilities), **local community/school cooperation**, **teachers-staff-administration/school cooperation**, **city council and government/school cooperation** and so on. Considering all these fields of cooperation, the school leaders are faced with different kinds of challenges. Some of them could be addressed by changing the school culture, some by training and some by making special arrangements.

Among all the above fields of potential cooperation, the cooperation between families, teaching staff and students is often the most critical. During the last decades changes in the families' structure and in social relationships, as well as the massive expansion of schooling in response to the demand for increased opportunities for individual fulfilment and quality of life, have increased the intervention capacity of citizens in the public arena of school education. More specifically, **families have increased influence on the school life**, in what concerns the school management and the services provided by schools. As a consequence, some tension was introduced either by schools questioning the families' capacity to intervene in the schooling processes, or by families questioning the quality of the education services. From this perspective, this field of cooperation can be proved problematic in certain school contexts, though as Camacho (2013) indicates, research contributions have highlighted the **importance of a concerted school/ family interaction to improve the education services and to foster learning**.

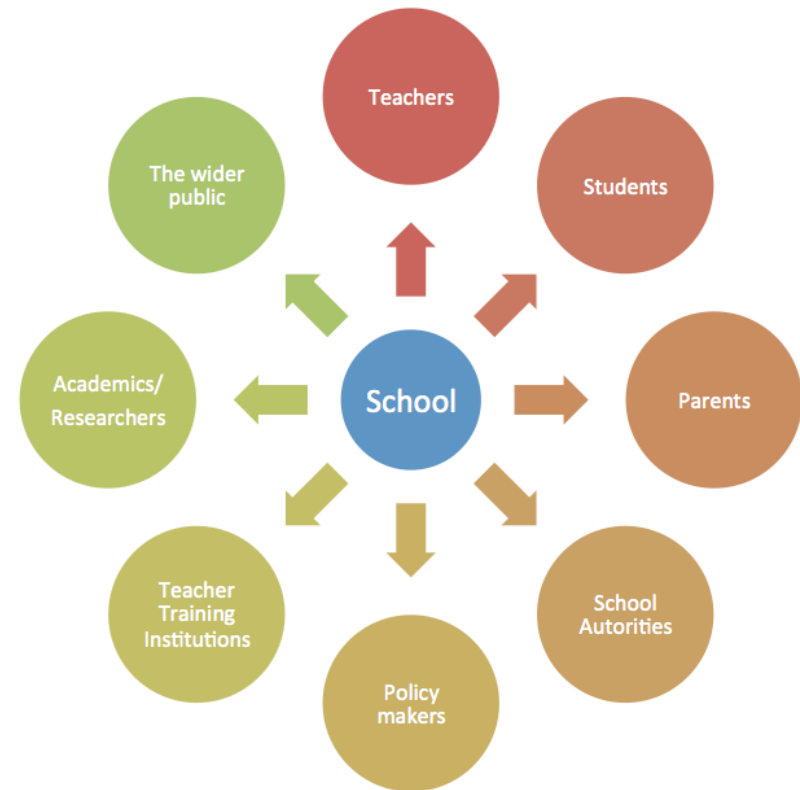


Figure 7.A: Main school stakeholders

### 7.3 School/family cooperation

Either based or not upon the legal basis as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, the fact is that the official discourse introduced references to the importance of school/family cooperation in students' achievement, and paved the way for recognizing the rights of families to systematically influence and participate in schools' policy making, this way gaining the status of partners: the right to have a say in the main decisions affecting school life, on assuming rights and responsibilities to cooperate in the building up of better and more effective schooling for all, to press for improved learning and achievement, as Figure 7.B shows, and within their margins of autonomy, for better self-regulated schools.

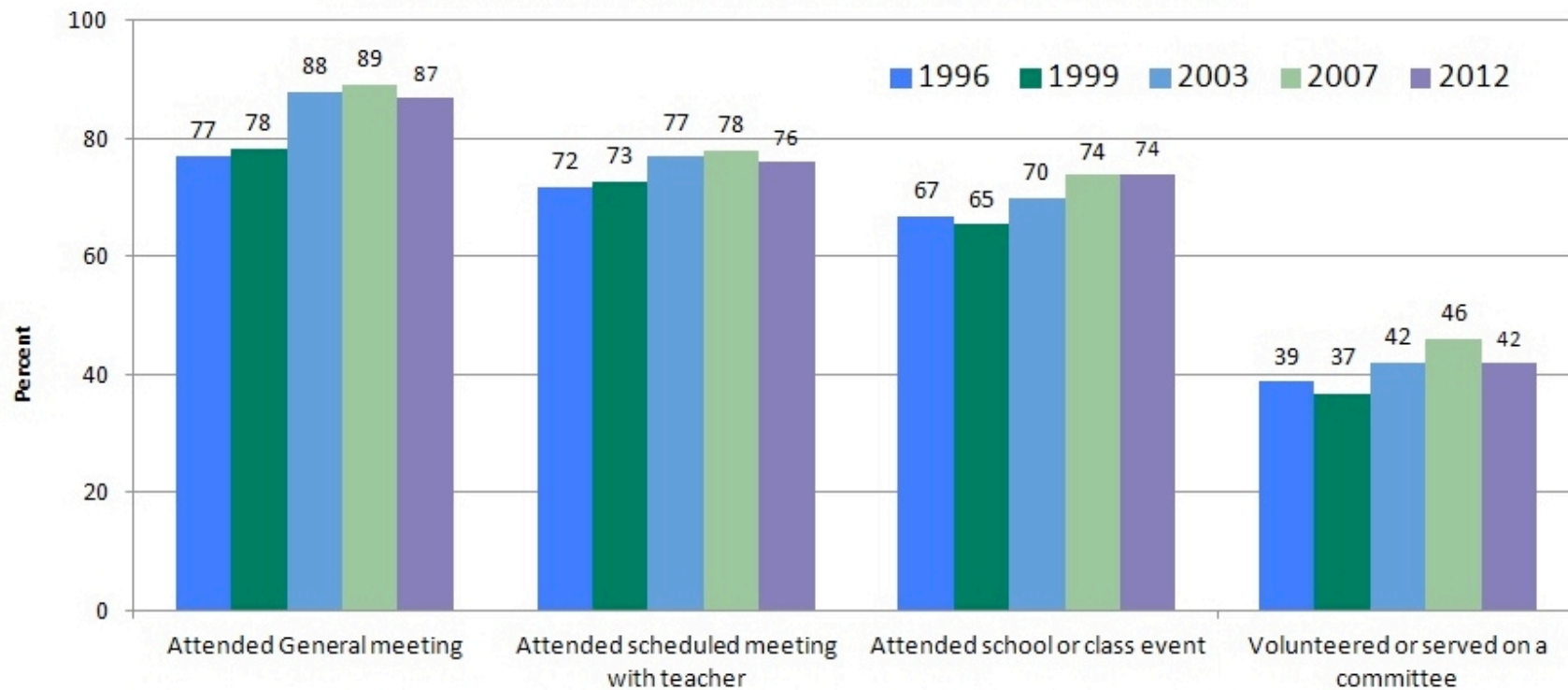


Figure 7.B: Trends in the Percentage of Students whose Parents Reported Involvement in their Child's School: Selected Years

Source: <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=parental-involvement-in-schools>

Too many times school partners'/stakeholders' involvement in the education service at local level stems on the belief that very often partners, namely parents, are privileged school service consumers. However, this doesn't mean that they are being involved in the construction of the global educational process, which presupposes participation in the discussion of learning results and in the processes preceding decision making, shared responsibility, and active citizenship. It must not be ignored that a trend exists, involving school heads, politicians and other citizens for whom **parents are neither stakeholders nor partners, but “clients”** and therefore they shouldn't be involved in school governance, as if school heads just have to guess their wishes regarding their children schooling effects and fulfil them ( *ESHA, 2014 Conference, Round table 4* ).

On the other hand, numerous studies have shown that **when parents are involved by being given responsibility for a certain area, they will be involved and their involvement will not be individualistic, for their own children only**. There is a considerable amount of experiences throughout Europe, some of them consolidated, showing the advantages of families being involved in school life as real partners. Even if not following Epstein et al (1997) typology of parental involvement, Deforges and Abouchaar (2003) on their review highlight how "spontaneous parental involvement" do "have an impact pupils achievement and adjustment in schools", regardless of social class and ethnicity, in different countries, namely in continental Europe, Scandinavia and the UK. Besides reviews, a considerable number of projects are nowadays addressing this issue, e.g. the *European Research Network About Parents in Education* (ERNAPE) and Nóra Ritók's work “Not only children need to be taught”, in the *Real Pearl Foundation*.

On the other hand, it is also true that many families are concerned essentially with the needs and well being of their own children at school, but usually do not take part in the construction and in the debate of the school educational project, neither in the education model discussion, whenever it takes place. The question is whether there is a willingness on the side of the school to involve them and whether the school approaches them in the right way. **Teachers often only involve parents in the individual schooling processes of their children mainly to inform them or to complain about their behaviour or learning difficulties**, but let them alone to solve the problems which they themselves, as professionals, are often unable to solve: to respond to individual difficulties, to promote better learning and equity in achievement.

Moreover, the weaker the parents' capacity in initiating an intelligent dialogue for intervention and to **understand the school discourse**, the weaker their children's achievement, as international testing has put in evidence. The above mentioned good practices and others show that if parents are addressed well and approached openly, they will engage in school education, often as part of their own lifelong learning (see, for example, *Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships* and *National Parents Council Primary*).

## → The participation of partners in Portuguese schools

Sometimes, the existing structures for parents' intervention don't allow, an effective participation, according to their roles and expectations. In Portuguese schools, as in other countries, a structure exists for the participation of partners in school life, "the school governing board", (Conselho Geral/General Board) gathering representatives of parents together with the representatives of teachers, other school staff, students, local authorities with education policy responsibilities, as well as other social and economic and cultural partners, all of them elected by their peers. The number of these members foresees the **need to make coalitions** in order to get the majority of votes in the decision processes. To perceive the relevance of this Board, it should be added that the respective mission covers the selection of the school head, the school educational project approval, and other school normative tools, as well as both the annual budget and the accounts report. **To what extent this example shows that training the parents for school board participation, selection and accountability towards the parental community of the school is necessary?**

The truth is that in the analyses of the Portuguese external evaluation reports Veloso et al. (2013) refer to **the concern of schools in involving local communities in the school life**, highlighting the involvement of parents in school life as having a long tradition and constituting an important concern in public schools. Data show that parents participate in school life in response to schools' initiatives to integrate them in school life, as members of different boards and as target groups for information sessions on how to follow their children's path and progress.

The patterns of parents' participation vary from region to region, depending on the school dynamics, which the authors categorize in three groups: in **traditional schools**, parents' participation is clearly more reduced than in **innovative schools**, where school leaders, namely the ones responsible for the class work coordination and tutorship, truly take the lead, follow the educational path of every student under their coordination, and together with class teachers, involve parents in the discussion of individual achievement and class performance, personalizing and valuing efforts and motivation, demonstrating a great involvement in their leadership role. In a different group, which the authors call the **"diffuse schools"**, parents' participation in the school boards, is highly valued, according to the legal dispositions, and in school life in general.



## 7.4 Participation and information issues

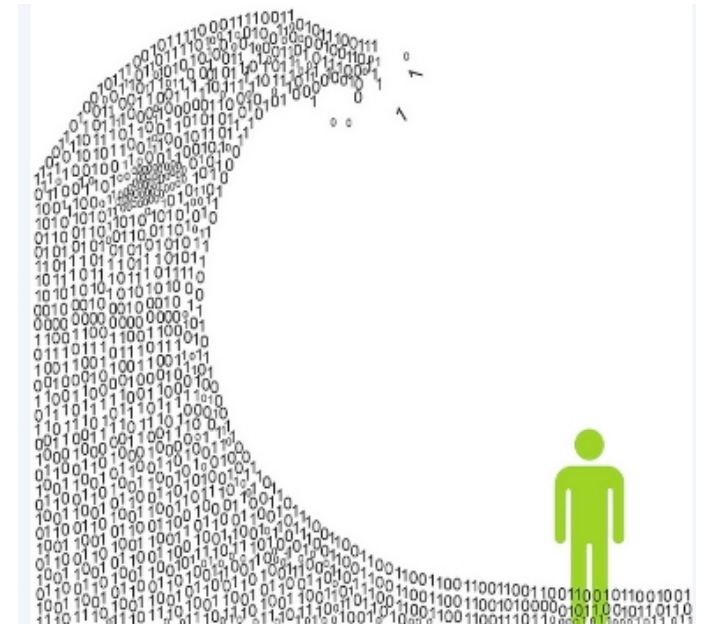
In the networked society, as conceived in the neo-liberal policies, the accessibility to information and knowledge became central factors to understand and manage the flow of data, the comparisons, the targets and the standards, the competition, the choices to be made, the subtleties of comparisons and accountability procedures. Simultaneously, **the accessibility to information and knowledge turned into central factors of exclusion.**

Figures and indicators turned into symbols of objectivity and credibility, “and provided opportunities for simplification of the problems of endless competing interpretations in order to provide a basis for action” (Grek et al., 2013, in Ozga, 2014, p.22). According to Carvalho (in Ozga, 2014, p.23), “this simplification removes the need for attention to context” “and its appearance of validity” reinforces comparisons in the government of education. “Comparison frames knowledge-governing relations through establishing three key principles

- ➔ that regular and systematic assessments are truthful practices for improvement of educational systems;
- ➔ that such improvement has to be analyzed in relation to the pace of change of other countries;
- ➔ that international comparison of student performances develops the quality of national education systems, while capturing educational complexity and diversity”.

Comparative data became a landmark in the education systems' evaluation and the essential criteria for schools' accountability, **as if the “magic” of the figures could be enough to turn numbers into evidences, and the evidences into truth**, to which media give a huge contribution and have a great responsibility. Therefore, the numbers play a fundamental role in the discourse of inspectors and administrators, besides parents and the general public, when comparing the students' results in standardized tests, and classifying a school's improvement as “above/below the expected value”, based on the school's results in national exams. The school administrators' discourse becomes familiar to the school agents, but less and less accessible to external partners.

It must be underlined the inspectorates' effort that has been made towards a common written discourse, more descriptive than judgemental, following common criteria and methodology. However it seems that the accountability practices have contributed for the introduction of an academic jargon that may allow comparisons at a surface level, though very often the complexity of the discourse may reduce the real meaning of data describing students' learning and the extent of schools' improvement. The technicalities of the method are excluding an effective participation of stakeholders and partners in the analysis of a **codified discourse, which needs to be made readable and meaningful to all**, including the school professionals.



## 7.5 Stakeholders and accountability

Current accountability procedures in European schools follow different formats according to national administration traditions and rules. However, it should be underlined a European effort to **harmonize accountability criteria and procedures**, through the influence of the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), on national policies and autonomy.

Autonomy is to be viewed as a social and a political construction, and therefore new tools for public action are to be constructed. In the post-bureaucratic society, **new models of public regulation emerge**, creating different fields for participation and responsibility, leaving behind models of strict “command and control” and looking for a new political relationship, based on **shared information and negotiation**. In this context the different school stakeholders have a specific role not just as school knowledge (information) consumers, but also, while partners, as **users of school information and co-producers of the necessary feedback** to consolidate the quality of schooling. Without a meaningful feedback, participation will be reduced and will exclude some partners and stakeholders, and in parallel will exclude a number of students.

**In the perspective of a shared accountability and distributed responsibility, the tools supporting the evaluation procedures have to guarantee the stakeholders ownership of the school improvement processes and distributed leadership.**

It must be recognized that **to overcome the shortage of school leaders' training opportunities** in some contexts, and the growing complexity of educational organizations and school management, **groups of school heads with similar professional interests and common perspectives, create small informal networks** to share experiences and know-how on the daily routines of school organization, on the interpretation of norms and policy implementation, to gain confidence and to establish professional communities of solidarity and resistance to internal conflicts, to the administration pressures, safeguarding their own school project identity, and their autonomy on the respect for accountability rules. Therefore, even if information is a paramount aspect impacting in the possibility of collaboration between school partners, either allowing or preventing its success, there are other, most likely more, relevant aspects such as relationships, confidence and trust.



“ On recovering democracy in the relationships with their partners and stakeholders, **schools are deemed to be accountable, as a condition to be trustful**. Therefore, educational work, students' achievement and outcomes, need to be defined and scrutinized by the internal and external communities together. ”



## 7.6 Stakeholders improving schools' social capital

### Informal networking and study groups

Informal networking is observed in dynamic and innovative schools. Beyond formal teachers' meetings, conducted by the heads of curricular departments to plan and discuss the curriculum management and related teaching and learning issues, small informal groups of teachers organize themselves in study groups, to learn from each other, to share materials and experiences, to overcome difficulties, to discuss and find solutions to their classroom challenges, focusing on learning issues, behaviour, or just to relax and enjoy confidence, trust and learning.

### The School of Parents

These initiatives have inspired some principals to organize together with parents' associations, a set of discussion sessions specifically for parents, led by different experts in psychology, health and parenthood, or family issues, in a format they called "**School of Parents**". The so-called "School of Parents" became a true school community organization gathering several parents living in the local community, as well as teachers and other staff which regularly attend to the debate sessions. The "School of Parents" turned into a space for information and discussion of common problems in the education of children, for sharing concerns and learning on how to follow and help their children in their studies. The Parents' Associations showed to be an excellent partner in the organization of this initiative, in promoting meaningful discussions and enabling parents for further interventions in school life (Oliveira, 2013).

The cases presented above constitute examples of how leaders in different ways influence their peers may contribute to **promote professional development** and improve teachers' quality through mutual support, on creating professional networks and on "**creating value from relationships**" (Minckler, 2014, p.658). It means that teachers can create **social networks (even including parents) to mobilize knowledge resources and to expand their "social capital"** to be defined as "the resources available to and used by a teacher by virtue of membership of social networks, to produce outcomes that are beneficial to the teacher, her/his students and ultimately to the school community as a whole" (Minckler, 2011; in Minckler, 2014, p.658). According to this author, "**the key to understanding social capital is in recognizing that relationships have value**, and that this value may be considered a form of capital. Relationships have value to the individual when his or her association accomplish two major goals:

- ➔ help the individual accomplish things he or she cannot do alone (task or instrumental outcomes); and
- ➔ satisfy the individual's belonging needs (an expressive outcome).

To accomplish the task or instrumental outcomes, participants in the relationship share or exchange both tangible (teaching materials) and intangible resources (information)" (Minckler, 2014, p.658).

## 7.7 Students as school stakeholders

Involving students, giving them a voice within school and allowing them participate in decision making, can critically contribute to the enhancement of the social capital of schools. Participation is an important learning experience and preparation for active and responsible citizenship, as far as John Dewey had demonstrated. In line with Dewey came Waldorf Schools, Freinet, Summerhill, schools based on Korczak's principles, etc. The more recent competency-based educational paradigm **places the student in the centre of the teaching-learning process**, stressing the fact that he/she is the subject of learning and not the recipient, so he/she must be active, learning by experience, by doing, by conviviality and sharing, as well as by being engaged in the design of school life from curriculum to timetables.

Many voices disagree, arguing that students are not mature enough. However, plenty of examples show otherwise, such as *Escola da Ponte* in Portugal, where the development of the curricula is undertaken in learning workshops, attended voluntarily by **students that learn how to self-regulate their learning process**, supervised by **teachers trained in active methodologies**. **The school is mainly governed by the weekly assembly organized and totally run by students** – a successful experience for over the past 30 years.

Plenty of other examples, from kindergarten to college across the world, are disseminated in UNICEF's *Child and youth participation resource guide*, such as the *School Councils*, a portal offering resources on establishing and running school councils, and Fletcher's *Meaningful Student Involvement Resource Guide* and *Meaningful Student Involvement: An Idea Guide*.

Even if students' participation is restricted to certain age groups in some countries such as Greece and missing totally in many others (in spite of the legal basis offered by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), the fact is that **good practices, showing the advantages of student participation from the earliest possible age can neither be neglected nor devalued**.

“ To what extent opposing and underestimating students' participation in school reinforces the reproductive function of the school and prevents social justice from being enacted in everyday school life? ”

## 7.8 Fostering stakeholders' collaboration

In Portugal **schools' autonomy assumes frequently the format of a contract**, being programmed and “negotiated” within the framework of public administration, following a distributed model of power and responsibilities, aiming at creating a new relationship and political legitimacy, on **shortening the distance between the decision makers and field actors**, or between “governed and governors” on recovering democracy and distributing responsibilities for the quality of the services to be delivered to all school users. Therefore, **the identification, definition and justification of a problem or issue related to stakeholders' collaboration needs to be addressed as policy making at school level**, aiming to enable school leaders to tackle challenges of equity and learning in their schools.

Portuguese authors (Nóvoa, 2007; Torres, 2011) have questioned the schools' capacity and ability to use their margins of autonomy, namely within countries following a strong tradition of political centralism, which creates a disposition to narrow or to expand their margins of autonomy, depending on their leaders' understanding of the political discourse, on their skill and experience in school leadership, namely on involving the school specific stakeholders.

The question is that in the context of European education policies and school performance, all stakeholders and mainly policy makers, need to respond to some sensitive questions:

**Who are the school education stakeholders, what structures exist for their collaboration in each European country, and how are they performing their role?**

Sometimes schools' regulatory frameworks for stakeholders' participation are not enough. As the experience of school life in Portugal and other countries often shows, the participation structures often condition peoples' thought and action (ESHA, 2014 Conference, Round table 4), preventing change to occur. **Participation in decision making is not just a matter of regulatory frameworks but more importantly of school cultures that encourage and value stakeholders' engagement in school life.** That is indeed a challenge for school leadership to address. And that can be achieved mainly through teachers, parents/families and students' involvement everywhere, but above all in socially deprived settings, where social and cultural gaps may exist between school heads, teachers and families/students. The dimension of cultural gaps demands a flexible school approach regarding families' involvement. In brief, a central question is: Is each and every school stakeholder performing his/her role in the best way possible? Why? What else and how can it be done?

**Do school leaders build their partners' social capital?**

Have school leaders the moral, epistemological, psychological and material resources to undertake this endeavour? If not, what is missing and how those lacking resources can be developed? Is there willingness, openness, knowledge and skill to support this learning process? Do school leaders capitalize on good practices of other schools and stakeholder groups, such as parents and youth associations?

### **What kind of information do the different stakeholders need and in what form to engage actively in school life?**

In school education, as in any field of human life, closeness brings power to people involved but usually brings conflict first. Different people have different needs and interests and therefore different motivations, so clash is at first almost unavoidable. On the other hand, it has been also proved that conflicts that are positively resolved make everyone involved more empowered. So the assumption here is that dialogue, understandable and easily accessible information, and a democratic attitude would benefit the learning processes and equity for all students.

### **What information the post bureaucratic school has to provide to guarantee equality in access to “readable” information by all partners?**

The assumption here is that European schools are living within overlapping and contradictory education paradigms, namely post bureaucratic versus hyper bureaucratic ones. The question is: how may schools overcome this situation? What reliable and readable information should schools collect and disseminate and in what format so as to make it accessible and useful to different stakeholders, and to build accountability on the quality of education provision in general and equity and learning in particular?

### **Are social justice issues taken into account in the analysis of teaching provision and learning quality?**

To what extent society in general and each and every school stakeholder in particular is concerned with equity and learning? Is social justice just a flag raised by particular social actors in certain fora? To what extent is it a generalized concern? Shouldn't it be? If so, how can it be made a reality?

### **How education policy makers support stakeholder involvement structures, by providing resources, training opportunities, and other support services?**

If legislation or any other formal regulations are understood as structuring the school system, what further support is provided by policy makers to foster cultural change? With no change in people's beliefs and knowledge, any change hardly can be achieved.

## **School-local community collaboration for equity and learning checklist**

Building and maintaining effective local community-school collaboration for equity and learning requires dedicated time and ongoing attention to the collaborative process. The checklist focuses on the **process of bringing partners together and working to promote equity and learning in schools**. The checklist (found in the next page) can help partnerships to reflect on, assess, and improve the quality of their collaborative efforts.\*

 Please reflect on the statements presented below and select the level of your agreement with them.

## Statements

1. Collaboration between our school and the local community has developed **a clear vision on equity and learning**.

2. Our partnership has collaboratively identified **the equity and learning results we want to achieve** for the students, the families, and our community.

3. Our partnership has successfully engaged **a broad and representative base of partners** from a range of individuals and organizations representing the school and the local community.

4. Our partnership has developed **strategies for coordinated action to promote equity and learning** between school staff and students, families, community members/organizations and local authorities.

5. Our partnership has established **a clear organizational structure** which is based on agreement upon the roles that individual partners should play, and on ensuring that **all partners understand and accept the responsibilities** of those roles.

6. Our partnership engages in activities to **create awareness** about and **increase support** for issues of equity and learning achievement in our school.

7. Our partnership has identified and **mobilized resources** (financial and other) from partner organizations and other entities throughout the local community to promote equity and learning.

\* This tool is based on the "*Strengthening Partnerships: Community School Assessment Checklist*" e-book by Martin J. Blank and Barbara Hanson Langford (2000).

## Degree of agreement

(1=Strongly disagree - 5=Strongly agree)



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### Web resources

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/sharingpractice>

<http://edglossary.org/stakeholder/>

<http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=parental-involvement-in-schools>

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm>

[http://bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/files\\_uploaded/uploaded\\_resources/18617/desforges.pdf](http://bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/files_uploaded/uploaded_resources/18617/desforges.pdf)

<http://www.ernape.net/>

<http://www.lemproject.eu/in-focus/news/real-pearl-not-only-children-need-to-be-taught>

<http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm>

<http://www.npc.ie/>

<http://www.escoladaponte.pt/site/>

<http://www.schoolcouncils.org/>

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# Policy Response Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 8.1 Introducing the toolset

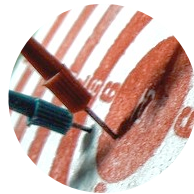
### ➔ What is the purpose of the toolset?

- ✓ To facilitate school leaders' active participation in the policy process
- ✓ To help policy makers and school leaders develop solutions to problems around policy implementation
- ✓ To develop contextually relevant and responsive policy that effectively supports equity and learning



#### Who is the toolset for?

- Education policy makers
- School leaders and teachers with a responsibility for policy implementation



#### What does it contain?

- A definition of policy and policy enactment
- The identification of barriers to policy implementation
- Creative solutions for policy engagement
- A link to a video, 'Policy Response Animation'
- Information about how to create an animation



#### How might it be used?

- By school leaders, senior management teams and classroom teachers to foster dialogue about policy response through the creation of animations

## 8.2 What is policy and policy enactment?

**Policy is both an attempt to solve problems and an attempt to persuade individuals to subscribe to particular beliefs that delineate action.** Policy is a process that brings certain principles or ideas into practice through the selection of goals, the definition of values and the allocation of resources (Ham & Hill, 1993; Olssen et al, 2004). Policy documents 'codify and publicise the values which are to inform future practice' (Ranson, 1995, p. 440), and as such they go to the heart of the relationship between the state and the welfare of its citizens (Hill, 1996). The concept of policy is bound-up with notions of **public and social issues**, the **solutions** to these, and the **role of the state** in providing these solutions.

➡ Policy does not simply tell us what to do; it also affords possibilities. Consequently, educators may take part in a process of what may be termed **'creative social action'** (Ball, 1998, p. 270) to resist or transform policy that threatens to undermine educational possibilities that they value. This is significant, as informed engagement provides a space in which dominant policy ideas, texts and recommendations are not simply accepted un-problematically at face value, but may be challenged, nuanced, reformulated, and changed. For this reason, Braun et al (2010, p. 549) talk not of policy response but **'policy enactment'**, which they claim involves the creative processes of interpretation and translation to bring abstract ideas into practice.

### 🔄 The process of 'creative social action'

The process of 'creative social action' is illustrated in the diagram on the right. At the heart of the policy process is the **'core message'**. This might be, for example, that we need to make our schools more inclusive. Informed engagement with policy recognises the **agency of everyone involved in policy implementation** (i.e. policy makers, school leaders, classroom teachers, parents etc) and this engagement involves the interrogation of policy and the **co-creation of a response to policy** informed by shared values. So, **how one school interprets and responds to a core message about inclusion might be very different from another school.**



*Figure 8.A:* The policy process as 'creative social action'

## Reflect on an emergent issue and the need for a policy response

Often, **policy is produced in response to emergent issues** for which current guidelines are inadequate or absent, and in such instances the translation of abstract ideas into practice has an urgency that is recognised by policy makers and educators alike.

An example of an emergent issue in the UK that has prompted a crucial and continuous policy response is discussed in the vignette below.

### Self-harm online and offline

At the start of the twenty-first century, media reports began to emerge about the **dangers posed to children by the internet**, including the danger of peer-to-peer victimisation. In 2007, the UK government commissioned Childnet International, a charity dedicated to protecting children online, to produce **guidance to help schools deal with the issue of cyberbullying**.

Childnet International consulted with school leaders and parents to develop an understanding of the issue and its ensuing report formed part of the UK Government's Safe to Learn Guidance for schools on bullying.

Seven years later, Childnet International reported on a **disturbing new development**: citing figures from the National Health Service (NHS), Childnet UK claimed that **the number of children aged between 10 and 14 treated in hospital after deliberately hurting themselves has risen by more than 2,700 since 2012**. Childnet went on to state that in 2014 the London School of Economics' report, Net Children Go Mobile, showed a significant increase in young people being exposed to potentially negative forms of user-generated content online, including self-harm websites.

Given the serious nature of self-harm and the possibility that children are encouraged to self-harm by viewing content online, **we might expect education policy on self-harm to be developed imminently**, perhaps in consultation with organisations such as Childnet and the LSE. It is likely that school leaders will be consulted as part of this policy development (see <http://www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals>).

## 8.3 Barriers to policy implementation

While policy response has the potential to engage all members of a learning community in ‘creative social action’ (Ball, 1998, p. 270), various **barriers to policy implementation may disrupt this process**. In 2013, the UK team of the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL) conducted a study of the **implementation of policy on school leadership for equity in Scotland** (Bagley & Ward, 2013; Ward et al, in press). School leaders identified **four reasons why they were not engaging** with this policy:

- ➔ policy documents are too **‘hard going and laborious’**;
- ➔ policy is perceived to be **irrelevant**, either ‘distant from my post and what it means in the context of my job’ or they are already doing this in their schools;
- ➔ **not enough time** to engage with policy or implement it;
- ➔ concerned about the **lack of policy ‘ownership’** and the lack of consultation during policy development.

Sometimes, policy seems to be so far removed from school leaders’ everyday experience that its implementation is almost impossible, as in the example provided below.

### Reflect on the case of 'Schools in Challenging Circumstances'

In 2001, the UK government published a **policy document aimed at improving school performance**, ‘Schools in Challenging Circumstances’. This policy implied that **inequity of results is the product of the poor practice of school leaders and teachers**, rather than the result of widespread material poverty outside the school.

Furthermore, it appeared to overlook the fact that some school leaders in ‘failing’ schools are obliged to direct time and resources to pastoral support for deprived pupils.

Lupton (2005) interviewed school leaders in the wake of this policy, and concluded that **if policy fails to acknowledge or address contextual pressures** faced by schools in deprived communities, then this policy **may foster a climate of despondency** that undermines school leaders' ability to engage with proposed solutions to inequity.

## 8.4 Creative solutions for policy engagement

The EPNoSL study of the implementation of policy on school leadership for equity in Scotland revealed that some school leaders are engaging with this policy and have benefited from this engagement. They said that they have engaged with this policy by:

- ➔ using it as a coaching tool, to **‘see where we are right now and where we want to be’**;
- ➔ using it to share best practice by working collaboratively with other schools in a cluster and using the policy to develop a **‘cluster improvement plan’**;
- ➔ using it as a **‘quality assurance’ tool**.

School leaders appear to welcome the **‘clarity of expectation’** offered by the **Standards for Leadership and Management**, and claim to be using them to help all staff, not just school leaders, develop a shared vision of best practice.

“ It seems, then, that **policy implementation is a creative process** in which school leaders draw upon their professional knowledge to adapt policy to their schools’ needs, and that networks help school leaders share best practice. ”

Policy implementation involves communication, i.e. sharing best practice; ensuring policy is ‘fit for purpose’, and ensuring that all stakeholders are ‘on board’ with the policy message. **When communication and participation are at the heart of policy response, creative social action appears to flourish.**

### How to meet the needs of ethnically diverse pupils? The case of Equity Action Groups

In 1996, the Australian government launched policy to **encourage schools to address issues of social justice**. In response to this policy, Rosewood State High School formed an Equity Action Group (EAG) to meet the needs of its ethnically diverse pupils.

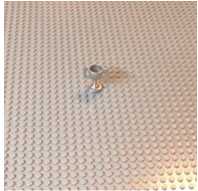
The EAG meetings are not compulsory and are open to all members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) and are held every week on one morning before school. These meetings enable guidance officers, teachers, therapists and administrative staff to share their insights and concerns about social justice and develop **interventions to minimise the negative effects of immigrant and minority pupils’ cultural and material disadvantages**.

Initiatives developed by the EAG include the **establishment of support groups for refugee and immigrant families; extra tuition** in language and mathematics, and **public events** to acknowledge the heritage of diverse cultures.

By working collaboratively within the school and making connections with the community beyond the school, the EAG has fostered **a common vision and a sense of purpose about equity** that is underpinned by a respect for individual voice and **an acknowledgement of the importance of peer support**. This policy response has produced **a transformative discourse of leadership** that aligns creative social action with collaborative endeavours to place **equity at the heart of learning** (see Niesche, R. & Keddie, A., 2011).

## 8.5 Policy response animation

We developed an animation on policy response based on our interviews with school leaders in Scotland (Bagley & Ward, 2013; Ward et al, in press). Our storyboard employed **visual metaphors** to capture the views expressed by school leaders.



### 1. Identification of the policy goal

The film begins with the identification of the policy goal (represented by a trophy).



### 2. Barriers to policy implementation: old ideas

Barriers to policy implementation include old ideas (represented by the cobweb and skeletons)...



### 3. Barriers to policy implementation: fear of change and workload pressures

... fear of change (represented by the shark), and day-to-day work load pressure (represented by bushes).



### 4. The teachers enter the maze and are held back by barriers.

➔ **They confront the barriers...**

### 5. Using resources

Working together, teachers confront the barriers, using resources (represented by the bicycle and broom) and

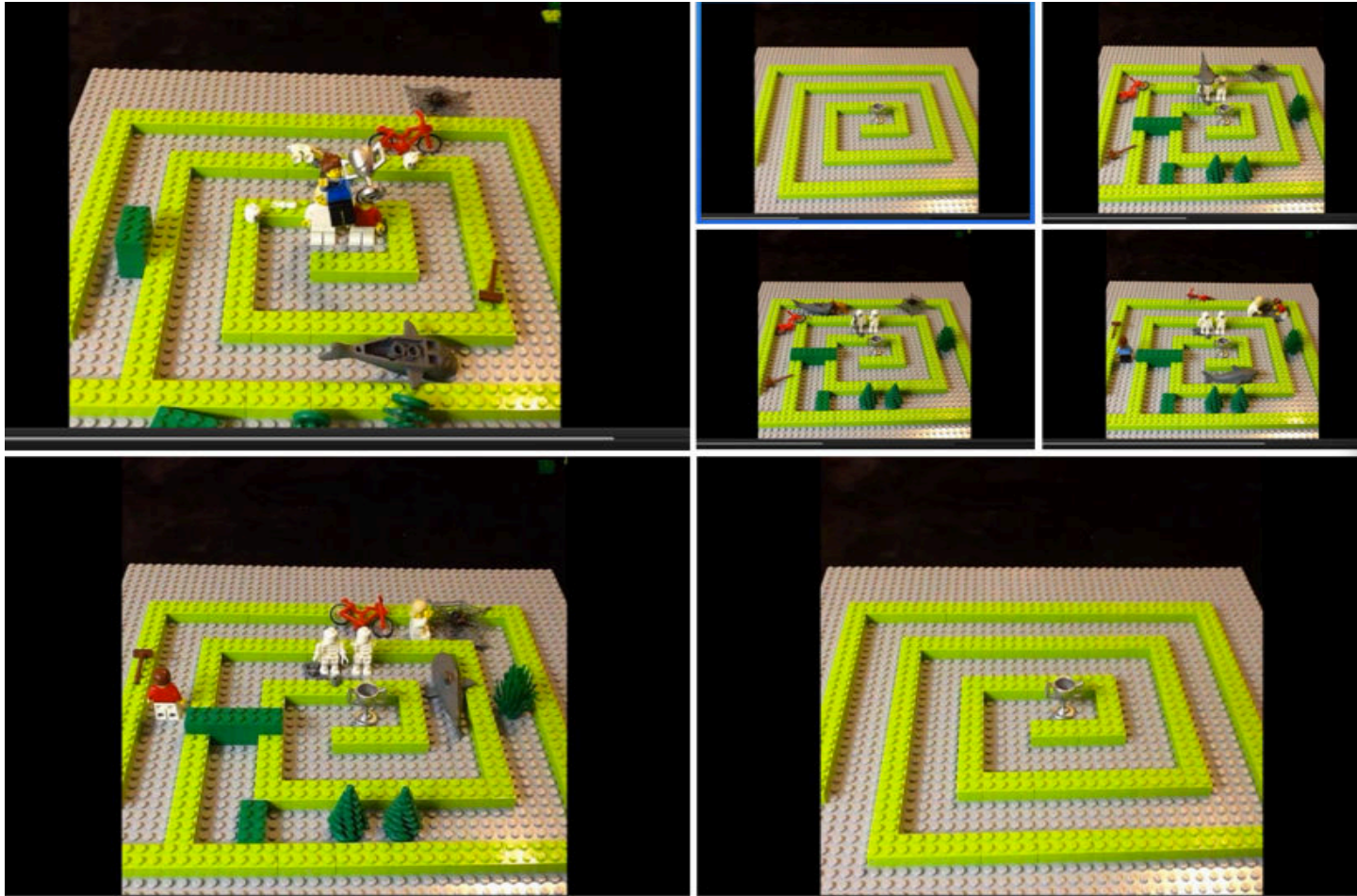


### 6. Using collective knowledge

The film begins with the identification of the policy goal (represented by a trophy).



➔ The **animation** is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSES3J10W-A&list=PLIYDp6HtVzIQYkY-SvW98IPoddf\\_1fbvz](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSES3J10W-A&list=PLIYDp6HtVzIQYkY-SvW98IPoddf_1fbvz)



Having read the toolset and watched the animation, we would like to invite you to **reflect on your own experiences and practice** in terms of a policy that you have responded to. To what extent does the reading and the video capture those experiences? In what ways would you depict things differently?

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Supporting Document 4: How to make an animation:  
[http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting\\_documents/doc4.pdf](http://toolkit.schoolleadership.eu/supporting_documents/doc4.pdf)

# Policy Assessment Toolset

*for equity and learning*

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## 9.1 Introducing the toolset

The systematic performance of school leadership policy evaluations and assessments **promote accountability and strengthen policy coherence**. The Policy Assessment Toolset is linked to all other toolsets because the focus, the objectives, the methods and the outcomes of ecologically valid policy evaluations and assessments should essentially reflect **what policy makers, school leaders and other school stakeholders believe that matters about policy, its implementation and impact**.




“ Policy evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of a planned, on-going or completed policy initiative (e.g. programme or project). The aim is to determine its significance and relevance, the fulfilment of objectives, its efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and scalability. ”

School leadership policy evaluation criteria vary. These may include:

- ✓ **significance and relevance**. Responsiveness to the needs of school leaders in relation to their mission in addressing challenges of equity and learning in their schools. Validity of its objectives and the consistency between the overall goal, the objectives, the activities and the impacts.
- ✓ **effectiveness** of a school leadership programme's performance in light of specified objectives,
- ✓ **efficiency** in maximizing benefits and/or minimizing cost (as compared to alternative policy options),
- ✓ **impact** of the policy initiative, in terms of intended or unintended positive and negative changes that, directly or indirectly, were produced (or estimated to be produced) by its implementation,
- ✓ **sustainability** of a school leadership programme's benefits and factors affecting it, and
- ✓ **scalability** of a school leadership programme.

### Why do we need to assess policy initiatives?

From a policy perspective, policy assessment is a process that needs to be embedded **in all major stages of decision making**, from policy formulation, to adoption, to implementation and to summative evaluation.

-  In the context of **ex-ante evaluation**, assessment is a **necessary step prior to the undertaking of a critical new policy initiative**, to provide evidence that will allow policy-makers and school leaders to appraise needs and different options and take informed policy decisions.
-  Assessment, as part of a 'policy implementation life-cycle', contributes to **fine-tune subsequent policies** and actions.
-  In the context of **ex-post evaluation**, i.e., after a policy has been implemented in full, assessment is necessary to provide evidence regarding its **actual impact** in terms of both intended and unintended outcomes, to identify the factors of success or failure, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts, and to draw conclusions that may inform other interventions.

## ➔ Applications of school leadership policy evaluation and assessment can range widely

In the policy field of school education there is a wide range of evaluation frameworks and assessment methods, techniques, tools and practices for conducting school leadership policy evaluation and assessment. These may vary according to:

- ✓ implicitly or explicitly stated, **political/ideological and epistemological frameworks** regarding the nature of school leadership policy and policy development processes,
- ✓ the emphasis placed on **the role and level of engagement of different school education stakeholders** (e.g. policy makers, experts, administrators, principals, teachers, parents, students etc.) in the design, implementation and use of school leadership policy evaluation or appraisal and related assessment approaches,
- ✓ the scope, the type and complexity of a school leadership policy, the nature of its intended outcomes, and the level of its implementation (single school-level policy, local, regional or national policy),
- ✓ their **degree of formalisation**, depending on whether or not evaluators are experts in performing evaluative research and analysis and/or follow a highly prescribed set of rules and data collection methods, and
- ✓ the goals of school leadership policy evaluation.

## ➔ School leadership policy assessment challenges

Assessing the potential and actual impacts of a policy on school leadership is difficult. It is reasonable to expect that it is **hard to establish causal relationships between specific school leadership policies and particular effects on students' performance or schools' record on issues of equity.**

**Time-lag between policy formation and implementation and policy outcomes and impact** is one reason. There always exists a time lag between:

- ➔ specifying a problem requiring policy action,
- ➔ introducing an initiative,
- ➔ changing the situation on the ground (e.g. changing the capacities school leaders to deal with issues of equity and learning or enabling school leaders to introduce more flexible solutions to such challenges by giving more room for manoeuvre to schools), and
- ➔ reaping the benefits of improved school leadership (e.g., reduced drop-out rates, better learning performance by all students, etc.).

Another reason is that **school leadership is rather indirectly linked to how well students do in school or how fairly and inclusively learning opportunities and learning outcomes are “distributed” in schools.** As previous research has shown, the impact of school leadership is indirect and moderated by teachers and other factors.

Yet another reason is that the **impact of school leadership policies is likely to be complex and predominantly qualitative in nature.**

## 9.2 Perspectives in school leadership policy assessment

Assessments of school leadership policies can be understood under the perspectives of various stakeholders in the field of school education. Here we focus particularly on the perspectives of top-level policy makers, of school leaders and of academics/researchers.

### → School leadership policy evaluation and assessment from

#### ... the perspective of top level policy makers

**Top level policy makers** often need data so as to make informed decisions that are likely to affect school leadership on the school system as a whole and provide the the tax payers with evidence regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of their policies. Evaluation and assessment, from the perspective of top level government officials, can be:

- ✓ a **policy instrument** which serves on the one hand the needs of **decision-making** and on the other of **transparency** and **accountability** of their decisions and actions.
- ✓ an instrument of **control** over those who are called to implement policies.

#### Evaluation and assessment for purposes of top-level policy making is increasingly becoming highly prescribed

Many governments around EU as well as EU bodies have adopted **detailed guidelines regarding the implementation of policy assessments** (see, for example, the European Commission's [Impact Assessment Guidelines](#)) and demand from agencies under their supervision or control to comply with them.

Overall, **policy assessments for purposes of decision-making and accountability tend to be highly institutionalised**, i.e. established and managed on the basis of a regulatory framework, which often includes directives regarding timing, resources to be used, preferred methods and techniques, and even reporting format. Usually, policy assessments of this kind **rely heavily on quantitative data and expert judgements**.

For example, the European Commission (EC) conducts its own evaluations of policy interventions as part of 'policy implementation life-cycles'. On this basis, it performs:

- ➡ impact assessment or ex-ante evaluation before a decision is taken and a policy intervention is implemented,
- ➡ interim and on-going evaluation during implementation and
- ➡ final or ex-post evaluation after completion of an intervention.

The most systematic type of assessment performed on behalf of the EC and many governments in Europe and around the world is potential impact assessment.

## ... the perspective of school leaders

School leaders are those who drive innovation and change in schools. To initiate innovation and implement changes in school life (i.e., changes in pedagogic methods, or measures to combat bullying) school leaders need information indicating what may be the potential benefits of the proposed changes, or what are the actual outcomes of an intervention after this has been implemented.

From the perspective of school leaders, evaluation and assessment of initiatives originating from within their own school can be very useful processes in order to:

- ✓ **take informed decisions** about the appraisal, design and implementation of innovations in schools and the establishment of changes in school life based on solid evidence regarding their efficiency and effectiveness, and
- ✓ **gain support from other members of the school community** to the initiatives and changes they propose or introduce.

### School leaders need professional training in methods and techniques of school policy evaluation and assessment

Evaluation and assessment of policies originating from schools are usually performed by members of the school staff with no in-depth expertise in doing rigorous research. Such processes are commonly exploratory in nature and the evidence collected is **mainly qualitative and often anecdotal** (i.e. narratives, personal experiences of people involved, casual observations, etc.). Such **evidence, when collected from trusted and knowledgeable members of the school community, can have high ecological validity and provide rich insights** into what and why an intervention works well in a particular school.

On the other hand, school leaders who rely solely on such evidence to take decisions about their school run the **risk of jumping to unfounded conclusions about casual connections between interventions and outcomes**. This can be the case for various reasons. Focusing predominantly on the more enthusiastic, vivid, experiences and stories of those involved, may lead to an overestimation of the positiveness of the impact of an intervention. Important factors that is possible to have contributed to a certain result may have been downplayed (e.g., the level of investments in human and other resources actually needed), although these may critically affect the scalability of a successful innovation at whole school level or across schools. Therefore, **school leaders should be offered professional training in methods and techniques of policy evaluation and assessment**, so as to develop knowledge and skills which ensure their rigorous implementation in collecting reliable and valid evidence.

School leaders are also **increasingly under pressure to respond to demands for assessment data by the central government authorities**. It is often the case that evaluation and assessment demands imposed to schools from above are often mistrusted by school leaders and school communities. This is because such top-down policy initiatives are often perceived as instruments of control and punishment rather than as valid methods for school improvement. Perhaps one important reason for mistrust is that school communities often have little or no influence in the decision making processes related to the goals, methods and actual uses of assessment data. **It is therefore important to engage school-level stakeholders, not just school leaders, in all phases of decision making on the evaluation and assessment of top-down policy initiatives to ensure their widest possible ownership and sense of responsibility for their implementation and outcomes.**



## ... the perspective of academics and researchers

While institutionalised policy assessments mainly reflect the concerns of top-level policy makers for data that can support immediate decision-making needs, **academic-oriented research usually serves the concerns of social scientists who are interested to develop a deeper understanding of leadership**, as this is (trans)formed and enacted in schools, within the complex frame of established regulatory regimes, policy agendas and intentions, dominant and emerging power structures in schools, stakeholder expectations, resources available, dispositions, day-to-day interactions and impact on school life.

### **Academics and researchers need to develop closer synergies with policy-making & school communities**

On their behalf, academics and researchers need to learn how to transform rigorous evaluation and assessment results into information that can be responsive to the needs of school leaders and of top-level policy makers. To do so they have to **develop closer synergies with policy-making and school communities**, and ensure that their concerns are also taken into account in the design, implementation and dissemination of academically-driven research.

**“ Stakeholder theory is implicit theory.** It is not endowed with prestige and attention as is scientific theory; it is, however, very important from a practical standpoint because stakeholders draw on it when contemplating their program’s organization, intervention procedures, and client-targeting strategies. **Stakeholders' implicit theories are not likely to be systematically and explicitly articulated, and so it is up to evaluators to help stakeholders elaborate their ideas.** ”

### 9.3 Participatory policy assessment

Participatory policy assessment approaches use participatory research methods to understand the problem to be addressed by policy action as well as the proposed policy solutions **from the perspective of those affected, by focusing on their realities, needs, and priorities**. Participatory policy assessment seeks to ensure that the intended beneficiaries have some control over the assessment process. In this respect, school leadership policy assessment seeks to engage policy makers, school leaders, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in knowledge and experience sharing, in implementing assessment activities and in analyzing their results.

“ A participatory approach advocates actively involving stakeholders in all policy making processes, from problem definition to ex-post evaluation. ”

National, regional and local governments, school communities, teachers' and parents' associations, academics and researchers in the field, all are part of the public discourse on school education and are affected school policy. Seeking to integrate their diverse perspectives into school policy evaluation and assessment can:

- ✓ strengthen **democracy in decision-making** and equality in the democratic governance of school education,
- ✓ enhance school policy support, trust, ownership and commitment ,
- ✓ empower those whose voices and concerns are not heard, particularly students and parents from disadvantaged groups,
- ✓ **build capacities** for negotiation, perspective taking and consensus reaching, and
- ✓ ensure that decisions and policies incorporate knowledge and expertise that otherwise might be overlooked.

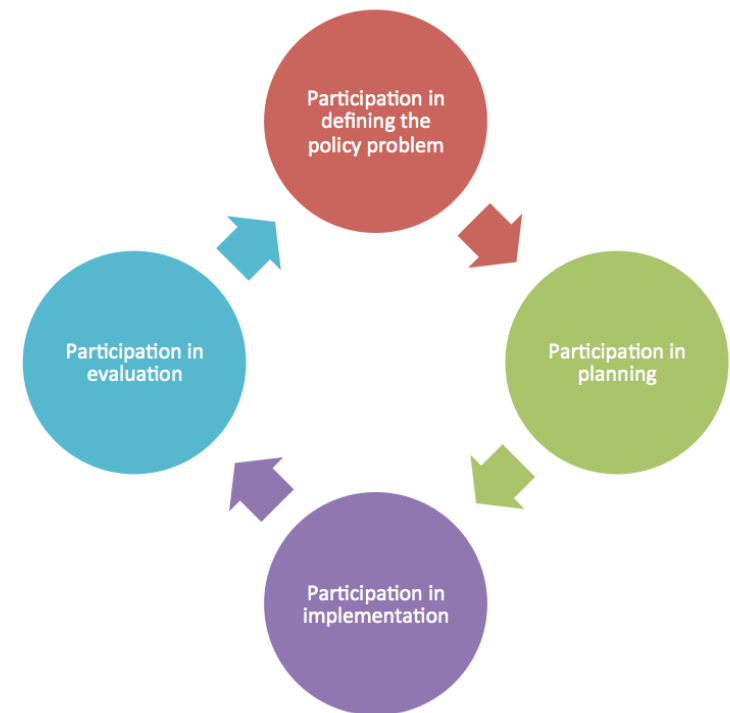


Figure 9.A: Participative policy process

## Tools for participatory policy assessment

In various fields of policy evaluation there have been implemented a variety of participatory approaches and tools. For example, the “**Social Audit**” approach is aiming to support an in-depth scrutiny and analysis of a public programme in order to determine its relevance to the needs and demands of the people that are expected to benefit from its implementation. On this basis, social audits seek to secure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard, that stakeholders share and give feedback on multiple aspects in the design, implementation, evaluation and results of policy initiatives, that they are regular and comprehensive and that they are publicly available.

Other tools or techniques for participatory policy assessment, include the “**Community Score Cards**”, the “**Citizen Report Cards**” and the “**Beneficiary Assessment**”.

A wealth of tools for participatory policy assessment are also presented in Slocum, N. (2003). **Participatory Methods Toolkit. A practioner's manual**. King Baudouin Foundation and the Flemish Institute for Science and Technology Assessment.

One recent approach to participatory policy assessment is the **Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis** (PIPA) which was first used in a workshop in January 2006 in Ghana, in the context of the Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF). Since then the PIPA approach has been used for programme/project planning, implementation and evaluation in various fields.



## 9.4 Impact assessment in the context of ex ante policy evaluation

The conduct of impact assessment is considered as a **useful step prior to the undertaking of a critical new policy initiative**. The performance of potential impact assessments prior to the introduction of a new legislation, strategy, programme etc., is also a **formal requirement in government work** in many countries around the world. Impact assessments are also, for obvious reasons, important to perform after the full implementation of a policy initiative (ex-post evaluation).

As Podhora and his colleagues (2013) argue, research on impact assessment tools is scattered across different research communities. In the absence of organized fora for sharing ideas and knowledge, it is difficult for policy-makers and school leaders to know the state of the art with regard to tool development. However, there are some key analytical steps in performing impact assessment which are common in many different approaches.

### The need for ex-ante small-scale pilot implementation of school leadership policy initiatives

**Impact assessments prior to the introduction of a new school leadership initiative can be problematic from a methodological point of view.** Prior international research on school leadership can offer evidence on the potential impact of a specific policy intervention on schools, and particularly on issues of equity and learning achievement. However, research on school leadership is still at its early stages in many European countries. This means that **there is not enough body of solid scientific evidence to guide informed decision-making in specific national or regional contexts.**

Impact evaluation studies based on data obtained from ex-ante **small-scale pilot versions of specific school leadership policy initiatives are therefore highly recommended.** Such context-sensitive data can then be used by cost-benefit or other types of ex-ante assessments to inform decision-making in specific national or regional contexts.

## Key analytical steps

Impact assessments can be structured around some key analytical steps, which may vary slightly depending on the type of school leadership policy initiatives:

- 🔗 **Step #1: Problem definition** (describes and provides evidence of the nature and scale of the school leadership problem and the student or other stakeholder groups, such as teachers or parents, that are primarily affected by it),
- 🔗 **Step #2:** Analysis justifying the **necessity and added value** of a new school leadership policy action,
- 🔗 **Step #3: Objectives** of policy action,
- 🔗 **Step #4:** Exploration of **policy options** for action (e.g., a 'no school leadership policy change' baseline scenario, discontinuing existing school leadership policy initiative, improved implementation where legislation already exists, self- and co-regulation etc.),
- 🔗 **Step #5:** Assessment of **potential impacts** of different school leadership policy approaches, clearly linked to the objectives and comparison between options. What target groups or school communities as a whole are likely to be affected by the impacts and when. Impacts on existing student attainment and observed inequalities in performance, and
- 🔗 **Step #6: Practical arrangements** for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of chosen policy initiative.

**Comparisons of different policy options** in order to inform school leadership policy decisions can be based on various methods and techniques, such as **cost-benefit** and **cost-efficiency** analysis, or a **multi-criteria** analysis.



*Figure 9.B:* Key analytical steps in ex-ante impact assessment

## 9.5 Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA)

In the context of school leadership policy evaluation, the Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA) approach can be used to carry out an **evaluation of likely programme/project impacts (ex-ante impact assessment)**, help the people involved in related policy programmes better understand what each other are doing, identify common interests and **foster programmatic integration**, provide **a framework and design for monitoring and evaluation**, and provide the impact hypotheses required for **impact assessment after the programme has finished (ex-post evaluation)**.

PIPA is a programme/project planning, monitoring and evaluation approach (Alvarez et al, 2010; Douthwaite et al. 2007). It draws from **program theory evaluation** (Chen, 2005), **social network analysis** (Cross & Parker, 2004) and **organizational learning** (Argyris & Schön, 1974), to understand and foster innovation. It is designed to help the people involved in a project, program or organization make explicit their theories of change, in other words how they see themselves achieving their goals and having impact.

### Scenario for a PIPA exercise: A school leadership capacity building programme on drop-out prevention

In the context of a wider policy strategy to reduce student drop-out rates in schools in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods, a government is considering the policy option to introduce a school leadership capacity building programme on drop-out prevention methods for all such schools in the country/state/region. **Before arriving to a decision about this policy option, solid evidence on its potential impact is needed.** For this reason, the government decides to fund three small-scale projects, each involving a network of three nearby school sites in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods. The government also sets up an **Impact Evaluation Team** to facilitate the project coordinators in planning and implementing their projects, to monitor and evaluate the impact of these projects and offer recommendations about their scalability.



## Implementing PIPA on the leadership projects in schools

The process begins with an Impact Pathways Workshop.

### The Impact Pathways Workshop

In the Impact Pathways Workshop representatives from each school leadership project work to develop the inputs required to build their project's **Impact Pathways (IP) logic model** and **network maps**. The workshop is facilitated by members of the Impact Evaluation Team.

The workshop participants are **project implementers**, participating **'next users'** (which are the school leaders involved in capacity building activities), **'end users'** (or beneficiaries, in our scenario students at risk of dropping out of school and their families), and **politically important actors** (such as local school authorities).

The workshop process is designed to help participants to **raise, discuss, and describe their hypotheses** for how project activities and outputs could eventually contribute to desired goal of preventing students from dropping out of school.

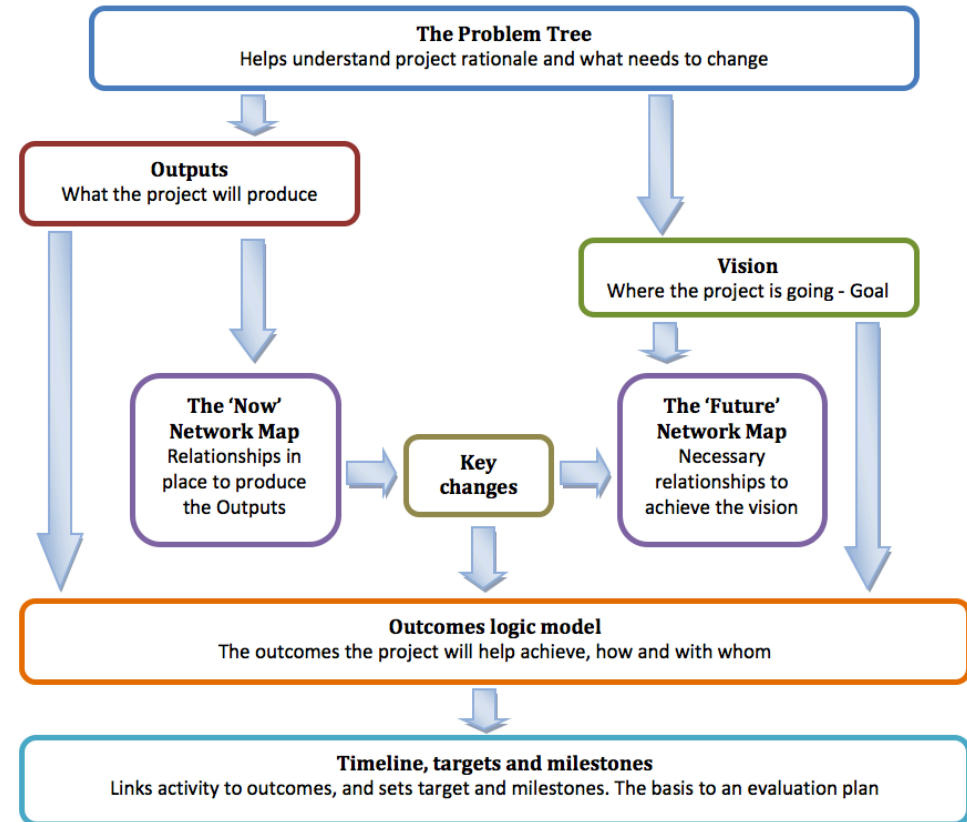


Figure 9.C: The PIPA workshop flow (Alvarez et al, 2010)

## The workshop is aimed to help participants to do the following:

- ✓ Clarify, reach mutual understanding, and communicate their project's intervention logic and its potential for preventing at-risk students in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods from dropping out of school;
- ✓ Understand other projects working in the same programme, and identify areas for collaboration;
- ✓ Generate a feeling of common purpose and better programmatic integration (when more than one project is represented in the workshop);
- ✓ Produce a narrative describing the project's intervention logic and possible future impacts (a form of ex-ante impact assessment);
- ✓ Produce a framework for subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

## Developing a cause-and-effect logic

The workshop begins with participants developing a **problem tree** which links the problem of high student drop-out in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods that the project is directly addressing with the leadership capacities and other school-based conditions that it wishes to improve. The branches of a problem tree stop when the problems that the project will directly address has been identified. These 'determinant' problems help to define the outputs.

## Developing a network perspective

To connect the linear problem tree model with the network perspective, participants (i.e. school leaders, teachers, at-risk students and their families, local authorities, etc.) construct a vision of success in which they imagine what they will do differently after the project.

Next, participants draw a '**now**' **network map**, showing current key relationships between stakeholders, and a '**future**' **network map**, showing how stakeholders should link together to achieve the vision. Participants then devise strategies to bring about the main changes. The influence and attitude of actors are explicitly considered during the drawing of the maps.

## Developing the outcomes logic model and a monitoring and evaluation plan

In the final part of the workshop, participants distil and integrate their cause–effect descriptions of project–impact pathways from the problem tree and the network view into an outcomes logic model. This model describes, how stakeholders (that is, school leaders, teachers, at-risk students and their families, local authorities, and project implementers) should act differently if the project is to achieve its vision, i.e. prevent at-risk students in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods from dropping out of school.

From this model there are outlined the main knowledge, attitudes, and skills that school leaders should be able to put in practice to promote effectively drop-out prevention. This, in turn, will inform the design of school leadership capacity building activities that school leaders will engage in.

The outcomes logic model is the foundation for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), because it provides the outcome hypotheses, in the form of predictions, that M&E sets out to test. M&E requires that the predictions made in **the outcomes logic model be made SMART (specific, measurable, attributable, realistic, and time-bound)**, so that project staff and stakeholders can know whether or not predictions are being realised.



## After the workshop. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

After the workshop, participants complete their M&E plan, ideally with key staff and stakeholders who could not attend. Projects periodically hold **reflection-and-adjustment workshops** with their key stakeholders. These reflection workshops can be seen as the culmination of one set of **experiential learning cycles** and the beginning of others. The vision is changed to some extent, based on what has been learned, the outcome hypotheses are revised when necessary, and corresponding changes are made to project activities and strategies. New milestones are set for the next workshop.

## Ex-post impact assessment

Ex-post impact assessment, which generally occurs 1-2 or more years after a project has finished, seeks to:

- ✓ verify the direct benefits of the project, and then
- ✓ trace how further adoption and use of project outputs contributed to drop-out prevention impacts, such as increasing the school completion and grade progression rates, reduced unjustified absences from school, etc.

### Adapted from:

- Alvarez, S., Douthwaite, B., Thiele, G., Mackay, R., Córdoba, D., & Tehelen, K. (2010). Participatory impact pathways analysis: a practical method for project planning and evaluation. *Development in Practice*, 20(8), 946-958.
- Douthwaite, B., Alvarez, S., Cook, S., Davies, R., George, P., Howell, J., ... & Rubiano, J. (2007). Participatory impact pathways analysis: a practical application of program theory in research-for-development. *People and Agroecosystems Research for Development Challenge (PA RDC)*, 39.

For further information on the PIPA model visit: <http://pipamethodology.pbworks.com/w/page/70283575/FrontPage>

## 9.6 Why perform cost analysis in school leadership policy interventions?

The omission of cost considerations risks the promotion of school leadership policy interventions that have only minimal positive effects, but high costs that exceed those of equally effective alternatives. Available resources for school leadership policy initiatives for equity and learning are often very limited, can always be used in other ways to reach the same policy goal, and saved resources can be devoted to other school system aims. Cost analysis has become an important decision-making tool in school policies, as **policy makers and school leaders are under growing pressure** to present evidence showing that initiatives funded from public resources deliver desired outcomes at reasonable costs.

“ Ensuring efficient and effective use of resources is an important aspect in the role of school policies. ”

The terms 'cost analysis', 'cost-effectiveness analysis', 'cost-benefit analysis', and 'cost-utility' analysis are often used interchangeably. However, **different methods of cost analysis can answer different policy questions.**

Evaluation questions	Form of cost analysis
How much will implementing this program or intervention cost, and what is the distribution of those costs?	Basic-cost analysis
Can we implement this program or intervention, given our budgetary constraints?	Cost-feasibility analysis
Which program or intervention provides the most effectiveness (on a single criterion measure) at the lowest cost?	Cost-effectiveness analysis
Which among many programs or interventions provides the most benefits at the lowest monetary cost?	Cost-benefit analysis
Which program or intervention provides the most utility at the lowest cost?	Cost-utility analysis

Table 9.D: Relationships Between Evaluation Question and Form of Cost Analysis (White et al., 2005)

## Cost-Benefit Analysis

Cost-benefit analysis is used to assess the costs and benefits of a policy option in monetary terms (Münich and Psacharopoulos (2014). It can be used to support decision-making regarding the introduction, continuation or discontinuation of a specific school leadership policy programme, or the allocation of resources among competing ones (Miller and Robins, 2006). In our scenario, it could be used to compare the policy options:

- ✓ a 2-weeks school leadership training programme on drop-out prevention methods for servicing school principals in poor neighbourhood schools, organised and delivered by higher education institutions in the region, and
- ✓ an alternative option of, say, a 2-weeks school leadership in-service training programme on drop-out prevention methods for all servicing school principals in poor neighbourhood schools, organised by higher education institutions but delivered in schools during the school day by properly trained school leaders.

A cost-benefit analysis would be expected to provide evidence, expressed in rates of return or other measure of "profitability", on which of the two policy options is likely to be more effective in achieving different drop-out outcomes in schools. Such outcomes could be school completion rate, grade progression rate, unjustified absences from school, etc.

## Basic-cost analysis

🔗 Basic-cost and cost-feasibility analyses are best suited to answer questions about the financial viability of a school leadership policy initiative.

Basic-cost analysis would focus on making reliable estimations on **how much it would cost to implement a 2-weeks school leadership training programme on drop-out prevention methods for all servicing school principals in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods.**

## Cost-feasibility analysis


🔗 Cost-feasibility analysis can be used to take decisions about the economic estimations provided by the basic-cost analysis. It goes a step forward to answer the question: **Can we implement this or that policy intervention given the constraints of the budget available?**

## Scenario for a Cost Analysis exercise: A 2-weeks school leadership training programme on drop-out prevention


In the context of a wider policy strategy to reduce student drop-out rates in schools in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods, a government is considering the policy option to introduce a 2-weeks school leadership training programme on drop-out prevention methods for all servicing school principals in such schools in the country/state/region. **Before arriving to a decision about this policy option**, solid evidence on its costs is needed. The government also needs to know what may be the benefits of such a policy intervention as compared to other policy options aiming to advance school leadership capacity building on drop-out prevention. **What type of cost analysis can provide such evidence?**

### Choice of cost analysis by question type

#### Cost-effectiveness analysis

 Cost-effectiveness analysis is used to **compare alternative policy options on a particular outcome** (Levin et al, 2012). It is considered as a simpler counterpart cost-benefit analysis because it does not require expressing benefits in monetary terms (e.g. euro value of the benefits). Overall, is **appropriate whenever it is unnecessary or impractical to consider the money value of the benefits** provided by the alternative policy options under consideration. In our scenario, cost-effectiveness analysis could be used to compare the policy option of "a 2-weeks school leadership training programme" and an alternative option using a **single criterion outcome**, for example, the school completion rate. A cost-effectiveness analysis would be expected to provide evidence on **which of the two policy options is estimated be more effective in achieving the desired policy outcome at the lowest cost.**

#### Cost-utility analysis

 Cost-utility analysis is similar to cost-effectiveness analysis but the single criterion outcome is the overall usefulness to, satisfaction or "utility" of, a targeted stakeholder group (e.g., students, teachers, parents etc.) (see, for example, Ross, 2008). This analysis is based on information on how valuable each outcome of one or more policy options is for which stakeholder group. A basic assumption is that different stakeholders in school education value differently the same outcomes of school policies, in our case school leadership policies. Each outcome is assigned with a weight, depending on different stakeholder group preferences, as these have been identified through research, negotiations, expert judgements, etc. **Cost-utility analysis can facilitate decision making by identifying the policy option that is estimated to lead to greater stakeholder utility at the lowest cost.**

## Costs and benefits of policy interventions

Many people, among them policy makers and school leaders, understand the economic cost of a school policy intervention (e.g. a school leadership training programme) in terms of expenses on staff salaries, on infrastructure, or on consumables. However, **cost information about a policy intervention based solely on accounting or budgetary cost data can be misleading.** This is because such information fails to account for opportunity costs and benefits of an intervention. In the field of economics **the "opportunity cost" of a resource, is the value of the next-highest-valued alternative use of that resource.**

### What do we mean by the opportunity cost of a 2-weeks school leadership training programme on drop-out prevention?

If a government decides to spend money on a school leadership training programme about drop-out prevention, it cannot spend that money on something else. If this government's next best alternative to leadership capacity building is extra tuition for students at risk of dropping out of school, then **the opportunity cost of leadership capacity building is the money spent on it plus the benefits lost by not spending that money on extra tuition to potential drop-outs.**

In our scenario, from the perspective of schools in high-poverty urban neighbourhoods, the benefits of a school leadership training programme about drop-out prevention refer to increased school completion and progression rates, reduced unjustified absences from school, etc. These benefits for the school are also benefits for the society as a whole and have important economic implications. In cost-benefit analysis, the economic dimension of social benefits of this policy intervention could be measured by (expected future) incremental before-tax earnings due to the completion of different school levels. However, it should be borne in mind that **educational interventions frequently involve outcomes (benefits) that lack explicit monetary expression** (Münich & Psacharopoulos, 2014) and credible estimates of the social returns, which are necessary for public investment analysis, remain elusive (Jimenez & Patrinos, 2008).

## 9.7 Further reading

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