

# **Supporting teacher leadership in 15 countries**

## **International Teacher Leadership project Phase 1**

### **A report**

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**David Frost  
Leadership for Learning  
University of Cambridge Faculty of Education**

## **Authorship of the report**

This report is authored by David Frost who takes full responsibility for the content.

Co-authors include Sheila Ball, Paul Barnett, Val Hill, Jo Mylles, Amanda Roberts and Vivien Wearing who participated in the analysis of evidence and contributed early drafts of text.

Majda Josevska and Amanda Roberts helped to develop and edit the text in the final stages.

Evidence for this report was contributed by members of the international research team who are all listed in the table in the Acknowledgements section overleaf.

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<b>Contributing organisations and individuals</b>		
<b>Country</b>	<b>Organisations</b>	<b>Individuals</b>
<b>Albania</b>	Open Society Foundation for Albania; Pedagogy Department, University of Tirana.	Dritan Nelaj, Fatmir Bezati, Inajete Kasimati, Rozeta Hoxhallari
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Open Society Institute, Sofia	Ilko Jordanov, Marianna Georgieva, Boyan Zahariev
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	proMENTE social research, Sarajevo	Ivona Celebivic, Alma Kadic
<b>Croatia</b>	EduConnect, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb	Ljubica Petrovic, Ivana Cosic, Vlasta Visek, Iris Marusic
<b>Greece</b>	University of Pelopennese, Corinth; 3rd Directorate of Secondary Education of Athens; Education Research Centre of Greece.	George Bagakis, Kiki Demertzi, Stavroula Kessari, Lefki Biniari, Marianna Tsemperlidou, Pavlos Kosmidis, Thanasis Stamatis, Themis Kapsi, Zoi Vitsaki, Katerina Skia, Xaris Papadopoulos, Sofia Georgiadou
<b>Kosovo</b>	Kosovo Education Centre, Pristina	Jehona Xhaferi, Melinda Mula

<b>Macedonia</b>	Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives; Bureau for Development of Education of Republic of Macedonia, Skopje	Suzana Kirandziska, Majda Josevska, Kristina Lelovac, Ljiljana Samardziska-Panova
<b>Moldova</b>	Pro Didactica Education Centre, Chisinau	Viorica Postica, Rima Bezede
<b>Montenegro</b>	Pedagogical Center of Montenegro, Podgorica	Milica Vukcevic, Milica Krulanovic
<b>New Zealand</b>	Lead School Transition Service/Ministry of Education, Christ Church	Colin Gladstone
<b>Portugal</b>	University of Minho, Portugal	Maria Flores, Isabel Viana, Ermelinda Lurdes
<b>Romania</b>	Central Education 2000+; Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Al. I. Cuza University of Iasi	Sorin Coman, Eugen Palade, Anca Nedelcu, Ciprian Ceobanu, Mona Chiriac
<b>Serbia</b>	Center for Interactive Pedagogy (CIP), Belgrade	Jelena Vranjesevic, Ljiljana Levkov
<b>Turkey</b>	Bahçesehir University, Istanbul; Sabanci University, Istanbul; Maltepe District of Istanbul	Ozgur Bolat, Aytac Gogus
<b>UK (HertsCam)</b>	Barnwell School, Stevenage; Birchwood High School, Bishop's Stortford; Sir John Lawes School, Harpenden; University of Hertfordshire; Leadership for Learning: the Cambridge Network at the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.	David Frost, Sheila Ball, Paul Barnett, Amanda Roberts, Jo Mylles, Vivien Wearing, Val Hill
<b>UK (South East)</b>	Canterbury Christ Church University;	Judy Durrant

## **Glossary of terms and acronyms**

APREME	Advancing Participation and Representation of Ethnic Minority Groups in Education
CANTARNET	Canterbury Action Research Network
CERI	Centre for Educational Research and Innovation
CPD	Continuing professional development
EU	European Union
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITL	International Teacher Leadership project
LfL	Leadership for Learning
MEd	Master in Education
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSF	Open Society Foundation
OSI	Open Society Institute
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TLDW	Teacher Led Development Work
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Preface

The International Teacher Leadership (ITL) project addresses the need for more effective approaches to teacher and school development and does so in a way that responds to the challenge of inclusion and social cohesion. The OCED report on school leadership (2008) recommends distributed leadership for schools as organisations, but there remains a need for a powerful strategy for developing this.

The purpose of the ITL project is to develop support for teacher-led innovation in a number of countries in the Balkans and elsewhere in Europe and to explore how this contributes to educational reform. Materials and techniques developed in the UK over many years have been adapted and translated to enable partners in participating countries to support teachers as leaders of processes of innovation. Project team members in the participating countries have worked in collaboration with school principals and other facilitators to establish programmes that enable teachers to identify agendas and priorities for change, develop negotiated action plans and act strategically to embed innovations in their schools. Project team members have established the infrastructure of local knowledge networks through which teachers can come together to inspire each other and share accounts of their leadership of innovation. Vignettes and reports of teacher-led innovation have been captured and disseminated in order to build a body of knowledge about how to improve teaching and learning.

The project has been funded by the Open Society Institute and has worked in conjunction with the APREME project funded by both the European Commission and OSI which has widened the project's scope.

Evaluation data from these teacher-led innovation programmes has enabled local teams to review and develop their practice. Data have been analysed by the Cambridge team in order to support the recommendations in this report. Through a process of cross programme evaluation and international networking, the project team has been able to refine and develop strategies, techniques, tools and materials that can now be offered as a framework to support a renewal of teacher professionalism and school reform across Europe.

This report underpins other publications which include:

- An issue of the 'inFORM' bulletin published by Leadership for Learning: the Cambridge Network
- A Facilitators' Guidebook to support those who wish to establish teacher leadership programmes
- A collection of stories published as a special edition of the Teacher Leadership journal

All of these are available for free download at [www.leadershipforlearning.org.uk](http://www.leadershipforlearning.org.uk) and [www.teacherleadership.org.uk](http://www.teacherleadership.org.uk)

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## **Section 1: Context and background**

*This section outlines the origins of the project and clarifies its aims before providing an overview of the cultural contexts within which the project operated.*

Educational reform is increasingly a global enterprise with governments around the world influenced by organisations such as the European Union, the World Bank and UNESCO. Nations are concerned about competitiveness. Studies such as the ‘Programme for International Student Assessment’ (PISA) enable policy makers to compare educational performance which has led to an increasing tendency among governments to adopt the policies of countries which appear to be successful. It is against this backdrop that the International Teacher Leadership project was founded. Over the three years since its inception, it has extended to a project team consisting of over 50 experts who are supporting around 1,000 teachers in 150 schools in 15 countries. The ITL project seeks to contribute to school reform by developing strategies which support teacher leadership.

The roots of the project in the UK stretch back to the late 1980s in response to questions about the link between teacher and school development. For example: how can teachers’ professional learning link to the development of practice and institutional change? Development and research around these questions has been well documented (see Frost, 1995a & 1995b; Frost, 2003; Frost and Durrant, 2002; Frost and Durrant, 2003a; Frost and Durrant, 2003b; Frost, Durrant, Head and Holden, 2000). In recent years a particular approach to supporting teacher leadership has emerged from this development work in the context of the HertsCam Network which supports hundreds of teachers in a large district in England (Hill, 2008; Hill, 2010; Mylles, 2005; Mylles and Frost, 2006). These teachers are committed to initiating and leading change in their schools and building knowledge about pedagogic innovation across the network. This network is facilitated by a team of 30 or so ‘tutors’ who are experienced teachers, often with senior leadership positions and recognised by the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education as associates who can work on its behalf to provide award-bearing programmes for teachers. It is from amongst this group that the ITL project’s strategy team emerged.

Through the ITL project, the HertsCam team offered to share their ideas, tools and materials with interested parties from other countries. A critical perspective on ‘policy borrowing’ (Phillips and Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004) recognises that practice cannot be simply transferred to different cultural contexts. The ITL project team was aware that the characteristics of practice in the HertsCam Network had evolved within a particular milieu, in a particular educational system and with the input of particular people with their own biographies and ideas. Nevertheless it was proposed that the essential elements of the teacher leadership support programme and the principles underlying it could be useful in different cultural environments.



## **Aims of the project**

The aims of the project were explored at meetings in Cambridge, Corinth and Belgrade between November 2008 and November 2009. At the beginning of the project the aims were to develop support for teacher leadership in a number of countries and explore how this can contribute to educational reform. However, since that initial discussion, further aims emerged, or at least took on a more pronounced form. Democratic values were central to the work of the Leadership for Learning (LfL) group at Cambridge, from which this project sprang, but, with the involvement of the Open Society Foundations ([www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)), following our inaugural meeting, the contribution of the project to the development of democratic civil society and inclusive practices became more explicit and pronounced. Support from OSF also brought new partners from a number of south-east European countries. It became clear that the project could make a difference, not only in post-conflict contexts, but also in countries where it might be assumed that democracy is already well developed.

Linked to this was a further emergent aim which was to engage with policy making in a direct and immediate way, in the flow of the project rather than relying on post hoc reporting. The methodology of the project does not follow the traditional approach which is to collect quantitative data, the analysis of which can be used to try to persuade policy makers to take appropriate action. Rather, the ITL project sought to generate activity which would provide the basis for direct policy advocacy. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 3 of this report.

The aims as they emerged in the first year of the project include:

- to establish programmes of support for teacher leadership appropriate to a range of different cultural / national settings and responsive to the particular challenges that arise in those settings;
- to explore how the development of teachers' professional identity and their modes of professionalism can contribute to educational reform in a variety of cultural / national contexts;
- to create and/or enhance knowledge networks for teachers;
- to create and/or enhance a network of experts (academics, local government staff, NGO staff, policy activists, experienced teachers and school principals) who can continue to provide support for teacher and school development;
- to promote and foster inclusive educational practices;
- to contribute to the development of democratic civil society.

## **The cultural / national contexts for the project**

It was recognised at the outset of the project that cultural contexts are different; we could not assume that strategies, tools and techniques developed in the UK over a long time period would be equally successful in other settings. Participants in ITL joined the project because they recognised the potential of these strategies, tools and techniques to address their concerns, but the different cultural contexts required us to think carefully about how best to adapt them for use in new circumstances. We were also mindful that educational reform is not simply an act of improving practice, but also constitutes social reform and as such is affected by the social context in which it is embedded (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). To understand educational reform we must therefore understand a country's wider educational context (Reezigt and Creemers, 2005).

In the early stages of the project we engaged in a cultural analysis exercise to inform the adaptation and development of materials to suit the particular circumstances of each national site. Partners were asked to write a paper to a common set of headings in order to construct a portrait of the national, professional and organisational context. These papers enabled us to discuss the challenges, obstacles and opportunities we faced when we came together in our full team conferences. Having recognised that the project was being seeded in different cultural contexts, we were nevertheless surprised to find that many, if not most, of the issues were common or at least recognisable to all participants. There were some striking differences but these tended to be a matter of scale or degree rather than the type or nature of the issue. The discussion of cultural challenges within the team encompassed democratisation, modernisation, economic limitations, centralism, professional development, school leadership, accountability and pedagogic innovation.

### ***Democratisation***

The national contexts for many of the partners were affected by the legacy of conflict particularly following the break up of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Social capital was said to be weak in a number of respects including issues of fragmentation, mistrust and divisiveness. There is also the legacy of the political systems of Eastern Europe under the earlier communist regimes which in some cases consist of centralism, authoritarianism and patronage. The process of democratisation is a slow and complex one without any clear pattern across the Balkan region (Pop-Eleches, 2007). Our Macedonian colleagues reported that 'our democracy is young', the country having declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, but the idea of democracy being 'a work in progress' resonated for almost everyone involved in the project. In many cases colleagues said that, although the legal and constitutional frameworks in place reflect a democratic society, there remained a great deal of work to be done to develop institutional life, relationships, values and attitudes that make democracy a lived experience. Even more so, there is a need for mechanisms to practically implement democratic values, not only mechanisms that penalise institutions and individuals for not upholding democracy in their respective domains. A DEMOS pamphlet quotes Zakaria (1997) who said: 'there are plenty of places where the existence of formal democratic rights doesn't necessarily translate into much substantive democracy in people's everyday lives.' The pamphlet reports on the use of a variety of indicators to assess the extent to which

democracy is substantive in people's everyday lives in European countries (Skidmore and Bound, 2008). This study reached beyond the usual measures of 'Electoral and procedural democracy' to consider such things as 'Activism and civic participation', 'Workplace democracy' and 'Democratic public services'.

Partners in the project talked about the challenge of the politicisation of education. The countries involved in ITL do not suffer the extremes of this as can be found in places such as Zimbabwe or Sri Lanka (Save the Children UK, 2010), but legal measures designed to protect the interests of minorities can put limits on innovation that leads to more coherent and inclusive learning communities. Ethnically focused provision in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Kosovo would be one example of such challenges. Another example concerns the appointment of school principals which can be influenced by political allegiances. In one notable case, the unexpected change of school principal for what was perceived to be political reasons disrupted the development of the school as a learning community and led to the abandonment of the teacher leadership initiative in the school.

### ***Modernisation***

The pressure for modernisation is evident for all partners in the ITL project. The goal of European integration is felt in member countries such as Greece or Romania, but also for EU candidate countries and those with aspirations for integration which includes Macedonia and Serbia. Alignment with EU standards in education raises complex questions about national goals as has been evident in the public debate about Turkey and EU accession. For example, in 'Today's Zaman', a Turkish academic is quoted as saying the following.

Turkey has not been able to succeed with its current education program, one developed in an already outdated industrial era. How then will it implement a new education program? One thing is for sure, however: with this education system, the EU is just a dream.

(Altan in Tarman, 2008)

Amongst partners in the ITL project the goal of integration is seen as a positive benefit, thus governments have made efforts to speed up the process of modernisation in these countries. However, partners also report that there is a tendency for governments to launch ill-considered national reform strategies which fail to mobilise the energy and commitment of teachers. The influence of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) therefore can be seen to be a 'mixed blessing' in that, while it promotes educational reform as an important accompaniment to economic advancement, it also leads to pressure from national governments towards managerialist accountability. The effects of international comparisons of educational attainment such as PISA and TIMSS can stand in the way of the development of shared leadership. While recognising the laudable aim of trying to establish international standards in education, Jorunn Møller has noted, in relation to Scandinavian countries, the unfortunate side effect.

This new educational accountability has been more about regulation and performance than educational improvement, local capacity building and the encouragement of democracy in schools. (Møller, 2004: 158)

The school effectiveness mindset and the discourse of managerial accountability can give rise to mistrust and alienation rather than shared leadership. A good example would be the account from our partners in Portugal where the education system was affected by teacher strikes in protest at new performance management measures brought in by the government (Flores, 2011).

In many of the school systems represented in the ITL project, leadership has been the preserve of the school principal with the rest of the school staff having equal status, albeit with barely any influence. However, as a result of the influence of bodies such as the OCED, national governments may now be inclined to promote role differentiation and a more complex organisational hierarchy in the hope that this will make schools more effective.

### ***Economic limitations***

In most of the countries participating in the ITL project, with the notable exception of the UK, teachers' salaries are low and partners report that teachers are not held in high esteem. It is also the case that schools, in the main, do not have funds to provide support for teachers who wish to engage in collaborative innovation and professional development. In some cases, teachers/schools have relied on external initiatives to support educational development.

Teachers in the UK have had many sources of support for professional development including local education authorities and the National College for School Leadership. Teacher unions, especially the National Union of Teachers, have also been significant providers and facilitators, but most of the partners in the ITL project report that teachers' unions limit their focus to pay and conditions. This situation may be about to change however as Education International, the global association of teacher unions, turns its attention to the question of teacher voice, self-efficacy and leadership (Bangs and Frost, 2011).

Economic problems also raise challenges for school improvement. High unemployment for example can be quite disruptive when it leads to a large percentage of families with absent fathers, as is the case in Moldova where many workers travel abroad to work. Furthermore, teaching in schools serving disadvantaged communities can be extremely challenging for school staff.

### ***Centralism***

In 2010, the Serbian government took decisive action, initiating a national debate aimed at creating a new vision for schooling in Serbia (Frost, 2010). This was welcome news to partners in the ITL project who had reported on the lack of vision as to educational reform in their countries. This does not mean that national governments lack ideas about the kind of education they would like to see in the future; critical comment is more to do with the process of reform which has been evidently flawed. For example, in Greece in the recent past there has been an expressed desire to see a 'focus on student centred learning, team work, project based learning and interdisciplinary study', but action to try achieve this was described as a process of top-down implementation that was 'catastrophic'. Cherry picking policies from abroad and attempting to implement them from the centre, tends to skip the most crucial challenge which is the local capacity-building referred to above.

The tradition of centralised decision making has had a stultifying effect and has created a lack of room to innovate at the local level. Ultimately, national governments may think that they need to retain the power at the centre, but the result is that their policy initiatives often fail to influence the situation where it matters – in schools and classrooms.

### ***Professional development***

Established traditions in teacher education constitute one of the most serious challenges to the partners in the ITL project. The assumption of the pre-eminence of subject knowledge, especially at the secondary or high school level, means that teachers lack a language with which to analyse and discuss the process of teaching and learning. Coupled with this is a tendency to assume that although students are learners, teachers are not. For many teachers, their authority in the school rests on the maintenance of the perception of the teacher as expert.

The construction of teacher development as ‘training’ is a common tendency across ITL project countries. Teachers often take part in activities where they are ‘instructed in’ the mechanics of a new curriculum without any attention paid to how to engage professionals with the underpinning values or principles of what they are now being ‘trained’ to ‘deliver’ (Grossman *et al.*, 2007; Koc *et al.*, 2007). This technical approach to professional development does not acknowledge the need to build teachers’ capacity to lead and manage innovation, to have an active voice in change and to experiment with and reflect on their practice at school level (Güven, 2008). This delivery model of teacher development is, unsurprisingly, both unpopular with teachers and ineffective in changing practice (Sari, 2006). In many European countries dissatisfaction with outmoded forms of CPD is reflected in low numbers of teachers attending professional development events (OECD, 2009).

For most partners in the ITL project the usual approach to professional development is disconnected from action and collaboration as this extract from a project report from Croatia illustrates.

The sharing of experience with implementation of new approaches and reflection on challenges rarely happens among teachers; in general there is no norm to share innovative experiences nor to invite colleagues to own classes.

Research on CPD supports the view that collaborative forms of professional development have the most impact on students’ learning (Cordingley *et al.*, 2003), but it also indicates that this occurs least often even in contexts such as the UK where there has been a great deal of development work over the past three decades (Pedder and Opfer, 2010).

Overall, the pattern of teachers’ participation in continuing professional development has tended to be instrumental with the result that approaches which assume that teachers will take the initiative to develop practice and improve schools may be greeted with scepticism.

### ***School leadership***

In initial reports from ITL project partners, school leadership was said to be under-developed, with a lack of skills and understanding at all levels. The discourse on school leadership in the

UK has intensified over the years with a significant step forward with the advent of the National College for School Leadership in 2000, but this is not the case in most of the countries participating in the ITL project. Most partners reported that leadership tends to be seen as the exclusive preserve of the school principal, but this does not necessarily entail 'instructional leadership' (Blase and Blase, 1998). In some cases, partners report a strong sense of hierarchy that inhibits collegiality whereas some report that the school principal has little influence on teachers' practice.

Where leadership is hierarchical and 'principal-centred', attempts on the part of teachers to exercise leadership can be seen as subversive and illegitimate. Some partners report that teachers' leadership is inhibited by the belief that they would be seen as presumptuous and offending against the unwritten code that all members of the teaching staff are equal. The challenge for the ITL project therefore, is to enable teachers to overcome these inhibitions and to enable school principals to embrace the idea of shared leadership.

### ***Pedagogic innovation***

The ITL project aims to enable teachers to lead the development of professional practice. However, these teachers are being asked to take on a formidable challenge in the form of the transmission model of pedagogy (Tishman, Jay and Perkins, 1993) which remains dominant. Partners report that this way of teaching leads to students being passive and unmotivated.

Compounding this is the problem of inertia with respect to pedagogical discourse and development. Partners report that it is unusual for teachers to engage in reflection and dialogue about teaching and learning and even more unusual to engage in systematic development work that might involve collaborative enquiry, coaching, mutual observation and so on. This is not simply a matter of teachers lacking the ability to do this; it is a symptom of a history of policies which have required teachers to simply implement prescriptive, ready-made solutions in top-down fashion.

It is feared that the pressure from international comparison referred to above, may lead to an extension of standardised, externally regulated assessment which, in turn, could have the effect of reinforcing the transmission model of teaching. This has been expressed for example by colleagues in Bulgaria where it is said that there is a fear on the part of policy makers that teacher assessment may be unreliable.

### **Readiness for innovation**

In spite of the challenges inherent in the cultural contexts in which the ITL project is operating, there is a high level of optimism amongst members of the international team. There are signs that national governments are hungry for reform. For example there has been a new national curriculum for elementary schools in Turkey based on constructivist principles (Opfer, Bolat and Frost, 2008) and in Montenegro it is said that the government aims to convert the 'memorising school' into 'the thinking school'. In Serbia there have been national conferences to discuss educational reform and 'transversal competencies'.

There are also some moves towards de-centralisation; for example in Bulgaria, there is some degree of local budgetary control. Regarding the curriculum, the reports from ITL project partners indicate that in many countries there is space in the curriculum for local determination of content. In Moldova for example, the school can choose what is taught in 25 % of the curriculum.

More importantly perhaps is the level of enthusiasm and the positive response of project partners to the idea of teacher leadership. They also report overwhelmingly positive responses from the teachers they engage with when taking steps to launch the project in their own localities. More detailed evidence of this follows in this report.

## **Section 2: Non-positional teacher leadership: theoretical perspectives**

Teacher leadership has been promoted in many forms in the USA and the UK and is increasingly seen as crucial to educational reform. In the 1980s, major reports such as ‘A Nation At Risk’ (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and ‘A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the twenty first century’ (Carnegie Corporation, 1986) called for a reinvigoration of the teaching profession in the USA. Teacher leadership was seen to be the key lever for this reinvigoration. The idea of teacher leadership was part of the developing discourse of professionalisation in the USA in the 1980s and 90s: Judith Warren Little had written a piece entitled ‘Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership’ (1988) and Anne Lieberman had addressed the question ‘Teacher Leadership: What are we learning?’ a few years later (1992). A significant breakthrough occurred a little later with the publication of the first edition of ‘Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders’ (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 1996). Subsequently, the ‘Teachers as Leaders Research project’ in Australia (Crowther *et al.*, 2002) illustrated what could be done to foster teacher leadership.

In England, what is now known as the National College sponsored useful work on distributed leadership (Bennett *et al.*, 2003; MacBeath *et al.*, 2004). Linked to this we have seen in the UK the provision of training courses and other forms of support focussing on ‘middle leadership’ and ‘emergent leaders’. These have tended to focus on building the capacity of heads of departments and other team leaders to manage their teams more productively (Naylor, Gkolia and Brundrett, 2006).

In May 2011 a significant development occurred in the USA in the form of the publication of a set of ‘model standards’ for teacher leaders. This is the result of an extended discussion involving a consortium of state authorities, universities and teacher organisations. The report is intended to support discussion about teacher leadership and it is undoubtedly a helpful step forward in terms of public recognition of the leadership roles that teachers play. The standards proposed were organised into seven domains as set out in Figure 1 below:

### ***Figure 1 – The domains of competence for teacher leaders***

- Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning
- Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning
- Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement
- Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning
- Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement
- Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community
- Advocating for student learning and the profession

These are doubtless important and useful activities, but the assumption in the document remains that teacher leadership is about designated roles. The model standards document says, of teacher leaders, that:



..they need recognized responsibilities, authority, time to collaborate, and support from school administrators to assume leadership roles.

(Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011: 12)

There are considerable difficulties with this approach. The creation of special roles of responsibility requires additional funding to enhance salaries which is not easily found; in any case, it places a limit on the development of leadership capacity, reaffirming the view that the sort of professionalism that includes the exercise of leadership is only for the few rather than the many. It may be the case that this approach, with its focus on the role and position of the teacher leader, reflects the position regarding the development of professionalism in the US at the present time, but it would be a mistake to assume that it is applicable in any universal sense.

### **Beyond organisational position**

An approach to teacher leadership based on the creation of positions within organisations gives rise to deeper concerns. The most obvious question is whether this approach actually makes schools more effective, and some branches of educational research have been trying to secure the evidence for this (Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss, 2009). More importantly perhaps is the question of what is most likely to create a climate that favours innovation and reform. In the OECD seminar 'Networks for Innovation', this question was posed about school principals.

Should they now be supervisors of quality control standards consistent with models from the industrial age or multi-dimensional knowledge managers of human and physical resources, sharing power and facilitating learner-centred communities?

(Shuttleworth, 2003)

In contrast to the organisation-focused approach to teacher leadership referred to above, we want to put forward an approach which does not assume that leadership is automatically linked with positions in the organisational hierarchy of the school. Instead it recognises the potential of all teachers to exercise leadership as part of their role as a teacher. This view resonates with the work on 'professional learning communities', in which the defining characteristics include 'reflective professional enquiry' (Bolam *et al.*, 2005). This involves the 'deprivatisation of practice' (Louis *et al.*, 1995) through which tacit knowledge is converted into shared knowledge. Thus the 'intellectual capital' held by the staff is mobilised, arguably a necessary condition for school effectiveness (Hargreaves, 2001). However, while ideas such as professional enquiry and reflective practice are important, this account of professionalism is not adequate to secure educational reform. What it lacks is an account of leadership – the process whereby teachers can clarify their values, develop personal visions of improved practice and then act strategically to set in motion processes where colleagues are drawn into activities such as self-evaluation and innovation. This approach rests on the assumption that the enhancement of human agency within a culture of shared responsibility

for reform and the outcomes for all students is essential for learning for all members of learning communities (Frost, 2006).

The ITL project built on the work of the HertsCam Network and related initiatives in which it had been demonstrated that a non-positional approach to teacher leadership can be productive.

### **The intervention: promoting non-positional teacher leadership**

The first meeting of the ITL project team discussed the practice that had developed in the UK and agreed on a set of principles that could guide future action (see Figure 2 below). The idea of using principles rather than behavioural specifications has a good pedigree and had been used in a previous project to try to overcome the challenge of cross-cultural development of professional practice and research (Frost and Swaffield, 2008).

These principles were revisited at each subsequent team meeting as new members joined the project. These team meetings featured discussions about shared beliefs in relation to non-positional teacher leadership and its potential to contribute to educational reform. Also examined was the nature of support needed to bring this to fruition.

### ***Figure 2 – Principles for supporting teacher leadership***

Effective support for teacher leadership involves:

1. A partnership between schools and external agency (ies)
2. Mutual support through membership of a group / network
3. Building professional cultures that give sanction and support to teacher leadership
4. Opportunities for open discussion (eg about values, strategies, leadership)
5. Tools to scaffold personal reflection and planning
6. Tools to model, exemplify and illustrate action
7. Expecting and enabling teachers to identify their personal development priorities
8. Facilitating access to relevant literature
9. Guidance on leadership strategies
10. Guidance on methods of evidence gathering that leads to change
11. Mobilisation of organisational / senior leadership support and orchestration
12. The provision of a framework to help teachers document their leadership activities
13. Opportunities for networking beyond the school
14. Recognition through certification
15. Opportunities to build knowledge from accounts of teacher leadership

These principles were developed and a later, extended version appears in Section 8 of this report.

### **The nature of support for teacher leadership**

In order to promote teacher leadership, we need strategies to support its development. There are at least four dimensions to this:

- appropriate methodologies for teacher leadership
- partnerships with external agencies
- deliberate cultivation within the schools
- appropriate contexts for knowledge building.

*Appropriate methodologies:* The idea of teacher-led development work (Frost and Durrant, 2002, 2003a) provides a step-by-step approach in which particular materials and techniques are used to model and guide a process of values clarification, reflection on development needs, consultation with colleagues about development priorities, negotiation of strategic action plans and the leadership of development work. This approach is being constantly refined and developed. It remains to be seen whether this can be adapted to different cultural settings.

*Partnerships with external agencies:* Support from external agencies is important whether this be the local authority, professional associations or national agencies for school improvement or quality assurance. Arguably, university departments of education have a special role to play because of their independence, access to literature and skills for guiding reflection, but any external support has to be mediated through genuine partnership arrangements so that external agencies do not simply replicate their normal habits of thought and operation.

*Deliberate cultivation within school:* Teachers are unlikely to sustain their capacity for leadership or successfully undertake a development project unless they have active support from their colleagues and in particular from the senior leadership team. There is a growing body of evidence that illuminates the role of senior leaders in facilitating teacher leadership (Andrews and Lewis, 2004, Mylles and Frost, 2006). There are very specific things that principals / headteachers do such as making additional time available or helping to facilitate opportunities for collaboration, but the more fundamental task is concerned with culture building or creating the conditions in which teacher leadership can flourish (Frost and Durrant, 2004).

*Appropriate contexts for knowledge building:* The nature of professional knowledge and the means by which it is generated are crucial in shaping professionalism. If teacher leadership is agential – if it is about the role of the teacher being extended such that all teachers can contribute to the development of professional practice - then it has to have a knowledge creation dimension. Support for this can be provided through networks and communities which exist to enable teachers' accounts of their leadership of development work to be articulated and broadcast. One example is the HertsCam Network in which a partnership between schools, the local authority and a university provide a context within which teachers can share their practice, engage in dialogue and publish authoritative accounts (Frost, 2008a). Other examples would include CANTARNET led by Judy Durrant and the Coalition of Knowledge Creating Schools led by Susan Groundwater-Smith in Sydney, Australia.

## **Sharing the HertsCam approach**

The elements described above were features of the HertsCam model on which the ITL project was founded. The HertsCam Network is maintained by a partnership between The University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Hertfordshire Local Authority and Hertfordshire schools and teachers. The programme supports school improvement by providing focused support for teacher leadership. This support, which deploys tools and techniques refined and developed over many years, enables teachers to lead development projects. Support is provided either through membership of school-based Teacher Led Development Work Groups (TLDW) or through the county-wide MEd in Leading Teaching and Learning. The common factor is that teachers are supported in designing, planning and leading their own development projects which address their school's priorities for improvement.

TLDW groups are established in response to requests from schools. They involve collaboration with the school to facilitate school-based group sessions and provide one-to-one support for teachers who plan and lead projects. Evidence of participation and development work is collected in a portfolio which is submitted for the purposes of the award of a postgraduate certificate.

The MEd involves occasional weekend residential conferences and seminars hosted by a small number of schools. The programme is also designed to support teachers' leadership of development work but in this case teachers' accounts of their leadership of development projects are submitted in the form of traditional, academic essays and theses which are examined against masters level assessment criteria.

A common programme of Network Events and an Annual Conference provides the means for teachers to come together to share accounts of their development work, build professional knowledge and inspire each other to continue to lead innovation. Accessible accounts of teachers' projects are published in the *Teacher Leadership* journal ([www.teacherleadership.org.uk](http://www.teacherleadership.org.uk)) and in the HertsCam Voice newsletter.

The activities of the network, including its award-bearing elements, are led and facilitated by a team of expert tutors who are all experienced school practitioners recognised by the Faculty of Education as 'associate tutors'. A common package of tools and materials enable members of this 30 strong team to provide high quality experiences for teachers.

Teachers' development projects are evaluated using a common framework for assessing impact. Tools based on this framework ensure that outcomes include impact on participants' practice and capacity, that of their colleagues, their students' attainment and learning capacity, the organisational structures and professional cultures of their schools and on the depth and breadth of professional knowledge shared within the educational community in Hertfordshire.

## **Section 3: Project methodology**

At the outset of this project there was clear and shared commitment to making a difference rather than limiting ourselves to some form of investigation. It was therefore important to adopt a methodological approach which matched the aims of the project and reflected its inter-cultural context.

### **An action orientation**

Firstly, the development of practice through research was paramount; it was important therefore that, although the project was initiated and co-ordinated by a university based academic, the strategy team included practitioner researchers. Similarly the wider project team included people from a range of backgrounds, including school teachers, senior leaders in schools, civil servants, NGO staff, researchers in universities and research institutes and post-graduate research students. This has given us a wide range of expertise and perspectives as well as reinforcing the commitment to developing practice.

Our conceptualisation of the project as action research draws heavily on what John Elliott called ‘a moral science paradigm of educational research’ (Elliott, 1987). Elliott’s account of action research as discourse rooted in practical development yet nonetheless involving the formation of a critical perspective is informed by Gadamer’s philosophy (Gadamer, 1975). The nature of our practice as a team of activists is problematised through discussion at team conferences and through critical friendship. The comparative dimension is of itself a critical process.

In order to facilitate devolved action research processes, all team members were provided with a guidance document that included tools for data collection. Data was used in each local context to evaluate, review and develop support programmes. Reports of periodic reviews were collected and analysed by the Cambridge team; these fed the international discursive process. Through discussion and collective evaluation, the team was able to build expertise based on knowledge of how to support teacher leadership which would be made available to wider professional communities and policy makers.

### **International discourse**

To reflect the aim of building democratic approaches to education, the project built on previous work at Cambridge under the umbrella of ‘Leadership for Learning: the Cambridge Network’ (LfL) at the Faculty of Education ([www.leadershipforlearning.org.uk](http://www.leadershipforlearning.org.uk)). The project extended and refined the methodology used in the ‘Carpe Vitam Leadership for Learning’ project (Frost, 2008b; MacBeath, Frost, Swaffield and Waterhouse, 2006). The legacy of that project included some knowledge of how to support international collaboration and how to design tools to scaffold reflections on practice as well as the value of critical friendship.

Moreover, the LfL team developed a view about research as disciplined, evidence-based discourse.

The project was designed as a dialogic process through which team members could make sense of their experience and engage in collective interpretation of data. It was essential therefore to begin with a consideration of the principles that should underpin any dialogue across cultural boundaries. At the first team meeting we examined a tool from another international project which listed ‘intercultural competences’ such as ‘expressing respect’, ‘managing interaction’ and ‘empathising’. These are not mere politesse, but essential principles to enable dialogue to flourish (Nezvalova, 2007; Lustig and Koester, 1993). The project team has met on 6 occasions: in Cambridge (UK), Corinth (Greece), Belgrade (Serbia), Mavrovo (Macedonia) and finally in Velioko Tarnovo (Bulgaria). These meetings have included consideration of team members’ cultural identities and contexts which took place not only through workshops, but also by meeting people and being introduced to the way of life in that locality.

The team conferences have played an important part in modelling the kind of process that can support teacher leadership. They have featured the sharing of practice and collaborative self-evaluation and comparison. The workshop activities used to scaffold team members’ participation have been designed on the principles of ‘active learning’. There has also been emphasis on the building of relationships which enables the team to sustain the dialogue and knowledge exchange beyond the confines of the team meetings.

### **Documentation and communication**

A key strategy for supporting dialogue has been the ‘portrait of the meeting’, a colourful document with photographs and other visual representations which make the document memorable and accessible. This style of documentation has helped to build social capital and maintain the profile of the project across a diverse and scattered community.

Communication is maintained through a series of monthly bulletins posted on a project web forum. Ideas and resources are shared. As the practice of supporting teacher leadership develops it is subject to critical discourse through structured discussion within this team.

### **Critical friendship**

A key strategy to support both the development aspect of the project has been the provision of ‘critical friendship’ in two ways. Firstly, the project coordinator has visited most of the participating countries to meet team members as well as teachers, school principals, local politicians and ministry officials. Secondly, the more experienced project team members from the HertsCam team have acted as critical friends to new project partners largely through email contact.

## **Policy advocacy**

As the project has matured the work of the project team has increasingly focused on policy advocacy. This project was conceived as an intervention not only in the practice of supporting teacher and school development but also as an intervention in the official discourse about how this should be carried out. Partners have collected data and documented teachers' leadership of development work in order to make this visible and to show how teacher leadership can be supported. They have also sought to engage with ministries of education, other governmental agencies and the branches of the media to stimulate debate about policies and the extent to which they constitute an enabling environment.

## **Illuminative evaluation**

The methodology of the ITL project has been heavily influenced by the traditions of 'illuminative evaluation' (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) and 'portraiture' (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis, 1997), both of which contribute to the aim of making practice visible. Vignettes and descriptions are used to make activities that may be unfamiliar visible and intelligible to the outsider. This enables both external and internal stakeholders to understand the nature of the practice and to consider the variables within it.

## **Section 4: Evidence of project activity**

*This section provides an account of the intervention – the activity of supporting teacher leadership.*

The evidence submitted by the participating national teams is used here to describe and illuminate the practice of supporting teacher leadership and the activity that has flowed from it. Matters of value, quality and extent are attended to in the flow of the account.

This section is organised under the headings:

- a) Scope and extent of teacher leadership programmes
- b) Partnerships to support teacher leadership
- c) The operation of teacher leadership support programmes
- d) Teachers' development projects
- e) Networking and knowledge building
- f) Policy advocacy

### **a) Scope and extent of teacher leadership programmes**

In the academic year 2010-11, the project supported activity in the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and UK. In the main the project activity was restricted to one central site such as Athens, Zagreb or Istanbul, but in some cases, for example Serbia, the activity was more widespread. In the case of Macedonia, the reach of the project could be described as nationwide.

The number of schools participating in the project, in addition to those in the HertsCam Network, is around 90, 55 of which are primary and 35 are secondary. The number of teachers who have undertaken development work in these schools is approximately 545. These figures are swelled by the many schools (approx. 55) and teachers (approx. 200) actively involved in teacher leadership within the HertsCam Network with a much larger number of teachers who participate in teachers' projects and in one form or another. In addition we can point to the range of participants who are involved as mentors, facilitators and 'pedagogues'<sup>1</sup>. It is therefore reasonable to estimate that, overall the ITL project has involved around 1000 teachers in around 150 schools.

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<sup>1</sup> Pedagogue – a role in countries such as Montenegro which is concerned with advising teachers and supporting students' welfare, learning difficulties and behaviour problems.



## b) Partnerships to support teacher leadership

This section addresses the question of funding, the impetus for the teacher leadership programmes, the nature of the organisations involved, ways in which schools have been drawn into the activity and the synergy with other initiatives or goals.

### *The question of funding*

Supporting teacher leadership as outlined in Section 2 above requires time, effort and expertise. The cost of this varies according to whether certification is offered but the table below is indicative of the sort of costs involved.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Days of work</b>
Facilitating school-based workshops	3-4
Planning and preparation of materials	2
Providing one-to-one support	2
Facilitating network events	2-3
Liaison with school principals and other partners	1-3
Preparation of publications to showcase teachers' work	2-3
Estimated total	15

The number of teachers and schools that can be supported through 15 days of work varies enormously depending on the extent to which capacity has been built. In some cases the support can be provided as part of someone's professional role which is already covered by their salary. This would be true for example in the case of a school pedagogue in Montenegro or in the case of an Assistant Headteacher in HertsCam. There are also economies of scale where a teacher leadership group facilitated by one person includes a large number of teachers or teachers from several schools.

At the time that the ITL project was first launched, HertsCam enjoyed significant advantages because of the way public money was distributed within the education system in England. The schools, the local education authority and the university all had access to public finance and the freedom to use those resources to support the teacher leadership work. School principals could elect to pay fees to the university to cover the costs of facilitating a teacher leadership group. The local education authority paid the tuition fees for those teachers who enrolled in the masters programme. The University received a subsidy from central government for every teacher who participated in its award-bearing programmes. Programmes such as HertsCam were not *initiated* by government, but the availability of pockets of funding enabled those who wanted to pursue this work to use public money to support it. School principals in HertsCam testify that participating in the HertsCam Network is relatively cost effective when compared to other methods of school and teacher development.

For all the other partners in the ITL project, there was very little access to public funds with a few notable exceptions. In the case of Turkey for example, a district governor saw the project as having the potential to contribute to educational reform and had the freedom to provide

substantial financial support. In the case of Greece, the close relationship between the University and the Ministry of Education enabled salaried government employees, whether in local government or academic posts, to elect to participate. In the latter stages of the project there is evidence that ministry officials are beginning to examine ways of using already established mechanisms to fund this work.

In the majority of cases, the funding made available by the Open Society Institute made it possible in 2010-11 for members of the team to provide the practical support needed to establish teacher leadership programmes.

***The impetus for the initiative***

The impetus for setting up a programme to support teacher leadership has not come from policy makers within the ministries of education, but from enthusiastic individuals who have previously worked collaboratively on other projects and who have established networks within the country. Collaborations between schools and universities, NGOs and research institutes and local government agencies have been relied upon in order to fulfil the requirements of the project. For example the ITL project in Macedonia is supported by the US Agency for International Development and the Foundation for Educational and Cultural Initiatives ‘Step by Step’ which is an NGO working with primary schools across Macedonia. Similarly in Serbia the ITL project combined with the previously existing APREME project, funded by the EU and OSI to address the problem of the inclusion of ethnic minority families in schooling.

***Nature of the organisations involved***

The activity of the ITL project has been sustained by people from a range of different organisations, including universities, government agencies, NGOs and schools themselves. In most cases, the participating organisations have been non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The types of organisation are indicated in the table below.

***Table – What kind of organisations are participating?***

<b>Type of organisations supporting the project activities</b>	<b>No. of countries</b>
NGO only	<b>5</b>
NGO and University/academic institution (i.e. research institute)	<b>3</b>
NGO and a government agency (ministry or local government)	<b>3</b>
Other (NGO partnership with consultancy firm, university only etc.)	<b>4</b>

Clearly the NGOs have been the dominant force in the development of this project but in many cases have been able to build fruitful partnerships with universities and government agencies. The NGOs involved have their own goals and mission statements such as the one taken from the website of one of them (Figure 3 below).

### ***Figure 3 – An example of an NGO’s mission statement***

**Who are we?** Educational Center PRO DIDACTICA is a non–governmental, non-profit organization, founded in August 1998.

**Our mission** The mission of Educational Center PRO DIDACTICA is to promote the principles of the open society, supporting individuals and organizations interested in continuous learning and development, in order to achieve a better personal and professional performance and to facilitate their integration into a society in transition. In order to accomplish that, the Center is offering informational, training and consulting programs and services, focused on development of life-long learning skills.

Most, if not all, of the NGOs participating in the project share goals associated with the ‘principles of open society’, democracy and inclusion. It is no coincidence that most of these organisations were originally founded by the Open Society Foundations (OSF) which “work to improve the lives of the world’s most vulnerable people and to promote human rights, justice, and accountability” ([www.soros.org](http://www.soros.org)).

***The role of universities:*** In the case of HertsCam, the University is a leading partner. This is also the case in the other UK site in the south east of England, but elsewhere the universities play relatively minor roles. There are exceptions: in Greece the initiative was seized by a university professor who has been a partner with the University of Cambridge in previous projects; in Portugal the initiative came entirely from a university lecturer who was able to use the approach through the doctoral project of one of her students. The scope of the activity in this case was minimal. The reason that the university is a dominant force in the two sites in England is that the universities have the facility to award degrees, diplomas and certificates to teachers. This award-bearing system has evolved over time and has been adapted to the extent that it can operate at a distance from the university buildings and programmes or courses within the system can be taught or facilitated by associates such as the practitioners who constitute the strategy team referred to on page 1 above. This flexibility is powerful in enabling members of the university staff to enter into partnerships and to shape the award-bearing dimension to meet the needs of teachers and their schools. In contrast the universities in the other countries involved in the project seem to be constrained by legal frameworks which make it impossible, or at least very challenging, to develop their award-bearing systems.

***The role of government agencies:*** In many of the participating countries, the government provides some form of accreditation for teachers’ professional development. This is often in the form of credit points which are accumulated by attending approved short training courses. In some cases it is obligatory to engage in continuous updating and in other cases it can lead to the enhancement of salary. As with the university system, there seems to be inflexibility in these systems which makes it difficult to adapt to this approach to teacher and school development. However, In a number of cases it has been possible to certificate the teachers’ work by creating a certificate which is endorsed by the participating organisations, for example in Croatia teachers were given a certificate which carried the logos of the ministry teacher training agency, the NGOs involved and the ITL project. A similar approach was

used in Bulgaria. In at least one case, the certificate awarded has been recognised by the ministry of education as creditworthy within the official process of teacher education.

Government agencies have played only minor roles in partnerships to support teacher leadership. In HertsCam, financial cutbacks have reduced the local authority's capacity to assist while elsewhere it is unusual for either local government or the ministry of education to have any direct involvement. However, there are some interesting exceptions. In Greece, the boundary between public institutions seems to be less than clear cut with the result that the team which supports teacher leadership includes individuals employed by the educational advisory service, some of whom work for the national research institute while others are graduate students of the university. The coordinator of the team there is a university professor who has long standing collaborative relationships with the University of Cambridge. In Turkey, the local district governor has invested heavily in the teacher leadership programme. Here the programme is led by a Cambridge doctoral research student committed to building support for teacher leadership in that district. Another interesting case is Macedonia where the Step-by-Step organisation works in partnership with the Bureau for the Development of Education, a national government agency.

***Practitioners as strategists:*** In HertsCam, experienced practitioners play leading roles in the teacher leadership support programmes. They teach on the masters programme and lead the school-based teacher leadership groups. In these roles, they are associates of the university and as such are provided with induction and ongoing support. Their work is also subject to rigorous quality assurance. By continuously replenishing this team of associate tutors, HertsCam builds its own capacity to provide support for teacher leadership. In the other countries in the ITL project, this practice is in its infancy but it is anticipated that, in the future teachers themselves will develop the confidence and ability to support their colleagues through teacher leadership programmes.

The critical friendship dimension offered by the key ILT partners has been significant in developing the capacity of the schools to develop the teacher leadership programmes. For example in Montenegro, representatives from the university have led sessions alongside school principals and pedagogues. In Serbia members of the Teacher Training Faculty and the Faculty of Philosophy have lent their support as mentors to the schools as the project has unfolded. They have also trained mentors from other organisations such as the Teacher Training College and the Centre for Interactive Pedagogy to support teachers to take forward their development projects.

### ***Drawing schools into the activity***

Schools were drawn into the ITL project in different ways. In most cases, the teacher leadership initiative was launched by members of the ITL team who made presentations to large groups of teachers and invited them to volunteer. For example, in Bulgaria advantage was taken of a conference connected to another initiative whereas; in Montenegro, the school pedagogues made presentations in each of their schools.

Adaptation to the local cultural context was most evident in the labels attached to the project activity at the point at which it was launched. The name ‘The International Teacher Leadership project’ proved to be unacceptable in some contexts. This was first encountered in Turkey where the use of the word ‘leadership’ in relation to teachers would be seen as subversive. In that context the euphemistic title ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Teachers’ was adopted. This type of adaptation occurred in a number of sites (see under *Support groups* below).

### ***Synergy with national priorities***

A key principle for practice in the HertsCam programme has been to invite teachers to develop projects focused on their own professional concerns which leads to there being many agendas within any teacher leadership group. However, in the ITL project more broadly, it is clear that the teacher leadership idea has been linked to other initiatives in which the agenda is already identified.

For example in Croatia, Serbia, Albania and Kosovo, the ITL project was linked to the work of the APREME<sup>2</sup> project which was designed to address the problem of the lack of involvement in the life of the school on the part of ethnic minority families. Schools were invited to apply to join teacher leadership groups and were selected according to criteria derived from the aims of the APREME project, for example: ‘children and parents belong to different ethnic groups’ and ‘the school is interested in various ways of cooperating with parents from different ethnic groups’.

There were other examples of where the ITL project served other initiatives. In Portugal the project was linked to a small-scale action research project. Here, a university lecturer with an interest in participating in international research had a part-time doctoral student who wanted to support the development of Information and Communication Technology or Informatics. In Macedonia, the ITL project was integrated with a national USAID backed primary education project which involves the development of mentoring for teachers. In New Zealand the methodology of the ITL project was adopted by a unit which took responsibility for easing the transition from school to the world of work for young people with special educational needs.

### **c) The operation of teacher leadership support programmes**

As argued in Section 2 above, the distinctive approach to supporting teacher leadership adopted in the ITL project is the provision of support which is direct, deliberate, detailed and sustained. The purpose of the support is to enable teachers to lead their own development projects aimed at improving aspects of teaching and learning.

***Support groups:*** In all cases the support for teacher leadership was provided by establishing groups which were led by members of the international team and their partners or associates. As referred to above, these groups carried a variety of labels: in Bulgaria for example they

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<sup>2</sup>APREME – Advancing Participation and Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Education (a project promoting all-inclusive education systems in the Western Balkans)

were called 'Active Teachers Clubs'; in Bosnia and Herzegovina the programme was called 'Supporting teachers to lead change' and in Montenegro it was referred to as 'Teachers of the future'.

In each participating country there were teachers from at least three schools taking part, sometimes in a single group and sometimes with a group from each school. The number of teachers in a group ranged from as few as five to as many as 23. The groups would meet on at least five or six occasions during the academic year but in some cases the frequency of meetings was more intense.

***Location of meetings:*** In the original HertsCam model, sessions are held on the school premises in a classroom or library at the end of the teaching day and normally last between two to three hours. These sessions would take place at least six times during an academic year. This level of frequency was generally the case across the ITL project with the exception of Turkey where the programme was significantly more intense. In Istanbul there were 14 sessions lasting four hours each. This raises the issue as to the sustainability. The more modest approach of 6-7 sessions per year seems to have been adopted in most cases although interesting variations also occur, to fit local contexts. In Kosovo, for example, initial whole-day sessions were held to introduce participants to the programme. Teachers' particular needs were taken into account when planning for sessions. For example, in Croatia, some sessions took place on a Saturday morning. In Turkey, teachers choose to meet on Saturday morning which is a non-teaching day, in a building provided by the local government. In most cases, no charges were incurred for such premises. Refreshments were usually provided by the organisers of the session. An important variable is the extent to which the work of the support group impacts on the professional culture of the school. This is more likely to be the case where there are a significant number of participants in one school and where the meetings take place at the school and involve senior members of staff.

***Facilitation of group sessions:*** The way in which sessions operated varied. The meetings mostly featured workshop activities or active learning sessions, helping teachers to plan their projects and reflect together on the progress of the development activity. Some were clearly facilitative in style, for example, in Serbia, whereas in other countries, a more didactic approach was taken, at least in initial meetings. Strong direction was seen to be needed, particularly in the initial stages of working together. Teachers were initially seen to be over-reliant on the facilitators, but through the teacher-leadership process they developed into more autonomous professionals. In Albania for example, 'mini-lectures' were used to introduce initial ideas of teacher leadership. Many reports commented on there being an overt strategy to create an atmosphere in which teachers could talk openly about concerns they have and honestly evaluate their own projects. A focus on creating an environment which is supportive to the development of teacher agency was evident in some countries.

***One-to-one tutoring:*** The approach to tutoring outside of formal meetings also varied. One-to-one support was generally provided outside of sessions. This was usually through informal face-to-face meetings and e-mail or telephone communication. Web-based social networking

sites such as Facebook were also used. Some countries instituted more formal individual tutorials.

***A step-by-step model:*** A key assumption underpinning the support for teacher leadership is that, in order to be able to lead development work, teachers need to be led through a process one step at a time and provided with targeted support at each step.

The steps in the process are:

Step 1	Values clarification
Step 2	Identification of professional concerns
Step 3	Negotiation and consultation to clarify agenda for development
Step 4	Action planning
Step 5	Negotiation and consultation to clarify the action plan
Step 6	Leadership of enquiry-based development work
Step 7	Networking to contribute to professional knowledge

The workshops discussed above are focused on these steps and designed to enable teachers to reflect in detail on their intentions and experiences and to plan effectively to ensure maximum impact.

***The use of tools:*** Another distinctive feature of the ITL approach to supporting teacher leadership was the use of tools created to support reflection and planning. At an early stage in the ITL project the HertsCam team shared a package of tools, techniques and strategies that had been developed and refined over many years. Partners were invited to adapt this package according to the local context. The programme of support also features the provision of opportunities for networking. Network events play a crucial role in enabling teachers from many schools to come together to build knowledge through display, presentation and critical discussion.

The majority of partners made substantial use of these tools and strategies for a variety of purposes. In some settings, partners relied on HertsCam tools to introduce the concepts and practices of teacher leadership. As facilitators' confidence grew, they began to develop their own resources, appropriate to the national context. In some countries, facilitators arranged for all tools to be translated whereas in others selected tools were translated. Often, numerous tools were trialled in the first year of a project. Evaluation of the effectiveness of these tools in supporting the development of teacher leadership, led to the use of a smaller selection of tools proven to be effective in a given context. Some group leaders developed additional tools to serve specific purposes. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tools were developed to help teachers recognise the characteristics of leaders of change. In Croatia, additional tools were developed from a reading of connected literature and used to support wider reading around key topics such as professional cultures and school improvement.

The most useful tools were seen to be:

- formats and structures which provided scaffolds for group work and discussion
- illustrative examples of key documents such as action plans
- instruments to help participants analyse the culture of their school
- vignettes of teachers' development projects to illustrate the nature of teacher leadership
- guidance sheets to help participants prepare and compile their portfolios
- guidance sheets to help participants prepare to share accounts of their projects through networking

Tools were both used within sessions and provided electronically, for example, on a website, for teachers to refer to in their own time.

***Certification:*** As is described above, in the case of HertsCam, participating teachers can be awarded either a postgraduate certificate or a masters degree by the University of Cambridge. Such academic frameworks were not generally available in other partner countries but instead partners created their own forms of certification which did not depend on the universities. In Montenegro for example participating teachers were awarded a certificate which bore the logo of the NGO – the Pedagogical Centre of Montenegro – together with the logo of the ITL project. The director of the NGO and David Frost as the ITL project coordinator signed each certificate. Discussion with the ministry of education had led to the certificate specifying that the teachers had “successfully completed the 27 hour programme of support and led a process of school improvement”. With this agreement, the teachers were able to satisfy the requirements of their national system for professional development and career advancement. Similar approaches were developed in Macedonia, Croatia and Greece. In Moldova, certificates were awarded by the NGO, Pro Didactica, in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

#### **d) Teachers' development projects**

A key feature of the ITL approach to teacher leadership is that teachers or other educational workers, whether they hold a position of responsibility or not, are enabled to lead development projects. Here the word 'development' is used to refer to a process in which there is an initiative to improve educational practice. This involves taking strategic action, that is to say, deliberate, planned and with a goal of making a difference. That action is designed to create some kind of collaboration with colleagues and others in which evidence is gathered and used to support reflection and deliberation, leading to significant and embedded change or improvement. Professional knowledge is created through this process and shared



further through networking and other forms of dissemination. It is not unusual to find examples of development work in schools, but usually the initiative tends to come from either the ministry of education or from the school principal. What is distinctive about the ITL approach is that the initiatives come from the teachers themselves.

In some cases, teachers collaborated in small groups – this approach was a particular characteristic of some national contexts eg Turkey. This approach seems to have the benefit of immediate collaboration, but this can also be seen to be an inhibitor in that teachers may then be less inclined to exercise leadership in order to build collaboration with their colleagues beyond the teacher leadership group.

Most projects are focused on teaching and learning in classrooms. In spite of what the national reports say about the pedagogic cultures being increasingly shaped by the pressure of high-stakes testing, it is evident that teachers' projects are very rarely aimed at simply raising test results. Instead they tend to be focused on aspects of learning or the social relationships in the classroom in order to improve the quality of learning. For example 'Developing active participation in reading lessons to improve children's reading' (Bosnia and Herzegovina) or 'How to make written feedback more effective for students' (Macedonia).

In most cases, it is evident that teachers' projects arise from their own perceptions of a problem, for example that students lack interest or motivation in lessons or that there is a need to address social, lifestyle or health related issues such as obesity. In some cases, the problem is presented to the teaching staff and then volunteers are invited to participate in project work to address the problem. This has been particularly the case where the ITL approach to supporting teacher leadership has been adopted by a pre-established initiative such as the 'Advancing Participation and Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Education' (APREME) project. Here the problem is how to engage the parents of ethnic minority students in the life of the school. This approach was particularly evident in Kosovo and Serbia.

Some projects are focused indirectly on teaching and learning in that they have in common a concern with relationships. Examples of such projects include 'Improving social skills for primary school students and strengthening unity in classrooms' (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and 'The new student in the class and how to overcome the negativity of others' (Bulgaria). A small minority of projects focus on the functioning of the school in ways which can be seen as having an indirect bearing on teaching and learning. On example is 'Applying Informational Technologies in Educational Management' (Moldova).

To illustrate the nature of teachers' development projects in the ITL project the following vignette (Figure 4 below) is drawn from a report from Zagreb in Croatia.

***Figure 4 – A vignette of a typical development project***

Gordana is a classroom teacher in a school in Zagreb. She was concerned with the challenge her students will face when making the transition to specialist subject teaching in the next school year. She talked with pupils about their fears and concerns. Subject teachers' expectations and finding their way to the subject classrooms were amongst their concerns.

Gordana thought that meeting the subject teachers in advance would help her students to cope with the transition. She asked her colleagues if they would cooperate with this idea and they agreed. She invited her students to make a list of the teachers they would like to meet and send invitations to them. She helped them to organise 5 meetings during the school term. Gordana talked to her colleagues and her students before the meetings to learn about their expectations and again after the actual events to assess how effective they had been. The feedback was positive: students' curiosity was satisfied and anxieties allayed. They felt that they had understood what would be expected of them and were happy to realise that they already possessed skills, abilities and knowledge needed for the smooth transition. The teachers seem to have gained a clearer picture of the students' personalities and their prior knowledge. Gordana provided all her colleagues with an account of her project and hopes to persuade them to build on this experiment to develop more strategies to ease transitions in the future. She also shared an account at a network event involving teachers from other schools in Zagreb.

This example illustrates how teachers identify a professional concern – in this case the problem that can arise when students have to adapt to new circumstances – and then take strategic action to try to address the problem. This teacher has collaborated with both colleagues and students involving evidence gathering and evaluation. The result is not only better professional knowledge in that particular school but also the potential for other schools to benefit through the sharing of an account of the project in local networks.

#### **e) Networking and knowledge building**

It is argued here that networking for teachers is a viable alternative to the dissemination of officially sanctioned knowledge through training. Where teachers have been empowered to innovate it is clear that they can experience deep learning about their practice and can find themselves engaging in knowledge building which builds social and intellectual capacity in both the school and the networks to which they belong. In the ITL project local networks for teachers have flourished. There have been successful events in Athens, Belgrade, Istanbul and Zagreb for example. The event in Belgrade also involved teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similarly, in an event in Bucharest, teachers from the north of Romania and from several parts of neighbouring Moldova came together to share their work and participate in joint workshops. National teams have also developed websites and paper-based newsletters to enable teachers to share their teacher leadership stories.

In the ILT project networking is seen as a process that enables professional knowledge building to take place. Professional knowledge is generated within the school through collaborative processes aimed at developing aspects of teaching and learning. This is illustrated in the following vignette (Figure 5 below) in which an experienced primary teacher in Moldova was concerned that her students seemed indifferent towards learning so she decided to develop a project in which she focused on creativity.

#### ***Figure 5 – A vignette from Moldova***

We first started to learn through play and using play, students started to participate in problem solving in a creative way: they changed endings to stories making them happy or sad, they invented new characters, improvised the environment and place where the story took place.

My aim was for each lesson to present students with a problem/dilemma that needed a solution. In a department meeting, I told colleagues about my project and I asked for their opinions and for their collaboration. I wanted them to use some creative activities and teaching methods so that we could later compare students' attitude and motivation to learning. We observed each others' lessons. We then met again and concluded that our students became more sociable, more creative and with a wider imagination. Some of them even improved their behaviour. I also tried some methods used by my colleagues and I asked them to come and observe my lessons. A few months later, we noticed great changes: students' motivation increased, they started to enjoy school and their attitude changed towards the better. Even the quiet students were participating more in class. Students were so excited about the ITL conference in which I was going to participate that they helped me create the display. They chose to tell the story of the project in a display in the shape of a book with each page showing the steps undertaken and the activities we did and symbolised by little clip art images.

In the case outlined above, the teacher initiated and led a process which created knowledge of how to enable students to become more creative. The knowledge was shared more widely and shaped by the experience of sharing and scrutinising through networking. In some countries, the habit of networking is well established. In HertsCam for example, there were 4 network events and one annual conference in 2010-11 and in Athens there have been 3 events since their involvement in the project. The following extract from the report from the Greek members of the project team is interesting:

*The teachers presented their action plans, talked about challenges they face, asked for ideas and help from the others..... They were really enthusiastic and asked for more network events. They were inspired and encouraged.*

(Report from Greece)

There are two important points to note from this. One is that the teachers are no longer simply disseminating; rather they are co-constructing knowledge through discussion and the exchange of ideas. It is not a matter of transferring 'best practice' – a term that has been rendered problematic in a number of places (eg Fielding *et al.*, 2005; Hannon, 2007) – but more a matter of examining a narrative about an episode of development work to see what can be learned from it. The second point is concerned with the cultivation of moral purpose which could be said to be even more important than the passing on of technical tips and key insights. At the event in Athens referred to above, teachers were said to be 'inspired and encouraged'. The stories that teachers share when they come together to network can be regarded to some extent as performing a similar function to that of a parable; in other words they are narratives that carry with them a moral message. This is illustrated in the vignette in Figure 6 below.

### ***Figure 6 – A vignette from Bulgaria***

At a network event in the Bulgarian city of Veliko Tarnovo an elementary teacher spoke about her project. She had been faced with a challenge when a nearby school closed and the students were re-distributed to other schools in the city. A group of six Roma children were transferred to her school. The teacher explained that the children lacked basic literacy and it was obvious to her that they had not received even a basic education in the past. Her interpretation was that they had been effectively excluded from education and she expressed her sense of injustice about this. She reported how she had consulted her colleagues who agreed to meet to discuss what could be done. Together they devised a strategy which

included an initial programme of intensive work on basic skills followed by gradual integration into the mainstream class.

What this teacher conveyed was not so much a recipe of techniques and resources for addressing the problem; the message was essentially a moral one. Teachers inspire each other partly on moral grounds by conveying in an illustrative way the idea that ‘we ought to do something about this’.

There is another important element to this process of mutual inspiration which is concerned with self-efficacy in which the essential message is: ‘people like us can solve problems like this’.

*I caught myself participating in discussions with all my heart, getting excited about the most ordinary talk between colleagues from our school and the colleagues from Hrasno. Exchanging ideas, listening to each other with respect, giving support to each other, one gets tremendous self-esteem, and that is all I need. So I managed to go beyond the limits of my previous work, I set my goals on a higher level. Having seen the results of what I initiated with my idea in cooperation with my colleagues, I am encouraged to make new ways to continue something that improves the quality of work with children, which encourages me personally, thereby making me happier.*

(Teacher quoted in Bosnia and Herzegovina Final Report)

Belief in self-efficacy is vital for human health and wellbeing (Bandura, 1989), but what is really interesting in relation to educational innovation is the idea of collective self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004). This is also highlighted by Scheerens’ analysis of the TALIS data (2010) which indicated a positive relationship between teachers’ self-efficacy and student achievement.

A legitimate question in any discussion about knowledge creation and transfer or knowledge management concerns *validation*. This is commonly expressed in the form of questions such as: ‘what works?’ and ‘what is best practice?’ (Slavin, 2008). The usual assumption in the literature on knowledge management is that validation is a matter for the organisation and in schools, teachers are not free agents of course. Their practice is shaped by national curricula and national testing systems. In the ITL project the emphasis is on teacher-generated knowledge which raises the challenge of knowledge validation.

In the HertsCam Network this is addressed by the involvement of the University and the local authority as significant partners. Teachers’ knowledge exchange is enriched and given rigour by the requirements of the masters degree which a third of network members undertake and by the academically less challenging certificate which the other two thirds pursue. Research-based knowledge permeates the discourse, enriching it and bringing a particular form of rigour to the knowledge creation and to the critical discussions that follow. In some of the other countries participating in the ITL project, the universities play a part, but this tends not to be in relation to the award of degrees or other awards, and in some cases there is no university involvement at all. At this stage in the evolution of the project we can say that knowledge validation at a local level is enhanced through the building of critical discourse in

networks but there is work yet to be done to guarantee academic enrichment of the sort which might raise the level of rigour.

#### **f) Policy advocacy**

As explained in Section 3 of this report, a significant feature of the methodology of the project is the commitment to exert influence on policy makers in the flow of the project by drawing attention to what is being achieved and by enabling teachers to speak for themselves about their innovations. This is linked with the illuminative dimension of the methodology which is the key to making innovative practice visible to policy makers and other interest groups.

This aim has been realised through dialogue initiated by members of the ITL team in their localities. This has been the case in Moldova for example where the NGO has a good relationship with the Ministry of Education. In both Serbia and Macedonia senior officials from the ministries attended ITL project events and have ongoing collaborative relationships with the NGOs concerned. In Serbia our partner, Jelena Vranjesevic, led a training session for the UNESCO European Center for Higher Education: *Excellence in Teacher Training in and for Multicultural Environments*. This event, for teacher educators from different Teachers' Faculties in the region, focused using on teacher leadership as a powerful tool for building allies in the field of intercultural education.

Where possible the occasion of a 'critical friendship visit' by the project coordinator and other team members has provided a focus for dialogue with policy makers. Such visits have often been linked to Network Events which have provided opportunities to showcase teachers' development work and highlight the expert facilitation that has enabled the work to take place. For example, for an event in Zagreb, invitations were sent to the ministry of education and the Education and Teacher Training Agency. At a similar event in Bucharest the ministry responded by sending an official who advises on teachers' continuing professional development.

In some cases policy makers have had a stake in the project from its inception. In Turkey for example, the project activity expanded significantly when a district governor invited the ITL team to establish a teacher leadership programme in his district. The Governor himself attended and spoke at the first network event in Istanbul and has since promoted the project with other governors and with the ministry of education at a national level. In Macedonia, the collaborative relationship between the ministry of education and the NGO involved in the ITL project was already established and so the deputy minister of education made the opening address when members of the Cambridge ITL team ran a 2 day induction event for the project.

Engaging the media has also been a strategic goal and we have seen many instances of successful penetration. There has been notable success in this regard in Bulgaria where David Frost was interviewed on prime time national radio. An interview was also recorded for a later television broadcast. In Croatia one of the local team members, Ljubica Petrovic,

appeared on a very prominent TV programme: 'Good Morning' and a short clip of an interview with David Frost was shown on a current affairs programme.

In some cases, the ITL project has been highlighted in the academic sphere through public lectures. In Athens, Zagreb, Sofia and Belgrade for example, David Frost has made substantial presentations to national audiences. The project has also been the focus of numerous articles in academic and professional journals; for example, in Croatia Iris Marusic and Vlasta Vizek published an article in 'Child, School, Family' – an educational journal. In Serbia, the journal of the Institute for Educational Research published an article by David Frost.

## **Section 5: Evidence of impact**

This section draws on evidence from the reports from national teams to provide an assessment of the impact of the work of the project on teachers, students, schools and systems. The evidence is more detailed in teachers' portfolios of evidence which are produced in local languages and therefore more difficult to access.

Impact is reviewed under the following headings.

- a) Teacher development
- b) Professional practice
- c) Inclusion
- d) Students' learning
- e) Schools as organisations
- f) Educational systems
- g) Wider community / society

The discussion in this section also highlights the variables / factors that contribute to the maximisation of impact.

### **a) Impact on teacher development**

The central and defining feature of the ITL project's approach to teacher leadership is that it enables teachers to initiate and lead development projects. This emphasis on the teacher's personal agenda is a powerful driver because it releases intense enthusiasm and a strong sense of moral purpose.

**Self-efficacy:** Reports from all the countries participating in the ITL project highlight the impact on teachers' self-efficacy and self-confidence. This has at least two dimensions: on the one hand teachers become more confident as classroom practitioners, and on the other hand they develop the confidence to be able to exert influence over the direction of their schools. National reports include plentiful evidence of improvements in confidence regarding classroom practice. In Moldova, changes to teachers' dispositions were noted, despite difficult professional circumstances.

*The teachers' projects made a difference not just to classroom practice, but more widely. It made a difference to their colleagues' capacity – their teaching, their understanding, their dispositions and their work motivation, in spite of teacher low status and salaries in our country.*

(Final Report, July 2011, Moldova)

It was evident from partners' reports that the opportunity for reflection offered by gathering and using evidence has a positive impact on teachers' professionalism. A key benefit of the ITL project is that teachers have begun to take the initiative, a process which increased their confidence both within and outside of the classroom. Teachers were seen to be developing in

confidence through their leadership activities. For some teachers this was evident in more active engagement with pedagogical debate within schools.

*The work on the project and in the group encouraged me to think and actively participate in work and discussions on issues I previously hadn't paid attention to. Instructions, suggestions, discussions and comments particularly had positive influence on my work.*

(Teacher A quoted in, Final Report, July 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

For others, it manifested itself in developing confidence to lead innovative work with colleagues. This awareness of the capacity to influence and to exercise leadership underpinned a change in self-concept.

*I learned that everything was easier through teamwork and that changes were definitely possible, although sometimes they seemed impossible. I learned that we should appreciate ourselves and our work more, because every change, no matter how small, is very important and big.*

(Teacher B Final Report, July 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The use of activities designed to explore the potential for teacher leadership has impacted on teachers' awareness of their own roles and their leadership potential. This manifests itself in an increasing belief in teachers' ability to influence school management.

**Leadership capacity:** Teachers in all countries participating in the ITL project appear to be developing confidence in their nascent leadership abilities. In some cases, this is due to a change in the way teachers perceived the idea of leadership, as illustrated by this comment from a teacher Croatia.

*The ITL project helped me to change the way I understood leadership.*

(Final Report, July 2011, Croatia)

In many countries, teachers' beliefs in their own capacity has been transformed by the ITL project.

At the start teachers were sceptical about the idea that they can change schools. . . . At the end of the sessions most of them said that change could be achieved, and it is teachers who can make that change.

(Final Report, July 2011, Montenegro)

In one group in HertsCam the tutor evaluated her work. She asked the teachers to tell her what they perceived teacher leadership to be about and then represented their responses in a 'wordle' picture.



**Figure 7 – A wordle picture**



(Creaby, 2011)

The picture indicates the words used most frequently in response to the tutor’s question. In the same context, comments such as those below had been gathered from teachers’ portfolios.

*I am a teacher leader because I am curious about how to change my own teaching and to work with colleagues in sharing good practice and to implement new approaches to our teaching.*

(Teacher A, HertsCam Report, 2011)

*Learning and leadership have very strong links. Without leaders of learning within a school, learning may become stagnant, therefore it is important staff realise that the work they are doing may be able to strongly impact on the work of others.*

(Teacher B, HertsCam Report, 2010)

## **b) Impact on professional practice**

The tools used by tutors to facilitate the workshops in the teacher leadership support groups include those which enable teachers to plan their projects with impact in mind. The emphasis is on embedding new practices in the school as organisation rather than limiting them to the practice of individual teachers.

It is clear from the reports from the project partners that teachers involved in the ITL project are already having a positive influence on whole school policy and practice. In Macedonia, for example, changes in teachers’ professional practice is particularly noted.

*The set of practical instruments and tools give the teachers the much needed resources to promote and implement improvement of their practice. These characteristics are the most challenging: developing a practice of taking initiative and leading change in a profession that is used to following orders and using digested solutions, is no small thing. This project has helped teachers to show initiative, develop a habit of thinking about the learning process and documenting, activities that strengthen teachers as professionals and intellectuals.*

(Final Report, July 2011, Macedonia)

In some countries, teachers’ influence outside of their classroom presents a considerable challenge given the history outlined in Section 1 of this report above. Participants tend to

focus on their own practice in the early stages but then find that colleagues become interested in the new practice and adopt it, or at least become involved in related development work. This is illustrated in the vignette below.

***Figure 8 – A vignette, developing active learning in an Istanbul primary school***

Nerin, a grade 3 teacher, was concerned about students' lack of enthusiasm. She noted a lack of engagement, passivity and daydreaming. She used an evaluation sheet to ask the students how they felt about lessons. They said that they were bored. She met with a group of them to explore why and they suggested new activities. In her teacher leadership group, she talked about what the students had told her. A colleague suggested using a Multiple Intelligences profiling technique which she tried. Then she experimented with the classroom furniture – creating groups of 4-5 pupils. She designed activities to suit the different types of intelligence. The energy levels seemed to increase. She wrote to parents to tell them about what she was doing and suggested ways that they could help their children learn. The discussion amongst parents led to some of them asking other teachers about these new approaches. The other teachers asked Nerin to tell them more about what she was doing. The next stage of the project was to work with the pupils to create new learning activities. A third stage was to talk to her colleagues about ways to share ideas about how to create active learning techniques. They decided to establish a special room - called the 'Activity Room' where they would display materials and share information about how to support active learning.

Sometimes the take-up is more formal. In Bulgaria, for example, one of the issues explored by teachers – 'managing noise in the classroom' – was adopted as a new priority in the whole school development plan for the next academic year.

In some cases teachers take the initiative to address a concern which affects the way the organisation works. For example: a teacher in Macedonia became aware that recording students' achievements was very time consuming so he devised a computer program which would allow him and his colleagues to record information about students' grades, attendance and comments about progress in their learning. He introduced his idea to parents and to his colleagues who adopted it with enthusiasm. He shared this with teachers from other schools in the municipality at a networking event.

**c) Impact on inclusion**

At the beginning of 2010-11 the scope of the ITL project was extended to include the APREME project which focused on the inclusion of ethnic minorities in schooling. Teacher leadership was a useful strategy that would help to take the aims of that project forward. Teachers were able to take the initiative to draw parents of minority communities into the life of the school. The following vignette is illustrative.

***Figure 9 – A vignette, drawing ethnic minority families into the life of the school in Kosovo***

Zana was concerned with low enrolment of ethnic minority students, their early drop-out and a low level of parent involvement. She invited colleagues to meet to discuss how to address the problem. They realised that parents from the minority community may not be well educated but they are good at playing various instruments, so they decided to establish the 'Music Lab'. They invited the teacher of Music and parents from the community and made the plan

together. The floor of the room was remade to make it appropriate for dancing. Musical instruments and traditional outfits from both communities were bought. They made a schedule for rehearsals where parents would come and help the teacher of music. They decided who will play instruments and who will help with dancing lessons. In cooperation with the principal, they organized an event where students, with the help of teachers and parents, sang, danced and played instruments. Through this event they were able to distribute information about the Music Lab to parents, teachers, education department officials and teachers from other schools.

The impact of teacher leadership on inclusion in the ITL project was not limited to those projects like the one above that arose because of the APREME project. It is axiomatic that teacher leadership will foster inclusivity because the teachers involved feel a direct benefit from their own enhanced sense of participation and voice. These feelings lead to a heightened awareness of the morality of participation. Additionally, there is a world-wide trend towards governments, NGOs and local educational authorities promoting education which extends beyond the school building and includes parents and the local community. This combines with the promotion of the value of self-evaluation and inquiry in which students' and parents' voices are solicited to create an environment in which inclusion, in its broadest sense, is nourished.

#### **d) Impact on students' learning**

Direct evidence of improvements in students' learning is difficult to access as explained above, but members of the international ITL project team are confident that teachers' development projects have made very significant contributions to such improvement. Evidence of impact on students' attainment and on their capacity for learning is to be found in teacher's own portfolios and, although teachers have used different approaches to collecting such evidence, reports from project partners are clear that the development work led by teachers has had a major impact on the quality and extent of students' learning, as well as their capacity to learn in the future.

Teachers often focused their development work on students who exhibited low levels of motivation. Having addressed the concern in many different ways, they were subsequently able to demonstrate enhanced levels of enthusiasm. More importantly they tended to show evidence of improved self-confidence and development of students' awareness of how to learn. For the teachers, it was clear that these benefits were because of increased collaborative working and a revitalised pedagogical approach.

*Better results are also noticed at the end of the year, which was one of my goals too. Impact on me relates to my view of planning lessons, and my future work, as well as the work of possibly interested colleagues. I will try to make my lessons as diverse as possible, and connect with as many colleagues as possible with the purpose of joining ideas.*

(Primary school teacher quoted in Final Report, July 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

This positive picture illustrated in the extract above was echoed in the reports from all the project partners. In some cases teachers pointed to falling levels of student absenteeism as an indicator of increased student motivation. In some cases raised levels of student attainment was noted. Some teachers had collected feedback from their students which indicated renewed enthusiasm for learning and satisfaction with teachers' innovations.

Given the nature of the project, it is not surprising that it is not possible, at this stage, to establish clear causal links between particular innovations and student learning outcomes. It was more appropriate to proceed on the assumption that teacher development leads to improvements in students' learning. The emphasis has been on the development of teachers' capacities and the nurturing of professional learning communities in which the values of inquiry, improvement, innovation and self-evaluation are cultivated. This inevitably leads to improvements in the quality of classroom practice, which in turn leads to improved student outcomes.

#### **e) Impact on schools as organisations**

There are indications that the teacher leadership programmes described above have supported the development of schools as professional learning communities. These programmes influence not only the teachers who are directly involved in undertaking projects but also the colleagues with whom they work. Impact is manifest in at least two different, but related ways: one, by influencing the practice of others and two, by contributing to the change in the professional culture more widely.

In partners' reports it is observed that participating teachers' projects have led to their colleagues experimenting with new ideas and practices. In Greece, for example, school principals have noted with considerable satisfaction that teachers had become more engaged and demonstrate a willingness to innovate. When teachers encourage each other to innovate, new norms are established with a tangible effect on the professional culture.

In spite of organisational structures that may be unfavourable, collaboration between teachers has been noted in reports from many of the participating countries. Partners report that teachers have begun to collaborate beyond the confines of a particular project, offering to share practice and to mentor their colleagues. One report talked of an 'enhanced team spirit amongst staff' and others reported that the collaboration fostered by the ITL project was seen to be a key factor in avoiding teacher burn-out. Networking events had opened up new opportunities to collaborate across school and district boundaries. The latter has the effect of generating excitement and stimulating a sense of moral purpose.

School principals in many countries are providing positive support for the development of teacher leadership in their schools. In some cases, the project has benefited from the wholehearted support and personal example of principals as leaders. Principals have organised promotional events which offered the opportunity to involve students, parents and representatives of the local community and media. In the case of primary and elementary

schools, it seems more often the case that school principals become directly involved in the development work whereas, in the larger, secondary schools, the principal tends to play a more distant enabling role. Some principals see the potential for teacher leadership groups to make significant contributions to whole school staff development activities as illustrated in the extract below.

It is common practice for members of TLDW groups to run in-school professional development for colleagues at staff conferences or similar events. This is often referred to as '*sharing good practice*' and sometimes '*learning from each other*' which implies a more empowering concept. Such events are seen as particularly '*authentic*' and '*more powerful*' because it comes from a colleague within the school and supports the teaching and learning culture of the school.

(HertsCam Evaluation Report)

#### **f) Impact on education systems**

This type of impact can be seen most obviously through the network events which have spawned participation in the ITL project.

*Sometimes schools can be fairly insular places therefore it is motivating and stimulating to hear that others are facing barriers and trying to find solutions. .... Good to link with others as I personally feel working as a partnership is so important to towns such as Stevenage – collaborative work can work so well if it has the foundations to work upon.*

(Teacher quoted in HertsCam Evaluation Report, 2011)

In the vignette included in Section 4 above (page 29), the teacher from Bosnia and Herzegovina, talked about *participating in discussions with all my heart, getting excited about the most ordinary talk between colleagues from our school and the colleagues from Hrasno*. She was reflecting on the way her developmental work spanned two schools. It is not untypical that teachers will collaborate across the normal organisational boundaries and work collaboratively to meet a common challenge.

Evidence from Macedonia demonstrates how developing teacher leadership can bring about systemic change in the ways in which teachers are professionally developed.

*. . . guiding teachers within their own professional environments and giving them freedom to choose projects and tools for different purposes are new and authentic ways of promoting professional development that makes this type of support better than other types. This project promoted teachers self-confidence, awareness of their leadership potential by forming strong teams of teachers which further connect into networks to share and build on their ideas.*

(Final Report, July 2011, Macedonia)

Network events have proved to be very successful in many countries both as opportunities to celebrate the impact of teachers' work and as opportunities to involve others in teacher leadership.

### **g) Impact on the wider community and society**

Because of the connection with the APREME project many teachers' projects have made a significant difference to the involvement of parents in the life of the schools. Not only has this occurred in the APREME schools, but it is also evident in schools right across the ITL project. This commitment could be seen for example in Bulgaria where a website created by the teachers themselves adopted the slogan: 'Teachers who offer support, trust and mutual assistance to build a team with students, parents, teachers and experts.' This echoes the moral message in the vignette in Section 4 above which describes the project in which teachers had collaborated to find new ways to integrate Roma children. In many countries, but especially in those with significant ethnic minorities, teachers have been successful in engaging parents who would otherwise have been reluctant to come into school. This is exemplified well in the vignette below.

#### ***Figure 10 – A vignette, working with the community in rural Serbia***

Jelena is young elementary school teacher who works in satellite classroom in a village where the majority of students are Roma. She's been receiving complaints from parents from the village that their children do not have proper school yard and they felt discriminated against because the main school has very a well-equipped school yard. She talked to the school principal about this problem and together they decided to do something about it. They talked to parents and discovered that the main motivation behind the request they made was a desire for their children to spend some quality leisure time because this rural area is lacking activities designed for children and youth (and this creates bigger problems, such as violence, alcohol and drugs abuse, etc.). They understood parents' fears and told them that the school would be willing to make a school yard, but they needed help from parents with such things as cutting the grass, cleaning the field, painting sports equipment and so on. Parents volunteered to help, so the joint action for building the school yard began with a collaboration between teachers, students and parents. During this process Jelena and the school principal thought about how to use school yard effectively; they suggested joint activities for parents and their children. This would provide opportunities for them to spend some quality time together and would strengthen parent-school cooperation. During the opening day of school yard, sports games were organised; parents were both organisers and participants in sports games together with their children and teachers.

The sort of activity illustrated above led to a much greater involvement of parents in the life of the school.

Teachers reported increased level of parents' participation and motivation to be involved in different aspects of school life. Parents were very glad to be informed about different opportunities for their involvement, they were motivated to participate and they attracted more parents to become involved.

(Final Report, July 2011, Serbia)

This involvement was not restricted to the sort of activity described in the vignette above, but also extended to involvement in the curriculum and classroom activity more widely.

In some countries, the ITL project has been seen to be a key lever in increased democratisation. In Moldova for example, an audit tool was used to demonstrate rising levels of democratic communication and decision-making during the course of the ITL project. In

most countries it is too early in the ITL project's history to claim a discernable impact on democratisation. However, in many countries, project leaders believe that the preconditions for such profound impact are being created through the building of teachers' self-confidence and capacity to effect change. The focus on inclusion in many of the teachers' projects is a key dimension of this type of impact.

Where teacher-led development work has become firmly established, many teachers have found ways to listen to their students for example by asking students for feedback on their experience of lessons or by inviting students to collaborate in developing aspects of the curriculum. Teacher-led projects have therefore generally involved more democratic, inclusive, student-led processes.

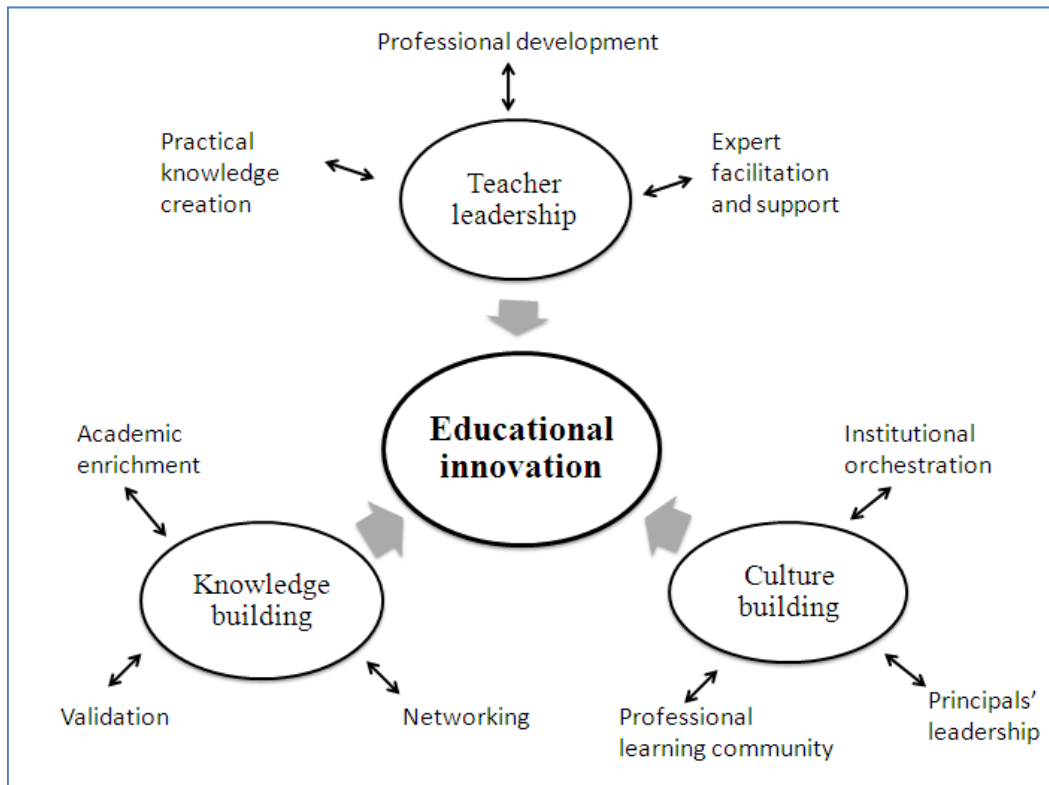
Principals have reported overcoming their fear of sharing leadership. Some have expressed the view that, in allowing teachers to take the lead and to set the agenda for change, they may be exposing the school to some kind of reputational risk. School principals feel their sense of accountability very keenly and have been courageous in enabling teachers to feel a sense of freedom and creativity. All report, however, that the risk was worth it in that their schools have benefited enormously from teacher leadership.

## Section 6: Summary of claims made and implications for policy

*This section draws together the evidence presented earlier, using it to support a number of key claims and to highlight a number for salient messages for policy makers.*

Our experience of working to facilitate teacher leadership in 15 countries has enabled us to accumulate compelling evidence which has underpinned intense critical discussions in the international project team. Although this must be seen as merely the beginning of the process of development and research, we nevertheless feel able to offer a theory of educational innovation in which teacher leadership plays a central part. This is represented in the diagram in Figure 11 below.

**Figure 11 – Diagram representing a theory of educational innovation**



What follows is an explanation of each component of the theory starting with the section at the top of the diagram, teacher leadership.

### Teacher leadership

As outlined above, it is assumed here that we are concerned with the role of all teachers in educational innovation rather than the chosen few who may hold formal positions in the organisational hierarchy or may have been appointed as ‘teacher leader’ in relation to a specific school improvement initiative. We also include within the term ‘teacher’ any educational worker including support staff.



The activity which is at the heart of the ITL project has its roots in the practice of supporting teachers' continuing professional development. However, it is distinctive in that it rejects what has been referred to above as the training model, in which the agenda for change is set by central or local authorities rather than by the teachers themselves. This is not to be confused with the claim that teachers should be able to choose from a menu of professional development opportunities which stops short of casting the teacher in the role of author of their own developmental script (NUT, 2009). In the ITL approach, teachers' professional learning arises from their pursuit of a developmental goal which they have identified and initiated.

The leadership of development work sets the teacher on a path that inevitably results in enhanced professionalism. This term is not used here to denote the explicit pursuit of improved status and conditions; neither is it used to refer to the efficient provision of a service centrally prescribed and quality assured; rather, it is about the scope of the teachers' role or their 'professionalism' (Hoyle, 1974). Teachers who lead development work are embracing extended professionalism in which they share responsibility for the goals of the learning community to which they belong, engage in knowledge creation and transfer and act ethically in pursuit of the interests of their students.

One of the defining characteristics of a profession is that it is associated with a knowledge base which requires induction in the form of a university based course leading to a degree or diploma (Larson, 1977), but this is generally accepted as being merely a foundation. In any case, the circumstances that professionals face throughout their working lives present fresh challenges which require a commitment to ongoing knowledge creation. In the ITL project approach, knowledge is created through the practical experimentation in the form of teacher-led development work. Teachers' projects create insights and practices that are new to the situations in which they are developed. Moreover, the knowledge created is not just about what works in classrooms; it is also about processes of development themselves. When accounts of teachers' development projects are shared, other teachers learn about how to lead development work as well as how to support aspects of students' learning.

Our argument for non-positional teacher leadership is not based on a naïve assumption that all that is required is for teachers to be released from the shackles of top-down management and centralist approaches to reform in order for innovation to blossom. On the contrary, we suggest that although teachers have a massive potential for leading change, as captured in the title of the book 'Awakening the sleeping giant' (Katezemeyer and Moller, 2001), this potential will only be realised through the provision of expert facilitation. In order for teachers to make the best of their capacity for leadership of development work, there is a need for deliberate and well-designed intervention. This requires people with expertise and the commitment to supporting teacher and school development who have the opportunity and the tools to provide programmes of support. Such programmes enable teachers to engage in reflection, action planning, critical discussion and evaluation. They provide expert guidance and sites for mutual encouragement and support. This can be a very cost-effective and

sustainable way to support innovation as expertise in facilitation can grow exponentially within teacher networks.

Clearly there are implications for policy makers and school principals here which are partly concerned with the resources needed to kick start teacher leadership support programmes and partly concerned with making the space to allow this approach to take root.

### **Culture building**

So far we argue that teacher leadership for all requires expert facilitation, but no matter how expert the programmes of support, they are unlikely to bear fruit without the growth of an enabling culture within the school. Schein famously said ‘the only thing of real importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture’ (Schein, 1985: 2). This can be misinterpreted as meaning that school principals must ensure that all members of staff accept, uncritically, their own vision for the school. An alternative view, favoured here, is that, rather than insisting on compliance with a school’s values, vision and development priorities, with all that implies about in-house training and quality assurance, school principals should welcome teachers’ initiatives however disparate their goals may be. This raises question about coherence and some have argued for ‘disciplined innovation’ (Hargreaves, 2008), but if this gives rise to imposition, the costs in terms of teachers’ diminished sense of agency and lowering of morale, far outweigh any gains. A more productive approach is for school principals to develop the art of *orchestration* where, through dialogue and influence, harmony among disparate initiatives is assured.

The orchestration of teachers’ development work is only part of the picture however. In order for teacher leadership to flourish, it is important that school principals, take positive steps to cultivate professional cultures that are enabling. A convenient framework for thinking about this arises from research on professional learning communities which identifies their defining characteristics (Bolam, McMahon, Stoll *et al.*, 2005). Paramount amongst these is that there should be shared values and vision based on collective responsibility for students’ learning, but this is a result of collaborative processes in which all concerned can reflect and engage in enquiry. Such collaboration depends on the level of trust and mutual respect among members of the community and the quality of discussion and internal networking.

We foreground the role of the school principal in culture building, but evidence from the ITL project indicates that teacher leadership itself plays a major part in helping to create a professional learning community. When teachers take the initiative and lead development projects seen to be beneficial not only to students’ learning, but also beneficial in the way they draw colleagues into collaboration and self-evaluation, school principals are able to see significant shifts in the mindset and norms of practice amongst the school staff.

There are clear implications here for school principals. The practice of culture building is skilled enterprise which demands courage as well as ingenuity. For policy makers there are

implications as to the stability of principalship and the extent to which an incumbent can focus on the development of a professional culture over time.

### **Knowledge building**

Above, we suggest that teachers create knowledge not only about teaching and learning, but also about how to lead processes of development through sharing accounts of their development work projects. To some, this may seem wasteful in that it involves endless rediscovery, but, in spite of efforts to package and disseminate practical knowledge on the part of government agencies and publishers, it remains very difficult to spread good practice.

System wide innovation depends on the extent to which this knowledge can be harnessed and shared. There is already a substantial literature on knowledge management which can be understood as the business of ‘capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using know-how’ (Collison and Parcell, 2004) and, according to the OECD’s research institute, it is something that education systems do not do well (CERI, 2008). This may be because professional knowledge is not easily transferred through simple dissemination as Hargreaves has explained (1999). It is ‘sticky knowledge’ (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1959) or ‘sticky information’ (Von Hippel, 1994) which has to be explored and reconstructed in order to become useful in new contexts.

Beyond the confines of the school, teachers are able to build knowledge together through their participation in networks, but it must be emphasised that networking has to be developed so that it becomes more than simply a means to disseminate accounts of teachers’ projects. Where network activities are successful, they involve teachers in critical discussion and comparison through which there is a collective development of the practices and ideas shared by the individual teacher. It takes time to develop the procedures and techniques that allow teachers to become sufficiently confident to embrace a discursive process that is more than celebratory sharing.

Some will be concerned about the validity of professional knowledge created by teachers; that it might be misleading or founded on misconceptions of one sort or another. For example, an evaluation of a sponsored teacher research scheme in the UK found that some teachers’ projects were not informed by reading and that some teachers seemed to be unable to adopt a critical perspective on their own discoveries (Furlong and Salisbury, 2005). The problem is not solved by discouraging teachers from engaging in project work however; rather we can ensure quality by deploying expertise in helping to create networking opportunities within which teachers analyse and debate the issues, practices and insights arising from their development work projects. Knowledge has to be tested through such practical discourse.

Another way to enhance the knowledge created through teachers’ development projects is to ensure academic enrichment by including universities as partners in the enterprise. It is tempting for university staff to see teacher networks as opportunities to disseminate the outcomes of academic research, but in a genuine partnership they will see the importance of

deploying their skills and resources to enrich the discourse that teachers are generating. This may be by introducing literature that illuminates the themes that teachers are working with or it may be a matter of deploying their analytical and literary skills to help teachers to produce credible accounts of their development work.

There are implications here for school principals in that teachers' knowledge building requires opportunities for networking which in turn needs support. This may be symbolic support but may also require resources. Policy makers can also lend symbolic support to encourage and celebrate teachers' efforts. Public spaces can also be made available to enable teachers' networks to hold events.

## **Section 7: Issues and challenges**

*This section presents a series of issues and challenges that the project team has faced and would have to be faced by anyone considering initiating support for teacher leadership.*

Overall, the challenge hinges on the belief that the approach to teacher professionalism adopted by the ITL project is in tension with the prevailing policy environment and entrenched traditions of practice. The project travels against a headwind driven by dominant assumptions about school leadership and educational innovation. It is hoped that this report provides evidence of a considerable degree of success over a relatively short period of time, nevertheless, we need to be both realistic and specific about the challenges we have experienced.

### **Challenge 1: Going to scale**

The scope and extent of the project activity is set out earlier in this report (Section 4: page 17). This has been achieved with modest financial help from OSF and within a time scale of 1-2 years (with the exception of HertsCam). The challenge now is how to 'scale up'. In some cases central and local government agencies are already involved and in most cases the project has come to the attention of policy makers. This has led to a degree of willingness to consider how such bodies can put resources into the programme, although that possibility raises concerns. One of the reasons for the success of the programme so far is that it has a sense of local ownership and the teachers themselves feel empowered. This could be undermined if the programme became 'official'. In the ITL research team as a whole we have a range of different backgrounds, members include staff from NGOs, academics and practitioners. This helps to achieve a balance in perspective which might be lost if the support for teacher leadership were wholly in the hands of the university or the ministry of education. A key strategy for developing the approach set out in this report would be for many organisations and partnerships to work to a set of principles rather than a prescription for action expressed in tight behavioural terms.

### **Challenge 2: Evidence of impact**

This is linked to the first challenge in the sense that policy makers tend to be more easily persuaded of the value of a programme if they are presented with quantitative evidence of impact based on standardised measures of attainment. This is a challenge in two respects: a) because the methodology of the project, as it is presently construed, is shaped by the aim of fostering activity and building the capacity to initiate it in the future, b) evaluations based on narrow measures of attainment would undermine the aim to develop practices that lead to authentic and broad learning aimed at creating modern, democratic and inclusive societies, and c) the sort of research required to produce valid evidence of achievement is both costly and long term. In order to support the development of this kind of work, the most useful form of evaluation is the illuminative model in which practice is made visible to a range of

stakeholders and interested parties. Illuminative evaluation also supports professional accountability. This is not just the job of researchers but also implies that teachers need to develop the skills and understanding required to assess the impact of the development work they lead and to make that evidence available to others.

### **Challenge 3: The capacity to support teacher leadership**

Extended support for teacher leadership is costly – perhaps 12-15 working days might support the work of 20-25 teachers over the period of a single academic year, depending on a range of factors that will affect efficiency. Who could provide such support? In the ITL project so far, the most substantial proportion of the burden has been carried by NGOs and in many cases they have been able to build collaborative relationships with universities and sometimes government agencies. There are other possibilities that have to be energetically explored. It is the case, for example in HertsCam, that the support work is provided by experienced teachers themselves in collaboration with the university. In some of the other countries there are deputy principals, pedagogues and others who might be able to do this work as part of their professional roles. Universities have also been able to play a significant role and may be able to continue to do so provided that their institutional goals can be fulfilled either as part of their postgraduate teaching programme or their research. There may be problems to do with status, hierarchy and asymmetrical partnerships between universities and schools which can be an obstacle to shared understanding of the methodologies needed to help teachers realise their professional goals.

### **Challenge 4: a methodology that supports teacher leadership**

The methodology of the ITL project is at odds with currently established models of teacher and school development which include inservice training, professional development seminars, research, the implementation of government initiatives and so on. It is therefore challenging to ask those whose expertise and experience have been shaped by these dominant models to embrace an approach in which teacher and school development are integrated, the teachers' concerns determine the agenda for development, enquiry is a tool of innovation and professional learning arises from practical experimentation and collective knowledge building. As this report demonstrates, this goal is realistic but requires a process of innovation in order to develop the understanding and skills needed. Concepts, techniques and tools developed originally in the UK have been successfully adapted but further development is needed to refine, clarify the approach and to include a greater number of facilitators as the work is scaled up. Supporting teacher leadership demands a skilful approach to tutoring which requires a facilitative mindset and command over the use of workshop methods and tools for collaborative reflection. These kinds of skills are not necessarily well established and have to be learnt through patient experiment. This is not a matter of mere implementation or 'roll out' as is sometimes assumed; it takes time and above all it requires extended discourse across international boundaries, fed by empirical investigation, evaluation and collaborative reflection. This is logistically challenging.

### **Challenge 5: Teachers' professional identity**

Teachers' narratives are often focused on the development of their own classroom practice and this has been the subject of celebration in network events and other contexts. It is clear that it is relatively straightforward to enable teachers to engage in classroom-based self-evaluation and development because it is quite close to their conception of what it is to be a teacher. What is more challenging is to enable them to see themselves as people who exercise leadership in order to influence their colleagues, their schools and their education systems more widely. The challenge for the facilitators is how to enable teachers to see the importance of learning the skills of leadership and to maximise the impact of their project work through strategic collaboration with colleagues, students, parents and other members of their school communities.

### **Challenge 6: Principals' professional identity**

Distributed leadership is a key recommendation of an OECD (Pont, Nusche & Morman, 2008) report on school leadership but this tends to assume an approach based on formal roles within the organisation of the school. Non-positional teacher leadership requires even more of a paradigm shift in the way school principals construe their work. It clearly requires principals to be both willing and able to cultivate a culture of distributed leadership, which inevitably challenges established hierarchies. Principals may fear a loss of control, particularly if teachers derive support from outside the school for their agenda setting and leadership. A significant challenge therefore is first to be able to persuade school principals of the benefits of teacher leadership and then to work with them in order to develop their skills in orchestrating teachers' innovations. This will maximise impact and achieve some degree of strategic coherence in the development of the school. For principals in many countries the concept of leadership is problematic and the sharing of leadership can be an extremely sensitive issue. In many places there is a deeply entrenched assumption that the most important resource you need to be able to exercise leadership is authority derived from position with an organisational structure. It is important therefore to promote an alternative view that what is needed is personal and professional authority which comes from a sense of agency.

### **Challenge 7: The art and logistics of networking**

This report includes evidence that teachers' networks can be powerfully beneficial in terms of celebrating achievement, mutual support, collective self-efficacy and knowledge building. There has been a great deal of success but the challenge now is to enable teachers to develop the skills of networking. Even more important however is the need to develop the skills for facilitating networking which has a series of techniques and tools associated with it. The challenge is to enabling authentic networking to take place and this involves more than dissemination. Teachers' early experience of networking inevitably centres on sharing an account of a finished project. This tends to lead to a celebratory response rather than a critical

discussion. In order for professional knowledge to develop, it is necessary to enable teachers to engage in critical dialogue through which ideas are tested and scrutinised. In addition to the above, there are logistical problems involved in bringing teachers from different schools together. Events can sometimes involve arduous journeys which can be challenging and expensive. To some extent networking can be extended through the use of web-based technologies. There is evidence of some success in this regard, but there are financial implications and the management of such technologies demands skill and know-how.

### **Challenge 8: Credibility and knowledge building**

The approach to teacher leadership discussed in this report leads to the development of professional knowledge. That is, knowledge about how to teach and knowledge about how to improve teaching and learning. A legitimate concern that might be raised by policy makers and university academics would focus on the validity of that knowledge. It could be suggested for example that teachers' practice should be determined by the outcomes of published research or by expert advisers appointed by governments. This would correspond with established norms. The defence of the approach to teacher leadership offered in this report lies in the extent to which the quality and rigour of the process of knowledge building can be guaranteed. The challenge therefore is not only to ensure that teachers' networking is genuinely critical, but also that the project work itself is informed by academic research and advice from government agencies and other credible bodies such as CERI.

It is helpful for teachers to be able to access literature about school improvement and about the specific aspect of teaching and learning which is the focus of the teacher's project. There is a wealth of material published in English but it is a challenge to find such literature in some national contexts.

There is a further dimension to the challenge of the validity of professional knowledge arising from teachers' development projects and this focuses on the question of moral purpose. So far, it seems that teachers who respond to the invitation to initiate and lead development work tend to be influenced by values of collaboration, openness, inclusivity, equity and other values which resonate with statements from the EU, UNICEF, OSF and other bodies which would claim to be committed to social justice and democratisation. However, there may be a fear that, once teachers have more freedom to set the agenda, some might be influenced by more negative value positions such as extreme nationalism or religious intolerance.

### **Challenge 9: Developing appropriate forms of accreditation**

As this report clarifies (Section 4: page 25), there have been various approaches to accreditation or certification although in a number of cases this has not occurred at all. It appears that universities are either unable or unwilling to create systems of certification to match the need to support teacher leadership, but this has been achieved in other ways. The evidence shows clearly that where this does occur, it is highly valued by teachers and can play



a significant part in motivating them to pursue their development work. In some cases, local partners in the ITL project have devised their own certification, sometimes in association with government agencies. A key challenge for the future is to reconcile the approach with established current structures such as systems administered by ministries of education, enabling teachers to gain credit points which make a difference to their career development. A different side to this challenge focuses on the need to engage with universities in order to stimulate innovation in their practices. There is enormous scope for universities to adapt their award-bearing frameworks so that they are able to recognise forms of enquiry that teachers' leadership of development work entails. There is also scope for university academics to search out and highlight the literature that illuminates, explains and supports the idea of development work.

### **Challenge 10: Fostering innovation in a hostile policy environment**

In education systems in many countries teachers feel relatively powerless and the level of salaries and status in society can have a constraining effect on the way they construct their identity. In a professional culture in which people are averse to risk taking, it is challenging for teachers to initiate development projects and to question current practice. A key challenge therefore is to cultivate a climate of innovation. School principals have a key role to play but they are often hindered by insufficient control over budgets which could be used to provide the means to support teacher leadership groups; by the pressure to employ short term tactics to improve test results rather than longer term capacity-building strategies; and in some cases by issues of stability where the leadership and governance of the school is subject to political change. The ministries of education have key roles also in that they have access to public funds. These tend to be attached to very specific goals, for example to support the implementation of a drive to improve learning in Physics or spelling in the primary stage; this is not an impossibility and may even be a good idea, but it could also be a constraint if it fails to ignite teachers' passions and concerns. Ministries could make funding available to create the infrastructure to support open-ended, teacher-led innovation.

### **Challenge 11: Maximising the impact of teacher leadership**

As discussed earlier (Challenge 5) teachers will tend, in the early stages of their teacher leadership journey, to focus on their own practice. They are likely to feel inhibited about attempting to influence what happens in their colleagues' classrooms. The challenge therefore is to enable teachers to think strategically and to design projects that will have a direct impact on practice in their schools. This can be attended to in a number of ways. First, it is a matter of planning for maximum collaboration in order to draw others into the process of the development work which will lead to reflection and self-evaluation by many people. Second, it is a matter of planning a project in such a way that new practices are embedded in the routines of the school either through establishing agreed policies or leaving a legacy of curriculum planning or teaching materials. Third, it is a matter of empowering teachers to lead staff development sessions for the other teachers in the school or district in which they

share what they have learnt and developed through their projects. This is a very cost effective way of enabling all teachers in the school to be touched by the teacher leadership initiative.

### **Challenge 12: advocating for a democratic approach to innovation**

There is evidence so far that the approach to teacher leadership promoted by the ITL project contributes to building social capital and commitment to democratic ways of life, but it is also true that weak social capital and traditions of hierarchy, authoritarianism and patronage are obstacles to the development of the activity. The challenge therefore is not only to continue to build partnerships with schools and local organisations with the capacity to provide the necessary support, but also to engage energetically in further policy advocacy. Such action is needed in order to engage with local players such as school principals who may not immediately perceive the need for this activity. Advocacy work with ministries of education is also vital: where the government agencies promote the idea, school principals are more likely to be cooperative. However, this does not guarantee authentic commitment to the principles of the approach. This clearly indicates that what is needed is sustained debate and campaigning to contribute to the democratisation of education systems and, in particular to strengthen the teachers' voice in the discourse about innovation.

## **Section 8: Principles for practice**

The ITL approach to supporting teacher leadership is underpinned by a set of principles derived in the first instance from experience and research in teacher networks over a 20 year in England and then developed through the ITL project over a 2-3 year period.

The principles set out below have been the subject of critical scrutiny and debate in a series of meetings of the international research and development team between 2008 and 2011.

***Principle 1: A partnership between schools and external agencies***

Such agencies might include university departments of education, government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

***Principle 2: Mutual support through membership of a group and a network***

Support groups can be established within single schools or within clusters of schools and these can be linked through networks.

***Principle 3: Professional cultures that sanction and support teacher leadership***

School principals need to build cultures that allow teacher leadership to flourish.

***Principle 4: Opportunities for open discussion***

Teachers need to be able to think critically about values, practice and innovation.

***Principle 5: A methodology that supports teacher's strategic interventions***

The idea of teacher-led development work provides a suitable framework.

***Principle 6: Enabling teachers to identify personal development priorities***

This releases passion, concern and moral purpose.

***Principle 7: Tools to scaffold personal reflection, planning and action***

Well-designed tools scaffold, exemplify and illustrate teacher leadership.

***Principle 8: Facilitating access to relevant literature***

This enhances the knowledge arising from teacher's development work.

***Principle 9: The provision of guidance on leadership strategies***

Expert guidance and mutual exploration strengthens leadership capacity.

***Principle 10: The provision of guidance on the collection and use of evidence***

Systematic enquiry is a democratic and collegial leadership strategy.

***Principle 11: Mobilisation of organisational support and orchestration***

School principals can support teachers' development work and ensure coherence in the school.

***Principle 12: The provision of a framework to help teachers document their work***

A structured portfolio enables teachers to plan, record and reflect upon their development work and can be used as evidence for certification and the like.

***Principle 13: The provision of opportunities for networking beyond the school***

Teachers derive mutual support and inspiration when they network with other teachers. Moral purpose is cultivated throughout the system.

***Principle 14: Recognition through certification***

Teachers' leadership of innovation can be recognised through certification provide by universities or partners of other respected organisations.

***Principle 15: Professional knowledge arises from accounts of teacher leadership***

Teachers can build professional knowledge through collaborative and critical discussion and exchange of ideas.

These evidence-based principles are offered as a guide for those who may wish to provide support for teacher leadership and as a basis for dialogue with policy makers. They are not intended as behavioural specifications but rather as a tool for review and debate.

## **Section 9: Recommendations and proposals**

The practical experience and evaluation evidence drawn upon to support these proposals and recommendations is significant. The project activity is not yet well established so what follows must be weighed with that in mind.

The section is organised as a series of recommendations to policy makers / government agencies, school principals, universities, facilitators of teacher leadership programmes and sponsors.

### **1. Recommendations to policy makers / government agencies**

- a) Policy makers should develop policies that recognise that teachers are capable of leading innovation beyond current expectations.
- b) In order to foster a climate of innovation, policy makers need to consider the impact of policies and procedures that pressurise schools into short term improvement tactics and away from longer term capacity building strategies.
- c) Ministries of education, government agencies, regional and local municipal administrations and politicians should consider making a modest amount of public funding available to extend the life of the initiative reported here. It is not recommended that such bodies create a national strategy or that they should fund the appointment of teacher leaders. Instead it is recommended that they create a fund which could be used to build the infrastructure needed to support teacher leadership. This could be made available to school principals who would be asked to apply for grants against specific criteria designed to ensure the building of local, self-renewing capacity.
- d) Ministries of education and relevant government agencies should consider the possibility of adjusting their systems to enable teachers who may have gained a certificate from another body (for example an NGO) to gain credit points that would be recognised as contributing to their career development or obligation for regular updating.
- e) Even if there is no funding available from ministries of education, government agencies and other relevant institutions, these bodies should nevertheless consider offering symbolic support for the development of teacher leadership programmes. This might be manifest for example by sending representatives to any large network events or by meeting with coordinators to discuss progress.

## **2. Recommendations to school principals**

- a) School principals need to embrace the values and skills of distributed leadership while working within current resources to nurture non-positional teacher leadership. This involves the ability to steer and orchestrate teachers' initiatives so that impact is maximised and strategic coherence is maintained.
- b) School principals should consider the possibility that capacity to support teacher leadership can be developed by reviewing the role descriptions of experienced teachers, vice-principals and pedagogues with a view to enabling them to play a significant role in supporting teacher leadership groups.
- c) School principals should devise strategies for drawing on the enthusiasm and expertise of teachers who have participated in teacher leadership programmes to provide staff development opportunities for all teachers within the school.

## **3. Recommendations to universities**

- a) University faculties of education should review their award-bearing frameworks to see how they may be revised to accommodate programmes of support for teacher leadership in which the university is a partner rather than sole provider. This may entail procedural adjustments but would also require a different set of understandings of what counts as knowledge.
- b) University faculties of education should investigate the intellectual resources and materials that can be used to explain and justify processes of school improvement, leadership, innovation and knowledge building and find ways to make such literatures and resources available to those who support teacher leadership.

## **4. Recommendations to potential facilitators of teacher leadership programmes**

- a) Facilitators of teacher leadership programmes should establish the means to continue to experiment and evaluate in action the strategies, tools and techniques required for supporting teacher leadership.
- b) Facilitators of teacher leadership programmes need to consider how they can clarify and refine the support they provide such that it enables teachers to focus on the development of their own leadership capacity. It is important to enable teachers to reflect on their leadership and develop the necessary skills and dispositions.
- c) Facilitators of teacher leadership programmes need to develop further the knowledge and skills necessary for scaffolding teachers' networking such that this become more interactive, rigorous and challenging.

- d) Facilitators of teacher leadership programmes need to develop the use of web-based technologies to enable teachers to share accounts of their leadership of development work and to correspond with each other to develop ideas, tools and materials to improve teaching and learning.
- e) Facilitators of teacher leadership programmes need to develop the means to enrich teachers' discussions with both research and policy based literatures to ensure rigour in the process of knowledge building.
- f) Facilitators of teacher leadership programmes need to consider ways to promote values of inclusivity, equity and democracy and to ensure that more negative value positions are challenged through discussion within teacher leadership support groups and network activities.

## **5. Recommendation to sponsors / donors**

- a) It is recommended that research focusing on the impact of non-positional teacher leadership should be commissioned. Such impact may be on the professional cultures of schools, the level of self-efficacy and wellbeing of teachers, or the quality of teaching and learning in schools, for example.
- b) It is recommended that the current network of experts developed through the support of OSF should be enabled to continue to collaborate on the development of strategies to support teacher leadership.

## Conclusion

We conclude with a simple overview of what this report has presented and an invitation to engage with these ideas in the future.

In Section 1, the discussion of cultural obstacles indicated that establishing the ITL approach to teacher leadership would be an almost insurmountable challenge. We were sharply aware of the fallacy of ‘roll out’ where it assumed that a programme can simply be disseminated and replicated in quite different cultural settings. We have worked hard to create and nurture a discursive process through which international partners could critique ideas and adapt materials, tools and strategies to suit local circumstances and cultural contexts.

As a research and development project, ITL can claim a significant level of success: it has supported extensive activity in 15 countries as outlined in Section 4 (page 17). In some cases, considerable momentum has been achieved and there are signs that teacher leadership now has a foothold in educational systems. An additional outcome is that a network of facilitators is now firmly established and is able to support collaboration in the future. This will also serve as a starting point for others who may want to embark on this endeavour.

A recurring theme in the ITL project has been the idea of the sleeping giant (see page 9) which suggests the idea of the massive untapped potential within the teaching profession. International partners have all expressed surprise and delight at what teachers have achieved and the extent to which the benefits of teacher leadership have been recognised and appreciated by school principals and policy makers in many of the participating countries. What is that has been so surprising? In outline it is simply this: that teachers really can lead innovation; teachers really can build professional knowledge; teachers really can develop the capacity for leadership, and teachers really can influence their colleagues and the nature of professional practice in their schools. However, what is abundantly clear is that teachers are only likely to do these things if they are provided with appropriate support.

We hope that this report has provided convincing evidence of what teachers can achieve when provided with the necessary support and makes clear how that support might be provided. We hope that policy makers, practitioners, university academics and potential facilitators will want to learn more about this way of working and will express their interest through the Leadership for Learning website. We have offered a set of principles (pages 52-53) to guide future development and hope that others will want to use these to develop the practice of supporting all teachers in developing their capacity for leadership.



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