From Political Decisions to Change in the Classroom:

Successful Implementation of Education Policy

Frode Nyhamn and Therese N. Hopfenbeck (Eds.)

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CIDREE YEARBOOK 2014

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CIDREE
YEARBOOK
2014

CIDREE is a network of educational organisations involved in curriculum development and/or educational research, set up in 1990 to establish closer working relationships at a European level.

Authors:
Graham Norris
Cornelia Riess
Maria Jürimäe, Anita Kärner, Leelo Tiisve
Luc Ria, Sylvie Moussay
Tone Cecilie Carlsten, Eifred Markussen
Branko Slivar, Brigita Žarkovič Adlešič
Stefan Wolter, Chantal Oggenfuss
Nienke Nieveen, Luc Sluijsmans, Jan van den Akker
Edit Sinka, József Kaposi, Attila Varga
Gerti Janaqi

Editors:
Frode Nyhamn and Therese N. Hopfenbeck

Editorial assistance:
Vigdis Arnesen

Cover picture:
Thinkstock

Design:
Anagram Design

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Foreword

I am delighted to present to you the CIDREE Yearbook 2014. Our focus this year on the effective implementation of education policy is a topic that I know will be of great interest to CIDREE members and the wider education community in Europe and beyond. Improvements in education systems and in outcomes for learners rely on high quality arrangements for turning policy into practice. So I am certain that policy makers, national education bodies, researchers, practitioners and partners will find this Yearbook 2014 perceptive and helpful.

The stimulating series of articles in this Yearbook highlight how different countries, agencies and practitioners within them have risen to the challenges of education improvement. Many factors can influence or hinder change in the move from national direction to local implementation.

Across the world, education systems are looking at ensuring the most appropriate levels of responsibility and autonomy for schools and practitioners. We know that those practitioners closest to the learners are best placed to improve their learning. However, as many of the articles highlight, arrangements for supporting schools and practitioners are also essential in making change happen. National education policy and priorities often set out requirements but do not always provide advice on how to achieve them, or how to promote innovation in doing so. What education infrastructures and strategies help the implementation of policy to be effective? How and why do these work?

I am pleased that the articles presented here help to answer such questions, with practical illustrations of key challenges and how these are being met. The critical roles of the local change agents, the learning environment and good support are clear. So too is the central place of partnerships. Partnerships amongst practitioners in professional learning communities, across other services working with

school, and of course with parents and with learners themselves. Often, time is taken to ensure consensus and coherence when developing national policy. However, is the same emphasis placed on agreeing how best to involve those partners in designing processes that will provide appropriate support and lead to change? This Yearbook explores these issues and provides insights into effective implementation of policy to improve education and learners' outcomes.

I would like to thank Frode Nyhamn and Kjersti Flaten, our CIDREE colleagues at Utdanningsdirektoratet in Norway for their skills and attention in collating and editing this Yearbook. All the authors who have contributed also deserve special mention – everyone's efforts have combined to provide a rich resource of information and advice for now and the future.

Alan Armstrong
President CIDREE 2014-2016
Strategic Director, Education Scotland

Editorial introduction

Frode Nyhamn and Therese N. Hopfenbeck

1. THEME OF THE CIDREE YEARBOOK 2014

In this book, we present articles from actual implementation initiatives in ten different European countries. The book represents an opportunity to identify the strategies we use, why we use them, and if there is something in our experience that should make us reconsider these strategies. The CIDREE Yearbook of 2013 discussed different policy positions regarding curriculum development, in particular the shifting balance between input/output regulations versus deregulation. This CIDREE book of last year also touched upon the topic of implementation, for example by stressing the importance of both securing a clear sense of direction, and at the same time creating a space for local initiative and innovation. These, sometimes paradoxical, perspectives are also present in the yearbook of 2014. In this book however, we move closer to the actual processes of transformation, and how these general perspectives are handled in some specific change processes.

There is a considerable interest in the issue of implementation these days. The project Governing Complex Educations Systems (CERI/OECD) has for example produced several reports focusing on effective government from the national and local level, on effective multi-level governance, and on the importance of understanding the complexity of education governance.[1] In this book, we also acknowledge the complexity of implementation of education policy. Not only will policy processes differ from one country to another based upon the history, context, governing structure and culture (Hopmann 1999), but they will also depend upon which implementation strategies the different actors have decided to use. It is well known from the literature that teachers need to be seen as important and active actors in any implementation of education reform, to make real changes in the classroom (Berryhill et al. 2009). If teachers are left out, and do not understand the policy processes involved, it is more likely that the implementation will fail.

[1]Reports can be found at http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/governingcomplexeducationsystemsgces.htm

The articles in the CIDREE-yearbook of 2014 present some general *learning points* based on the experiences of the CIDREE members on the issue of implementing education policy. The basic question is why some initiatives reaches the classroom, while others stop somewhere along the implementation chain. This general question can be specified into a number of perspectives on and approaches to the process of implementation. What they all have in common, however, is the focus upon teachers as agents for implementation of education policy.

How do teachers and schools view governmental initiatives from their perspective as professional practitioners? This book presents experiences and reflections on how teachers and schools meet different governmental initiatives or reforms. In the Norwegian context, systematic talks with teachers, headmasters and school owners on implementation of governmental initiatives[2] have touched upon many of the same points that where discussed on the CIDREE-conference in Utrecht in November 2013. This includes the importance of communicating a clear direction, ample opportunities for local action, capacity building, and a plan for how to follow up the initiative. The articles of this CIDREE yearbook will present experiences that will broaden our understanding of teachers, schools, municipalities' experiences, and their responses to an initiative or reform. Hopefully this will give you as a reader some new ideas and a deeper understanding of the factors that constitute productive change processes at the school level.

How to introduce reforms and policy initiatives along the lines of consistency and alignment? This question is about how new initiatives can be introduced in a way that strengthen other initiatives rather than compete with them. Related to this is also the issue of consistency when it comes to content of an initiative compared to earlier or parallel initiatives. We acknowledge that schools have a limited capacity to absorb different or shifting initiatives, and that that we should

[2]This refers to a process of gathering systematical feedback from teachers, headmasters and school owners on different governmental initiatives. The data includes interviews with 75 respondents (10 municipalities/19 schools). The project was conducted in 2011 by The Ministry of Education and The Norwegian Directorate for Education and training, and it resulted in a ten-point action-plan on implementation.

keep that in mind when deciding if and how a new initiative should be launched. This has also consequences for the way an initiative is communicated. Is it clear for important stakeholders how they can build on the work they are already doing? Alternatively, is it clear how the initiative constitute a contrast to previous policies and practices?

Reflections on the toolbox, what tools are available to support the implementation and how should they be combined? This question is also about alignment and consistency, but with an emphasis on the tools that can be used to support a policy. A tool in this context could be regulations, support structures, quality assurance tools including assessment data, etc. The question is whether these tools are combined a way that makes them support each other.

These perspectives or questions above were introduced as possible starting point for the articles. The articles of this book present perspectives that broadens these discussions. This should make the CIDREE Yearbook 2014 even more interesting.

2. A GLIMPSE INTO THE YEARBOOK

In this yearbook, the CIDREE members present one or a few cases to illustrate some of their experiences with implementation. Below you will find a short introduction to each of the articles that are included in the CIDREE Yearbook 2014.

Scotland: Working on realizing the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)
The Scottish article presents the ongoing work to realize the benefit of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) (see CIDREE Yearbook 2013 for details) in a way that brings about the desired change in teaching and learning. The article reflects on how implementation efforts have contributed to improvement in primary and secondary schools. The case study descriptions included in the article are based on statements from the schools, and on statements from visiting teams of independent validators. Scotland has a tradition of allowing for long time span and broad involvement when developing and implementing new reforms and initia-

tives. The article shows us how this tradition has been useful in the implementation of CfE by the strong emphasis on creating space and permission for everyone involved to decide how these goals should be realized in a their specific context.

Austria: Investigating the introduction of national standards and how information is used to develop schools

Austria introduced national educational standards in 2008. These standards define core competencies students should normally have acquired by the end of Grade 4 (primary school) and by the end of Grade 8 (secondary school). The introduction of national tests was a respond to the debate regarding Austria's poor results in international tests such as TIMSS and PISA, and the authors write that findings from these studies demonstrated the need to create national standards. The article discusses if the introduction of educational standards has been able to (i) affect the school system through competence-orientation and sustainability in teaching (implementation), (ii) assessing acquired competencies by the means of standardized tests (monitoring) and the observation of the standards' influence on teaching in a good way, and (iii) improving the learning culture within schools (evaluation). This article sheds light on the actors' opinions and on the processes from legislation to classroom practice, while giving an interesting insight into how the support system has worked in this case. The article specifies how an extensive support system can be established to ensure that information on performance is used in a productive way within schools.

Estonia: Introducing formative assessment through the use of professional learning communities

The Estonian article presents a process of introducing formative assessment as a guiding principle in Estonian schools. A vital element of the strategy is the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as change agents. The article shows how the teachers' role and ownership in educational change can be ensured, and the data is generated from a study including 217 teachers from 20 schools. Mentor teachers, trained in a program of self-development and peer

support, have led the professional learning communities. The experience from Estonia suggests that the use of a teacher in-service education resulted in teachers taking more responsibility, and that this process has supported a deeper understanding and greater ownership of the paradigmatic change among teachers. The Estonian case demonstrates a strategy of facilitating arenas (PLCs) for teachers to learn, exchange ideas and translate the new knowledge into their own practice. This makes it possible for teachers to discover and reevaluate their practice.

France: The development of teachers as professionals in difficult contexts
This article explains that for more than twenty years, education policy in France has aimed at reducing social and territorial inequalities. Teachers in educational priority zones meet numerous prescriptions that lay out aims and objectives, but often they are not provided with the means to achieve them. Against this backdrop, several observation groups have been created to study the actual activity of teachers. The goal is to better understand the evolution of the teaching profession in difficult contexts. Two case studies serves to illustrate the conditions of the implementation of change in lower secondary schools situated in educational priority zones. The French article offers some great case-reports, and has some very specific advice to give on tools and processes that will help teachers develop new practices.

Norway: phased implementation as a strategy for "diffusion of innovation"
The Norwegian article presents a program that brings together a great number of strategies and tools in order to strengthen the upper secondary schools in Norway. By addressing the issue of motivation and capability on the secondary level, the goal is to see an increased number of students completing higher secondary, and move further into vocational training or higher education. The program presented in the article is organized as a "phased implementation". This implementation strategy allows change to occur in smaller steps by including more partners working in phases over an extended period. The Norwegian article is also a contribution that highlights the importance of innovation in implemen-

tation, meaning that the elements in the program can be adjusted from one phase to another.

Slovenia: Reflecting on the experience from 20 years of reform

The goal of the Slovenian article is to reflect on the lessons learned after 20 years of reforming the education system. By discussing two distinct curricula, some general learning points are extracted. The process of implementation is analyzed on both policy level and school level. The article uses literature on implementation to create an analytical framework for the article. The article explains that there has been no holistic evaluation of the reforms mentioned. The analytical frame is therefore used as a tool to discuss the reforms. This makes it possible to disclose some of the hidden currents navigating the process of the reforms. In one of the reforms presented (the primary school reform), the implementation was phased with schools entering in the first phase acting as mentors for schools entering later on in the process. The article points at this system of mentoring, and the facilitation of communication and reflection among teachers, as one important criterion for success. One of the lessons learnt from the cases presented in the article is that there is a need for a clear policy input in the start of the reform. At the same time the experiences shows that excessive political involvement could also be counterproductive.

Switzerland: Investigating the teachers' attitudes to education reforms and policies

This article analyses the preferences of teachers compared to the preferences of persons with similar education when it comes to issues that are relevant for education reforms and policies. The study presented in the article consists of data from two different surveys in Switzerland (2007 and 2012). Findings suggest that qualified teachers have a distinctly higher aversion to issues that could affect their working conditions in an immediate way. Whereas no differences are observed when looking at issues that are not likely to be relevant for the working conditions or the context of the teachers' work. The article is an interesting contribution when it comes to understanding what issues teachers are likely to have

other preferences to, than comparable groups in the population. Oggenfuss and Wolter also describe the importance of having teachers on board when implementing any reform in Switzerland. With reference to Oelkers and Reusser (2008), they conclude that teachers' acceptance is a key condition for successful implementation of any reform.

Netherlands: Introducing an approach of mutual adaption to understand the implementation of curriculum change

The article discusses the challenges of schools and teachers in taking up local curriculum development activities, and the challenges of educational partners at various system levels to encourage schools and teachers to address curriculum change. Examples of various system levels are such as policy-makers, support agencies, test developers, textbook developers, pre- and in-service educators, and inspectorates. The article presents a "mutual adaptation approach" as a starting point for describing a productive translation from the intended curriculum into the implemented curriculum, the curriculum in action (Goodlad, 1979; van den Akker, 2003). In the contribution for the CIDREE Yearbook of 2013, SLO presented the swings in regulation in different timespans and part of the Dutch education system. This serves as a background for this article. The authors argue that a mutual adaptation approach is the best way to enhance a democratic debate and to create a balanced decision-making process for the goals and contents to be realized and assessed. This approach also highlights the importance of professional development that prepares teachers to adapt high-quality materials to their context.

Hungary: Investigating a new governmental system for ensuring the quality in education

The Hungarian article presents a new system of governance introduced in 2010. This system is marked by vigorous state engagement and centralization, meaning increased content regulation, preparation, support, and control. The government has introduced two indirect tools; a method of educational program development and a new generation of textbooks created by the state textbook development

program. In addition, the government has introduced a new system for teacher training and a system for assisting teachers with professional advice through curriculum implementation materials, education programs, best practices, and reference institutions. The teachers also receive support by professional advisors in specific pedagogical situations. The article describes how the government monitors the accomplished work by inspections and a performance assessment system. The article also presents a system of learning outcome requirements and performance evaluation of institutions through the assessment of students' achievements. The Hungarian article gives an interesting example of how to combine different support structures with a strong emphasis on output monitoring.

Albania: The introduction of community schools as a broader perspective on the development of schools

The Albanian article presents a fresh initiative to develop schools as community centers. This initiative started in September 2013, and The Ministry of Education and Sport in Albania has made a number of initiatives to support the realization of this goal. The approach provides the opportunity to assess the work of the school in terms of cooperation with families and community. As part of this initiative, they have also introduced a comprehensive school curriculum reform to support the development of schools as community centers. The author discusses the possible benefits of schools as community centers, including how the concept of community schools can work as an organizing principle for the development of Albanian schools. Although in an early phase, the article gives some insight in the thinking behind this initiative and some possible outcomes. As discussed in the end of this editorial introduction, implementation is often seen as a balancing act between accountability and autonomy, implicating a kind of principal-agent relation between the state level and the local level. The Albanian article can be understood to offer a different kind of logic, focusing on the schools' relation to the local community. Maybe this could be seen as an example of a horizontal accountability as opposed to the vertical logic mentioned previously.

3. WHAT CAN BE LEARNED FROM THESE EXAMPLES?

In education research, there is a growing understanding of the complexity in the field of governing (Ball and Junneman, 2011; Grek, 2009). There is also literature that acknowledges the problems of different implementation models (Byrne and Ozga, 2008; Ball, 1997). In other words, researchers acknowledge the complexity and do not necessarily support one-size-will-fit-all implementation strategies. Instead, knowledge of each country's culture, history and context can be seen as important when planning for implementing education reforms. This is in line with the findings so far of the OECD-project on Governing Complex Education Systems. The project finds that it is not the model of governance that will determine whether a policy succeeds or fails, but rather the underlying knowledge systems and how they are managed (EDU/(CERI 2014). The different case studies in the present Yearbook vary both in scope and in nature, as countries differ in how they are governed and how they implement education programmes and policy reforms. Questions such as *What education infrastructures and strategies help the implementation of policy to be effective*? have to be discussed in the national context, taking into account the knowledge that different stakeholders possess. As suggested in the introduction, teachers and the teachers' role as stakeholders and agents of implementing education reforms are of particular importance in this respect.

In the work by Berryhill (2009), Barret, (2011) and Smit (2011), the authors describe how initial dialogues with participating actors such as teachers are important to avoid resistance and disagreement when implementing reforms. One example of this can be the Norwegian Case study, which reports on an implementation strategy in phases. Here the policy level support groups of schools, instead of a large scale national implementation strategy. The phased approach allow for broader and closer co-operation between the participating schools, researchers, stakeholders and the government. It can be seen as part of a governing trend where the practitioners are working in professional learning communities and teachers are agents in the implementation phase. The approach

acknowledges teachers as professionals, and key-stakeholders for translating the policy into practice.

We have argued that implementation strategies should be specific for each context. While the general reasoning and perspectives may be valid across countries and situations, the actual meaning of this may vary quite substantially. On a general level, many would probably agree that trust and accountability are of vital importance for a system to work, but does it looks the same in different countries? The Swiss article shows us how teachers react to different issues, and what we can expect to be more sensitive to them. The article discusses if teachers opinion in some cases can be understood as self-interest rather than an expression of domain-specific expertise. In our perspective it would be helpful to specify some of the general discussions on accountability and autonomy by pointing at *what topics* that will challenge the teachers role as a professional actor the most. In Norway, we have just had a teacher strike on how the working hours of teachers should be spent.[3] Some argued that the strike had revealed an underlying dissatisfaction among many teachers because they feel their role as professionals has been challenged over some time (Utdanningsforbundet, 2014). A typical statement was that "I don't feel that I`m trusted to do my job good enough anymore". This makes an interesting contrast to the feedback Norway received from the OECD. Andreas Schleicher, Dep. Director for Education, OECD, expressed his view on the Norwegian teacher profession as follows (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013: 39): *"Yes I think the high degree of autonomy of teachers and schools is not matched by transparency and the accountability culture"*. In order to understand this contrast in judgment between the teachers and OECD we think it is important to seek further knowledge about the socio-cultural background, and this may serve as an illustration of the importance of considering the local context when making judgments on a strategy or system.

[3]One of the most important issues for conflict in the Norwegian strike was the local government (organized through the employer union KS) wanted the teachers to spend more of their time at the school. This would, they argued, make it easier for teachers to cooperate, arrange meetings, etc.

Several of the articles focus on the importance of capacity building, with examples on how to support teachers and schools. The Hungarian article describes a great number of initiatives as part of a new system of governance. Riess writes about how they introduced National standards in Austria which became mandatory in 2008, followed by standardized achievement targets and standardized tests in 2012. Of particular interest is the descriptions of how teachers in Austria work and follow up results from the tests. It is well known that we live in times where data collected in schools through a number of tests, are not always used to improve the learning for students, and there is a lack of knowledge of how to use the amount of data collected (Baird et al, 2014, Lillejord et al, 2014). The article from Austria is therefor an important contribution to this field.

Some challenges

As Carlsten and Markussen write, one of the challenges when implementing educational policy, is to clarify what is supposed to be achieved and by when. Too many education programs lack clear milestones, and it is both unclear when a reform starts and ends. This is also a challenge for evaluation of programs, since it is not at all always clear when the implementation of a program started. Another challenge with implementing new education policy is described in the paper from Estonia, a country implementing AfL as a reform. It is well documented that sustainable development is seldom considered when implementing AfL, even though it is recognised that it takes time for teachers to develop the theoretical and practical aspects to make changes in the classroom (Gardner et al., 2011). Policy makers are often elected for shorter terms, and their need for quick solutions can be a challenge for researchers and practitioners who need to work on implementation for a longer period.

Another challenge is that even though collaboration and developing shared practices among teachers appear to be valuable implementation strategies for good practice, history shows that this is not what teachers have been doing in each country. As an example, the authors of the article from Hungary explicitly write, “Currently, sharing materials prepared by teachers is not part of our pedagogical

culture". At the same time, we find articles in this report about professional learning communities, and on how shared practice among teachers and learning in networks can offer interesting perspectives for further discussions among policy makers, researchers, teachers and school leaders. It also opens up for another perspective, stated by Professor Loiuse Hayward: *"People see research, policy and practice as a hierarchy. However, you can turn that model on its side and say: collectively what is it that we are all trying to achieve and what are the different roles we play if we are to achieve our aspiration? You can't do that without dialogue. There has to be space both for dialogue and for the networks necessary to support change across communities"* (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013: 64).

The articles in this yearbook provide an opportunity to reflect on our experience, and compare different initiatives across the CIDREE-countries to identify some general learning points. We hope the book will also stimulate some interesting reflections on experiences in other contexts as well.

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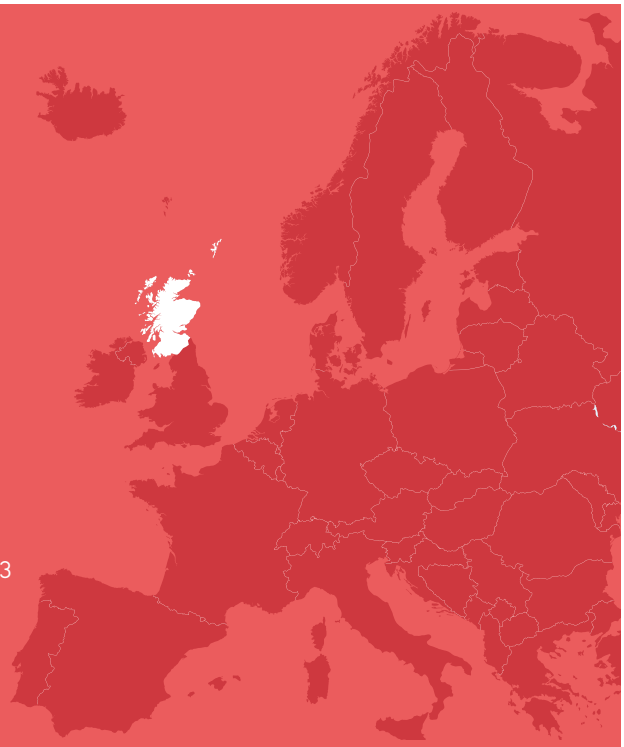
The Lenses and Cultures for Positive Change

AUTHORS:

Graham Norris
Assistant Director

Graham is an Assistant Director with Education Scotland, Scotland's national education improvement agency. Graham presently has responsibility for developing the curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment in the school years 5-18. This involves developing and promoting approaches which help staff in Education Scotland and education establishments bring about positive change. Previously, within HM Inspectorate of Education, Graham had national responsibility for areas such as music, ICT across learning, creativity, inclusion, and for developing inspection processes and managing inspection teams.



Facts about UK – Education Scotland

- Population: 5,4 mill
- Students per teacher: primary 16.5, secondary 12.2
- Expenditure on education: 6,4 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,83

ABSTRACT

This article describes some of the approaches being used in Scotland to secure and realise the benefits of our major curriculum reform programme - Curriculum for Excellence, and gives examples of the impact it is having on students. Our approaches are founded on a belief that everyone who has a stake in education needs to contribute to make sure the curriculum remains relevant and fit for purpose in a changing world. This article describes how we are developing our national partnership working and culture of trust to make this happen. It also describes how we use three key perspectives – inward, outward and forward – to give direction to change, and how a clear understanding of the past is needed to guide these perspectives to bring about positive impact. The article emphasises the key role of professional dialogue in different contexts to promote teacher agency, and concludes with a description of our 'next steps'.

Keywords: Curriculum, Learning, Teaching, Assessment, Change, Inwards, outwards, forwards, 3 Horizons, Partnership, Curriculum for Excellence, Impact

BACKGROUND

Scottish Ministers are responsible for education policy in Scotland. Early in the last decade, Ministers initiated a national debate about the school curriculum. This debate was wide-ranging and the education community and those who used the education services engaged in it fully and constructively. The national debate led to the major curriculum reform programme we know as Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Work is presently ongoing to realise the benefits of CfE and confidence is increasing that it is now bringing about real change in the nature of learning and teaching. You can read more about how this curriculum came into being in last year's CIDREE Yearbook, together with details about the design of the curriculum, its purposes and principles, and steps towards implementation, or by visiting Education Scotland's website. This paper builds on the background provided in last year's article by exploring some of the ways in which Education Scotland, our national improvement agency for education, has been supporting schools and their partners in implementing CfE policy. You can read more about Education Scotland's role in improving Scottish education and particularly in implementing CfE in our corporate plan.

This article includes a number of evaluative case study descriptions of practice where policy can be seen to have contributed to improvements in different primary and secondary schools. These descriptions are drawn both from the views of those involved in implementing the changes and from independent validations carried out by visiting teams which comprised HM Inspectors, Associate Assessors, and Education Authority officers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational innovation has a long tradition in Scotland. Presently, perhaps more than ever before, we can see just how much the world is changing and why innovation and change in educational provision is no longer optional. We know that children and young people's life opportunities are being influenced more than ever by **what**, **how** and **why** they learn. This recognition is at the heart of our new curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence, which is designed to help children and young people be better prepared than ever before for unpredictable and at times uncertain futures. CfE creates the space and permission for everyone involved in providing education and related services to decide how best to meet the unique needs of the children and young people they serve. We know that these needs vary from student to student, school to school, and indeed from community to

community. We also know that the best motivation to learn is internal motivation and that, whilst external pressures and realities can drive effort, the best learning comes from wanting, inquisitive, and enquiring minds. CfE provides the space to harness this motivation so that every young person can be helped to find a successful pathway to a positive destination.

> The school was making good progress in improving young people's leadership with the aim of a positive impact on learning in the classroom and the life and ethos of the school. All young people from identified focus groups were confident, articulate, self reflective, enthusiastic, highly motivated, and enjoying the enhanced leadership opportunities available to them.

CfE is a different kind of approach to curriculum design based on four clearly defined capacities[1]. It seeks to ensure that children and young people learn and acquire the skills, attributes, capabilities, and knowledge they will need to have successful futures. Many of these attributes and capabilities are the focus of the case study boxes throughout this article. These are included to illustrate how national curriculum policy is changing practice in educational establishments, classrooms, and services. Many of the illustrations relate to key attributes and capabilities specified in CfE, such as "taking the initiative and leading," "creating and developing," "working in partnership and in teams," "thinking creatively and independently," "being open to new thinking and ideas," and "having enthusiasm and motivation for learning," to name but a few.

> Young people have a clear understanding of what CfE "looks like" in the school and how it relates to the skills they need for learning, life and work. They have high expectations of themselves both in terms of academic attainment and their holistic achievement of attributes and capabilities.

The essential skills and knowledge base of each curriculum area are specified in national publications, blended together with the attributes that now play such a critical role in all of our lives. Other features of the curriculum such as values,

[1]The four capacities are successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors,

entitlements and principles for effective delivery are also specified. This policy approach ensures that teachers have real flexibility in planning with students how best to make learning relevant for each of them as individuals. Whilst this policy framework and guidance creates the scope for professional decision-making in a local context, that in itself is no guarantee that positive change will happen as a result, no matter how clear and comprehensive that guidance might be. Bringing about positive change, by which we mean having a positive impact on outcomes for students, is a complex and often unpredictable business. In a spacious and permissive policy environment, it becomes even more complex because there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. It means having the confidence to trust that those working most closely with students are best placed to know what those students' particular needs are, and indeed that they know how best to meet those needs so that students achieve success. But it takes professional courage at both national and local levels to have this confidence in a system that had previously been accustomed to being controlled through national guidelines and inspection. This courage needs to be based on a clear understanding of how to bring about positive change and the critical importance of robust quality assurance processes and constructive accountability. It means understanding the synergies across all those things that can have a bearing on the system and which have an impact on students, not least the relationship between what young people learn, how they learn, why they learn, and effective approaches to assessing and evaluating their progress. We also know just how important it is to understand the influence of social background, advantage and disadvantage, self-evaluation, the quality of teaching and learning and approaches to improvement, educational leadership, governance and accountability, culture including peer group behaviours, resources, and not least the capacity and morale of a system seeking to maintain high standards whilst innovating to improve.

Children are taking increasing responsibility for themselves and for their own behaviour and show a real understanding of why they need to do so. Less time is wasted on sorting out disagreements and more time is spent on learning. Children believe that they work better together now in collaborative learning contexts.

This article, then, seeks to explore some of the means by which these important changes are being made in Scotland and the impact these are having in the class-

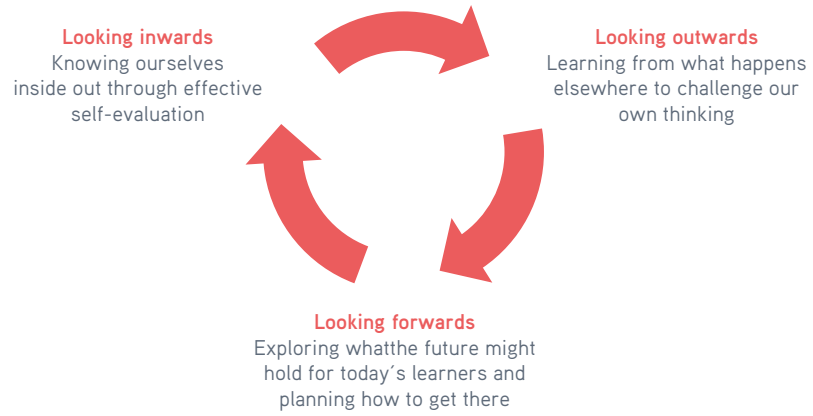
room. The illustrations are drawn from establishments and services that have been seeking to implement national policy for a number of years by using change approaches promoted by Education Scotland, our national improvement agency for education. The crucial links in this strategy relate to the development of inclusive partnerships within a national learning community in which all who have a stake in education have a real say in how it develops, and ensuring that this community is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to fulfil its aspirations. This is very much a work in progress, but signs that real and lasting transformation is possible are encouraging and worthy of being shared in the hope that they will encourage others.

> Children are using their skills to contribute to school improvement because they have the confidence and skills to do so. Attributes including creativity, leadership, problem-solving, teamwork respect for others, and many more, are developing further as a result

First, we will explore **three perspectives** that we think underpin effective change and which we think have the potential to transform the curriculum, learning, teaching, and assessment. Second, we will look at the vital role **partnerships** play and will need to even more in the future if we are to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and change is sustainable. These sections will include reference to the role Education Scotland has in promoting positive change, both through activities that align to the three perspectives and through other key improvement approaches including inspection and review. And finally, we will look briefly at Education Scotland's strategy for promoting further improvement across educational establishments and services, and what we intend to do next.

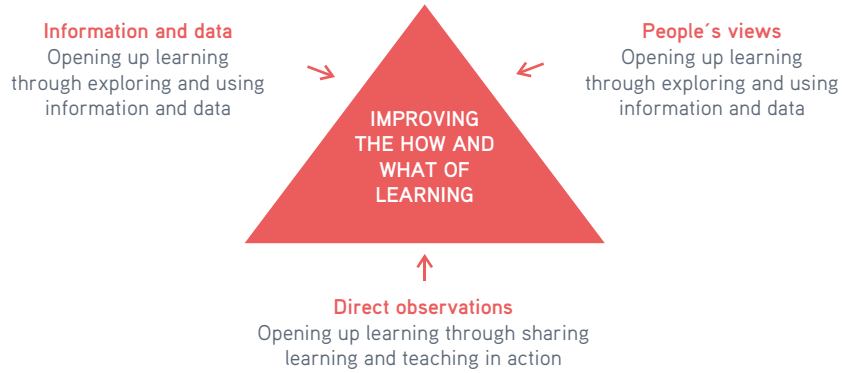
2. LOOKING INWARD, LOOKING OUTWARD, LOOKING FORWARD – THREE PERSPECTIVES FOR POSITIVE CHANGE.

Looking inward, the first perspective, is about knowing ourselves inside out through effective self-evaluation for improvement. Schools and their partner services have been taking on the mantle of self-evaluation over the last two decades or so. As a result, we know from our school inspection programme that self-evaluation in Scotland has reached a level of maturity whereby practitioners now routinely look closely at the quality of outcomes for those they serve and the processes that lead to those outcomes. You can read more about how they do this



in our publication *Learning Together: Opening Up Learning*. In the context of learning and teaching, they might do this by combining information from a range of complementary angles. The first source of information could be drawn from what people think, notably in the classroom, through ongoing learning dialogues involving teachers and students as learning is taking place. More than asking students to reflect on their own learning, though, to be effective the dialogue also needs to involve their parents/carers, or indeed colleagues to find out what they feel about the quality of learning and teaching. This approach requires constructive intent on the part of all participants, a willingness to be objective and realistic, and well-focused and relevant questioning.

A second source of information could come through sharing professional views about learning and teaching amongst colleagues. These views might reflect other professionals' direct observations of learning and teaching in action during class visits, or indeed from participation in the lesson or learning experience themselves. When teachers share each other's views on learning and teaching in this way, not only can they help each other by offering constructive feedback, they can also learn about their own practice by reflecting on what they have observed. This is an important source of self-reflection that can give teachers a different take on what students are actually experiencing in the classroom. It is about looking at the learning experience through the students' rather than the teachers' eyes; the experience can be quite profound.



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Teachers and young people have been visiting each other's classes in "trios" and find this a powerful approach to sharing practice and learning from each other. They are clearly enthused by the positive outcomes of this evaluative approach to learning together. They see it as a practical application of leadership at all levels, including young people. Both unpromoted staff and young people are involved and clearly see their own leadership roles within it.

A third source of information is likely to be outcome or performance data. This is key to gauging the success of learning and teaching and can take many forms. It might be based on ongoing assessment information or information gathered for monitoring and tracking processes, or indeed it could be summative data stemming from end of unit tests or examinations. This kind of information is key to effective self-evaluation; without it, the impact of learning and teaching cannot be properly gauged. In all cases, it is the combination of different sources of information, such as the three described here and illustrated in the diagram on the above, which leads to robust self-evaluation that can be used effectively as a sound basis for improvement.

> CfE has provided the context for raised expectations, aspirations and ambition amongst all staff and young people. Driven by inspirational and distributed leadership and effective change tools, staff have evaluated their work in a robust way and related current practice to young people's future needs. Behaviour, exclusions and attendance have all improved, and a new sense of purpose and determination to do well is now established as the dominant culture.

One of the important roles of Education Scotland's inspectors is to plan inspection activities around an establishment's own self-evaluation. This has been a strong feature of our inspection process for around six or seven years now and it has promoted recognition of the importance of self-evaluation. As inspectors validate an establishment's views of its strengths and areas for development, they gain a confidence in its capacity to know itself, sustain improvement or, sometimes, identify where further support is needed.

> Good examples of progress included the preparations for major changes to the structure of the curriculum and the involvement of parents and the wider community in paving the way for an authorising environment for change. The school had made good progress in the second year of developing flexible learning programmes as part of its delivery of CfE, and all stakeholders had been involved in the process.

Looking outward, the second perspective, is about knowing what is possible. It is about knowing what learning, teaching, assessment, and the curriculum look like elsewhere so that we can challenge our own thinking, aspirations, and assumptions. This perspective can help us to learn from others, perhaps in similar circumstances, and thereby reflect on our own ambitions and expectations of students. It might involve finding time for learning visits to colleagues' classrooms or discussions about effective practice and less successful approaches through dialogue, perhaps in professional networks and learning communities. Sometimes it might mean using multi-media examples of excellent practice available online in order to reflect on one's own practice. Research data can play an important part in learning from others, as can benchmarking data on performance outcomes, which can be used for reflection. Increasingly, comparative performance data is becoming available beyond local boundaries; it now embraces both national and

international communities. These are important sources that are helping underpin improvement strategies. However, it is not about replicating what we see elsewhere, although we will often enjoy learning about good ideas. Rather, it is about gaining an insight into how "best problems," challenges, and opportunities are being addressed in similar, or indeed different, contexts. For example, within our permissive policy framework, we can learn much from colleagues in other establishments about how local needs have driven choices about curriculum design and how change is being implemented. With the advantage of this insight, we are much better placed to find our own unique solutions that best meet the needs of the students we serve. One of the core roles of Education Scotland's senior education officers, inspectors, and other staff is to share the thought-provoking, innovative, and effective practice they have encountered as they engage in professional dialogue with practitioners in different contexts. This will often be through professional dialogue during an inspection, through leading professional and appreciative enquiry approaches, or perhaps through network events or conversation days with different groups of practitioners for particular purposes.

Teachers are part of a rich community of students and are committed to the "new way," facilitating and directing learning, rather than controlling learning.

Looking forward, the third perspective, is about exploring what the future might hold for today's students and planning how to get there. Time and time again we see successful businesses transform themselves, not necessarily overnight but through well-designed, almost evolutionary, incremental steps. Businesses have to do this in order to survive - we can all think of examples of those businesses that did not change, including some household names, and as a result are no longer on the high street. This kind of transformational change takes foresight and planning and an absolute recognition that innovation is not an option but a prerequisite. It also recognises that innovation is not always predictable and that there may well be failures as well as successes. But how well do we do this in education? Children's and young people's needs are changing just as much as businesses' are. These are often the very same businesses that our students will be working in, or even leading, one day. Addressing these needs means talking to students about their learning and their aspirations, about what they feel they do well, enjoy and need, and doing something with that knowledge to improve

their learning. But how systematically do we ensure we stop doing things that no longer have relevance to students' futures? How ready are we to challenge our own assumptions about doing things we've always done but which might bear little relevance to students' future needs?

> Young people now lead change planning and horizon scanning sessions. In doing so, they are using a range of higher-order skills, high-level attributes, and several capabilities both to lead these sessions and also to participate in them.

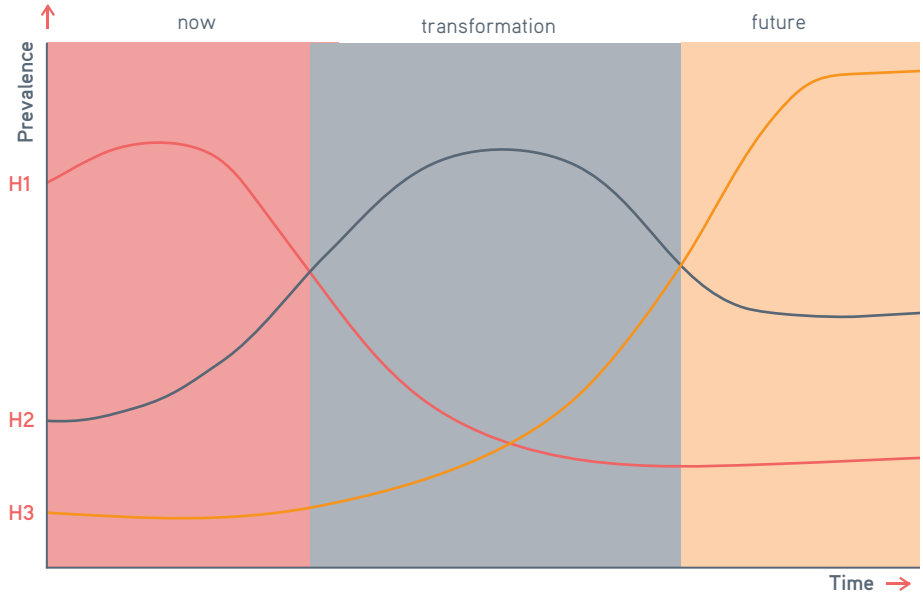
To help promote the idea of relevance to students' future needs within existing improvement planning cycles, Education Scotland has been developing approaches that explore the short-, medium- and long-term needs of students in order to give better, orchestrated direction to improvement strategies. This approach might just give us the means and confidence to break down some of the long-standing and seemingly insurmountable issues faced in Scotland, including the need for greater equity in educational outcomes for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

> The school is 'innovation brave'. It is ambitious for change and confident about making it. It is tackling successfully issues that may be proving difficult elsewhere in the sector.

The first of these forward-looking approaches is called Three Horizons[2] . It is an approach designed to provoke conversations that take a much more ambitious and focused look at the future needs of students in a rapidly changing world. It also takes account of and addresses the challenges and assumptions of the present – the things that we always do because we always have. And the approach also helps us to recognise and understand those things that have real value so that we ensure they are sustained and improved. It does this by opening up thought-provoking choices and ideas about our socially, environmentally, economically, politically, and spiritually changing world. For example, one of the conversations might well explore the extent to which a school recognises that the context for successful learning and effective contribution is now international and global. This Three Horizons approach might then go on to explore the chang-

[2]Developed in partnership with The International Futures Forum

THREE HORIZONS CHART



ing education system by looking into the classroom, learning environment, pedagogy, and policy. For example, practitioners, students, and their parents/caregivers might debate how well their school is preparing young people for jobs that don't yet exist. Or they might explore the extent to which the time children spend on improving their handwriting is time well spent in the context of the role handwriting is likely to play in their lives in 10 or 20 years time. They might consider what that role could be, and then match it to a range of other priorities for the present and future. The Three Horizons approach might then go on to relate these world and education contexts to the changing attitudes and lives of children and young people themselves. For example, students might debate with their teachers the extent to which learning in school or college recognises and harnesses the technology-driven world in which they live and in which learning takes place on demand anywhere, anytime.

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Young people were taking increasing responsibility for themselves and for their own learning and showed a real understanding of why they need to do so. They were working in an independent and flexible way, making effective use of the various open breakout spaces.

The need for proven change tools to help navigate the change process becomes even more compelling when aspirations have been set through the Three Horizons approach described above. So, in Scotland, we are using a range of change tools that have the flexibility to be used in different ways to meet different circumstances. Education Scotland has the responsibility for ensuring that practitioners are well versed in how to apply these tools. Looking at what the future might hold and how to prepare children and young people for it is vital, particularly when combined with self-evaluation and learning about practice from other teachers, establishments or education systems. It can help us to challenge perceived wisdoms and assumptions, but it does not necessarily make the needed change happen or provide the stepping stones that will bring it about. Becoming aware of the forward perspective might show that much of what we do remains relevant, is entirely valid, and needs to be preserved and improved, but it will also show where significant or profound change is needed. To help address this need and make this positive change more likely, Education Scotland has been working with practitioners to develop change approaches based on those used in the international business community. These approaches use a range of powerful change tools[3] that businesses themselves use to transform their fortunes. These tools harness the emotions we all experience when facing change or trying to implement it and they use these emotions to engage everyone involved in a systematic, creative process of change design. Most importantly, the tools have the scope to tackle perceived blockages by presenting options and alternatives designed by those most involved and affected and they enable each incremental step towards transformation to be carefully planned, monitored, evaluated, and adjusted as necessary. Education Scotland is supporting practitioners across schools and partner services in using these change tools to increasingly good effect.

> These approaches have released leadership capacity and creativity in a very structured way and enabled everyone to participate in improvement, including young people who are now very clearly at the centre of planning for improvement in the school. A particular example of this is young people's direct involvement in the staff recruitment process.

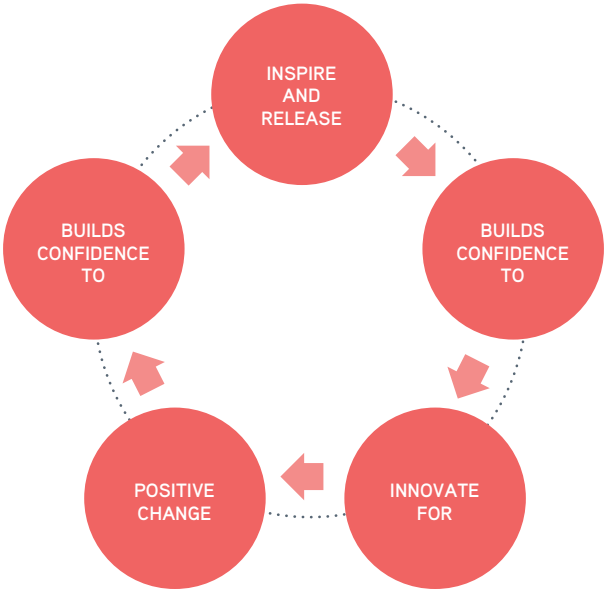
Overall then, we think the three perspectives of inward, outward and forward combine to provide a powerful direction that can bring about positive change.

[3]Developed and licensed for education in partnership with Forth Road Limited and Jim Ewing.

But we also recognise that these three perspectives are not enough. They need to be grounded on a clear understanding of what has promoted or hindered positive change in the past so that previous constraints are removed. This perspective might be called "experience", or "pragmatic realism". No matter what we call it though, without such reflection on the past the risk of innovation for innovation's sake is increased and the likelihood of positive impact is reduced.

3. A NEW DRIVE FOR PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Critical to the success of all of the above is the need to recognise the context in which change approaches take place. Developing **partnerships and a positive cultural context for change** is vital. This is at the heart of the education system in Scotland, based on strong partnerships across national bodies, with local authorities, with practitioners and their representatives, and indeed with students and their parents too. This means having a new, inclusive approach to a national professional learning community which recognises the demographic complexities of Scotland, including the geographical variations in the size and shape of its communities and the role of online networking and learning systems[4]. That said,



[4] Game On is an example of an online national education programme which links schools across all parts on Scotland and further afield across the Commonwealth.

however, the cultural context and influences on systemic change are complex and multi-faceted. Culture can be influenced by different kinds of opportunities and pressures, by resources, and by the morale of all involved. Leaders at all levels have a key role in inspiring a positive culture for change and showing they have the confidence to release those around them to innovate. They recognise that professional partnerships are vital in systems that are undergoing significant change and that values such as trust and respect need to be at the heart of the process. Professional trust creates the environment for practitioners to feel that they have real permission and have been "released" to be innovative. Innovation is key to positive change. As illustrated in the diagram on the previous page, this approach also understands that positive change further increases the likelihood of increased trust, thereby creating an even more positive context for innovation. Indeed, this might be seen as a kind of virtuous cycle of innovation that is based on professional trust.

Partnerships are enabled and nurtured by carefully balanced and coherent approaches to professional dialogue for improvement, using a wide range of tailored approaches at both national and local levels. High-quality professional dialogue promotes teacher agency in a powerful and unique way. Accountability needs to be constructive and not seen as restrictive – people recognise that with choice comes responsibility and the need to be accountable for the choices made. In Scotland, we enhance professionalism and leadership by actively gathering evidence about what works through inspections, reviews, collaborative professional enquiry and other activities, and using this information to both advise and to intervene proportionately with support where necessary. This emphasis underpins our Scottish "learning system," in which the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts, i.e., everyone can learn from everyone else. Key to this system is our determination as an educational community to learn from and share what works best with each other in a way that recognises that differences are opportunities from which we all learn. It is not about right or wrong or good or bad, it is actually about starting from a belief that everyone shares a common purpose to do their best for students. This starting point changes the nature of professional dialogue. It means that everyone involved, be they teachers, students, or their parents/caregivers, head teachers, or inspectors, Education Authority officers, or service managers, works **with** each other rather than doing things **to** one another. So how do we ensure this shared professional learning is taken forward at a national level, building further on the national conversation that led to CfE in the first place?

> … it is possible to release latent leadership capacity and creativity in a very tangible way. This is because staff and young people now feel they know how to lead, both by understanding their own need for purpose and vision to define the focus of their leadership and by being equipped with the tools with which to involve others fully in the changes they are leading …

National forums are an important aspect of this partnership and are vital to securing the positive cultural landscape it needs to be effective. Everyone who has a stake in securing and maintaining an effective curriculum and approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment needs to know they can have a say in ensuring that intended outcomes are being realised. This aspiration has led to a new, inclusive approach to national partnership working in Scotland, through the development of Curriculum, Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Support (CLTAS) National Forums. These forums seek to ensure that children's and young people's needs continue to be met at a time when the complex world is changing around them. The forums will seek to address one of the challenges facing education systems around the world when bringing about significant curriculum reform – that of ensuring we continue to meet the needs of those students in the system at the time when change is underway. This approach, now being adopted in Scotland, seeks to reduce the necessity for fundamental curriculum reform of the sort we have seen in the past, thereby ensuring that change can provide continuity of experience for students. We have this opportunity because CfE focuses on the core purposes of learning and these are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. As such, the overall purpose of the CLTAS National Forums is to secure, consolidate and embed improvements to the curriculum, learning, teaching, assessment and support, and to maintain their relevance to deliver high-quality outcomes for all students. The implementation of the first tranche of National Forums is now underway, covering Expressive Arts 3-18, Mathematics and Numeracy 3-18, a Digital Learning Forum, and The Middle Years 8-16. The forums are being set up in a way which reflects our new understanding about how change happens. First off they are designing their own terms of reference, after which they will be considering how they will gauge the following.

- Progress towards securing continuity and progression in learning through 3-18
- Progress towards improved learning, teaching, and assessment and support based on students' individual and collective needs

- Progress towards securing better outcomes for all students and reducing inequity in outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
- The impact of innovation, opportunities, challenges, and perceived constraints
- The suitability of the evidence base on which the Forum can base its work, and what needs to be done to ensure robust breadth and triangulation of evidence
- Progress towards building confidence in Scottish education
- The usefulness of advice and materials provided locally and nationally
- Key strengths and areas for development

The forums are being established through a partnership approach led by Education Scotland, Scottish Government and senior leaders in Education Authorities, in full consultation with all concerned. Once fully established, they will include teachers, head teachers, employers and industry, Education Authority officials, students and their parents, and a range of partner services, amongst others. They have the potential to have a significant impact on the way educational change is managed in the future.

4. WHAT COMES NEXT?

Education Scotland is moving into a new phase of working. Its work and ambitions are now clearly defined to show how it will help Scottish education *transform lives through learning*. Education Scotland's vision emphasises a system that will be "...renowned for the ability of national and local partners to work flexibly together..." as described earlier in this article with reference to CLTAS National Forums. This strategy is needed because Education Scotland is now targeting its work directly on three aspirational strategic goals:

- educational outcomes for all students improve;
- inequity in educational outcomes is eradicated; and
- public confidence in education is high.

The objectives[5] through which these ambitions will be realised are:
- to build a world-class curriculum for all students in Scotland;
- to promote high-quality professional learning and leadership amongst education practitioners;

[5] A full explanation of these objectives can be found in Education Scotland's Corporate Plan at http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/about/remitandframework/corporateplan.asp

- to build the capacity of education providers to improve their performance continuously;
- to provide independent evaluation of education provision; and
- to influence national policy through evidence-based advice.

The Scottish approach to education improvement can be summarised as one in which everyone involved is seeking to build and support a self-sustaining learning system, one which drives perpetual improvement. By involving everyone who has a stake in high-quality education, this inclusive system has the capacity to drive improvement in all sectors of education, whether they are children and family support services, or staff in schools and colleges. Such a learning system focuses on the needs of students and engages a high-quality professional workforce to make it work. In summary, such a system needs to:

- ensure that practitioners have broad enabling national guidance with clear expected outcomes;
- encourage local interpretation and application in practice, with incentives for well-managed innovation;
- ensure that evaluation takes place at appropriate levels, ranging from internal to external and from local to national;
- bring in external evidence from high-quality research; and
- be vigorous in identifying and sharing evidence about what works in ways which are well-suited to informing decision-making by practitioners at the front line.

As we move ahead, Education Scotland will continue to develop approaches to mapping and sharing innovative and thought-provoking practice, building on previous well-established approaches such as *Journey To Excellence*, and to gauging its effectiveness through inspection, review, and other approaches.

This article, then, has described some of the approaches being used to advance national policy and the related objectives in education establishments. It provides examples of some of the impact these approaches are having. Through CIDREE's overview of European education developments and its networks' contributions to future improvements, CIDREE is very well-placed to explore with Scotland in the future our approaches to implementing change as the impact we are seeking becomes increasingly evident. Further information can be obtained from www.educationscotland.gov.uk or from Graham.norris@educationscotland.gov.uk

Outcome-oriented Education in Austria:

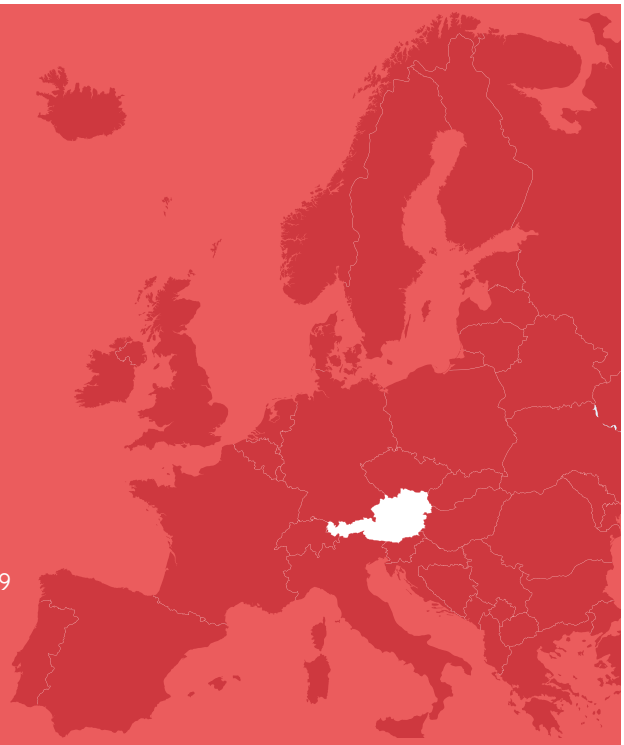
From a Political Decision to the Reach of Educational Standards Inside Schools

AUTHORS:

Cornelia Riess

Researcher

Cornelia Rieß is researcher at the Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School Sector (Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens, BIFIE). She is working in the field of evaluation and accompanying research with a special focus on the reception and utilization of reported data from the regular monitoring of educational standards.



Facts about Austria

- Population: 8,5 mill
- Density: 101 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 12, secondary 9
- Expenditure on education: 5,7 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,59

ABSTRACT

In 2008, national educational standards became mandatory in Austria. Standardized achievement targets were defined to enable the observation of whether and to what extent schools impart those core competencies that students normally should have acquired by the end of Grade 4 (primary school) and by the end of Grade 8 (secondary school).

Educational standards aim to affect the school system through competence-orientation and sustainability in teaching (implementation), the assessment of acquired competencies by the means of standardized tests (monitoring), and the observation of the standards' influence on teaching and the learning culture within schools (evaluation). A core element within this process is the feedback schools receive regarding the results of their pupils after each standardized test.

Nationwide standardized tests were conducted for the first time in 2012 at Grade 8. Feedback was given in spring 2013. An extensive support system was established to help schools in interpreting and dealing with assessment data. Concurrent with the implementation and monitoring of educational standards, an internal evaluation of associated processes took place. This article presents some results of the internal evaluation which shed light on the participants' opinions and processes on the way from legislation to classroom practice.

Keywords: educational standards, evaluation, competences, monitoring, assessment, feedback

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the constitution, a key goal of the Austrian school system is to equip each and every child with the skill set needed to succeed in subsequent phases of education, profession, and life in general (Art. 14 B-VG i. d. F. BGBl. I Nr. 31/2005). This goal also outlines the basic idea of Austrian Educational Standards, which became mandatory in 2008. Until then, Austria exhibited a poor tradition of national assessments and had been oriented more towards input than output. Participation in the international assessments of Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, (TIMSS) 4th Grade, Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, (PIRLS) 4th Grade, and Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) at the age of 15-16 years were the main sources of information on learning outcomes for the Austrian educational system at this time. Findings from these studies demonstrated the need to create national standards. PISA 2006 identified every fifth Austrian pupil as being at risk, meaning that they were still unable to read and comprehend texts, to solve simple mathematical tasks, or to understand basic natural scientific phenomena after 9 years of education. Furthermore, a process focusing on empowering schools to operate more autonomously began in the mid-1990s. Schools, thus, were enabled to autonomously define emphases in their curricula, though governmental specifications remained concerning core subjects. This autonomy, however, showed the need for nationally standardized achievement targets for core subjects. To combine practice, science, and governmental guidelines, the Federal Ministry of Education commissioned teachers, researchers, and representatives from school inspectorates and the ministry to develop national education standards. These standards contain the subjects German, reading, writing and mathematics in primary school; and German, mathematics and English in lower secondary school.

This essay describes the concept of educational standards in Austria as well as their regular monitoring through standardized testing. Accompanying evaluations provide insight on the testing procedure and its impact on teaching. From the standards' implementation in 2008 to the results from the first standardized testing in 2012, three main evaluation phases can be distinguished: the success of an innovation – such as educational standards within the Austrian school system – is affected by the participants' willingness to change. Consequently, in the first phase, the accompanying evaluations focused on the information level and attitude amongst principals and teachers. These surveys took place in the context of sample studies that were undertaken prior to the first nationwide

standardized testing. In the second phase, the process of the first standardized testing itself was evaluated. The third evaluation phase focused on how the schools responded to the feedback they received on the reported achievements. Findings from these evaluations aim to illustrate the process from the basic idea of educational standards to their impact on day-to-day school life.

2. THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN AUSTRIA

Standards describe learning outcomes by defining the skills that pupils should have acquired by certain points in their educational career. They are derived from the curriculum. Conceptually, the Austrian educational standards are based on Weinert's definition of competences (Weinert, 2001). In this concept, competences can be aqcuired through learning processes. Furthermore, they are independent of a certain context and thus enable to solve tasks in different situations of life. Competences comprise knowledge and cognitive skills, the ability to self-regulate, and social communication and motivational elements. For the purpose of the development and proving process of educational standards in Austria, the Federal Ministry of Education installed a steering group. It assigned the Federal Institute of Educational Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian School Sector (Bundesinstitut für Bildungsforschung, Innovation und Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens, BIFIE) the task of coordinating teachers and content specialists into working groups which developed subject-specific competence models, formulated the standards, and generated prototypical items which were then sampled in pilot schools.

Cooperation with pilot schools assured immediate feedback on the adequacy and practicability of the formulated standards. Nationally standardized achievement targets for the core subjects were defined to enable the observation of whether, and to what extent, schools impart those basic competences that students normally should have acquired by the end of Grade 4 (primary school) and by the end of Grade 8 (secondary school). They are thus no "minimum standards" or "maximum standards;" they are based instead on the concept of "normal standards." The Austrian educational standards aim to affect the school system through competence-orientation and sustainability in teaching (implementation), the assessment of acquired competences by the means of standardized tests (monitoring), and the observation of the standards' influence on teaching and the learning culture within schools (evaluation). *Implementation* concentrates on processes in the classroom; competence-orientation implies the need to focus on

the acquisition of the determined competences when planning and teaching lessons so that tasks reflect the structural composition of competences. By comparing students' actual acquired competences with the standards, teachers can identify the best possible way to further improve their students' learning outcomes. The Austrian educational standards, by establishing competence-oriented teaching that is focused on students and their educational outcomes, introduced a paradigm shift in the Austrian education system from inputs to outputs. To support the implementation of educational standards in teaching, the BIFIE developed, in cooperation with experts who were mainly from pedagogical universities, special trainings and teaching materials. Schools, as well as participants in the special trainings, received a copy of the materials free of charge. Online, the material could be downloaded from the BIFIE website. *Monitoring* students' performance through regular standardized tests indicates whether, and to what extent, students have acquired the determined competences. The BIFIE reports the observed level of competences to the participants of the learning process (students, teachers, schools), as well as to the educational decision-makers. This external feedback on testing results serves as a tool for orientation and thereby helps to enable continuous quality assurance and quality improvement in the school system at different levels. While schools are to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses and the causes that affected their performance at the school level, the national assessments represent an external *evaluation* that provides policy- and decision-makers with the information required for long-term educational planning. In combination, these developments at different levels aim to initiate a continuous process of development in the educational system. The BIFIE was brought in to implement and regularly monitor the Austrian educational standards and to accompany these processes through evaluations.

3. THE FOUNDATION

After the legal introduction of the Austrian educational standards, a process of development and testing began. The BIFIE undertook so-called baseline-studies as sample surveys in 2009 for the 8th Grade and in 2010 for the 4th Grade (Laimer, 2011). The goal of these surveys was to raise awareness of students' current skills before the implementation of educational standards would reach teaching processes. Consequently, the baseline-studies should, as a long-term reference, provide evidence of the impact of the implementation of educational standards on educational output. Furthermore, the baseline-studies served to provide insight into the applicability of survey instruments and logistic processes. This was

necessary because the objective and standardized measurement of whether and to what extent the determined competences were acquired is an essential attribute of standardized assessment. Standardized testing refers to the nature of test items as well as the basic conditions of the test situation, which include the sequence of testing as well as instructions and administration-persons who were trained in standardized testing. A first phase of internal evaluation took place with a special focus on the implementation process in schools (Grillitsch, 2010). The general goal was to gain information on the process and the impacts of the introduction of educational standards in Austria, including investigating which requirements would enable the successful implementation and continual improvement of the standards within the education system. A main determinant for the success of processes of change is the willingness for innovations among its stakeholders (Oelkers and Reusser, 2008). Since the implementation of educational standards means profound modifications in teaching combined with a challenge of routines and structures, anxiety and uncertainty are to be expected (Jäger, 2004). Besides clarity of targets and procedures, the awareness of the necessity and utility of an innovation are prerequisites for a positive attitude (Oelkers and Reusser, 2008; Jäger, 2004). The first accompanying internal evaluations concentrated on the information level among teachers and principals and their attitudes towards the expected improvements educational standards would make in their daily school life. In 2010, more than two-thirds of teachers and principals at the lower secondary level felt themselves very well- or well-informed about general aims and functions of educational standards. However, at that early phase, more than 70% among that group found themselves less informed or uninformed about the way in which feedback is given after the standardized assessment and what the aims and targets of these assessments are (Grillitsch, 2010). Findings from international studies confirm that teachers and principals often find the reported results to offer only a very limited amount of concrete options for action (Schwippert 2004; Peek 2006; Groß Ophoff et al. 2006).

4. MOVING TOWARDS REGULAR MONITORING

The regular assessment of acquired competences by way of standardized tests is part of a continuous quality cycle aiming to initiate and support steady developments in the quality of the Austrian education system. Since every single standard test is defined as a completed project that shows possibilities for future improvements, the need for accompanying evaluation is obvious: insights from these evaluations are the basis for variations and enhancements in future testing.

The first standardized testing was undertaken in May and June 2012 for mathematics at the secondary level. A survey was conducted of all 79,678 participating 8th graders, which represents almost 1% of the total Austrian population (2013: 8,477,230, Statistik Austria 2014) and about 7% of all students (2012/13: 1,142,726, Statistik Austria 2014) in Austria.

The planning and execution of the standardized testing included BIFIE-staff as well as external people. BIFIE continually informed schools on the next steps and communicated those preparations that must be undertaken in order to guarantee a successful standardized testing process. To secure standardized testing of educational standards, people with teaching experience received a nationally consistent training in the administration of standardized tests. The administration of the tests was predominantly completed by teachers within their own school. The so-called internal test administrators (n=3,674) were nominated by each school's principal. In about 7 % of all classes, external test administrators (n=391) undertook the testing. Furthermore, in a sample of 3 % of all classes, quality controllers (n=123) inspected the standardized testing procedure at schools with internal test administrators. While external administrators and quality controllers were trained by BIFIE-staff, so-called test administrator trainers (n=100) instructed internal test administrators after their own training had been completed. Prior to conducting the tests, the administrators, in co-operation with the school's principal (n=1,416), had to check the completeness of measurement materials. These groups – internal and external test administrators, quality controllers, test administrator trainers, and principals – represented the target groups of the evaluation on the execution of the first standardized testing. The evaluation focused on the training-processes, information and communication processes between BIFIE and stakeholders, services (e.g., a BIFIE-hotline in case there were questions and difficulties during the testing), technical infrastructure, the testing procedure, as well as the general attitude and expectations towards educational standards and national assessments. It was expected that experiences from this testing procedure would affect attitudes and expectations on future testing. Consequently, in addition to the observation of the procedure itself, attitude, sufficiency, and expectations of involved people (e.g. the test administrators) towards future testing were addressed in the survey (Zuber et al., 2012).

Essentially, evaluations have four targets (Stockmann, 2007): the gaining of insight, the execution of control, the creation of potential for development, and

the legitimation of executed measures and procedures. The weighing of these targets differs from evaluation to evaluation, depending on the individual object being evaluated. Insights allow a rating of the process on the basis of defined criteria and thereby enable a derivation of management measurements. The main target of this evaluation was to further develop the procedure of standardized testing in order to gain insight for optimization. For this reason, online-questionnaires for principals, internal and external administrators, and quality controllers were developed. The quality controllers' documentation and other process data (e.g. problems stated to the BIFIE-hotline) complemented the database. Participation in the survey occurred voluntarily and anonymously. As internal administrators could only be contacted through the schools' principal (i.e., not directly), a low response-rate (23%) is explainable. In the other groups (principals, external test administrators, test administrator trainers and quality controllers) more than 60% participated in the survey.

The information and communication processes (e.g., correspondence to principals on the testing procedure and logistics) were deemed sufficient and coherent. The testing itself took place for the majority without difficulty and was characterized by a high level of co-operation between principals and test administrators. More than 85% of internal and external test administrators estimated the students to be very motivated or rather motivated for the testing. Generally, the answers of internal and external administrators bear a high resemblance to one another. The quality controllers' documentation concerning preparations, testing procedures, and post-processing confirms an overall fluid testing process (Zuber et al., 2012).

Concerning the training processes that took place in preparation for the testing, it was found from the participants' responses that the training should take place closer to the day of testing. Furthermore, previous knowledge should be considered to a higher degree, so that the length of the training process might be shortened for those with high previous knowledge. Teachers (i.e., test administrators) showed a rather critical attitude towards the use of standard testing. On the other hand, 75% of principals who participated in the online survey rated the standard testing to be very or rather useful for quality improvements in the education system. A lack of information can generally lead to anxiety and scepticism. Although such a lack of information was not explicitly stated in the responses, it was expected that the participants' (e.g. test administrators) attitude might improve after the first results from the first standard testing had been reported.

Subsequent to the testing of educational standards, the testing material was delivered back to the BIFIE where it was scanned and the students' performance assessed. Multiple choice items could be coded automatically by the computer. Items that included written answers were rated by coders with special training.

5. FEEDBACK ON RESULTS FROM STANDARD TESTING IN AUSTRIA

After six months of data processing and analysis, the BIFIE reported the results of the standard testing. This feedback represents the next step within the quality cycle. In Austria, the following groups received information on the students' performance in the course of the assessment of educational standards:

a) Principals received an online report regarding the students' performance which was comprised of two parts. Part one showed results referring to the total school performance and part two presented the results for each tested group. The report also provided some general information on the composition of students as well as on soft facts like the well-being of the tested children in class and school.
b) Eighth grade mathematics teachers received an online report on the performance of their own group.
c) Students had access to their own results and their report also included a comparison with the average performance of all tested pupils.
d) For each school within a region, the school inspections at the district and province level received part one of the school's report as well as an over view on their region.
e) The presidents of regional education boards received an aggregated performance-report for the pupils in their respective provinces.
f) The Federal Ministry of Education received a report for each province as well as interesting aggregated results.
g) School partners (students, parents, and teachers) were informed on general results (part one) of the school by the principals.

Reporting assessment results should initiate improvements in schools. This is based on the expectation that giving schools a report on their actual state leads to change in school-specific procedures and structures as well as to developments in teaching (Visscher and Coe, 2003). However, findings from surveys on the reception of the reported information present a contrasting picture. While intense (subject-related) use of the reported data among teachers was ascer-

tained (Peek, 2004; Schneewind, 2007), the data's concrete effects on teaching were rarely stated (Schrader and Helmke, 2004; Posch, 2009). The assessment's utility for the own work, as perceived by the teachers, as well as their general acceptance of the assessment, seem to be the main determinants so that teachers find it useful to deal with the reported results (Kühle and Peek, 2007). For the BIFIE, the model on the development of teaching (Helmke and Hosenfeld, 2005) was the basis for the implementation of feedback (Breit et al., 2012). It describes how reports resulting from assessments influence teaching and instruction. In the model, a data-based reflection on teaching and the students' competences can only take place when the data has been correctly interpreted. A prerequisite to this is the general willingness to deal with the data and to reflect on the own doing (e.g. concerning reasons that might have influenced the result). On the basis of this reflection, evidence-based measurements for developments in schooling and teaching can be derived and undertaken. The impact of these measures is to be evaluated after a defined period of time. There are variables that might influence – in a positive or a negative way – this quality cycle, such as acceptance, previous knowledge, and motivation. School-related factors, such as the amount and quality of available equipment or the school-programme, and external factors, such as the availability of supporting personnel (Helmke, 2004), can also influence this quality cycle.

Supporting schools in their interpretation of the data

The evaluation of the reception and usage of feedback during the baseline-period found the applicability of the reported results, with respect to options for action, restricted among teachers and principals (Amtmann, Grillitsch, and Petrovic, 2011). Though the reports were positively rated concerning clearness and comprehensibility, a desire for support in data interpretation and the derivation of actions was detected.

As a consequence, a team of so-called "Rückmeldemoderatoren" (RM) supported schools in reading their results. The RM ought to secure a correct analyses and reflection on data from assessments. The information presented in the report should become clear to schools and thus usable for quality improvements. The aim, therefore, is that RMs transfer data competence to schools and thereby secure the basis for evidence-based developments in schooling and teaching. RMs help detect school-specific strengths and weaknesses and give information on regional support (e.g., the trainings offered at the pedagogical universities).

School development, however, is not a task for the RM. Schools were free to decide to accept the help of an RM. Schools that made use of this service could choose between two options: either there was only one meeting between the principal and the RM, focusing on a correct data interpretation at the management level (principal), or schools used the option for a second meeting, which then centred the interpretation of data on teachers of the tested classes.

Findings from international studies show that the understanding of reported results is a main prerequisite for the usage of assessment data (Koch, 2011). Lack of statistical knowledge is a core problem in dealing with data. A consequence, then, is that irrelevant optical elements are interpreted to be important (Gray, 2002). For the evaluation, thus, there was an interest in finding out the data competence of those who have to initiate development processes; i.e., the principals.

According to Abelmann and Elmore (1999), evidence-based developments in schooling and teaching will only take place when the results are communicated and dealt with in the community and in a cooperative procedure including a shared responsibility. Other studies confirm the positive influence of collegial cooperation on the usage of feedback (Visscher and Coe, 2002; Asbrand et al., 2012). Consequently, an evaluation of the reception of assessment data should include communicative processes with respect to the reported results, for example, concerning the intensity and reach of such communicative processes. Questions of interest are, for instance: is there a school-specific structure where the data interpretation and data usage can be found, indicating a collective coordination of pedagogical reflection? Is communication only informal and cursory? Concerning the assessment results from standard tests, there is a legal agreement in Austria stating that principals have to discuss class results with those teachers that taught the tested classes. The inclusion of parents' representatives is mandatory in Austria, too. This means that general school results have to be presented and discussed with the school partners, which is a board that includes pupils, parents, and teachers. Here, it is of interest to observe how the results are perceived by the board and how much importance is placed on the results.

Determining the impact on classroom practice

Educational standards and their regular assessment through standardized tests aim to support a long-term process of professionalization in school and teaching.

An important indicator of how well this process is working is shown by the process of reception and by the measures that are undertaken on the basis of the reported data.

Rossi and Freeman (1993) determine four ways to use assessment data:

i) Instrumental Usage: decisions are founded on the available information resulting from assessments.
ii) Conceptual Usage: the report of performances does not lead to single decisions but affects the thinking of decision-makers in a basic way.
iii) Symbolic Usage: the feedback information is used selectively to support the decision-maker's current point of view with the data.
iv) Strategic Usage: schools and teachers try to reach optimal testing-results, leading to a teaching-to-the-test effect.

Surveys on the usage of performance data resulting from assessments in the German-speaking area show that the reported data did not lead to concrete changes in teaching (Schrader and Helmke, 2004), whereas principals saw the results as a basis for pressure to change and initiate measures of school-specific quality management. In general, an instrumental usage of assessment data is relatively rare or takes place only with reference to the teaching, but not in a communicative process that involves the entire school. An interesting question for the evaluation is whether measures, based on the reported assessment data, are derived and of which kind they are: instrumental, conceptual, symbolic, or strategic.

The presented model on developments in teaching and schooling (Helmke and Hosenfeld, 2005) states the impact of context factors, i.e., individual characteristics of involved persons and of the relevant school, on the internal usage of assessment data. This means that the reception, as well as the extent and quality of usage of the data, may be positively or negatively affected by these variables. Studies show that individual and school-specific variables should be distinguished. Examples for individual context factors are teaching experience, pedagogical attitude, and knowledge of teaching methods. Examples for school-based factors are the type of school, the size of school, or available systems of supply. Consequently, the evaluation has to adhere to individual and school-based context factors as well.

Aspects in the focus of the evaluation

The aim of the evaluation was to gain knowledge regarding the reception and usage of the reported assessment data that resulted from the testing of education standards which took place in May and June of 2012. Furthermore, the survey had to evaluate the influence of the usage of RMs on the reception and usage of the data. For this reason, the evaluation combined three different surveys, including quantitative as well as qualitative data.

In the first step, the procedure of the Rückmeldemoderation (i.e., the meeting between RM and principal) was surveyed quantitatively on the basis of online questionnaires for the 510 schools where a Rückmeldemoderation had taken place. Since the meetings between principal and RM were held on different dates within a defined period of time, each school received an invitation to participate in the evaluation one week after the meeting with the RM. This was to ensure that the impressions from the meeting were still clear enough to be evaluated. At this time, it had been about six months since the assessment data had been reported to the schools. 351 schools (69%) participated in the survey.

There were three main areas of interest that drove the evaluation:
Contextual factors, including the reception of the assessment data (e.g., how intensively did the principal deal with the reported data?), individual attributes of the principal (e.g., what is the principal's general attitude towards the assessment of educational standards?), and motivational aspects (e.g., what were the principal's reasons for making use of the Rückmeldemoderation?).

The course of the Rückmeldemoderation, including the preparations prior to the meeting (e.g., did any difficulties occur when asking for an RM?) and concerning the meeting itself (e.g., how were competence and friendliness of the RM perceived?).

Consequences directly resulting from the Rückmeldemoderation, comprised of the gain in competences due to the RM (e.g., did the competence in the handling and interpretation of data improve?) as well as changes in the volition and motivation to undertake measures (e.g., did the RM support or initiate processes of quality development?).

The second step took place after all Rückmeldemoderationen were completed and focused on the RMs' perspective. For this reason, the evaluators participated in so-called reflexion meetings that were organized in 4 of the 9 Austrian provinces. The aim of these meetings was to get feedback from the RM on their experiences concerning the Rückmeldemoderationen, including their perception of the meeting, the existing data competence at schools, and reasons mentioned to make use of this service and whether, after their exertion, they felt themselves sufficiently prepared by the preceding training. The experiences differed between the provinces, partly due to regional differences in accompanying supply systems for handling the assessment data. Generally, the RMs found themselves warmly welcomed in schools and well-prepared from the training. However, since the evaluation focuses on the reception and usage of the reported assessment data in schools, no detailed findings from the reflection-meetings will be presented in further detail.

The third step of data acquisition consists of qualitative interviews that were undertaken with 31 principals. The aim was to obtain knowledge regarding the reception and usage of reported assessment data resulting from the testing of educational standards. The survey, too, should explain the impact of the Rückmeldemoderation concerning the reception and usage of the reported data. The sampling of the interviewed schools adhered to the following characteristics: 1) there should be one group of schools with Rückmeldemoderation and one group without Rückmeldemoderation; 2) the number of participants from each province should refer to its representation in the total population; 3) concerning the type of school, too, the sample was based on the representation of the type of school in the population; 4) the sample had to reflect schools with a performance level above, within, or below the level that was to be expected on the basis of the composition of students and the schools' contextual factors; 5) finally, those schools that had used the BIFIE-hotline to an extreme extent were excluded.

The relatively clear assignment of the object to be evaluated – a comparison of the reception and usage of the reported assessment data between schools with and without Rückmeldemoderation – enabled to formulate interesting research questions to be covered by the interviews. This allowed for structured interviews (Lamnek, 2005). By using a half-standardized guided interview, the main structure and focus of the interview was defined while there was further space for the

consideration and exploration of aspects that were not anticipated prior to the interview. The principals were contacted by phone and a meeting at the school was fixed. The first part of the interview referred to context factors of the principal (e.g., work experience) and concerning the school (e.g., the size of the school). The main part of the interview focused on questions about the reception and usage of the reported data. This included a) *the reception of the data*: e.g., what was the first opinion upon receiving the report? How are content, structure and comprehensibility of the report valued? b) *The communication of the results:* e.g., with whom have the results been discussed so far? Who has access to the report? Which contents of the report have been of special interest in the discussions? c) *Rückmeldemoderation*: In schools with Rückmeldemoderation, the principals were asked to speak about the reasons to make use of a Rückmeldemoderation and whether they gained from this service. In schools without Rückmeldemoderation, it was asked whether the possibility of accessing a Rückmeldemoderation was known and why they did not make use of it. d) The final part of the interview focused on whether and *what measures for developments in teaching and schooling were derived* from the report, whether responsibilities and a timeline for the realization have already been defined, and whether external personnel to supply the realization will be necessary.

6. FROM POLITICAL DECISIONS TO CHANGE IN THE CLASSROOM: FINDINGS ON THE RECEPTION AND COMMUNICATION OF REPORTED DATA IN SCHOOLS

The interviewed persons (n=31) gave a mainly positive first impression regarding the reported assessment data (Rieß and Zuber, 2014). Those who saw themselves confronted with low achievement scores stated that these corresponded with their own expectations. A positive reception is also reflected in the findings from the online-survey (n=351). About one third found the results to be much better or at least better than expected, for more than half of the principals, the results confirmed their own expectations. When dealing with the data, the principals initially focused on the results that referred to the school in total. However, later they most frequently (42 %) concentrated on the results that referred to those graphics that showed the performance of the participating classes with respect to defined competence dimensions of the subject of mathematics. A main point of the report is that it offers various measures against which schools may compare their own performance. This includes the absolute performance as well as the performance under consideration of contextual affects (composition of stu-

dents and school-specific conditions) and the average performance among all Austrian schools. Furthermore, the report shows how many pupils have surpassed the expected level of acquired educational standards, how many there are within or who have partly reached the expected level, and how many students are below the defined level of expected educational standards a child should have acquired up to this point. This represents a criteria-based benchmark. Findings from the interview show that principals used these three reference values to a very similar extent, ranging from 29% to 35%. In the interviews, the report was rated to be understandable, though some theoretical concepts make a detailed examination necessary for the principals. Results from the online questionnaire confirm a positive valuation of the report: 85% rated comprehensibility, information content, and clarity as "good" or "very good." Furthermore, the report, though detailed, is not too extensive and is well-structured. A majority of the principals stated in the interview that the communication process involved the entire teaching staff. The most frequent content of the school's internal examination was the comparison with the available reference values. The meeting with the school partners primarily included a presentation of the major school results. Furthermore, in several schools, this group received some background information on the concept of the educational standards and the standard testing or was presented with examples for test items. In some schools, this also led to discussions on consequences and measures. Two thirds of the interviewed principals stated that the school had already derived measurements for the quality development. These measures were separated into five groups: first, most measures (n=21) referred to the planning and execution of teaching (e.g., changes in teaching methods). Second, measures for more standardization in teaching (e.g., concerning the rating of performances) were mentioned six times. Third, more training for teachers will be a main goal for 5 schools. The fourth group of measures (n=5) refers to more personal and timely resources. Measures to improve soft facts, such as the well-being of students in school, represent the least mentioned group (n=2). Only one principal mentioned opposition from teachers. In about half of the schools where interviews took place, measures for development were stated by the teaching staff itself. Half of the interviewed principals defined their role as being a leader and, at the same time, a supporter of the realization of measures. In almost one third of the schools, subject-specific teaching personnel were assigned to implement these measures. In most schools, the measures are on track to be executed within one school-year. The responsibility for the development lies mainly with the subject teachers.

More than 500 schools made use of the opportunity of Rückmeldemoderation. Following the results from the online survey, three fourths of the respondents said that the schools made use of the RM to get a confirmation that their own data interpretation was correct. From the interviews, it was discovered that in those schools without Rückmeldemoderation, all principals said that the results had been understandable and self-explanatory. As stated in the online survey, the main content of the Rückmeldemoderation referred to a correct interpretation of data, to make strengths and weaknesses transparent, and to initiate the handling of the reported results. The climate of discussion was rated as "very good" by 96% of the principals participating in the online-survey; 94% valued the professional competence of the RM as at least "good." In total, 95% of those surveyed found the Rückmeldemoderation very or rather helpful. In the interview, half of the principals with Rückmeldemoderation stated that the discussion with the moderator had initiated consideration of the reasons that led to the result. Furthermore, principals with Rückmeldemoderation stated that they had gained a better understanding of the data through the Rückmeldemoderation. However, other than this subjective rating, findings from the interviews show no differences or improvements in the communication structures for schools with Rückmeldemoderation in comparison to those without. Both groups stated that on average, the derivation of measures from the report was rather easy. Both groups found the report similarly helpful for the planning and realization of measures for educational development.

7. FUTURE STEPS IN THE EVALUATION OF THE STANDARDS' IMPACT ON TEACHING

The evaluation has so far focused on the reception and communication processes taking place at schools directly after the report of assessment data gleaned from the testing of educational standards. The first measures of developments in teaching and schooling derived from the report were of interest, too. The data refers to qualitative and quantitative surveys with principals as the main target group. The findings aimed to provide insight whether the understanding of the available data, which is the prerequisite for a meaningful dealing with reports on assessment data, is given or not. Therefore, the optional supply of RMs, who aim to support the understanding and interpretation of the reported data, was part of the evaluation process as well. The next evaluation phase extends the group of participants. In addition to the school principals, teachers and representatives of the school supervision will be included. While principals are responsible for

undertaking those measures to secure the schools' structural basis for change, teachers are directly affected through changes in the planning and execution of their teaching. Consequently, teachers will be asked about their understanding of the report as well as the acceptance and perceived use of the reported data. Principals will be asked about the long-term effects the report of assessed data will have on developments in the quality of schooling and teaching. A main aspect at this level, therefore, is the sustainable impact of educational standards. The third group to be surveyed is the school supervision. On one hand, this group must look at whether, and to what extent and quality, schools deal with the reported data and which measures of development are derived from it. On the other hand, at this level, middle- and long-term decisions are made to support schools and secure necessary structural systems of supply.

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Teachers Taking Ownership of Educational Change via Participation in Professional Learning Communities

AUTHORS:

Maria Jürimäe

MA

Maria Jürimäe has the background of language and literature teaching. Her work in the Centre for Educational Research and Curriculum Development at the University of Tartu is connected with research and counselling schools/ kindergarten in questions of development of school curricula, assessment for learning, key competencies. She is also involved in teachers' pre- and in service training and is the author of several books and web-resources.

Anita Kärner

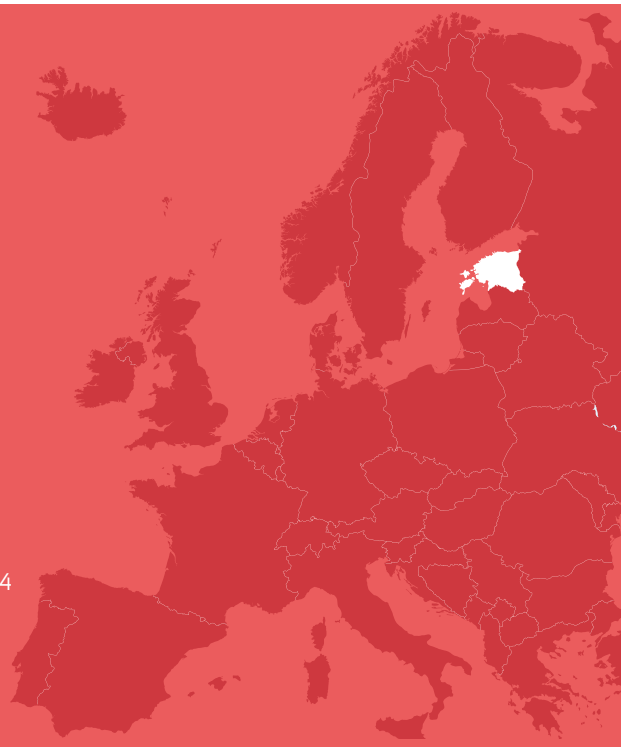
PhD

Anita Kärner has worked in the Centre for Educational Research and Curriculum Development at the University of Tartu for the last 8 years. Her main fields of research and development are: research supervision, school innovation, curriculum development, co-operation of school and community, formative assessment. She develops and runs teachers' in-service courses and the course of education policy within the master's program of European Studies.

Leelo Tiisvelt

MA

Leelo Tiisvelt has a long time work experience in school – as a teacher of mother Tonga and literature, as a tongue headmaster and literature shool leader. Today she is working at Randvere School, planning the educational processes and implementing assesment for learning. Leelo has done research in the field of formative assessment, leaded professional learning communities and is also leading an in-service training instituion „The New School".



Facts about Estonia

- Population: 1,3 mill
- Density: 28 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 13, secondary 12
- Expenditure on education: 5,5 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,84

ABSTRACT

As part of a discussion on teachers' roles and ownership in educational change, we present the example of implementing a complex educational change – the introduction of formative assessment – through professional learning communities (PLCs) in Estonia. In the study presented here, 217 teachers from 20 schools voluntarily joined professional learning communities led by mentor teachers and followed a programme of self-development and peer support. Their feedback provided a wealth of empirical data with which to analyse the impact of PLCs. Using this kind of model in teacher in-service education resulted in greater professional responsibility among teachers and supported a deeper understanding and greater ownership of the paradigmatic change.

Keywords: Estonia, educational change, teacher professional development, professional learning communities, formative assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, education has been acknowledged as being at the core of economic development and success (e.g., Holdsworth, 2010; Oliver, 1999; White Paper, 1995). National curricula and educational strategy documents, including Estonian national curricula (see Estonian NC, 1996 and 2011), stress the importance of lifelong learning and the goal of moving towards a learning society.
One of the most important characteristics of a learning society is the learners' own initiative and responsibility for his or her own progress (Niemi, 2002). One way to improve students' learning is to provide more effective professional learning activities for teachers (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Being an effective teacher no longer means being professional only in one's own subject; teachers increasingly face moral, social, and emotional dilemmas (Beijaard et al., 2000) which require broad professional skills such as supporting the development of general competencies, organizing active learning, assessing students' development, and working with students with special needs, etc.

2. EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Changing the teaching and learning paradigm in schools is a profound educational shift. The direction in which educational change occurs can differ. In many cases, the changes are initiated "top-down," i.e., new ideas are introduced without open preliminary discussions in national policy documents, national curricula, etc. As stated by Goodlad (1994), top-down changes may not be welcomed by teachers. There is tension between teachers' perceptions of the national curriculum guidelines and their own curricular intentions. This tension may be overcome when educational change is also directed by a "bottom-up" movement, i.e., when a single teacher or a single school finds a new and promising solution and others eventually learn from it. In order for a change to be effective, it has to have support both from "bottom-up" and "top-down" processes (Fullan, 1991). Teachers' voluntary activities, including their willingness and interest in personal development, play an important role in these processes. Glickman et al. (2007) refer to the active role of teachers and school leaders in educational change in the following statement: "The essence of successful instruction and good schools comes from the thoughts and actions of the professionals in the school" (p. 352).

Teachers tend to resist "top-down" changes mandated by the authorities. They may feel pressured by such mandates. Quite often, they lack the resources (time,

data) to understand the background of the change; for them it is just a question of the authorities wanting to assert power (Parding, 2007). Teachers' dependence on the state, school leaders, and external assessors can be experienced as powerlessness, which has been associated with the motivational orientation of avoidance (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). In this perspective, the main argument for implementing new methods or ideas would be "because the headmaster demands it" or "because it is stated in the national curriculum" (Jürimäe, Kärner, & Lamesoo, 2012). These changes tend to be formal and superficial and do not last very long (Fullan, 1991). However, if teachers discover an area in their class that needs improvement and, because of that need, initiate the change (and/or are engaged in that change), they are positively willing to change. Teachers' attitudes of either resisting or welcoming/initiating changes are a question of ownership. Teachers are more likely to value learning and development experiences when they feel ownership of the process (Niemi, 2002).

The knowledge and skills possessed by a teacher depend on his/her ability to continuously learn and develop, to deal with current research, and to be aware of global changes in society (Niemi, 2002; Pui-wah, 2008). Dolan (2012) adds that the fact that initial teacher education is insufficient for the lifelong professional needs of teachers is widely accepted by the professionals in teacher education.

Paradigmatic changes cannot be implemented by a single teacher. Opfer and Pedder (2011), Lundahl (2005), Niemi (2002), Fullan (2001), Senge et al. (2000), and Schratz (1997), among others, have stressed the role of school as a learning organisation and the importance of collaboration between teachers.

Cooperation, flexibility, and participation in school development are components regarded as characteristic of successful teachers obtaining extended teacher professionalism (Lundahl 2005). These components of teacher professionalism also underline the importance of new approaches to teacher education in the sense of pre-service and in-service levels. In this context, Hökkä et al. (2010) stress the need to restrict the individual autonomy of teacher educators in order to support collaboration among educators already during initial teacher training to stimulate teachers' understandings about their profession as collaborative.

The organisation needs to act as a whole by involving the stakeholder groups. The modern approach to teacher cooperative and active participation is clearly expressed in the Diaz-Maggioli's (2004) model of teachers' professional development in which collaborative decision-making, a growth-driven approach, collective construction of programmes, inquiry-based ideas, tailor-made techniques, varied and timely delivery methods, adequate support systems, context-specific programmes, proactive assessment, and adult-centred instructions are presented.

3. CHALLENGE FOR THE SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS IN ESTONIA: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment (assessment for learning) includes different activities of teacher and student (sharing goals, gathering and evaluating information, giving and using feedback) to improve the process of teaching and learning (Black & Wiliam, 2009; Brookhart, Moss, & Long, 2009). The ideology of formative assessment is based on the ideal of supporting every student in taking responsibility for his/her learning. The key word here is *ownership* – when the student feels that she/he is learning because she/he wants to learn, then she/he enjoys the process of growth, development, and success (Brookhart et al., 2009). The results are quite different compared to students who learn only because they have to learn or because they want to get good grades (Pulfrey et al., 2011). Quite often, students do not have the resources (time, data) to understand the background of their learning tasks and the only reason to fulfil the task is the hierarchy of power: someone who is "above" them has the power to force them to do as asked. In such cases, students still learn to "earn" grades because they would like to please their teachers and parents and avoid negative sanctions. They do not, however, own the learning. This kind of learning does not support them in growing into lifelong learners.

Teachers can be the role models of lifelong learning, but only if they take a profound ownership of their learning (Fullan, 2001).

Estonian classrooms today are not the same as they were before the re-independence 23 years ago; the roles of teachers and students have changed. The number of teachers using different methods of active learning (collaborative projects, language immersion, directed inquiry learning, different possibilities of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT,) etc.) has increased (Liiber & Roosaare, 2000; Mehisto & Asser, 2005; Oder, 2008). This can be taken as a sign

that our teachers are willing and able to change. Since 1996, a new curriculum was developed. The main innovations in the Estonian National Curriculum for Basic and Secondary School included methodology for integrating instruction and the concept of competencies and guidelines for designing school curricula (Krull & Mikser, 2010). Schools and teachers have received the opportunity and obligation to make decisions at the school level and to grow as learning organisations and professionals. Teachers and schools were also given more freedom to assess students in a way that promotes learning (see Estonian NC, 1996), but just a few years later the decree of the Minister of Education reduced the assessment process to mainly just grading (Hindamismäärus, 2000). In Estonian general education, main goal is defined as follows: "to increase the social competencies of students, such as communication skills and critical thinking, entrepreneurship and creativity, leadership and cooperation" (Estonian Human Development Report, 2011, p. 109). In order to achieve this goal, the Estonian National Curricula for Basic Schools and Secondary Schools, updated in 2010/2011, became more oriented towards learning rather than teaching. Using teaching methods that take into account and are appropriate for the pupils' individual traits leads logically to new conceptions of assessment.

In the national curriculum for basic schools (2011), the concept of formative assessment is defined as assessment taking place during studies, in the course of which the pupil's knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and behaviour are analysed, feedback is provided on the pupil's previous results and shortcomings, the pupil is encouraged and guided in further studies, and the future objectives and routes of studying are planned. Above all, formative assessment focuses on comparing the pupil's development with his or her previous accomplishments. Feedback shall describe, at the right time and as precisely as possible, the pupil's strengths and shortcomings and shall include proposals for further activities that support the pupil's development. This concept is based on the work of international experts (see Black & Wiliam, 2009) and is a fundamentally new approach compared to the former national regulations for assessment (see Hindamismäärus, 2000) and school traditions, for which the implementation process was long and required considerable effort.

4. USING THE PLC (PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES) MODEL

It is difficult or rather impossible for the teacher alone to implement a complex educational change. For example, formative assessment's methodology is neither

new nor unintelligible, yet it requires the creation of a system that a single teacher alone may not find easy to handle. Furthermore, formative assessment makes it necessary to critically observe and reflect on current and often unconscious behaviour, which is difficult to do when alone (Nissilä, 2005). The teacher therefore depends on partners from among his or her colleagues. The professional culture of the organisation needs to support this. For example, Marzano et al. (2001) highlight the positive dependence on each other and face-to-face interaction in cooperational learning, in which one helps the other to learn and vice versa.

The authors have experienced the traditional "sit and get" model (lectures and discussions with little or no follow-up activities) separate from the classroom context (Killion & Harrison, 2006), which may be a useful method of disseminating additional knowledge to those already mentally involved in change. Without actively involving teachers in their schools, in-service courses will have only a minimal effect on those who do not understand the essence of the change.

One option for facilitating educational innovations is collaborative professional development. Collaborative professional development can cover a number of activities from working together with colleagues in unplanned, informal ways to highly structured and formalised learning rounds or communities of enquiry or learning (Kennedy, 2011). Formative assessment can be facilitated by the introduction of professional learning communities (PLCs) in which teachers can support the development of a collaborative work culture and help build the school as a learning organization (Thompson et al., 2004). The expected benefit from the cooperative activities in the PLCs was to support teachers' abilities and willingness to cope with educational change. The final expected benefit of PLCs was to clarify teachers' perceptions of their own professional identities (Beijaard et al., 2000).

5. IMPLEMENTING FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN ESTONIA VIA PLCS

Professional learning communities were used to test and introduce the strategies of formative assessment during a single academic year. The basis of our example is a model developed by Brookhart (2009) that has been developed further over three years with a small number of teachers and adapted for the situation in Estonia.

Twenty (20) schools with a total of 36 learning communities and a total of 217 teachers participated in the professional development programme. The teachers of every participating school formed voluntary PLCs with four to six members that worked in pairs between sessions. The programme also included classroom walkthroughs and teacher inquiry into their classroom practices and the beliefs that drive them.

The programme's aim was to create the necessary conditions and environment for professional development in the following areas:

- Treating a subject (or several) as an organic part of the whole
- Cooperation with colleagues in the case of integrating subjects, implementing the cross-curricular themes, and establishing the general competences of students
- Leading the group processes and educational activities in the classroom
- Setting goals in a way that helps students take responsibility for their learning
- Detecting misunderstandings and failure in the learning process and using opportunities to turn these into learning opportunities
- Instructing the students and giving effective feedback
- Evaluating student development
- Analysing the learning process and making some adjustments and changes if necessary

The learning sessions were constructed according to the sharing principle that is an inevitable part of the culture of learning communities (Buysse et al., 2003). A total of seven learning sessions and a final seminar for all the teachers of the participating schools were held. Each teacher presented his or her homework, which included a relevant description of the practical classroom activities and self-analysis. For each session, the members of the community also had to read an article that was then discussed.

Bearing in mind that critical individual reflection and cooperation with colleagues in problem-solving are powerful tools in teachers' learning (Meirink et al., 2009), the teachers were provided with the possibilities for self- and peer- assessment. Together, PLC members familiarized themselves with the new material and chose

partners, who then agreed on how to implement the strategies they had learned during the previous session in the classroom. They also visited each other's lessons, upon which they based their homework. The idea of learning in pairs was to give feedback to each other. The teachers that belonged to the PLC above were all mostly investigators of their own and their partner's work. A moderator, who as a rule was an active teacher, was in charge of the community.

In order to ensure the individual reflection that is crucial to deep learning (Attard, 2012), each teacher had to give anonymous feedback at the end of every session. The feedback form contained three questions:

- What was the most interesting issue in this session?
- What do you plan to make part of your everyday work?
- Which are your suggestions to the moderators of the session?

At the final conference, every participant was asked to assess the entire series of PLC sessions.

The feedback sheets were analysed using the content analysis method to explore Estonia's development of a PLC model, which was categorized by Stake (1995) as an instrumental case study. Teachers' answers about their interests, plans, and suggestions were gathered and grouped; similar answers were put into categories and the categories were reorganized when needed. Analysis of data was continuous; the moderators and researchers used the data to plan and adjust upcoming meetings of PLCs and to map the teachers' journeys in professional development.

6. THE PROCESS

Each community had a moderator: the teacher having previous experience in participating as a learner in a similar community following the same program. In the introductory session, the essence of the PLC and the concept of formative assessment were discussed. Learning files (the platform for gathering data about professional development) were initiated and cooperation agreements made.

During the second session, methods were introduced for determining how a teacher can best share learning aims with the student. The members of the

learning communities obtained concrete pointers on how to use assessment information to identify and plan future learning and on how to compose rubrics to provide students with learning intentions and success criteria.

The third session introduced indicators for how teachers can get feedback in the classroom regarding whether or not the students understood a subject. Methods for encouraging students to share information about misunderstanding or false comprehension with teachers were also introduced. Some participants expressed a clear wish to change their teaching techniques immediately.

During the fourth session, a method for giving effective feedback was taught and an understanding was reached that feedback indeed means broadening people's understanding of three areas in "The Johari Window": the blind area, the hidden area, and the area of unknown activity (Luft & Ingham, 1955).

For the fifth session, several of the learning communities joined a neighbouring community and most participants found this to be a very rewarding experience. During the fifth session, a lot of moderators brought in different practical activities to enrich the learning process within the main topic, which was how to formulate questions in a way that would activate students.

The sixth session was devoted to the role of self-regulation in successful learning. As a surprise to the trainers, during the penultimate session, a misunderstanding occurred in one of the learning communities: a teacher had considered self-regulation to be a subject for primary school, because in later years, the focus would be on gathering knowledge and skills, not on students dealing with themselves. The teacher likely had misconceptions that inhibited his or her understanding of the ideas presented in the sessions. This episode shows that teachers need time to see formative assessment strategies as a logical part of the teaching process.

During the seventh session, different continuous development models were discussed (see Deming, 1982; Moon, 2004). In the same session many teachers found that self-evaluation – reflection and discussion with colleagues were the key issues in their professional development.

7. ANALYSES OF EVIDENCES AND FINDINGS

At the end of each session, written feedback was given in response to prepared questions. The data were collected and analysed via qualitative content analysis, i.e., grouping similar answers and forming categories and subcategories.

In the introductory session, teachers were asked to share their expectations regarding the professional learning community. The teachers stated that they expected to experience the following:

1) cooperation and exchanging experience;
2) understanding formative assessment;
3) picking up practical skills;
4) improving the quality of the learning process, changing him/herself and the students.

The expectations of many participants indicated that they came not only to acquire knowledge, but to implement that knowledge in real life.

During the second session, several teachers were able to look further than the subject of the second session and obtained new ideas for a group task and for the general taxonomies of the evaluation system. In this session, a number of participants felt that they obtained an emotionally satisfying result from exchanging ideas with colleagues and they felt excited that they were on the right track. Some of the participants' feedback is presented in quotes below and in the following section.

> "It seems we are in the same boat, we also know where the weak spots are," "an exciting private form of discussion, where in a lot of cases the best ideas are born," "different visions, because we are not just sitting around discussing things but there is the opportunity to talk about ourselves here."

There were also participants who, through feedback, expressed that their current practice had some shortcomings. Some of the members of the professional community were still not very confident after the second session, remaining rather cautious or even sceptical.

> "Since I didn't get the whole picture this time, I will go on in the usual way," "we live, we see," "a wise man doesn't run. Great changes won't happen immediately. One step at a time," "Not very sure yet!," "I'll digest and think. I don't know yet."

The feedback from the third session indicated that the teachers still expected very clear models from the learning sessions regarding how to act in the classroom. The materials in the third session presented a number of examples of how to use indicators for the quality of communication. Most of the participants highly appreciated these and expressed a wish to implement them at once.

Since notes for a good listener were included in the training materials, an overview of listening techniques and listening barriers was given and the markers of pseudo-listening were described, as was critical self-analysis, analysis of oneself, and teachers as listeners in general.

> "I identified how much a person uses pseudo-listening," "I intend to LISTEN more," "... I will talk less."

The practical understanding of listening was identified as one of the important tasks of a teacher and the student was also characterized as a listener.

> "I believe that thanks to the past session I am also going to follow how students behave towards each other while listening, not only towards the teacher."

With a self-critical attitude, resolutions were also stated regarding giving more responsibility to the students.

> "I will try to test staying in the background more and letting the students be more active."

Even after the third session, doubts were expressed via feedback, but considerably fewer doubts were expressed than after the second session. Some of the participants saw better cooperation of subject teachers as the most important advantage of listening skills.

A critical attitude towards the teachers' own work (which was surely connected to an increased sense of security in the professional learning community) became more dominant in the feedback after the fourth session. Teachers trusted their colleagues more and more and realized that speaking self-critically creates important discussions through which they could try to solve their problems.

Compared to the previous session, more feedback was given in which critical observation included a solution to the problem. A lot of opinions about the different nuances in the feedback were also given.

> "I'll try to give more quality feedback to my students," "I intend to change the fixing of errors system," "I'll try to be more consistent," "I will avoid making judgements," "I will ask the students to rephrase the feedback I give them," "I intend to continue giving the students feedback during the process, because I see the need for it," "I'll focus on the work, not the person," "I'll try to be supporting and positive while giving feedback."

The question sessions had a few surprises in store. A number of people admitted that earlier they had not consciously thought about questions as a learning motivator and expressed a clear wish to avoid this mistake from now on. Several teachers rediscovered the question as the driver of discussion for themselves.

> "I'll try to implement the technique of discussing in pairs more. Thus far I have avoided it in the interests of discipline, but considering its positive effect on shy children, I could use it more," "test how questions direct students to discuss, asking questions from each other."

There were no doubts or sceptical opinions this time. Several participants admitted that they were starting to get more and more used to formative assessment and that it is good to practice formative assessment with colleagues.

In their feedback, the participants of the sixth session expressed the importance of self-regulation in successful learning. There were honest confessions from participants who had not thought about self-regulation before. The feedback showed how teachers sensed more and more that there is a need to support students in their learning rather than just teaching the subject.

> "From now on I intend to be a more active supporter, a guide," "I'll try to compose the evaluation model in a way that the student could analyse himself through that," "surely I will try to support my students' self-regulation, and I will not take it for granted anymore."

More and more teachers shared their own personal experience as a student. For example, one admitted to having been in trouble as a student because of a lack of learning skills and hoped their students did not have to experience that. Several teachers started to think of their own role as a parent and how a parent could support learning. Feedback showed that teachers had not gathered information through self-evaluation before and did not know how to use statistical data accessible in their own school more professionally for self-analysis.

At the end of each session, the teachers participating in the communities got a chance to make proposals about their moderators' activities or the general organisation of the training series. The majority of the participants offered sincere support for their educators. Very often the educator's professionalism and expertise in handling the subjects was noted. The moderator's excellent handling of the group was addressed separately, including his or her skilful leading of discussions. It is worth noting that almost all the participants mentioned in the feedback how highly they value the experience of their colleagues. In addition, observations about formative assessment were gleaned from the feedback that teachers had offered as a result of the learning cycle.

At the end of the learning series, the final seminars were held back in the schools where the professional learning communities had developed. All the school teachers participated in these seminars. The members of the professional learning communities introduced their best teaching experiences and shared their thoughts about implementing formative assessment and participating in the community with their colleagues. Figure 1 (see Appendix 1) illustrates teachers' expectations and satisfaction with the results of learning in communities.

8. CONCLUSION

The implementation of paradigmatic changes through classical in-service training courses is complicated because of the need for a lot of learning, re-defining of concepts, re-designing of (common and habitual) practices and re-evaluation of the whole teaching and learning concept and the teacher's role. This process needs to be supported by very time- and energy- consuming practice, reflection, and peer support.

Experience from the implementation of assessment for learning through teacher professional learning communities demonstrated that it is a promising model for implementing paradigmatic change for the following reasons. The model:

1) contains a "bottom-up" element – teachers gather into these communities on a voluntary basis and the communities are moderated by a colleague instead of using an external expert;
2) gives teachers more responsibility – they are not forced to learn; they decide to learn and are ready to experiment, fail, show their vulnerable side to their colleagues, and obtain and share support;
3) creates collegiality – discussions and the development of shared values support a deeper understanding and ownership of paradigmatic changes (like formative assessment).

The positive effect of collaboration was experienced throughout the PLCs, especially when supporting each other by giving constructive feedback on the work of others in each group. Through a more personal relationship, the problems of the learning process and of the students were noticed and the teachers remembered their own difficulties as students. Through practical joint activities, scepticism towards updates decreased, which was helped by the critical analysis of colleagues' activities and gathering the evidence of student achievements and their own professional development. Based on the participants' recommendations, the educators are planning to use online learning possibilities, for example e-learning environments like Moodle to distribute theoretical learning materials and upload homework and to compose more content-rich and informative feedback sheets when creating more joint sessions with the professional learning communities in other schools.

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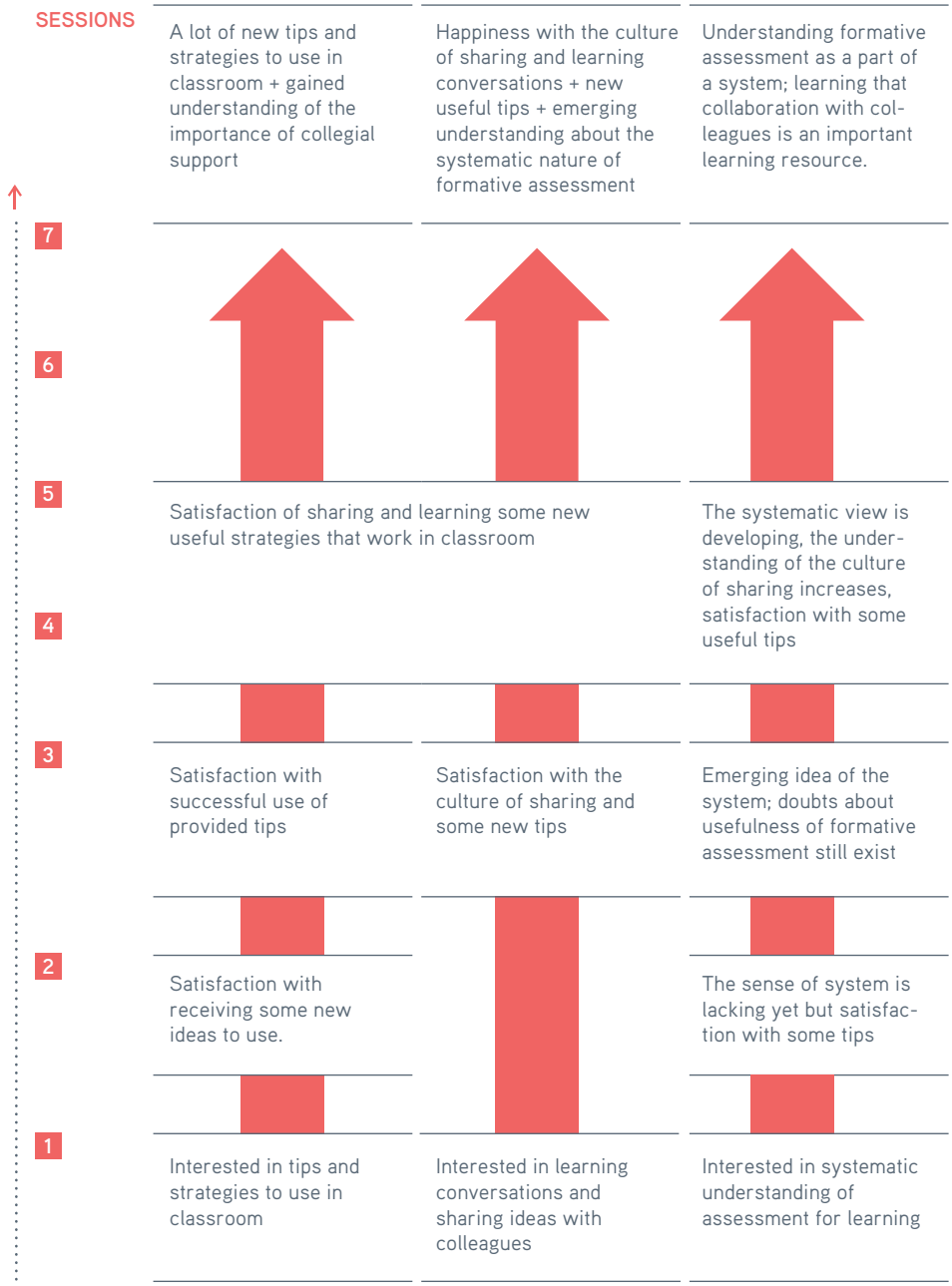
Appendix 1

FIGURE 1: TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF LEARNING IN COMMUNITIES.



"Change Laboratories" Within Secondary Schools:

Towards Accompaniment and Support of Teachers in the Appropriation of New Reforms in Priority Education

AUTHORS:

Luc Ria

Professor

Luc Ria is a professor in Education Science and holder of the UNESCO Chair "Training teachers for the 21st century" at the Institut Français de l'Education (France): (http://www.ens-lyon.fr/chaire-unesco-formation). He investigates professional development of beginning teachers. The modelling of his empirical data enables the conception of innovative measures for training teachers: NéoPass@ction research/training program (http://neo.ens-lyon.fr), includes 1300 video excerpts on the work of beginner teachers and the typical transformation of their teaching methods in response to their successive experiences.
Email: luc.ria@ens-lyon.fr

Sylvie Moussay

Professor

Sylvie Moussay is a professor at the University of Clermont-Ferrand in France. In reference to the theory of activity, her longitudinal studies have focused on the novice teacher's professional development, the effects of mentoring, the transformation of school leadership and local school management. Recently, she has been involved with the Academie de Lyon, a decentralized regional education authority, in a project of analysis of the implementation of new educational reform in secondary schools.
Email: Sylvie.Moussay@univ-bpclermont.fr

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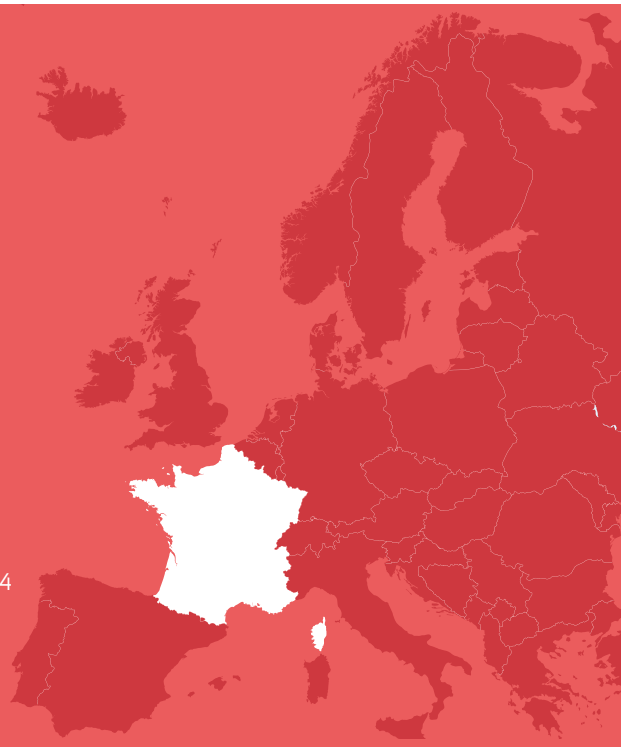

Facts about France

- Population: 65,8 mill
- Density: 404 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 19, secondary 13
- Expenditure on education: 6,1 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,84

ABSTRACT

For more than twenty years, priority education policy in France has aimed at reducing social and territorial inequalities. In 2014, it is still one of the priorities of the Law for the Refoundation of the schools of the Republic. This policy encourages a diversification of missions and work frameworks requiring much experimentation and innovation.

Against this backdrop, several observation groups have been created to study the real activity of teachers. Investigations into priority education policy undertaken in five lower secondary schools have enabled researchers to use objective and subjective indicators to account for the prescriptions which regulate the work of the members of the educational community as well as the processes of transformation of teaching methods needed to meet these prescriptions.

Two case studies will serve to illustrate the implementation of change in lower secondary schools situated in educational priority zones. These case studies underline the role of the two researchers, which is to use tools for the observation and analysis of professional activity in order to provide teachers with impetus and support in the process of appropriation of the new educational orientations.

Keywords: Teaching; secondary schools; reform of priority education; analysis and development of activity; in-school training.

1. INTRODUCTION

In various countries over the last decades, the results obtained by the implementation of educational reforms have shown that changes in education targeting pupil success have not easily taken root in schools (Fullan, 2007) and penetrated classroom practices. This leads some authors to assert that the policy adopted is not equivalent to the policy introduced (Carpentier, 2012). In many countries, the issue is both the failed introduction of educational reforms (Elmore, 2004) and the understanding of why political injunctions are implemented in some cases and meet with teacher resistance in others. Some researchers quite rightly investigate teacher resistance to the educational reforms which are supposed to help them in their daily work (Tardif and Lessard, 2004). Moreover, it would appear that teacher professionalization policies, which are seen as a determining element in the evolution of school practices (OECD, 2013), are insufficiently accepted and supported in the teacher milieu (Maroy, 2006). By underlining the limits of "top-down" or "bottom-up" implementation processes for orienting educational change, recent research has highlighted the relevance of a "hybrid" approach that is likely to more easily and durably introduce educational reforms (Carpentier, 2012). This approach provides a renewal of the relationship between the decision-making actors of educational policy and teachers, who are no longer acting as mere subordinate workers but as actors capable of appropriating the prescriptions and then adjusting them to the context of the individual school (e.g., characteristics of the pupil intake, teacher expectations and expertise, culture of the specific school, school organization, contracted objectives, etc.). In adopting this perspective, we aim to describe one possible road to the operational implementation of the hybrid approach. Specifically, this is an account of the commitment of teachers within the process of reformulating the prescriptions and exchanging expertise targeting a real implementation of change. This contribution also provides the opportunity to present and discuss the research tools used to accompany the teachers in the development of a new organization of school work and teacher practices.

There are five parts to our text. The first describes the context of the schools with educational priority classification – schools which face a multiplicity of reforms – and the difficulty teachers face in efficiently responding to the new educational orientations. In the second part, the description of this context enables us to demonstrate the relevance of an approach centred on activity analysis, both

for provoking and providing the impetus to change and for accompanying teachers in the renewal of their practices. The third part describes the methodology used in the change laboratories within schools. The fourth part presents two case studies which describe the way in which teachers, accompanied by researchers, participate in the process of change. The final part is a discussion demonstrating the conditions required for the successful accompaniment and support of teachers in the transformation of their practices.

1. THE CONTEXT OF LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH EDUCATIONAL PRIORITY CLASSIFICATION

In the 1980s, in France, the policy of administrative decentralization granted schools some degree of flexibility in their organization and in their implementation of innovations. This flexibility drove a dynamic project-based process that favoured pupils who were experiencing difficulty in learning, an educational trend which went hand-in-hand with new modalities of teacher intervention (Ria and Moussay, 2014). This was especially the case in schools situated in educational priority zones[1] in which diverse measures were aimed at aiding, supporting, and accompanying pupils from highly disadvantaged social milieus (for example, methodologies to help pupils to organize their homework). However, the effects of these measures on students' learning were very modest with limits that are still manifest. Pupils don't have better school results. Some actors have gone further and denounced the dispersion of actions, the increase of often juxtaposed measures of support and assistance (Félix, Saujat, and Combes, 2012), the constant changes, the vague finalities and, consequently, the inefficiency of innovations within the lower secondary schools situated in educational priority zones (van Zanten, 2004). Others point to the turn-over of teachers as an obstacle to the work of inter-colleague coordination of the implementation of new school reforms and the transformation of teachers' classroom practices. Finally, in the reforms, the modalities of action and the means to achieve the goals have often been left to the "discretion" of the teachers. This agrees with the findings of Desimone (2002), who has demonstrated that the more imprecise the reform, the longer it takes to implement.

[1]ECLAIR (2000 primary, 300 lower secondary and 30 upper secondary schools for ambition, innovation and success) currently constitutes the core of French priority education which is best characterized by the concentration of under-privileged populations.

2. A FRAMEWORK FOCUSED ON ACTIVITY ANALYSIS AND THE CHANGE OF PRACTICES

Our approach focuses on the observation and analysis of real activity with the aim of achieving a better understanding of how teachers appropriate injunctions and what they invest of themselves to develop their work. The first postulate insists on the relevance of proximity to the work environment of teachers and the need to take into consideration the actors' subjectivity in their work, i.e., the preoccupations, intentions, motivations, and the professional difficulties encountered in the transformation of their work. The second postulate consists of making the work an object of individual and collective analysis with a view to encouraging the elaboration of new meanings, the identification of the seeds of potentialities in work situations, and the enunciation of new possible actions. Finally, the third postulate defends the idea of a close link between intervention, research, and training. Three distinct dimensions which can mutually enrich each other: intervention both *on* and *within* the milieu in order to respond to the professionals' requests; research as a rigorous approach for a better understanding of the development process of new practices as well as what can prevent this development; and the training of participants through the use of tools for the analysis of ordinary work situations, such as the change laboratory (Engeström et al., 1996) and the activity analysis laboratory (Ria and Lussi Borer, 2013), which provide professionals (school principals, teachers, coordinators, nurses, etc.) with the opportunity to re-open dialogue on the implementation of change by focusing on the work and innovations undertaken within their own school.

3. METHOD

3.1. Implanting "Change Laboratories" in Schools

Our interventions were characterized by a certain length (several months/years spent in the schools) and were undertaken in five French lower secondary schools situated in educational priority zones in the Paris and Lyon areas. They were explicitly aimed at provoking and accompanying change in the professional practices of teachers. In two of these schools, the setting up of "laboratories for the changing and analysis of teaching activity" provided the professionals with tools for the observation and analysis of classroom activities. These laboratories were implanted in the following five stages:

- The creation of a collective that included the researchers and teachers
- The discussion of the specific modalities of our interventions (finality,

interview framework, modalities of exchange, and research tools) and of the contract of collaboration with the participants
- The observation and filming of the teachers at work (inside or outside the classroom, in subject-centred meetings and general assemblies)
- The proposal of tools for the analysis of work, based upon audiovisual recordings of the activity
- Broadening the scope of analyses with other professionals at the school (*Conseiller principal d'éducation*[2] and the "*vie scolaire*" staff under their orders and teaching assistants)

In each school, some twenty teachers, the principal, and the "*vie scolaire*" staff were finally involved in the work analysis process.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

Different types of data were collected in order to describe the national and local institutional prescriptions: institutional texts or circulars, school objectives contracts, and mission briefs for teachers regarding the priority education networks. This entire set of formal and informal texts enabled identification of the recent orientations of educational policies and local injunctions. These documents were completed using the logbooks in which, on either a daily or weekly basis, the participants in these studies recorded their activity inside or outside the classroom, especially the most outstanding events. Records of the content of meetings organized by teachers were also kept. The audiovisual recordings of classroom activity and meetings gave rise to a collection of data on professional activities. In addition to these recordings, the team also collected data from the simple and crossed self-confrontation interviews (Mollo and Falzon, 2004). During the self-confrontation interviews, the researcher asked the teachers to explain what they had been doing in the class ("what and how?"), what work orientations they had decided upon and for what reason ("why?"). The intention was to capture the points of view of the professionals concerning the new forms of work.

[2]Hierarchically, the Conseiller/Conseillère principal(e) d'éducation (CPE) has a similar status to teachers but with different missions. Singly or in larger numbers, according to school type, size and classification, they head the "Service vie scolaire," which deals with the pupils' out-of-class school life, attendance and, often, certain levels of misbehaviour. Their service usually includes junior (and often young) staff charged with various missions of pupil supervision (school restaurant, playground, and compulsorily attended "free" periods, for example and, in some cases, tutoring) as well as assisting the CPE's in the execution of their tasks.

The data were analyzed in three stages: i) the first step consisted of the transcription of the self-confrontation interviews; ii) the second step in the analysis of the verbatim data consisted of identifying the expression of their judgements, their dilemmas, their disagreements on professional situations, the expression of new actions, and the choice made between different actions in response to the institutional reforms; iii) the third step, which involved the triangulation of the two researchers, consisted of discussions between them about the markers identified during the parallel data analyses in order to confirm or reject them.

4. RESULTS: CASE STUDIES FROM FRENCH SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The first case study will show how four "teacher-referents" participated in the implementation of change in a secondary school in the Lyon area. Three conditions will be described: the creation of weekly consultation meetings between the principal and her/his team and the teacher-referents to debate the institutional injunctions; the setting up by the researchers of a work collective uniting the four teacher-referents, with the aim of enriching the debates on the transformation of practices; and the organization by the teacher-referents of meetings for exchanges with the other teachers in order to develop a shared vision of classroom practices. In the second case study, we will describe the work analysis tools used and tested in the school in the Paris area. These tools aimed at allowing volunteer teachers to re-question their professional activities and collectively construct new norms of intervention for use with difficult school populations.

4.1. Case Study 1

In 2010 (Ministry of National Education), the designation of teacher-referents in lower secondary schools situated in educational priority zones was one of the key measures of the new policy directives. In addition to their classroom teaching hours, the teacher-referents have to construct new organizational dynamics, oversee the new measures for following pupils in difficulty, train teachers, and reinforce links with the parents. In the official instructions, the teacher-referents are considered to be central actors of the process of change. Their mission consists of assisting the principal in the organization of school life and the piloting of the prescribed changes. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report (2011), high performance educational systems are those in which the principal and her/his team and the teachers work together in experimenting with and regulating ongoing reforms. The idea of distributed governance (Yvon and Poirel, 2012) as the determining element in the hybrid process of implementing reforms is thus asserted.

4.1.1 The Implication of Teacher-Referents in the Change Laboratory

At the start of the 2011-2012 academic year, four teachers (Sami, Juliette, Sim, and Lorris)[3] working in a lower secondary school of a Lyon suburb agreed to become teacher-referents. They wanted to obtain details concerning their mission brief and expressed certain professional dilemmas (e.g., how to pilot new measures of support without constraining the activity of colleagues; how to recognize the value of innovative practices without making a clean sweep of past experiences; how to support and assist colleagues to discuss and analyze of classroom practices in an school establishment providing little time to pause and reflect upon the work). In November 2011, the principal asked the researcher to accompany the teacher-referents in their new mission. Consequently, the researcher invited these professionals to participate in the change laboratory according to the stages described below.

During the first phase, the researcher attended meetings between the four teacher-referents and the principal. During these consultation meetings, they discussed the different elements of the educational policy for priority education. All the participants used these meetings to discuss desirable reorganizations with a view to improving classroom practices.

During the second phase, the researcher encouraged the teacher-referents to work together and form a work collective. The collective formed by the four teacher-referents was not an end in itself but rather a means of elaborating on the diagnoses for practices and imagining what could be transformed given the characteristics of the school. During these exchanges, the researcher helped each teacher-referent express her/his point of view concerning the new educational orientations. The first exchanges enabled the teacher-referents to express the challenges of work and the professional issues upon which they wished observations and discussions to be focused.

During the third phase, the researcher set each teacher-referent to work upon the analysis and co-analysis of video-recordings of their activity (meetings with the principal, consultations with other colleagues, individualized interviews with pupils). The analytical work was undertaken in the form of self-confrontation interviews. The teacher-referent and the researcher watched the video and could stop it or return to events that seemed important and that affected them. During

[3]The names have been changed in order to guarantee anonymity.

co-analyses of work, the researchers invited two teacher-referents to discuss the actions and difficulties of their work (the difficulty of harmonizing practices, the lack of visibility of work undertaken with pupils).

In the final phase, the collective formed by the four teacher-referents and the researcher pursued the analyses further. These exchanges enabled them to reach an agreement regarding new actions to be implemented, such as the creation of moments for professional exchange aimed at encouraging their colleagues to talk about their work with the pupils.

4.1.2. An Example of Transformation: the Organization of Moments of Exchange by the Teacher-Referents

The teacher-referents, who had collaborated with the researcher in the co-analyses of their work, suggested to their colleagues that they begin establishing moments of exchange regarding the activities undertaken within the school. To provide these moments of exchange with impetus, they decided to have their colleagues watch and react to a classroom video (taken from the Néopass@ction[4] online resource). According to Lorris, the teacher-referent chairing the exchanges:

> We weren't there to say whether the colleague worked well or not … we told them 'above all, let yourselves be surprised by the practices of others' and it worked […] in fact they talked to us about their work, measures of co-presence in class to really help our pupils, learning island based lessons[5], several of us have set that up […] it was interesting to see that some teachers wanted to convince the others that their practices were efficient while remaining very open all the same.

In referring to certain elements observed in the video (pupil noises and shouts, the position of the teacher at the pupils' entry into the classroom, the movements of the pupils, the time elapsed between the pupils entering the classroom and the presentation of the lesson objective, etc.), the teachers reflected upon and discussed their actions, which included "instituting double file in a restricted space to prevent clashes and collisions with another file of pupils," "demanding that

[4]http://neo.ens-lyon.fr

[5]Learning island based lessons invites the pupils to work in small autonomous groups. This way of organizing work is based upon the principles of inter-pupil mediation and help.

pupils rapidly take out the five tools for verification at the start of the lesson," "rapidly entering the lesson content by asking pupils to re-read their lesson in the first ten minutes of the lesson," and "not spending too much time presenting the objective of the lesson."

The teacher-referents considered these moments of exchange to be an important stage, saying, "We discussed codes and rituals to be established with the pupils here [...] they paid attention to the innovations initiated by various colleagues [...] for them this became more concrete things to be experimented in their classes." The implementation of change took place in this case through the intermediary of a framework of exchange favouring "bringing colleagues together" and enabling everyone "to see something other than their own practice [...] an opportunity to take advantage of the experience of a colleague" (Lorris). This way of progressively constructing a collective point of view on work within the school and on the possible innovations favoured the networking of experienced teachers, beginners, and new arrivals within the school. Thus, for Sami, the objective of these moments of exchange is "to extract another benefit from the meetings, this is the message teachers send us, we all need another moment, an extra moment to talk about what we do, the problematics here." This is how he expresses the need to create a new context for exchange about the difficult work to be undertaken.

This illustration echoes the discussions developed within the change laboratory. From the perspective of responding to their mission briefs and finding a solution to the problem of a lack of visibility of practices within the school, the teacher-referents constructed a new form of consultation focusing on the work of colleagues and the teaching profession.

4.2. Case Study 2

The new reference framework for priority education[6] in France (2014) re-asserts the need for the training and insertion of arriving staff in such schools as well as long-term support and assistance. This reference framework also insists on the importance of problematizing collective training actions around the particular professional situations encountered in schools. In this respect, a lower secondary school in the Paris area, which has educational priority classification, has for several years been experimenting with professionalization training for its teach-

[6]http://www.educationprioritaire.education.fr

ers, most notably through the use of video-based training tools (Picard and Ria, 2011). The management team of the school called upon a research team[7] to: a) support beginner teachers (with less than three years of teaching experience) in their project for improving their interventions with heterogeneous classes; b) train teachers (using field trainers) in the analysis of the professional activity of their more or less experienced colleagues; and c) encourage, within the teaching collective, the revision and elaboration of the modalities of intervention with shared educational values and demand criteria. The objective is to analyse their classroom activity using tools inspired by the French tradition of ergonomics[8] in order to favour the progressive development of a professional culture specific to the school, which is paradoxically absent in this type of school with a difficult pupil population.

4.2.1. The Conception and Evaluation of Tools for the Analysis of the Work of Teachers

The teachers, notably the beginners, had high expectations of the researchers, who had a double function within the school: supporting the transformation of the teachers' professional activities and evaluating the effects of measures upon the tools for the professionalization of teachers. Three types of work analysis tools were mainly used and tested by some twenty volunteer teachers, including both beginners and experienced staff.

First, video recordings were used to make individual inquiries into the classroom activities of the teachers. This was done in two stages: the first descriptive and comprehensive phase favoured the explicit expression and verbalizing by the teacher of her/his classroom experiences, particularly the ones the teacher perceived as being problematic. In the second phase, the researcher described a set of observable elements seen in the video recording of classroom activity, thus providing his own insight into the situation observed. Then, while remaining constructive and benevolent, he questioned the relevance of the activities

[7]For more details, see Ria and Lussi Borer, 2013.

[8]French-language ergonomics is based upon an initial distinction between task and activity. The task is defined by an aim, sub-aims and the specific conditions for achieving this aim. A second distinction is made between the prescribed action and the action actually accomplished. Finally, a third distinction is made between the activity (actually) accomplished and the real (potential) activity. The first is part of the second, which is itself rich in complexity and contradiction. The activity apprehended from the point of view of the actor thus possesses a depth which cannot be accounted for by an approach focusing solely upon the representation and supervision of the aim to be achieved.

observed and assisted the teacher in constructing new modalities of action. In so doing, he was careful to ensure that these modalities should be both compatible with the teacher's dispositions to act and adapted to the school-specific teaching conditions.

Secondly, collective inquiries were made into the activities of teachers with various levels of experience, including beginners. Within the laboratory, teachers strove to analyse video recordings of the work situations of their colleagues, according to the following stages: i) describing the objective elements of the classroom situation (teacher's actions, pupil behaviour, teaching content, class atmosphere, etc.); ii) relating the observable facts to the concrete intentions and preoccupations of the teacher filmed; iii) evaluating the relevance of the activity (without judging the person) according to co-constructed criteria; and iv) proposing orientations for transformation which were both realistic and feasible for the activity observed. These collective analyses contributed to the "deconstruction of the activities observed" (Ria and Lussi Borer, 2013) in order to understand the main organizers and the main tensions or difficulties. They enabled the discussion of the adequateness of the finalities of the teacher and the means implemented to achieve them. Finally, the teacher collective strove to define shared and, *a priori*, more relevant and more robust modalities of intervention in the types of professional situations observed.

Third, collaborative thematic inquiries were made by the team of teachers regarding a given class. These began after the emergence of a shared feeling of dissatisfaction regarding the class. The reasons for this dissatisfaction included: a sharp drop in academic results, difficulties in settling down to work, a lack of respect for homework instructions, learning difficulties, the management of disruptive pupils, and so on. Each teacher gathered materials from her/his own interactions with the class relating to the pre-agreed upon theme (photos, videos, lesson preparations, pupil assessment sheets, pupils' productions, etc.). The presentation to the collective of these materials from the different school subjects (with the same methodological framework of analysis as described above) enabled the identification and comparison of the effects of different modalities of intervention upon pupil behaviour. For example, the collective evaluated the effects upon the pupils of different formats for welcoming pupils and setting them to work according to teacher and academic subject. For example, the effects upon the pupils of different formats for welcoming pupils and setting them to work according to

teacher and academic subject. The finality of these collaborative thematic inquiries was not the reduction of the pedagogical freedom of the teachers but the construction of shared registers of intervention with the same markers and a harmonization of the explicit thresholds of demands and tolerance for pupils.

4.2.2. An example of the Transformation of the Professional Activity of a Beginner Teacher

The case study of Hervé, a physics teacher (tenured, second year at this school) provides an illustration of the effects of individual and collective inquiries on an individual's professional activity. Hervé was photographed and filmed in the classroom. Then he underwent an individual inquiry based on photos and a video of his physics class before his activity was presented (in photos) at the first meeting of the whole group. During the collective inquiry, a rather heated controversy arose between Hervé and Zouhir (an experienced math teacher) about the standard procedure for starting a class (e.g., stand up, be quiet, take off coats). According to Zouhir, pupils must first be placed in the optimal learning conditions and Hervé skipped this step:

> I start right off by talking about what we did last time, before putting it into a new context so I can introduce what's coming next. [...] For me, the "rule" is "come in — sit down — pencil case — notebook." [...] Back when I was in school, I already didn't understand why we had to stand up behind our chairs [...] Personally, I can concentrate on correcting tests on my lap in the subway, etc. I don't see why a kid who's wearing a coat wouldn't be able to concentrate. So, based on that, I don't want to waste time and run the risk of a conflict with a pupil, simply to get him to take off his coat.

One year later, at the start of the new school year, Hervé now required pupils to stand in silence facing him once they had entered the classroom. He described his new activity as follows:

> I defined the procedure right at the beginning of the year. Since the lab [last year], I knew that I had to change things ... I waited until the beginning of the school year to do it, with a few very simple rules. I try to explain to them why I'm having them stand and wait ... it's a way of saying 'Hello, we're going to be together for 55 minutes, you're standing up facing me, and so am I.' The problem I had was that I couldn't see the meaning of it all [the

standing routine] or explain it to the pupils... In short, if the standing thing is just to make them be quiet, well first of all, it doesn't always work, with some classes I never succeeded, and besides, uh ... it's sort of like being a 'dictator' forcing them to 'stay standing'. And so, right from the first hour of class this year, I gave a meaning to all the rules I asked them to follow. If I hadn't been able to back the rules with meaning, I think I still couldn't have done it, I couldn't have forced it on them or even on myself.

Finally, it required a whole school year for Hervé's start of class activity to be transformed. The 3 individual and 2 collective inquiries into his own activity as well as those into the activities of other teachers progressively contributed to: i) producing the emergence of a feeling of dissatisfaction with his own modalities of action (while resisting change to his work habits for more than six months); ii) his becoming aware of the more efficient character of actions undertaken by his colleagues; iii) progressively changing his own demand-related norms (regarding both himself and his pupils) to finally arrive at new registers of action for the following school year (and a new way of giving his profession meaning); and iv) progressively developing a critical reflexive analysis of the relevance of his pedagogical interventions:

"

In front of my own videos, I didn't know at first how to do any different; the collective pushed me to change my practices. I resisted at first but I continued to reflect about doing things differently. Anyway, I didn't want to change during the school year. And then, time helps, the fact of seeing yourself in video, analysing what you're doing and hearing other people analysing how they set their pupils to work [...], that drives reflection and continuous questioning about what you do, how you work. [...] When you [the researchers] weren't there, each time I tried to tell myself 'what if the camera was there at the back....'

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Activity Analysis as the Key to Changing Professional Practices within the School

It must be recognized that, in France, secondary school teachers still give lessons in a solitary manner, far from the eyes of their colleagues. The experimentations presented in this text have shown how the modalities of exchange and work involving both researchers and teachers can contribute to the decompartmentalization of professional activities and, more broadly, to the individual and collective

assimilation of national or local prescriptions. The professional activity of beginning or experienced teachers can constitute a shared vector or object of study and an object of transformation. The opening of reflexive spaces favouring the knowledge of the activity of other colleagues leads to the limiting of the isolation of certain teachers who experience forms of guilt. When provided with an ethical and methodological framework, these teachers can identify and describe the professional situations which they experience as genuine and daily difficulties – without fear of being judged or assessed. From this perspective, the tools of analysis applied in these schools enabled teachers to re-question the relevance of their work, which is regularly subjected to new prescriptions. Indeed, the modalities of analysis of teachers' practices progressively contribute to the construction of a collective point of view of the practices and innovations as well as to the elaboration of a school-specific action culture. The pragmatic benefits are to be found in the construction of a shared reservoir of robust activities, that is, activities answering school demands in terms of teaching content as well as principles of feasibility for the teachers, given the teaching conditions encountered at the school in question.

5.2. The Collective as the Essential Interface for the Appropriation of the Prescriptions

The case study results have shown the extent to which the creation of professional collectives within schools can provide change and innovations with impetus. The objective of the collective of teacher-referents was to succeed together in going beyond the professional preoccupations linked to their new mission and to untangle the knots of an as yet over-blurred work horizon (Clot, 2008). We have therefore been able to show that the collective within change laboratories could assume an important place in schools for dynamizing exchanges about work and enabling the challenges of transformations to be met. Setting up these laboratories contributes to the development of teacher collectives, especially by encouraging, around instances of co-analysis, the construction of a collective professionalism overtaking individualism (Lessard, 2005). Certain studies have related this notion of work collective to that of professional learning communities open to a collegial collaboration culture (Hamel, Turcotte and Laferrière, 2013). Other research has shown the relevance of the collective centred on reflexive dialogue and the sharing of norms and values for the elaboration of "learning schools" and "(teacher-) training schools" (Ria and Lussi Borer, 2013), or, more recently, "learning organizations" (Moussay, Étienne, and Méard, 2009). In our case studies, the collective is defined as a space for the confrontation of points

of view on innovation and change. Within this collective, the real work becomes a subject of discussion and the practices analyzed can give rise to experimentation by colleagues.

5.3. For Greater Efficiency in Educational Action

The two case studies have illustrated how the modalities of understanding the teaching profession in priority education can be transformed by means of the change laboratory. In the first case study, exchanges about work contributed to the implementation within the school of new moments of consultation between teachers and to the development of new modalities of intervention. In the second case study, the individual experience of beginning teachers was sustained, enriched, and supported by the collective activity of the analysis, comprehension and re-norming of each individual's register of values. In both secondary schools, more and more volunteer teachers participated in these situations of the analysis of work (more than a third of the teachers in the Parisian school). Even though it requires time to durably transform the educational atmosphere of a school, the points of agreement achieved between teachers concerning demands vis-à-vis pupils and the modalities of action to accomplish them enabled one to observe appreciable improvements in the action of the entire education team in specific professional situations. These situations included: an improvement in the greeting of pupils and in setting them to work, better coordination between teachers and the *vie scolaire* team, greater efficiency of modalities of accompanying and supporting pupils experiencing difficulties, etc.

6. CONCLUSION

This contribution has spotlighted the benefits of accompanying and supporting teachers in the process of appropriating new school reforms. The change and activity analysis laboratories presented in this article constitute spaces for critical exchange with human and technological interfaces enabling teachers to show their work, to re-question the relevance of their own modalities of intervention in order to attempt, and, finally, to produce collective and contextual responses to national recommendations for priority education. The experimentations conducted within the two lower secondary schools are broadly positioned within a national and international reflection asserting the determining role of the individual school as a new space for the training and professionalization of teachers (UNESCO Chair "Training teachers for the 21st century"[9]).

[9]http://www.ens-lyon.fr/chaire-unesco-formation

However effective in the cases presented here, these experimentations remain isolated and fragile insofar as support for change can meet with resistance and even a refusal to be involved from some teachers. To encourage its realization, three main conditions seem to be required: i) the determining drive provided by the team piloting the school in order to implicate the largest possible number of education staff in the project of change; ii) the construction of an ethical framework guaranteeing that teachers can undertake exchanges about their work in protected and reassuring (non evaluative) collaborative spaces; and iii) the need to train field trainer-teachers in the tools of work analysis (methods, ethical framework, and training scenarios) in order to accompany and support their colleagues.

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Phased Implementation:

Successful Alignment of Tools of Implementation to Improve Motivation and Mastery in Lower Secondary Schools in Norway

AUTHORS:

Tone Cecilie Carlsten

Researcher/Ph.D cand.

Tone Cecilie Carlsten is a Norwegian researcher at the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education. She has been evaluating national curriculum implementation programs in Norway since 1997, specializing in international comparative studies on relations between curriculum change and teachers' instructional practices. As a former teacher, she has experience from Norwegian, German, US and Spanish educational systems. Carlsten is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Oslo.

Eifred Markussen

Senior Researcher

Eifred Markussen is a Norwegian researcher at the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education. He has been researching upper secondary education for 24 years. He mainly publishes on special education and dropout challenges. He has done comprehensive longitudinal projects using both quantitative and qualitative data on both topics. Markussen is currently leading the Norwegian part of a longitudinal international project, *The International Study of City Youth*.

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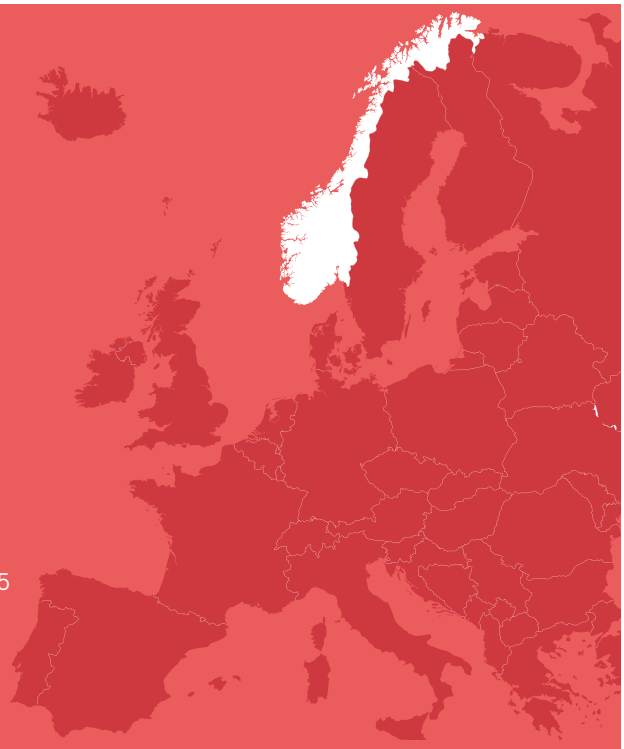


Facts about Norway

- Population: 5,1 mill
- Density: 16 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 10, secondary 10
- Expenditure on education: 6,8 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,75

ABSTRACT

Is one national implementation strategy better than another given similar conditions? Or: Is choosing an implementation strategy a way of altering its conditions? A Norwegian aphorism says that the forest stands although its trees changes. In this chapter we examine current implementation dynamics in Norway. We discuss how perceived changes fit long-term ('standing') national features of the education system, and how they may inform and play into the changing international landscape of travelling policies. In Norway, a phased implementation strategy is being used to implement the Strategy for Lower Secondary Education 2013-2017. The aim is to improve classroom instruction in lower secondary schools. The strategy is based on research indicating that student motivation for learning is at its lowest at this level of schooling. In this chapter we explain the idea of phased implementation. We describe stakeholder responsibilities and indicate how implementation tools are aligned across phases. Our perspectives are based on a survey among school leaders and school owners conducted Spring 2014. Findings show a surprisingly high degree of optimism in informants' responses given that former implementation research in Norway pointed to loose couplings between reform goals and local impact. We discuss benefits and challenges of the phased strategy, paying attention to aspects specific to Norway and to those shared by other CIDREE-members.

Keywords: Phased implementation, national implementation strategies, school improvement, lower secondary education

INTRODUCTION

There is a growing interest in Norway as in Europe to understand how lower secondary education may enhance young students' motivation to learn. Research and statistics indicate that student motivation for learning is at its lowest in lower secondary school (e.g. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2011). School as a social institution is under continual observation in order to relate future competence demands, societal ideals, and classroom practices to meet the interests and abilities of today's young generation. Globalization has influenced a spread of reforms and assessment schemes that have had a profound impact on the work for curricular control in national education systems (e.g. Astiz, Wiseman & Baker, 2002). Scholars analyzing educational policy implementation today are concerned with understanding how different implementation strategies are selected, adjusted and maintained to fit each country's political conditions as well as the complexity of individual schools and lower secondary classrooms (McLaughlin, 1987; Honig, 2006; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer 2002). Educational policy in one country may inform policies in another, contributing to the current landscape of travelling policies and soft governance (Moos, 2009; Hopfenbeck et al., 2013; Mausethagen, 2013a). At the same time, large-scale comparative studies such as the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey, TALIS2008 (Vibe, Aamodt, & Carlsten, 2009) and TALIS2013 (Carlsten, Caspersen, Vibe, & Aamodt, 2014) have confirmed that it is a valid concern for researchers to compare not only policy administration between nations (cf. Haft & Hopmann, 1991), but also the ways in which these nations select strategies for policy implementation. This chapter aims to contribute to the European exchange of implementation research by analyzing the first steps of a current implementation strategy for enhancing young students' motivation to learn in Norway.

WHAT IS PHASED IMPLEMENTATION?

In the following, we identify the benefits and risks of phased implementation in education policy development based on initial findings from our evaluation of national tools aimed at supporting phased implementation. The most interesting question to ask is why phased implementation was selected in Norway in this particular case. First, however, we have to identify what phased implementation is. In this case it refers to an implementation strategy that allows change to occur in smaller steps by including more partners working in phases over an extended period of time to allow for "diffusion of innovations" (Rogers 1983). In terms of policy implementation theory, phased implementation is a distinct strategy for

administrating change in the school system in a phased rather than a full-scale or trial scheme approach (e.g. Stone 2004). The overall aim of educational change is distributed across the system in subsequent time slots. Experience from the first phase is integrated into the way implementation tools are administered for consecutive and partly overlapping groups of schools.

In Norway, this approach is currently being used as a mode of implementation for the Strategy for Lower Secondary Education 2013-2017, which is a joint effort to improve classroom management, numeracy, reading, and writing in lower secondary schools. All schools offering lower secondary education in Norway are divided into four groups which correspond to four phases of policy implementation throughout 2013-2017. The first group participated in 2013-2014, the second group started in the Fall of 2014, the third will begin in the Fall of 2015, and the final group will begin in the Fall of 2016. All four groups will have to work extensively with multiple partners on all levels in the education system, all working towards the overall aim of enhancing young students' motivation to learn.

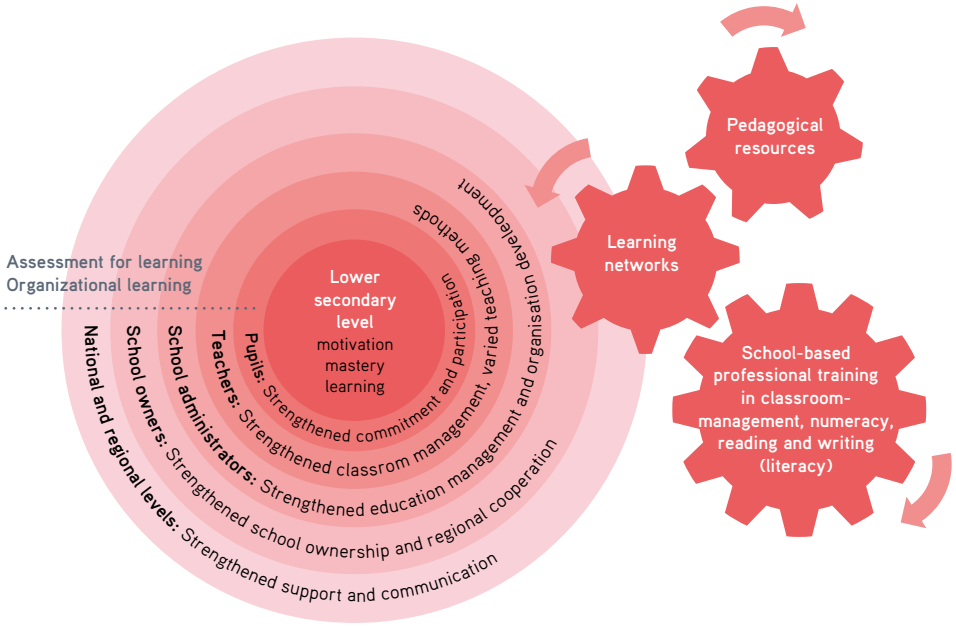
THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY FOR LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION 2013-2017

The Strategy for Lower Secondary Education 2013-2017 is the result of an ongoing political discussion in Norway regarding how to develop a diverse and inclusive school system (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011). Norway is well-known for the compulsory comprehensive school system it introduced over 250 years ago (Telhaug, Mediås, & Aasen, 2006). The country's emphasis on inclusion and social-democratic welfare has had an impact on the way education policy is designed and implemented. Recent educational reforms in Norway include national tests and monitoring mechanisms to see if key outcomes are being achieved like most other countries in Europe (Mausethagen, 2013a). However, Norway has not established follow-up mechanisms such as high stakes incentives and rewards that are "characteristic of accountability policies in some other countries" (Hatch, 2013, p. 113). Therefore, Norway's attempt to develop a diverse and inclusive school system is not a top-down structure. The dual Norwegian accountability system that Hatch is describing is rather a case for capacity-building, which means that teachers' work integrates contact with stakeholders on all levels of the education system (Mausethagen, 2013b; Carlsten et al., 2014). As in all education systems, selecting a strategy for implementation means selecting a strategy to ensure that all implementing agents are equipped to understand

their practice and motivated to allow for change (Moos, 2009; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002).

The Norwegian strategy for lower secondary education 2013-2017 is presented in the document *Motivation and Mastery for Better Learning. Joint Effort to Improve Classroom Management, Numeracy, Reading and Writing* (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). There are many stakeholders involved (see Figure 1). They all have a responsibility to contribute in different ways to achieve the common objective of enhanced motivation and learning outcomes for the young students (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011).

FIGURE 1: STAKEHOLDERS, OBJECTIVES, AND NATIONAL SUPPORT TOOLS IN THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY FOR LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION 2013-2017 (CARLSTEN & MARKUSSEN, 2014).



(Based on Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). The six circles refer to aims for the overall scheme as well as for five main groups involved. The three meshing gears refer to the tools selected to drive the implementation. These represent the three main tools of support for the strategy stakeholders: School-based professional training in classroom management, reading, writing, and numeracy; pedagogical resources; and learning networks. The two bullet points to the left refer to two underlying principles in the Norwegian Strategy for Lower Secondary Education 2013-2017. In order to create a more practical and and varied education, the government emphasizes the need for continuous assessment and for developing a good organizational culture.

Improving motivation and mastery in lower secondary level education in Norway is a government strategy aimed at strengthening this key level in the education system (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2011). As mentioned, research and statistics indicate that student motivation for learning is at its lowest in lower secondary school (ibid). Research in Norway and internationally has shown that a focus on motivation, engagement, inclusion, and learning opportunities for all students at this level is crucial to ensure that students stay in school and achieve the formal education necessary for future employability and lifelong learning skills (Markussen, Frøseth, & Sandberg, 2011; Markussen, 2014; Rumberger, 2011).

WHO IS INVOLVED?

In this implementation strategy, students are considered a resource that enhances quality in the lower secondary school. As they grow older, Norwegian students are gradually expected to take more responsibility for their own learning, to take the opportunity to participate in the governance of the school, and to communicate their expectations for the school (Ministry of Education and Research, 2011). Parents also play a decisive role in school development in Norway. In the framework for developing lower secondary education, parents are expected to set requirements, encourage and motivate their children to continue their efforts in lower secondary school, and actively participate in the relationship between the school and the home (ibid). Teachers are responsible for the students' educational and social development according to the strategy document for lower secondary schools. They are also expected to provide practical and varied instruction, adapted to the students' abilities (cf. Education Act, §3-1). School leaders are responsible for learning results and for developing a collectively oriented culture at the school by facilitating a stronger professional community through cooperation, reflection, and sharing of experience. Norwegian municipalities, as school owners, are responsible for fulfilling the students' right to primary and secondary education, cf. Section 13-1 of the Education Act, and therefore play a key role in the strategic leadership. At the national and regional level, teacher training institutions, national centres for educational support[1], regional GNIST partnerships,[2] and 57 specifically

[1]National centers for educational support have a national mandate to lead and coordinate the development of new and improved working methods and learning strategies in education, from the level of kindergarten to teacher education in Norway.
[2]The regional GNIST partnership is a broad commitment to improving the quality of teacher education and developing the teaching profession in Norway. The partnership is working to raise the status of teachers and to recruit good teachers for 21st century education.

trained counsellors have a key role in the realization of the phased implementation strategy. All in all, the phased implementation strategy seems to be selected in order to ensure the logical link between including all stakeholders into the pedagogical foundation of school-based development, and the long-term work at the national level for increasing student motivation.

Central to understanding the selection of the phased implementation strategy is also the features of the Norwegian educational system. Universal and equitable education based on a belief in free schooling is a strong feature of the Norwegian school system (Telhaug, Mediås, & Aasen, 2006). With a large geographical area (385,252 square kilometres) but a relatively small and scattered population (5,109,059 by 01.01.2014), forty percent of primary and lower secondary schools are so small that children of different ages are taught in the same classroom. Primary and lower secondary levels are often combined in the same school. When it comes to coordinating the scattered educational system, Norway is a unitary state with a tradition of delegating a large part of the responsibility for school governance to its 428 municipalities. The characteristics of classrooms integrating all students under municipal authority in a system working with a traditional national curriculum is central to understanding the idea of phased implementation in our case.

A SHIFT IN IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY?

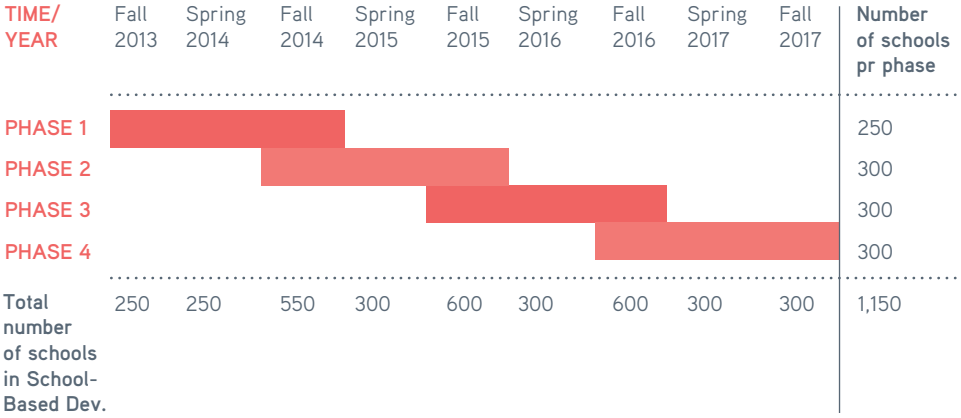
In earlier reform implementations, Norway initiated full-scale arrangements. Although with a strong tradition of trial schemes, these have to a large degree been based on a traditional governance strategy emphasizing a single-event curriculum change. It has been driven by legal and financial changes, and it has in many ways followed a traditional top-down New Public Management approach, asking "what works?" (Aasen et al., 2012; Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). In the current strategy, the government has responded to criticism from earlier policy evaluations by creating an explicit national implementation strategy that is aligned with the political strategy (Aasen et al., 2012; Ministry of Education and Research, 2013; Directorate for Education and Training, 2013). In this sense, the Norwegian implementation strategy seems to appear with the features of a knowledge-informed strategy, indicating a shift towards soft management (Postholm et al., 2013; Dyrkorn et al., 2014; see also Mausethagen, 2013b). Since 2013, participants in the Norwegian strategy for lower secondary education have been regularly invited to implementation seminars by the national authorities. The work

has been followed up by several agents before and after, such as scholars, counsellors and resource teachers working across schools and regions. This is quite different from the way in which earlier reform implementations were handled, where schools worked more independently often after having been served research in a seminar quite remote from their own classrooms. On the one hand, the focus on school-based development has been a part of Norwegian strategy for schooling since 2003. Phased implementation as a strategy ensuring learning networks are maintained over time and across all lower secondary schools, on the other hand, is more of an innovative act in Norway today.

ORGANIZING THE PHASES

There are several ways in which to organize a phased policy implementation. One example is a modular-based system, in which all units involved start with a core function module for implementing change (e.g., externally designed school evaluation tools) and then over time move on to more specialized modules (e.g., models of reading instruction). Another way of organizing the groups is by geographic location or by school function (e.g., by engaging school leaders before teachers). In Norway, the phased implementation strategy emphasizes schools

FIGURE 2: PHASES OF IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY FOR LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION 2013-2017 (CARLSTEN & MARKUSSEN 2014; BASED ON DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING, 2013).[3]

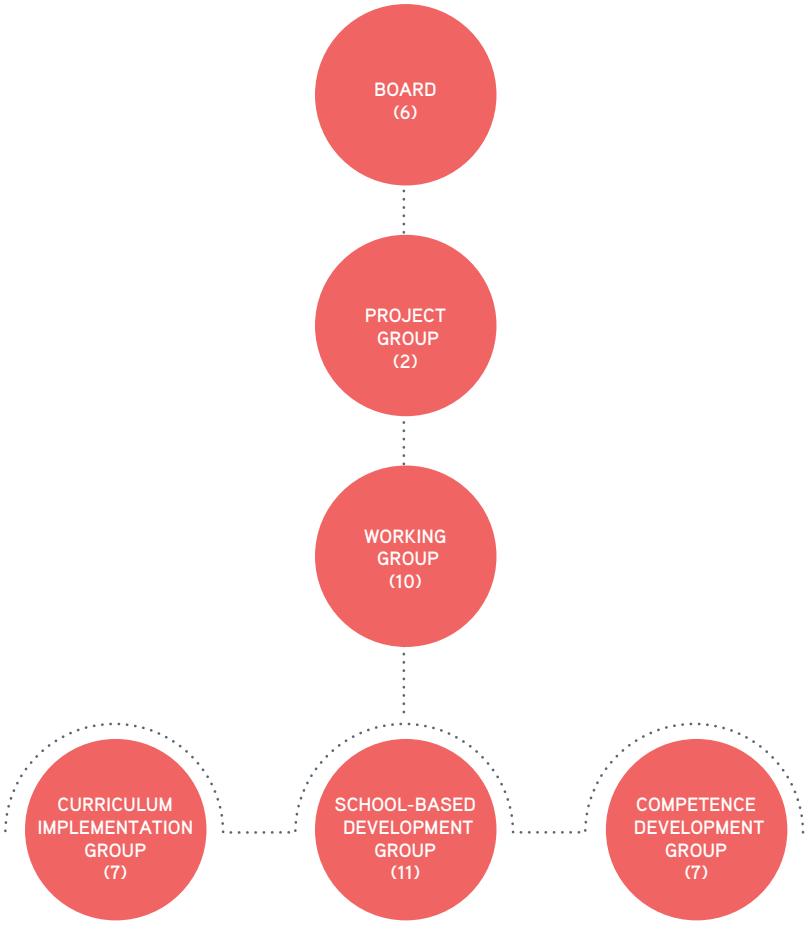


[3]The official figure operates with 1,150 as the total number of schools involved, but the program is in reality open for all 1,295 lower secondary schools, according to the Directorate for Education and Training.

as the main unit of change regardless of geography and school size. Schools offering lower secondary education are divided into four groups which include four defined phases of three semesters (Figure 2).

The aim in this phased strategy is to cover all lower secondary schools (8th-10th Year) and combined schools (1st-10th Year) in Norway. The functionality of each implementation phase is designed to avoid temporary solutions that could have

FIGURE 3: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR IMPLEMENTING THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY FOR LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION 2013-2017 (PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM THE NORWEGIAN DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING, 2014). NUMBER OF PERSONS IN PARANTHESES.



been an outcome in a parallel- or direct full-scale changeover. One example is the establishment of counsellors when working towards the aim of developing learning networks (see support tool in Figure 1). In this scheme, the school owners in phase 1 were selected by the Directorate itself to ensure that the baseline was designed to inform the following phases. The selection of school owners was based on feedback from the teacher educator regions on who had the opportunity to start working with schools Fall 2013, along with results from a national survey of competence and capacity in this sector and a national survey on school owners' and schools' stated needs (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2014). The selection was also based on a dialogue with the county governors, and feedback from group meetings where all partners where involved (ibid). The strategy also included a pilot project (Postholm et al., 2013). Based on a well-informed first choice of participants, the strategy is designed to include participants of the first phase to be included as resources into the next. The priority tools are under constant scrutiny and the system is designed to be under continual improvement. Although complex, the phased implementation strategy may theoretically be easier to control in a school system such as Norway's, as it is divided into well-defined phases in comparison to full-scale changeover strategies. The focus on national coherence and clear centralized leadership of processes is reflected in the organizational chart for implementation by the Directorate for Education and Training (see Figure 3).

BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

If we observe Figure 2 with the stakeholder perspective from Figure 1 in mind, we may assume that there are clear benefits to conducting system change in phases (e.g., extended time is available for adjustments). The strategy illustrates the potential benefit from an integration perspective, in which negative influences that arise at the start become less critical as new groups commence the program. The control of these processes is reflected in the large-scale involvement by the central authorities seen in Figure 3. The time provided for all stakeholders to adapt to new political signals is longer, thus allowing for the capacity-building over time and across groups that is needed if all implementing agents are to understand their practice and allow for change (cf. Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). The national and middle management staff may concentrate on part of the system or some of the stakeholders and better supervise the processes (cf. Moos, 2009). In phased implementation, it is not only the given groups of schools that define a phase. A phase is also defined by the embedding of knowledge and knowledge

infrastructure. In theory, the strategy risk decreases, the knowledge usability increases, and the implementation allows for a system that can be used operationally and then upgraded with smooth steps of transition. The functionality of each phase is designed so that each new phase in the strategy builds on insight from the preceding phase.

While there are potential benefits to phased implementation in Norwegian education policy development, there are certain challenges as well. The following two steps are crucial in order for this strategy to succeed: 1) the careful selection of participants for phase 1, as all the other phases learn from the success and failure of this group; and 2) the strategic placement of support structures to align phases and tools within, between, and across the four phases.

Regarding the first challenge, we have emphasized that in Norway the Directorate for Education and Training decided which school owners should be offered support for school-based development and by which higher education institutions. Since the strategy is still in the first phase it is difficult to assess if the selection criteria and processes have been optimal at this point in time.

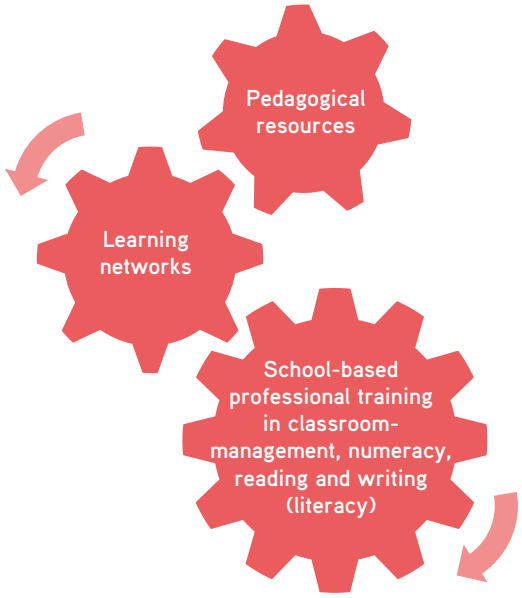
The second challenge involves tools and structures to make all phases work towards the same aim. The phased approach relies on precise documentation and flexible use of tools across phases. A related dilemma might be unclear milestones, i.e., what is supposed to be achieved in each phase. Without well-defined milestones, the duration of the implementation as a whole might increase, as it is unclear when the "reform is finally over." Another important precondition for the success of the implementation strategy is the clarification of roles and responsibilities. Good communication between participants such as counsellors, scholars and school owners is another prerequisite, as the aim is to involve all levels in the education system for all 1,295 lower secondary schools in Norway.[4] Explaining "what works" under different conditions of complexity requires supportive resources to ensure a long-term impact.

[4]The Information System for Primary and Secondary Schools in Norway (GSI) indicates that per October 1st 2012, there were 614,894 students in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools for the school year 2012/2013. In 2010-2012, there were 159 private schools in Norway, of which some were private but government funded. All in all, Norway spent 6.8 per cent of the gross domestic product on education according to UNDP numbers, while the average for the OECD countries was 5.9 per cent. There are 2,957 public and private primary and lower secondary schools in Norway, of which different combinations of schools equal 1,295 lower secondary schools. As mentioned, due to the scattered school system (low population/large geographical area), some schools in Norway combine different grade levels. Teacher density in Norway is 13.5 students per teacher. The discrepancy between this number and the number given on the introduction-page for the article, is caused by two different way of calculating teacher density.

ALIGNING POLICY TOOLS IN PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

The aim of our evaluation of the strategy *Motivation and Mastery for Better Learning* is to provide insight into the degree to which the strategy tools are well-suited for optimal goal attainment within, between, and across phases of implementation. As seen in Figures 1 and 4, the three "meshing gears" represent the three main tools of support for the strategy stakeholders: School-based professional training in classroom management, reading, writing, and numeracy; pedagogical resources; and learning networks.

FIGURE 4: NATIONAL SUPPORT TOOLS IN THE NORWEGIAN STRATEGY FOR LOWER SECONDARY EDUCATION 2013-2017 (CARLSTEN & MARKUSSEN, 2014; BASED ON MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, 2012).



When it comes to tools, some are seen as specific to the context of Norway, while others are shared by more members of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE). One domestic example is the Norwegian group of 57 counsellors working across regions that we have referred to earlier. Because municipalities are too small to be self-sufficient in terms of competence and capacity, the national level allocates resources to regional counsellors. Another specifically Norwegian feature is the way the

authorities work with the higher education institutions. For a small country, Norway has 22 quite small higher education institutions, which requires that attention be paid to network strategies in all implementation strategies.

The phased implementation strategy in Norway illustrates a common European trend. This involves a shift from traditional implementation tools of "what works" in educational politics – legal, financial, and assessment (Aasen et al., 2012) – to an increased focus on informative and assessing or "soft" tools (Moos et al., 2013; Hudson, 2011; Postholm et al., 2013; Dyrvik et al., 2014). These soft tools align with a form of governance described as soft governance of education (e.g. Moos, 2009). Since the formal field of implementation research emerged in the 1960s, there has been a growing concern with the "what works" framework (Odden, 1991; Spillane et al., 2002). In past implementation research, the goal was to reveal that policy, people, and places affected implementation. In new approaches to implementation research, one aim is to uncover various dimensions and how interactions among these dimensions shape implementation in different ways (Honig, 2006). The Norwegian case might illustrate this shift in implementation theory in practice.

CURRENT IMPACT OF PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

Understanding and evaluating the impact of this strategy is an important part of the strategy itself. If the claims in this chapter hold, that countries may learn from another and that Norway is illustrating a new shift in implementation theory, understanding the nature of implementation strategy today is therefore relevant for all stakeholders involved in the work of changing educational systems (Spillane et al., 2002; CIDREE, 2006; Wooldridge, Schmidt, & Floyd, 2008).

An important factor in examining the impact of implementation strategies is to reach an understanding of the benefits and risks of phased implementation as it meets the different agents of implementation at the local level. Questions regarding implementation for the development of lower secondary schools were therefore incorporated into the survey "Questions to Norwegian Schools" for the Directorate for Education and Training (Sjaastad, 2014). The study was conducted in the Spring of 2014 and included 380 schools with lower secondary classes.[5]

[5]A methodological discussion is found in Sjaastad 2014.

EXPECTATIONS OF SUCCESS?

Two hundred and two school leaders responded to a question regarding what they estimated the long-term impact of the strategy to be: "Do you believe that the arrangement 'Strategy for Lower Secondary Education in Norway' will be successful?" In the first report from the evaluation Spring 2014 (Sjaastad 2014), results show that school leaders overall have a positive attitude regarding the expected outcome and successful long-term effects of the strategy. The interesting finding in terms of phased implementation is that school leaders in phase 1 who are already working on the strategy seem to be more enthusiastic about the outcome than those who have not yet started this work (Sjaastad, 2014). Within this phase, school leaders expect more practical instruction (73%), more varied instruction (95%), and better pedagogical practice (91%) to take place.

School owners also responded to the question of long-term effects. Every school owner may be responsible for some 10+ schools, and these may belong to different groups. Sixty-two of the 102 school owners participating in the survey had no schools in phase 1. Thirty-nine school owners had between one and eight schools in phase 1, while one school owner had 15 schools in phase 1. A majority of school owners indicated a belief in changes in varied instruction (83%) and enhanced pedagogical quality (85%). Seventy-four percent regard the strategy as likely to reach its ambitions. Seventy percent of school owners expect long-term effects, agreeing with school leaders on this issue.

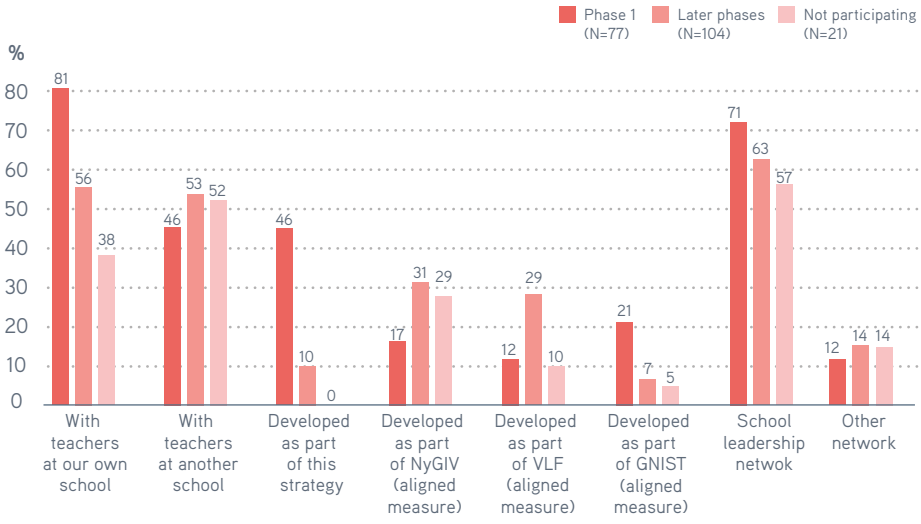
These indicators aiming at improving motivation and mastery in lower secondary schools in Norway might be considered attainable by school leaders at this stage. This finding will be analysed and re-examined in the upcoming surveys and interviews in our evaluation. It is interesting to note the optimism in school leaders' responses on these indicators, given that former education policy implementation research in Norway has pointed to loose couplings between reform goals and local results in terms of student learning, e.g., test score improvements (Olsen & Skedsmo 2012).

TOOLS AND TRAINING

An important supportive tool in the strategy is participation in learning networks (see Figure 4).

There are three types of networks where schools in phase 1 deviate from the other groups: networks with teachers in their own schools, networks developed as part of this strategy, and existing networks developed as part of GNIST (Figure 5). Our data indicate that more schools in phase 1 participate in all networks. This might be a sign that the strategy assists in activating networks. It can also be a sign that those who do not participate belong to a group of schools owners that are not as involved in existing networks as those the Directorate selected for phase 1.

FIGURE 5: IN WHICH NETWORK DOES THE SCHOOL TAKE PART BASED ON PHASE PARTICIPATION? RESPONSE BY SCHOOL LEADERS. N = 202 (CARLSTEN & MARKUSSEN, 2014)[6]



[6]NyGIV: New Possibilities (NyGIV) is a Norwegian national project to increase successful completion in Upper Secondary Education and Training from 70 to 75 percent. Improved cooperation between different levels of government and between different measures is central to the project. VLF refers to Assessment for learning.

It is interesting to note that school leaders participating in these networks have higher expectations regarding long-term effects in the areas of varied and practical instruction (Sjaastad 2014). They seem to believe that teachers' existing instructional patterns can be changed and that pedagogical practice will be strengthened. Nine out of ten believe in a change in their own level of school leadership. Ninety-one percent of school leaders in networks believe that this strategy will lead to better schools, while only 61% of those who do not participate in networks believe this (ibid). The impact of being in phase 1 is enhanced by participating in networks, which also seem to lead to increased belief in the effects of this strategy. The longer school leaders have participated in this strategy, the more they seem to understand its positive effects, according to our survey at this initial stage.

An area in which school owners and school leaders seem to disagree is the quality of mutual cooperation (Sjaastad 2014). Over half of school owners believe in lasting quality enhancement in their cooperation with schools, while only a third of school leaders expect the same.

LINKING AMBITIONS AND RESOURCES

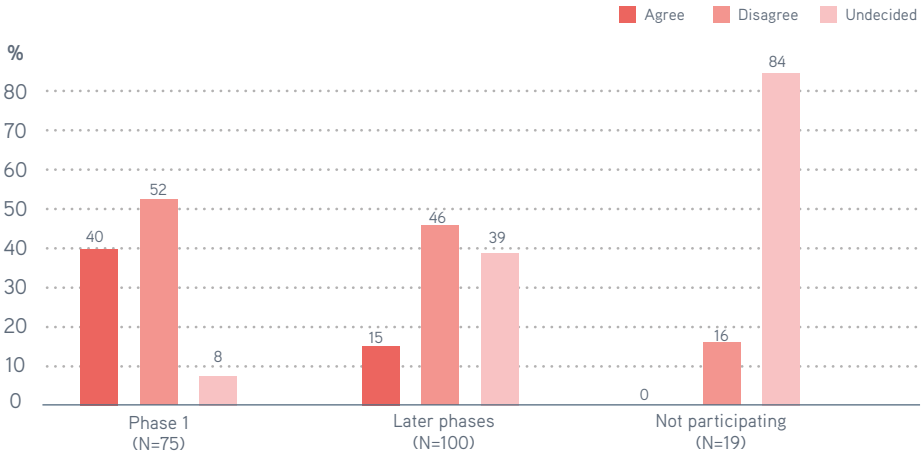
The implementation tools should integrate efforts within and between groups. We therefore examined stakeholder views on the relationship between the resources they have received and the ambitions they see as connected to this approach, asking for agreement or disagreement on the statement: "the amount of financial resources is sufficient to reach the aim of the strategy" (see Figure 6).

It is interesting to note that the school leaders in phase 1 seem to have participated sufficiently to provide such a decisive answer. The level of agreement is surprisingly high when we know that resources have been spread across many agents in the system and that school leaders are not among those who have received the larger share (Sjaastad, 2014).

GNIST: SPARK (GNIST) is a broad commitment to improving the quality of teacher education and developing the teaching profession in Norway. The partnership is working to raise the status of teachers and to recruit good teachers for 21st century education.

VLF: Assessment for learning – AfL (Vurdering for Læring) is a four-year Norwegian educational program (2010-2014) involving more than 400 schools. The main goal has been to improve assessment practices in Norwegian schools by working on integrating the four AfL principles into their teaching practice (Hopfenbeck et al., 2013).

FIGURE 6: STAKEHOLDER UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND STRATEGY AMBITIONS ACCORDING TO PHASE PARTICIPATION. REPORTED BY SCHOOL LEADERS IN RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT: "THE AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IS SUFFICIENT TO REACH THE AIM OF THE STRATEGY."
N = 194 (CARLSTEN & MARKUSSEN, 2014).[7]



CONCLUSION

Strategic implementation is a fundamental step in the realization of society's expectations for education. The nature of schooling as a social system calls for updated knowledge on the benefits and challenges of different models of implementation. In Europe, a substantial amount of resources are allocated to examine the effects of continual implementation efforts. This chapter has addressed the initial stages of the implementation of the Strategy for Lower Secondary Education in Norway, paying particular attention to the benefits and challenges of the phased strategy.

Emphasizing the fact that we are in the initial stage of evaluating these efforts, we are careful not to encourage drawing definitive conclusions or generalizing from Norway to a European audience. At this point in our evaluation (which will go on for four more years) we do, however, have interesting survey responses from 202 school leaders and 62 school owners.

[7]The group answering "not participating" is a group containing schools that have not yet been assigned to a certain phase or schools that are uncertain of actual participation (see also Sjaastad, 2014).

The respondents in our survey – school leaders and school owners alike – provided very positive feedback as we are approaching the end of phase 1 and the start of phase 2 of the intended change in lower secondary education in Norway. Looking at responses from school owners and school leaders participating in an evaluating survey, the central tools in the framework – school-based development, pedagogical resources, and learning networks – seem to be surprisingly well-connected to the stated ambitions. The respondents expressed a positive outlook on further development even after the formal phase is over, possibly indicating the benefits of middle management and extended time periods of implementation in the phased strategy.

A few questions remain: would the positive feedback from school leaders in our survey have been different had another mode of implementation been used? Is the phased implementation strategy a remedy to the stated need for clarity of roles and responsibilities because it is more flexible? Is the new framework better aligned to professional needs and ways of daily school improvement than earlier reform efforts? Is the phased implementation type better aligned to the Norwegian education system with its scattered school geography and decentralized governance approach? We are also questioning the status of tools versus aims in the strategy: how may the impact of existing learning networks be compared to newly established learning networks in a system such as education? Are there other tools that would be better matched to the idea of phased implementation? We will be able to present more nuanced answers to these questions when the evaluation is complete in 2018.

As a field of research and practice, education policy implementation has been searching for strategic tools of implementation under the slogan "what matters is what works" (Vedung, 2010). Recent trends in implementation research also emphasize the importance of understanding the complexity of "what matters" and "what works" (see also Hopfenbeck et al., 2013). As Honig points out, implementability and success factors are obviously important outcomes of the policy implementation process, but the essential implementation question is not "what is implementable and works," but "what is implementable and works for whom, where, when, and why?" (Honig, 2006). To communicate the "what matters" and explain how schools can reach goals of "what works" under different conditions

is currently something Norway seems to be exploring with surprisingly positive results. What may be unique about strategic implementation in this case and what may be comparable to other European countries would be a worthwhile research subject for the CIDREE-network in the years ahead.

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Learning by Doing or Learning from Mistakes?

AUTHORS:

Branko Slivar

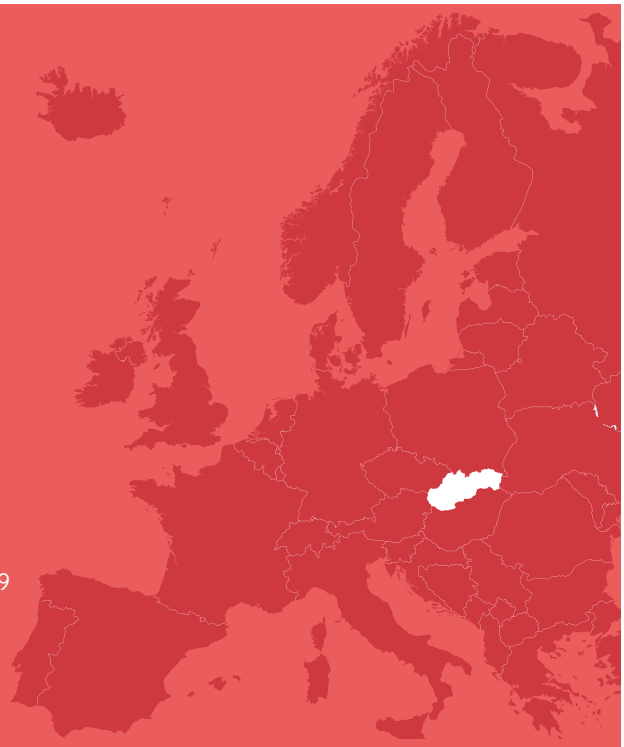
Head of Department for Secondary Education

Branko Slivar is Head of Department for Secondary Education at The National Education Institute of Slovenia. He is working with teachers and school leaders on the national and international level. His main professional interest is in the area of curriculum planning and development, implementation of changes in schools and teacher stress management. He was resident Twinning adviser in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the field of strengthening institutional capacity of the Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education.

Brigita Žarkovič - Adlešič

Head of Centre for Professional Development

Brigita Žarkovič - Adlešič is Head of Centre for Professional Development at The National Education Institute of Slovenia. Her work is strongly linked with schools and teachers on the national and international level. Her publications are dealing with learning of teachers, coaching and mentoring. Her international work is related to learning in management and teaching. She was actively involved as an expert in the field of professional development on projects in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Facts about Slovenia

- Population: 2,1 mill
- Density: 102 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 16, secondary 11
- Expenditure on education: 5,9 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,79

ABSTRACT

When Slovenia gained independence in 1991, an autonomous education system was established and we introduced educational reforms. This article aims to present general learning points from implementing curricular changes in primary and upper secondary schools. We wish to provide a holistic overview on the implementation process, including historical background and changes in the education system. We have analysed the process of implementation both on a policy level and on an implementation level. This analysis disclosed the hidden currents navigating the process of the reform. We have extracted general learning points from the lessons we have learned, and with this article we wish to highlight some of them, believing that they could bring valuable messages to policy makers in Slovenia, and in countries facing challenges similar to the Slovenian.

"We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience."
– John Dewey

1. INTRODUCTION

Slovenia is a young country, as it gained independence only 23 years ago. During these years Slovenia has introduced political pluralism and joined the European Union (2004). Most of the transition countries in the region have undergone profound political and economic changes, and have started executing comprehensive reforms of their school systems. These reforms have encompassed large systemic alterations in the field of legislation, organisation and curriculum. Since education is one of the crucial segments of society, it is not unusual to notice strong political commitment in this respect. Slovenia was in European public media and among European politicians recognised as a success story in the early phases of its independence, mainly due to its economic growth and increased budget for education. However, more than twenty years after its establishment, we can look critically at some of the processes undergone in the field of education, and we can do it with a certain distance. We will first look into the background of the Slovenian success story, and then try to investigate some of the challenges in the succeeding story.

In this article, we present two case studies. The first is the transition process of extending mandatory primary school by one year; from 8 to 9 years of primary school. We will study this transition process in the period 1998 – 2003. The second study is the reform on curricula in upper secondary school[1], and this study is divided in two different time spans; 1998 – 2002 and 2008 – 2014. In doing this, we wish to present general learning points of Slovenia from the last 15 years of implementation of curricular changes in primary and upper secondary schools. The case studies will be discussed mainly on an implementation level, and the implementation on policy level will be discussed in a more general manner prior to the case studies. In order to provide a frame for these case studies, we will start by giving a short overview of Slovenia's history and its education system.

2. NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Short Historical Overview

Slovenia gained independence in 1991. To better understand the specific situation of education in Slovenia, we would like to give an overview of the regional history

[1]In Slovenia the upper secondary school is called gymnasia and it is preparatory for further university studies. There are two different types of gymnasia: general and specialised gymnasia (technical, art and economics). In the article we are using the term upper secondary to imply all types of gymnasia.

of the last 150 years. The recent educational and cultural history of Slovenes can be split into three periods; the first one goes back to the period of Austro Hungarian rule from 1867 to 1918. At that time, the Slovenes were a minority people speaking the Slovenian language in German-speaking states. It is important to mention that the establishment of public schools in Austria in 1869 also accelerated the cultural development of the Slovenes. By the First World War, the Slovenian provinces had reached a high level of literacy. From 1918 until 1991 Slovenia was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, also known as Yugoslavia. After the second world war in 1945, the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established, bringing together six nations, namely Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Slovenes.

Up until Slovenia's independence, Slovene education developed within the framework of several education systems. During the Yugoslav period from 1918 until 1991 there was a constant attempt to gain an independent education system against Yugoslav-Serbian centralism. It struggled for its survival in environments that were not in the least favourable. Slovenian as the language of instruction was always the most sensitive issue, and just as Slovene education survived through language, the language survived through education. In the interweaving of various cultural, linguistic, educational and conceptual influences, Slovene education takes credit for serving to consolidate a small nation's ability to survive in spite of it being surrounded by large nations and always under threat (Šverc, 2007). 1991 is the beginning of the first period of absolute autonomy of the Slovene education system (Plut, 2001).

2.2 Changes in the Slovenian Education System

In 1919, the first Slovenian university was established, and this marks the first step towards the setting of an independent Slovene education system. This enabled upper secondary school students to continue their education at university level. Consequently, the number of upper secondary school students increased, though the majority still ended their education after 8 years of compulsory education.

After the Second World War, communist rule brought in new views on education. The main idea was to enable transitions among different types of secondary schools and to make upper secondary education accessible to all. In 1946, the education authorities introduced the law on compulsory seven years of education,

which was a big step for other Yugoslav countries, yet a step back for Slovenia, which already had a compulsory education of eight years. Slovenia was ahead of other republics also according to other statistical indicators, such as the educational structure of the population, the percentage of students among the population, and the budget allocated for education and culture. In 1957, The Committee for Reform of Education published several proposals of a new Yugoslav education system. Among them was a proposal for ideology-driven school curricula, a unified system of education that would introduce eight-year primary school throughout Yugoslavia, and a more open enrolment to universities. In 1958, the new Law of Education enacted all the proposed ideas. Among other things, it is necessary to mention that upper secondary schools started losing their dominant role, and were labelled as bourgeois and elitist. Some demanded their abolishment, which finally happened in the beginning of the eighties with the introduction of so-called "guided education". In that period two new types of secondary schools were introduced, which can generally be divided into the so-called professionally oriented (vocational) programmes and the more generally oriented programmes (pedagogy, natural science, mathematics, social sciences and cultural programmes). Immediately after the Slovenian independence in 1991, the reinstatement of the former model of upper secondary schools and the external exam (matura) took place.

On the level of compulsory education, there were no crucial systemic changes until the reform in 1996. For the reform of primary school, the following complex changes are characteristic: Compulsory education was prolonged to 9 years, with pupils entering education one year earlier, at the age of six. It was organised into three cycles: 1st to 3rd grade, 4th to 6th grade, and 7th to 9th grade. A foreign language was now introduced earlier than before, more specifically in the second year of primary school. Descriptive grading became obligatory for the first cycle (1st to 3rd grade). After each cycle, at the end of 3rd, 6th and 9th grade, there was testing of acquired knowledge according to national standards. External examination was performed at the end of 9th grade. The education law mentioned above also introduced curriculum differentiation and individualisation, as well as the possibility to group students according to their abilities.

3. EDUCATION REFORM – SHORT OVERVIEW OF CIRCUMSTANCES

According to Plut (2001), the process of education reform had three distinct phases with different foci that partly overlapped.

1. After independence, the focus of the first stage was on organisational structure, financing, setting of the goals of the system as a whole, but also setting separate goals for each level of the education system. This reform phase concluded in 1995 with the publication of the White Paper on Education in the Republic of Slovenia (Krek, 1996) and the introduction of four new regulations for preschool, primary, secondary and adult education respectively, which were enacted in 1996.

2. The second phase began in 1995 and focused on the curriculum at the primary and secondary level. During this period of curricular reform, expert bodies were established to execute the goals that were set: The National Curriculum Council, Field Curricular Commissions and Subject Curricular Commisions (National Curriculum Counsil, 1996). The National Curriculum Council consisted of experts from different fields of education. They designed the general and specific goals of curricular reform, and decided on the basic methodological framework for the entire reform, as well as for coordinated activities.

   Field Curriculum Commissions were directing the reform on the level of educational fields (preparation of the basis for the renewal of specific fields of education, publication of programmes, and preparation of guidelines for study groups) and coordinated teacher training within the primary and secondary level. The Subject Curriculum Commissions provided the analysis of syllabi and programmes, produced suggestions for syllabi, and designed and delivered in-service teacher training.

The process of formulating new syllabi for all subjects was designed according to professional principles, which are briefly presented in the following text. All suggested solutions had to be compared to the syllabi of at least three countries with highly developed educational systems. The choice of which countries to compare ourselves with depended on the Subject Curriculum Commissions, which selected three of the most developed countries in the field of education, according to their achievements in international comparative studies (TIMMS, PISA).

Certain suggested solutions such as syllabi and didactical resources were discussed among teachers in study groups, and field commissions had to examine their feedback and take it into consideration for the preparation of the final official document. In case of dilemmas, where there was no clear consensus, additional expert opinions had to be acquired. One of the principles was also to include parents and other actors in public debates about the accepted solutions, and with this, the communication with experts and lay public alongside the whole process was established. The National Curriculum Council and National Subject Committees formulated new subject curricula and discussed them with teachers and experts before they were adopted in 1998. Unfortunately, all those principles were not consistently taken into consideration, also due to various political pressures.

3. At the end of 1998, the third stage of the reform began, which focused on implementation and evaluation. The National Commission for Evaluation was established to evaluate the changes in the new curricula and in the organisational structures of the schools, and its impact on the students' knowledge. The Commission formulated a comprehensive framework and strategies for the evaluation of educational reform (Nacionalna komisija [...], 1999).

In the year 2000, Slovenia faced a change of government. This change also had a strong impact on the reform process, especially on implementation and evaluation. The new minister abolished The National Commission for Evaluation, and established a new body called the Strategic Council, which was supposed to redirect further implementation of the reform. Critics of the educational reform got prominent positions and a voice in the new Ministry of Education. The process of implementation and evaluation was highly politicised. Plut (2001) wrote:"This political fight to gain control over the evaluation of the educational reform was short-lived, since the political left overwhelmingly won in the October 2000 election, and in December, a new team took over power. However, the incident did demonstrate the political sensitiveness of education."

Partial evaluations addressing different content areas, like knowledge, syllabi, and the influence of curricular change upon students, were performed by the National Commission for Evaluation, which was re-established after the elections in October 2000. Due to time, material and organisational constraints, those content areas were only partially covered and thus a holistic picture of the effectiveness of the reform was missing. During the work of the Commission for

Evaluation there was no holistic evaluation of the entire reform (Musek Lešnik, 2011). In addition to the partial evaluation, the National Education Institute (NEI)[2] monitored the reform and completed several descriptive follow-up reports, which again gave just a fractional view of the reform.

4. CASE STUDIES

4.1 Theoretical framework

The specific historical positioning of Slovenia, which has been part of larger state systems up until its independence, could be interpreted as the reason for a lack of tradition and experience in the planning and execution of systemic education reforms.

According to the circumstances described above, and due to the fact that there was not enough information to get a holistic view on the process of reform implementation, we tried to get a clear picture by analysing the implementation on the primary and upper secondary level of education.[3] The reform implementation at the primary school level was very complex, and had a greater political and societal accent. It was less complex for upper secondary, as this required a smaller scope in changes and number of schools involved and was less promoted politically.

We aim to describe the course of the reform and the implementation of systemic change, and we wish to elucidate some of the factors expressed as important for effective implementation in the theoretical framework for this article. We base this mainly on Fullan (1991), Altrichter (2005), Halasz and Michel (2011), and Corrales (1999). We then wish to make a critical estimation of what was, and what was not, successful in the case of Slovenia.

Fullan (1991) introduced clusters of indicators associated with the decision to initiate or to adopt an innovation in education. The three factors for making such decisions are the innovation's relevance, readiness, and resources. Relevance

[2]National Education Institute (NEI) is a public institution which provides professional groundwork for decision-making in education by: prepairing proposals for educational programs requested by professional councils and state bodies, monitoring and evaluating pedagogical practice, especially the introduction of new programs or program elements, and publishing relevant data about the educational activities of kindergartens, schools and other educational institutions.

[3]National Education Institute covers general education at the primary and upper secondary level. Vocational education is under the authority of Centre for Vocational Education and Training.

refers to perceptions of educational practitioners concerning the usefulness. Readiness involves the school's capacity to initiate and develop the innovation and being prepared to use new activities, behaviours or practices. Resource availability involves financial means, time, equipment and appropriate materials related to the intended change.

Altrichter (2005) described facilitating or limiting factors which comprise the following key themes:
a. characteristics of the innovation itself (complexity, clarity about goals),
b. local characteristics (community, school district, regional administration),
c. organisation (actors and organisational characteristics),
d. government and external agencies (resource support, quality of relations).

Halasz and Michel (2011) presented a model of implementation based on the European key competences for lifelong learning. It is of special interest to us because they introduced the factor of political commitment. Their model is based upon the analysis of support of the key education policy actors in the domestic education policy arena, and on the evaluation of implementation capacities. The key policy actors are education authorities represented by the Ministry of Education. Successful implementation depends on at least two parallel factors, which are strong political commitment and strong implementation capacities. They understand *strong political commitment* as support of key education policy actors, whereas they define *strong implementation capacities* as understanding the logic (complexities) of curriculum change, and competent use of appropriate policy tools.

Corrales (1999) has studied the obstacles for successful implementation of education reform in different countries, and these obstacles are represented in various levels of educational and economic development. He suggested that political obstacles are not necessarily insurmountable. He also discussed the political conditions in which education reforms are more likely to be approved. He claims that reform implementation is more feasible when the following conditions are met: cost impact of the reform is addressed, the supply and demand for reform are reinforced, and possible reactions of dissatisfied individuals or groups (veto groups) are taken into consideration.

4.2 Analysis on the basis of a set of indicators

We used the set of indicators presented above as reference points in our analysis, and it helped us establish an overview of the reform, and get an insight into the basis of certain limiting and facilitating factors. We will look into the conditions necessary for successful implementation (policy level), and the individual factors important for completion/realisation (implementation level).

The policy level comprises Halasz and Michel's (2011) theories about policy commitment and implementation capacity. We added the additional factor of political impact, which is present in transitional countries, especially in countries of former Yugoslavia. We here define political impact as *active involvement of political parties, aiming at political influence and control of the education reform process.*

There are five factors affecting implementation on the implementation level, which include several subcategories:

- The first item is dealing with characteristics of the innovation, which involves clarity of goals and means, complexity and usefulness of innovation. Complexity reflects the amount of new skills, altered beliefs and materials required by an innovation (Altrichter, 2005).
- The second item is the content of the innovation, which reflects the focus of the innovation, namely syllabi, didactics or programmes.
- The third item is internal environment, which involves actors (leadership, teachers and students), their interactions, participation and level of commitment in the process of change.
- The fourth item covers resources, which encompasses capacity building (professional development) and finances, staff and material support.
- The fifth item deals with external environment, and incorporates active support and understanding, community involvement and quality of relationship between actors.

4.2.1 Conditions relating to policy level

As mentioned before, there were three phases in the process of education reform. In the first phase, we noticed a very high level of political commitment in the preparation of documents, regulations and laws. In this phase, a strong political impact (engagement of political parties to control the reform process) was not present. According to Plut (2001), a relatively high degree of agreement about the

basic principles of reforms had been reached between professional experts and educational policy makers.

In the second phase, the influence of the policy level was evident to a much greater extent. The policy level was realised through guidelines, support of the curricular national bodies, promotion of active and ongoing dialogue with experts and lay public. The Ministry of Education covered the normative, financial and organisational aspect of activities under these new circumstances. On the policy level, expert groups (Subject Curricular Commissions) organised teacher training on the topic of the new syllabi. In parallel with this process, university experts were actively involved in teacher training as well.

The implementation capacity was manifested through an understanding of the logic of curricular change, which was evidenced by additional reform bodies and structures, like different expert groups alongside the existing national education institutions. On the other side a large number of written materials about educational reforms were published, namely Goal Oriented and Process Developmental Planning of Curricula, Renovation of Gymnasia and External Exams (Barle-Lakota and Bergant, 1997), and comparative studies about European education systems. All these initiatives involved various experts coming from different backgrounds and fields, representing different views.

In this phase, political impact was strongly present. In Slovenia, the process was not as transparent and democratic as it seemed at first sight. Many teachers and experts were invited to have a say in public debates, give suggestions and different views, yet their critical opinions were not reflected in new legislation or in various curricular documents. As Plut (2001) noticed: “The nature of these discussions often indicated that the individuals who publicly discussed an issue were frustrated because they had not been heard in the first place, and also felt that they could stir up public opinion in support of their claims. At the same time, the policy makers, who stood by their criticized solutions, were often on the defensive and supported their decisions on the basis of the "experience of other European countries," but did not explain their positions clearly or defend them on professional grounds.”

Alongside with professional debates and activities, strong political discussions about “important professional but highly value-loaded issues” (Plut, 2001) were

also taking place. They tackled issues like the role of the Catholic Church in public education, elective religious courses, transition from kindergarten to the first grade and external testing.

As presented before, the third phase of the reform was marked by strong policy commitment and political impact. Political commitment was evident through the establishment of, and financial support of the Evaluation Commission, and in the preparation of the Regulations on Evaluation. Political impact could be perceived through the abolition of the National Commission for Evaluation, and the establishing of new bodies staffed with experts holding various political opinions. These new bodies criticised and minimised the achievements of former governments, and changed certain implemented solutions, like external evaluation of knowledge in primary and upper secondary education, the amount of religious content in schools, and too many lessons per year resulting in overloaded programmes. According to Plut, experts expressing their independent views were victims of political labelling in the media, such as "left wing", "old communists", "pro-church", "black" and "conservatives".

Professional debates expanded, and entered the mass media. On the basis of differences in expert views, the press and broadcasting companies produced sensationalistic news, which politically polarised public opinion. The pressure created by the media, and consequently by the public opinion, hindered the professional dialogue. Most professional views were given political labels, and round tables and panel discussions with experts were organised based on political beliefs, rather than upon the diversity of expert opinions. The emphasis was on the political issues and not on the content of the debates. Quality expert solutions could be rejected by the authorities because the holder was of "the wrong" belief.

Experts who were politically undecided and supported certain solutions, suggested either from the Left or the Right, were immediately attributed certain political beliefs. The consequence of various political labels hindered professional dialogue, which made the evaluation of the reform even more difficult. The political shifts in 2000 and 2004, where solutions were promiscuously changed or rejected, or changed or reinstated, also caused a discontinuity in the system.

In spite of turbulent developments on the political level, The National Education Institute's monitoring (Krapše, 2002) showed that this didn't have a larger direct

impact on school practice. This could be attributed to three factors: the schools' resistance to change, the teacher's care for the wellbeing of pupils, and their use of common sense in accepting pragmatic solutions.

4.2.2 Conditions relating to implementation level

The first case deals with the analysis of the implementation of a system transformation, which represented a substantial change on a national level; from 8 to 9 years of primary school. The second case refers to a narrower scope of curricular change in upper secondary education, which was of a more pedagogical nature.

– Reflections on the 9-year primary school

Introduction of a nine-year primary school was organised as a trial, and in the first phase 10% of all schools entered the new programme. In the following years, the number of schools and classes expanded. The process ended in the school year 2003/04, at which point all schools were involved (Brecelj, 1997). Schools entered the process gradually according to various conditions like trained teachers, suitable classrooms, material conditions, and readiness to accept established novelties as innovative methods of instructions.

The primary school reform is analysed through five factors on the implementation level. The first one deals with characteristics of innovation like clarity, complexity and usefulness, which can all be tracked through syllabi and other curricular documents, in which different ways of implementation were defined. Complexity encompasses descriptive grading, differentiation of instructions, and introduces project approach. It reflects new beliefs, skills and competences. According to the results monitored by NEI, teachers found those changes useful (Krapše, 2002).

The second factor is the content of innovation, which was present in curricular documents at the level of syllabi (goal oriented), didactics (student oriented approach), and programme (transition to the 9 year program). These were at the same time also the main emphasis of the reform.

The third factor of internal environment involves interactions of the main actors, their participation and level of commitment in the process of change. In school it was realised through cooperation and collaboration among teachers of different subjects and between teachers and their leaders. For this purpose different teams who were dealing with concrete aspects of implementation in the classroom were

established. Parents were regarded as an important partner in realisation of the reform goals. They were part of school boards and their opinions were shared at parents' meetings. In most cases students were not involved.

The forth factor at the level of implementation is capacity-building of school staff and support which was most strongly represented. The National Education Institute with its regional offices played a crucial role in this, by organising study groups and the Network of Mentoring Schools. Bottom up approach was applied through study groups. They have been regionally organised as circles of teachers of the same subject, who meet three times a year to exchange and discuss didactical issues. Various solutions were tested with teachers and principals. Principals were reporting on successful organisational solutions, while teachers were focusing upon the instruction. Teachers also initiated changes which were supported by the National Education Institute.

The fifth factor is external environment, which implied active collaboration between schools and the local community (municipalities). Representatives of local communities were part of school boards and were responsible for financing of primary schools.

According to Fullan (1994) educational change can be initiated from two distinct sides either top down or bottom up. Implementation of primary school reform is characteristically a combination of different initiatives of curricular change, top down, bottom up and bottom across. Different approaches were chosen on the basis of theoretical findings (Fullan, Wideen, 1994) and recommendations of international experts invited by the Minister of Education.

Top down approach was used in two cases. The first one was implementation of documents, issued by the Ministry and its bodies, which had defined the aim, goals and the course of the reform. The second one was teacher training delivered by Subject Curriculum Commissions on topics of the new syllabi.

Bottom across approach was employed in training delivered by networks of mentoring schools, which referred to the organisation of teaching and school operation. The first schools implementing the reform served as mentor schools, and they established mentor networks, which supported other schools when entering the process of reform. The heads of mentoring schools were trained in the area

of school management under new (changed) circumstances, such as organising and monitoring the entire process of school operation. With the help of mentoring schools and study groups, the National Education Institute was supporting teachers on a specific didactical and content level, i.e. how to teach according to the new syllabi (Milekšič, 2004). The system of mentoring schools was created to promote knowledge and exchange of experience about the implementation of the new curriculum among teachers. It also enabled more communication and reflection among practitioners, which is one of the conditions for changing beliefs and accepting novelties. The analysis of the reports of study groups, performed by the National Education Institute advisors, showed that teachers were discussing questions about implementation among each other and shared examples of good practice. They expressed the opinion that such discussions helped their teaching practice (Milekšič, 2004).

– Reflections on the Upper Secondary School

The implementation process of the reform at the upper secondary level proceeded in two phases (1998 – 2002, 2008 - 2014). As in the analysis of primary school reform also the upper secondary reform is analysed through five factors of implementation level. It followed the principles of the curriculum reform. As compared to primary school, changes proved to be less complex. There were no organisational changes and there were fewer schools involved.

– The first phase of the reform (1998 – 2002)

The first factor; clarity, complexity and usefulness, could be traced through syllabi and other curricular documents in the upper secondary school reform. The main emphasis was to achieve:

- a higher level of interconnectedness between academic subjects
- to prevent an overload and fatigue of students
- to introduce a variety of new methods and approaches to teaching
- to increase the active role of students
- to raise the quality and sustainability of the acquired knowledge

All the mentioned issues required different attitudes and beliefs about teaching, new skills in the field of didactics, and the emphasis on cooperation between teachers of different subjects. According to the results of monitoring by the National Education Institute, teachers found these changes useful (Internal report of NEI). The second factor, the content of innovation, covered syllabi, didactical, and pro-

gramme innovation. Besides establishing new specialised types of upper secondary schools, like art or technical schools, or schools of economics, the main emphasis was on the renewal of goals-oriented syllabi. Monitoring showed that practice in the classroom, namely various methods of instruction, had changed only with a small number of teachers. The monitoring also showed that the syllabi should be renewed. There was still a weak interconnectedness of knowledge, prevailing lower taxonomic levels, too few authentic learning situations, not enough linking of theory and practice, and a lack of connections with real life situations. Independent, critical and creative thinking was not appropriately represented, sufficient emphasis was not given on the development of cognitive as well as affective-motivational and metacognitive activities. The syllabi defined such a broad a scope of content matter, that the real essence of the subjects/disciplines were lost (Rutar-Ilc, 2006).

The third factor, which covers cooperation and collaboration among teachers of different subjects, was weakly represented. Therefore, an important goal of the reform, namely interconnectedness between academic subjects, was not achieved.

The fourth factor, capacity building and support, was present. However, its influence was quite superficial as compared to implementation of the reform in primary school. In this phase, the implementation of syllabi was delivered top down by Subject Curriculum Commissions together with the NEI advisors, who were running seminars in circles of teachers' study groups. The addressed topic was mainly the novelties in new programmes. There was no networking of mentoring schools, and no testing of new didactical solutions with teachers. Since the change was not as complex as in the primary school reform, it was assumed that a top down approach was sufficient, and that the change would happen by itself. According to expectations, the new syllabi should trigger changes also in the school practice. However, that was not the case. We can conclude that the change didn't happen by itself, and also that the application of just the top down approach was not sufficient.

The fifth factor, external environment, was represented through cooperation with the experts from The National Education Institute but there was no active collaboration between schools and the local community (municipalities).

– The second phase of the reform

Due to the findings of the monitoring, the National Education Institute responded with the second phase of the project (2008-2014), which was to build upon the lessons from the first phase. It put emphasis on internal and external factors and resources. It was oriented towards changing teachers' beliefs and behaviour. The National Education Institute prepared an integrated model of support to introduce and implement curricular changes into schools. A special team of experts was established in order to execute the model. In this phase, the emphasis was on internal and external environment and resources. There was greater emphasis on teachers and lesser on students, whereas parents were not involved at all. In 2006 the process of renovation of syllabi started, and in 2008 the introduction to upper secondary schools began.

According to Slivar (2007), the project had two aspects. On one side, it was initiating and introducing changes in schools, such as supporting schools in planning and implementing innovations, action research and evaluation. On the other side, it was stimulating didactic innovations in instructions, such as implementing more (inter)active methods, encouraging interdisciplinary approaches, and introducing the new assessment and grading culture.

According to the monitoring, the second phase was more successful. "We succeeded not only in reaching the didactic goals mentioned above, which were our priority at the beginning, but also in reaching other, wider goals that can add to the real school quality" (Rupnik Vec, Rutar-Ilc, 2012).

5. LESSONS LEARNT

Given the fact that the empirical evidence about the first broad educational reform after the Slovenian independence was insufficient, we will try to sum up the learning points from the analysis of limiting and facilitating factors through the process of reflection. The set of indicators helped us to perform a more consistent and systematic analysis. We would like to emphasise that the analysis cannot, and should not, be a replacement for the missing evaluation.

Even if a reform is carefully planned, and have strong political support, our analysis show that this does not guarantee successful implementation. The problem is the number and the dynamics of the factors that interact and affect the process of educational change. Factors on policy and implementation level are in constant

interaction. It is important to treat them equally; otherwise the implementation will be less effective. Fullan stated that the process of educational change is a dynamic one, involving interacting factors over time. When more factors work against implementation, the process will be less effective. Consequently, when more factors support implementation, more change will be accomplished in practice. The results from a large number of studies on educational change make it clear that influencing factors often have a different impact in different settings of educational change (Fullan, 1991).

The results of our reflection process are the following learning points:
A curricular change, regardless of scope, either on a system or institutional level, always addresses the beliefs and behaviour of teachers, which is the most complex process. It cannot be done without their involvement; therefore the top down process alone is not appropriate. Altrichter writes: "Changing the curriculum means changing the behaviour and professional beliefs of thousands of teachers so that their daily interactions with pupils are significantly modified. We can thus regard it as an extremely complex, open ended, non-linear process which makes it a partly controllable innovation process, which cannot be effectively directed top-down..." (Altrichter 2005, in Halasz and Michel, 2011 p. 300). It is recommended to apply a combination of top down, bottom up and bottom across approaches.

An overview of the assessed factors at the implementation level shows that internal and external environment and resources are important regardless of the complexity of change. The message of the reform has been that it does not happen through changes in curricular documents, nor in system changes of the organisational framework of school operation. It takes place in the classroom, when the teachers embrace the change, and begin to change their practice (Milekšič, 2004). The analysis also showed weaknesses in student involvement, since they were not actively involved in any of the reforms. The second weakness is community involvement in both phases of the upper secondary reform. One of the reasons for the weak involvement of students and community (especially parents), lies in our educational tradition, which was mainly centrally led.

Policy input is a necessary condition in the initial phase of every reform. It should be at least partly present to make the implementation successful. It empowers other factors and plays an important role in reform outcomes. The total absence of political commitment would result in its failure. Nevertheless, the presence of

too strong a political impact can be counterproductive. In that case, policy does not recognise and accept the failures in the implementation process. To avoid such situations, it would be recommendable to have a national body nominated by the parliament who would deliver the reform supported by the NEI.

The theory on educational change is described by Fullan (1991) as a 'theory of probing and understanding the meaning of multiple dilemmas', and not as the field of political combat. Our experience clearly shows that strong political impact in some cases will hinder changes and development. If political parties do not take into consideration the professional views presented to them, but rather make decisions based entirely on their political orientation and beliefs that are not professionally supported, the field of educational change is in trouble. It is necessary to enable a professional open dialogue with different actors. In our case, some groups were overlooked, or in the best case listened to but not heard. From our case, we can also learn that it is necessary to take into consideration the so-called veto groups, who add value through their critical views.

Let us conclude with Altichter's idea that implementation involves learning on different levels. It has been an important learning process for teachers, teams, schools and experts, who took part in the reform. But very often overlooked, is the learning of policy makers and political structures that play a crucial role in the development of an education system. This article could bring a valuable message to policy makers in our country, and at the same time it can serve as an aid to other countries in transition, which are facing similar politicised developments in the field of education.

The consequences of the introduced reforms have a long term impact on education and society as a whole, thus it is of crucial importance that changes are carefully planned and systematically implemented.

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Are Teachers' Views of Educational Policy Different From the Rest of the Population?

AUTHORS:

Stefan Wolter

Director

Stefan Wolter is Director of the Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education and Past-President of CIDREE. He is also a professor at the University of Bern, where he heads the Centre for Research in Economics of Education. He represents Switzerland at the OECD as delegate to the Education Policy Committee and Governing Board member of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) and is the Chair of the Group of National Experts on Vocational Education and Training of the OECD. He is also a research fellow of CESifo (University of Munich) and IZA (Bonn). His research areas cover all levels of education and he has lead the two research projects on public opinion on education, covered in this article.

Email: stefan.wolter@skbf-csre.ch

Chantal Oggenfuss

National Coordinator

Chantal Oggenfuss has been a member of the scientific staff at the Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education (SCCRE) since 2012. Before she graduated in education science and sociology in 2012 she worked as a trainee at the SCCRE. She is co-author of the Swiss Education Report 2014 and of a trend analysis concerning arts education in Switzerland. She represents Switzerland as National Coordinator in CIDREE.

Email: chantal.oggenfuss@skbf-csre.ch

Facts about Switzerland

- Population: 8,1 mill
- Density: 196 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 15.2, secondary 12.5
- Expenditure on education: 5,6 pst. of GDP

ABSTRACT

Education policy opinions and preferences of teachers are important not only in shaping public opinion, but in ensuring the acceptance, and hence the implementation, of education reforms. While the media communicates a great deal about the education policy preferences of the organised teaching body, we know little to nothing about how much these preferences coincide with or differ from those of the rest of the population. On the basis of two representative opinion polls on education policy issues in Switzerland (2007, 2012), we analysed the differences in preferences between those who have completed teacher training and the rest of the population. This shows that there are statistically significant differences in preferences if the topic is directly related to teachers' working conditions. By contrast, there are no differences in preferences if the topics are indirectly related to teachers' working conditions or not related to them at all. Therefore, alongside their specialist knowledge, the vested interests of teachers must undoubtedly be considered as an explanation of different education policy preferences.

Keywords: Educational policy, teachers, attitudes, public opinion

1. INTRODUCTION

Free choice of school, the introduction of external student assessments, and educational expenditures are, like other education policy topics, often the subject of controversial debate in which unionised teachers effectively advocate their interests and communicate their concerns and attitudes through the media. It is obvious that teachers are perceived by the public as experts on the education system whose views also have an impact on shaping the opinions of the rest of the population. Teachers' opinions therefore play a very important role in the education system, because their attitudes and their acceptance of education reforms represent one of the key conditions for the success of education in general and of reforms in particular (Oelkers and Reusser, 2008).

In a direct democracy such as the Swiss political system in which citizens vote regularly on particular education issues, this is of great importance. It is also a specific feature of the direct democratic system in Switzerland that the Cantonal Minister of Education is elected by the citizens on a majority voting for individuals basis. And as more than 95% of all school-age children attend a public school which is fully funded by the state, teachers are, beside a very small minority, government employees of the Cantonal Minister of Education. Due to the fact that teachers have a highly organised and strong union[1], his or her re-election depends on the teachers' attitude of his or her work.[2] Furthermore, and this is not just the case in Switzerland, teachers are members of the parliament and contribute to the legislative work.

Do teachers always represent positions which are shared by the rest of the population and is it really their specialist knowledge that explains any differences in preferences? Or could it also be their own interests because, unlike the rest of the population, teachers' working conditions may be directly affected by reforms and changes in the education system?

Even though the education policy preferences of teachers are very important to the education system, little to nothing is known about whether and how these preferences potentially differ from those of the rest of the population. Even in

[1]In Switzerland two-thirds of the teachers are organised in trade unions. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2004).
[2]For further information about schooling in Switzerland, the organisation and governance of the school system, the educational policy context, teacher labour market and teacher employment see (OECD, 2004).

other countries, such questions have so far been investigated only occasionally (see West et al., 2012, for a similar analysis in the U.S.). Switzerland has also lacked a close analysis of this question.

To close this gap, two Swiss surveys on different education topics from 2007 and 2012 are used in this study. These surveys were carried out by the research institute gfs.bern on behalf of the University of Bern[3], Centre for Research in Economics of Education. The basic population surveyed consists of Switzerland's eligible voters (2007) and the resident population in Switzerland (2012). The aim of the surveys was to find out how different population groups feel about topics relevant to education policy and what their educational preferences are. Detailed information on socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, such as details about the family situation and other factors, was also collected. These allow differences in preferences to be investigated by controlling for many characteristics of different population groups.

The paper is structured as follows: section 2 discusses the theoretical explanations and existing empirical literature. Section 3 describes the data, section 4 contains a comparison between people who have trained as teachers and the rest of the population with regard to numerous socioeconomic and demographic characteristics and other criteria, section 5 describes the survey design, and section 6 describes the empirical results. Section 7 presents the conclusions.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

A first explanation as to why teachers' preferences regarding educational topics may differ from the attitudes of people with a different educational background is supplied by theoretical considerations of teaching as a profession[4] and of expert knowledge which, since the 1980s in particular, have also found their way into teacher research (e.g., Pajares, 1992; Reusser et al., 2011). Based on the criteria defining a specific profession, such as regulated access to the profession, specific training on content and method, knowledge of the specific professional language, an advanced decision-making ability, and profession-relevant research, teachers

[3]These surveys were carried out by the Leading House "Economics of Education" of the universities of Zürich and Bern thanks to financial support from the Federal Office for Professional Education and Technology (OPET)/State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI). The authors thank Maria A. Cattaneo for the establishment of the surveys used in this study.
[4]The term "profession" is used here in a general manner to describe the occupational group. The classic sociological professional theory definition is narrower (see Parsons, 1968; Abbott, 1988; Stichweh, 1994).

can be defined as their own professional group (Köck, 2008). Connected to this is the assumption that teachers have specific, profession-related knowledge, which means "learned facts, theories and rules, as well as experiences and attitudes" (Bromme, 1992, p. 10). This produces a possible asymmetry of information between the teaching body and the rest of the population, a phenomenon that is observed in other occupational fields as well. On the basis of this unequal knowledge, it can therefore be assumed that there will be differences between how teachers and the rest of the population assess and evaluate certain situations.

Empirical findings about the expert knowledge of teachers are based mostly on qualitative investigations of the professional convictions of teachers in general regarding teaching and learning processes (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006; Reusser et al., 2011), or on specific questions about teaching and learning processes (e.g., Crawford, 1998; Vacc and Bright, 1999; Staub and Stern, 2002), and less on education policy or education system topics. Another research area is the investigation of teachers' attitudes towards reforms and their experiences with them. More recent papers on this are concerned, for instance, with the introduction of standardised performance tests (overview in Wood et al.; 2006; further studies Dass, 2001; Seashore Louis et al., 2005; Donnelly and Sadler, 2009). A comparison between teachers and people who do not work in the education system is, however, largely lacking from these analyses, which is why, based on these studies, it is impossible to say whether there are differences in assessments or preferences between teachers and the rest of the population and, if so, whether these might be due to an asymmetry of knowledge between the groups.

A second approach to explaining different preferences in educational questions between teachers and other people is provided by the Rational Choice Theory (Becker, 1976).[5] Differences in preferences might occur if thoughts on the expected individual costs and benefits of different options appear to be different for teachers and other people. In forming preferences, both groups act in a way which maximises benefit, but for teachers this leads to different cost-benefit analyses than for non-teachers. Analyses of voting patterns show, for instance, that voters in referendums act to maximise individual utility (Bonoli and Häusermann, 2009). In comparing the preferences of teachers and of other people, it appears that differences in preferences emerge above all in issues which are

[5]Similarly, the theory on "vested interests" (Sivacek and Crano, 1982) predicts differences in preferences depending on the differences in the perceived personal consequences of the policy.

directly related to teachers' everyday working lives and working conditions. Investigations of the topics of free choice of school and competition between schools point in this direction. These investigations show that teachers tend to have negative attitudes towards such competition which directly impacts their working conditions, in comparison to parents who hope for a better fit between the school and child (e.g., Sandy, 1992; Belfield, 2003; Diem and Wolter, 2013).

Naturally, this raises the question of why we are at all interested in differences in preferences on education policy and education system issues between teachers and non-teachers, when the teaching profession (compulsory education) makes up only around 2.3% of the population. The importance of teachers' preferences and thus also of potential divergences of these preferences from those of the rest of the population, stems from the following two aspects: first, it is difficult to implement changes or reforms in the education system against the opposition of teachers, as teachers are of course responsible for a large part of their implementation and can therefore block unwanted changes. Second, the organised teaching body can also act against their employer (the State) if their interests differ from the interests of the numerically much larger group of non-teachers, because teachers, as "insiders,", unlike "outsiders," (i.e., non-teachers), have more bargaining power (Lindbeck and Snower, 1988, 2001). They can therefore prevent their employer from implementing changes which could (potentially) have a negative impact on their working conditions, even if the same changes would promise more benefits to the vast majority of outsiders (students and parents). The bargaining power of the insiders also increases because outsiders are poorly organised and are only temporarily interested in education issues, (i.e., their interest is limited to the period in which they themselves or their own children make use of education) (Moe, 2011).

Public opinion polls on education issues are carried out regularly in some countries; for instance, in Germany, by the Institut für Schulentwicklungsforschung (Institute for School Development Research (IFS)) (Kanders, 2004), in Austria, as part of the education monitoring process (Institut für empirische Sozialforschung (IFES), 2011), in Canada (Ontario) (Hart, 2012), or in the United States (West et al., 2012). In some cases, these studies indicate similarities between the preferences and assessments of teachers and the rest of the population or even just parents of school-age children. With the exception of the study by West and colleagues (2012) for which an additional sample of teachers was taken, these

differences are, however, not analysed in further detail, i.e., it is often unclear whether preferences and opinions differ because it is a case of teachers on the one hand and non-teachers on the other, or whether the differences can be attributed to the fact that these two groups also differ in other socio-demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

3. DATA

Two different data sets are used to answer the question of whether teachers' preferences differ from the preferences of the rest of the population in relation to different education issues. These opinion polls on education issues were carried out in 2007 and 2012 by the institute Gesellschaft für praktische Sozialforschung (gfs.bern) on behalf of the University of Bern's Centre for Research in Economics of Education. The latter drafted the questionnaires and carried out the evaluations on the different topics (Cattaneo and Wolter, 2009; Busemeyer et al., 2012; Cattaneo and Wolter, 2013; Diem and Wolter, 2013). These already published evaluations also contain more detailed information on the samples used.

The polls were carried out through telephone interviews and were conducted in German, French, or Italian, depending on the language region. The samples taken are representative for Switzerland. In addition to the attitude towards various questions on the education system, a range of individual socioeconomic characteristics and details of political orientation and family situation were collected in each case. The basic population of the 2007 data set was 2,025 Swiss voters aged 25 and above. The basic population of the 2012 sample was the Swiss resident population aged between 18 and 99. Of the 2,828 interviews, 2,060 were with Swiss citizens and 768 were with non-citizens. To guarantee the comparability of the two data sets, people who were not Swiss citizens (from the 2012 data set) were excluded from this analysis. The sample selection was stratified by language region. Households and target persons in the household were selected by randomization. In order to obtain a representative picture of the total study population (the population of the sampling was the Swiss telephone directory), the number of interviews was restricted through the use of upper limits for gender, age categories, level of education, and marital status. The 2,025 valid interviews from 2007 corresponded to a response rate of 28%; in 2012, the response rate was 27%.

Regarding the representativeness of the surveys, it can be stated that the number of people in the sample who have trained as teachers is around the number expected, based on the share of training contracts (3.3% in 2007 and 3.7% in 2012). The "teacher" group refers to those who indicated that they had trained as teachers (generally a teaching qualification for the compulsory education sector). Since the surveys did not contain any indication of current employment, this group also included people who had completed teaching training but at the time of the survey worked in a different profession or did not work at all.[6] Based on socialisation theory concepts it can, however, be assumed that training is an important stage in professional socialisation and that the requirements of learning and later carrying out the profession produce "actors with the same habitus, i.e., shared thinking and evaluation patterns and patterns of action" (Heinz, 1991, p. 403). However, it should be assumed that, in questions on issues which (could) impact the specific working conditions of teachers, people who trained as teachers but no longer work as teachers (might) entertain different views from active teachers. This would potentially increase the variance of opinions in the "teacher" group on the one hand, and reduce the difference between the "teacher" group and the non-teacher group on the other. This means that any distortions which might exist as a result of the group set-up would make it impossible to empirically determine differences between active teachers and non-teachers, or that these would be statistically insignificant, and that the actual differences between teachers and the rest of the population, taking into account only professionally active teachers, would be greater than shown here.

The absolute number of observations is, however, too small to analyse in depth any differences within the group of people who have trained as teachers, which is why we are limiting ourselves to comparisons between the groups. For comparisons between the groups, the small sample size may be a problem if it exaggerates the heterogeneity within the group of people who have trained as teachers, which increases the standard errors of the estimates so that the differences from the other groups are therefore statistically no longer significant. However, where statistically significant effects are found, a potential heterogeneity of opinions within the group of people who have trained as teachers should not present a problem, even with a small sample size of observations.

[6]Based on Swiss census data (2012), 2.3% of the Swiss population was employed in the teaching workforce (compulsory education sector). Therefore, we can estimate an upper boundary of one third of the respondents to our surveys that had initially trained as teachers but where working in another occupation at the time of the survey.

4. DESCRIPTIVE COMPARISON BETWEEN GROUPS

The attitudes and preferences of teachers could, as mentioned already, differ from the rest of the population because of their specific professional know how or because of self-interest. It could also be, however, that teachers differ from the rest of the population in their socio-demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, which also impact preferences and attitudes. Thus the differences between teachers and non-teachers could be a result of these socio-economic and –demographic differences and not of the fact that they are teachers (or not). To avoid such misinterpretations, the differences in preferences between teachers and non-teachers are analysed below in multivariate analyses, which also take into account a range of socio-demographic and socioeconomic factors. That this is essential in a comparison is demonstrated already by a simple comparison of mean values of the key individual characteristics of people who have trained as teachers (with teacher training (TT)) with those who have not (without TT) and of people who have trained as teachers with people who have not trained as teachers but have another tertiary qualification (i.e., universities of applied sciences (UAS) or universities (U)) (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF MEAN VALUES

	WITHOUT TT	WITH TT		UAS/U	WITH TT	
	Mean	Mean		Mean	Mean	
Gender						
Female	0.505	0.782	**	0.448	0.782	**
Age						
25-39	0.248	0.191		0.283	0.191	*
39-64	0.487	0.596	*	0.529	0.596	
65 and older	0.265	0.213		0.188	0.213	
Political orientation[7]						
Left	0.172	0.338	**	0.309	0.338	
Centre	0.536	0.563		0.484	0.563	+
Right	0.160	0.056	**	0.153	0.056	**

[7]Missing information refers to non-responses, or people who did not attach importance to a left/right split.

Employment status						
Full-time	0.585	0.641		0.686	0.641	
Part-time	0.201	0.381	**	0.249	0.381	**
Unemployed	0.157	0.134		0.141	0.134	
Retired	0.258	0.225		0.173	0.225	
Household income						
Less than CHF 4,000	0.126	0.007	**	0.057	0.007	**
Between CHF 3,000 and CHF 6,000	0.246	0.239		0.098	0.239	**
Between CHF 5,000 and CHF 8,000	0.303	0.380	+	0.186	0.380	**
Between CHF 7,000 and CHF 10,000	0.178	0.190		0.360	0.190	**
Over CHF 9,000	0.141	0.183		0.300	0.183	**
Children						
No children	0.317	0.209	**	0.370	0.209	**
School-age children	0.202	0.239		0.264	0.239	
Non school-age children	0.475	0.551	+	0.366	0.551	**
Language						
German	0.702	0.789	*	0.669	0.789	**
French	0.244	0.169	*	0.271	0.169	**
Italian	0.054	0.042		0.060	0.042	
Type of settlement						
Rural community	0.334	0.296		0.229	0.296	
Agglomeration	0.428	0.479		0.435	0.479	
City	0.238	0.225		0.336	0.225	**
N	3943	142		634	142	

+ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Not surprisingly, women are much more strongly represented in the teacher group. What is also remarkable is that people who have trained as teachers and those who have not differ in terms of their political orientation. Those in the category "With teacher training" are more often on the left of the political spectrum than other people. The share of people in part-time employment also differs significantly in the two groups. The latter is mostly attributable to the link between

gender and the probability of being employed part-time. Moreover, people who have trained as teachers are less frequently found in the lowest category of "Household income below CHF 4,000" than people who have not trained as teachers (the categories for recording the household incomes for the two data sets are not identical, and so overlapping categories were chosen for the comparison of mean values). In addition, people who have not trained as teachers are more likely to have no children than are people who have trained as teachers.

The comparison of mean values of people who have trained as teachers only with people with another tertiary qualification (university of applied sciences or university) shows some other significant differences in individual characteristics, although not many. In other words, some individual differences between people who have trained as teachers and the rest of the population are due more to the level of education than specifically to training as a teacher. The tendency of people who have trained as teachers to be more on the left of the political spectrum appears only in comparison to the overall population, not in comparison to people with another tertiary training. People who have trained as teachers are, however, less likely to be on the right of the political spectrum than people with another tertiary qualification. The share of those in part-time employment is, in people who have trained as teachers, statistically also significantly higher compared to other people with tertiary training.

5. STUDY DESIGN

Based on the theoretical considerations, the statistical evaluation concentrates on two differently oriented subject areas. First are questions which may have a direct influence on the working conditions of compulsory school teachers, and second are questions on education issues which can be assumed to affect teachers everyday work indirectly, if at all. Should expert knowledge more than anything else explain differences in opinions between teachers and the rest of the population, then we would expect different opinions in both subject areas. However, if it is self-interest which explains the differences in opinions, then we would instead be likely to find differences, or only find differences, in questions which directly affect teachers' working conditions.

Since different studies (for instance Zarifa and Davies, 2007) prove that satisfaction with the education system influences the attitude towards educational topics, before evaluating the survey questions on the two subject areas, we ana-

lyse the question of satisfaction with the quality of the state education system. This serves as a primary control question to determine whether differences in opinion on other education issues might be explained by the fact that teachers and other people have a different assessment of educational quality and therefore feel different degrees of pressure to support changes in the education system. The question was: "Are you happy with the quality of the state education system?" For the multivariate evaluation, a dummy variable is set up and coded 1 if the answer was positive. As it turned out that in the assessment of the quality of the education system, teachers did not differ from other people (see Table 2), this question was no longer used as an additional control variable in the subsequent appraisals. This question was used only in the 2007 survey and could therefore not be used as a control variable in the 2012 questionnaire.

Differences in the preferences of teachers and the rest of the population regarding the funding of education were analysed first. To see whether being directly affected leads to differences between teachers and the rest of the population, two different questions but both on educational funding were analysed, one of which affected people who had trained as teachers directly in their everyday working lives, while the second would have no affect on the everyday lives of teachers. The first question involved increasing funding for the compulsory education sector in order to improve student-teacher ratios, which at the same time would lead to a reduction in teacher workloads. The second question involved increasing state funding for tertiary level B professional education and training, which would have reduced the private training costs (see Appendix questions 1 and 2). Since, in the present data set, most of the people who have trained as teachers are primary and lower secondary school teachers, increasing funding for compulsory education would have a direct impact on their workload, while raising state funding for tertiary level B professional education and training would not have any impact on it.

This is followed by analyses of three questions on subjects that directly involve teachers with regard to their everyday working conditions (see Appendix questions 3–5). These are whether to support private schools with public money, and to introduce a free choice of public school, on the one hand, and the introduction of uniform cantonal tests to assess pupil abilities on the other hand. With the first two questions, it can be assumed that teachers would feel exposed to increased pressure in their work as a result of increased competition between private and

public schools or within public schools. In the third question, teachers would feel exposed to greater control over their work, and would therefore support such reforms less than the rest of the population, who would tend to support those reforms as extending their freedom of choice in the education system and providing more transparent information about pupil performance.

Finally, two more questions are analysed which involve the education system but should not have a direct impact on the working conditions of teachers in compulsory education (see Appendix questions 6 and 7) and in which no difference in preferences between teachers and other respondents is expected, if such differences in preferences are explained only by a direct impact on work and not by different opinions on education questions in general. The first question relates to the care of children under the age of 3 and whether these should primarily be cared for by the family or whether there is also support for care outside the family. The second question involves the assessment of the average baccalaureate rate in Switzerland, which is currently 20%, and whether this rate is regarded as too high, appropriate, or too low.

To compare the attitudes towards selected education issues of people who have trained as teachers or people with a different qualification, logistical regressions are calculated. Two comparison groups are formed in each case. The first comparison group (Model 1) compares teachers with everyone else, while in the second comparison group (Model2), other people are considered differently, depending on their level of education. The comparison of teachers with other people differentiated by level of education indicates how much, if at all, teachers have similar preferences to other people with a tertiary qualification and differ from the average preferences of the population not because they have trained as teachers, but because they have a tertiary qualification. Gender, age, employment status, political orientation, family situation (children, household income), and place of residence (type of settlement: city, country, agglomeration, and language region) are taken into account as control variables. In the question asking for views on the baccalaureate rate, the cantonal baccalaureate rate of the canton of residence of the respondents is also taken into account.

6. RESULTS

6.1. Satisfaction with the Quality of the Education System

Most respondents have positive attitudes towards the quality of the state education system in their canton of residence. Around 80% of respondents are either very or fairly satisfied. Between people who have trained as teachers and those who have not, no significant difference is observed in the degree of satisfaction with the quality of the education system (see Table 2, Model 1). Satisfaction with the quality of the education system falls as the level of education of respondents rises. Therefore, in comparison with people who have completed compulsory schooling only, those who have trained as teachers view the quality of the education system as statistically significantly less positive, but the judgment of people with another tertiary qualification does not deviate significantly statistically from that of teachers (Model 2).

TABLE 2: SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF THE STATE EDUCATION SYSTEM
LOGISTICAL REGRESSION INDICATING ODDS RATIOS

	M1	M2
	Without TT	UAS/U
Reference group		
People who have trained as teachers	0.949	1.398
Lower secondary level		2.286 **
Upper secondary level		1.497 *
College of professional education and training (PET college)		1.775 *
Control variables	YES	YES
Pseudo R2	0.03	0.04
N	1721	1721

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Control variables include all variables used in Table 1.

6.2. Education Funding

In the two questions on education financing, there is a statistically significant higher rate of approval (see Table 3) for an increase in expenditure on compulsory education by people who have trained as teachers (88%) compared to the average

population (70%). Compared to people with a tertiary qualification (77%), the difference is still large (an odds ratio of 2) but is no longer statistically significant, which leads to the conclusion that people with a tertiary education have replied quite heterogeneously to the question. Although most respondents would also support an increase in state funding for tertiary level B professional education and training, the differences between people who have trained as teachers and those who have not are very small and not statistically significant.

TABLE 3: ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION FUNDING FOR DIFFERENT EDUCATION SECTORS
LOGISTICAL REGRESSION INDICATING ODDS RATIOS

	Increasing expenditure for compulsory education		Increase in state funding for tertiary level B professional education and training	
	M1	M2	M1	M2
Reference group	Without TT	UAS/U	Without TT	UAS/U
People who have trained as teachers	2.587 *	2.023	1.025	0.842
Lower secondary level		0.713		0.864
Upper secondary level		0.800		0.747 +
College of professional education and training (PET college)		0.573 *		0.910
Control variables	YES	YES	YES	YES
Pseudo R2	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05
N	1751	1751	1769	1769

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Control variables include all variables used in Table 1.

In other words, much greater support for educational expenditure among those who have trained as teachers in comparison to the rest of the population is found only when the education funding is for an education sector and a purpose in and from which the teachers can benefit directly.

6.3. Subjects Which Would Affect Teachers' Everyday Working Lives

Regarding the choice of school and standardised cantonal pupil tests, the rate of approval among people who have trained as teachers is consistently lower and statistically significantly so even when controlling for many other factors (see

Table 4). Only with regard to standardised pupil testing is the difference from other people with a tertiary education statistically insignificant. The response pattern for the question of standardised pupil testing shows strong education-dependent preferences; the lower the level of education, the higher the approval of standardised cantonal tests. In total, around 80% of respondents who had not trained as teachers would welcome such tests, compared to 62% of people who have trained as teachers.

In all questions which directly concern teachers' everyday working lives, gender also influences preferences. Women tend to support freedom of choice but tend to reject the introduction of standardised cantonal tests. Although those who have trained as teachers are predominantly female, the effect of the teacher training variable is hardly reduced after controlling for gender.

TABLE 4: ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUBJECTS WHICH WOULD AFFECT/INVOLVE TEACHERS' EVERYDAY WORKING LIVES
LOGISTICAL REGRESSIONS INDICATING THE ODDS RATIOS

	Supporting private schools with public funding		Choice between public schools		Attitude towards standardised cantonal school tests	
	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2
Reference group	Without TT	UAS/U	Without TT	UAS/U	Without TT	UAS/U
People who have trained as teachers	0.513 +	0.470 *	0.424 **	0.438 *	0.459 **	0.795
Lower secondary level		0.818		0.827		2.009 **
Upper secondary level		0.888		1.021		2.127 **
College of professional education and training (PET College)		1.062		0.921		1.698 *
Control variables	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Pseudo R2	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.04
N	1848	1848	1821	1821	1959	1959

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Control variables include all variables used in Table 1.

6.4. Subjects Which Do Not Directly Affect Teachers' Everyday Working Lives

The descriptive assessment reveals that 81% of respondents who have not trained as teachers are in favour of children under the age of 3 being cared for by the family or a caregiver close to the family. 75% of people who have trained as teachers are in favour of this, as are 70% of graduates of universities or universities of applied sciences. The differences between people who have trained as teachers (see Table 5) and all other groups are, however, not statistically signif-

TABLE 5: ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUBJECTS WHICH DO NOT DIRECTLY AFFECT TEACHERS' EVERYDAY WORKING LIVES. ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILDCARE: LOGISTICAL REGRESSIONS INDICATING THE ODDS RATIOS, ASSESSMENT OF THE BACCALAUREATE RATE: MULTINOMIAL LOGISTICAL REGRESSIONS

	Attitude towards family care of children under 3		Regards the baccalaureate rate as too low		Regards the baccalaureate as too high	
	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2
Reference group	Without TT	UAS/U	Without TT	UAS/U	Without TT	UAS/U
People who have trained as teachers	0.901	1.238	0.210	0.080	0.335	0.267
Lower secondary level		1.158		-0.184		0.183
Upper secondary level		1.705 **		-0.136		-1.123
College of professional education and training (PET College)		1.103		-0.316		-0.103
Cantons with a low baccalaureate rate (Ref.)			Reference group		Reference group	
Cantons with an average baccalaureate rate			-0.010	-0.022	0.373*	0.371*
Cantons with a high baccalaureate rate			0.138	0.124	0.045	0.031
Control variables	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Pseudo R2	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
N	1983	1983	1788	1788	1788	1788

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01
Control variables include all variables used in Table 1.

icant. In the assessment of the baccalaureate rate, a multinomial regression model was used, with the base category that the rate has been assessed as just right. 27% of interviewees who had not trained as teachers regard the rate as too low, 58% of this group regard the rate as just right, and 15% regard it as too high. Of the people who have trained as teachers, 30% found the rate too low, 52% found it just right, and 18% found it too high. Those with a tertiary education were slightly more likely to regard the rate as too low, but the differences between people who have trained as teachers is not statistically significant whether compared to the average population or compared to people with a tertiary education.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The opinions and education policy preferences of teachers are important to the design of the education system in two ways. First, teacher opinions have a considerable influence on public debate on education issues, and second, the successful implementation of education policy decisions is dependent on acceptance by teachers. Despite this dual importance of the education policy preferences of teachers, little is known about how far these preferences coincide with or differ from those of the rest of the population. Moreover, it is difficult to assess whether any differences are due to the fact that teachers are experts and therefore have a specialist knowledge of educational issues which sets itself apart from the level of knowledge of the average population, or whether it is the direct impact on working conditions which explains the differences in preferences.

To examine these questions in detail, data was analysed from two representative surveys of the adult population in Switzerland on different education topics from the years 2007 and 2012. The detailed data first enabled comparisons of preferences between people who have trained as teachers and other people who have not, taking into account a wide range of socio-demographic and socioeconomic factors, as teachers differ from the rest of the population in many of these characteristics which can also have an impact on education policy preferences. Second, a general question regarding the assessment of the quality of the education system helped to clarify whether any differences in opinions and preferences might be attributable to the fact that people do not agree on the state of educational quality. We would expect people who consider the quality of the education system to be very good to be more critical of changes and reforms and vice versa. Third, the broad range of education policy questions allowed a comparison of preferences on issues which can be assumed to have a direct influence on teach-

ers' working conditions, and on those where this relationship does not exist or exists only indirectly. If the different specialist knowledge of the persons surveyed explains differences in preferences, then it should be expected that these appear irrespective of whether the question is geared directly towards the working conditions of teachers or not. If, by contrast, the impact on everyday working life explains differences in preferences, then such differences are expected only in questions which relate to working conditions.

The findings show that people who have trained as teachers are positioned differently from people who have not, exclusively on issues which directly affect teachers in their everyday working lives. Thus, for instance, the improvement of working conditions through more financial resources meets with a significantly higher approval from teachers, whereas the improvement of the financial resources of students in tertiary level B professional education and training does not meet with higher approval from teachers than from the rest of the population. Similarly, all changes which might negatively influence teachers' everyday working lives, such as greater competition (free choice of school) or greater transparency as to the performance of the education system (cantonal standardised student assessments), meet with significantly lower approval from people who have trained as teachers than from the rest of the population. Finally, on education issues which do not have a direct connection to the everyday working lives of teachers in compulsory education, such as childcare in early childhood or the baccalaureate rate, no differences in opinions and preferences can be seen between the groups.

Even if the question of how far attitudes might be connected to specific expert knowledge, which leads people to evaluate changes differently due to their teacher training and professional experience, cannot ultimately be clarified, it is evident that differences in preferences and opinions emerge only in those issues which directly affect teachers in their everyday working lives. In the interpretation of the media-dominated education policy debate, which is of particular importance in a country where most educational decisions are made directly by the people (direct democracy), it should, therefore, definitely be considered that teachers, in regard to individual topics, form a very specific interest group whose opinions may not coincide with those of the rest of the population, only out of self-interest and not because of a domain-specific expertise.

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Appendix

Questions

1. Imagine an initiative is launched in the canton where you live to increase spending on education for primary and secondary schools by 10% to improve pupil-teacher ratios. Would you vote Yes or No?
2. Do you think that the State should also pay tertiary level B professional education and training costs? Yes/No?
3. Do you agree that private schools should be supported with public funding?
4. Do you agree with the idea that parents should have a free choice between public schools for their children?
5. Should pupils' knowledge be periodically tested through standardised cantonal school tests?
6. Should children under 3 be cared for primarily by their parents or another caregiver close to the family?
7. In Switzerland, around 20% of pupils graduate from an academic baccalaureate school. Do you think this rate is too low, just right, or too high?

Encouraging Curriculum Change in the Netherlands:

The Next Episode

AUTHORS:

Nienke Nieveen

Senior Researcher

Nienke Nieveen is senior researcher at SLO (Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development). Her dissertation, was based on a four-year design research project in the field of professional curriculum development. From 1997 to 2007 she was appointed assistant professor at the University of Twente, specializing in curriculum design research and school-based curriculum development. Her work at SLO centers on the Institute's evaluation activities, curriculum implementation and teachers' curriculum design expertise.

Luc Sluijsmans

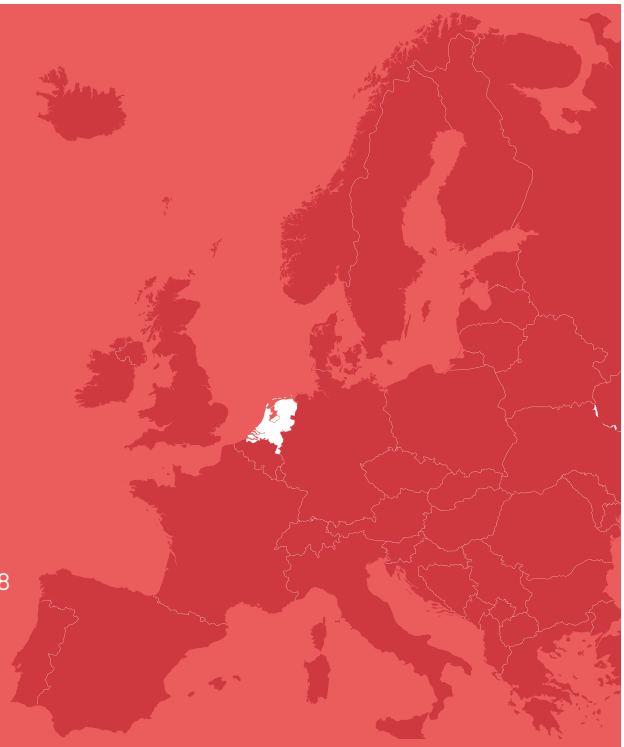
Curriculum Developer

Luc Sluijsmans is curriculum developer at SLO (Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development). After attending teacher education college, He studied Educational Sciences and Technology at the University of Twente. After his graduation, he led various-projects related to curriculum and school development. He also worked as a team leader in a school for upper secondary education. Luc is passionate about designing curricula. His specific interest focuses on coaching teachers and school leaders in the design of their curricula.

Jan van den Akker

Director General

Jan van den Akker is director general of SLO (Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development). He is also professor emeritus in Curriculum Studies at the University of Twente. He served as CIDREE president in 2009-2010. His areas of special interest are: curriculum development in interaction with teacher professional development and school development; curriculum policy; curriculum implementation; methodology of (curricular) design research.



Facts about The Netherlands

- Population: 16,8 mill
- Density: 119 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 16, secondary 17
- Expenditure on education: 6,2 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,78

ABSTRACT

In the contribution to this yearbook, we will discuss the challenges of schools and teachers in taking up local curriculum development activities and the challenges of educational partners at various system levels (such as policy-makers, support agencies, test developers, textbook developers, pre- and in-service education, and inspectorate) to encourage schools and teachers to address curriculum change. Moreover, we will propose a mutual adaptation approach as the best fit. This approach would consist of public curriculum debates, attention to curriculum capacity building of teachers and school leaders, balanced curriculum autonomy and guidance, and balanced curriculum dynamics and stability, all of which will lead to common responsibility for curriculum change.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the start of "modern" curriculum development about half a century ago, nations worldwide have increasingly experienced how complicated it is to realize substantial curriculum renewal at a certain scale. Classroom practices tended to be more characterized by stability than change (Cuban, 1992). Even if new curriculum proposals seemed to introduce sound improvements (which was not always convincingly the case), the implementation road was usually bumpy and the practical impact often disappointing, i.e., from the perspective of policy-makers and designers. Some reasons for the lack of success were obvious: overly ambitious politicians, too short timelines, insufficient involvement and professional development of teachers, and insufficient orchestration between the activities of many players in the education development arena.

The curriculum history of The Netherlands is no exception to this sobering pattern. Over recent decades, curriculum policies themselves have shown various directions and emphases, with rather unclear and incoherent messages (Kuiper, Nieveen, & Berkvens, 2013). Not surprisingly, implementation results have usually been modest and unstable.

Above all, curriculum debates and evaluations seem to suffer from a lack of clarity about quality issues. While the term "quality" is often used by all participants, the meaning seems to vary considerably across actors and contexts. Some more specification appears useful. We like to use the following distinction within the broad concept of quality:

- Relevance: refers to the extent to which the intended curriculum is perceived to be a relevant improvement to practice, as seen from the varied perspectives of policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers and the extent to which the intentions are based on state-of-the-art knowledge.
- Consistency: refers to the extent to which the design of the curriculum and the extent to which the various curriculum components (such as aims and objectives, student activities, materials and resources and assessment) are adequately linked to each other and match with state-of-the-art knowledge.
- Practicality: refers to the extent to which users (and other experts) consider the curriculum-in-action as clear, usable, and cost-effective in "normal" conditions.

- Effectiveness: refers to the extent to which the experiences and outcomes resulting from the curriculum-in-action are congruent with the intended aims and objectives.
- Scalability/sustainability: refers to the extent to which an increasing number of schools and teachers (outside the pilot group) implement the curriculum with depth, ownership, and in a longer timeframe.

All these aspects appear to be problematic. The most essential, though often neglected, aspect refers to relevance. For many curriculum renewal efforts, the underlying rationale ("for what purpose should learning these aims and objectives be stimulated?") remains implicit, overly vague, or heavily contested. The following quality aspects are more or less cumulative, the previous ones being conditional to latter ones, as can be illustrated by a "rhetoric" question such as: if a curriculum is not practical, why would it make sense to investigate its effectiveness? More deliberate attention to these quality criteria would increase the chances that curriculum development will lead to real and lasting improvements.

Experience (world-wide) has also shown that successful curriculum change benefits from a combination of both top-down (centralized) and bottom-up (decentralized) approaches, preferably reinforced by horizontal exchange and professional development between professional networks (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Kuiper, 2009). In other words, local autonomy and initiatives (bottom-up) should be stimulated and supported in interaction with coherent policy frameworks, validated through transparent and democratic procedures (top-down) and support (from aside).Thus, curriculum implementation should not be regarded as a merely technical process. Public values and various interests of many stakeholders are at stake. The top priority should be curricular capacity building of (teams of) teachers and (networks of) schools as the essence of curriculum implementation is constituted by the efforts of teachers to translate the intended curriculum for their students in classroom practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Deliberate attention to curriculum quality and a combined implementation strategy are two notions that are essential for the next episode in Dutch curriculum implementation efforts. Before elaborating on our views for this next episode, we will first provide a conceptual framework for curriculum implementation. Then, as curriculum implementation efforts are closely linked to (or driven by) curriculum policies, we will briefly elaborate on four episodes in Dutch curriculum policy

over the last 45 years. All these will be input for the final section in which we will discuss an implementation approach for the next episode.

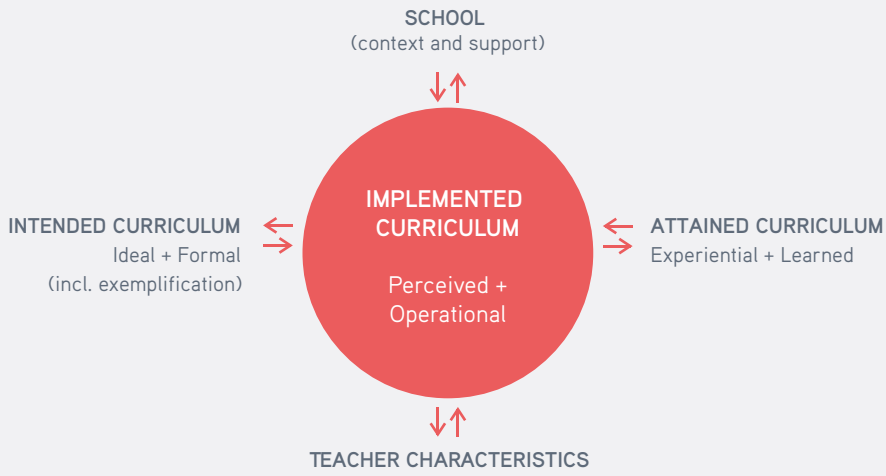
2. PERSPECTIVES ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

The complexity of curriculum implementation can be characterised by its "multi" nature: it is multi-dimensional, multi-layered, and multi-directional.

Multi-dimensional

We consider the term "implemented curriculum" as it relates to *what an innovation consists of in practice* (already phrased as such by Fullan and Pomfret in 1977). Curriculum implementation is thus seen as all efforts (of teachers and of many stakeholders) that assist in transforming an intended curriculum into a curriculum-in-action (Goodlad, Klein, and Tye, 1979; van den Akker, 2003). Many factors and actors influence (and are influenced by) the way teachers perceive a curriculum change. In order to make explicit some of these relationships, we follow-up on the seminal works of Goodlad, et al. (1979), Fullan (2007), and the basics of the model that was introduced by van den Akker (1998).

FIGURE 1: KEY RELATIONSHIPS IN CURRICULUM CHANGE



The horizontal line in Figure 1 represents three forms of a curriculum: the intended (dreams), the implemented (actions), and the attained (results). Building on the work by John Goodlad (1979; see also den Akker, 2003) these three forms can be split up in the following six representations of the curriculum, which is especially useful in the analysis of the processes and outcomes of curriculum innovations (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: FORMS OF A CURRICULUM

INTENDED	Ideal	Vision (basic philosophy underlying a curriculum)
	Formal/written	Intentions as specified in curriculum documents and exemplifications
IMPLEMENTED	Perceived	Curriculum as interpreted by its users (especially teachers)
	Operational	Actual process of teaching and learning
ATTAINED	Experiential	Learning experiences as perceived by learners
	Learned	Resulting learning outcomes of learners

Non-curricular factors will also influence teachers' perceptions. In this model, two main variables are distinguished: the characteristics of the teachers and the (school) context within which they act. With respect to teachers' characteristics, many scholars point at the fact that curriculum change calls for changes in teaching behaviours/capacities. Moreover, for deep and sustainable change, alterations in teachers' beliefs and attitudes are crucial. Their mental concept of education (based on their own experiences being a student, their teacher education and their teaching experience) is to a large extent driving their wishes and ability to renew the curriculum in the classroom.

The context of change, the other factor on the vertical line, will also impact teachers' perceptions of a curriculum change. It consists of the colleagues, school leaders, students, and parents and their stance towards national and local educational policies. The context also includes the availability of a supportive school culture with financial resources, time, and supportive colleagues and educational leadership. Internal and external support (including pre- and in-service teacher education) may assist teachers in the process of making the change meaningful

for their local practice. Support can also come from the kind of attention paid to educational themes by the media and lobby groups, depending on the extent to which the curriculum change speaks to a sense of urgency felt in society.

According to the framework in Figure 1, successful curriculum implementation depends on/is encouraged by:

- *The intended curriculum: ideal*
- The extent to which the renewal is relevant according to the stakeholders (policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers); links up with a sense of urgency and sharp problem analysis;
- The provision of clarity concerning the foundations and essential intentions of the renewal;
- The extent to which the intentions have been subject to a broader discussion (feedback from teachers and other stakeholders should be taken into account and influence the intentions).

- *The intended curriculum: formal and exemplification*
- The extent to which teachers have access to educative materials (such as frameworks, lesson materials and resources, assessment materials) that have been designed by intermediary parties (text book publishers, test constructors, inspectorate, etc.) with explicit attention to their quality;
- The extent to which the materials/examples have been subject to piloting (with teachers and other stakeholders) in order to improve their quality.

- *School*
- A stable school policy that matches the intended renewal;
- A supportive school culture (including financial resources, time, and supportive colleagues and educational leadership);
- The extent to which teachers have access to (school internal and external) support that is based on the renewal.

- *Teacher characteristics*
- The extent to which teachers are willing to put effort in the renewal (drive);
- The extent to which teachers are able/have the capacity to put the intended change into practice (power);

- The extent to which teachers are able to keep on track to realize lasting change (flow).

- *The attained curriculum*
- The extent to which students have positive experiences with the curriculum-in-action;
- The extent to which the curriculum-in-action leads to intended student results;
- The extent to which the renewal is part of solving a problem or bringing a cherished wish closer to the classroom practice.

In sum, implementation is a multidimensional process with many players, stakeholders, and factors. Nevertheless, in the end, schools and teachers are the key actors in this process. The extent to which students will notice the change and show different learning results (which is of course the main aim of any curriculum renewal) is heavily influenced by the perceptions of teachers and the way they put the change into practice.

Multi-layered

We use "a plan for learning" as a definition of a curriculum (see Thijs & van den Akker, 2006, for elaboration of our basic curriculum concepts). Given this simple definition, a differentiation between various levels of the curriculum has proven to be very useful when talking about curriculum implementation. The following distinctions appear to be helpful:

- Supra level: international reference frameworks, comparative studies;
- Macro level: society, nation and state, for example, national syllabi or core objectives;
- Meso level: school boards, schools and institutions, for example, school-specific curriculum;
- Micro level: classroom, for example, textbooks and instructional materials;
- Nano level: individual and personal plans.

The supra level usually refers to international debates or agreements on aims and quality of education and it is sometimes fuelled by the outcomes of internationally comparative studies. Curriculum development at the supra and macro levels is usually of a "generic" nature, while "site-specific" approaches are more

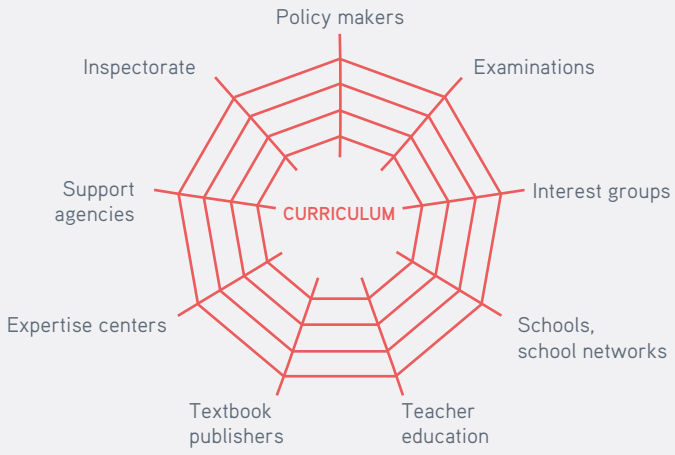
applicable to the levels closer to school boards, schools, and classroom practices. The process of curriculum development can be seen as either narrow (developing a specific curricular product) or broad (a long-term, ongoing process of curriculum improvement, often including many related aspects of educational change, for example, teacher education, school development, and examinations). In both instances, the different layers affect each other, often in unexpected ways (van Twist, van der Steen, Kleiboer, Scherpenisse, and Theisens, 2013).

In summary, next to being multi-dimensional, curriculum implementation is also a multi-layered process within which many stakeholders and participants formulate motives and needs for changing the curriculum, specify these ideas in programmes and materials, and make efforts to realise the intended changes in practice.

Multi-directional

Where schools and teachers are in charge of the actual implementation of the curriculum in practice, all actions taken by others (policy makers, school boards, support agencies, test developers, textbook developers, pre- and in-service education, inspectorate, and so on) need to be considered as "*implementation encouragement.*"

FIGURE 2: SYSTEM SPIDERS' WEB: PARTNERS INVOLVED IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION ENCOURAGEMENT



In an ideal situation, these partners would take the essence of the renewal as a starting point when planning and performing their implementation encouraging activities. When it comes to encouraging curriculum implementation, there are two extreme approaches (Snyder, Bolin, and Zumwalt,1992): the fidelity approach and the enactment approach.

In a *fidelity approach,* the intended curriculum is highly specified, prescribed, and packaged and the curriculum change in the classroom should closely correspond to/align with/adhere to the prescribed intentions. Here, teachers are directed to select and use particular lesson units in specified ways. This approach aims at uniformity, requiring that all schools teach the same topics in similar ways. In its most extreme form, this approach leads to a prescribed and controlled "autocue" or "karaoke" curriculum. The educational partners in the system web have a role in directing and standardizing the curriculum implementation in the classroom but usually at great cost to professionalism and motivation of teachers.

In the other extreme, represented by the *enactment approach*, the intended curriculum provides ample room for teachers and students to make local curricular decisions, for instance, based on what happens in the classroom. This means that next to their teaching duties, teachers will be involved in planning, developing, and implementing the school-based curriculum which asks for specific competencies. At the heart of this "open field curriculum" approach is trusting schools and teachers to make site-specific interpretations of curriculum guidelines (Hopkins, 2005). The role of the partners in the system web is diffuse, the needs and wishes of the schools and teachers are steering their work.

Between both extremes, one can position the *mutual adaptation* approach to curriculum implementation. Here the intended curriculum provides clarity about the basic ideas and directions underlying the curriculum change, and provides details in the form of (several alternative) exemplifications that can help teachers adjust to the change. However, at the same time, this approach leaves room for schools and teachers to make suitable on-site modifications, which is seen as an important issue because of the differing circumstances facing schools and teachers. The development process of this "framework curriculum" is "a two-way street" between developers and users: adjustments of teachers will also feed changes in the intended curriculum in order to improve, for instance, its relevance and practicality.

All in all, implementation support is a multi-directional process, no matter what curriculum implementation approach is taken. However, the kind of support that is provided by the partners (prescriptive or more open-ended) depends to a large degree on the way curriculum regulation is considered in a country. Two extremes have been distinguished by Kuiper, Nieveen and Berkvens (2013). At the one extreme, *curriculum regulation* reflects a government's intention to prescribe the curriculum at the input level in terms of goals and contents and at the output level in terms of modes of assessments and examinations and surveillance by the inspection and governance. Those prescriptions imply a *fidelity approach* to implementation in which the room for site-specific curricular choices is restricted. At the other extreme, *curriculum deregulation* reflects a government's intention to refrain from prescription and control at the input and output level. Here an enactment approach would fit, stimulating school-based curriculum decision-making. A mutual adaptation approach to implementation suits situations that lie between these two extremes.

3. CURRICULUM POLICY IN THE NETHERLANDS

For a deliberate discussion on the applicability of implementation approaches, we need to provide some background on Dutch curriculum policies. In the Netherlands, the amount and kind of prescription in primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary education by the Dutch government have been subject to change over the years, with the greatest level of autonomy in primary and junior secondary education. In their contribution to the CIDREE yearbook 2013, Kuiper, Nieveen and Berkvens made an attempt to disentangle curriculum policy and practices in the Netherlands during the past 40 years. In doing so, three major episodes were distinguished. Very recently, we experienced the rise of a new episode. In the remainder of this section, we will focus merely on the policies for junior secondary education. Table 2 summarizes the four episodes for this educational sector.

The four episodes show (slight) swings in regulation in junior secondary education. At the end of the first episode, teachers and others felt that the number of attainment targets was too high and that the targets were too specific. As a consequence, it was concluded that a decentralized education policy was desirable. A task force advised the government to allow schools more responsibility and degrees of freedom to (re)design and innovate their curriculum, based on a general set of requirements to justify choices in curriculum design.

TABLE 2: FOUR EPISODES FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

	Curriculum policy in junior secondary education
EPISODE 1: 1970-2000	slight swing towards input regulation
	mild output regulation by means of surveillance
EPISODE 2: 2000-2007	less input regulation by means of de-specified attainment targets;
	more output regulation by means of surveillance and governance
EPISODE 3: 2007-2013	swing towards more output and input regulation as regards literacy and numeracy
EPISODE 4: 2014-›	reconsideration of plans for mandatory tests on literacy and numeracy and more attention to the overall quality of the curriculum

During the second episode, the set of attainment targets was reduced from 356 to 58. Schools and teachers in junior secondary education were encouraged (or challenged) to create their school-based curriculum according to their aspirations. To support schools in (re)designing their curriculum and improve the curriculum cohesion, four scenarios were introduced leading to cohesion by: 1) close cooperation between subjects; 2) providing integrated projects; 3) introducing learning areas with integrated subjects; or 4) taking students' competences as a starting point. In addition to the 58 core objectives, schools were required to spend a third of the curriculum on aims and objectives of their own choice. A timetable was not prescribed and the schools accountability was administered through self-evaluation. More than 86% of secondary education schools supported this approach and put effort into redesigning their curriculum for junior secondary education (Onderbouw-VO, 2008).

In the course of the third episode, input regulation with respect to literacy and numeracy increased. This was due to alterations in the political climate because of a change of government in 2010, the rhetoric at the policy level on striving for a top five ranking in international comparative studies (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS), and because of the many autonomy-related issues schools encountered when creating school-based curriculum. Plans were put forward to implement a mandatory test at the end of primary education and mandatory diagnostic tests for literacy, numeracy, and English at the end of junior secondary. It seemed that output regulation (inspired by the Global Educational Reform Movement (GERM)), in

addition to more input regulation, had prominently entered the scene regarding the basics (and probably English) in the compulsory age of schooling.

Very recently (during the last year) we have seen the emergence of a different emphasis, fuelled by criticism of GERM. The dominance of assessment-driven approaches to educational improvement is challenged. Practitioners and policy makers called for more attention to the curriculum as a key factor in improving the quality, especially relevance, of teaching and learning. As a result, the plans for mandatory testing on the "basics" are being reconsidered. Moreover, initiatives are being taken to organize a broad debate (with many societal stakeholders) about the quality of the overall curriculum. A resulting curriculum rationale should serve as inspiration for all participants in education, especially all those who, in whatever role, are involved in curriculum development.

This recent shift in emphasis urges policy-makers and others to deliberately consider approaches to curriculum implementation that apply to this change. This deliberation should also consider the lessons of the past. Therefore, the next section will first present the main challenges that teachers and school leaders in junior secondary education felt confronted with during episodes 2 and 3.

4. CHALLENGES FOR SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS IN EPISODES 2 AND 3

Beginning with the second episode (when schools were encouraged to design and implement their own curriculum) and influenced by the third episode (with the policy swing towards more regulation), a number of challenges emerged with regard to the effective use of the allocated responsibility. This section will discuss and illustrate four of these challenges that are based on the synthesis of a number of studies (Diephuis and Van Kasteren 2003-2007; Durven Delen Doen, 2009; Handelzalts, 2009; Miedema and Stam, 2010, Nieveen, van den Akker, and Resink, 2010; Onderbouw-VO, 2008; Voncken, Derriks, & Ledoux, 2008; Waslander, 2007; Waslander and van der Weide 2009). The quotations in the Box 1-4 provide illustrations of the general patterns of experiences of many school leaders in Dutch junior secondary education schools working on curriculum innovations.

Challenge 1. Balancing curriculum development, professional development, and school development

School-based curriculum development activities show that the change process can only succeed when the school organization and the professional development

of teachers are supportive and cooperative and when there is an evident synergy and interaction among these three development areas. Such an integrative implementation approach in which curriculum, professional, and school development are addressed simultaneously is complex. Most of the time teachers are responsible for (re)designing the curriculum but are not responsible for decisions in terms of professional development or budget. In Box 1, this challenge is illustrated by a quote from a school leader.

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Box 1: Illustration of Challenge 1

"In 2001, our school board started a new school for secondary education. Our school seized the announced increased freedom for schools to design their curriculum based on our own contemporary educational concept. We chose to organize our curriculum in broad learning areas and to work in teams of teachers. We also developed our own learning materials, selected digital learning tools and built a learning environment that consisted of large learning spaces within the school. The courses had a duration of eighty minutes, leaving sufficient room to set up learning experiences for learners. Although teachers were trained to teach one subject, they now became responsible for a learning area with two or more neighbouring subjects."

"During the phase of designing our ideal curriculum, the teachers discovered that they found it difficult to determine what should be included and left out of the curriculum. It turned out to be a complicating factor that the construction of the new school building started before the new school concept was fully ready. Although the new school building looked wonderful, there weren't enough learning materials and the teachers were not accustomed to the pedagogies needed in a learning environment in which hundreds of adolescents work together."

"It was an enormous challenge to decide on and organize a lot of quite important things at once. In most occasions, I had no overview of what happened in the school and what was needed. The risk was that due to time constraints, only several teachers and leaders in the school picked up a part of the development. There were many good ideas related to the new curriculum, but due to a mismatch with the learning environment, a lack of money for learning materials, and a situation in which teachers were not sufficiently trained, we couldn't bring our ideal curriculum into practice as intended."

Challenge 2. Taking the time needed for successful implementation within the daily routines

The second challenge focuses on how schools can ensure that they take the time that is needed for successful implementation within the daily routines. Schools that implement their own curriculum need time for the following phases of development:

1) Orientation: teachers and leaders discuss the urgency and purpose of the educational reform and the choices in educational opportunities and develop plans for a new curriculum, teacher profile, and organisation (duration: 1 to 3 years).
2) Experiments: (teams of) teachers start piloting their ideas and evaluate and adjust their plans (duration: 3 to 4 years).
3) Consolidation: the plans are more widely implemented in the school (duration: 1 to 3 years).

In total, a school-based curriculum innovation takes 5 to 10 years. The question is how school leaders and teachers are motivated to complete each phase successfully. There are several reasons why this is mostly not the case. First, teachers are compelled to complete their daily work and the redesign of a curriculum simultaneously ("during the renovation the shop remains open"). A second reason is the lack of a conceptual and procedural framework that provides guidance in the innovation process. Moreover, the external pressure from the school board, parents, and/or the inspectorate, who are determined to see "good" results as time passes, can become quite challenging. This issue is illustrated in Box 2.

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Box 2: Illustration of Challenge 2

"The plans to offer each learner a personalised curriculum were supported by a broad group of teachers and other leaders in the school. The articulation of the plans took more time than I thought. There were multiple perspectives on the concept of 'good education'. Each of us discussed the plans, but it was difficult to put it into writing to indicate what the implications would be for teacher training and the design of the learning environment. After the first pilots, the teachers experienced the practical implications of the initial curriculum reform. Not every teacher persisted in this phase of experimenting. As the years progressed, it became more difficult to find time to (re)design the curriculum and to develop learner materials. The process of the teachers' professional development also took energy and time."

"The challenge of the school was that the redesign had to take place in a pressure cooker. There was hardly time to discuss the relevance of the curriculum. Also, we took limited time to pilot and to evaluate. As a consequence, teachers and students became frustrated. After some reflection and change of plans, we went back to where we started, the orientation phase. At the moment, there seems to be a better fit between the current curriculum, the competences of the teachers, and the learning materials that were purchased."

Challenge 3. Stimulating collaboration between school leaders and teachers

A school that (re)designs a curriculum requires solid educational leadership. To develop a new curriculum, educational design capabilities are necessary. These skills are not always sufficiently present in the team of teachers and school leaders. Therefore, it is important that there are regular professional development activities and meetings in the school aimed at developing and exchanging curriculum products. It is also necessary to work on a collective memory and to repeat the urgency of the educational reform and the quality criteria for the curriculum products. Structural meetings between leaders in the school and teachers will increase the confidence in the success of the curriculum development efforts. Changes in school management and/or teachers who are leaders of part of the development will make a successful implementation of the educational reform vulnerable. In Box 3, the school leader illustrates the challenge of collaboration with the teachers of his team.

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Box 3: Illustration of Challenge 3

"My colleague school leader in the school and myself put a lot of effort into activating collective prior knowledge of the entire team about the educational reform. It turned out to be crucial to talk to each other about the direction of the innovation and to share experiences. Our school was growing and as a consequence, many new teachers arrived. The unique educational concept got the attention of new teachers. However, there were also teachers who left the school because of the concept. With this flow of workforce, it was difficult to safeguard the direction of the innovation."

"It was and still is the challenge of the school that we need teachers who convert the educational reform into a curriculum in action. Only then can the ideal curriculum reach the classroom. I learned that regular professional meetings between the leaders in our school and the teachers turned out to be crucial."

Challenge 4. Handling pressure from stakeholders

This challenge points at the fact that in most schools, it is not only the teachers and school leaders who decide on what the curriculum will look like, but several other parties as well. The school board, parents, (local) politics, press, textbook publishers, teacher education institutes, the inspectorate: these are just a sample of the stakeholders that are involved in curriculum design efforts of the schools. Finding a balance between internal and external expectations is complex. In Box 4, the school leader illustrates the challenge.

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Box 4: Illustration of Challenge 4

"Initially, we used the policy space to set up learning areas in the school. After six years, it turned out that this intervention did not yield good exam results in upper secondary education. Not all learners were adequately assigned to different educational levels. The inspectorate intervened and demanded better results. At the same time, the national education debate on educational reform caused some criticism. Some parents started lawsuits against the school as a response to incorrect decisions about their children. At the same time, the tightening of examination requirements and the introduction of the tests for literacy and mathematics raised our awareness that better results had to be realised. This was the reason to roll back a large number of innovations such as the lesson time (forty minutes instead of eighty), teaching with a personalised curriculum, assessments, and learning materials. Because the building could not be modified, we still work in large learning areas. The paradox is that the learning environment is not aligned with where our curriculum stands now."

"The challenge of the school was that the external pressure was not felt to be supportive at all. The first discretion of the inspectorate stimulated the school to achieve better results, but the second one demotivated the teachers and school leadership. It was, for the school board, a reason to be less committed. Parents were also concerned about the level of proficiency that their children reached in junior secondary education. It is frustrating to see that the school had to seize back to old familiar ways to organise education that matches with tests and examination requirements."

This section illustrates several challenges that schools feel confronted with when they design and implement a school-specific curriculum under changing policy circumstances. At some points, support seems to be too weak and based on ad hoc policy decisions, whereas at other times, strict government policy hinders

the schools' efforts. The key here is to figure out how to strike a balance between an approach that encourages schools to create a curriculum that fits the local context and population and one that stakeholders find encouraging because good things happen. In the next section, we will discuss our notion of an implementation approach for this next episode.

5. THE NEXT EPISODE: MUTUAL ADAPTATION 2.0

As "mutual adaptation" already seemed to be the most realistic perspective for curriculum implementation, we will now explore how this approach fits even better with recent trends in Dutch curriculum policies and practices, including the reconsideration of plans for mandatory tests on literacy and numeracy and the increased attention to the overall quality of the curriculum (episode 4; summarized earlier in this contribution). A few components of this "mutual adaptation 2.0 approach" would include the following:

- Public, democratic curriculum debate: a public, democratic debate with active participation by stakeholders beyond the "educational province", about the societal mission of education. The focus would be on the overall rationale and major aims of teaching and learning. In order to structure and facilitate this debate, one needs clear and careful conceptualization of major curriculum terms (especially about the various functions of education, e.g., qualification, socialization, and personal development). Otherwise, it is impossible to discuss and prioritize the endless "claim on aims." There is a need for systematic information about the current interrelations between the intended, implemented, and attained curriculum. Without such information, a debate about principles and values gets easily distorted by ignorance or false assumptions.

- Curriculum capacity building: professionals in school practices should get system-wide (see Figure 2) trust to (re)design and enact their own curriculum within the broader societal mission and in agreement with their local circumstances and preferences. However, explicit attention to curriculum matters (such as the four challenges of school-based curriculum development described earlier in this contribution) is rather limited in current Dutch school practices, for various reasons. This implies that substantial investments are needed to increase the curriculum development

capacity of school leaders and teachers. Curriculum conversations at the school level (including the immediate environment) should be stimulated. Also, continuous professional development should focus on preparing practitioners to adapt high-quality materials and should highlight adaptability of sources.

- Balancing curriculum autonomy and guidance: a dilemma refers to the interaction between national and local decision-making and ownership of the curriculum. In the Dutch educational culture and context, almost no one is in favour of a very detailed and highly prescriptive national curriculum. Most people prefer modest regulations with lots of autonomy for own choices by schools and teachers. However, it is certain that coming to a consensus about such a small common curriculum core will pose many challenges, both substantive as well as communicative. It appears that many teachers and school leaders like concrete assistance in making their choices. The question arises: how much guidance, specification, and exemplification (provided by the different partners in the system's web, see Figure 2) is effective without endangering the space for local players? The current educated guess is that it helps to share many good practices and high quality, adaptable exemplifications (e.g., lesson and test materials), but to avoid formal prescription and an overdose of accountability measures.

- Balancing curriculum dynamics and stability: how to strike a proper balance between dynamics and stability? Claims for innovation by educational missionaries are often alternated with cries for rest by others. Both positions are understandable. So, what sort of combination would help? A promising way forward seems to be that major societal curriculum debates that lead towards renewed overall mission statements should be carried out only about every ten years. In between, it seems wise to trust all professionals involved to do their job in realizing the curriculum and to carefully monitor how practices and results are evolving. Minor adaptations will no doubt be made by many practitioners all the time, but the overall mission should remain intact for a longer period.

Taken together, these characteristics of mutual adaptation 2.0 might create a spirit and culture of encouragement for all involved in curriculum discourse and enactment. A strong point of such an approach might be that it combines the

strengths of the three classical perspectives that are often mentioned as conditional for lasting (curriculum) improvement of education: technical, political, and cultural (House, 1981), or substantive, technical, and socio-political (Goodlad, Klein, & Tye,1979). Moreover, it combines the two indispensable ingredients to initiate and sustain educational change (Fullan, 2001): pressure and support. This time, however, they will not merely be seen as simplistic movements from a top-down level but rather interpreted as a multi-dimensional, multi-layered and multi-directional process.

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Diversity of Curriculum Implementation Tools in Hungary

AUTHORS:

Edit Sinka

Professional Leader

Edit Sinka, who has been involved in education research and development for 15 years, is the professional leader of the 21st Century School Education (Development and Coordination) Project supported by the European Social Fund at Hungarian Institute for Research and Development. Her special focus of interest is the structure and effectiveness of educational systems, therefore many publications of hers relate to these topics and she also gives lectures on them at University of Debrecen.

József Kaposi

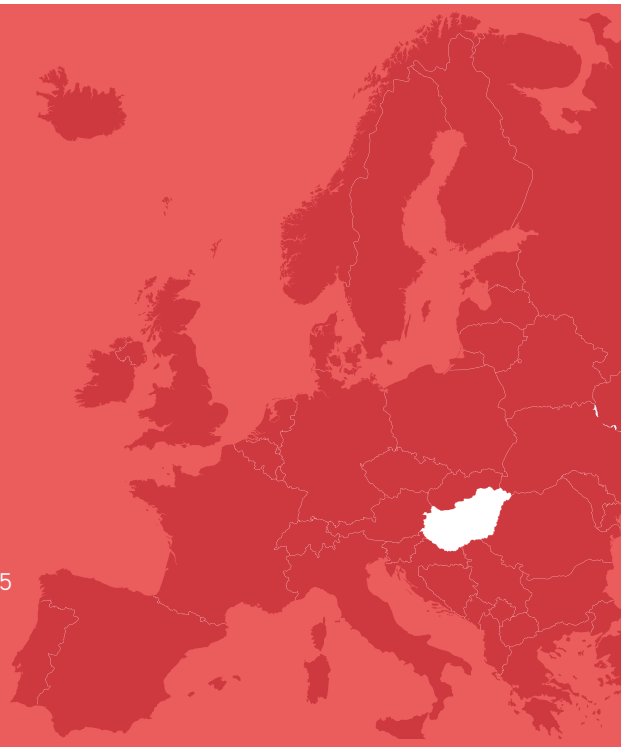
Director General

József Kaposi is General Director of *Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development* (HIERD). He is also an associate professor at Pázmány Péter Catholic University and a lecturer at University of Pécs. He gives lectures and holds seminars on subject pedagogy. He has been involved in writing textbooks and other materials for teaching history for more than a decade. His pedagogy-related writings can be found in New Pedagogical Review (ÚPSz) as well as in other HIERD publications.

Attila Varga

Senior Researcher

Attila Varga is senior researcher in the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development. His main interest is school-development. He has co-ordinated for a decade the development of the network of Eco-schools in Hungary. Recently he is responsible for the development of educational programs for all-days schools. Beside his development work, he also gives lectures on education for sustainability and environmental awareness at Eötvös Loránd and BME universities.



Facts about Hungary

- Population: 9,9 mill
- Density: 106 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: primary 11, secondary 12
- Expenditure on education: 4,4 pst. of GDP
- Teacher's salaries compared to other full-time tertiary-educated workers (ratio): 0,55

ABSTRACT

The major foci of the Hungarian education systems development are ensuring the effectiveness of education, increasing its efficiency, and ensuring equity. In order to achieve this goal, a new system of governance has been built into the education system. Since 2010, this new system of governance has included vigorous state engagement and centralization. In this paper, we describe the new curriculum-related tools that serve more coherent and complex content regulation, preparation, support, and control. The two most important indirect tools of the new content regulation system are the complex method of educational program development and the new generation of textbooks that is being created by the state textbook development program.

The government facilitates preparation for the new curricula by introducing a new teacher training system and assisting teachers with professional advice concerning: curriculum implementation materials, education programs, best practices, and reference institutions. Government also provides support for teachers by professional advisors, dissemination and adaptation of good pedagogical practices, support for individual-level horizontal exchange of experience between teachers.

The government monitors the accomplished work of schools and teachers based on the new curriculum with the following tools: the new teachers' inspection and performance assessment system and the development of a system of students' learning outcome requirements that supports performance evaluation of institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social changes that have occurred between the second half of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century pose a serious challenge for European education systems. In knowledge-based societies, the role, interpretation, and creation of knowledge have fundamentally changed. Knowledge has become a decisive driving force of the economy. Its production is no longer primarily realised through individual efforts, but rather through the networking of various knowledge-producing groups. The central focus of the development of the Hungarian public education system is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of education and to guarantee equity. In order to achieve this, beginning in 2010, the government – which prefers a stronger state – has been developing a new system of public education management, which means greater state engagement and centralisation as well. The latter has also influenced curriculum development, which we have shown in last year's yearbook (Horváth, Kaposi and Varga, 2013). In this paper, we describe the tools which aim to serve more coherent and complex content regulation, preparation, support, and monitoring connected to the new curricula. Our essay shows how the Hungarian education management system tries to create an education system in which all schools would get enough professional support, and in an appropriate measure, to achieve the objectives of the curriculum, and in which the work of all schools is evaluated according to the same quality criteria. The measures taken by our government to attain this goal include curriculum and textbook development, the reform of teacher inspection, teacher education, and the professional support of teachers.

2. INDIRECT CONTENT REGULATION THROUGH CURRICULA, NEW GENERATION OF TEXTBOOKS, AND INNOVATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Former governments only accomplished immediate content regulation in public education through the creation of curricula. In order to promote successful implementation of the new curricula, the new management expanded the range of tools for state content regulation with two tools: state-led textbook development, the aim of which is to create a new generation of textbooks, and complex education programs development, which facilitates the spread of the new education organisation forms appearing in the new curriculum system.

3. THE NEW GENERATION OF TEXTBOOKS

As last year's CIDREE yearbook editors pointed out, often "unintentionally, textbooks have quite an input-regulative effect on teaching practices, representing

'self-imposed prescription'" (Kuiper and Berkvens, 2013). Hungarian public education has traditionally been driven by learning tools, that is, textbooks influence pedagogical practice (teaching) in a much greater measure than the regulations that determine their development. In light of this tradition, the target system of the revised policy considers textbooks and all tools that carry content as determining. One of the reasons for doing so is, as an American textbook researcher put it, "changing textbooks is the most economical and effective way to improve the content of work in the classroom and teaching."

The Hungarian government declared its intention to take on an increased role in education in 2010. Consequently, in the Public Education Act adopted in 2011, the government committed itself to making textbooks available for students free of charge, from grade 1, as of 2013, in a phasing-out system. New content regulation tools that came into force (the new National Core Curriculum, frame curricula and directives) imposed new directions, namely balancing the development of European key competences with the acquisition of contents in areas of knowledge based on national traditions. As a further objective, putting value-based education in the centre was articulated, which, in the long-term, can result in the harmonization of individual and public interests as well as the strengthening of a sense of social belonging.

The newest textbooks are characterised by the paradigms of lifelong learning (LLL) and life wide-learning (LWL), the widespread use of information communication technologies, the application of the experiences collected during previous curriculum implementation processes, and the gradual expansion of knowledge sharing platforms and learning networks. At the same time, newly produced textbooks diverge more and more from original textbook ideas, as the new focus is no longer the simple transmission of knowledge, but rather the development of study skills. New textbooks are concentrating on *solutions facilitating meaningful learning* (No author – Iskolakultúra, 2011) and focusing on the applicability and transferability of knowledge acquired in various situations and areas of knowledge (Molnár, 2002). In our country, the education management mandated that the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development (HIERD) begin developing a new generation of knowledge transfer media (textbooks, digital learning and teaching tools, and knowledge repositories) in the framework of a research and development project. The new concept focuses on the changed notion of knowledge and learning, activity–centered material acquisition, age-adjusted language, and system of pedagogical tools.

The concept emphasizes that textbooks are to pay particular attention to raising motivation by highlighting the essence of the topic and also by systematizing individual or group tasks that facilitate exploration of previous knowledge. Moreover, well-structured study materials, problem raising texts, figures, graphs, tasks and questions encouraging students' reflection, and the visuality and design of textbooks should all support learning. The textbooks are written using teamwork (pedagogical development experts, methodology development experts, teachers, and IT professionals) and by utilising the experiences of a one-year pilot program, they will become the common development results of a network of researchers, developers, and teachers.

The textbook writing process is also defined by the fact that, parallel to the development of paper-based textbooks, a high capacity, easily accessible digital platform is developed (National Public Education Portal). This results in paper textbooks with less content, since many elements previously included in textbooks, (figures, activities, questions) are now accessible via this electronic platform, in a much more attractive visual format, (such as 3D, for example). The portal not only allows teachers to show students a variety of sources of knowledge in class, but also boosts learning motivation with interactive tools (web 2 function). It makes it possible for textbooks to function as e-books and the use of mobile applications creates an opportunity for life-wide learning (Csapó, 2006). Besides, the set of tasks accessible on the portal are differentiated, thus making it possible for individually tailored tasks to facilitate meaningful learning and provide accurate feedback on students' individual performance.

Ongoing, state-supported textbook development in the HIERD can entail a number of professional advantages and positive social effects, as opposed to market-driven textbook publishing. First, it can guarantee that the developmental objectives and the contents of the framework curricula appear intelligently in textbooks, that academic circles (universities) and cultural public institutions (museums, archives) are actively involved, and that textbook development is connected with the nationwide expansion and diffusion of the use of information communication technologies. Second, the overall quality of textbooks can improve, since quality assurance is built into the process (writing – pilot – feedback – correction), which is a more effective tool than a single accreditation procedure. Finally, there are advantages to printing a large number of copies which cannot be overlooked: it can serve as an important cost-effective factor. Moreover, making sure that textbooks are given to pupils and are then reused several times from year to year is also important for

a number of reasons: it saves paper, it is environmentally friendly, and it serves sustainability. Furthermore, the accelerated rate of the distribution of free textbooks can improve equity in the educational system.

Developing the new generation of textbooks started in 2013 and according to plans, textbooks prepared in this program will be widely available for the public education system by 2020.

4. INNOVATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Education programs are complex systems which provide full-scale guidance and a supportive environment for pedagogical work in a given field. The definition of an education program is included in Government Regulation number 110/2012 (VI.4.), on the publishing, implementation, and application of the National Core Curriculum:

!

The education program

6. §(1) The education program is a seven-component system elaborated based on a given pedagogical concept. It supports the planning and organisation of education, allows for reaching the educational objectives set in the National Core Curriculum and a given framework curriculum, and facilitates the processing of content components. It covers at least one subject, one or more fields of knowledge or pedagogical periods.

(2) Parts of the education program are:

a) The pedagogical concept, which is a document explaining the reasons for developing the pedagogical system, its objectives, and the place and method of its application;
b) The learning-teaching program, which is a pedagogical plan that explains the objective of the system in the spirit of the concept, its requirements, its contents, the time frames of the learning process, suggested methods and tools, organisational patterns that can be used and which refer to means and tools of assessment;
c) The description of teaching-learning units, the detailed explanation of the elements of the learning-teaching program;
d) Tools which carry both information and tasks, and enable the realisation of planned activities;
e) Assessment and its tools, which are in line with the contents of points a)-d);
f) Training programs specifically developed to equip teachers for the implementation of the given program;
g) Support, advice, professional meetings, maintenance of the program.

A recent international comparative survey that examined the education system of 13 countries showed that education programs are unique Hungarian innovations. In international practice, it is very rare for all the 7 elements of education programs to be directly linked together during education development work (Sió et al., 2013). The introduction of the notion of education programs and the initiation of their development show that the Hungarian education management endeavours to provide coherent frameworks and support for teachers from as many angles as possible, including all sides of pedagogical work.

It is apparent that the education program is a complex system which unifies the tools of curriculum implementation including the theoretical basis and supports tools of everyday pedagogical work and elements supporting the introduction of the new practice and its later application.

The first group of educational programs are developed for the Bridge programs, which occurred for the first time in the Hungarian education system in 2013. They provide a transition towards vocational or secondary education for students who have not completed their basic education by the time they reach the minimum school-leaving age or adults who would like to re-enter school without having completed their basic education. The second group of newly developed education programs are programs for extended schools (HIERD, n.d). By supporting the spread of extended schools (as a form of organising school), the basic objective of the government is to guarantee equal chances for all children in having access to those extracurricular activities which are necessary for unfolding their talents, overcoming their learning problems, and developing their social skills. The Public Education Act specifically defines extended schools as follows:

Extended school: a form of organising school in such a way that classes are evenly distributed between morning and afternoon sessions, taking into consideration a balanced workload for students (HIERD, n.d).

That is why education programs are developed: to support the systems of extracurricular activities in extended schools (HIERD, n.d). These programs differ from previously mentioned education programs not only in the fact that they are made for extracurricular activities rather than classes, but also in that their development is carried out by the active involvement of partner schools, which try out the content elements of the program in their everyday practice. These developments

are realised in a research – development – innovation framework in which the actors become actively involved from the very beginning of the process. Research studies preceding the development of the education program have explored practices already existing within the areas to be developed, and education programs are put together based on experiences. Education programs are developed in cooperation with 55 schools. The schools are not only involved in the development of the programs, but also carry out the testing of them in practice; moreover, they actively participate in finalising the programs according to feedback. Professionals from the HIERD provide continuous professional support, training, and networking opportunities for schools participating in the program.

5. TRAINING TEACHERS FOR A PROFESSIONAL LIFELONG CAREER: RESTRUCTURING THE SYSTEM

As another supporting tool of preparation for the new curricula, the government has introduced a new teacher education system, which adjusted teacher training to the demands of public education.

The character and role of knowledge, as well as its connection to the economic sector, have changed in developed, knowledge-based societies. In these societies, knowledge functions as the driving force of the economy. A new demand has emerged for knowledge to be describable in terms of competences, and the job market has also expressed competence-based demands (European Commission, 2010), which in turn increasingly determine education. The changing perception about learning outcomes has a serious effect on the processes of teaching and learning, since it restructures emphases and changes roles and functions. It also results in a new pedagogical approach (Adam, 2008; Kennedy, 2007): the role of teachers as people sharing knowledge has shifted towards the role of people who support learning.

Consequently, teachers have to cope with new challenges in a different educational environment. However, the increased value of knowledge and the more direct connection between education and economy makes the effective teacher's work extremely important. Therefore, initial teacher training and continuous professional development, regulation of public education, teacher training and employment, accreditation and quality assurance, and systems of wages, promotions, and motivation must all create one single system (Stéger, 2012).

Perhaps the most important result of the recent reforms regarding teacher training is that thinking about teacher training has fundamentally changed in Hungarian education policy. A broader perception of teacher training, which is not limited to teacher training that takes place solely in higher education institutions (which, by the way, are also being transformed by the reforms) has gained prominence. In line with the paradigm of lifelong learning, the concept of teacher training in education policy includes the idea that the development process covers the whole continuum of a teacher's lifelong career, which is realised in the framework of a system complete with professional and financial rewards.

The introduction of the Bologna system (dividing the five year degree into a Bachelor's and Master's) in teacher education in 2005-2006 has received a great deal of professional criticism, both from the side of higher and of public education. In addition to the declining application numbers, the most commonly articulated problem has been that shifting the majority of pedagogy courses to the MA level, as well as teaching disciplinary subjects in a two-cycle mode, (that is, with different numbers of credit points, one as a major and one as a minor), did not serve the aim of increasing the prestige of the degree, and did not allow for acquiring proficiency in general pedagogical or in specific professional subjects, and thus did not improve upon the effectiveness of the former teacher education system.

In addition to these problems, the reform of 2006 caused an overflow of degrees in the training market which did not meet the needs of institutions for teachers. The structure of degrees became fragmented and disintegrated into exciting but narrow areas of expertise, which has undermined the amount of career choices of general knowledge subjects with long historical traditions (history, literature, and mathematics). Teacher training institutions offered degrees with specialisations which public education was all but unable to make use of, and the appearance of which detracted from the prestige of teacher training, as well as from its social image. Furthermore, the divided training made it difficult to develop all three components of the teaching profession (discipline, didactics related to the specific field, and pedagogy and psychology) in a harmonised manner. The unified Master teacher degree suggested that the subject-specific part of teacher degrees is only of secondary importance. Thus, a sharp criticism was formulated by educational researchers, namely that the role of pedagogy in teacher training has been overemphasised; yet, it does not sufficiently prepare teachers for solving pedagogical problems and for inclusive and differentiated teaching (Radnóti and Király, 2012; Laczkovich, 2009).

The concept of developing teacher training, based on the 2011 National Higher Education Act, assumed that the reform of the training system must be defined by a balance between continuity and necessary change, the professionalisation of the teaching career, quality assurance of the degree, and an increased consideration of the need for public education and of the demands of the job market. From a professional point of view, the most important objective of the transformation must be effectively preparing teachers for their chosen professions.

As a result of the aforementioned concept, development of a new teacher education system (similar to the pre-2005 system) has begun, which returns to the non-divided and dual degree structure (5+1 years at universities, 4+1 years in colleges), puts more emphasis on practical training (1 year), and with the extended training time (5 or 6 years), provides an opportunity to balance the proportion of the two specialisation tracks and for teaching pedagogical-psychological knowledge continuously and with more emphasis put on it.

In the new training system, introduced in September, 2013, students choose two specialisations at the beginning of their studies, with the same amount of credits for both tracks. They can only choose minor tracks (art history, philosophy, ethics, communication etc.) as second specialisations. A specialisation has two possible outcomes: basic school teacher or secondary school teacher. Thus, the first three years of the dual degree teacher training system are built upon common, identical requirements for 180 credits. The choice about the level of outcome (basic school or secondary school) should be made in the third year. Practical training, now a semester, doubles to a whole year for both basic school and secondary school teachers, which enables students to prepare for their professions in a real pedagogical environment. The goal of the increased and more emphasised practical training time is to guide students to a school environment where they can get a teaching job after graduation.

The National Higher Education Act ordered the establishment of teacher training centres. Their role is to ensure cooperation between actors involved in teacher training. This includes coordinating the work of pedagogy and psychology professionals as well as representatives of various subject fields and methodology areas. In connection with this, teacher training centres also naturally carry the task of continuously revising trainings. Paragraph 64 (6) of the Public Education Act defines the centres' priority tasks as the qualifying exam of teachers and the

whole qualification procedure, as their representative must be present during these. Teacher training centres must necessarily follow, and in their own institute initiate, education research connected to teacher training.

The functioning of teacher training centres resembles the program director model, which often comes up in higher education management literature. The model basically offers a solution to the difficulties originating from the contradictions between the traditional disciplinary university organisation (Becher, 1987) and the students' and employers' demands. The main point of thinking in a matrix organisation is that the two organisational units (departments and program management offices), which both function along different logics, cooperate as equal partners in the creation of programs (Drótos, 2009). The situation is no different in the case of teacher training centres.

6. SUPPORTING TEACHERS WITH PROFESSIONAL ADVICE: CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION MATERIALS, EDUCATION PROGRAMS, BEST PRACTICES, AND REFERENCE INSTITUTIONS

Education management supports pedagogical work based upon the new curricula in various ways, but mainly through the method of exemplification. The most important exemplifying channels are as follows:

1. Sharing of framework curriculum implementation materials and lesson plans, which primarily support the introduction of new content elements of the curricula.

The National Curriculum, revised in 2012, and the related framework curricula that was adopted require teachers to substantially renew the content and methodology of their teaching in a number of areas. In order to support implementation in schools, the HIERD is developing framework curriculum implementation support materials which are regularly uploaded on our website (HIERD, 2013-2). The main aim is to provide examples, to encourage the teachers' own innovations, and to present how the regulations of framework curricula can be implemented in their pedagogical routine. These materials do not hold any legal status and thus do not create any obligations for schools. The support materials include professional working materials, pedagogical methodology recommendations, suggested syllabi, activity plans, and task descriptions. Implementation support materials focus mostly on the areas whose implementations have posed the greatest chal-

lenge for schools. Thus, support materials have been developed for facilitating the introduction of new subjects that have emerged in the new curriculum regulation (for example, ethics), for subjects where new curricula require a significant change of approach (such as natural science subjects), and for subjects where important new content has been introduced (mathematics, history, Hungarian grammar and literature, and visual arts).

2. Supporting the dissemination and adaptation of best practices in pedagogy, supporting individual, horizontal exchanges of experience between teachers.

Recently, the idea of supporting cooperation between teachers has gained more attention. Cooperation is of pivotal importance, both in the area of teaching natural sciences (Balzano et al., 2014) and in that of special education (Friend et al., 2010).

One great advantage of cooperation is learning from one another. This need not only be done by working together, which is sometimes difficult to do in practice; it can also be promoted by sharing pedagogical best practices. In Hungary, the philosophy of exemplification (Education Scotland, n.d) is represented by disseminating best practices. The notion of "best practices" is used by most school leaders and a number of institutions use the term. This is due to the fact that many institutions have embraced the opportunity and as an optional or obligatory part of various European Union tenders, to document their good practices and made them publicly available. However, in Hungary, there is not yet a mature method of sharing best practices which would be independent from tenders and would become an ordinary part of the public education system. Currently, sharing materials prepared by teachers is not part of our pedagogical culture. There would be a need for adaptation skills and adaptation knowledge, since only those programs that meet the necessary adaptation conditions can function as best practices. By adaptation of best practices, we mean a documented, professional support system in which the owner of the good practice supports the adaptation of his or her practice. A highlight of this is mentoring and participating in each others' classes, but also other sorts of support that meet local needs, for example, workshops, trainings, professional consultations, presentations about the use of teaching materials, school visits both from the school that shares the practice and from the school that adapts it. The education policy documents of the EU (Official Journal of the European Union, 2009) state as an important objective

ensuring possibilities for continuous professional development for teachers. Adapting best practices can be an important element of a teacher's attitude, but this must be followed by adequate professional support (HIERD, 2013-1). An important part of this professional support system is the development of an online platform where best practices can be presented.

The reformed public education system supports the pedagogical development of individual teachers and provides examples for institutions. The development of an innovative network of institutions which facilitates horizontal learning between institutions is also happening by integrating the results of former projects supported by the European Social Fund into the public education system. Recommendations concerning the service function of innovative public education institutions identified during previous projects will cover the following large topics:

- What is the best way of developing this knowledge-sharing network, taking into consideration both location and thematic aspects?
- What kind of experts are best suited for qualifying this specific group of institutions, and what knowledge is needed from those who would be supporting inter-institution sharing of knowledge?
- What changes are essential in the legal and financial environment so that this network of innovative institutions can be incorporated, in a sustainable way, into the institution system of professional services?
- What are the specific methods of sharing pedagogical knowledge which guarantee success of learning from each other?

The elaboration of recommendations is preceded in all subject areas by a multi-level and broad professional debate. Practical professional workshops support the development of the methodology of inter-institutional sharing of knowledge. By the end of this process (prospectively from 2015), in addition to innovative institutions that were identified during former projects, institutions where excellent professional work is being done will have the opportunity to join the service system in a regulated way (HIERD, 2013-1).

3. The aforementioned four-level exemplification system (curriculum implementation materials, education programs, pedagogical best practices, and reference institutions) can only function effectively if there are actors in the public education system who advertise these supporting opportunities

for teachers and who support the implementation and adaptation of these good examples. Professional consultants can take on this supporting role. They help teachers to solve specific pedagogical problems, support their reflective self-growth, and help to improve the pedagogical documents of a given school.

In Hungary, the development of a network of professional consultants related to the reformed public education system is currently under development and testing.

The basis of this new type of professional consultancy is a person-centered consultant approach, the most important characteristics of which are continuity, personalised approach, and equality (partnership), as listed by the experts. The central idea of person-centered consultancy is that everyone is the best expert on their own lives. The characteristics needed to create a climate supporting development are:

(1) The credibility and genuineness of the consultant, which establishes confidence, and the equality of the supportive relationship, so that teachers can afford to really be themselves.
(2) The professional consultant must be able to provide unconditional acceptance, attention, and positive evaluation for teachers, who in turn can feel secure, and thus their willingness to cooperate becomes stronger. The professional consultant does not formulate conditions and requirements but rather gives support in a way that gives teachers access to their own experiences and resources.
(3) A high level of communicating empathy, which indicates to teachers that the professional consultant understands them, pays attention to and listens to their individual needs, is really present and is sympathetic to what they are saying.

Regarding the issue of *continuity*, it is important that the professional consultant be able to support the continuous professional growth of a given teacher in a given school. Therefore, professional supporters affiliated with the schools are included in the system that is currently being developed. The professional supporter can be the school leader or the deputy or the head of teams of teachers organised according to their subject area. An important document in the professional development of teachers is their portfolio, which is also supporting mate-

rial for professional consultancy monitoring. Subject area managing professional consultants can have an important supporting role in helping to compile the portfolio and in preparing for its defence. The principle of continuity can also operate if the very same professional consultant visits the teacher from year to year, so that a strong professional connection can develop between the consultant and the teacher.

The principle of *personalisation* is mainly operating on the fact that the teacher and the professional consultant work together to initiate a process that best suits the needs and interests of the teacher. The individual character of the support is in the focus of the whole process of professional consultancy. There is only one permanent content element of professional consultant visits: professional tasks, subject area, and curriculum knowledge competence, which is an area in which examination is obligatory during the visit. The teacher is free to choose 1 or 2 other areas of competence which she would like to address during the professional consultant's visit. Thus, the basic principle of professional consultancy – namely, that the primary role of the consultant is to protect against obstacles that encumber teachers in clearly describing a problem and finding a solution to it – becomes attainable.

The principle of *partnership* operates on the fact that professional consultants are themselves teachers who have professional experiences similar to those of the peers they visit, since they teach the same subject, in the same type of school, in the same region. It is important that all participants of the visit look at it as a process of mutual learning and guide it or participate in it accordingly.

Supporting materials provided for professional consultants aim to guarantee the uniformity and quality of the consultancy procedure, however they also allow for the consideration of local conditions and the situation of the teacher being visited. The result of professional consultancy is, on the one hand, a final summary document to which the teacher, the school leader, and the HIERD have access. Thus the connection of the teacher's individual professional growth to the context of the given institution can be examined, while at the same time county and country level data are being generated about the status of specific subjects, and also about the demands and developmental needs concerning the professional support of teachers. On the other hand, at the end of every visit, as a result of the work of the teacher and the professional consultant, a professional development plan is

created for the teacher, which, in addition to long-term individual developmental objectives, includes short-term (that is, for a year or a couple of years) professional goals and related activities necessary for achieving these goals.

The development plan primarily aims to promote awareness of the teacher's individual professional development but it also indirectly it contributes to the development of the institution (Kézy et al., 2014).

7. THE NEW INSPECTORIAL SYSTEM

The education management tries to monitor work based on new curricula by various means. The newly created inspectorial and teacher qualifying systems give immediate feedback on the professional quality of individual and institutional work. The establishment of both systems is directed by the Educational Authority, with the use of EU sources. The inspectorial system is currently under testing and will probably be launched in the next school year. It enables experts to evaluate the work of teachers and school leaders and that of the school from general pedagogical points, while also identifying areas for improvement. The latter makes it indispensable for forming a close bond with the professional consultancy system, as presented earlier.

Both the monitoring and the advisory-supporting function are traditionally part of the Hungarian public education system. Seeds of inspection have already appeared in 1777, which counts as an early date from a European scale. This was the first attempt at organising education – which was so far delegated to denominations – into a central system. As part of this process, school inspectors began their work. In 1868, state inspection of schools became part of the law. Since then – until 1985, the inspectorial system existed. Then a new education law put an end to this system by assigning professional control to the school and its maintaining body. In the 1990s, education policy seemed to think that even if maintainers of schools do not have the necessary competences to control the legitimate functioning of schools and to evaluate work done in schools, by involving individual professionals and companies providing services (of which there increasing numbers were on the market), they would still be able to answer the task of evaluation. There was a lack of systematic monitoring of institutions based on standards and done from the outside (not from within the school). This was one reason why school self-evaluation never had reliable outside support with the exception of one single thing, the National Assessment for Basic Skills, which

have existed since 2001, even though this was a central element of the recommendations issued by the European Commission and the Council in 2001.

As mentioned earlier, in 2010, a new government came into power in Hungary which aimed to delegate more power to the state and central public services than before. The education management had this in mind when deciding on the introduction of a standardized external evaluation system. However, this does not mean an automatic return to the pre-1985 situation, because the newly formed system differs in multiple points from the old one. The most prominent of these is that the basis of the new system is general pedagogical criteria, as opposed to the previous one which was divided into subjects.

The National Public Education Act (Magyar Köslöny, 2011-1) provides for the management of the inspectorial system (pedagogical-professional monitoring), while also recording the framework for monitoring in the 86th and 87th paragraphs: *"The goal of the national pedagogical-professional monitoring is to monitor and evaluate the work of teachers based on external, uniform criteria, with the aim of improving its quality."*

According to legal frameworks, the inspections evaluate the work of teachers based on general pedagogical criteria. In addition, they evaluate the work of school leaders based on leadership theory criteria. They do so considering the realisation of the institution's own objectives, thus supporting the professional development of the institutions.

Pedagogical-professional monitoring is a tool which, together with other elements of the evaluation system, defines the direction of the next period's developments by building on planning and realisation. In addition to supporting development, another important goal of the inspections is to give positive feedback, that is, the identifying of outstanding areas in the work of the teacher, of the school leader, and of the school.

When developing the system, an important goal was to put the least possible burden on teachers and experts participating in the process of monitoring. Taking this into consideration, and also driven by the aim to reach a professional consensus, the elaboration has been made with the inclusion of all the actors involved. Before launching the system, a pilot phase and professional conferences are

taking place. The inspection is carried out everywhere along the same criteria with a uniform and public method. The benchmark includes conformity to the general aspects of pedagogical sciences, the general aspects of the National Core Curriculum, and the school's own pedagogical program.

Monitoring tools used by the pedagogical-professional inspection (list of aspects, questionnaires, evaluation forms) are uniform and public, based on a ministerial directive. The backbone of the pedagogical-professional inspection is the evaluation of the teacher. Therefore, the most common form of inspection is observations made during a class or session visit. These are complemented by document analysis, interviews, and self-evaluation in the case of teachers. In the case of school leaders, the results of the questionnaires completed by teachers working under the school leader and by parents of students of the given school also contribute to the evaluation.

Inspectorial work is made up of three phases: previous preparation, on-the-spot monitoring, and summing up. The monitoring wraps up with an evaluation. This highlights outstanding areas and areas for improvement, so it gives a factual report and does not give recommendations for improvement in the monitoring phase; it is the schools' competency to decide upon these. Neither does the inspection give recommendations about actions related to employers' legal competency. This is also the task of schools; however, while carrying out these actions, they must take into consideration the results of the inspection. Inspections are carried out by experts, who are teachers who have specifically prepared for this task and whose name is publicly available on an experts' list.

In 2013, a government directive (Government Decree, 2013) was issued about the teacher promotion system. The thought behind this action was that the lifespan career model, which has proven to be a success in other countries, and in the case of other professions, can be a motivation among teachers in Hungary also, and thus result in improving the quality of public education. A central element of the lifespan career model is the teacher qualification system, which puts emphasis on the continuous professional development of teachers. In the course of the qualification exam and the qualification procedure, a committee assesses the level of competences of the teacher, based on the evaluation of certain documents and their personal impressions from the class visits.

The improvement of the system of learning outcomes provides an evaluation about the schools' work through the authentic, reliable evaluation of the students' results. One of the most important fields of this is the developmental work which is now ongoing in the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development, the objective of which is to improve the requirement standards of the content of education and to support their implementation. Part of the work is to develop standards that are in line with the new curricula for given grades and areas, but also to elaborate learning outcome requirements based on new curriculum regulation and in line with requirement standards, as well as sample tasks that support evaluation and instruction guides for evaluation, utilising both the results of international developments and evaluations and the results of Hungarian research.

8. CONCLUSION

In the last four years, the Hungarian education system underwent some radical changes. The main characteristic of these changes is the increased role of the central government involved in all areas of education, that is, not only the areas discussed above, which were basically introduced to assure the quality of pedagogical work in schools but also in the area of maintaining and operating schools.

There were a number of reasons for these changes. First, significant differences had evolved among schools in Hungary, in terms of physical environment, available human resources, and the achievements of students. Second, the impact of previous, centrally initiated changes (that is, changes preceding the newest, current ones) was below expectations. And third, expenditures on education continued to grow despite a decreasing number of school-aged children and learning outcomes did not improve, or only did so slightly. The education management responded to these challenges by taking steps to greatly increase involvement from the government, transformation, and reform.

In the years to come, we will be shown whether the Hungarian education management will be able to build and operate such a system, which, due to the increased role of the state (coordinating the above discussed very complex set of tools), would be capable of managing changing local needs and at the same time narrowing the differences between schools – by differentiated use of resources – which is, according to most authoritative analyses (such as Herczeg, 2014), the most compelling problem of Hungarian education.

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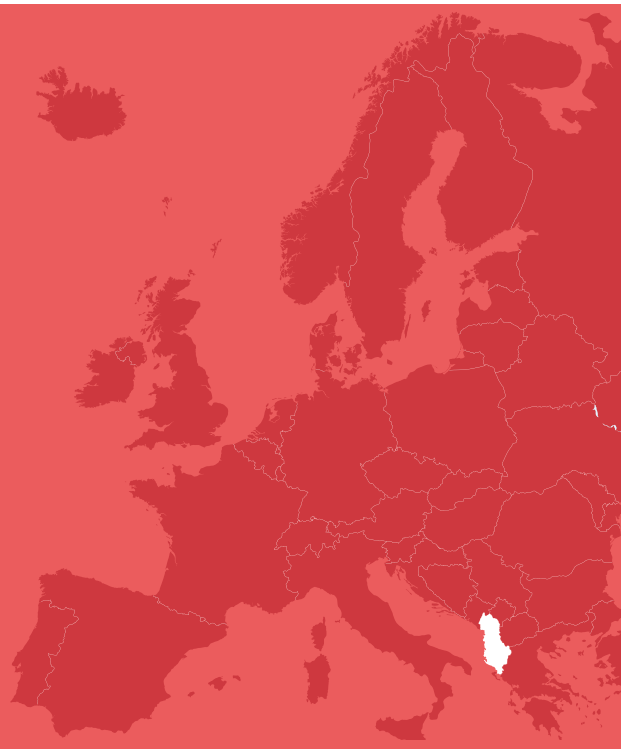
Reforming School as a Community Center in Albania

AUTHORS:

Gerti Janaqi, PhD

Director

Gerti Janaqi is Director at the Institute for development of education in Albania. The Institute of Education Development (IED) is set up on the basis of the Institute of Curriculum and Training (ICT). It is a public institution subsidiary to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). The mission of IED is to offer expertise and high level professional counseling to the Ministry of Education and Science, and the subsidiary institutions of all levels based on the results of scholarly research and educational practices.



Facts about Albania

- Population: 2,8 mill
- Density: 96 persons per km^2
- Students per teacher: 18
- Expenditure on education: around 3 pst. of GDP

ABSTRACT

Since September 2013, The Ministry of Education and Sport in Albania has made a number of initiatives to develop Schools as Community Centers (SCC). This approach is an important dimension of the reformation of pre-university education in Albania and provides the opportunity to assess the school's work in terms of its cooperation with the community and the student's family. Goal of this initiative is to design strategies for supporting the development of models for SCC in cooperation with all relevant actors.

This article presents the main ideas and intentions of establishing SCC. Based on theories, literature and policy documents, we will discuss the possible benefits of such community centers, and how this way of organizing education is thought to be a good solution for Albania. Furthermore, we wish to present the Albanian initiatives that have been put forward to support the implementation of this reform.

Keywords: School, community school, student, parent, teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Today, schools, families and community face a common challenge: ensuring quality education for children and youths, as well as opportunities for them to meet their needs beyond academic preparation. Children and youths should be informed about the social issues and problems their community. Partnership with other stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education and Sport, NGO's on the field and local authorities, creates a possibility of developing and implementing projects that aim to solve some of the challenges in society, making the students capable of contributing to their communities.

Schools as centers of community[1], as friendly schools for all, is a promoting and developing movement that started in September 2013 in Albania. The initiative of "Child friendly schools", promoted by UNICEF, aims to turn the school into an environment where the partnership between school, family and community strengthens and develops the full potential of every student (UNICEF, 2012).

A Child friendly school project was promoted in three districts September 2013; Durrës, Berat and Korçë. This was done through informing sessions with 9 trained specialists from the Regional Educational Directories (RED) and with broad participation; in total 15 school principals and 60 teachers were trained to develop, implement and monitor action plans for Child friendly schools.

The Law for Pre-University Education in the Republic of Albania, the normative acts pursuing this law, and the 2012-2013 draft Strategy on Pre-University Education, all supports the operation of a school that is open to joint decision-making with the participation of the family and community.

The concept of schools as centers of community is based on the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989), and represents a thorough approach which interweaves all aspects of the reform in education, by setting the child in the center of attention in all the activities organized and implemented in the school.

For more than two decades, a series of initiatives have been developed in Albania. These initiatives have prepared the terrain towards building a culture, philosophy, practice and policy in support of the child friendly school, which is comprehensive

[1] *Schools as Community Centers* in this article will also be referred to as SCC's, *community schools* and *schools as centers of community*.

and open to the community. Such initiatives are "Facing the hidden drop out challenge in Albania" initiated and supported by UNICEF (UNICEF, 2006), "Inclusive Education in Albania" initiated and supported by Save the Children (Save the Children, 2013). All these initiatives have been aiming to improve the cooperation between principals, teachers, students and community members in order to enhance the quality of education. However, these initiatives have been defragmented, and have not been supported by a coordinated policy.

By introducing the concept of schools as centers of community, we hope to ensure a comprehensive inclusive environment without gender discrimination or other forms of discrimination, better achievements of children and youths, assurance of better health, active participation of students in decision-making, and a wide involvement from the families. Last, but not least we hope to ensure the students' openness to the community in general, to the Regional Education Directorates, and to the municipalities.

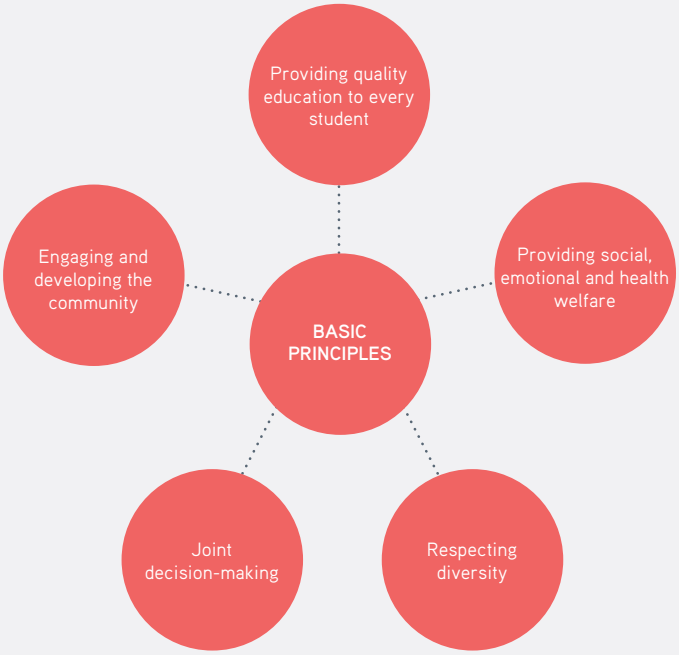
SCHOOLS AS CENTERS OF COMMUNITY IN ALBANIA

The Albanian educational system needs schools as centers of community, because conducted surveys and experiences have proved that children and youths need more chances and support to succeed in their school and after school activities (Save the Children, 2013; UNICEF, 2006).

SCCs are education institutions which do not only serve the school community (students and teachers); they are open institutions that also serve the families and other community members, and hence their work is based on the needs of students, families and community. They offer numerous after school activities for students, families and the surrounding community. This means that schools accept parents as co-educators and involve them in joint decision-making processes. SCC's also ensure social cohesion and builds on the strengths of the community.

The motivation for introducing schools as centers of community is the acknowledgment that schools appear to have been transformed into closed institutions, focusing on only one way of teaching and learning. Today many people see it as an island isolated from the community (Adelman and Taylor, 2008). We believe that transforming schools into community schools will make them function as interactive institutions, where students, teachers and parents cooperate.

Studies and successful experiences have shown that when schools work in partnership with other actors, opportunities to overcome learning barriers are created, and that such partnerships improve the quality of schools (Melaville, Blank, and Jacobson, 2011). Schools, families and community work together to build sustainable strategies for the children, youngsters and their families, to enrich and encourage the students through formal and non-formal activities, and to ensure an environment that offers and integrates services for schools, families and community.



The SCC is guided by different basic principles, as shown in the figure above. The SCC should provide quality education to every student, respect diversity, and use its resources to serve the community. At the same time, the SCC should provide social welfare, and support the students in emotional issues, as well as health issues. The SCC should be engaged in the developing process of the community.

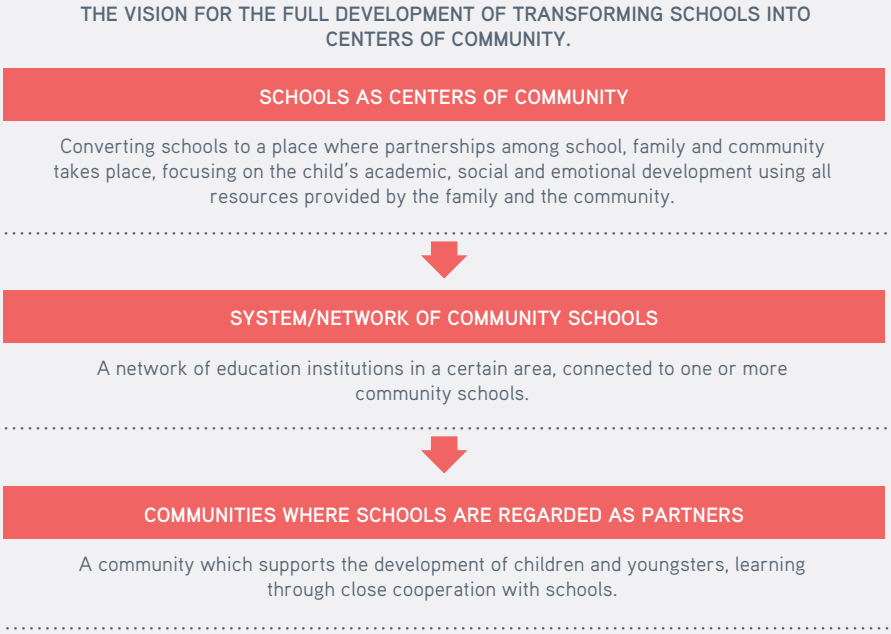
SCC should encourage different activities, such as activities for the academic development of students. Community schools offer programs and services that ensure support and academic development for students and youngsters, programs

that supports them in completing their curriculum through activities that enforce learning and academic development.

As part of the program, schools are invited to set up academic courses according to the needs and wishes of the students, such as science courses that are different from compulsory programs and experience in class. These courses vary in levels and content depending on the student's needs: from very advanced levels, to complementing courses for students with difficulties. The school sets up clubs to support a deeper understanding of the subjects, to complement the students' knowledge in various fields, and to develop the students' abilities to critical thinking. They could for example set up debate, reading or poetry clubs, all depending on the needs and wishes from the students. SCC also include activities for artistic, cultural and sports development. In this way, schools as centers of community will enable their programs and services to address the needs of the physical, mental and emotional development of a student. If the program is successful, students should find information and tools that increase the quality of their general well-being, which in the long term also will increase the quality of the school.

Another dimension of SCC is activities related to participation and involvement in the community. Schools as centers of community include voluntary parents, organization representatives, and local institution representatives as partners and as important resources. There have been examples of this in Albania already: We have seenparents who have volunteered to help schools in organizing traditional dishes fair, local representatives from health centers that has helped pupils in terms of health care, and we have seen representatives of local police educating children in road safety. These activities build a positive, welcoming and cooperative climate, and they contribute to the development of new ways of involving parents in the schools. These activities also help parents to follow their children's progress and to support them.

Schools as centers of community imply a close cooperation with the community in order to enable programs, services and support for the community members. The schools' cooperation with the community could include common projects that mutually serve the community, the schools and the students. Examples of such projects could be setting up computer labs that are also available to parents, establishing school libraries, or so called sports corners where the children, families and other community members can take part in after school activities.



TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS INTO CENTERS OF COMMUNITY

Two schools as community centers will not be identical. Each school create its own profile based on the identified needs and available resources in the school or community. The transformation process from school to community center is a continuous process. If it works as intended, the cooperating actors will gradually discover the opportunities that the community centers provide, and this will increase the benefits for students, families and the community. In order to develop schools as centers of community, a continuous and permanent involvement of all actors is needed. Their continuous stimulation and participation will help to improve the achievements of both students and schools.

Below we present some of the measures taken in the initial phase of this program, in order to realize the goal of developing schools as community centers. There has been discussions, round-table meetings, open debates, and publications, in order to raise awareness and increase the knowledge about community schools. We have also organized training sessions with school leaders from 66 participating schools around the country in the school year of 2013 – 2014.

There have been several initiatives to improve school infrastructure by providing new teaching and learning materials such as labs and technological appliances. Schools participating in this initiative are from all regions of Albania, and each RED has a number of schools included. There are 6 participating schools in Tirana, 6 in Durrës, 7 in Elbasan, 6 in Shkodër, 7 in Vlorë, 6 in Korçë, 6 in Fier, 5 in Lezhë, 5 in Berat, 6 in Gjirokastër, 3 in Kukës, and 3 in Dibër. The schools are located in both towns and villages. The Ministry of Education and Sport, the Regional Education Directorates (RED-s) and the municipalities have so far:

- made available school materials necessary to enable the various thematic after school activities
- made an effort to build capacities of school principals, teachers, parents and community representatives for an effective cooperation on school activities
- made recommendations in order to strengthen school structures, such as the school board, the student government, and the teacher councils. This has been done to ensure that parents and community can play a more active role
- identified support programs and projects carried out in cooperation with national and international institutions and agencies such as UNICEF, Save the Children, and World Vision. This helps the schools to eliminate phenomenas such as school dropout and violence in schools, and to increase competence in conflict resolution and knowledge of human rights

WORLD EXPERIENCE; OTHER COUNTRIES' RESEARCH ABOUT SCHOOLS AS COMMUNITY CENTERS

Schools are institutions that are responsible for the formal education of children and youth. However, schools that carry out this responsibility most effectively understand themselves and their students as part of a larger social system that includes families and communities. Partnerships between schools, families, and communities can create safer school environments, strengthen parenting skills, encourage community service, improve academic skills, and achieve other desired goals that benefit students at all ages and grade levels (Epstein, 1995).

Although some families maintain a strong partnership with schools throughout their children education, many families' involvement decrease as their children progress from elementary to middle and high school. This decline occurs despite studies illustrating the importance of parental involvement for secondary student's school success (Eccles & Harold, 1993).

Downey (2002) recommends that programs developed to promote parent-teacher communication focus on improving relationships between parents and their children. He also recommends programs that meet the broad needs of parents, such as improving reading skills, ways to decrease financial stress, and programs that provides knowledge about health and nutrition. Moreover, as we do not really understand what specific family characteristics and activities cause poor school performance, we are not close to understand why poor performance occurs. According to Dryfoos, outcomes from the programs could be organized into four categories: learning and achievement; improved social behavior and healthy youth development; family well-being and enhanced community life (Dryfoos, 2000). Dryfoos (2000) concludes that it is time to recognize community schools as an important component of the education reform movement. Most of these programs have goals not only to improve school performance, but also to change the lives of children and their families, and to reduce social barriers to learning.

STEPS TAKEN IN ALBANIA UNTIL NOW

Before commencing the initiative of transforming schools into community centers in September 2013, the Ministry of education and Sport sent an invitation to all actors interested in the improvement of students and schools, to determine the most valuable strategy of intervention to implement this new approach. The aim of this invitation was to sensitize all interested actors such as teachers, school administrators, parents, community representatives, and donors, and to promote cooperation between them for the opening of schools. They all agreed to have schools involved in this initiative, and the schools chosen are spread throughout the country. Since 2013, 66 schools in 37 Regional Educational Offices are involved in this initiative. We expect that in the coming years, they will learn from experience and develop successful practices as community centers.

Benefits from the initiative can be seen in schools like "Bajram Curri" in Tirana, where teachers and directors have been trained in connection with the SCC. The school has designed an activity plan for the school year 2014-2015, and the school is equipped with computers, tables and chairs, attained from donors. In "Jani Minga" in Vlora, a new sports facility is under construction with the support of the municipality, parents and school leaders have contributed with sports equipment, and the teachers are also trained for SCC.

Schools are supported at local, regional and national level with:

- Documentation and legal provisions that support this initiative, and enable educational institutions across the country to become part of it.
- A set of indicators (standards) that the educational institution must meet to become a community centre. Standards are summaries of the most basic features that a school should have to fulfill its mission as a community center. The standards are organized in five core areas, and the institution in question should be able to provide quality education for every student, ensure social, emotional and health welfare for every student, engage the community, and assist community development, organize and carry out joint decision-making, and provide an inclusive environment that respects diversity. The school can use these indicators to build activity plans, and to implement activities that lead to its transformation into a community center.
- The engagement of 37 educational local directories that help implementing the initiative. They support schools with expertise to design activity plans, and provide resource materials, such as guidelines and training modules, as well as materials needed to support school activities.
- Building capacity of school leaders and other actors in the planning of short and long term activities for schools as community centers.
- Cooperation agreements for internships with institutions of higher education
- Development of guides and other recourses for school leaders, teachers, parents and community representatives who are involved in this initiative.
- Capacity building of teachers, parents and community representatives through workshops. It is foreseen the establishment of a web that supports and facilitates the work of schools in developing action plans and exchange of positive experiences between different schools. This site is under construction.
- Improvement of school infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Schools as centers of community is a new approach with many important components, and it is a vital part of the education reform movement that is in progress. This approach has potentially a big impact, as it involves a great number of actors, such as students, parents, schools and community. The central goal is to increase the cooperation between them for the benefit of the student's personal and edu-

cational development. As this initiative is rather fresh, the steps taken until now should be understood as work in progress. One way of making the initiative more specific, and to support the development of the participating schools, is to introduce some standards connected to specific areas, and guidelines for using these standards. The implementation of this approach is the next step, which include more actors that will support and develop it for a stable community school in the future.

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