

Towards a Framework of Reference for School Leadership

Domains – Components – Modules

The development of the *European Synopsis* on school leadership, in which all partners and tandem partners described the current context and situation of school leadership in their country, and the need for materials and resources useful to leadership development across Europe led to the current *Framework of Reference*. There are three key reasons for its development:

1. While the country reports of the *European Synopsis* provide a useful basis for comparison between different European countries, it was quickly clear that common themes exist which unite educational leaders and policy makers across Europe. These themes form a framework that guide educators and policy makers in analysing their own national/regional/local practice in leadership development with a view to looking at strengths and weaknesses in different areas. These areas constitute the domains and components in this framework.
2. It became apparent that these key themes were linked to international research findings on leadership and leadership development. The domains and components help to make that link, in particular through its connection to the work of Leithwood and Riehl (2005)¹, and can thus lead the interested reader to uncover further material from other international contexts.
3. Finally, it was considered necessary to have an organisational principle that could guide the reader in searching for modules and materials of interest and relevance to their own practice.

As a result of these insights, the partners agreed on a structure for the country reports based on school leadership research at the beginning of the project. The structure was further improved while the project

¹ Leithwood & Riehl (2005) defined four leadership functions. The ISSPP merged two categories ('setting direction' and 'managing teaching and learning program'), renamed a domain ('political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction') and added a category ('working with partners and the external environment') (Moos & Johansson, 2009). For the present project, domain 5 was added to emphasize education and training of school leaders.

was being conducted. It guides readers from the categories in the synopsis to related training modules and includes topics such as "Establishing and negotiating the direction of school development", "The focus on teaching and learning", "Restructuring and re-culturing school organizations", and "Systems leadership and co-operations in networks". Also included are introductions to the national policies and governance of schools in the regions / countries where the modules were developed and are already in practice, as well as sections which focus on recruiting and educating school leaders. The reports present a variety of answers to leadership issues across Europe and thus present a solid background for understanding this *Framework of Reference*.

Core domains

According to Leithwood & Riehl, domains are useful instruments to describe and categorize a comprehensive body of knowledge of school leadership. Therefore all project partners and tandems were asked to contribute to a survey in which they ranked important issues for leadership in their countries. Their feedback was then evaluated and condensed into a set of core domains. The *Framework of Reference* identifies five greater domains which comprise all leadership topics:

- (1) political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction
- (2) understanding and empowering teachers and other staff
- (3) culturing and structuring schools
- (4) working with partners and the external environment, and
- (5) personal development and growth.

Domains can be seen as broad categories of leadership, which in turn need to be subdivided into individual components of leadership which relate to more specific and detailed requirements. The components are in turn linked to examples of good practice modules from all the partner countries. These modules can serve as exemplars or inspiration, but do not necessarily represent pan-European good practice, as national and regional contexts differ

strongly, necessitating specific approaches to leadership and module development. Not all components are represented by an equally large number of modules.

Leadership Domains

1. Political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction

Schools are built on relations with the outside world. Hence school leaders have a responsibility to convey external expectations to the school and to implement them by adjusting and adapting them to the specific mission of the school, thereby cultivating acceptance.

Leading is the major task of school heads in the sense of 'leading the way ...' and 'being at the head of ...'. Leadership is an interactive business. Woods (2005, p. 115) phrases it this way: "... the essence of leadership is not the individual social actor but a relationship of almost imperceptible directions, movements and orientations having neither beginning nor end."

While reciprocity is fundamental to such relationships, the defining contribution to an organization is the "emergence of a shared sense of direction along with *perceptible* influence, eventually, on organizational members to move in that direction" (Leithwood & Day, 2007, p. 4). Leadership does not work in a vacuum: There are many legitimate and legal expectations from stakeholders outside and inside schools that create, limit and direct the work. Many of these expectations contradict each other, and many external assumptions and demands as well as structures can seem strange or meaningless to professional cultures. This puts school leaders in a position where they need to interpret, translate and elucidate external demands in order to facilitate sense-making and create a shared sense of direction in their schools.

2. Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff

Teachers, not leaders, are the most important people for assisting and furthering student learning. School leaders should therefore make an effort to provide optimal teaching conditions for staff members and also give teachers themselves the possibility to work towards ideal educational relations with students.

This means that the primary aim should be to design school structures and cultures that support teacher capacity building and learning. School leaders can have general and specific influences here, for example by implementing continuous personal development or providing in-service training opportunities for teachers, by defining the pedagogical vision of the school and developing pedagogical practices, by implementing quality assurance, and also by interacting closely with teachers and teacher teams on a daily basis.

3. Structuring and culturing schools

Given the fact that teaching, learning and leading take place in organizations, it is an important task for school leaders to structure and culture schools. The main responsibility is to adjust structures to the intentions and culture of teaching and learning so that they support instead of hinder the work.

Schools are organizations with clearly defined structures, but if they are to be effective and successful, they must also be communities, held together by a sufficiently shared sense of identity and by sufficiently common norms. Classrooms and schools are social fields, and education and learning take place in these social fields. Loyalty and commitment to the organization are not by any means felt automatically by members of an institution, so building, maintaining and deepening them is a leader's duty and mission. If staff and students are to behave loyally to their organization, leaders should work hard to shape it, so that all members can commit themselves to the ethos of their community.

School leaders thus have structural as well as cultural responsibilities. The structural part of their work comprises planning and managing human and material / financial resources, and it also includes developing ideal procedures of communication and decision-making. Their cultural responsibilities involve the creation of a corporate identity.

4. Working with partners and the external environment

Schools do not only rely on the expectations from the outside world, but they also need to collaborate

with institutions, agencies and authorities in order to fulfil their educational tasks.

Schools are highly dependent on their environments, be they political, administrative, community-related, professional or cultural. Therefore it is very important for school leaders to manage and conduct relations with the outside world. They must be able to understand and interpret signals and expectations from many stakeholders. They must also be able to convince stakeholders that their schools are doing a good job, e.g. by documenting this with league tables or inspection reports, or by leading political negotiations with stakeholders.

School leaders need to acknowledge this dependency on outside stakeholders and build partnerships with parents and policy-makers, as well as social, educational and cultural institutions at many levels: locally, nationally and internationally. School leaders have to be able to develop relations with the community they serve. These relations should be beneficial to both the school and the community.

5. Personal development and growth

Although some school heads may be predisposed to become good leaders, there is a need to raise

and educate them, in particular as the expectations towards their work are changing rapidly. They need to be able to develop their leadership skills as well as their personal competences on a continuous basis.

The domains in which development should ensue are outlined above. School leaders and representatives of the educational system need to describe the relevant and appropriate professional and personal competences, and to construct and utilize learning opportunities on a long-term daily basis. Development opportunities can take a variety of forms, such as formal leadership study programmes or more informal networks or teams.

The five domains cover nearly all – or at least the most important – aspects of school leaders' work and functions as generated by partners in the course of the project.

From Leadership Domains to Components

The survey among our partners brought to light the necessity of educating European school leaders. All the partners were asked to find four to six areas within each domain which were considered important to leadership and leadership development in their country / region. These components were supposed to cover the entire range of the domain. At the same time they had to be subdivided to make it easier for users to understand the link between domains, components and modules.

The domains are defined in short descriptions of their content and consist of two to six components, which are also briefly explained. Two examples:

The first domain ("Political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction") consists of the following components: developing leading and managing change, developing strategic planning, translating external expectations into internal meaning, negotiating and communicating meaning, visions and mission statements, and fostering ethical standards.

The component (b) "Creating organizational and communication culture" in Domain 3 ("Culturing and structuring schools") is described like this:

"A positive school culture and open communication have been found to be related to school outcomes. Therefore, school leaders need to encourage and distribute leadership and create an appropriate management structure."

1. Components in Domain 1: Political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction

External expectations towards schools change all the time due to developments in population, immigration, technology and science, politics and culture. Therefore schools must be able to react adequately to changes and develop strategic planning. Leaders have to translate external requirements into mission statements for their schools, so teachers will understand and accept

them. Ethical standards are one aspect that should be emphasized in these statements, such as ensuring fairness, justice and democracy in an institution.

1a) developing leadership and managing change
School leaders play an important role in implementing changes in schools. They must be able to manage the organizational and educational processes that adapt school practices to external requirements.

1b) developing strategic planning for schools
In order to make effective and efficient changes, school leaders need to look to the outside and write strategic plans for future structures and culture.

1c) translating external requirements into internal meaning
Strategic plans need to be understood and accepted by the stakeholders involved and thus have to be conveyed in a plausible way.

1d) negotiating and communicating meaning, visions and mission statements
School leaders need to enter into communication and negotiations with stakeholders so as to produce visions and mission statements that stakeholders can buy into.

1e) fostering ethical standards
A pivotal aspect of planning and implementing changes involves the core purpose of schooling that builds on ethical, educational, political and cultural values. These values differ from context to context, but in many societies they will include procedures that guarantee fairness, justice and democracy.

2. Components in Domain 2: Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff

School leaders are supposed to improve teaching in order to support student learning by raising teachers' competencies in subject matters, didactics, methodologies, classroom management and ICT.

Leaders need to build a teamwork culture and distribute leadership as well as ensure performance management, assessment and evaluation. There-

fore they need to develop efficient Human Resource Management and a professional learning environment.

2a) improving teaching and student learning

Student learning is at the centre of schooling, and teaching is an important support to that. School leaders thus need to create ideal conditions for teaching and learning.

2b) fostering teachers' competencies in subject matters, didactics, methodologies, classroom management and ICT

School leaders must ensure that teachers acquire high competency levels through formal and informal in-service education, by access to appropriate learning materials and by having appropriate frameworks and good working conditions.

2c) building team work and distributing leadership

A way to build learning communities for teachers is to encourage them to collaborate in teams and distribute leadership functions among them.

2d) ensuring performance management, assessment and evaluation

Collecting and analysing data on learning and teaching processes and outcomes are important aspects of improving learning and teaching.

2e) developing efficient Human Resources Management

In order to help all teachers to develop their qualities and make effective use of them, school leaders need to build good HRM systems. This also includes taking care of teachers' psychological welfare.

2f) creating a culture of professional learning

School leaders must build learning organizations that encourage teachers to experiment, discuss and share professional knowledge.

3. Components in Domain 3: Structuring and culturing schools

School leadership requires attention to both structure and culture. A key part of that is developing school leadership and management across the institution. Leaders need to create an effective organizational and communication culture that is under-

pinned by appropriate organizational structures. This will involve planning and managing human and material / financial resources while ensuring transparent decision-making.

3a) developing school leadership and management

Leadership is not only the function of the school head, but will need to involve staff across the school. Therefore leaders need to encourage and distribute leadership and create an appropriate management structure.

3b) Creating an effective organizational and communication culture

A positive school culture and open communication have been found to be related to school outcomes. School leaders play a key role in exemplifying and building a culture that is characterized by empathy, the ability to listen and understand, and by high expectations of students and staff.

3c) building appropriate organizational structures

A key leadership task is to ensure that a school has an organizational structure which is in harmony with the culture of the school, aims to maximize students' learning opportunities, and encourages teachers to be leaders in their classrooms.

3d) planning and managing human and material / financial resources

School leaders need to put in place rational, effective and efficient processes that keep the school functioning on a day-to-day basis while being prepared for future developments and possibilities.

3e) ensuring transparent decision-making

Fairness and openness in decision-making need to be ensured by providing clear rationales and structures that assure equity while taking into account individual differences and needs among students and staff.

4. Components in Domain 4: Working with partners and the external environment

School leadership is as much an outward-facing as an inward-facing activity. It is a well established fact that school leaders need to build and maintain rela-

tionships with parents, wider school communities and national / local / school authorities. However, it has become increasingly apparent that in order to maximize their effectiveness, schools also need to cooperate with agencies and organizations / institutions at local, national or international level and build networks with other schools.

4a) building and maintaining relationships with parents, the wider school community and national / local / school authorities

Parents and the community are key stakeholders in a school and can strongly influence pupils' success. Developing and maintaining parental support is therefore vital. Planning sustainable schools requires good relationships with national / local / school authorities.

4b) cooperating with agencies and organizations / institutions outside the school at local, national or international level

Schools can benefit significantly from collaborating with other agencies such as local businesses, charities, social and health services etc. Developing positive relationships across different organizational cultures in a non-hierarchical relationship is therefore important.

4c) networking with other schools

Research shows that school-to-school networking and collaboration can create a strong mechanism for school improvement. Developing joint projects and networks with other schools therefore offers good opportunities to engage in professional learning.

5. Components in Domain 5: Personal development and growth

In order to adapt to educational and societal change it never suffices to rely on competencies and knowledge gained in the past. School heads need to acquire and maintain leadership competencies through continuous personal development and engagement in peer networks.

5a) developing and maintaining leadership competencies through continuous professional development (CPD)

The rapidly changing environment that schools are working in requires of leaders to be lifelong learners who continue to develop their personal, pedagogical and leadership skills and competencies through formal or informal professional learning activities.

5b) building peer networks at local, national or international level

Peer-to-peer networking has been shown to be one of the most effective forms of professional learning. This is not just restricted to working with peers in the same locality, but is increasingly done in national and international networks of leaders.

From Components to Qualification Modules

All the partners in the network contributed good-practice examples of modules for the qualification of school leaders in their countries. These modules are described on one page each in this volume to facilitate access to the material.

The descriptions link the modules to the respective domain and component(s), and give information on these aspects:

- the target group
- the main course objectives
- the duration and possible certificates
- contact persons
- links to the websites where the modules can be downloaded or accessed.

The modules are written in the languages of the countries from which they originate. However, with the help of the contact persons it is possible to have them translated and / or adapted for the required language and target group.

References

- Leithwood, K., & Day, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Successful School Principals: international perspectives*. Toronto: Springer.
- Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2005). "What we know about successful school leadership." In W. Firestone & C. Riehl (Eds.), *A new agenda: Directions for research on educational leadership*. New York: Teacher College Press.
- Moos, L., & Johansson, O. (2009). "The International Successful School Principal Project (ISSPP): success sustained?" *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(6), 765-780.
- Woods, P. A. (2005). *Democratic Leadership in Education*. London: Paul Chapman.

An overview of the framework: domains, components and modules

Domains of school leadership	Components of school leadership	Modules for qualification	Page
1. Political and cultural expectations and their translation into internal meaning and direction	a. developing leading and managing change	HU1 (Management of Changes) PL3 (Educational Change) RU1 (Strategic Planning)	20 21 22
	b. developing strategic planning for the school	RU1 (Strategic Planning) HU2 (PM Training) IE6 (Leading the Organization)	23 24 25
	c. translating external requirements into internal meaning	IE3 (Enterprise of Education) ES1 (Educational Organization) SE1(Exercising Functions) EE5 (Shaping Study Environment)	26 27 28 29
	d. negotiating and communicating meaning, visions and mission statements	ES2 (Quality Management)	30
	e. fostering ethical standards	PL2 (Management Basics) RO2 (Professional Ethics)	31 32
2. Understanding and empowering teachers and other staff	a. improving teaching and student learning	SL1 (Classroom Management) RO1 (Teaching-Learning Evaluation)	33 34
	b. fostering teachers' competencies in subject matters, didactics, methodologies, classroom management and ICT	RO1 (Teaching-Learning Evaluation) HU2 (PM Training) NO (Leading Learning)	35 36 37
	c. building team work and distributed leadership	AT2 (Staff Development) HU2 (PM Training) IE5 (Leading People)	38 39 40
	d. ensuring performance management, assessment and evaluation	LT4 (Self-Evaluation) RO3 (Quality Management) IT2 (External Evaluation) IT3 (Quality Development)	41 42 43 44
	e. developing efficient Human Resources Management	IT3 (Quality Development) AT1 (Conflict Management) PL1 (Conflict Management) ES3 (Resources Management) EE2 (Personnel Management)	45 46 47 48 49
	f. creating a culture of professional learning	RU4 (Monitoring) IE4 (Leading Learning) TR1 (Communication, E-schooling) EE5 (Shaping Study Environment)	50 51 52 53
3. Culturing and structuring schools	a. developing school leadership and management	HU2 (PM Training) IS1 (Development and Evaluation) SE3 (School Leadership) EE2 (Personnel Management)	54 55 56 57
	b. creating organizational and communication culture	AT1 (Conflict Management) AT2 (Staff Development) PL3 (Educational Change) RO3 (Quality Management) SL2 (Communication) SL3 (Preventing Violence) TR2 (Information System)	58 59 60 61 62 63 64

Domains of school leadership	Components of school leadership	Modules for qualification	Page
	c. building appropriate organizational structures	LT ₄ (Self-Evaluation) RU ₁ (Strategic Planning) RU ₄ (Monitoring) SE ₂ (Management by Objectives) EE ₁ (Development of Organization)	65 66 67 68 69
	d. planning and managing human and material / financial resources	HU ₁ (Management of Changes) IT ₁ (Legal Basics) IT ₃ (Quality Development) RU ₂ (Law in Education) RU ₃ (Economy & Financing) EE ₃ (Resource Management)	70 71 72 73 74 75
	e. ensuring transparent decision-making	RU ₄ (Monitoring) PL ₂ (Management Basics)	76 77
4. Working with partners and the external environment	a. building and maintaining relationships with parents, the wider school community and national / local / school authorities	PL ₁ (Conflict Management)	78
	b. cooperating with agencies and organizations / institutions outside school at local, national or international level	IT ₂ (External Evaluation) SL ₃ (Preventing Violence) RU ₂ (Law in Education)	79 80 81
	c. networking with other schools	CH ₁ (Competence Portfolio Development)	82
5. Personal development and growth	a. developing and maintaining leadership competencies through continuous personal development (CPD)	DK (Teacher to Leader) NO (Leading Learning) IE ₁ (Research Methodology) IE ₂ (Person of the Leader) EE ₄ (Self-Management)	83 84 85 86 87
	b. building peer networks at local, national or international level	RO ₂ (Professional Ethics) PL ₂ (Management Basics) LT ₃ (Self-Evaluation Tools) CH ₁ (Competence Portfolio Development)	88 89 90 91

Recommendations

General Trends and Necessary Measures

Recommendations: General Trends and Necessary Measures

The *Framework of Reference* along with the modules and other material collected by partners showed both substantial diversity across participating countries and concerns that were common to all. These commonalities were interrogated in relation to the literature on successful educational leadership to develop a number of recommendations for policy and practice, as it would be remiss not to draw the conclusions evident from the data collected. Therefore, a number of recommendations drawn from these sources are presented.

It is important to recognize here that these recommendations do not provide a blueprint for leadership development to apply in each country. Rather, they should be seen as providing food for thought and a set of questions which with practitioners and policy makers can interrogate their own systems and practices. The aim of these recommendations is therefore a practical one, and while inevitably normative in part, these recommendations are related directly to the framework and the work of the network.

In the Comenius network *The Making of: Leadership in Education* representatives from 13 countries, six tandem partners and two associated partners networked over a period of three years. During the project period all the partners met face-to-face at four conferences and were continually in touch via email and the network's website. The major outcomes are documented in the country reports compiled in the *European Synopsis* and in the large compilation of training modules in the present *Framework of Reference* with a large compilation of training modules.

The country reports and the *Framework of Reference* reveal that a number of developments with regard to the conditions and challenges of school leaders are identical or similar in many countries. The identified trends form the basis for the systemic recommendations to policy makers at European, national and local levels.

European added value

The cooperation in the network produced an increase in the shared knowledge of conditions of and expectations towards school leaders as well as new insights into ways in which schools are being governed all over Europe. This increase in knowledge also led to a greater interest in and better understanding of the theoretical and practical approaches which different educational systems follow as well as the ways in which these systems are constructed and work. Sympathy for each other's concerns evolved and knowledge exchange was initiated. Many thoughts and ideas have been shared and adopted by other network partners so that mutual understanding and more common practices have developed. The positive support experienced by all the partners confirms the research findings that networking and collaboration can be a very effective form of professional development.

A crucial element of these processes was the development and use of a common set of concepts: the domains and components. These categories were the basis of our dialogue and led to the adoption of an increasingly common professional language. At the same time, the results of the networking and cooperation were integrated. Domains were constructed on the basis of leadership research and theories while the descriptors of the domains and their components were developed in the network interactions.

Recommendation 1

It is very productive to develop mutual understanding through soft governance on a transnational level: by means of developing a common professional language that encompasses both similarities and differences between local situations and expectations. The *Framework of Reference* provides a step towards this goal.

Recommendation 2

In light of the established effectiveness of networking as a form of professional development, systems need to enable the creation and cultivation of networks of school leaders at local, national and international levels.

leaders necessitate a sufficiently reduced teaching role, if they are to be executed effectively.

Creating conditions for school leadership

In many countries there is a trend towards the decentralisation of finances. Personnel management thus moves from national level to local levels or to autonomous schools. Moreover, there is a frequent shift in parental interest from public to private schools. At the same time, many small schools are being merged into bigger systems. This is a set of factors that contributes to a rapid increase of demands on school leaders.

The country reports point to two responses to this challenge. One is to make sure that only the best candidates are recruited for the job by offering them optimal conditions such as an appropriate reward structure, appropriate leadership education, and good working conditions, including appropriate support by recruiting staff with a variety of competences. The other response is to share leadership responsibilities and accountabilities in schools by delegating or distributing authority and tasks.

Recommendation 3

There is a need to find a balance between the focus on school leaders, their competences and their situation on the one hand, and the focus on the distribution of leadership tasks and responsibilities in flexible systems on the other hand. This can both alleviate the load on individual school heads, and can develop leadership across the school, leading to greater empowerment of staff and an increase in school capacity for improvement.

Recommendation 4

There is a need to make working conditions and remuneration for school leaders sufficiently attractive in order to ensure that systems are able to attract high-quality candidates to school leadership roles. Many countries currently face recruitment problems, with too few teachers wanting to make the step towards becoming school leaders as the perceived demands of the job outweigh the rewards. In particular, the increased requirements of school

The need for educational leadership

A shift of focus in educational policies can be extracted as one strong tendency from the country reports. International cooperation and comparisons like the PISA study have had a great impact on the perception of the purpose of schools and thus on the dominant political discourse of what constitutes a good school. The political interest in outcomes has grown. Educational systems react differently to this trend: some make stricter demands for measurable accountability with respect to the quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

The country reports underscore that school leaders' core task is to support teaching and student learning, but that they often have difficulties in finding the time to do this. The choice of modules for Domain 2, which is closest to teaching and learning, shows a strong interest in educating school leaders to ensure their responsibility for this core task.

Recommendation 5

There is a need to find ways of harmonizing the tasks involved with school leadership and classroom practice, both in leadership qualifications and in practical, distributed structures. Educational systems need to encourage school leaders to exercise instructional leadership through quality control and leading the pedagogical project of the school. This implies that school leadership should preferably be exercised by staff with an educational background.

Supporting school leaders

Parallel to the general trend of decentralisation, many countries show trends towards a recentralisation of curricula by way of more detailed learning standards as well as a recentralisation of the monitoring of outcomes through national tests and the like. National political demands need to be understood and accepted by teachers in order to have them teach in line with the expectations. Therefore school leaders need to translate these expectations into a language that teachers understand, so they can make out its meaning and transform it into new practice.

Recommendation 6

There is a need for support structures at all levels (national, regional, local and school-to-school) to help school leaders to mediate between external expectations and internal cultures and traditions. It is also important to clarify the formal position of school leaders so they can be loyal when confronted with external and internal expectations.

Room for decision-making

Political and societal demands on schools and school leaders are strong and in many cases growing. This growth in demands requires of school leaders to be able to respond effectively to them. This will only be possible if they are autonomous to a certain degree.

Recommendation 7

Political structures need to recognise that the demands placed on schools and school leaders can only be met if leaders are given the power to make relevant decisions in their school.

Professional development and support

The increasing demands on school leaders mentioned above mean that a larger set of skills is required of them than in the past. Financial autonomy brings with it budgetary responsibilities. Accountability brings with it the need for internal quality control mechanisms, while in many systems greater responsibility for staffing requires enhanced HR competencies.

Recommendation 8

National systems need to be put in place to ensure that school leaders receive appropriate training and development in those competencies the systems requires them to exercise. These systems should address the needs of school leaders at different stages of development and experience, such as preparation for leadership, induction of newly appointed leaders and further development of acting leaders.

Recommendation 9

In systems where required competencies are becoming very broad due to wide-ranging school autonomy, systems need to enable the introduction of new leadership roles and staff in schools, for example by developing the School Business Manager function.

The need for comprehensiveness in professional development

While the process followed in this project has shown the richness of professional development and training available in the different partner regions, it has also shown that there is a lack of material in certain key areas. This was seen as being the case in particular for the areas of school profiling (the school profile, the school programme) and improving knowledge in the area of Human Resources Management (communication with colleagues, conflict management, target setting). Furthermore, it was clear that in many systems only some of the reviewed domains were covered.

Recommendation 10

Systems should explore the extent to which their leadership development strategies sufficiently cover the domains of school leadership. Other systems may provide useful exemplars where this is not the case.

Recommendation 11

Systems need to ensure that professional development opportunities are available in the currently widely neglected areas of school profiling and HR management. While these will need to be created according to national policies and priorities, there will likely be some scope for cross-national collaboration on the development of suitable materials.

Conclusion

The Comenius network *Leadership in Education* was set up in 2008 as a three-year project with the following aims:

- to compile a Europe-wide synopsis on the quality of school leadership including the dissemination of the project results in digital and in print form and the setting up of a European framework for the quality of school leadership
- to compile a comprehensive collection of concepts and materials such as leadership development modules in the area of school leadership
- to create an information and communication network in order to provide the possibility of exchanging the concepts and programmes of school leadership in Europe.

To meet these aims, the network undertook the following activities:

- Annual conferences to discuss and disseminate findings (Hildesheim, Tallinn, Bolzano, León) were held.
- Bilateral meetings and visitations between partners and their tandem partners (at least once for each tandem partner) took place.
- Country reports from all 13 project partners and 15 tandem partners were collected and updated.
- A formal and informal exchange of experience and knowledge between partners and participants took place.
- National websites were established or existing websites were linked to the leadership platform to facilitate information exchange.

Information from the partners' country reports and educational research was used to develop the *European Synopsis*, which then was the basis for the *Framework of Reference* and the recommendations.

The *European Synopsis* and the *Framework of Reference* have been published in two volumes with a print run of over 1,000 copies and were distributed to all partners, participants of the conferences and to other interested parties. In addition, a website has been set up containing the synopsis, the framework including the recommendations, all the country reports and other relevant information in an easily accessible and searchable format (www.leadership-in-education.eu).

The intention of our network was to make a contribution to developing a common understanding of key concepts of educational leadership across Europe and to create a shared language around these concepts.

While the European education landscape is diverse and many policies and practices are determined at national or regional levels, all the partner countries agree on the key importance of educational leadership in schools. The network hopes that the materials that were made available will foster cross-cultural learning and understanding of the common issues around educational leadership and leadership development, as it already has for network partners.

It becomes obvious in the reports that good practice exists in all the partner countries. However, it has also become clear that none of these countries has developed leadership programmes that comprehensively address every element of the leadership framework. The *European Synopsis*, the *Framework of Reference*, the modules and the recommendations should be viewed as a means by which educational systems and practitioners may interrogate and revise their own policies and practices.