Consultative Meeting on Innovative School Leadership  
23-24 April 2018  
Novotel Sukhumvit 20, Bangkok, Thailand  

Concept Note

I. Background

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 – Education 2030 has seven targets and three means of delivery, of which SDG 4C focuses on teachers: By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers. However, nowhere is school leadership mentioned in the SDG 4.

"The principal is the nerve centre of school improvement,"1 a statement supported by numerous publications2 attesting to the importance of school leadership in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. School leadership has an impact on the entire school system, including teachers’ motivation, professional growth and performance, students’ learning outcomes, school climate and environment. The roles and responsibilities of school leaders are not limited to human and financial resource management within the school perimeter, but include instructional leadership that has to keep pace with the complex challenges of a rapidly changing world. Often the links to relay external development and demands into internal school processes and outcomes, school leaders are overburdened. With limited resources, they face serious challenges in meeting their school’s educational goals.

An OECD study concluded that leadership development programmes are more effective when they:3

- “prepare and develop school leaders using innovative approaches that address the broader roles and responsibilities of leaders and the purposes of schooling, and that use core technologies to achieve intended outcomes;
- are designed to produce leaders who work to build student-centred schools with the capacity for high performance and continuous improvement towards that end; and
- take a system-wide perspective, so that the programmes are aligned with the larger goals and processes of the system concerning school improvement, student performance, and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness.”

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Recognizing that school leadership is a priority and school leaders need sustained support to enable them to do their job more effectively, UNESCO Bangkok has implemented several projects that address this need. For example, the Korean Funds-in-Trust Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education (GCED) project aims to strengthen the capacity of school leaders to support and implement GCED in their institutions. Similarly, under the UNESCO-HNA Partnership for Girls’ and Women’s Education, the Enhancing Girls’ and Women’s Right to Quality Education through Gender Sensitive Policy Making, Teacher Development and Pedagogy in South, Southeast and Central Asia project plans to enhance female school leadership to create a more gender-responsive and gender-friendly learning environment.

At the same time, the projects also demonstrate the pressure exerted on school leaders, tasking them to implement new initiatives designed by external agencies. School leaders are expected to possess the relevant knowledge and skills in multiple areas and topics of importance to the 21st century so that they can guide their teachers and students accordingly. In response to such demands, appropriate and adequate assistance must be well-planned and cohesive to ensure higher levels of acceptance and implementation.

Therefore, UNESCO Bangkok is convening a consultative meeting with experts, policymakers and school leaders involved in the two projects, and UNESCO staff to synergize school leadership activities within UNESCO and with external key players.

II. Objectives

The objectives of the consultative meeting are to:

- Clarify school leadership roles, responsibilities, challenges and priorities for interventions;
- Identify opportunities and channels for developing school leadership competencies;
- Explore mechanisms to synergize school leadership programmes and activities, paying particular attention to UNESCO Bangkok’s projects on Preparing Teachers for GCED and Enhancing Girls’ and Women’s Right to Quality Education.

III. Expected Outputs

The expected outputs of the consultative meeting include:

- Summary of roles and responsibilities of school leaders, as well as challenges and priorities for interventions
- Compilation of opportunities and channels for school leadership development programmes
- Recommendations on how to synergize school leadership programmes and activities

IV. Dates and Venue

The consultative meeting will be held on 23-24 April 2018 in Novotel Sukhumvit 20, Bangkok, Thailand.
V. Language

English is the main language of the consultative meeting.

VI. Participants

The meeting will bring together approximately 30 participants, comprising experts, policymakers, school leaders and teacher educators involved in the two UNESCO Bangkok projects, and UNESCO staff. UNESCO Bangkok will cover the economy round trip airfare, accommodation and meals for the duration of the meeting.

VII. Proposed Programme

Day 1
- Welcome and introduction of participants
- Let’s hear from the experts: What is school leadership?
- Group work on challenges, priorities and opportunities for intervention
- Overview of UNESCO Bangkok’s projects
- Role play: School leaders’ potential reactions to the projects
- Welcome dinner

Day 2
- Recap of Day 1
- The sky is the limit: Identifying synergies for school leadership programmes and activities for the two UNESCO projects
- Back to reality: What is possible and practical?
- Recommendations for next steps and collaboration: For the project and beyond
- Wrap up

VIII. Contact Persons

For programmatic issues For logistical arrangements
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