

Editors

Slavica Ševkušić ■ Dušica Malinić ■ Jelena Teodorović

# LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Initiatives and trends in selected European countries



Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia

Faculty of Education, University of Kragujevac, Jagodina, Serbia

Hungarian-Netherlands School of Educational Management, University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary

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## FOREWORD

In recent years, there has been increased agreement between researchers, policymakers, and educational practitioners that educational leadership is one of the most important policy levers for the improvement of school quality and pupil achievement. Many countries have implemented policies that regulate entry to principalship, obligations of principals, training requirements, and licensing procedures. Researchers give us principals' views on these developments; they are frequently/often positive, showcasing that principals are aware of and deeply interested in obtaining professional competencies required to do their jobs properly, but oftentimes are negative, indicating principals' dissatisfaction with the autonomy they are (not) given, administrative burden, politization of their position, lack of professional development opportunities, inadequate support from higher authorities, and so on.

As researchers, we were interested in various aspects of educational leadership for some time; however, the idea of the publication *Leadership in education: Initiatives and trends in selected European countries* emerged as a result of our participation in the TEMPUS project "Master program in educational leadership (EdLead)" (2013–2017), which was coordinated by the Faculty of Education, University of Kragujevac, Jagodina, and whose aim was to create a master programme, professional development courses, and other resources for principals of educational institutions in Serbia. Particularly inspiring for this publication was the project's international scientific conference "Challenges and dilemmas of professional development of teachers and leaders in education", which was organized in 2015 in Belgrade, Serbia, by the Institute for Educational Research in cooperation with the Institute for Improvement of Education of the Republic of Serbia, Hungarian-Netherlands School of Educational Management, University of Szeged, Hungary, and Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Also, a significant incentive for us to create this publication was the recent set of initiatives pertaining to educational leadership in Serbia.

The aim of this publication is to trace the development and examine the current status of leadership in education in the context of the education policy and practice of selected European countries. Experiences from 12 countries: Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria and Finland are



presented. Selection leaned more toward countries of Eastern and Central Europe, since much less is known about their needs and issues in relation to educational leadership as opposed to countries of Western Europe and, wider, Anglosaxon countries. Invited authors were those who are recognized as experts on the topic of leadership in education (in alphabetical order of their countries): Christian Wiesner and Michael Schratz (Austria), Hariz Agić and Žaneta Džumhur (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Bozhidara Kriviradeva (Bulgaria), Vesna Kovač and Stjepan Staničić (Croatia), Milan Pol and Bohumíra Lazarová (Czech Republic), Jukka Alava (Finland), Tibor Baráth, László Horváth, Attila Nóbik and Éva Verderber (Hungary), Biljana Maslovarić and Jelena Ivanović (Montenegro), Konstantin Petkovski and Zoran Hristovski (North Macedonia), Jelena Teodorović, Slavica Ševkušić, Dušica Malinić and Jasmina Đelić (Serbia), Alena Hašková (Slovakia), and Majda Cencič and Justina Erčulj (Slovenia).

When designing the publication, we wanted readers to be able to see the similarities and specificities of the initiatives and trends in leadership in education in countries that partially share a socio-geographical heritage. In order to implement this idea, we proposed the structure of work, which has the following elements: (1) Legislative framework (the laws and bylaws regulating topics such as duties of principals, requirements for principalship, preparation of principals, selection of principals, induction, licensing, career progression, etc); (2) Current state of education in the country (description of the current situation, positive and negative aspects of the state and development of principalship, as well as review of the research on the educational leadership in the country, evaluations of trainings of principals and such); and (3) View towards the future (recommendations for the improvement of educational leadership in the country). However, the authors could approach the offered structure flexibly, that is, they were given the freedom to focus on the aspect of leadership in education that is relevant and topical in education policy and practice in their country. The chapters before the readers reflect this.

On one hand, we can observe similarities and differences in developmental trends in educational leadership. For example, some countries have a decades-long tradition of officially preparing school leaders at the national level (e.g., Slovenia), some have recently produced legislation and training for school leaders (e.g., Serbia), while in some, formalization of multiple initiatives in educational leadership has been delayed for years (e.g., Croatia). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the extensive complexity and number of educational institutions considerably prevent national-level action on educational leadership.

On the other hand, we can also get a glimpse of the most pertinent or current topics in educational leadership present in different countries. For example, the chapter on Slovakia raises the question of autonomy, the chapter on Slovenia elaborates the initiatives that enhance support offered to educational leaders, and the chapter on Finland focuses on exemplary municipalities where educational leadership has been fully embraced, leading to changes in school culture, organization, and quality of work. In chapters on Austria and Hungary we learn about institutions that prepare school principals and the innovative research models they employ, while in the chapter on the Czech Republic we find out about principals' perceptions and practices from extensive research undertaken by educational researchers. In the chapter on Montenegro, we get acquainted with the content of the training program for principals, as well as its evaluation, while chapters on Bulgaria and North Macedonia give us insights into selection and appointment procedures for principals.

The important part of all chapters in this publication was the authors' view toward the future and their expert opinions on steps necessary for the improvement of educational leadership in their countries. Based on these sections, one can identify some important issues that need to be further resolved in most of selected countries by engagement of researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

- *Higher professionalization of principalship*, because principals' work is still treated more as a function than a profession. First, this includes the establishment of better defined, more stringent and transparent criteria for the selection of principals as well as the creation of appropriate mechanisms and instruments for evaluation of their work. To achieve this, it is necessary to eliminate or at least reduce the political influence on principals' appointment and activities. Second, professionalization implies the improvement of competencies of principals through appropriate initial, advanced and in-service training and mentoring, creation of opportunities for principals' career progression and efforts to make principalship more attractive.
- *Changes at the system level*, such as synchronizing legislative and professional aspects of leadership and giving more autonomy to schools and principals, especially in the field of financing and budgeting. At the same time, it is necessary to relieve principals from administrative overload so they can focus more on the pedagogical aspect of leadership. Also, for achieving the higher quality of education it is necessary to promote the decentralization and democratization of all educational structures.

- *Intensification of research in the field of education leadership*, bearing in mind that studies in this field are relatively scarce in most of the selected countries. Future research should, among other things, focus on studying the effects of existing training programs and examine what competencies are needed for principals to lead schools as they become more autonomous.

We hope that the readers will be more than acquainted with the initiatives and trends of leadership in education in these countries, motivated to deepen the study of this important phenomenon, and eager to open new questions and topics for its future research and improvement.

Our preparation of the publication could not have been so successful without the full cooperation of all the authors who were ready to fulfill the requirements and suggestions of the editors, both in terms of the structure and the content of the chapters.

We owe special thanks to reviewers of the publication, Prof. Em. Dr. Eric Verbiest, Prof. Paed. Dr. Ilze Ivanova and Prof. Dr. Henryk Mizerek who have significantly contributed to the quality of this publication with their suggestions.

*Editors*

Slavica Ševkušić, Dušica Malinić, Jelena Teodorović

## **PRINCIPALSHIP IN AUSTRIA: BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT**

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*Abstract.* The Austrian school system has historically been characterized as highly bureaucratic and strongly regulated. Several policy approaches have been made to counteract the numerous parallel structures and too little congruence in task-orientation and responsibility. A shift towards more school-based innovation has initiated a slow movement towards more decentralization and deregulation, but principals are still confronted with restricted autonomy, which makes it difficult for them to empower their faculty for collective action. The introduction of national testing has led to some incremental changes. However, deep-rooted cultural mechanisms continue to successfully promote decentralization and stability as the most highly valued sources of educational quality. Austria's participation in international projects has given a lift to mobilizing research potential on school leadership. Recently, the transformation of school governance has become a major focus of educational reform, which has stimulated various investigations to explore and evaluate various national strategies of school governance with respect to their contribution to quality development of the school system. Research focuses on the role of principals as change agents, for example in evidence-based measures such as standardized testing or school inspection as an external evaluation.

*Keywords:* leadership development, system transformation, FieldTransformation<sup>360</sup>, leadership for learning, leadership culture.

### **THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AUSTRIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The beginnings of the Austrian school system go back to Empress Maria Theresa and the school reforms in 1774 which provided schooling for everyone for six years of compulsory education. The legal basis for the current school system derives from a comprehensive Education Act in 1962, which raised the period of compulsory education to nine years. The Austrian system has until now been a hybrid, neither centralized nor decentralized. However, the hybrid model still is highly centralized and hierarchically organised, when

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viewed from the perspective of an individual school or from the perspective of principals, and is still one of the few systems that is selective at a very early age. The federal system of education governance requires the national government to set the framework and provincial governments to enact detailed legislation. The federal government has full responsibility concerning the employment and conditions of teachers and other staff working in schools. However, responsibility for actual employment is more complex, with provincial governments responsible for staffing some schools (primary, general secondary, polytechnic, and vocational schools), while others (the general academic-track lower and upper secondary school as well as vocational upper secondary schools leading to the school-leaving Matura examination) are administered at the federal level.

Compulsory schooling starts in September following a child's sixth birthday and lasts nine school years. All children must attend kindergarten for at least one year before starting primary school. The education of children after the kindergarten is divided into three main categories; primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. After four years of primary school (Volks-/Grundschule), the lower Secondary education lasts for four years and is split between the Neue Mittelschule (general secondary; NMS) and Allgemein bildende höhere Schulen (academic secondary; AHS), the AHS is further divided into Gymnasium (general), Realgymnasium (science-based) and Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium (home economics). After the NMS, a one-year polytechnic course may lead to school leaving age or students may go to a vocational school, including on-the-job training. Vocational Schools build on a dual system of education: apprentices split their learning time between studying in schools and the world of work. Upper secondary education lasts for four to five years and is divided into the following types of Allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen: Gymnasium, Realgymnasium, Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium and Oberstufen-Realgymnasium. Vocational secondary education lasts five years. All streams lead to the school-leaving exam (Matura), which gives access to higher education (for example: university or teacher education college).

Principals of the schools, who are selected by either the region or federal level, have only limited authority over budgets, curriculum, and personnel (Schratz, 2012). As is the case with government administration in general, responsibilities for legislation and implementation in school education are divided between the Federation and the Länder. This division is made as follows:

- The Federation has exclusive responsibility for legislation and implementation with regard to the academic secondary schools and the

entire field of general upper secondary education, intermediate and upper secondary vocational education and training for kindergarten teaching staff and non-teaching supervisory staff, and with regard to the conditions of service and staff representation rights of teachers at these schools/colleges.

- The Federation is responsible for legislation, and the individual *Länder* are responsible for implementation with regard to the conditions of service and staff representation rights of teachers at public sector schools of compulsory education.
- The Federation is responsible for basic legislation, and the *Länder* are responsible for issuing and implementing laws with regard to the organizational structure of federal education authorities in the *Länder* and the external organization of public sector schools of compulsory education. External organization includes the development, construction, maintenance and approval of schools, but also the establishment of pupil numbers per class and teaching periods. All basic legislation has a framework character and is expressed through implementing laws promulgated by the *Landtage*, the legislative bodies at *Länder* level.
- The *Länder* are responsible for legislation and implementation as, for example, with regard to nursery schools.

Individual schools and their principals have little autonomy; they have some budgetary autonomy and they are allowed to adapt the curricula to their needs within limited boundaries. The teachers are responsible for the interpretation of curricular guidelines. Consultations play an important part in the Austrian school system. Through the *School Education Act* (*Schulunterrichtsgesetz*, 1974), the stakeholders – teachers, parents, students and the community – are invited to participate in decision-making. As part of social partnership, teacher unions, relevant organisations and groups have a strong influence on decision-making. Since the school year 1993/94, the 14th amendment to the *School Organization Act* [*Schulorganisationsgesetz*, 1993] has empowered the respective school partnership body (*Schulgemeinschaftsausschuss* [SGA]: a school committee comprising teachers', pupils' and parents' representatives or *Schulforum*: school forum in compulsory schools in which only teachers' and parents' representatives are involved) to issue its own curricular regulations autonomously by a two-thirds vote. This means that main focal points may be chosen within a given framework and schools can develop their own profile. Provisions governing school autonomy at pre-vocational schools enable a flexible response to the vocational interests of pupils and the respective demands of the particular region.

Nowadays, the challenges for educational development lie in the recent societal development – especially concerning culture, science, technology, environment, law, and economy. The number of immigrants with different cultural background has influenced the population at large and schools in particular. People have to learn to live in a democratic way and have to recognize and enact their social responsibility. To be able to develop these competences, self-assurance and self-organized learning and acting have to be encouraged. The pupils should acquire abilities and competences necessary for their further education and profession, for example the ability to cope with communicative and cooperative tasks.

Although Austrian schools have generally had a good reputation in the Austrian public according to yearly ratings, the results of PISA and TIMSS studies had brought about heated political and public discussions about the quality of schooling in Austria. As a consequence, similarly to other European countries, a stronger evidence-based governance system has been introduced and in the future a lot more accountability and reporting systems will be introduced. The discussion progressed from a strong idea of accountability and minimum achievement standards in the early 2000s towards a development-oriented approach from the middle of the 2000s, but more strongly since 2010. The focus was high on the subject of teaching and the school-level improvement and development. Currently, the well-established development-oriented educational standards system may be changing to a more performance-oriented standards system. In the near future, the new system will be tested on the level of individual student performance at different stages of the system and will not primarily address the level of teaching or schools anymore.

## PRINCIPALS BETWEEN FEDERALISM AND CENTRALISM, BETWEEN CONTROLLER AND DEVELOPER

For a long time, the principal's role in Austria had been characterised by hierarchical positioning within a centrally governed school system. The role of the principal hinged largely on the school administration's governance concept at the time, which was marked by the school as a subordinate administrative authority. The school leader, as a "primus inter pares", served to implement official regulations as smoothly as possible (Schratz, 1998; Wiesner *et al.*, 2015). By the end of the 1970s, the epistemic interest of the principals was to focus on improving the quality of lessons and schools as an educational action-and-organisational unit (Fend, 1987). In those days, the individual school and its quality were seen as the "motor" or "driver" of



school improvement. Additionally the improvement systems were based on organisational development theories (e.g., Dubs, 1994; Scharmer & Käufer, 2013) and emphasis was put on the principal's leadership and personnel responsibility as central elements. The role of the principal changed to forming, developing and designing an organizational culture, which has a strong influence on the quality of organizational learning (Senge, 1990). Following the data-based paradigm after the first large-scale international comparative studies, principals became highly responsible for stability within the system and for the performance of their school in order to embed processes effectively and sustainably in output-measurements (Schratz *et al.*, 2016). The implementation of the national educational standards began in 2008/09 and their regular assessment in 2011/12. This formally marks the shift in policy towards a focus on outputs and school development and making it transparent that the required outputs comprise being able to use knowledge and competences. The feedback system through the educational standards broadens the scope of evidence-oriented quality development for schools and teachers (Schratz *et al.*, 2019). Now the principal has to advise the teachers and to monitor the performance of the pupils/students.

Nowadays principals in Austrian schools are either civil servants of the federation (academic secondary schools or secondary vocational schools) or of the federal state (primary, general secondary schools, special schools or vocational schools). The principal is the head of a school, and all teachers and other staff directly report to him or her. He or she is responsible for the running of the school and the interactions between teachers, parents, and pupils. Moreover, he or she has to communicate with superiors (e.g. inspectors) and stakeholders outside school. The principal is responsible for the quality and improvement of the school through quality assurance systems, for running the school like an organization, and for the school performance through the output of the learners. In other words, principals are in a hybrid position - neither controllers nor developers, but both.

Further duties of the principal are laid down in the *Civil Service Code* and the *Province Teacher Service Code*. He or she runs the school, corresponds with the school authorities, and advises teachers on their teaching and educational work. Principals may inspect instruction being given in the classrooms at any time, in order to monitor the quality of teaching. The principal is responsible for implementing laws and other legal regulations as well as instructions issued by the educational authorities. The principal prepares meetings with school partners and is responsible for executing the decisions made at these meetings. Principals have to adapt the annual budget to the needs of their school. In smaller schools, principals have a



partial teaching assignment, which depends on the number of classes at their school.

The duties and responsibilities of a principal are regulated through laws established by the Austrian Parliament. The principal has to arrange all matters regarding the federal law – except concerns belonging under the jurisdiction of other elements of the school system or of the supervisory school authorities. She or he is the direct superior of all teachers working at the school, and of all other employees. He or she is responsible to run the school and to cultivate the contact between the school, the pupils, the legal guardians, and (at secondary vocational schools) other staff with teaching duties. The principal has to advise the teachers concerning their teaching and their contribution to the education of the children; periodically he or she also has to monitor both quality of teaching and the students' performance.

In schools where a permanent deputy of the principal is appointed, he or she has to assist the principal fulfilling his or her duties. Individual duties incumbent upon this deputy head have to be determined by service instructions given by the Federal Ministry of Education. In schools in which a teacher is appointed for the assistance of the principal, the assistant has to fulfil all administrative duties linked with the pedagogical work in the school. The principal has to take care that all teachers working at the school fulfill their duties in a regular, appropriate, economic, and economical manner. He or she has to guide them, to give them appropriate instructions, to deal with occurring mistakes and grievances, and to see about the adherence to the office hours. The principal has to promote the professional advancement of the teachers, taking into account their performances. As a general rule, the principal has to be present in school during teaching hours. In the case of a temporary absence during teaching hours, he or she has to provide a substitute. At schools with teaching hours in the mornings and afternoons, the school board can shorten the compulsory attendance of the principal, in which case a substitute has to be provided. The principal has to establish a strategic plan for staff requirements and personnel development.

In order to be appointed principal of a school in Austria, a selection process has to be successfully completed for all types of schools. Because of public criticism on too strong an influence of political parties through their affiliated teacher unions policy measures have been undertaken, both on the national and federal levels with a view towards more transparency in the recruiting process. This has led to more competence-oriented selection criteria, such as assessment centres, potential analyses and similar. The introduction of such procedures, which are partly commissioned by private firms, has helped to raise the standards in the selection of school leaders,

but hiring firms or buying software makes the process costly. The new development has also motivated teachers to apply for positions; previously they would not have done so, believing they would not be recruited. Currently, a new, three-stage, nationwide uniform application procedure is being prepared and developed, to be used throughout Austria.

In the past, teachers had to complete a school-based part-time management course with 12 ECTS credits within 4 years after appointment, which should increase professionalism within three to four semesters. The courses are offered in each state by the university colleges of teacher education (Pädagogische Hochschulen), each of which developed individual curricula taking into account a framework set by the ministry in 2008. In the near future, principals will have to earn 20 ECTS credits through the university programme “Leading Schools Professionally – Prequalification” before they can apply for a position. However, the 12 ECTS Course will still be offered in some federal states. Starting in January 2023, from the date of appointment candidates will additionally have to take the university programme “Managing Schools Professionally” (40 ECTS credits), which has to be completed within four to five years. Five years of school leadership experience (as a temporarily trusted school principal) will count as 30 ECTS credits and could replace the prequalification course, while the remaining 10 ECTS will be credited to the course “Managing Schools Professionally”. After a five-year probationary phase school leaders will be appointed permanently. They usually stay at the same school or move up the career ladder by becoming school inspectors.

## SCHOOL PRINCIPAL RESEARCH IN AUSTRIA

### **The research context**

Although the national rhetoric in educational policies in Austria deals a lot with principalship and its important role in school improvement, research on school principals has not received a lot of attention in informing both education policy and practice. It seems, that “despite the well-known impact of principals towards school quality improvement, Austrian school research is not strongly developed in the field of school leadership research and therefore has little effect on policy and practice” (Wiesner *et al.*, 2015: 66). It was rather international co-operations which have given special impetus to leadership research. Accordingly, Austria’s participation in international projects such as Leadership for Learning (EU), Principalship Improvement (OECD), Central European Co-operation for Education (CECE), TALIS (Teaching and

Learning International Survey) and EPNoSL (European Policy Network on Principalship) among others, have mobilized research potential on principalship and offered a comparative context for principal research in Austria. A lot of the research on principals is implicit and backpacks on other topics as part of research on governance and school autonomy, school profile development and school development, school quality, and issues of equity (diversity, migration, but also school structures – e.g. early streaming/segregation) and inclusion.

Bryk (2015) argues that, while there are sufficient scientific findings for successful schools and effective teaching, there are few studies or findings on how this data, information and knowledge can be transferred into different contexts and diverse populations for them to actually have a sustainable impact in schools. For him, this dilemma is related to the often-unperceived complexity of our education and school systems, but also to the range of fluctuation in the results (outputs, outcomes) they produce. There have been some more or less promising concepts in the last decades in Austria, which are highly important for principals.

## **Concepts and findings on principals' role, work and development**

### *Key competences for effective principalship*

“What makes a principal successful in the 21st century?” was the fundamental question that researchers investigated in a EU-supported CECE<sup>1</sup> project, in which Austria took part (Révai & Kirkham, 2013). The study with four neighbouring countries focused on the competences principals will need in the future and their development (preparation and training) in five countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia). The result of the 3-year-long co-operation is the first cross-border competency framework based on the research into the expectations of key stakeholders such as principals, teachers, and trainers of principals, educational experts and policy-makers, called Central 5 – the *Central European Competency Framework for Principals*. It defines the knowledge, skills and attitudes a principal is expected to possess in order to be successful in a turbulent and fast-changing world. As such, it encompasses the art and science of leading a school and captures the complexity of their role in the following five domains:

- leading and managing learning and teaching
- leading and managing change

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<sup>1</sup> Central European Co-operation for Education

- leading and managing self
- leading and managing others
- leading and managing the institution

The competency framework is based on investigation into principals' opinions and experiences of managing and leading schools. The five domains relate to specific areas of principals' work and integrate competences which are presented as knowledge, skills and attitudes. Knowledge in this competency framework includes facts, information, descriptions or skills acquired through principal education and training or experience. "It can refer to the theoretical or the practical understanding of a subject. Knowledge can be explicit (as with the theoretical understanding of a subject) or implicit (as with practical skill or experience) and can be more or less formal or systematic. A skill in this competency framework is the learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results often with the minimum outlay of time, energy, or both. A skill is the ability that one possesses. General skills would include teamwork, time management, leadership and self-motivation. Specific skills are related to a certain job, e.g. in school management. An attitude is positive or negative evaluation of people, objects, activities, ideas etc.; it is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour." (Révai & Kirkham, 2013: 44)

*Positioning leadership in a culture of "Führung"*  
(*Culture of Leadership*)

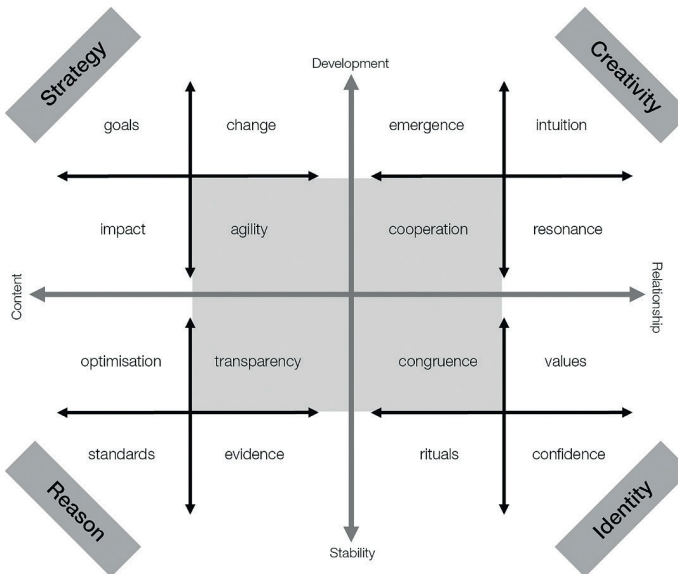
In 2004 the Minister of Education, Science and Culture founded the Leadership Academy (LEA). The original intent was for the LEA to prepare principals "operating outside a hierarchical, bureaucratic structure, with the capacity to act more independently, to take greater initiative, and to manage their schools though the changes entailed by a stream of government reforms" (Stoll, Moorman & Rahm, 2008: 16). Previous research on the role of principals in Austria (e.g. Fischer & Schratz, 1993; Rauch & Biott, 2003; Pool, 2007; Schratz & Petzold, 2007) indicates that competences related to management and leadership form an important foundation for the qualification and professionalization of principals. So the LEA programme was based on theories of action about effective learning-centred leadership, about effective learning of leadership learning, and about effective systems change. A tailor-made research model and instrument, *FieldTransformation*<sup>360</sup> (FTF<sup>360</sup>), has been used in the Leadership Academy (Schley & Schratz, 2010; Stoll, Moorman, & Rahm, 2008; Wiesner *et al.*, 2015; Schratz *et al.*, 2016; Gregorzewski, Schratz & Wiesner, 2018; Wiesner, 2019) to monitor development

of individual progress in the participants' competences and personal mastery. According to Senge (1990), personal mastery is interpreted as a value-based, intrinsic and motivational understanding of individual as well as organizational life. Consequently, personal mastery in the FTF<sup>360</sup> aims at the professional self – not just with respect to professional knowledge, but also with respect to one's own understanding as a whole and to self-awareness (Schratz, Paseka & Schrittmesser, 2011).

This culture of leadership in education can be defined as the basis for successful leadership in practice. In the educational context of schools, a "culture of leadership" is understood to be a visionary style of leadership embracing all leadership responsibilities, in which responsibility is shared in order to fulfil and achieve mutual tasks and common goals through personal, social, organisational and systemic as well as value-based, purpose-based emotion, thought and action.

This approach covers a wide range of competences for social and situational actions. FTF360 consists of different fields (quadrants), which are set up between the poles of stability and development on the one hand, and relationships and content on the other. Competence refers to the inherent ability to freely vary between poles and generate knowledge and actions, meaning a certain level of quality that is more highly aggregated and is characterised as an ability to actually handle knowledge and actions (cf. Dewe, 2010). In the FTF model, the first quadrant (bottom left; hereafter clockwise) represents "rational processes" of reason and sanity, the second "strategic processes" of objectives and goals, the third "creative processes" of ambition and creation and the fourth "identity processes" of grounding and values regarding educational leadership [...] (Wiesner *et al.*, 2015: 82). Each quadrant contains four thematic fields. Working with the model renders leaders and researchers an understanding of the respective leadership *culture* in the dynamic framework between stability and development as well as distance (factual content) and proximity (emotional relationship), which determines the space of opportunities for each leadership action (Schratz *et al.*, 2016) with regard to a personal leadership mastery (cf. Fig. 1).

Figure 1. School leadership qualities according to the "FieldTransformation<sup>360</sup>" model<sup>2</sup>



According to the theoretical model, leadership and personal mastery are situated within the two axes: On the one hand, principals have to balance their work between the *past* (stability and continuation) and *the unknown future* (development and innovation); on the other hand, they have to achieve the desired or expected results through communication with the people in relations and connections (teachers, students, parents, partners etc.) involved. Successful principals have to be competent in all four quadrants, which means they have to:

- be a visionary, articulate goals and give the direction where the school is going (strategy),
- build organisational effectiveness and a community through standards, norms and rules to achieve expected goals and to gain a commitment within the people (reason),
- show character to live the values which are convincing and support the leadership attitude to create a culture of leadership (identity),

<sup>2</sup> The "FieldTransformation 360" was developed by a think tank consisting of Wilfried Schley, Michael Schratz, Christian Wiesner, David Kemethofer and Johannes Schley, and based on the theoretical work of Riemann (1961), Ulrich, Zenger & Smallwood (1999), Watzlawick, Beavin Bavelas & Jackson (1967), Thomann (2014), Scharmer (2009), Schley & Schley (2010), Schratz, Hartmann & Schley (2010), Wiesner (2010), Scharmer & Käufer (2013). The model was also developed with reference to the "Central 5".

- facilitate personal engagement of all the actors involved for a resonant and generative way of working and living together (creativity).

The concept of the Leadership Academy (LEA) including the FTF model assumes that school climate and school quality are significantly influenced by school leadership and that school leaders are amongst the most important change agents in schools. Against the background of the social framework, political conditions and new challenges to the school system, school leaders must be competent in dealing with transformation (Schratz, Hartmann & Schley, 2010: 29). In this sense, leadership is a specific attitude and watchful care – *Haltung* (Steinkellner & Wiesner, 2017), directed towards the future, which is to be enacted in the present as leaders have to act in the present by sensing already the future in a given present moment (Scharmer, 2007).

For Stoll, Moorman & Rahm (2007: 27) the Leadership Academy programme (16 ECTS), was “an innovative and carefully crafted response to a need to prepare a large number of school leaders over a short period of time to fulfil their role effectively in an increasingly autonomous system. Blending content and process, it focuses on developing learning-centred leadership and an orientation to systems change through an approach that emphasises building personal capacity in a supportive learning community”.

*The importance of reflection in spiral shaped cycling movements.* Systematically implemented “quality development leads to a cyclic movement that, if successful, leads upwards in the form of a spiral” (Schratz, Iby & Radnitzky, 2000: 10). The “distance from the target criterion becomes the basis for assessments” (Terhart, 2002: 58) and becomes the centre of interest in order to enable comparative assessments of schools of the same type or with the same prerequisites. The processing cycle of evidence is influenced by various individual, school and external conditions and ideally reflects the development-oriented effect through helical or spiral-shaped evaluation processes (Wurster *et al.*, 2013; Schratz *et al.*, 2019). In particular, the Helmke framework model (2004) corresponds to the school and teaching development and shows the pedagogical benefits of data and information. Following Helmke’s supply-use model (2007), there is, ideally, manifold evidence for school and classroom improvement and development, be it with regard to achievements, competence levels, processes (enjoyment of the subject, etc.), satisfaction or other aspects of school quality at a particular school, which are (1) understood (received), (2) reflected and then (3) could lead to concrete changes (Helmke, 2007) through actions relating to school and teaching development, the (4) effectiveness of which is then evaluated internally. Each of the “individual steps (reception, reflection, action, evaluation)



is a prerequisite for the next step” (Koch *et al.*, 2006: 190). In principle, the model is for principals also “suitable for describing the use of self-evaluation data” (Wurster *et al.*, 2013: 24).

In the course of the Austrian education standard testing stages in 2016, 2017 and 2018, in order to partially examine parts of the model (reception – reflection – action), all school principals at lower secondary and primary school level in Austria were surveyed with regard to school development work with the education standard testing (cf. Wiesner, Schreiner, Breit, Kemethofer, George & Angerer, 2016). The results reinforce the significance of *reflection* in the evidence-oriented school and teaching development (Wiesner, Schreiner, Breit & George, 2018). The reception of evidence heavily influences the reflection work by principals in the secondary school, which in turn has a great impact on action. However, there are no discernible significant direct effects of reception on action (Schratz *et al.*, 2019; Wiesner & Schreiner, 2019). Similar effects have been observed in school principals at primary school level. Evidence can be used as part of a powerful reflection process that aims at understanding, instruction, and mobilisation of processes and actions, in order to improve and develop the school over time (Firestone & Gonzalez, 2007). Reflection work should be understood as value work and cultural work and is a defining stage of the entire process (cf. Helmke, 2004) of school and lesson development and improvement.

### *Leadership for learning*

Schwartz (2013) dealt with the first systematic application of the concept of the Classroom Walkthrough (CWT) in a German speaking country. She sees CWT as a highly effective instrument to monitor and direct lessons to achieve leadership for learning if the principal of the school frequently observes lessons for a short amount of time and thus gets a snapshot insight into the pedagogical work at the school. A principal’s task to affect higher student achievement can only be achieved through the teachers and their actions in the classroom. Her findings point to the fact that successful work with the CWT in schools can trigger dialogue about teaching and learning through efficient and trustful feedback. By putting the focus on all efforts on teaching and learning of pupils and teachers, the principal can get an insight and high-quality data which can be used for school and staff development. The stronger the CWT is linked to the goals of the development plan of the school, the more successful will its implementation be and the more success will this concept have at the actual school.



There are different practices for evaluating walkthroughs. Various forms have developed, depending on the time available, the size of the school, and the school culture: individual feedback, feedback at subject area or grade level, feedback to team-teaching partners or to the entire teaching staff. The short reflective dialogue has proved to be the best form. "The primary objective of the walkthrough is to improve pupils' performance through reflection and the professional development of teachers" (Schwarz, 2011: 30).

So the competences needed for principals in mastering CWT as a leadership-for-learning tool are highly complex. Therefore Schwarz investigated how Austrian principals mastered the implementation of the CWT at their schools. According to her findings, feedback about what the principal had observed in a professional conversation with the teachers proved to be the most important asset in staff development. The aims of these dialogues are twofold: on the one hand, they should encourage the teachers to reflect on their own actions; on the other hand, they should inform the leadership team about how they can support their teachers' progression. The primary aim of walkthroughs lies in the increase in students' achievement through the reflection and the professional development of the staff.

## SUMMARY

This chapter on leadership research in Austria has given insight into the Austrian school system which has historically been characterized as highly bureaucratic, strongly regulated in details, hierarchically organized, and little output-oriented. There seem to be too many actors, numerous parallel structures and too little congruence in task-orientation and responsibility. The system is characterized by a strong influence of the social partnership structures, partisan politics, the (teacher) union and the teacher representatives, whereas parents, students, research(ers) and other (less formally organized) actors have little voice (Schmid, Hafner & Pirolt, 2007).

School principals are confronted with conflicting messages from federal (Ministry) and regional (Länder) levels and often experience an overload of disconnected policies, leading to a sense of confusion and uncertainty on the different levels of the school system (regional, district, local levels). This in turn can lead to de-energizing effects of fragmentation, creating leadership dilemmas, and pulling principals into different directions between *sollen* (duty) and *wollen* (desire) (Schratz, 2003).

Although there has been a shift towards more school-based innovation through a slow movement towards more decentralization and deregulation (Schratz & Hartmann, 2009), local school governance and leadership are characterized by a flat hierarchical structure with one principal and varying numbers of teachers; due to a strong focus on one person, leadership is usually not shared by many people. Moreover, principals are confronted with restricted autonomy (finance, curriculum, personnel), which makes it difficult for them to empower their faculty for collective action.

Most of the research on principals in Austria concentrates on the question of what the key competences for effective leadership are in a system which asks principals to lead schools in a system which gradually becomes more autonomous. The answer to this question is based on research which was often done co-operatively with other partners through international projects (e.g. through European Union grants). This is a general feature of research in Austria because of the small size of the country and the limited number of researchers, which gains from internationalization and the comparative perspective.

The second question on principal research in Austria builds on the first one: How effective are national and regional qualification and professionalization programmes in teaching the necessary key competences to newly appointed and experienced principals? The results of the studies give an insight into how principals articulate goals and give the direction for the school, how they create organizational effectiveness and build community to achieve these goals, how they show character to live the values which are convincing and support the leadership attitude and how they facilitate individual engagement among the actors involved.

In more recent times the transformation of school governance has become a major focus of educational reform, which has stimulated various investigations to explore and evaluate various national strategies of school governance with respect to their contribution to quality development of the school system. Since principals play an important role in this transformation process at the school level, some of the research focuses on the role of principals as change agents, for example in evidence-based measures such as standardized testing or school inspection as an external evaluation.

The concepts and findings of the various research approaches have to be seen in the light of reform in stable systems, where policy cultures are closely related to the socio-historical context of a country, and that is why mere policy borrowing does not work easily (Devos & Schratz, 2012). Although schools are locally managed in Austria, the government still decides what constitutes a good school. Therefore the introduction of national

testing has led to some incremental changes. However, deep-rooted cultural mechanisms continue to successfully promote decentralization and stability as the most highly valued sources of educational quality. And principals have to walk the tightrope between federalism and centralization, which will be the dominant challenge in the near future and open up new research questions to be answered.

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## **EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND STATE OF MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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*Abstract.* The educational process is one of the most complex service-oriented social activities. In education, clients are not just students, but their parents, the local community, the economy, and the wider social community. Therefore, in countries with a significant degree of democracy, education is of great importance because the progress of every social community depends on quality assurance in education. It is well known that 90% of a school's quality of work is its competent employees (Ender, 2000). This points to the importance of those who guide, educate, encourage, monitor, and evaluate students. This paper deals with the status of educational management in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) from the point of view of the educational complex structure in BH, legislation, with a focus on the position of the heads of school institutions. Conclusions are based on theoretical considerations of research in the field of education management outside and within BH. In the end, based on the results of positive local practice, we indicate ways to improve the state of educational leadership, as well as education and continuous professional development of the directors of the school institutions in BH. Based on these considerations, a list of priorities for thematic areas for director training is proposed.

*Key words:* educational management, leadership, training and professional development

### INTRODUCTION

Globalization includes economic, political and cultural processes. It is very complex but controversial as well. Education and education systems cannot exist beyond these changes. No manager can assume that his organization is isolated from global activities. No school can ignore the global perspective. Education needs to be directed towards the context in which it functions

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and to the full development of each person. The schools' tasks become more demanding, as education needs to prepare young people for new technologies and new value systems. School directors have a special role to play in accomplishing these tasks. According to Ender and Strittmatter (2004), the director must be prepared to respond to the needs of employees (e.g., development needs, new learning, support for teachers) which are arising from school development (e.g., optimization of processes, long-term school development). The teachers together with the director are the initiators of change. That is why it is said that the director must "lead, not shape" (Delors, 1998: 162).

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) school directors are being immersed in a profession for which they have not been educated. Some have a qualification as a manager in education, but very rarely. The majority of them get elected for this function based on an open tender that has very general requirements, and in no part of BH is there a demand in the procedure for management and leadership education. On the other hand, there is no supply of formats and methods of training that meet the needs and opportunities for learning of a school director. Learning styles, specific prerequisites for learning, and working conditions of a school are at the center for developing director's competences. Initial training for directors for developing competences important for business life is obtained outside the institution, by the self-initiative of appropriating knowledge, outside formal forms of education. Forms of informal learning play a major role in the biographies of directors. Standard seminar-based offerings do not meet the requirements of directors because they are not tailored to the specific and concrete needs of school directors' field of work. In BH, there are no opportunities and learning arrangements in the education system to provide quick and uncomplicated access to knowledge for the current problem. In this paper, we will address the situation in the area of education management and improvement of directors' competences in BH and on the basis of gained experience and research, in order to propose measures for the future.

## EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT FROM A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

By studying extensive literature in the field of management in education, it can be concluded that there is a lack of a single definition of the concept of leadership and the conceptual complexity of this phenomenon. In theoretical discussions and frameworks of conducted research, leadership is defined in various ways. As an illustration, there is data on the existence (up to 2011)

of 201 million internet sites and 6 million leadership books (Bolden, 2011). Despite being satiated with information about leadership, there are trends that are noted in the development of the concept of leadership and the common elements of its various definitions which have already been mentioned (Buchberger, 2017).

The central element of many definitions of leadership is recognizable as a process of influence. Petz (1992), Robbins (1995), Tavcar (2002) and Bush (2003), cite the influence of leader on the group as the main function and form of behavior in the process of leadership (in: Agić, 2009). Citing the authors Newman and Clarke (1994), and Gunter *et al.* (1997), Bolam (1999) defines educational management as “performing functions with the consent of politics” (in: Bush & Bell, 2002). He differentiates leadership from educational management through the core of formulating responsibility through transforming politics into the leader’s own organization. Bush, Bell, Bolam, Glatter, and Ribbins (1999) constantly emphasize that educational management should be focused on the goals of education. Goals must be measurable, realistic, focused on activities and tasks at school or colleagues. Goals, as the vital interest of education, management, and even those who set it up (politics), should be the center of attention.

Riches (in: Morrison, 2003: 209) has set five major tasks for the school leader: (1) sets clear goals; (2) serves as an example; (3) supports and respects colleagues; (4) develops and preserves culture in school; (5) sets and interprets the mission and vision into action. Bush *et al.* (1999) constantly emphasize that educational management should be focused on the goals of education. It is the subject of constant debate and disagreement. The main course of school management is activities, tasks at school, or colleagues.

## THE STATE OF THE EDUCATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a specific structure of education systems, jurisdiction and governance within its constitutional structure. In BH, 12 education systems operate in ten cantons, Republica Srpska, and the Brcko District of BH. The following table presents educational institutions in BH at different administrative levels, dealing with education policy, legislation in education, and the financing of education.

*Table 1. Overview of educational institutions*

<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Level of Functioning</b>
Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has a Department for Education	state
The Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska	entity
The Ministry of Education and Sports of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	entity
The Government of Brcko District of BH, where there is a Education Department	district/local
Cantonal Ministries of Education within FBiH – 10 cantonal ministries	canton
Department of Education in Municipalities and Cities	local

The system of governance in education systems in BH implies two subsystems: managing the organization of the educational process from the financial, legal, and administrative aspect; and quality management regarding teaching content, methods of work, evaluation, continuous improvement EUICBE, and Education Development Strategy (in: BH 2008–2016: 7).

The following table gives an overview of professional education institutions in BH at different administrative levels.

*Table 2. Overview of institutions dealing with professional issues in BH education*

<b>Name of Institution</b>	<b>Level of Functioning</b>
Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education	state
Agency for Higher Education	state
Pedagogical Institute of Republika Srpska Entity	entity
Pedagogical institution of Brcko district	district/local
Pedagogical institutes at Canton level – 8 cantonal institutes	canton

From a review of the legal regulations at all levels, Table 2 provides a list of basic functions of the mentioned educational institutions in BH (Damjanović, Suša, Škunca, Milenković, Ristić, 2012):

- Coordination of activities in the education sector including: coordination of education administration, coordination of the education system, cooperation with other sectors in BH, cooperation with NGOs;
- Planning and development of education policies including: strategic development of education, legislation, institutional development, human resource development;
- Monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of education, including: education statistics and information systems, standards of student achievement and assessment of achieved results, development of common core curricula, accreditation and certification, other tasks and tasks within the jurisdiction of bodies, agencies and other professional institutions and bodies established at the level of BH and the lower levels of government, inspections;
- Financing of education with macroeconomic planning, financing of educational institutions;
- Planning of a network of educational institutions and
- EU integration and international co-operation.

Among the authorities and bodies dealing with the issues of education and professional issues from Table 1 and 2, there is no true cooperation or binding legal regulation. There are very sporadic examples of transferring experiences from local environments to a higher level, whereas cantons and entities are responsible for all issues (apart from a few) in the field of education, practice exchange, creating joint plans, and joint projects. The only opportunity to exchange experiences and results is engagement through project activities that are funded by international institutions.

Educational management in BH is not properly set up at state level. Article 52 of the *Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BH*<sup>1</sup> stipulates that “the director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and for the conduct of the school’s pedagogical activities”, whereas the School Board is responsible for “determining and implementing school policies, and the efficient use of human and material resources” (Article 51), whereby the school “enjoys an adequate degree of freedom [...] especially with regard to recruitment of teaching, professional and other staff, and freedom of work for teachers” (Article 41). Articles from the Framework Law become significantly transformed when they are incorporated in laws of the cantons and entities.

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced under Article I. IV. 4.a) and II.4.) of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the session of the House of Representatives held on 27 June 2003 and at the session of the House of nations held on 30 June 2003.

Although political interference, which should not be a subject in the area of school autonomy, is prohibited, in practice it is different. Not only is the choice of director a political matter, but also the employment of teachers is a matter of political assignment. Of course, declaratively, officially, employment is the director's responsibility; however, this is not the case in practice.

Interestingly, the last paragraph of the cited Article 108 is filled with what cannot be under the obligations of other sections of that article, which are the foundations of school management. From formal and informal conversations with the director of educational institutions, it can be concluded that the content of the indents "performs other activities in accordance with the law and school rules" refers to the following activities:

- providing additional financial resources for school work, investments and capital investments,
- procurement of funds, materials and the like,
- preparation and realization of various projects,
- supervision and control of the work of employees,
- legal affairs – interpretation of the law, legal disputes with associates,
- cooperation with parents, the local community, governmental and non-governmental organizations,
- work with students – pedagogical jobs
- professional development of teachers
- organization of competitions.

During the training sessions for school directors, an impression is gained that directors, due to lack of money for regular and extracurricular activities, spend most of their time obtaining additional financial resources for various projects, and co-operation with businesses, parents, and the local community. According to the statements of school directors, they are exhausted in unnecessary administrative and legal affairs due to improper and imprecise legislation (Agić, 2009). In this way, time, as a resource, is lost at the expense of pedagogical leadership activities. "As long as they [directors] work and hold to their administrative tasks and only take care of the school building in which their school works, we cannot expect directors to devote themselves to working with people" (Erčulj, 2001: 88).

Thus, educational management in reality is reduced to administration, transmission of information, instructions, and orders of the ministry in charge. From the jurisdiction of school directors, which is prescribed by law, the direct powers of director should be seen through the dual role – leadership and managerial, and many authors have given their theoretical contributions to explaining this role (Bell *et al.*, 1999; Bush & West-Burnham,

1994; Bush & Bell, 2002). By comparing directors' attitudes<sup>2</sup> with theoretical approaches to management (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994; Everard & Morris, 1996; Morrison, 2003), we come to the conclusion that the current state of education in BH is more oriented toward managerial than toward leadership approaches. We have prioritized tasks that directors would like to work in:

- improvement of educational work
- professional upgrading of teachers and management
- work on the motivation of employees and
- creating a favorable climate in school.<sup>3</sup>

These priorities are fully contained in a list of elements that directors, as pedagogical leaders, must take into account in their educational leadership (Bush & Bell, 2002: 73).

Thus, when it comes to educational management in educational institutions, it can be concluded that there is disagreement between the statements that define educational leadership and the actual situation of management in schools in BH. Such generalization of presented attitudes for the level of BH is justified, because the educational processes in BH are all more or less, similar or the same. Although there has been no research at BH level, it can be concluded that there are positive practices at local level in treating educational management.

One good example is the Pedagogical Institute of Tuzla, which, based on the experience of attendees of the School of Directors in Slovenia, organizes training for school directors in the Tuzla canton in a modular pattern, with topics that are suitable for adult learning (three modules per 3 days training, in total 9 days). In this canton, the education of directors and members of school boards is a legal obligation. Education is intended for new directors in the first year of their term of contract. In the Zenica–Doboj Canton, a director of a school is obliged to obtain a certificate of qualification for performing the function in the first year of his/her mandate. Training is brief, two days for legislative topics and one day for financial management. On the topic of teamwork, trainees are required to develop a project to improve the quality of educational work. The Commission consisting of 3 members conducts an interview and decides on certification.

In the following text, we will present an overview of education management in BH with a focus on leadership.

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<sup>2</sup> From the Report on the training of directors of primary and secondary schools TK Module 3. 2008, Pedagogical Institute TK.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## AN OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

A more organized approach to the implementation of educational management in education institutions began after the implementation of numerous educational development projects funded by the European Commission<sup>4</sup>, the Open Society Fund of BH, KulturKontakt Austria, the CES project of the Finnish Government, Save The Children for South East Europe, etc. Significant project activities that had very good results were achieved in the first decade of this century. We highlight Soroš's "Model for Systemic Changes in Secondary Education in BH" project, which was accomplished in cooperation with the relevant Ministry of Education in Tuzla canton (TK). One of the results of the project was the education of 20 directors of primary and secondary schools in TK in the School for Directors of the Republic of Slovenia. After that, 17 students enrolled in postgraduate studies at the University of Kopar (Faculty of Management), in collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University. The result is that all, 10 participants obtained master degrees, and 3 completed doctoral theses in management in education. Below we will outline several research results that came from a group of authors employed in schools, the relevant ministry, and the TK Pedagogical Institute. Research is mainly focused on examining the existence of various models and leadership styles in educational institutions.

In the research among directors and teachers in 8 primary school in TK, Isaković (2007) investigated the existence of a transformational style of leadership, which is a "type of educational leadership that is necessary to introduce schools to the 21st century" (Fullan, 1991, Leithwood *at al.*, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992; Harris, 2002; Bush, 2003; in Agić, 2009: 102). It was shown that the transformational style of leadership is not predominant in schools in BH. Hasanović (2009) in his study of 250 directors of upper secondary schools from all parts of BH showed that the general concept of transformation and transactional leadership and the transactional style of leadership individually, fall into the middle rank of development, while the transformational leadership of upper secondary school is transitioning to a high level of development in the system of upper secondary education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hasanović, 2009: 206).

Huseinagić (2009) conducted empirical research among 60 of 120 school directors in TK, based on the Hersey and Blanchard model: situational

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<sup>4</sup> See in: *White Paper: A Joint Strategy for the Modernization of Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2003. Educational authorities in BH with the help of the EC-TAER program and the European Union.



model and eponymous questionnaire (Bass, 1990: 490). The research has shown that principals rarely use a “directing style”, “delegating” and “transferring responsibility”, which is a style of leadership appropriate for subordinates who are competent and consistent (R4) and capable of accomplishing the task set (Huseinagić, 2009: 158). From the tabular overview (Huseinagić, 2009: 137–138) it can be seen that 20.41% of directors were practicing “directive style” in 12 offered situations. “Encouragement to Cooperate” was used by 20.55%, “Delegating” by 11.52%, while “Teaching and Monitoring”, where the leader was highly focused on relationships and tasks perceived, was used by 47.50% of directors. It is clear that “Delegating”, where the leader is low directional to relationships as well as to tasks was very modest, with a level of only 11,52% (Huseinagić, 2009: 138).

When it comes to a situation-based approach to leadership, in his research, Avdić (2006), using the theoretical basis from Northouse (2001), showed that situation-based approach to leadership in BH, viewed through the prism of research on the Hersey–Blanchard model (in: Agić, Avdić, Bajrić, Halilović, Hasanović, 2006: 108–122) is present at the middle level of development of the directors of upper secondary schools. The most presented styles of leadership of school directors (S2 and S3) are aligned with the abilities and maturity of followers. Due to insufficiently developed “wider professionalism” of the teachers, it did not get into a high-level leadership style (S4)-delegating, which, due to the high degree of maturity of the followers, is characterized by the low level of directivity by director – leaders, both by tasks and by relationships (in Hasanović, 2009: 256).

Participatory leadership, through the level of delegating tasks by the directors of upper secondary schools to employees (Jahić, 2006; Agić *et al.*, 2006: 123–153), is at medium development, based on the survey in the TK. The level of delegation of tasks ranges from 40% to 93.50%. At the high level, tasks are delegated from the “pedagogical aspect”, but at the low or middle levels “managerial jobs and tasks” are delegated. The research did not succeed in providing a fundamental understanding of the meaning of the term delegation for all categories of respondents, i.e, whether the transfer of “jurisdiction and powers from a director to associates” is considered as a process of democratization of leadership or as a subtle control of associates (in: Hasanović, 2009: 256).



## EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING

When it comes to the educational training of directors in BH, the situation is very colorful. It is best implemented in the TK, due to staff who participated in the mentioned projects. The training of the directors of TK started in 2004, initially in cooperation with Slovenian colleagues, and later in the regular programs of professional training of the Tuzla Pedagogical Institute, with its own forces: new trainers who had graduated from Slovenian and English universities and university professors. The training program of TK directors was accepted by the Federal Ministry of Education in 2008 as a model for other cantonal ministries. In other cantons, there is no such form of education because ministries of education have not given their approval. The educational authorities of Brcko District implemented two of the three modules of this basic training program for management in education in 2009. In addition to the above-mentioned project, which was supported by the Open Society Fund of BH, some others have also addressed the issue of education management in BH. The CES (Corporation in Educational Sector) project is worthwhile. This was supported by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the TK Pedagogical Institute. Training of management teams from more than 200 schools was implemented by domestic staff (2004–2005). Another project was organized and supported by the Austrian KulturKontakt, and consisted of four modules (2010–2011). This training of directors from more than 100 schools across BH has been carried out, using domestic resources.<sup>5</sup>

Also, the Netherlands government has stimulated and helped set up a training programme for school management in many countries in South East Europe. Thus, BH was a participant of the program from 2010 to 2013, together with Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia. This program was organized and led by the Netherlands School for Educational Management (NSO) and the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education BH. Within the framework of the program, five people were trained to be school management trainers. Also, a collection of papers on this topic was issued, and a manual with created modules, lessons, exercises and tasks for future training participants were prepared. However, as with other similar projects, there was no opportunity for these trainers to gain further knowledge and competencies, as educational authorities did

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<sup>5</sup> These projects have weaknesses that are realized without taking into account the results of similar, already realized, projects. They are being implemented, and educational authorities have responsibility for their institutionalization. It is common practice that educational authorities do not sufficiently absorb the results of projects in the reform process of our education.

not show any interest in further activities in the area of school director training. More precisely, nothing has been done to introduce the training of the director as a systemic solution.

The projects implemented by the European Commission (EC-TAER and others), whose conclusions were accepted by all Entity and Cantonal Ministries of Education, contain statements on the need to strengthen the leadership and managerial competencies of directors of educational institutions. However, so far nothing has been done to institutionalize organized support for the management of educational institutions at state level.

The research in primary schools which was undertaken in the academic year 2010/2011 by the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education (the Agency), also provides indicators for additional education of school directors. Thus, about 80% of directors had a chance to improve their management skills. However, for 85.79% of those who attended the directors' training such education was largely during their existing mandate and did not represent a prerequisite for the selection of new school directors. The largest number of directors who attended management education (66.7%) stated that these actions were not enough, and that they should be more frequent and of better quality. This should be kept in mind when it comes to designing and planning the strategy for improving the functioning of schools in BH. In all of these studies, it has been shown that investing in directors of educational institutions is highly profitable. Studies have shown that the introduction of change, the creation of a favorable school climate, the manner of decision making, and relations to employee development and self-development depend on the level of training of managers in educational management (Agić, 2010, 2011, 2012).

In almost all areas of BH, everything seems to do with politics. By dealing with school-based support and school management, we can conclude that the role and status of a director is endangered because the choice of director tends to be related to political affiliation rather than professional abilities. The future status, role and training of directors in BH must be different from the current situation. In our practice, directors have a mandate equal to the executive authorities that have appointed them. It is therefore impossible to carry out seriously long-term planning and implementation of their professional development. Directors, as an important link in the education chain, should be selected on the basis of professional competencies with the obligation of continuous professional training without the influence of political powers.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After training sessions of school directors, research has shown that they have a different attitude toward change, which does not have to be introduced from top to bottom (Fullan, 2001). On the contrary, they are encouraged to change within the school with high participation of all participants in education in all segments, from planning, especially strategic decision-making, to curriculum creation and the need to institutionalize change. The aforementioned research projects took into account the programs and content directors' training, with the proposal of its thematic framework. Here are some suggestions for the priority of the thematic areas required for educational leadership in the 21st century. The results are shown in Table 3.

*Table 3. Overview of priority areas for education and training of directors*

Agić (2009) <sup>6</sup>	Hasanović (2009) <sup>7</sup>	Erčulj (2001) <sup>8</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership, decision-making, planning,</li> <li>• Changes, management and control, resistances,</li> <li>• Financing, obtaining special revenues, programming and projects,</li> <li>• Legislation, reading and interpretation, and drafting of subordinate legislation,</li> <li>• Quality of education, quality school,</li> <li>• Staff development, teamwork, conflicts, managing meetings, communication,</li> <li>• Theories of organization, culture of organization and others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with people,</li> <li>• Employee motivation,</li> <li>• Culture and climate in school,</li> <li>• Monitoring the work and professional development of teachers,</li> <li>• Conflict resolution in school,</li> <li>• Organization theory,</li> <li>• Cooperation of schools with the environment,</li> <li>• Theories of leadership in education,</li> <li>• Styles of learning and ways of creating knowledge,</li> <li>• Delegation of duties and powers to associates,</li> <li>• Introduction of change in school,</li> <li>• Strategic planning at school,</li> <li>• Communication in school,</li> <li>• Teamwork,</li> <li>• Evaluation of work of the school,</li> <li>• Project management at school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legislation,</li> <li>• Participations,</li> <li>• Planning (short-term and long-term planning),</li> <li>• Managing meetings,</li> <li>• Working with people (climate, professional development of employees)<sup>9</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Agić, 2009: 206

<sup>7</sup> Hasanović, 2009: 257–258

<sup>8</sup> Erčulj, 2001: 87–96

The content in Table 3 can form the basis for creating training programs for directors in BH. Those areas can be grouped in specific topics and modules. It is important that training encompasses all directors because more will be then achieved than if energy is used to improve the capabilities of only some of them (Drucker, 1993).

There is no alternative to investment in the directorates of educational institutions. Research by Agić (2009) has shown that a more favorable environment is concerned with: the introduction of change (climate, communication, participation in decision-making), relationship to (only) perfecting, communication, conflict resolution etc. in schools where managers were trained with disciplines from Management in Education in an organized way (Agić, 2009: 204–205). From experience in countries with a tradition of training managers and directors in education, (Slovenia for example), it is of crucial importance that decision-makers in this area should plan the initial training of directors before they enter their first director mandate. It is known that in the first few months of the directoriate, principals tend to create their “own style of leadership” (Roncelli Vaupot, 2001: 215–228).

Like many other issues in BH, the relationship to educational management is not adequate at the level of local communities. This must be a matter of social and political agreement in line with higher education strategies. Our country has a respectable resource that is competent in planning, implementing, and continuously improving the system of continuing professional training, as well as basic training in educational management. However, measures are deployed by entities and cantons, which operate without harmonized policies. Gathering all staff into one place with joint work on improving the status of educational management in BH would be of crucial importance for future activities and trends towards managers/principals more favorable status and better positions of leadership in educational institutions in BH.

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## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

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*Abstract:* The chapter presents the current state of educational leadership in the Republic of Bulgaria in terms of legislative framework and empirical research. Since changes made in the education system in 2015–2016, educational leaderships has been seen as one means toward raising the quality of education and creating effective educational organization. Still, the concept of educational leadership is not fully integrated in the legal requirements for the selection, appointment, and professional development of educational leaders. It is safe to say that leaders achieve the status of “leader” in the mind of their followers. That’s why the question of leadership is closely related to the perceptions and understandings of staff about the leadership position and the qualities of the person in charge. The article presents results from an empirical survey of leadership potential, built upon the concepts of J. Maxwell for “good leadership”.

*Keywords:* educational leadership, Bulgaria, legislative framework, principal’s professional development.

### INTRODUCTION

For the past decade there have been a number of reforms in the educational system in the Republic of Bulgaria. The most important one was the implementation of a new Law on preschool and school education in 2015, which was enforced in August 2016. This law replaced the *Law for people’s education*, which was active from 1991 until 2016 and was adapted, updated and changed numerous times. There was a need to make a smooth transitions between the old and new laws. Thus, policy makers decided that the new law would be officially published almost 10 months before being enforced, so the main stakeholders had sufficient time to prepare for one of the most crucial changes in educational system in the country. Those changes included changes in the school education system structure, changes regarding professional competencies of teachers and school leaders, and changes in school curricula.

For any educational leader to be effective, it is necessary to cooperate with and to consider the roles of national and regional governing bodies.

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The leader is one who stimulates and motivates both teachers and management staff to work together for the implementation of the educational process, including children's socialization. That's why preparation and training educational leaders should be integrated as part of the whole national educational policy. In Bulgaria, the Minister of education and his administration, along with regional and municipal governing bodies, should ensure the qualification and additional in-service training of educational managers.

The chapter presents some features and characteristics of educational leaders and educational leadership in Bulgaria in the context of the new educational law. These features include the legal framework for the selection, appointment and qualification of educational leaders, along with the perceptions teachers have of their school principals as leaders, gathered through empirical research. The research used a questionnaire by J. Maxwell for the evaluation of leadership potential (Maxwell, 1995) in relation to a questionnaire for measuring job satisfaction, developed by M. Radoslavova (Radoslavova & Velichkov, 2005). The job satisfaction questionnaire used several different subscales for measuring total satisfaction: satisfaction with character of tasks/activities; satisfaction with coworkers; satisfaction with leader; satisfaction with results.

According to Maxwell, leaders with high leadership potential should possess certain qualities and should be able to carry out certain activities better than their staff. For example, when applied to educational institutions, leaders with high potential should: know themselves; be confident; be quick-minded and intuitive in decision-making; carry values and norms, which are accepted and recognized from most of educational specialists in the school; be able to reach consensus; be generous, yet decisive and firm, when needed in their professional activity; be as objective as possible, impartial, when making judgements for actions of team members; and have high professional competency.

Leadership as a phenomenon has been an object of a long-term research interest both internationally and in the Bulgarian context. Still, the present article is more focused towards picturing the current state of educational leadership in the Bulgarian context than making a summary of leadership theories. Such summaries are easy to find (Amanchukwu, Stanley, Ololube, 2015; Bush & Glover, 2014; Bush & Glover, 2003; Nawaz & Khan, 2016).

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The main legal document arranging the educational system and its work is the *Law for preschool and school education*. After long debates both on

political and professional levels, with the broad participation of different social strata, the law passed through the Parliament at the end of 2015. With the implementation of the law, Bulgaria committed herself to developing an up-to-date educational system, making the national context closer to European educational policy, yet not forgetting national traditions in the educational field. The law strives for better inclusion of different vulnerable groups in education and for better quality of education as a whole.

While the *Law for Preschool and school education* was accepted but not yet enforces some additional relevant legal documents were also developed, needed for the full implementation of the Law. Some of these documents are directly related to educational leadership and educational leaders, like *Regulation for status and professional development of pedagogical specialists* (2016), where, along with other specialists in education, the professional profile and requirements for principals of educational institutions (educational managers) were stated explicitly for the first time in terms of skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Educational leaders are trained during the formal higher education system at Bachelor, Master or Doctoral levels. This can only be done in accredited universities with a license to teach in the field of education and/or management of education. Typically, a graduate gets a formal bachelor degree in a subject field and a qualification to teach. This is enough, along with 5 years of experience as a teacher, to be selected as manager of a school or kindergarten. There is no official requirement for a Masters degree in Educational management, although having one is considered a benefit in the selection process.

According to the *Law for preschool and school education*, a position of manager/principal/head teacher of an educational institution can be filled by any pedagogical specialist with at least 5 years of experience as a teacher. Exceptions are made for principals of sport schools (with extensive training of professional sportsmen), who can be appointed as principals without being teachers if they have at least 5 years professional experience in the field of Physical education and sports. The principal must have a higher education, although the law does not specify any level, so a Bachelor's degree is enough. The principal should be in possession of at least Bachelor degree in teaching, as the law requires him to teach a certain amount of classes per year. The selection of educational managers of state or municipal schools (both financed with public money) is done through competition, regulated by the Labour code. The competition takes place before a commission, in which there are representatives of the municipality (for municipal schools) or Ministry of education / Ministry of culture / Ministry of sports (for state

schools), a representative of the Regional Department of Education, and a representative of the Community council of the educational institution. The Community council is a new body within educational institutions, created in order to provide means for the better involvement of parents in management processes.

Job competition for becoming a principal of an educational institution in Bulgaria has several stages.

- First stage: job candidates present documents to prove they have the formal education and training, required by the law. A list of candidates, approved for the second stage is officially published and the candidates are formally informed for their results at the first stage. Those whose documents fulfil the requirements for the job are informed about the date and place of the second stage of the competition.
- Second stage: a written exam for evaluating basic competencies and knowledge needed for the job.
- Third stage: interview with candidates who have passed the previous stages of the competition.

The whole procedure for election of educational leaders/manager is quite strict. Still, there are no requirements for specific formal education or training in the field of Educational management, nor any requirements for previous experience as a management team member, (especially in comparison with the health system in Bulgaria where in order to become a director of a hospital, one should have a Master's degree in Health management). There were some debates before the law was implemented as to whether such requirements should be placed for becoming a principal of an educational institution but no consensus was reached on the issue.

A principal is appointed to the job with a formal (unlimited in time) contract, either by the minister of education (for state schools) or by the head of the Regional department of education (for municipal schools). It should be noted, that the Regional department of education is a subsidiary of the Ministry of education, and so, technically, the power of appointing educational managers for all public schools lies within the hands of the government, not in the hands of the municipality. An exception is made for appointing principals of municipal kindergartens – the mayor of the municipality appoints their principals. This is due to the fact that schools, although municipal in position, have some autonomy from the municipal governing body, while kindergartens are established by the municipality and are jointly financed by both the state and the municipality itself.

In the Bulgarian educational system, all staff, including managers, are appointed with time-unlimited contracts of service . There is ongoing debate

in society and among professionals and researchers in the field about whether educational managers should have a restricted mandate – for example 4 or 5 years – for their position. While most teachers believe such a mandate is necessary, there is no common understanding among educational managers and researchers. While some believe such a mandate would motivate managers to work more effectively so they can be appointed for another term, others consider such an idea as an obstacle for their work. The fact that they would have a limited amount of time for the job might make them inactive or could make the strategic planning and development of the organization they are responsible for harder as they would see no point in it. The question of the possible number of mandates additionally complicated the discussion so, for now, there are no evident efforts for a common conclusion on the topic.

As mentioned above, for the first time there is now a description of the competencies an educational manager/leader should have for the job. They are written in the *Regulation 12/2016 for the status and professional development of educational specialists*. These competences include: academic competences; organizational competencies; human resource management competencies; communication competencies; and administration competencies. All the competencies include a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes, deemed needed for the job of educational manager, e.g. principals of educational institutions. Such a professional profile makes the selection of managers slightly more professional and effective. Another function of the professional profile is to provide benchmarking indicators and orientation for the leaders themselves, for the way they do their jobs, and for the qualities they should have in order to be successful.

Duties of educational leaders can vary depending on the institution they are appointed in. In general, all educational leaders should lead and manage the educational process in its full scope in the institution, according to national educational policy, and according to the Law for preschool and school education. They should plan, organize, coordinate and control all aspects of school institutional activities as well: administration, communication with external stakeholders, even financial. Educational leaders have a lot of responsibilities relating to the implementation of national educational standards in different fields (such as obligatory school curricula, inclusive education, quality management in education, etc.). They should also develop positive relations with parents and other stakeholders, seek partners for joint activities, and support the development of positive relationships among parents, teachers, and students.

In addition, the law requires educational leaders to organize the whole institution in terms of students' enrolment plans and process, the number of

teachers needed, and they should develop and care for the physical setting of the institution. In schools, the educational leader has quite a lot of power due to the system of delegated budgets, which provide school principals with the power to plan and spend school finances at their own discretion and they can also select, appoint and dismiss teachers and all school staff members. These powers provide school principals with broad management discretions and actually require additional set of competencies, such as economic understanding and financial management competencies, etc. Schools in Bulgaria actually compete for students, as free school choice has been established, along with “per capita” funding for schools (Law for preschool and school education, 2015, art. 12; Law for people’s education, 1991, art. 9, Eurydice – National education system – Bulgaria<sup>1</sup>). Due to this fact, school budgets depend heavily on the number of students in the school and educational leaders are expected to be proactive in their communication with the outside community, be aware of the school image, and create and implement effective strategies for marketing and advertising what the school can offer.

When it comes to human resource management, it is a common understanding that educational leaders should provide beneficial work conditions for school staff, should motivate them in higher achievements, and support their professional development through providing opportunities for on-going in-service or outside school training.

All of these responsibilities require both managerial competencies and leadership potential. While managerial competencies are described in details in the professional profile of the manager, mentioned above, leadership potential and leadership behavior are still considered more like personal attributes, relating to the individual, than a characteristic that can be developed through focused training. For example, some of the Communication competencies of an educational leader, stated in the professional profile in Regulation 12 for educational specialists, include knowledge, skills and attitudes for building effective teams in school, promoting team work, creating positive school climate and effective communication channels, building partnership within school and with outside institutions and stakeholders, implementing strategic planning and developing school vision, building school quality, and solving conflicts, etc. All of these skills are part of the leadership process but still they are hard to conceive in formal in-service training. Educational leaders are supposed to undergo a process of attestation every 4 years. This is a new process for the Bulgarian educational system, enforced with the new law. All educational specialists will be evaluated in a specific way and this includes managers as well. Attestation

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<sup>1</sup> [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/bulgaria\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/bulgaria_en)

is a process of evaluating the compliance of a manager's work with his professional profile, with job requirements, and with the institutional strategy for development and its goals. Attestation is done by a commission that includes the manager's employer (minister and/or representative of Regional department of education, the mayor, and representatives of the staff in the institution and the Community council). If the school provides vocational education, a representative of business organizations (partners of the school) can also become part of the commission. Each member of the commission is expected to evaluate the work of the educational manager in an unbiased manner, using evidence from the manager's self-evaluation, the manager's portfolio, school documents, etc. The commission then issues a joint evaluation in a special attestation report and provides recommendations for future development or to correct issues that members of the commission see as problematic.

The whole process of the attestation of an educational manager is similar in nature to the selection process. While formal criteria are easy to establish and evaluate, leadership potential or the way the staff see their manager as a worthy leader is hard to support with documentary evidence. The law does not state that attestation should include a survey among teachers or parents, but if the commission wants it, it can be done.

An educational leader is responsible for his own professional development and for the professional development of staff. There is a requirement that at least 1% of a school's annual budget for salaries should be spent on professional development of school staff, while the manager should participate in training for professional development as well. According to the law, on-going professional development is specified in the form of the number of academic credits all educational specialists, including managers, should get during an attestation period (3 credits for each 4 years). Such credits can be earned at accredited universities or through participating in courses, provided by training organisations with a special license from the Ministry of education. There are also several special organizations within educational system, which provide additional qualification and training for educational specialists.

In 2018, the Ministry of education started a project "Qualification for professional development of education specialists", which is intended to end in 2021. The project is funded by the "Science and education for intelligent growth" Program, with European grants. The training planned to be developed and offered within the project include three thematic fields:

- Knowledge and competencies for implementation of innovative teaching methods, academic results evaluation methods, diagnostic of

personal development, and consultation of students for better learning results;

- Implementation of models for development and creation of a positive school environment, including improvement of home–school relations, involving parents in school life, and effective class management;
- Raising competencies of management specialists for implementation of modern management models in educational institutions, leadership for effective organization of school activities, and coordination of educational teams within the institution.<sup>2</sup>

In this last field of future training there is a special place for management and educational leaderships, but there is still no special training for only educational managers.

Some institutions governed by Ministry of education, like the National centre for qualification of educational specialists, offer special courses for educational managers. Some of these courses deal with topics like financial management in education in relation to recent changes in financing mechanism; managing a delegated budget; the modern educational leader – specifics of functions, etc.<sup>3</sup>. There are other courses, provided by different training organizations, licenced by the Ministry of Education. A brief search in the register of these organizations revealed that there are approximately 178 approved training programs, concerning leadership and leaders in education for both teachers and managers<sup>4</sup>.

If they wish, educational managers and future managers can get a master's degree in Educational management in several universities, such as Sofia University, Plovdiv University, Southwest University, Veliko Tarnovo University, etc. Within these master's programs students learn how to be a professional and effective educational manager. The programs have different length – from one year for specialists in education to 1.5–2 years for people from different professional field. Master's programs are often offered full or part-time, and some universities also offer distant learning. Some of the subjects in such master's program include Educational management, Human resource management, Strategic management and management of Innovation, Financial management in education, ITC in educational management, etc. Still, as there are no formal requirements for having a master's degree in Educational management, participation in such programs is only up to managers' personal wish for professional development.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://teachers.mon.bg/Uploads/Docs/Themes-10-09-2018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://niokso.bg/events.html#>

<sup>4</sup> <http://iropk.mon.bg/public/search>



## CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN BULGARIA – SOME EMPIRICAL DATA

The summary of the law and of the situation of educational leadership in Bulgaria presented in the previous part raised some questions regarding leadership and the way it is perceived in our educational system.

The formalization of the selection and attestation processes can be seen as a positive step toward more objective appointment and evaluation of educational leaders. In addition, leadership is highly popular as a training topic in non-governmental training organizations. On the other hand, formal requirements do not include a formal higher degree diploma in educational management and leadership. State training bodies only vaguely touch the topic as it has been a modern issue in Bulgaria for the past few years.

Still, the idea of leadership, and educational leadership, is not measurable with a set of formal criteria. It is more visible in the interaction of the leader with the staff, and such an approach for understanding educational leaderships perhaps needs to be implemented in our system. Of all definitions of leaderships available, the ones that focus upon interpersonal interaction and the ability to “lead” and inspire others are the most appealing ones. So it is safe to state, that being a “leader” means having “followers”. So it is up to the perception of staff to define the educational leader and this means that each organization can see its manager as a leader to some extent or in some situations, and cannot recognize him as a leader in others. That’s why, finding ways to “pull out” the perceptions of staff regarding their leader should be on the research agenda and should underline leadership research, along with common ideas and understanding of leadership characteristics.

For the past several years, the author has done a series of research work on educational leadership in different aspects (Kriviradeva, 2015, 2015a). During these studies different research tools were used for studying leadership in different aspects and its potential for development. In this part of the paper there is a brief presentation and summary of empirical results, implemented in 2017 and 2018.

The study included a total of 377 respondents, all of them teachers in kindergartens and schools, 84.2% females and 11.6% males. 4.8% did not reveal their sex. Of all surveyed people 40.3% were between 40 and 50 years old, and 32.6% were older than 50. Teachers below 30 years old comprised just 6%. The average number of years work in the educational system was 19.4.

Leadership was studied with an adapted version of Maxwell questionnaire for evaluating the level of potential leadership qualities (Maxwell, 1995). The questionnaire includes 25 characteristics of leaderships, formed in 25 statements. The qualities include: having positive approach toward people, can solve problems, sees the big picture, can handle stress, express positive attitudes, has a good understanding of himself, etc. Each respondent is asked to evaluate the principal of his/her school or kindergarten for every question on a 4-point scale with (1) being “the principal absolutely does not have this quality” and (4) being “the principal absolutely has this quality”. The questionnaire presents a Likert scale with a maximum possible evaluation of 100 points. Reliability analysis shows Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.953, which provides quite a confidence in the reliability of the tool.

Maxwell (1995) uses this questionnaire to differentiate 5 levels of leadership in terms of the way leaders are perceived by their staff:

- An exceptional leader – 90–100 points – should keep up the good work and should coach and build other leaders in the team;
- A good leader – 80–89 points – should keep to developing and could engage with supporting and building others;
- A rising leader – 70–79 points – should focus on building his own leadership qualities and behaviour;
- A leader full of potential – 60–69 points – like a candidate-leader in the future;
- Incomplete leader (needs serious improvement) – below 60 points.

Using this classification of leaders, we can actually reveal the way educational staff perceives their principals and can build a summary picture of educational leadership.

Results show an interesting picture. The average evaluation of educational leaders by their staff is 74.64 points, (SD=17.584). Such an evaluation defines the cumulative perception for educational leader as being “a rising leader”. Variation in opinions is quite large as every respondent evaluated his/her own principal. Still, an average result like this shows that there is hope about educational leaders when it comes to the way their followers see them. Quartiles of the leadership evaluation provide additional insight into this perception (Table 1).

*Table 1. Evaluation of school principals as educational leaders*

Quartiles	25	50	75
Points	66	74.64	87

It can be seen that 25% of all respondents evaluate their principals with 87 points or more. In addition, when the evaluation mark of each respondent is coded in accordance with Maxwell's classification, 18.8% of surveyed staff evaluated their principals with 90 points or more, and another 18% – with less than 60 points, ergo – principals are seen as incomplete leaders, or so to say – not seen much like leaders; 26.5% perceive their managers like good leaders and another 26.5% like raising leaders. Only 10% evaluate their principals as leaders, full of potential.

These results more or less suggest that although the leadership role of an educational manager should be understood as crucial for the effective management of educational institutions, at the present time in Bulgaria the summary picture of a manager/leader in education is mostly between rising and good leader. Maxwell states a that rising leader should focus on his own personal growth. If Maxwell's theory of decreasing leadership potential is true, then such leaders will select and appoint teachers and staff with less leadership potential than themselves and they will not be interested in building and supporting other leaders in the organization. Such a scenario will inevitably lead to a decreasing leadership potential in their organizations, and considering the fact that every teacher is sort of a leader for their students (Harrison & Killion, 2007), with a huge role in their motivation for learning, the decreasing leadership potential among teachers can create a situation of lowered academic achievements of students.

As we see the educational leader as a leader in the eyes of staff, it is interesting to see if there is a relation between the level of leadership that respondents see in their principal and the level of their job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is measured with a questionnaire, developed and validated by Radoslavova (Radoslavova & Velichkov, 2005). It has 4 subscales which aggregate into a total level of job satisfaction. These subscales reveal the satisfaction of the characteristics of the job, of coworkers, of the principal, of results. Each statement in the questionnaire is evaluated on a 5-point scale.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between evaluation of principals' leadership potential and the evaluation of respondents' own job satisfaction. There was a significant positive correlation between the two variables [ $r=.589$ ,  $n=374$ ,  $p=.000$ ]. Detailed analysis shows that this correlation is higher when it comes to satisfaction of principal [ $r=.702$ ,  $n=374$ ,  $p=.000$ ] and is at its lowest value in satisfaction of results [ $r=.169$ ,  $n=374$ ,  $p=.002$ ]. Although a causal relationship cannot be presumed from a correlation, these results show that there is a possible connection between the way "followers" perceive the principal as a leader and the levels of their job satisfaction. Such a

connection should be further researched as it can help to strengthen educational leadership and improve job satisfaction and performance.

## VIEW TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The ideas and empirical data presented above provide a base for the following recommendations for improving educational leadership in the Bulgarian context:

- Selection and appointment of principals should require a Master's degree in Educational leadership and management. This will allow the leader to have a more solid background in management practices and a deeper reflection on his role as educational leader;
- It is necessary to strengthen life-long training and additional qualification of educational leaders so they can better understand leadership, their own leadership potential, and to find ways to improve. This may include training in organizational leadership, personal development trainings, etc.
- Future educational leaders in the Bulgarian context should have basic economic and financial literacy so they can manage school budgets in a better way. This can also be said about their skills in human resource management.
- There is certainly a need of a specially designed obligatory course for newly appointed educational leaders, which will provide deeper understanding of school organization, educational leadership, and educational management practices.
- It is necessary to keep in mind and to search for ways to reveal and understand the way educational staff perceive and evaluate educational leaders. As there is various and numerous research on effective leadership, this should be complemented with data about staff expectations, staff evaluation of leadership, and to use such data for future planning and development of both the leader and the organization. As the presented results revealed – there is a positive correlation between leadership level and job satisfaction, which can provide further insights into educational leadership.
- All of the above certainly requires a specific merge between practice and theory in management of educational institutions. Joint research, conferences, and events should be part of developing a new model of educational leadership – one serving good in practice with the help of theory.

Improving educational leadership means creating a structure for the training and support of educational leaders, changing practices of selection, appointment, and qualification, creating working mechanisms for evaluation, and taking into consideration the perceptions and opinion of educational staff about leadership and leaders. It also means finding the relations between educational leadership and other parameters of educational organization and their management, like job satisfaction, organizational culture, motivation, etc. Such a mission requires the common efforts of practice and theory, which may require the establishment of a national organization, working purposefully and actively with educational leaders so good practices can be made visible and be shared both on national and international levels.

Educational leaders should have high leadership potential and be ready to build school leaders and teacher-leaders who will increase the effectiveness of educational institutions and the quality of education. It is necessary to start developing social skills training, training in leadership, team work, built upon interactive teaching methods, which will increase the leadership potential of school community members, their job satisfaction, and the way they do their work.

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## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract.* The overview of leadership in education in Croatia is grounded on the analysis of its development level, insights into existing research and state of affairs, and indications of possible activities in this field of expertise. The analysis has proved the intensive field development: numerous studies have been conducted, a number of conceptual and operational documents have been created, and an expert framework for introducing positive changes into the field of expertise has been ensured. Except for the early 90s, education policy has been more declarative than really supporting change. Experts and professional associations of principals expect faster alignment with the solutions of other European countries. They emphasize the need for institutional education of principals prior to assuming the role, the definition of the competency standard, clear and measurable criteria for the principal's election, greater security for those who have proved to be great school leaders, and a more appropriate system of professional development of leaders of educational institutions. An insight into studies confirms the existence of the continuous interest of researchers and contributes to the knowledge related to school leadership, principals' competencies, professional development, school leadership models, and other related phenomena. In the foreseeable future, legal measures for the occupational and qualification standards of principals, the standardization of competencies and principals' licensing, and the introduction of compulsory education for the future leaders of educational institutions are expected.

*Keywords:* educational leadership, principals of educational institutions, licensing of principals, professionalization of leadership in educational institutions

### INTRODUCTION

With respect to the leadership in the education of the Republic of Croatia, we will provide an insight into its current situation, development, present important studies, and will indicate the possible directions of its future development. The overview of leadership in education in Croatia is grounded on analysis of its development level, insights into the existing research

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and state of affairs, and indications of possible activities in this field of expertise. A review of leadership development in Croatian education is based on insights into (1) Acts, (2) documents and activities of education infrastructure in the field of leadership, (3) activities of professional associations, (4) key literature on principals, (5) higher education programs, and (6) conducted studies. The analysis has proved the intensive field development: numerous studies have been conducted, a number of conceptual and operational documents have been created, and an expert framework for introducing positive changes into the field of expertise has been ensured. Except for the early 90s, education policy has been more declarative than it really supporting the change. Experts and professional associations of principals expect faster alignment with the solutions of other European countries. They emphasize the need for institutional education of principals prior to assuming the role, the definition of the competency standard, clear and measurable criteria for the principal's election, greater security for those who proved to be great school leaders, and a more appropriate system of professional development of leaders of educational institutions.

## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW<sup>2</sup>

From a broader perspective of leadership in education, we can claim that its indications in Croatian education were recognized shortly after the Second World War. Hence, we could state that it started with education policy activities by adopting the general *School Management Act* in 1955, was operationalized in the documents of the responsible educational infrastructure in 1958 (Institute of Education, 1958), and was continued by experts' reflections and conceptualizations (Leko, 1958). A more evident contribution, closer to the current understanding of leadership, was provided by the 1964 *Primary Education Act*, which attributed the managerial and leadership role to a principal and assigned the responsibility of the pedagogical process to a specialized expert – a *pedagogue*. The leadership-managerial role of school principals was further profiled by the reform of secondary education in the 1970s, whose aim was to strengthen the link between education and human resource needs of the country's economy (Malić, 1971).

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<sup>2</sup> A more comprehensive review is available in Staničić, 2012

## **The first phase (1990–1999): from inspiration to deprofessionalization**

In the early 1990s, stronger efforts to introduce changes in the field of education and leadership in educational institutions became evident. Namely, the need for principals' professionalization was indicated, and their managerial role was emphasized. Concerted efforts of education policy and infrastructure were noted, as well as experts' requests to depoliticize education and raise the level of leadership competencies in education. The importance of the principals' professionalization in the field of educational management was adequately acknowledged in the early 1990s, after the obligation to pass the principal's certification exam had been stipulated by the 1992 *Secondary Education Act* (1992). To implement the above-mentioned legal obligation, a series of complementary activities followed:

1. Adoption of the *Rules and Regulations of the certification examination of principals of secondary schools and student dormitories* (1993) and the *Program of principal's certification examination* (1994);
2. Establishment of the *school for principals of educational institutions* in 1993, which was organized and administered by (then) Ministry of Culture and Education as the administrative education authority, the Institute of Education of the Republic of Croatia as the carrier of professional program contents, and "Znamen", the publishing company, as the organizer and coordinator of school's operational activities (Staničić, 2010)<sup>3</sup>;
3. Issuance of the *Handbook for principals of educational institutions* (Drandić, 1993) and the launch of the annual editions of *School Manual*, which is unique in this part of Europe due to its content, structure, and duration (Staničić & Drandić, 2018);
4. Establishment of national Associations of Principals of Secondary Schools (in 1994) and Primary Schools (in 1995) that, in addition to the long-term support to their members at the meetings, have been reopening expert-related issues in order to raise the level of principals' professional competencies.

Unfortunately, the favorable times, inspired by the need for a contribution to the quality of education through the professionalization of principals, were abruptly interrupted in the mid-90s, as the new education authority

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<sup>3</sup> The school for principals of educational institutions ceased its operations in the autumn of 1994, without receiving a formal abolishment act from the ministry of education, while the unofficial explanation stated that principals did not need formal education as the responsible ministry would provide them with comprehensive "instructions".

abolished the school for principals and reduced the number of education staff in schools. Namely, the *Act on Amendments to the Secondary Education Act* (1995) rescinded the provision on mandatory certification examination for principals of secondary schools and student dormitories. In addition, all attempts at affirming leadership in education and principals' qualifications were disputed and discontinued. Hence, the second half of the 90s stays remembered by de-professionalization in Croatian education. With respect to the decision-making, the education system became centralized, and the leadership activities became controlled remotely. In other words, the school management was based on the directives.

### **The second phase (2000-2009): conceptualization without application**

The appointment of a new education authority in the early 2000s was followed by a change of education policies. The development of the *Strategy of Development of the Republic of Croatia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* began; hence, the focus was also put on changes in education (Pastuović, 2001). The Ministry of Education and Sports gathered the experts who, in 2002, created a document *The Concept of Change in Education System in the Republic of Croatia* (Strugar, 2002). Within that project, the Croatian education system was thoroughly analyzed, which resulted in identifying weaknesses and possible solutions. The field of educational management and leadership was also covered, i.e., the existing state of affairs and suggested solutions were displayed. In addition, the document elaborated the organizational-technical and program preconditions needed to revitalize the school for principals as the expert and scientific support to the principals' professionalization. The school, however, was not reopened.

One of the most valuable contributions to the advancement of leadership in Croatian education is the development of *Program for Professional Training of Principals of Elementary and Secondary Schools*<sup>4</sup>. The initiative of principals' associations was supported by the Education and Teacher Training Agency, and The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports formed a committee responsible for the development of a professional training program in 2005. The purpose was to propose a program that would serve as a basis for the training of existing and future principals of primary and secondary schools. One of the specifications was, certainly, a proposal to form a national center for the principals of educational institutions in Croatia, which was

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.azoo.hr/images/AZOO/Ravnatelj/RM/1\\_Program\\_osposobljavanja\\_ravnatelja.pdf](https://www.azoo.hr/images/AZOO/Ravnatelj/RM/1_Program_osposobljavanja_ravnatelja.pdf) (Retrieved March 13, 2019)

based on the solutions introduced by other countries. Two years later, in 2007, a *Principals' Training Curriculum* was created at the initiative of the Education and Teacher Training Agency, based on the *Program for Professional Training of Principals of Elementary and Secondary Schools*.<sup>5</sup>

Activities related to the conceptualization of educational leadership and the development of expert frameworks (2000–2009) were followed by some other valuable contributions.

1. In June 2007, a two-day workshop “Principals’ Training and School Management in Croatia: Enhancing Quality and Relevance” was held and organized by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Education and Teacher Training Agency, the Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education, and the World Bank, with particular reference to the review of educational experiences of principals in other countries.
2. Due to the incentives presented at the above-mentioned workshop, a two-year seminar for principals of pre-school institutions and primary and secondary schools started the same year, organized by the Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency and the Dutch educational leadership institute (Nederlandse School voor Onderwijsmanagement). The methods, topics, and results were published in the proceedings of the seminar “School Principal – Management – Leadership” (ETTA, 2009). The status of principals’ trainer was acquired by 24 participants at the seminar.
3. Adoption of the *Primary and Secondary Education Act* in 2008 enacted a procedure for acquiring a principal’s license (2008), thus confirming the seriousness of the education policy’s intention to achieve principals’ professionalization.

At that stage, more concentrated publishing and researching activities of experts and scholars in the field of leadership in education were recorded. Namely, the first monograph covering that field in a comprehensive manner (Staničić, 2006a) should be emphasized, as well as a number of other papers focused on specific issues related to the programs of professional training (e.g., Hitrec & Bilankov, 2004).

### **The third phase (2010–2019): the delay continues**

A strong message towards the professionalization of leadership in education was shared during the international conference of principals of primary

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.azoo.hr/images/AZOO/Ravnateljji/RM/2\\_Izvedbeni\\_program\\_osposobljavanja\\_ravnatelja.pdf](https://www.azoo.hr/images/AZOO/Ravnateljji/RM/2_Izvedbeni_program_osposobljavanja_ravnatelja.pdf) (Retrieved March 13, 2019)

and secondary schools and student dormitories, held in Dubrovnik in 2011.<sup>6</sup> Participants' views were formulated as a request aimed at ensuring the pre-conditions crucial for principals to become ready to assume their roles, execute them in a sovereign manner, and resign with dignity.<sup>7</sup> Valuable support for the professionalization of leadership in education was ensured by publishing the *Legal and Pedagogical Manual for Primary and Secondary Schools* (Drandić, 2011), which contains 1216 pages of legal documents and expert arguments for principals to assume the role as administrative and pedagogic school leaders. That manual has confirmed that leading an educational institution can no longer be a mere function, but should become a profession. After numerous (previously described) unsuccessful attempts to make a significant change to the situation in educational leadership practice, experts were provided with a new opportunity in 2013, that is, the development of *the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology* (2014). The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports formed a working group whose task was to propose solutions that would contribute to the improvement of the quality of the educational institutions' management (Staničić 2014). It was concluded that, in the interest of management quality improvement, the changes that would professionalize leadership of educational institutions are the following: the redefinition of principals' role, the development of competency standards for principals, the institutionalization of future principals' education, the development of a program and licensing process for the principals of educational institutions. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) appointed the Expert Working Group to implement the Fifth goal of the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (EWG-a5). According to the MSES' Decision, EWG-a5 had three main tasks: (1) to develop the occupational standards of principals, (2) to develop national qualification standards for a principal's profession, and (3) to develop a licensing model for principals of educational institutions. The Expert Working Group has completed all three Decision's tasks and submitted them to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (Drandić, 2019).

Considering the proposed licensing model, EWG-a5 identified key issues, established legal and professional assumptions, and suggested the licensing model for existing principals. According to this model (1) licensing is preceded by the creation of a database of existing principals, and the

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<sup>6</sup> The conference "Status and Position of Principals" was organized by the associations of principals of primary and secondary schools and student dormitories (HUROŠ, UHSR, UUDRH), held from October 25 to October 26, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> The document comprising Conference conclusions was published as "Readily, Sovereignly, with Dignity" in Official Gazette no. 37, November 22, 2011, p. 3. It could be found at HUROŠ and UHSR websites.

adoption of appropriate legal documents and a licensing program. Candidates who registered for the licensing procedure (2) would access the examination process in front of the commission, based on the prior evaluation of documentation (portfolio) and then an immediate (written and oral) exam. All existing principals can access the licensing procedure, and the content and manner of assessment depend on their achievements in relation to the learning outcomes regulated by the national qualification standards of a principal's profession. While existing principals acquired their knowledge and skills during their work and through the process of formal and informal learning, future candidates for principal positions would acquire necessary knowledge and skills by attending accredited programs provided by higher education institutions and would acquire "the initial license", which would allow them to be elected to the principal's position by the end of the first mandate. Their re-election would be conditioned by the results of monitoring, evaluation, and re-licensing.

In addition to the activities of the responsible ministry, it could be noted that, in that period, higher education institutions also engaged in offering the programs for the acquisition of the principals' competencies. First, they introduced compulsory and elective school management and leadership courses in the existing study programs for initial teacher training, after which the accreditation of two postgraduate specialist studies for the acquisition of principals' competencies followed<sup>8</sup>. The specialist study program for principals of educational institutions is organized as a one-year study (60 ECTS). It's based on the national qualification standards of a principal's profession that defines the following sets of learning outcomes: managing an educational system, managing and leading an educational institution; basic management and leadership skills and techniques (team work, advisory work, communication, presentation, motivation, project management, quality improvement); human resource management, legal aspect of educational institution management; financial operation of an educational institution; managing the educational process, and managing relations with the environment of the educational institution. The program consists of several parts: eight compulsory courses (each course is worth 3 ECTS credits); six principal's practicums (each practicum is worth 4 ECTS credits); elective course (students choose one course from the list; the course is worth 2 ECTS credits); research methodology course and seminar in specialist thesis writing (they are worth 2 ECTS credits each) and specialist thesis writing (activity

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<sup>8</sup> There are two postgraduate specialist studies accredited in Croatia: at the University of Zadar and University of Rijeka. Authors of this paper participated in the curriculum design at the University of Rijeka, so this particular study program is taken as an example and described in this paper.

is worth 6 ECTS credits). The special features of this program are so-called *principal's practicums*. By participating in these practicums trainees acquire knowledge and skills of greater complexity and application. Generally, two instructors work together in the organization of practicums: a teacher from a higher education institution of an academic rank (assistant professor or higher) and an experienced school principal, with references acquired in his/her participation in relevant professional training programs and during his/her work in an educational institution. Within the framework of thematic practicums in educational institution management, and depending on the specific subject matter of the practicum, the attendee is expected to: have access to practical situations in the educational institution, observe specific processes, participate in carrying out real or simulated activities under supervision, develop an analysis of a given practical situation, get feedback, and have insight into his/her own performance<sup>9</sup>.

## CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

It can be concluded that, over the past thirty years, experts have made a valuable contribution to educational leadership in the Republic of Croatia. In other words, an expert framework for introducing positive changes in this field of expertise has been ensured. Thus, the development of, for example, occupational and qualification standards of principals, as well as a licensing model, has resulted in creating key preconditions for achieving a more reliable selection of existing and future leaders of educational institutions. However, the responsible education authority has again decided to postpone the legalization of these documents. Due to such political decisions, experts and associations of principals are dissatisfied with the existing situation of educational leadership. Hence, *inter alia*, they point out (Drandić, 2019):

- Occupational, qualification and competency standards, as well as the quality indicators of management and leadership in preschool and school institutions, are not legalized;
- There are no verifiable criteria for election and, in particular, the re-election of principals;
- There is no job security of principals after the end of their mandate;
- Unlike teachers and other education staff, the leaders of educational institutions cannot be appointed to a higher academic rank;

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.ffri.uniri.hr/files/dokumentiodsjeka/PED/SSR/Plan\\_i\\_program-SSR-2018.pdf](http://www.ffri.uniri.hr/files/dokumentiodsjeka/PED/SSR/Plan_i_program-SSR-2018.pdf) (Retrieved March 15, 2019).



- The principal's salary is not based on a satisfying number of factors that make their job more complex and demanding;
- Principals have major responsibilities and obligations, but do not have the option to hire an assistant principal;
- The current role of principals, i.e., their duties, authorities, and responsibilities, indicates that the principal is treated as a function rather than a profession;
- The autonomy of principals' decision-making is reduced, as well as the corresponding responsibility for the quality of school functioning;
- It is necessary to examine the quality of relations between principals and school boards;
- The system of professional development of principals of educational institutions is not considered appropriate.

The severity of the criticism is additionally confirmed by relevant international actors, that is, the statistical data displayed in their comparative education analyses that rank Croatia rather unfavorably, particularly with respect to the quality and professionalization of management and leadership practices in educational institutions. According to the EC (EC/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013), Croatia is one of the few countries in the EU that does not provide training programs for principals prior to them taking up their duties. When selecting candidates for principals, the competencies necessary to perform their duties are not considered at all. According to the TALIS (OECD, 2014), Croatia is the third-ranked country (after Spain and Serbia) by the number of principals reporting that they have not been trained for some of the relevant topics regarding the educational management and leadership (e.g. instructional leadership). Croatia has the largest number of principals (45%) who reported that their training for acquiring principals' competencies was none or weak.

## RESEARCH ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN CROATIA: AN OVERVIEW

The interest of the scientific research community in studying the phenomenon of school leadership in the Republic of Croatia can be detected by the first insight into the search results of the topic-related scientific papers published in relevant scientific journals, as well as by analyzing other published scientific publications (doctoral and master theses, editorial books, monographs, conference proceedings, etc.). The overview and systematization of conducted and published studies on school leadership in Croatia provide an insight

into key topics that attracted the authors' attention, as well as into certain characteristics of school leadership phenomenon in Croatia. In addition, it is possible to determine whether the research interests of Croatian authors are in line with the current research trends that could be found in other national contexts. It is also worth examining whether the conducted studies had followed all key thematic areas that could have contributed to the continuous improvement of theory and practice of school leadership, especially if previously mentioned limitations and deficits of its development in Croatian education policy and practice were taken into consideration. Given the key topics and contents, published papers could be grouped into the following thematic categories:

1. Activities, roles, and functions of school leadership;
2. Principals' competencies;
3. Professional training and development of principals;
4. The relationship between principals and certain stakeholders;
5. School leadership models and their functioning in the organizational context.

Given that relevant international publications have been publishing research papers on school leadership for a long time, it could come as surprising that Croatian journals still publish papers whose aim is to justify or position this field of research in the context of education (e.g., Buhač, 2017a), for management as a discipline in the field of education, and the social status of education is not recognized. However, valuable theoretical and conceptual frameworks for conducting research on management in the context of educational institutions have already been proposed by earlier papers (Staničić, 2006a; 2006b; 2007; Jurić, 2004), noting that the idea of management had a universal meaning, which is the reason why its application became widespread. The transfer and adaptation of theoretical-practical models are also noted in the attempts to discern dominant styles and models of school leadership, which have long been discussed in international publications. Hence, there are increasing efforts by authors to correlate, that is, to adapt contemporary knowledge about some of the effective school leadership styles to the Croatian research context (Staničić, 2007; Sajko & Mrnjauš, 2009; Kovač, Buchberger & Staničić, 2014; Vršnik Perše *et al.*, 2015; Buchberger & Kovač, 2017; Buhač, 2017b), thus providing room for the implementation of (albeit few) empirical studies on the effectiveness of school leadership practice in the Croatian educational context.

## **Papers focused on activities, roles, and functions of school leadership**

The majority of authors aim at highlighting the (current) key roles of principals and offer the results of assessing the importance and performance of certain roles. Burcar (2013) has conducted doctoral research which determined key roles of principals and the way they were realized in the Croatian education system, and then examined the principals' attitudes towards certain managerial and leadership activities. The author emphasized and commented on several groups of key roles of principals: the role of information collector and distributor, communicator, strategist and planner, executive manager, administrator and organizer, leader, pedagogic leader, and educator. The research results indicate a hierarchical model of realizing principals' roles in the education system of the Republic of Croatia, in line with the activities through which these roles are realized. Blažević (2014) is focused on the leadership role of school's principals, which is examined through its the following principles: motivation, communication, interpersonal relations, school development, the introduction of innovation and changes, professional development of school employees, and the school's reputation in society. The survey showed that the respondents (teachers) are generally satisfied with the realization of the leadership role of their schools' principals. They are most satisfied with the way the principals address the school's development and reputation in the wider community and the professional development of the employees; however, they are least satisfied with the introduction of innovation and changes in schools and the methods of motivating the employees.

The authors also monitor the realization of principals' specific roles, to which particular attention is paid in the context of changes affecting the education system. Thus, Kendelić (2011) emphasizes the importance of presenting the vision and mission of the school, and Stanić (2017) adds the importance of building the school image. Matijević-Šimić (2011) highlights the principal's role of motivating teachers, while Varga, Peko & Vican (2016) examine the role of principals in the concepts of changes to the education system of the Republic of Croatia. Due to the decentralization of the education system, schools have become more autonomous; hence, the expectations of principals to realize the transformation role are increasing. In the context of centralization and decentralization of the education system, Vican (2016; as cited in Vican, Sorić & Radeka, 2016) examines and determines the factors that impede the realization of principals' activities: laws and regulations, political elites, parents and custodians, education reforms, and the

appointment of new ministers. It is certain that some of the current and necessary guidelines of Croatian education policy, particularly the tendency to professionalize the principal's function and the development and registration of the principals' occupational standard, could strengthen the need for continuous analysis of key activities and roles of principals.

### **Papers focused on principals' competencies**

Studies focused on the principals' roles are logically complemented by those examining the competency profile of principals. Staničić (2000a) conducted doctoral research aimed at identifying the optimal model of school leadership, based on the competency profile of the leadership process subjects – principals and pedagogues. The importance of certain competencies, their conditionality, and their correlation were examined. The author comes to the conclusion that numerous characteristics and insights needed for a successful leadership could be integrated into a model of five competencies: personal, developmental, professional, interpersonal, and action. The developmental competency appeared to be the most relevant, accompanied by the interpersonal competency. Peko, Mlinarević & Gajger (2009) examine which competencies are of crucial importance for principals to lead a school effectively. The results of their effectiveness self-assessment point to only two leadership subscales that recorded principals' higher performance than average: encouraging professional development and building the school's reputation. The focus of the researchers' interest was also put on some of the specific principals' competencies: human resources management (Staničić, 2006b), social (Janković, 2012; Mlinarević & Zrilić, 2015), interpersonal (Jukić, 2012), leadership (Andevski, Arsenijević & Spajić, 2012), project management and school marketing competencies (Alfirević, Pavičić & Relja, 2016), and entrepreneurial competencies (Alfirević, Vican, Pavičić & Petković, 2018). By revealing empirical data mainly related to the assessment of importance or self-assessment of the mastery of certain competencies, most authors agree that there is a great need for professional training and development of principals, aimed at developing and strengthening these competencies. However, it should be noted that there are no indications of the conducted research which would provide data on the actual level of principals' qualifications. Recently, in line with the current trends in education policy, authors have been analyzing the importance and necessity of defining and adopting national competency standards for principals (Vican, *et al.*, 2016; Feguš & Kovač, 2017), while drawing attention to, *inter alia*, the fact that Croatia is falling behind other European countries with respect to that issue.

### **Papers focused on professional training and development of principals**

In his doctoral research, Đaković (2012) focused on examining the model of professional development of principals in the field of school management. Based on a theoretical review, key trends of contemporary professional development of principals were pointed out, and existing models were grouped according to the principals' work experience and the aims of professional development of secondary school principals. Principals of Croatian secondary schools listed the non-existence of the mentoring model as the greatest weakness of the existing model system, for they perceive mentoring as crucial at the beginning and in early years of principals' mandates. The results of recent studies indicate the expressed need for the professionalization of principals' occupation (Vican *et al.*, 2016), as well as the principals' high awareness of the importance of permanent professional development (Rogić, 2017). Given the recent emergence of new forms of initial training for Croatian principals, that is, due to the greater involvement of higher education institutions that offer programs of postgraduate specialist studies, it is expected that researchers will pay more attention to the assessment of actual effectiveness of such programs.

### **Papers focused on the relationship between principals and other stakeholders**

It should be noted that there are few conducted studies on the relationship between principals and certain stakeholder groups inside and outside the school (Pahić, Miljević-Riđički & Vizek Vidović, 2010, Slavić, 2014, Kovač & Buchberger, 2014; Kovač, Rukavina Kovačević & Rafajac, 2017), which have focused mainly on different aspects of the relationship with teachers, parents, and representatives of local self-government. Alfirević *et al.* (2011) analyze the (marketing) orientation of primary school principals towards several groups of individual and institutional stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, responsible ministry, local government), and their research model is based on the idea of "strategic intelligence", which is reflected in the ability to create and disseminate the data on relevant stakeholders and organized responses to them. A low level of principals' orientation towards the majority of stakeholders relevant to the school functioning, particularly the local government and potential students, is identified. Sunko (2011) examines factors affecting the trust of school employees in school as an institution and points out: the less they trust the school leader, the less they

trust the entire school system and its activities. Alfirević, Vican and Pavičić (2018) investigate which educational and social factors contribute to the perception of school principals as independent managerial profession. The results suggest that both public trust in certain social stakeholders relevant to education and the public perception of school effectiveness can serve as forecasting factors of public assessment of the principal's profession. Taking into account the results of this group of studies, a question should be asked: To what extent are the existing models of professional training and development of principals directed towards the development of their positive social relationships?

### **Papers focused on the research of school leadership models and their functioning in the organizational context**

It is essential to note that studies aimed at examining the relationship between certain features/styles of school leadership and other key phenomena, related to the school as an organization, were conducted in the Croatian context as well (Peko, Mlinarević & Gajger, 2009; Slavić, 2016; Buchberger, 2018; Buchberger, Kovač & Ažić Bastalić, 2018; etc.). Researchers analyze which school leadership features are more correlated with some indicators of school effectiveness (perceived organization effectiveness, job satisfaction, subjective teacher benefits, teachers' attitude towards performing certain activities, e.g., school self-evaluation, etc.), and the extent to which their correlation is mediated by the school climate. The distinctive value of these findings is apparent, as some specific school leadership styles can be distinguished and confirmed, which can contribute to better functioning of schools and their employees. These findings partially confirm the results of international PISA and TALIS surveys, which point to low representation indexes of some of the preferred leadership styles in Croatian schools, especially *instructional* and *distributed* (OECD, 2014; 2016). However, it is questionable whether education policymakers are sincerely interested in providing further support to such studies and, more importantly, in using the potential findings.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS – A FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE**

From the early 90s to the present day, there have been several attempts to raise the role of Croatian principals to a higher level of professionalism.

These efforts were concentrated on identifying the requirements whose fulfillment would increase the effectiveness of principals' work and the quality of education in the educational institutions. Hence, they are evident in: the field of legislation, the attempts to standardize the principal's knowledge and competencies, the institutionalization of education, and the creation of an appropriate knowledge base for principals (Staničić, 2016). The practice has also shown that there are constant shifts between periods of greater policy commitment to professionalization issues and periods of decline and stagnation. We are currently witnessing the latter phase. On the other hand, there are the concerted activities of principals and their associations that continuously draw attention to the unsatisfactory situation and define precise guidelines for the improvement of leadership practice in educational institutions (Drandić, 2019). The justification of their demands is additionally supported by the results of empirical studies and messages from the academic community.

It remains to be seen whether the issues related to leadership in educational institutions will finally be addressed in the desired direction. We expect national education policymakers to finally decide whether qualified leaders of educational institutions are needed, whether their qualifications should be determined before assuming the responsible and demanding role, and whether amateurs in educational leadership are still sufficient for the Croatian education system.



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## LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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*Abstract.* This article deals with leadership in education in the Czech context. First of all, it outlines a number of changes that have occurred since the early 1990s and influenced various aspects of leadership in education. Data on education and schooling are described as related to the work of school leaders (headteachers). Attention is also paid to major initiatives in school leaders' professional development and their relation to the attempts (albeit unsuccessful) to establish a headteacher career system and standards. Subsequently, data from main research projects focusing on various aspects of school leaders' work are provided. The article concludes with a view towards future developments in educational leadership in the Czech Republic.

*Keywords:* educational leadership, Czech Republic, headteachers, career system, career standards.

### INTRODUCTION

Education/school leadership is an issue that regained new importance after the political and social transformation of the late 1980s. The new democratic era brought new arrangements to schools and schooling and, as a consequence, was reflected in expectations related to school leaders, particularly headteachers.

The education system became looser as early as the beginning of the 1990s, when the direct and, for a long time, strict links of schools to the higher levels of the system, mainly the central authorities, abated. In this new situation, schools soon obtained a relatively large degree of autonomy in many aspects of their operations, particularly in regard to their legal status and the increased powers of headteachers in various managerial activities, the management of staff, work with the curriculum and so on.

Nevertheless, schools were also rather soon affected by a tendency to balance this autonomy with an accent on external responsibility (*Kvalita a odpovědnost*, 1994) and, subsequently, started receiving demands for multilateral accountability, both internal (including self-evaluation) and external (e.g. by means of obligatory annual reports on the state of the school).

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The bureaucratic load of schools, or rather that of their leaders, began to increase, which was often criticized by headteachers (McKinsey, 2010).

Financial limits (insufficient funding) in almost all areas of school operations have long had unfavourable effects. Some of these limits are compensated for by subsidies through projects, particularly those co-financed by European funds. Although many of these projects clearly play a positive role, a sometimes exaggerated accent on school development based on externally subsidised projects implies risking a loss of focus on the objectives the school has or would like to have.

On the other hand, thanks to these projects, professionals in various specialist non-teaching occupations, such as school psychologists, special educators and sometimes pedagogical consultants and mentors, have established themselves in some schools. And a variety of trainings are offered for newly founded positions for teacher specialists, so-called coordinators, in areas such as environmental education, school education programmes, inclusion, and so on. So, in a certain sense, schools are better equipped than before, both in terms of personnel and material resources, but the external setting is changing so quickly that there are justifiable concerns about whether this is sufficient for schools to react adequately.

Also, the new arrangements highlight the influential role of school-founding entities. This is usually the municipality for basic schools<sup>1</sup> (with the exception of private and church schools) and office of the regional administration (with the above-mentioned exception) for upper secondary schools.

This article is focused on the topic of leadership in school education, particularly on school leaders in basic (ISCED 1, 2) and upper secondary schools (ISCED 3) in the Czech Republic.

## CONTEXTUAL DATA

In 2017, the Czech Republic had approximately 10.5 million inhabitants and, in the school year 2017/2018, there were 4,155 basic [primary] schools (for pupils aged 6–15) in operation, 241 of which were church schools and private schools and 332 were schools for pupils with special educational needs. A total of 63,005 teachers were employed in these schools. With regard to the age of headteachers, those in the age group 51–60 have long been predominant, accounting for 49% of all headteachers of basic schools in 2017/2018 (*Kvalita*, 2018). The proportion of male teachers in basic schools

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<sup>1</sup> Basic schools operate on ISCED 1 and 2 levels; upper secondary schools on ISCED level 3 in the Czech Republic.



is 13% while for headteachers it is 34% (MŠMT, not dated). With regard to this, Plitzová (2013) presented results of research carried out by the National Institute for Further Education (NIDV) showing a certain trend towards a higher percentage of male headteachers in larger schools. Female headteachers were more often employed in schools with fewer pupils.

In the same school year, in the Czech Republic there were 1,308 secondary schools (for pupils aged 15–18/19) (including 331 church and private schools), employing 38,115 teachers (*Statistická ročenka České republiky*, 2018). The age profile of headteachers in secondary schools is also dominated by older teachers: “The negative trend of the ageing of teaching staff in secondary schools has also been observed for management. The number of youngest headteachers, aged 31–40, is stagnating while the number of those shifting from the 41–50 age group to the 51–60 age group is rising, as is the number of those in the 61–70 age group” (Výroční, 2018: 95–96). As a consequence, the number of headteachers with a total experience in school leadership of 11–20 years has increased, as has the number of those with 21–30 years of experience. Again, this is related to the continuous ageing of secondary school headteachers and the low natural generation change (*Kvalita*, 2018: 96). In secondary education, the proportion of men is approximately 28.5%, while in the leading position (headteacher) their representation is 56%.

Teachers’ salaries in 2017 were only slightly above the national average but have followed a rising trend, particularly in recent years. The average salaries of headteachers are higher by approximately one third in comparison to teachers’ salaries. Also, statistics have revealed that men’s salaries in schooling are higher than women’s even when the same salary patterns are applied (MŠMT, not dated).

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The operation of basic and secondary schools in the Czech Republic is controlled by explicit legal regulations. Above all, the School Act 561/2004 stipulates the powers and responsibilities of headteachers and the way in which they are selected for and carry out their work. The founding entity may, but does not have to (in such cases, the current headteachers remain in their positions), publish an invitation to tender for the position of headteacher every six years<sup>2</sup> (*Školský zákon*, 2004). Such practice does work in some places, but is problematic in others. With regards to the basic [primary]

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<sup>2</sup> The same person can apply for multiple mandates.

school headteachers, “the average numbers of applicants who have participated in tenders show that pedagogues are showing increasingly less interest in the position of headteacher; one reason for this may be the increasing difficulties in the performance of this work” (*Kvalita*, 2018: 50).

A 2018 inspection report found that tenders for the position of headteacher at basic [primary] schools were assessed (altogether 668 tenders in the given period) as follows: “the tender was carried out in a rather formal way, it was evident that the favourite was known beforehand and most committee members had agreed on him/her (18.9%); the tender took place whereby evident efforts were made by part of the committee to promote their own favourite candidate at all costs (5.1%); evident efforts were made by the committee to choose the best applicant and the most appropriate applicant received a large majority of the votes of the committee (58.6%); evident efforts were made by the committee to choose the best applicant and the most appropriate applicant won by a narrow margin (10.2%)” (*Kvalita*, 2018: 50).

Tenders for the position of headteacher of secondary schools also indicate that the “leading positions at secondary schools are not wanted” (*Kvalita*, 2018: 97).

### **Headteacher education**

For a headteacher to successfully apply their relevant powers and responsibilities, he or she is supposed to undergo requisite education and to continue educating him/herself in the position. With regard to the formal qualification training of school leaders in the Czech setting, the main initiatives are implemented on two levels:

#### *Short (usually one-off) courses*

These are either one-off events, specifically targeted, or short-term projects. They are numerous and are delivered by various providers who offer educational programmes accredited by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth of the Czech Republic. They have been largely supported by structural funds in recent years and some of them are important, coordinated on a nationwide scale. For basic school headteachers, the most frequent topics of in-service training were legal regulations (81.5%), the education of pupils with special needs, the organizational management of schools, and inclusive education. Analyses focusing on in-service headteacher training have confirmed that “[...] a lower proportion of headteachers (less than 50%) prefer

in-service training in the form of seminars on leadership of the teaching process and teaching in classrooms [...] headteachers usually underestimate the importance of the pedagogical and methodological leading of teachers in strategies of education and schooling and efficient methods and forms of teaching. This aspect has continued to be on a lower level than management in the sense of economics and administration" (*Kvalita*, 2018: 49). A similar trend has been identified for headteachers of secondary schools (*Ibid*: 97).

### *More systematic training*

Apart from short courses, there is a recent but probably more stimulating tradition of more systematic programmes. Most of these are provided by university departments, although other providers are involved as well. One such programme is "Study for Headteachers of Schools and Education Institutions" (also called Functional Study I) which offers a 100-hour course in "knowledge and skills in the management of schools, education institutions and human resources, including health care" (*Vyhláška* 317, 2005: 5654). This course is a basic prerequisite for the position of a headteacher. Another course is Study for School Leaders (also called Functional study II), a 350-hour programme which takes place at higher education institutions and provides the participant with "knowledge and skills in the management of school-engaged legal entities, particularly in the theory and practice of school management, law, economics, pedagogy and psychology, health care and protection, and information technologies" (*Vyhláška* 317, 2005: 5655). This type of study consists of five obligatory modules: (1) Theory and Practice of School Management; (2) Human Resource Leadership; (3) Teaching Process Management; (4) Law; (5) Economics and Financial Management. These modules are carried out according to given content standards and minimum time frameworks for each form of work. Participants are typically people who are considering the possibility of becoming headteachers, or those who are already beginning headteachers. The graduates of this training receive a non-degree certificate.

It may be interesting to examine the latter of these options more closely. First of all, it seems that this programme features a number of specific characteristics that correspond with school leader training programmes in several other countries. First, there are incipient efforts to approach school leader training as a continuum. Also, there is an evident tendency to provide those pursuing the programme with opportunities to address individual needs, and there is an accent on the learning process and respect for the context specifics of participants. Moreover, this programme makes it possible to invite participants to learn in a setting of multilateral relations between

theory and practice. The organizational/methodological arrangement of the programme corresponds to this as well, leading to a needed diversity of methods and forms. In this respect, the programme can be considered a notable step forward.

As regards the shortcomings, they can be found in the content of the training. Unlike principal trends in modern education systems, this programme is rather marked by symptoms of technicality, which means that economic and legal aspects have so far played a relatively strong role. Therefore, in terms of content, the current concepts of this programme for school leader training are closer to a conservative approach to education for school management, and thus lag behind present-day possibilities and needs in preparing and supporting people involved in school leadership and management (cf. Pol, 2007).

### **Comprehensive approach to educational leadership in new projects**

In spite of evident failures in the efforts to innovate basic provision of education and create/implement a career system and career standards, support for headteachers and wider school-leading teams certainly exists. This is evidenced by the large number of usually short-term courses offered by the National Institute for Further Education and other institutions at central, regional and local levels, both public and private, and by previously mentioned investment projects supported by the government and European funds.

Some of these deserve attention in this context. The aim of the project Successful headteacher (2005–2008) was to “[...] provide information and improve the skills necessary for curricular change in school management, in conformity with long-term developments of society, regions, municipalities as well as schools and education institutions”. This training was carried out in the form of a number of optional modules: (1) Curricular Change and the New Role of Schools; (2) Managerial Control of the Processes of Change in Schools; (3) Quality Management and Assessment; (4) School Development Strategies; (5) Supervision in Managerial Practices (*Úspěšný*, not dated).

A large project entitled “Strategic Management and Planning in Schools and Territories” started in March 2016 and will continue until 2021. This project “[...] is focused on nursery schools and basic schools with development potential in strategic management and planning”. It is based on the premise that the participation of headteachers and school leaders in wider forms of professional development should be promoted. For this reason, the

project is not only aimed at delivering courses and seminars but, taking into consideration the specific conditions and needs of schools; it will offer headteachers the participation in individual forms of professional development (coaching, mentoring, supervision or benchlearning) (*Strategické*, not dated).

The main objective of the project “Support System for Professional Development of Teachers and Headteachers”, which runs from January 2018 to the autumn of 2022, is to “[...] strive for the creation, verification and implementation of a system of integrated modular support that will contribute to improved professional development of leaders in school management and teachers in subject didactics. This should be achieved by means of professional communities using a wide range of peer support and in-service teacher training with pre-defined quality criteria” (*Systém*, not dated). One of the nine key activities of the project (KA 06 — Management) is focused on school leadership and the design and verification of a comprehensive and continuous modular system of school management, particularly in education management.

The shift from education based on courses and seminars to individualised forms that better reflect the needs of headteachers is particularly in evidence in most recent projects. Also, these place more emphasis on shared experience, the evaluation of new forms of education, and continuity.

### **Absence of a career system and headteacher standard**

The problems of headteacher education are sometimes considered to be related to a non-existent career system and the lack of a headteacher standard. Efforts to establish a career system and to create a standard for headteachers seemed to be in progress some time ago but never reached the stage of implementation. (Incidentally, more recent efforts to define and implement a career system for teachers have ended up the same way.) With regard to the career system, the plan was to distinguish several stages of headteachers’ careers, differentiating between beginners, advanced and highly experienced. The latter were intended to have not only the opportunity of leading their own schools but of being engaged in the education of headteachers on the lower levels of the career system.

A proposal for a career system and standard for headteachers was put forward in 2015 as a basis for wider professional and political discussion prior to making a final decision. The authors declared that it was aimed at improving quality, updating priorities, and pupils’ achieving better results (*Kariérní systém*, not dated). The document defined the following principles/assumptions:

- A headteacher is, primarily, the pedagogic leader of the school. Pedagogic leadership will be restored as a priority for headteachers (or school leaders).
- Applicants tendering for the position of headteacher will be ready to hold the post and will receive immediate support at the beginning of their professional career.
- There will be a nation-wide system for the transparent and criterion-based evaluation of applicants that is accepted by establishing entities.
- Formative assessment of the performance of headteachers will be carried out at the end of an adaptation period as well as at further stages of their career.
- There will be a standard of quality that should be attained by every headteacher after six years in office.
- The career system of headteachers will be interconnected with that of teachers, with emphasis on support for teachers' professional development from the headteacher.
- Headteachers will receive high-quality support for their professional development; conditions will be created for the sharing and exchanging of their experience, monitoring, coaching and the involvement of the best headteachers as leaders of the schooling system.
- The evaluation of the headteacher will be linked to the evaluation of the whole school (*Kariérní systém*, not dated).

As for the headteacher standard, certain levels were designed as being associated with expectations for the intensification and development of headteachers' competences. The standard was designed as a tool for achieving, maintaining and increasing the quality of their work; it was also intended to incorporate the scope of headteachers' involvement in the system. A new feature was the inclusion of governmental requirements for professional competences and their development throughout one's career, which related to five domains: (1) Leadership and Management in Schooling and Education; (2) Leadership and Management as Based on Values and Visions; (3) Human Resource Leadership; (4) Organization Management; (5) Personal and Professional Development.

The idea of the authors of these proposals was to interconnect the careers of headteachers with their standards. A major criterion was that a degree of attainment of competences is to be expected at various career stages. Indicators were designed for the assessment of these competences. The career system of a headteacher was to be divided into four stage indicators: 0, 1, 2, and 3. An applicant for the post of headteacher would be classified as

stage 0 and then, once in office, the headteacher would be expected to progress from career stage 1 to career stage 3 (*Kariérní systém*, not dated). The proposal was not accepted due to lack of political support.

## CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: RESEARCH DATA

A variety of research studies into the work of headteachers (school leaders) has been carried out in recent years. These can be divided into: (1) studies directly focusing on the headteachers' work as such (e.g. instructional leadership) and (2) those covering a wider range of problems in schools such as inclusive education, school climate, and so on. With regard to the latter, the findings on the work of headteachers were rather secondary, as an inevitable factor within the topic under observation. Similarly, research surveys can be divided into: (1) those in which headteachers (school leaders) themselves were the respondents and (2) those in which teachers or other people in schools reported on the work of headteachers. The following section presents selected findings from surveys dealing with the work and position of Czech headteachers. Not all surveys are mentioned, as the focus is on those carried out after the year 2000, which was when the situation in Czech schools changed significantly, and new legislation was introduced. Even so, not all the findings are applicable in full. The results should be rather understood within the dynamics of the time. The various methodologies and limitations should be taken into account, both for qualitative and quantitative surveys.

Symbolically, let us start with a survey focused on the path towards the position of headteacher. Pol *et al.* (2009) explored the professional careers of headteachers by a method of life history, focusing on important events at the inception of their careers. It was found that headteachers felt strongly anchored in the teaching profession. Their opinions indicated that the shift upwards was a matter of chance that could be expressed as "being in the right place at the right time". It was typical for them to feel lonely when adapting to the new role and so they tended to look for support and security, for which they used a variety of strategies. During the second phase, the need to perform the role of headteacher "appropriately" arose and called for a feeling of self-reliance, which is fundamental to success in such a professional role. Nevertheless, it was typical for headteachers to lose their initial optimism, sometimes rather naive, and to seek self-confidence in activities they were good at. A key factor in this phase was their relation to the school;



a feeling of responsibility and affinity made it easier to get through this period. The research confirmed the existence of several stages in the career of a headteacher and, consequently, the need to differentiate headteacher education, support and evaluation in relation to these stages (Pol *et al.*, 2009; Pol *et al.*, 2010).

A variety of relevant data was generated by extensive questionnaire surveys within the project TALIS, which was supported with EU funds (Kašparová *et al.*, 2015). Some of the results enabled a comprehensive and comparative examination of the job of headteachers in the Czech Republic and abroad (Kašparová *et al.*, 2014). These surveys focused on a wide range of headteacher activities in order to recognize the current state with regard to their activity, the major limiting factors, needs, and so on. Among other objectives, the authors of this project were interested in how much time Czech headteachers devoted to various activities. The data showed that most of their time was dedicated to administration and meetings (including human and material resource management, planning, reporting, checking that regulations were complied with and so forth). In the Czech Republic, this takes up as much as a half of their working time. A large percentage (94%) of headteachers said they had checked school documents and administration procedures “often or very often” during the previous year, and it seems they did so more often than headteachers in other countries that were studied. In contrast, a lower percentage of headteachers cooperated with headteachers of other schools (37%) and solved timetabling problems (20%) when compared to international average.

Headteachers of Czech public schools spent more time (50%) on managerial and administrative operations and meetings than headteachers of non-public schools (44%). Headteachers of grammar schools (students aged 11–19 or 13–19) devoted more time to administration and managerial operations (55%) than headteachers of basic [primary] schools (50%). Moreover, secondary school headteachers spent more time on teaching-related activities than their counterparts in basic schools (22% vs. 18%). Another finding was that the amount of time spent on the two main activities (administration and teaching) was influenced by the size of school. Administration took up more of the time of headteachers in bigger schools (those with a staff of more than 40 teachers) than of those of smaller ones (40 or less). Nevertheless, this may have been due to the fact that headteachers of smaller schools had a higher teaching commitment, so they spent more time on teaching-related activities (Kašparová *et al.*, 2014).

In response to questions indicating headteachers’ responsibilities and willingness to delegate powers, the respondents said they felt responsible

mainly for decisions on recruiting and dismissing teachers, fixing or increasing their starting salaries, and admitting pupils. In these areas, only 19% to 29% of headteachers shared the responsibility with other actors. By contrast, responsibility was most often shared in areas such as decision-making on the offer and content of subjects, on the wording of disciplinary principles and on procedures for evaluating pupils. These findings were confirmed by Lhotková (2011) whose research focused on the work of deputy headteachers and middle management. She also observed that teaching and pupil-related activities (marking, choice of textbooks and aids, work with new teachers, in-service teacher training) were areas in which middle managers worked quite independently. The tasks headteachers were least willing to delegate were typical managerial activities such as planning, specifying teachers' workloads, evaluating employees, managing finances, and so on.

The results of TALIS indicated that headteachers in the Czech Republic felt most constrained by insufficient finance and school budgets (93% of headteachers), government directives and regulations (89%), work overload and responsibility (82%) and the salary system based on career advancement (73%) – headteachers would prefer more possibilities to reward teachers not only according to the length of teaching practice, but especially according to their performance. In contrast, 32% of headteachers claimed their efficiency was mostly limited by a lack of teachers and 29% cited lack of support for their own professional education. A comparison of results from various schools has shown that headteachers of public schools perceive more obstacles to the efficient performance of their job than headteachers of non-public schools (although this relation is not strong). Headteachers of public schools more often perceived the advancement-based salary system as limiting. They also more often mentioned lack of opportunities and sources for the professional education of teachers. Insufficient human resources were more strongly perceived as a limitation by primary school headteachers than their secondary grammar school counterparts. As expected, it was found that the more strongly a headteacher perceives any kind of limitation, the lower work satisfaction he or she reports (Kašparová *et al.*, 2014, 2015).

However, it seems that Czech headteachers experience a relatively high level of job satisfaction. Almost all (98%) would recommend their school as a good workplace and hardly any would change it for another school if they had the opportunity. Approximately the same percentage stated that they took pleasure in their work. Overall, job satisfaction was expressed by 95% of headteachers, both in terms of their own performance and in general. The level of job satisfaction of headteachers in the Czech Republic does not seem to be related to their own personal characteristics (gender, age, educational

attainment) nor to most of the characteristics of their schools (type, size, location). One exception was that headteachers of schools where more than 10% of pupils had special educational needs reported more job satisfaction. Also, the authors of this extensive study found that if teachers spend more time in teaching-related activities and follow a pedagogical style of leadership, their job satisfaction is higher (Kašparová *et al.*, 2014).

Instructional leadership was also studied by Lazarová *et al.* (2015a) in their research using a mixed methodology. They investigated the efforts and feeling of success in selected areas of education leadership: (1) fulfilling teachers' needs; (2) supporting professional development; (3) concern for pupils; (4) working with academic results; (5) developing the educational programme; (6) cooperating with parents; (7) stimulating climate; (8) shared vision. They found that headteachers concern themselves most with teachers' needs (an average of 3.68 on a scale of intensity of 1 to 4) and concern themselves the least with supporting the professional development of teachers (2.37). Female headteachers assessed their approach with a higher intensity in all areas apart from academic results. Working with these hard indicators, such as educational results of students, was, apparently, the realm of male headteachers. In the areas of supporting professional development, working with academic results and concern for pupils, the lowest intensity was expressed by headteachers whose experience was the shortest. Headteachers of fully organized schools (school providing education to students of all grades) said they dealt more with academic results while those of schools that were not fully organized concentrated on providing a "home-like" atmosphere, with a stronger focus on pupils. Headteachers of primary schools considered their leadership work to be successful, feeling most proficient in the field of support of a stimulating learning environment (85 points out of 100). Most self-criticism was associated with the development of the education programme (75 points out of 100).

More recent surveys have examined headteachers' perceived proficiency in developing a stimulating climate. The school climate has been a continuous focus of researchers for some time now. Results from Czech schools indicate that the manner in which headteachers communicate with teachers fundamentally affects the leadership style and, thus, mutual relations (Lukas, 2009). The nature of the relationship between teachers and the headteacher has an impact on the satisfaction of both and, therefore, on the success of the school. Dividing the team into two opposing camps, a situation of them and us, can be an obstacle to school development (Sedláček, 2008).

Lašek (2001) and, later, Urbánek (2003, 2006) used the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire to explore teachers' perception of

headteachers' responsiveness, supportive behaviour and directedness. They found that teachers in primary schools perceived headteachers to be more directive compared to teachers in secondary schools. Differences were also apparent regarding gender (Lašek, 2001). Female headteachers, despite being slightly more directive, were perceived as more helpful; teachers cooperated with female headteachers more willingly and reported less frustration. The school climate was perceived to be more positive in schools where the headteacher had been in office longer (11 years and more). Conversely, more directedness, less openness and more frustration were associated with the least experienced headteachers.

Pol *et al.* (2013) studied the processes of organizational learning, also using a mixed methodology, and their key topic was how headteachers support the processes of organizational learning. They found that the primary condition for such support is the headteacher's behaviour whereby he or she: insists on a high quality of work, becomes a model of behaviour, accentuates the teamwork of teachers, supports peer visits to classes, delegates, and supports the school climate. Headteachers in this study considered it important to have good relations between leaders and create strong partnerships or larger groupings.

Research focused on school leadership in specific contexts or specific periods of change in education policies also produced interesting findings. For example, Sedláček (2008) studied the specifics of school leaders of rural schools and came to the conclusion that an important factor in the processes of leadership is the context of the small rural school and, related to that, the larger importance of the role of the mayor. The mayor's considerable influence can act as a destabilizing element, making the headteacher feel less secure. The headteacher then largely attempts to convince the mayor of that he or she is the right person in place.

The obligation for schools to compile reports was an impetus for the international project "Developing Leadership Capacity for Data-informed School Improvement" (DELECA), which focused on questions such as how headteachers work with data. It found that Czech headteachers collected data on pupils, infrastructure and teachers, while the least data was collected on the external community and the perception of the school by various subjects. Czech headteachers were convinced that their task was to develop schools by means of decisions based on data, but they felt much less obliged to collect data and carry out research in their own schools. They expressed more desire for data-based school development than data collection. Also, they generally expressed the view that there was more need for education in school development than for work with data (Lazarová *et al.*, 2015c).

Inclusion has become a significant topic in recent years, so it is not surprising that many researchers have inquired into it. Using qualitative procedures, Lazarová *et al.* (2015b) studied how school leaders supported inclusive education. From the viewpoint of the leaders, there were two key aspects: supporting the idea and culture of inclusive education in schools and mastering the practice of inclusive education. Headteachers are able to significantly influence the way in which inclusion in schools is perceived. They stated that if the leaders themselves are not committed to the idea, it is very difficult to support inclusive education. Mastering the practice includes “protecting teachers” from work and administration overload related to inclusive education. Support systems for teachers are established, which involve a structure of rules, prompt solutions for problems, consulting, personnel reinforcement, and support for participation and democracy in schools. Although headteachers reported that they often had to strike a balance between the rules and making concessions to teachers, they were not afraid of making decisions in difficult situations.

## A VIEW TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Headteachers of basic [primary] and secondary schools are people in positions of great responsibility. This will have to be taken into account when establishing strategies and procedures that will lead to an adequate legislative framework for their work, continuous education, and support for and evaluation of their work. This should also include the aspect of differentiated career phases. It will also be necessary to liberate headteachers from administrative overload and accentuate the necessity to support the key processes in schools, namely, learning and teaching. Headteachers should have a realistic chance to develop schools in this direction, from the inside, in cooperation with other people in schools and the wider community.

The work of headteachers will have to remain under relatively strict control. At the same time, it must be made more attractive so that we can recruit proficient individuals from future generations. Unfortunately, the demographic indicators are not favourable. A variety of tools and specific measures are at hand, but their application often remains a matter of political will and preference, both in terms of general politics and education policy.

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## **INCREASING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND IMPLEMENTING PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP IN FINLAND**

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*Abstract.* This paper discusses recent developments in school leadership practices in Finland. The focus is on what effects the major changes of education paradigms had in educational leadership. The theoretical discussion is based on several research findings. A meta analysis of 30 PhD studies was done by Alava, Halttunen & Risku (2012) in a research commissioned by the Finnish National Board of Education. Some of the key findings in this study were the need for stronger future orientation, the importance of broad pedagogical leadership, and understanding leadership as a resource with emphasis on shared leadership, change leadership and values leadership. The empirical examples in this paper are from two municipalities, Åland and Mäntsälä, where extensive development efforts were carried out in 2005-2018. The development in Åland was instigated by the rather poor results the students got in mathematics in the PISA 2003 assessment (Uljens, Sundqvist & Smeds-Nylund, 2016). In Mäntsälä the development was initiated by the two new administrators, who became worried about the rather stagnant organizational culture and the level of leadership competence in the schools. Both cases reveal the need for system wide effort, the importance of culture and values, the role of participation and dialogue, and the need to re-define leadership. They also show the way to lead schools into professional learning communities.

*Keywords:* system-wide development, cross-school teams, pedagogical leadership, school culture, learning community.

### **CHANGE OF THE DRIVERS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

The most profound change and development in educational administration and school leadership in Finland took place during the period from 1970 to 1999 when the entire system was changed from top-down to an almost opposite bottom-up approach (Alava 2007; Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999). This was due to the development of society and a major paradigm shift in the guiding principles of education. Finland saw the change from 'Nation Building' in the 1950s, building the welfare state in the 1980s, and national competitiveness at the turn of the millennium into 'Future Creation' of today.

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The latest developments also dramatically changed the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and principals. As described by Alava, Halttunen & Risku (2012) and Isosomppi (1996) their role changed from being civil servants performing simple administrative tasks into real leaders as described by Nikki (2000), responsible for all matters – strategy, finances, management, personnel, leadership, culture, values, stakeholder relations, and pedagogical leadership (Mustonen, 2003). In the new millennium new paradigms arose in education policy and practice. Accountability, results, quality, freedom of choice, and national competitiveness became new drivers of development. Many of these elements can be seen in the latest 2016 curriculum, which is still in the implementation phase.

Gradually, also, theoretical interest in educational leadership grew, and several new studies were conducted. In 2010 the National Board of Education commissioned the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä to undertake a meta-study of the last 30 PhD theses focused on school renewal and school leadership in Finland. The goal of the study was both to synthesize the theoretical aspects of the theses and to explore the practical solutions and guidelines in them. This was highly important for development of educational leadership in Finland, because in the 20<sup>th</sup> century most academic research on educational leadership had been international.

One of the key findings of the meta study was that the new situation called for a stronger future orientation alongside traditional teaching and management duties (Alava, Halttunen & Risku 2012). This was in line with the understanding that Finland was transforming from the ‘Nation Building’ phase into the ‘Future Creation’ phase; Kirveskari (2003) called for visionaries to express how things should be and to feel responsible for both their own organisation and broader society. The report also summarizes the results into a new understanding of educational leadership and presents a framework of broad pedagogical leadership with four key development processes: curriculum development; development of organizational culture; creation of vision objectives and agreement on strategies; and specification of the basic mission. In addition to these, the broad pedagogical framework includes three competencies and attitudes of leadership: shared leadership, change leadership, and values leadership. Leadership is not a person or an act; it is a resource to be utilized in the situation at hand; different schools are in different situations so they need different resources.

Finally, combining the future orientation, developing school culture, increasing teaching staff’s competencies, and building the new curriculum highlight the roles of both teachers and the principal as learners. Then, members of the school organisation should form a community of learners,

where the principal is a learner along with everyone else (Alava *et al.*, 2012). It is therefore, following Moilanen's (2001) argument, possible to consider that the objective of internal school development is to create a community of learners.

Like the meta-study described, the situation in schools and the role of school leaders had changed a lot. On the governmental level the situation has instigated further studies in order to clarify the new roles and responsibilities of principals (National Board of Education, 2013). The report concluded that it is impossible to identify and decide very detailed tasks, roles and responsibilities of school leaders because the schools are different, the municipalities with their norms and regulations are different, and the school contexts are different. Therefore, there cannot exist any uniform nationwide solutions, although the base for any school leader's work is in the new legislature. It includes increased responsibility in managing, finances, and buildings (in collaboration with the municipality), but more and more matters related to pedagogical leadership (curriculum, work plan, evaluation; school culture and values; developing the whole school community; leading competencies; student affairs and welfare; external networking; all personnel matters – recruitment, temporary appointments, training, well-being). Looking to the future the report emphasizes pedagogical leadership and knowledge-based management (National Board of Education, 2013).

## REFORM IN PRACTICE

We can link the framework of broad pedagogical leadership presented above to two recent empirical studies. Because in Finland municipalities have the responsibility to organize education, and because they are very independent, there are multiple ways to understand education and school leadership in Finland. These two cases were selected because they have made major efforts and developments leading to notable changes and results in their work.

The first is a follow-up study of a ten-year development process in a district called Åland, a region with 16 small communities. The second is an on-going study by the author in a city of Mäntsälä. Both conducted a major educational renewal process in the period 2005-2018 but for different reasons. The educational administrators in the district of Åland got worried about rather poor results in mathematics revealed in the PISA 2003 studies. The PISA results can be calculated on a regional level, which is the case in Åland. In Mäntsälä the two new administrators got worried about the rather stagnant organizational culture and the level of leadership competence

in the schools. It needs to be noticed that, while Mäntsälä is a rather typical mid-size municipality in Finland, with around 20 000 people, the region of Åland is different, because it has, for historical reasons, a semi-independent role and is mostly a Swedish speaking community with around 30 000 inhabitants. Åland has 22 elementary schools and two secondary schools. Mäntsälä has 14 elementary schools and one secondary school.

The PISA 2003 results in Åland first inspired self-critical reflection and developed in teachers and principals a growing awareness about their function in schools, leading to a ten-year multi-level school regional developmental turnaround process (2003–2012) (Uljens, Sundqvist & Smeds-Nylund, 2016). The process has been successful. In PISA 2012, Åland was found to be performing at the nation's top, achieving better results in mathematics than Finland on average, thereby demonstrating major development (Harju-Luukkainen, Nissinen, Stolt & Vettenranta, 2014).

In the city of Mäntsälä a similar education reform process was initiated in 2011 by the new superintendent. The focus was first to increase the leadership capacity of school leaders and restructure the educational administration. Also, the emphasis was on the school level development led by the school leaders. Major reform has taken place; a new team structure was developed, emphasizing cross-school collaboration; an intensive leadership training program was launched and several new approaches for school development were introduced and implemented at school level. In the district of Åland, two phases of development can be seen: first, the use of evaluation results for development purposes (2001–2004), and second, an intentional, full-scale school development program (2005–2013). According to Uljens *et al.* (2016), several major efforts could be identified in the process: the curriculum was revised and clarified; work was organized by creating horizontal discussion arenas striving for more precise content, greater coherence, and common goals; pedagogical dialogue was increased, and work teams were strengthened; the principals exhibited strong, quality-oriented thinking, and saw the advantages of, and often attended, in-service training. The areas of actions and approaches found in the cases of Åland and Mäntsälä link to the framework of broad pedagogical leadership.

### **System-wide change effort**

It is notable that the major school development did not take place in isolation at school level in either case. In both places, the regional/municipal administrative leaders (superintendent and basic education leaders) played a major role. In addition to the collaboration of the municipal education

office and the school principals, wider collaboration was also of importance. For example, in Mäntsälä, the team structure involving all schools proved to be very efficient, as did the dialogue with parents and other stakeholders.

In both municipalities, collaboration inside the different sections of operations was important. In Åland this included a process that involved health care, youth organizations, and social services (Uljens *et al.*, 2016). In Mäntsälä an in-depth comprehensive plan of collaboration in the entire sector of cultural activities was accepted (Lehtinen, 2014). The municipal activities included schools, the library, community college, culture, youth and sports sections, and the secondary school combined with the activities in the NGO sector. The plan also emphasized moving from a management-driven model into a team and collaboration model. In a small municipality this created a lot of synergy. The contacts and dialogue with parents played a significant role in both municipalities. In Åland a lot of open meetings were arranged. Uljens *et al.* (2016) argue that it was important that the principals saw parents more as resources in new ways of communication. It was obvious that in a small and tight community where most people knew each other, dialogue was easy due to a positive approach of development.

In Mäntsälä the situation was somewhat different. Several small rural schools had to be either closed or merged, and that raised some tensions among the parents involved. There, too, meetings were held mostly to inform the public and to give citizens a voice in the planning process. Later, another kind and very positive collaboration with parents occurred in the implementation process of the new 2016 National Curriculum. This curriculum included a new element called multidisciplinary teaching and learning. This new pedagogical method was called phenomenon-based learning, and unfortunately, it was very often misunderstood, as if Finland was abolishing all subjects and replacing them with studying phenomena. Naturally, that was not the case, but multidisciplinary learning meant that each school would carry out one one- or two- week long period where a real-life phenomenon is studied in a new way, emphasizing student responsibility, external connections, and concrete results. In these projects parents had a significant and positive role (Hellström, S., Personal interview, May 15, 2016). Very positive results, student activity, and parents' involvement in this new pedagogical approach were also reported by another principal (Laasila, S., Personal interview, June 2, 2016).

The new team structure in Mäntsälä was constructed for two main reasons. First, to increase collaboration among the schools, and second, to harness all knowledge available in order to conduct all the changes and renewals needed. This new collaborative approach is understandable,

because the schools were all only medium-sized, and all of them had to do the same changes. It would have been a significant waste of resources if all of them had done the same tasks in isolation, which had been the way for many years. The change process of the team structure was led by the administrative director of basic education, but all principals were included in determining what cross-school teams would be needed, who members in the teams should be, and how the tasks decided in teams would be implemented in schools. The new team structure consisted of six teams: a team for school safety, a team for ICT development, a team to support daily learning and schooling (including special education and immigrants), a team for pedagogical development, a team of school secretaries, and a team for resources. Three of the chairmen of the teams were regional principals<sup>1</sup>, two were educational experts working in the municipal administrative office and the resource team was led by the administrative director of basic education. These six people also formed the management team for basic education. All the schools selected members to every team. Team members had the responsibility to disseminate all the decisions and best practices to all schools and they also brought initiatives from the schools in a bottom-up way to be discussed in the management team. In addition to these teams, there were also six designated coordinators, whose tasks were to promote their special areas in order to benefit all schools; for example, coordinators of school safety and ICT (Mäkinen, J., Personal interview, March 12, 2019).

In sum, the following key elements that made system-wide educational development possible, were:

- cross-school team structure and collaboration;
- dialogue between municipal educational managers and school principals;
- multi-professional co-operation;
- recreating curriculum and collaboration with parents.

### **Importance of school culture and values**

The importance of values was seen in many aspects of the development of both Åland and Mäntsälä. According to Uljens *et al.* (2016), in Åland the rather low scores in PISA 2003 results created a growing awareness and shared responsibility for the situation. All that reflected the importance of values, responsibility, and the notion of care for education. The role and importance of school culture was also seen nationally in the new 2016

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<sup>1</sup> Regional principals are 'regular' school principals with additional duties.

curriculum in Finland, where it is stated that learning community should be at the core of school culture, alongside well-being and safe school day, interaction, cultural diversity, participation, equality and sustainable future (Finnish National Board of Education, 2016). The dissertation of Lahtero (2011) opens a new perspective on leadership culture by examining it as a network of meanings by the teachers. In addition, Lahtero's work offers an illustrative perspective on the complexity and role of the school's organisational culture as part of the principal's everyday activities as seen in the both cases described here.

In Mäntsälä, the developing of school culture was seen as important at both municipal and school levels. When the two new educational administrators started their work in 2011 the two priority foci for them were increasing the leadership capacity of the school principals and changing the school culture, which they then saw as very conservative, like 'stagnant water' (Lintonen, P., Personal interview, March 12, 2019). With new leadership behavior, structural changes, recruitment, leadership training and school level guidelines, major cultural development took place (Mäkinen, J., Personal interview, March 12, 2019). The principals cannot undertake the school-level changes alone, and need a lot of support from their municipal education directors (Vuohijoki, 2006). In recruiting the new principals, their competence and potential to lead were sought after (Lintonen, P., Personal interview, June 13, 2016).

At the school level, the development of school culture began with initiatives and actions by the principals. One of the principals, who started in 2011 in Mäntsälä, analyzed the school culture at that time and concluded that it was rather isolated and conservative (Lipponen, M., Personal interview, June 1, 2016). Knowing that cultural change would not be easy, he included the change and development of school operations with several initiatives and actions. He also strongly advocated the stand that the core values are important and good behavior in school is a must. The main driver in his leadership philosophy was student focus – putting students in the center. This meant, for example, taking some students into the interviews of the applicants for a teacher's position. Clearly, this raised some eyebrows, but principal's example encouraged teachers to include students in many other activities.

In another school in Mäntsälä, whose principal has been regarded as a visionary leader, school culture was important. She also emphasized the strong student focus in the multidisciplinary projects that the school had in 2016. It was a major effort, and some might say daring, because the principal guided the work so that students took the lead on all 90 projects that the entire school was involved in during the two last weeks of spring semester



of 2016. She assured the teachers by saying that perhaps there would be some chaos, but that all of them could do it. As part of the renewed school culture, she also allowed different opinions in an open dialogue. One important element linked to values and culture is the notion of pedagogic wellbeing and positive leadership, which could be seen in this school. Liusvaara (2014) argues that leader's support strengthens the sense of coherence, which is the basis for wellbeing. Safe and open culture enhances pedagogic wellbeing. Positive leadership, which consists of the principal's own positive interaction with others, causes positive feelings and action on others (Wenström, 2019).

The principal had a lot of experience as a teacher in entrepreneurship classes, and therefore, she had a strong belief in the students. As the result, all 90 projects were completed with great success. The topics ranged from kickboxing to camping to an international visit to Amsterdam. All projects were carefully documented, photographed and evaluated (Hellström, S., Personal interview, May, 31, 2016). The findings from Mäntsälä clearly reflect the notion of trust, which has been one key element in Finnish society. The principal trusted the teachers to exercise their informal leadership that served the school community. And in return, the teachers also trusted the principal to best serve the teachers' work and wellbeing by using formal leadership. Doing this, the principal proved to be a caring school leader and, as Kanervio, Pulkkinen & Risku (2015) emphasized, strived to ensure that teachers engage themselves in sharing their expertise to develop their professional capacity together. Trust has also been one element in distributed leadership (Tian, 2016). In her study about values and ethics, Teikari (2016) found several similar important values among Finnish school principals – safety, fairness, care, courage and friendship. The importance of culture was discovered in the studies by Kunnari (2008), Lahtero (2011), Erätuuli and Leino (1993) and Vulkko (2001).

In sum, the key elements in stressing values and culture in educational development were:

- developing school culture begins from leadership culture;
- applying positive leadership;
- putting oneself on the line as a leader;
- placing students at the center.

### **Participation, communication and dialogue**

Participation and shared leadership were also present in the two municipalities in question. In Åland this was the combination of strong central initiative

and broad dialogue among all participants. The local educational administration was proactive in launching the development but according to Uljens *et al.* (2016) this was done in a manner whereby the local government did not leave them or or blame them. Also, at the school level there was a lot of dialogue; developmental actions were carried out in a culture aiming at coherence, open, two-way communication. Uljens *et al.* (2016) also saw that as the government and the superintendents did at higher levels, so could a more positive atmosphere be created.

In Mäntsälä the two new administrators adopted several new ways of communication. They launched regular meetings for all principals, where both practical, everyday issues were discussed but also future-oriented visionary matters were deliberated. New teachers were carefully inducted, and the in-service training of teachers was delegated to regions (Lintonen, P. Personal interview, Oct, 31. 2016). A very important phase of school-based development was a workshop among all management teams of all schools in Mäntsälä. In that workshop all these teams analyzed their school culture, defined goals for development, and reported their work to everybody else. This kind of work with teachers from all schools working together was new and created several new connections between teachers and schools, fostering a new kind of school-to-school networking (Mäkinen, J., Personal interview, March 12, 2019). These observations are in line with theoretical findings. Mäkelä (2007) found that external networking takes up a significant proportion (22%) of a principal's time. According to Pesonen (2009), principals expect school management to develop towards collegial management between principals from different schools and to expand to both internal and external school networks. Also Paukkuri (2015) in her dissertation found the importance of networking. She argued that new meanings of shared leadership could be reflected on and learned in networking with other schools.

This network-based collaboration was, however, not limited to the municipality of Mäntsälä alone. An important example of that is a close collaboration between the neighboring municipality, Tuusula. In western Mäntsälä it became necessary to build a new school for grades 7–9 because in that area there already existed three elementary schools for grades 1–6. These three schools were near the border with the neighboring municipality and rather far from the closest grade 6–9 school in Mäntsälä municipality. Therefore, these two municipalities made a contract and financial arrangements so that the children from these three schools in Mäntsälä could go to the school for grades 7–9 in Tuusula although they lived in Mäntsälä.

In addition to the school networking level, at the school level a lot of dialogue-based practices have also been adopted in Mäntsälä. One of the new issues demanding discussion was the new system to evaluate student achievement and progress in the 2016 curriculum. The aim was to give continuous feedback to the students during the whole year and the progress of the student to be evaluated against the goals mentioned in the curriculum. The evaluation is not based solely on isolated tests, but is also grounded on classroom activity and the quality of homework. In addition to giving a plain mark, the teacher can also give written feedback. This has raised a lot of questions among the teachers, so one area of internal dialogue among them has been defining the evaluation procedures to be used (Hellström, S., Personal interview, May, 31, 2016). One important medium in increasing communication and dialogue with parents has been an electronic platform called Wilma, which is used in most Finnish schools in order to inform the parents about school's activities, their children's issues, and collecting feedback from them.

In sum, the key elements in enhancing participation, communication and dialogue were:

- understanding through inclusive dialogue;
- wide participation to secure commitment;
- dialogue through entire education administration;
- leading the school-level dialogue as a key task for the principal;
- communicating expectations through proactive and trusting leadership.

### **Re-defining leadership**

As can be seen in this article, traditional leadership and management practices in schools were challenged in many ways. Those schools moved far away from the 'one-man' leadership practice: traditional administrative work is no longer sufficient, and leadership is emphasized, values are the new base for school development, and emerging school culture is a strategic effort. According to Uljens *et al.* (2016), in Åland, the role of the principal used to be mostly managerial. The principals held common meetings, but the discussions were not goal-orientated and the teachers mostly "ran their own race". During the developmental process, principals started visiting classrooms. This was perceived as an expression of recognition of the teachers' work and thus was perceived positively by teachers.

As mentioned earlier, in Mäntsälä, one of the key focus areas of educational development and reform was to increase the leadership capacity of the principals. This was initiated by the superintendent and carried out

by the administrative director of basic education (Lintonen, P. Personal interview, March 12, 2019):

- Structures were renewed in order to support school-level leadership; very small schools were merged to form bigger units in order to secure the possibilities to really lead and manage; this way principals could be appointed as full-time school leaders, not part-time as before;
- The former top-down management was abolished, and a participative and distributed leadership approach was introduced;
- Leadership training for all principals was arranged<sup>2</sup>;
- The superintendent and the administrative director of basic education attended a two- year along university-based leadership program;
- Leadership skills and potential were valued in recruiting new principals;
- A regional model for school leadership was created with three areas with a regional principal in each of them;
- A new management team for elementary education was created.

It can be said the development in Mäntälä has been from non-leadership to leadership to shared leadership to team leadership (Mäkinen, Personal interview, Oct. 31, 2016). The structural formation of the geographical regions was a very important start in school level collaboration; schools do not work together unless the school principals work together and encourage collaboration. According to Mäkinen (Personal interview, March 12, 2019), the new structure first forced principals and teachers to collaborate, but after some years it became a normal way to work, leading to the next step of building the cross-school team system where all schools collaborated. In addition to cooperation, the new structure enabled shared and distributed leadership, which focuses on leading the entire organisation's knowledge and learning emphasizing dialogue and mentoring, where every member of the organisation is a learner. The organisation thus becomes a community of learners (Alava *et al.*, 2012).

Both the superintendent and the administrative director of basic education in Mäntsälä emphasized their role as supporters of school-level leadership. In doing so, they developed and introduced a detailed handbook for

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<sup>2</sup> The two first short one-day training session for school principals in Mäntsälä were facilitated by outside trainers. The first focused in leading school's processes and the second in twelve leadership areas in public management (Strategic leadership, managing resources, quality leadership, leading competencies, leading the working community, leading innovation in complex context, leading networks, managing change, leading communication, leading everyday action); a framework developed by the lecturer (Stennvall & Virtanen, 2010). Later, the administrative director of basic education used considerable time in the regular school principals' meetings for topics he learned in the extensive leadership training programs he had participated at the University of Jyväskylä.

school leaders and adopted a quality framework to enhance school level operations (Lintonen, P., Personal interview, March 12, 2019). One important result of the increased collaboration and communication has been the increase of trust, which was lacking in the early years of the time period in question (2011–2018). The main reason for the possible mistrust was misunderstanding and usage of different constructs and terminology (Mäkinen, J., Personal interview, March 12, 2019).

New pedagogical approaches and methods were also introduced in Mäntsälä. More and more participative leadership was emphasized. As was underlined by Hellström (Personal interview, May 31, 2016), leadership is also part of pedagogy; it is implementing the strategic plans into real action among the teachers. It needs also to be individualized because teachers are different, and they need to be supported and encouraged individually. It has been found that renewal processes require the principal's strong pedagogical leadership (Hellström, 2004). In addition to planning and organising teachers' work, Raasumaa (2010) suggests that a principal as a broad pedagogical leader also attends the quality development of knowledge and learning just as the municipality had done.

Another school-level emphasis in Mäntsälä has been teamwork. In the beginning schools had teams for everyday school matters like information, security and well-being. Later, the more comprehensive team structures were created, often subject-based – teams of mathematics teachers, arts teachers, language teachers etc. In Finland, the special education has had a big role in practice and is behind good PISA results. All schools have different support for students with special needs, either through part-time or full-time special education teachers. Considering that this is a demanding area, not all teachers have a good command of it. Therefore, an interesting solution was to include in each team structure in school at least one teacher who is qualified in special education. Therefore, such a team can discuss any problems related to children with special needs, regardless of which teacher raises the issue (Lipponen, M., Personal interview, June 1, 2016).

In sum, the key elements for re-defining leadership, were:

- applying new pedagogical leadership understanding that leadership is part of pedagogy;
- superintendents and educational administrators' important job is to support principals;
- principals' important job is to support teachers;
- shared leadership can be enforced by management teams, restructuring management systems, delegating tasks to various teams; leading through team structures.

## CREATING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS

There is an increased theoretical discussion about networked learning communities, but not much empirical examples have been presented. As discussed earlier, the formation of a learning community was also the end goal in the model of broad pedagogical leadership and emphasized also in the PhD work by Raasumaa (2001). However, the two municipalities discussed above have taken concrete steps towards a new kind of learning community where both school-to-school and school-to-community networks have been created as part of their school culture development and new, student-centered model of teaching. As Uljens *et al.* (2016) explain, the development began with national level initiatives during the first period and then continued to self-directed developmental work in regional, municipal and local settings. Educational administrators clearly turned the Åland school system into a professional learning community. In doing this, a system-wide approach was needed, where strong participation and dialogue were crucial.

As we can see, the two cases described earlier reflect the theories of professional learning communities (Morrow, 2010; Jackson, & Temperley, 2007; Nkengbeza, 2013). Are the two examples discussed above perfect learning communities? Perhaps not, but we can find essential elements in their development efforts towards that goal. And we can conclude that:

- *If schools are to improve*, staff – teachers and leaders – must develop the capacity to function as professional learning communities.
- *If schools are to function as professional learning communities*, they must develop a collaborative culture and network orientation.
- *If schools are to develop a collaborative culture*, they must overcome a tradition of teacher isolation and adopt new pedagogical leadership.
- *If schools are to overcome their tradition of teacher isolation*, teachers must learn to work in effective, high performing teams supported and encouraged by school leaders.

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## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN HUNGARY

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*Abstract.* The paper deals with school leadership in Hungary, providing a historical perspective. We review the system changes from the decentralization process following the change of the regime in 1990 to the current centralization process initiated with the 2011 Law on National Public Education. The article focuses on school and leadership autonomy as linchpins of national education systems, analysing different roles (operation, control, maintenance, professional operation) of different stakeholders (maintainer, school, principal, educating staff). We describe the process and requirements of becoming a principal in Hungary, directly focusing on education programmes for school leadership and the evaluation and assessment system of acting principals. The final section deals with different research projects which aim to better understand school leadership through the lenses of organizational culture and effectiveness (Competing Values Framework) and the rhetoric of the learning organization, managing learning schools. Finally, future development prospects are discussed.

*Keywords:* school leadership, autonomy, responsibility, learning organization, Hungary

## INTRODUCTION

In the next chapters, we will discuss the state of educational leadership in Hungary. First, we cover the changes and current state of the legislative environment of school leadership. Then we discuss the role and responsibilities, tasks and evaluation of principals in the Hungarian system. We also elaborate on current research projects regarding learning organizational behaviour and organizational culture of schools. Finally, we discuss possible development opportunities for the future of educational leadership in Hungary.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

### **Before 1990**

Throughout the history of education in Hungary, the question of organization and content of education, alongside the responsibility and autonomy of principals, was a political issue (Bocsi, Kozák & Móri, 2016); there was no societal consensus regarding these important questions of public education that would transcend political parties. Educational reforms and regulations were often at the mercy of the actual political structure.

The fundamental reforms of the Hungarian school system began in the 1980s and continued after the political transition from socialism to democracy (1989/1990). In 1985, the new Public Education Law widened the institutional independence and the professional autonomy of schools<sup>1</sup> and teachers. “After the passing of the 1985 act on education, more and more schools were provided with the chance to diverge from the strict rules, to establish new school structures, and to experiment with new subjects, methods and educational content. An ever-growing number of educational institutions were (under the pretence of ‘pedagogical experiments’ or ‘alternative pedagogical programs’) exempted from the obligation to abide by the subject system and the hours of instruction defined by the 1978 central curriculum, and (by abolishing the system of inspection) the different governments practically gave up on directly monitoring the implementation of the central curriculum and sanctioning deviations therefrom, thus the regulative power of

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper we usually use the term ‘school’ as a general term, meaning all kind of educational institutions (regardless of the level of instruction, maintainer, general or vocational focus, or other aspects). When it is relevant, we emphasize the special focus (e.g. if a legislative change only affected vocational education).

the central curriculum kept continuously decreasing from the late 1980s on” (Halász, 2001: 50). Also, the Act loosened the strict central control over the appointment of school leaders, enabling school staff to have a consultative vote on the candidates. Only candidates who had the support of the majority of the teaching staff could be appointed.

The law officially did not affect the centralized curriculum (1978) and the school structure (Horn, 2010). In the second half of the '80s, however, changes in the elements of education started with the establishment of non-state and alternative schools, and the reestablishment of some church schools.

Since the educational reform of 1985, there was a decisive depoliticization regarding expectations of schools and the role of school principals, which led to the professionalization of leadership work and focus on professional problems.

### **After 1990**

The democratic government further eliminated state-monopoly in the school system in 1991, making local self-governing authorities responsible for schools. Although the school system was still (mainly, but not directly) financed from the central budget, the decentralization of the administration and supervision ensured that local agencies – municipal governments, churches, or foundations – could enforce their own interests. The new democratic legislation enacted in 1993 legalized changing school structure, providing many choices for students and parents. Also, it established ideological pluralism in the schools, and it finished the work on school autonomy that was started by the educational reform of 1985, thus tailoring the national curriculum to the opportunities arising from school autonomy (Halász, 1994).

After the change of the regime in 1990, there began a process of decentralization of both operative and professional issues, so institutions and leaders gained more autonomy. Through this decentralization process, the previously state-operated institutions became the responsibilities of local authorities. This change opened the path to considering local characteristics of schools and provide local solutions. Local authorities could decide together with the communities of teachers what kind of school they envisioned (Balázs & Szabó, 1998). The shared responsibility between several actors characterized the two decades following the fall of the socialist regime. “Vertically, the responsibility is shared between the central (national), regional, local and institutional levels. There are, thus, four levels of control. At the

local and regional level, the administration of education is integrated into the general system of public administration organized on the basis of local governments. The influence of the regional level is rather weak, but the scope of local and institutional responsibilities is very broad” (Szabó, 2010: 26).

In parallel with this change, the free choice of schools presented keen competition between institutions, which enhanced the role of schools as service providers. This shift was accompanied by the introduction of professional leadership and management regarding school organization, which led to the rise of a new kind of leadership role focusing on a school’s philosophy, vision, and school marketing. These processes induced organizational and pedagogical content changes, which led to more freedom for institutions to develop these aspects. One example would be the possibilities of creating adaptive pedagogical programmes focusing on local characteristics, which could make a school unique in the competitive environment. However, the increasing autonomy was linked to the increasing burden, which in turn led to the decrease in the innovation capability of teachers (Szebedy, 2010).

Describing this period, Szabó concluded that “in the decentralised education administration system, the autonomy of schools is great: school defines its educational programme, its curriculum, the school head makes decisions about employment of teachers (appointment or replacement of teachers, salaries and wages but in the most cases the tight budget does not allow to its realisation), and the schools have certain financial leeway” (Szabó, 2010: 26).

### **Current changes**

Most recently, a system-wide change occurred with the introduction of the new educational act (Act CXC. of 2011 on National Public Education, from now on: NPE Act, 2011).

After 2010, the new conservative Hungarian government started a radical reform of the school system. The transformations strengthened the role of the state and central regulation. The centralization of the educational system has had a long tradition in Hungary as in much of Central and Eastern Europe. The educational policy of the first two decades after the Transition can be somewhat interpreted as an attempt to break away from the continental traditions of educational systems and move toward an Anglo-Saxon (or Atlantic) tradition. The return from a decentralized educational system to a more traditional, centralized one has its roots in the history of educational policies in Hungary (Kozma, 2014).

Many steps of the centralization process stirred fierce political (and sometimes) professional debates. It is clear that the centralization process has its coherent logic and fits well into the history of Hungarian educational policy; however, whether or not the general direction of centralization or its particular provisions are advantageous is debatable.

One of the most important steps of the centralization has been the nationalization of those schools that were maintained by local municipalities. Church and foundation schools have not been nationalized, although the educational government deliberately marginalized the latter ones. A centrally organized operator of state schools<sup>2</sup>, the Klebelsberg Institution Maintenance Centre (Klebelsberg Intézményfenntartó Központ, KLIK), became responsible for the operation of state schools. The nationalization and reorganization did not go smoothly. The system became underfunded and has had daily operational problems.

“The government’s implementing decree of June 2016 reorganises the management structure of schools in such a way that the operation of all schools will be taken over from the municipalities by the state. The central state maintenance will be complemented by 58 district level centres. Schools will be allowed to manage a certain part of their financing, allowing them some autonomy regarding their everyday expenses. The amendment will also authorise school heads to distribute the salary supplement increments of 2016 and 2017 with a performance based differentiation between teachers” (European Commission, 2016: 5). Only kindergartens remained the responsibilities of local municipalities.

This shift is contrary to international trends in school governance (OECD, 2016) and has led to the decrease of roles and responsibilities of the local level in both financial and human resource areas. In this system, the state is the maintainer, operator and controller. There were significant changes regarding the selection of principals, as well as in their roles, responsibilities, and evaluation. These aspects are discussed in the following section.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the law maintainers can be a “natural or legal person who or which has obtained or has the right to perform public education tasks and meets the requirements necessary for operating the public education institution according to the provisions of this Act”. Later the act states that “Public education institutions may be established and operated by the State, nationality self-governments and, within the framework of this Act, church legal persons registered in Hungary as well as other organisations or persons on condition that they have obtained the right for conducting such activity as laid down by statutory provisions (European Commission, 2016: 6). “Operating and maintaining roles of schools used to be separated. The operation (e.g. reparation works) of schools in settlements under 3000 inhabitants was done by the state, above 3000 inhabitants by the municipalities. From 2017 onward the state maintainer will take over this role from all municipalities” (European Commission, 2016: 5.)



## CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN HUNGARY

### **Becoming a school principal in Hungary**

The § 67 of the NPE Act states that the selection of the head of the institution involves a public tender process and that candidates should fulfil the following professional requirements:

- tertiary qualification required to fulfil the teacher position;
- qualification for school leadership as a result of a specialised training programme (see below);
- at least four years of professional experience in teaching;
- full-time employment as a teacher for an indefinite time.

In the open tender, the candidate is asked to present a leadership programme built on the analysis of the current situation and the possible future of the given school. Although there are no official requirements on the content of the leadership programme, it is generally expected to contain a clear institutional vision and to be built on the self-assessment of the principal and the institution<sup>3</sup>, in synchronization with the annual work programme of the school. Prospective principals should provide strategic goals and operationalize them indicating effectiveness and accountability criteria. In the leadership programme, cooperation with teachers, formative assessment and reflectivity might be central themes. Candidates usually strive for balance regarding tradition and innovation and they must focus on the aspects of teaching and learning as well. Although not compulsory, the candidates might reflect in their programmes areas that are covered in school leadership inspection. The inspection, as discussed later, evaluates incumbent school leaders. The evaluation manual can, however, help the candidates in identifying the requirements and competencies of contemporary school leaders.

The proposal of a leadership programme must be made public on the website of the institution. The teaching staff are neither allowed to vote for the candidates nor have the right to comment. Finally, the head of the institution is appointed by the maintainer (in the case of state-schools, the minister) and is responsible for education at the institution for 5 years. The commissioning, appointing, and decommissioning of principals are the responsibility of the operator. Kindergarten principals, however, are appointed by local maintainers, but the process is similar to the one described above. It is not required for the operator to provide an explanation if they want to refuse the candidate.

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<sup>3</sup> It is rare to have an external applicant, but in that case it is expected from him/her to gather information regarding the school.

## **The educational leadership teacher-training programme of the Hungarian-Netherlands School for Educational Management (HUNSEM)**

After the change of the socio-political system in Hungary in 1989, strong needs arose to establish a new management programme for prospective school leaders that would have an international character, be grounded on modern management theories, and be based on broad experience and practice. The bilateral projects conducted between 1993 and 1998 and supported by the Hungarian and Dutch Ministries of Education have created the ground for elaboration of the content and organizational form of long-term professional co-operation. The newly created educational management training programme was accredited in 1996. The international evaluation of the programme was carried out by an international professorial committee, which conducted analysis and assessment of the curricula and the teaching staff in order to ensure high quality of training. Finally, the HUNSEM was established in 1998 with the aim to:

- establish the organizational/institutional background of educational management training and management development in the framework of the Dutch-Hungarian bilateral programme;
- assure the scientific foundation and development of this professional field;
- ensure the sustainability and development of the training in line with the market demands;
- deepen and enhance international relations in this particular field.

Four of the six founding institutions have continuously cooperated in the HUNSEM since its inception: The University of Szeged, the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development, University of Amsterdam, and NSO-CNA Leadership Academy (Netherlands School of Educational Management). Throughout the years, other Hungarian universities would join and leave the consortium.

The HUNSEM renewed its mission and strategy in 2014, and we highlight the core elements of its mission in the following statements:

1. The sense of the existence and operations of HUNSEM is creating values for the stakeholders in the field of educational leadership and organizational development.
2. The social mission of HUNSEM is to support sustainably the creation of an equitable education system, and the domestic labour market in accordance with a knowledge society. It trains excellent leaders

to contribute to the improvement of education and the learning efficiency of students, thus the growth of personal prosperity and family welfare.

3. HUNSEM works as a community: the staff members understand each other; the commitment to modern management and organizational thinking connects us. They form a humane, empathic, opened and motivating community, where essential values are professional calling, commitment to quality and efficiency, training in organisational and personal competencies, producing knowledge, and mediating values.
4. HUNSEM is a learning organisation with future-oriented expertise, characterized by a familiar team who can work together, decision-making and executive mechanisms, and human resources dynamically responding to possibilities and challenges.
5. HUNSEM is active in its internal and external collaboration, and works as a network centre. It is a change-oriented organization, possessing a research-, development- and innovation-supporting culture, transparent internal processes, effective communication, problem-solving focus and TQM based quality assurance.
6. HUNSEM is an adaptive school: student orientation and openness toward users and consumers are decisive criteria for us. The staff members believe in the unity of theory and practice, in the importance of the necessity of developing practical skills and practice-orientated thinking, in the reason for existence, and in the power of shared and involving leadership.

HUNSEM provides a master-level specialized training program for teachers (future and acting principals) in different specializations (school leadership specialization, mentor-teacher specialization). All training programs last two years (120 ECTS), and consist of a foundation phase (1<sup>st</sup> year) and a specialization phase (2<sup>nd</sup> year). The teaching methods are based on the active participation of students, and combine contact learning with e-learning. (See the list of courses in Appendix 1.) Besides the core program – leadership training for acting and future school leaders, deputies and middle leaders – there are also specializations which prepare teachers for special tasks and roles that can be considered as leadership roles: mentors (HR specialists), quality assurance advisors, regional educational administrators, supervisors, or school development specialists.

HUNSEM became the second largest leadership institute in Hungary. It has been providing training since 1997, so the first group finished its studies in 1999. Although currently some other institutions provide educational leadership programmes in Hungary HUNSEM is still one of the most

prestigious institutes in this field. Table 1 shows the main data regarding the number of participants who received a diploma from the HUNSEM training program.

*Table 1. Number of participants receiving a diploma from a HUNSEM training program*

Program/University	Number of participants	Remark
Leadership training program (University of Szeged)	2143	Between 1999 and 2019
Other specialization (University of Szeged)	803	Between 1999 and 2019
Other universities belonging to the HUNSEM consortium	app. 1000–1200	Between 1997 and 2018

### **Responsibilities and tasks of principals**

The decision-making system in Hungarian schools strongly relies on heads of institutions and teaching staff. In many cases, the teaching staff has the right to decide on many school matters, while the principal's role in the decision-making process is a preparatory one, despite the fact that they are responsible for the professional and legal operation of the school. The principals are responsible for pedagogical work, leading and managing the educating staff and preparing materials for decisions, also taking responsibility for their realization and control. School heads have the right to accept the pedagogical programme of the institution. Every six months, the principal has to report to the parent council regarding the operation of the school (NPE Act, 2011).

Despite their responsibilities, school heads don't manage a budget, cannot conclude an agreement individually, and have no professional authority regarding financial matters (these are managed by the maintainer), although some decision making power was transferred back to school heads from 2017. Strategic decisions are difficult to make since change management is not in school leaders' job description and since they can only make suggestions, but not decisions regarding human resource development plans. The employers of teachers are the local educational districts (delegated from the centre operator), so their appointment and dismissal and their wages are the responsibility of the director of the educational district. Although school heads have relative autonomy in the day-to-day

operation of the institution, without financial autonomy they are hindered as they need the approval by the educational district, even for requesting teacher substitutions, which is a different setting compared to the situation before 2011.

### **Evaluating the work of the principal**

In 2015 the Hungarian education system introduced a nation-wide school inspection system, which in turn emphasized the role of institutional self-evaluation. Educational institutions must conduct a systematic institutional self-evaluation that is based on the standards developed by the Educational Authority and approved by the minister responsible for education. The systematic institutional self-evaluation is conducted on three levels: the institution, the leader, and the teacher. Its goal is to identify strengths and possible development areas at each level and to create a development plan based on the results which will be the part of the institutional development plan.

The self-evaluation of principals is conducted according to the yearly self-evaluation plan, at the second and fourth year of the appointment based on the expectations developed by the work-group responsible for self-evaluation, the principal and the educating staff. The evaluation manual that contains not only the standards but also the exact procedures is partly based on the results of the International Cooperation for School Leadership project (supported by the European Commission), the so-called Central5 competences for school leadership (Révai & Kirkham, 2013). The five key dimensions identified in the project and their correspondence to the evaluating system are presented in Table 2:

*Table 2. Comparing competences from Central5 and the Hungarian evaluation system for principals*

Competence areas of Central5	Hungarian evaluation areas of principals
Leading and managing learning and teaching	Leading and managing educational processes – teaching, learning, improving, diagnostic
Leading and managing change	Leading and managing institutional change
Leading and managing self	Improving leadership competencies
Leading and managing others	Leading and managing the staff of the school
Leading and managing the institution	Leading and managing the institution and its operation

The external evaluation of principals is based on general pedagogical and leadership aspects. Inspectors evaluate the realization of the goals set by the principal regarding pedagogical and leadership development. The goal of the evaluation is to give realistic feedback on the principals' work. The evaluators make their assessment based on school documents interviews and local inspections. They make written recommendations in which they mark the areas that are extraordinary and those ones that are in the need of improvement.

### **Current research and development projects regarding educational leadership in Hungary**

The Hungarian-Netherland School for Educational Management (HUNSEM) is not only an educational institution but also regularly conducts and engages in various research and development projects focusing on educational leadership. Since 2014 HUNSEM has been involved in a regional research and development project focusing on helping schools to become learning organizations. The learning organization (Senge, 1990) is an adaptive, self-organizing entity, able to manage knowledge (Garvin, 1993) with the appropriate cultural aspects (vision, values, behaviour) supporting the learning environment, processes supporting learning and development, and structural aspects enabling the support of learning activities (Armstrong & Foley, 2003) in order to continuously learn, develop and adapt to the ever-changing environment (Ali, 2012).

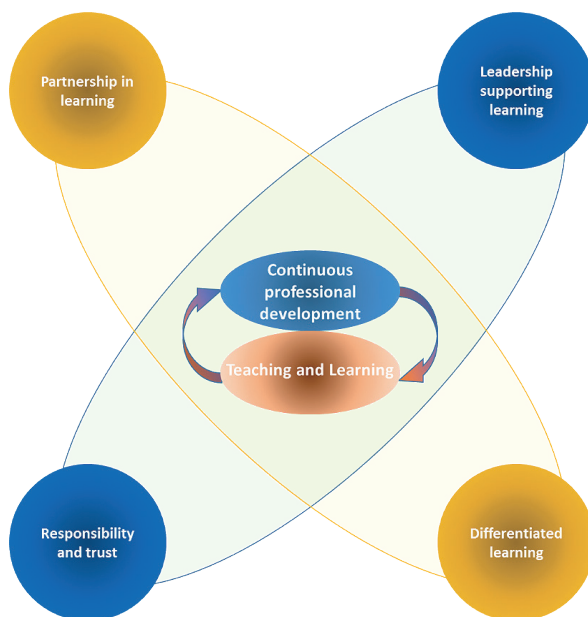
Several empirical studies explored the concept by linking leadership, organizational learning, and student outcomes (for example the *Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes* by Silins, Mulford and Zarins (2002) and the *Leadership in the Process of Organizational Learning in Schools* by Pol, Hlousková, Lazarová, Novotny and Sedláček (2011)).

In 2015, between June and September, a large-scale questionnaire was implemented in the Southern-Great Plains Region of Hungary for heads of institutions, middle managers, and individual teachers in schools. The questionnaires were linked through the educational ID of the institutions. The questionnaire focused on the validation of the HUNSEM's learning organization model and the assessment of organizational culture via the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). The database contains the responses of 62 schools (submitted by school principals), 199 deputy-heads and 1192 teachers.

The HUNSEM's learning organizational model was later incorporated in the educational leadership programme as a diagnostic and development

tool, thus ensuring the sustainability of the research and development project. The model consists of the elements shown in Figure 1 (Anka, Baráth, Cseh, Fazekas, Horváth, Kézy, Menyhárt & Sipos, 2015).

*Figure 1. The HUNSEM's learning organizational model for schools (Anka et al., 2015, p. 21)*

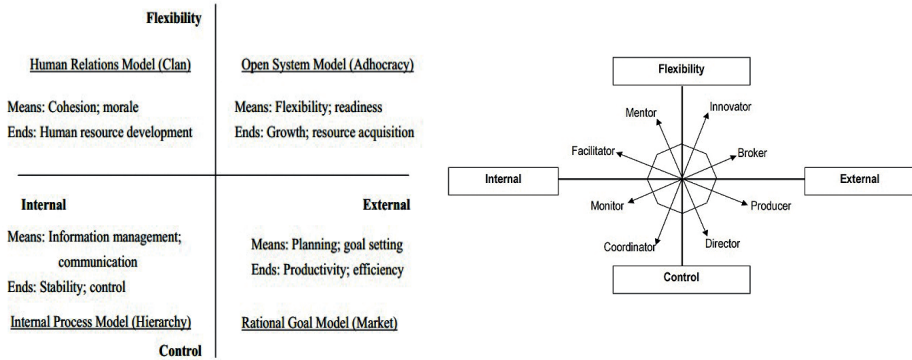


In the centre of the model is the core business of educational institutions – teaching and learning – which is reinforced by the continuous professional development of staff. One axis of the model is the human aspect, namely partnership in learning and differentiated learning. The other axis is the organizational aspect of the model, namely responsibility and trust regarding the organizational culture and the leadership which is supporting learning. Regarding these dimensions, we found significant differences between highly competitive schools and less competitive schools (based on National Competence Measurement data) and also between organizations which are less and more characterized by organizational learning. Combining these dimensions we created a scale for Learning Organizational Behaviour (LOB) (Horváth, Verderber & Baráth, 2015).

Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework is a well-known tool in educational research. Along the axes of flexibility-control and internal-external focus, it considers four organizational culture models and eight leadership roles (Figure 2).

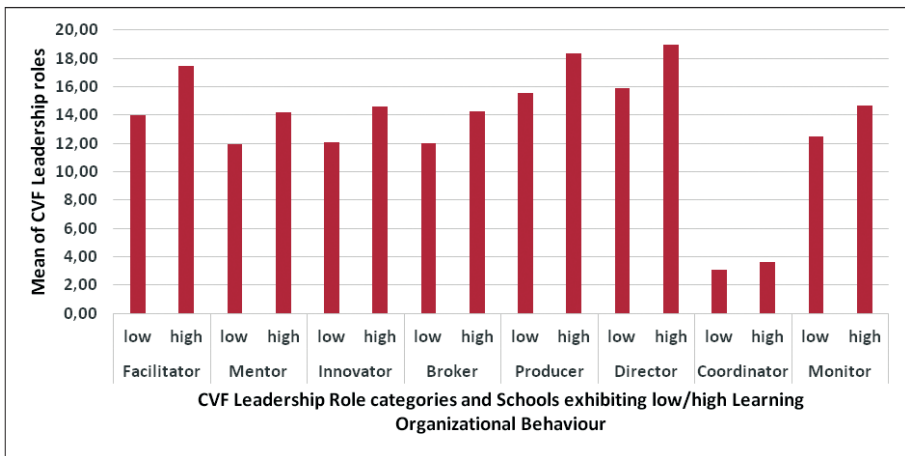


Figure 2. Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011)



In order to answer the question of what leadership style characterizes the Hungarian public education institution which is operating as a learning organization, we divided the sample along the Learning Organizational Behaviour scale to a high profile organization and a low profile organization. The comparison of different leadership roles across these categories gave us data presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Comparing schools with low and high Learning Organizational Behaviour across leadership roles of the Competing Values Framework



Both types of organizations – highly competitive and less competitive schools – were high on the Director and the Producer roles, which belong to the External-Control quadrant of the framework. Also, we could connect highly competitive schools with the Facilitator role as well, which is in the Internal-Flexibility quadrant. The Director role behaviours consist of designing and organizing work, including delegation, envisioning the future, and keeping tasks and goals consistent and clear. The Producer role behaviours consist of managing time and stress, taking care of productivity, and focusing on results. These leaders are task-oriented and work-focused; their influence is based on intensity and rationality. These leaders are energized by competitive situations, and winning is an important goal (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Quinn, Faerman & Thompson, 1996). The Facilitator role behaviours consist of building effective teams, facilitating participative decision-making, problem-solving and managing conflict, as well as seeking consensus (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Quinn *et al.*, 1996). The Coordinator role, which is in the Internal-Control quadrant, is insignificant for both highly and less competitive schools. The Coordinator role behaviours consist of organizing the work structure, schedules, giving assignments, managing projects, and designing work processes across functional areas, and their influence are based on these. These leaders are dependable and reliable (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Quinn *et al.*, 1996).

In all cases, the organizations which have a high value on the Learning Organizational Behaviour scale are prone to higher values in the leadership style scales. If we examine the difference between the two groups with the means of the leadership style scales we find that all differences are significant.

To understand the deeper relations between the different leadership roles and the different dimensions of learning organizational behaviour we examined the correlations between these variables. Altogether, the Facilitator role has the highest correlation ( $r=0.708$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) with the learning organizational behaviour, meaning that the more competitive schools are more likely to identify with Facilitator leadership role. The Facilitator role belongs to the human relations model and the clan culture and it mainly means that the leader is strong in building teams, using participative decision making, and managing conflict. The clan culture is similar to a family-type organization because it is full of shared values and common goals, cohesion, participation, and an emphasis on empowerment and employee involvement. Quinn and Rohrbaugh contend that (cited by Yu & Wu, 2009: 38) the clan culture is just the organizational culture defined by Wilkins and Ouchi (1983: 472–474), which can be developed under certain conditions, such as a relatively long history and stable membership, absence of

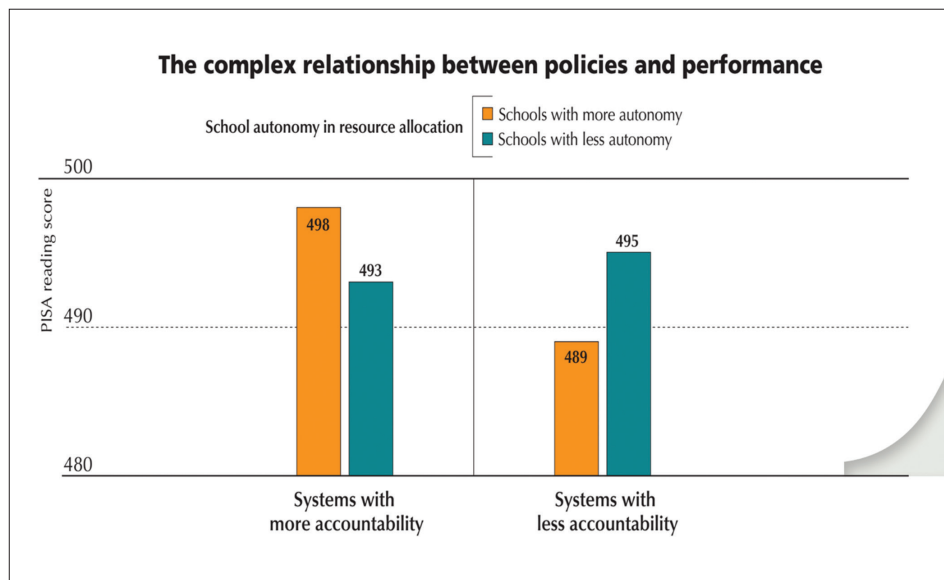
institutional alternatives, thick interactions among members, etc. Cameron and Quinn argue that clan-type firms are more like extended families than economic entities; instead of hierarchical structure they work as semi-autonomous work teams, ensure empowering work environments, and facilitate employee participation, commitment, and loyalty (Cameron & Quinn, 2011: 41–43).

## VIEW TOWARD THE FUTURE

When looking at the possible future of educational leadership in Hungary we must distinguish a legislative and professional aspect of the question. From a legislative point of view, it seems that the current system will remain intact and little radical change can be expected regarding the current core values of the system. From a professional point of view, it is a question whether or not maintaining or challenging the status quo would be a rational strategy. Any professional development regarding school leadership which accepts the current situation and explores the possibilities within the boundaries of the system effectively maintains the current situation. The current situation is crippling some aspects of school leadership (e.g., control over budget, human resources) but it could lead to the fulfilment of other aspects of leadership (e.g., pedagogical leadership, mentor roles). It depends on the intentions and culture of micro, mezzo, and macro level governance, their interactions, and, also on the requirements of the fast changing knowledge society.

On the other hand, from a system point of view, synchronizing legislative and professional aspects of leadership, the balance between accountability and responsibility is an important question for the future. As can be seen from the PISA results in Figure 4, accountability and autonomy go hand in hand: schools with less autonomy tend to perform better in systems with less accountability and schools with more autonomy tend to perform better in systems with more accountability (OECD, 2011).

Figure 4. The complex relationship between policies and performance (OECD, 2011, p. 4)



Still, on the system level, Hungarian education must face the dwindling numbers of student teachers and mass shortage of teachers in schools. This is a prospect that could overwrite legislative and professional practice in order to provide minimum service in schools (e.g., the coverage of disciplinary areas by other teachers).

Regarding institutional and leadership level aspects, we turn to the results of our research projects using the lens of learning organizations and the competing values framework. It is evident from a series of research results that schools operating as learning organizations have better student outcomes (Pol *et al.*, 2011; Silins, Mulford & Zarins, 2002). For example, the Welsh Government initiated a change in their education system focusing on developing schools as learning organizations in partnership with the OECD in order to improve student outcomes (OECD, 2018). It is evident from our research project that the rational goal model is the strong suit of principals in Hungary (as it was before 2011, see Baráth (2009)), but the current legislative context set impediments for the fulfilment of these roles, therefore, naturally pushing principals to other aspects of the competing values framework. One promising aspect would be the human relations model, expanding the facilitator and mentor roles of leaders. In this aspect, principals could focus on internal leadership (instead of management) roles, facilitating

informal workplace learning, collaboration among staff, an important prerequisite of the learning organization model.

Beside internal cooperation there would be a need for inter-organizational cooperation as well as another source of professional development facilitated by school leaders. Initiatives in these areas show promising results as can be seen from a research project focusing on the development and embedding of horizontal learning in the Hungarian education system. The role espousing a learning-centred vision, support of professional development, and self-directed learning from the leadership seems to be a crucial element in supporting schools' inner and external knowledge sharing practices (Horváth, Simon & Kovács, 2015).

To summarize, school leadership in Hungary must face diverse challenges in the future, partially stemming from contextual and legislative factors (e.g., decreasing number of teachers, issues of accountability and responsibility). In response, the development of school leaders must prepare future school leaders for these challenges and help them to better exploit and explore the opportunities of a more human- and learning-/learner-centred approach to leadership.

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*Appendix 1. HUNSEM leadership training for acting and future school leaders*

<b>1<sup>st</sup> semester (foundation phase)</b>		
<b>Subjectgroup</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Credits</b>
Organization	Organizationa ltheory and organizational culture in education	3
	Organizational development in schools	3
	HR management in educational institutions	5
	Strategic planning in education	3
T-grouptraining	Personal development and improving communication skills	3
Knowledge management	Development of reflective thinking	3
	Knowledge sharing (internal and external)	3
Information management	Gathering and analyzing information	5
<b>Number of credits</b>		<b>28</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> semester (foundation phase)</b>		
Quality improvement	Quality management in education	5
	Innovation management in education	3
	Project management in education	3
Education policy and administration	Theories of educationalsystems	4
	Governance of education	3
	Legal environment of education	3
Efficiency and evaluation of education system	Efficiency and effectiveness of education	3
	Institutional evaluation	3
T-group training	Conflict management	3
<b>Number of credits</b>		<b>30</b>

<b>3<sup>rd</sup> semester (specialization phase)</b>		
Leadership development	Theories of leadership and operative management of schools	6
	Organizational communication	3
Finance and administration	Legal aspects of school leadership	3
	Resource management in school	5
Thesis-writing	Seminar for thesis-writing	2
Practice	Field practice	3
T-group training	Training for development of leadership competences	3
<b>Number of credits</b>		<b>25</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup> semester (specialization phase)</b>		
Strategic management	Marketing in education	3
	Managing adaptive education	3
Education and development	Quality improvement	3
	Curriculum regulation, local/institutional curriculum	3
	Effective school	3
	Special elective course 1	3
	Special elective course 2	3
<b>Number of credits</b>		<b>21</b>
Final exam		12
<b>Total number of credits</b>		<b>120</b>



## LEADERSHIP IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF MONTENEGRO

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*Abstract.* Based on the recognition of the importance, complexity and the influence of the principal's function in the whole education process, the main goal of this paper is to present a picture of the status of the leadership function in the education system of Montenegro. The first out of three parts of the paper deals with the Legislative framework, e.g. competencies and dominant areas of work of principals in educational institutions. The second part describes the current state of educational leadership in the country and gives the history and scope of the program for the training and professional development of principals. Ever since the establishment of the system of licensing and relicensing of education staff (2010), including the leaders of educational institutions, they are obliged to continuously develop in professional terms. The last part – a view towards the future – gives recommendations for the strengthening of the school leadership role in order to respond to changes in society, particularly in the education system, in a professional and competent way, thus encouraging the development of the institution, that is, of every employee individually.

*Keywords:* principal, leader, education process.

### INTRODUCTION

The entire system of professional development of teachers in Montenegro was established in the period from 2005 to 2009 in the context of the project "Development of the Professional Development System of Teachers in Montenegro", managed by the Bureau for Educational Services<sup>1</sup>. Teachers, pedagogues, principals and assistant principals, advisors and supervisors of the Bureau for Educational Services, as well as foreign experts, participated in the said process.

The project consisted of five key components and one of them, pertaining to the professional development at the school/kindergarten level

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<sup>1</sup> The Bureau for Educational Services is a government institution for monitoring, improvement and evaluation of educational processes in the general pre-university level of education. The Bureau has research, advisory and development oriented functions in the education system.

and titled Training of principals, i.e. developing quality management at the school kindergarten level, has been recognized as an important link in the overall development of the education system. As the leaders of educational institutions have a great influence and responsibility for the realization and results of the entire educational process, they can be a decisive incentive, but at the same time they can become or remain a barrier to the work of the entire institution. Namely, their capabilities and management skills affect the results of the work of the entire institution, because the quality of management inevitably reflects on the quality of both teaching and learning processes, the motivation of the teaching staff, the educational institution's ethos, as well as on the continuous professional development of teachers (Meador, 2019; Bredeson, 2000).

In the context of a modern educational institution, the principal's functions appear to be complex and interrelated on various levels. Principals of educational institutions have the following tasks: planning and organizing the work of the institution; management of the institution; monitoring and analyzing the results of the work of the institution; managing interpersonal relations, and the like. In all these areas, principals aim at integrating the goals of the institution and the personal goals of employees (Drucker, 1992; 2007). In order to successfully manage their educational institution they must possess certain competencies. Since each educational institution has its own specificities and operates under different conditions, it is necessary to provide principals with a variety of professional competencies, i.e. knowledge, skills, and values that will be applicable in different working conditions. Therefore, the potential of the individual, in this case the principal, for independent action in the various parts of society (Heilinger, 2005), the capacity of a person to develop (Arnold, 2001), together with developed professional competencies, which include cognitive and value-related, emotional and motivational aspects of action, remain crucial for the success of one's work. This is about developing and improving four key competences that are cyclically and synergistically related: personal, professional, social, and action competences (Staničić, 2011: 194). It is particularly important, having in mind the *Manual for Principals on Continuing Professional Development of Teachers at School* (2017: 10), Standard 5: "Principals of Educational Institutions support the professional development of teachers and develop themselves professionally", which states that the principals are expected to develop leadership skills that include recognizing professional development as one of the priority activities and building structures that support it by providing the necessary resources (human, material, technical, time...). In the indicators related to the Standard 5, it is stated that principals participate

in professional development activities; the institution plans and implements appropriate professional development activities; principals draw attention to the benefits and expected outcomes of professional development and support the continuous improvement of the quality of teaching and learning; principals support the building of a culture of professional development in educational institution; principals allow for the efficient use of available resources, including the time needed to achieve goals. It is worth pointing out that with this particular solution – the active involvement of the principal in the professional development of teachers – an additional step was made in the direction of professional interaction and cooperation between principals and teachers, where professional development refers to both.

The goal of educational reform is to create quality management at the school level, as an important basis for the overall development of education. “Contemporary school management is based on cooperation, consultation, suggestions coming from members of the organization or individual teams, active participation in decision-making and their implementation and evaluation, professionalism, mutual respect and partnership relations within the school and relation between the schools and its environment” (Jelovac, 2007: 196). Principal should be aiming at high-quality results in all of their most important functions, such as organizing, managing, providing pedagogical and instructive assistance, evaluating of the staff results and researching (Vujisić, 2004: 256).

Modern economy requires an education system to become a key factor contributing to the overall development, based on respect for cultural and other forms of diversity. The leader must possess all the necessary knowledge in the field of education management and broad education, abilities and communication skills in the team, with the aim to efficiently implement organization, management, staff choice and control. Proper work of the educational institution demands a high level of organization and coordination of teamwork, which certainly has a positive effect on interpersonal relations (Mršulja, 2007: 215).

The job of the principal as a school leader is key for education reform, in addition to the fact that principals must continuously work on their personal development. The reformed schools need principals who will be visionaries of change who will, with all their knowledge and skills, lead the school organization. “Professional development involves a continuous process that starts with the choice of profession, through basic education (faculty), assuming the role principal, as well as permanent development and improvement of oneself while in that role” (Jašić, 2010: 201).

A good and successful principal should possess some of the following characteristics: valuable, intelligent, honest, ambitious, energetic, flexible, optimistic, brave, strong and stable personality (Beycioglu & Pashiardis, 2015). Some of the skills that every principal should possess are organizational and leadership skills, as well as visionary ability, capacity for taking the initiative, rhetorical ability, the ability to distinguish the important from the unimportant, the ability to adapt to new situations etc. At the same time, another important ability of a successful principal in a reformed school is to be a visionary, which is the most important characteristic of the leader. The principal has a strategy and the ability to convey the vision to his or her members of staff and to win them over to its realization (Knežević, 2007).

One of the roles of the real leader is to move the process of introducing innovations into school organizations. This process is also the process of introducing much needed changes. The development of school organizations implies the awakening, realization, activation and innovation of all technical and human resources, with the aim to adapt all aspects of the school organization to such changes (Gajić, 2007: 265).

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK – COMPETENCIES AND DOMINANT AREAS OF WORK OF PRINCIPALS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The need for professional training of principals in educational institutions in Montenegro was defined by the *Strategic Plan of Education Reform* in 2007 and the *General Law on Education of Montenegro* (Article 79), as quoted in the *Study on the Needs for In-service Training for the Principals of Educational Institutions* (Lalović, 2017: 1) which stipulates that a principal shall:

1. plan, organize and administer the institution's work;
2. organize rationalized and effective educational curriculum delivery;
3. provide the equality of students in the accomplishment of the rights to education, in line with their capabilities;
4. prepare the proposal of annual work plan and shall be responsible for its implementation;
5. manage the Panel of Teachers, or the Professional Panel's work;
6. select teachers, professional associates and other staff in the institution;
7. propose the document on the organization and the systematization of working posts;
8. perform professional and pedagogical supervision;



9. decide on the rights and the obligations of employees, in line with the law;
10. stimulate professional improvement and in-service training for teachers;
11. adopt the quality improvement plan of the educational work of the institution;
12. advocate and represent the institution, and be liable for the legality of institution work;
13. cooperate with parents and with the surroundings;
14. establish various commissions for assessing the knowledge of students during the school years, at the request of students, parents or legal guardians;
15. execute other jobs in line with the law and the Statute of the institution.

The professional activities of the principal of the educational institution can be divided into ten key areas: administrative affairs – relating to the monitoring and implementation of laws and regulations, the drafting of internal acts, staff issues, administrative affairs, etc.; financial affairs – relating to the preparation of a financial plan, the acquisition of funds, the preparation of reports and annual financial reports, keeping records of assets and equipment; work on maintenance and improvement of working conditions in the school – relating to the maintenance of space, equipment and resources belonging to the school, repairs and adaptation of certain parts of the facility; planning and organization of the work of the institution – relating to the planning and programming of work, organization of regular, elective, supplementary classes, professional practice, etc.; monitoring and analysis of the results of the work of the institution – relating to monitoring and analysis of the achieved results of the school and its teachers, introduction of innovations and improvement of teaching process; administration and management of the institution – relating to conducting meetings and teaching panels' sessions at school, work of Professional panels, instructive work with teachers, students and staff; extra-curricular, cultural and public activities of the institution – relating to the realization of various programs that are not included in teaching, public and cultural activities of the school, production and humanitarian work, etc.; cooperation with various bodies and organizations outside the school – relating to the establishment of contacts and cooperation with local government bodies, ministries, agencies, institutions, media, etc.; interpersonal relationships and school atmosphere – relating to cooperation with employees, parents and students or mediation work in resolving interpersonal problems, etc.; personal and professional development of employees – relating to the organization of professional

development of teachers, using and recommending professional literature, mentor classes, information about best practices, etc.

The specter of jobs performed by principals in educational institutions in Montenegro is wide and diverse and requires a wide scope of knowledge and skills that cannot be acquired during pre-service education or mere classroom work. Since the head of the institution is not born such, but is created and developed, the need for professional development of principals of educational institutions through training programs is more than obvious, necessary, and justified.

### CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COUNTRY

In order to build the professional capacities of the principals of educational institutions taking up that role for the first time, a program for their training and professional development has been developed. The goals and content of the program focus on the development of a range of abilities necessary for the successful, quality work of the leaders of educational institutions. It is rather functional in its character, because it is conceived in such a way that, in addition to providing basic theoretical knowledge, trainees can focus on the practical application of knowledge in their everyday work.

The program is based on Article 79 of the *General Law on Education of Montenegro (2013)*, which prescribes this training as mandatory. It is unique for all leaders of educational institutions and is intended for principals, assistant principals, and teachers who meet the requirements for principals.

Authors of professional development programs targeting principals are consultants from the Bureau for Educational Services, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, Examination Centre, professors from the University of Montenegro, pedagogues, psychologists and school principals themselves. The departing points and guidelines for the development of existing modules, as indicated in the document titled *Training Program for Managers of Educational Institutions* (Bureau for Educational Services, 2013) were created, *inter alia*, not only on the basis of the previous work on training managers of educational institutions, but also on the basis of the needs for the professional development of managers of educational institutions.

The need for professional training of the managers of educational institutions in our country was established by the *Book of Changes* in 2001, the *Strategic Plan of Education Reform* in 2007 and the *General Law on Education of Montenegro* (Article 79). With the aim of providing training and

continuous professional support to principals and improving the training process, the Competency framework for principals was developed as a starting point for the development of education programs. This document defines competencies that managers of educational institutions must possess in order to efficiently and effectively perform this very complex task. Based on the competencies defined in the Framework, a Training Program for Managers of Educational Institutions was developed, which already had its four editions. We hereby list the structure of all four education programs because they reflect the chronology of changes, as well as the needs of Montenegro's educational system. Namely, in 2004, the program of professional training of the principal of educational institutions, which had nine modules, was introduced: 1. Modern theories and principles of learning and teaching; 2. Theoretical approaches and practical experience in curriculum planning; 3. Assessment and assessment systems; 4. The art of communication; 5. Theories of organization and management; 6. People in the organization; 7. Planning and decision making; 8. Principal as a pedagogical leader; 9. Legislation in education and education. In the period from 2005 until 2008, the training program included the following modules: 1. Communication at school; 2. The Principal as a pedagogical leader; 3. School quality; 4. Legal regulations in education; 5. Organization and management; 6. Planning and decision making and 6. People in the organization. In the period from 2009 to 2012, a modular program for principals included the following topics: 1. Communication at school; 2. The school principal as a pedagogical manager; 3. Quality of education at school; 4. Planning and decision making; 5. Organization and management; 6. Managing change. The themes i.e. modules from 2013 until today include: 1. legislation and administration; 2. planning, programming, organizing and monitoring the work of the educational institution; 3. teaching/learning; ensuring the quality of school work; 4. human resources management; 5. cooperation with parents, school board, local and wider communities; 6. managing the financial and material resources of the school and 7. Vocational school in its surroundings.

The program features six modules: Legislation and Administration; Planning, programming, organizing and monitoring the work of the educational institution; Teaching/learning; Ensuring the quality of the work of the institution; Human Resource Management and Collaboration of Principals with parents, school board and local and wider community.

Since 2019, one of the obligations of the participants of the training program for principals is to produce a professional paper, an end-of-course written work, which includes theoretical and practical elaborations of a problem of the educational process of the institution they manage. This final

paper should be focused on finding solutions aimed at improving the work of the institution, identified by Department for quality assessment, as an area that needs to be improved. The trainee should, with the help of literature, acquired competencies and mentor support, offer a solution to the problem his or her institution faces.

In the period from 2004 until 2015, this training was completed by 321 principals of educational institutions, what can be seen in the Study on the needs of vocational training of the leaders of educational institutions from 2016, as shown in the Table 1.

*Table 1. Number of trained principals per year*

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	Total
No. of principals	43	36	30	43	33	32	26	19	21	18	20	321

When it comes to the type of institution, as can be seen from the table below, the largest number of educated principals work (or have worked) in primary schools.

*Table 2. Number of trained principals according to the institution in which they work*

Type of institution	Elementary music schools	Kindergartens	Elementary schools	Gymnasiums	Secondary vocational schools	Student's dormitories Resource centers
No. of principals	7	29	233	25	20	7

A recent report on the training needs analysis showed that out of the 30 offered options regarding the needs for the professional development of managers of educational institutions, principals chose 15 which in their opinion should be included in such a training program for future principals: introduction to the methods of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teachers; familiarizing principals with the school self-evaluation methodology and quality management model; learning about the basic motivation theories and ways of motivating people at work; learning about the techniques

of project design and submitting applications; learning about the examples of successful teaching organization (regular, additional, supplementary, practical, etc.); training in the application of information technologies in the work of the principal; learning about the criteria for determining the quality of teaching; being able to successfully resolve conflicts between people (non-violent conflict resolution); training in planning and programming (drawing up an annual and long-term plan of work and school development plan); learning basic communication skills (negotiations, meetings, presentations, reports, etc.); learning basic leadership styles (knowing which styles are appropriate for certain situations); learning basic teamwork techniques and how to train team leaders in school; to learn contemporary approaches to learning (active and interactive teaching and learning); getting acquainted with the legal documents and regulations in the field of education and learning how to establish effective cooperation with the surroundings (local community, employers, etc.)

When it comes to secondary vocational schools, due to the specific nature of their organization, in the domain of financial and material resources management as well as the domain of cooperation with individuals, businesses and institutions at local, regional or national levels, the Financial and material resources management of the school and Vocational school and its surroundings modules have been developed as well. The reason is in the difference in the internal functioning of the schools. Namely, in the elementary school and gymnasiums there is a minor portion of legal income (for example, renting of the training rooms, exhibition rooms). Vocational schools are directed to the more intensive cooperation with companies, having the driving courses, various services, like tourism, agriculture, machine facilities etc., creating the bigger potential for the income, what is a reason for having an additional module – Financial and material resources management.

The only research carried out by the Bureau for Educational Services about the needs of professional training of the principals of educational institutions (*Study on the Needs for In-service Training for the Principals of Educational Institutions*, 2017) has set the following research goals: Gathering and systematizing the experience of the principals regarding the quality and effects of training they attended; Confirmation of the dominant activities and problems in the work of the principals of educational institutions in Montenegro and Modification of the future content of the professional training of the principal.

The set questions and tasks in the conducted research were: whether the content of the training for principals, influenced the increase in the efficiency of school management; whether the organization and manner of work

in the principal's training contributed to increasing the efficiency of school management; determining the basic orientations and the dominant areas of the principal's work; determining current problems in the principal's work; identification of competencies – of knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for efficient management of the school, i.e. determination of the profile of the ideal principal of the school, as well as determining the future contents and vocational training programs for the principal.

The survey was conducted through a questionnaire, and all principals of educational institutions in Montenegro participated (184 totally), i.e. principals of pre-school institutions, elementary schools, gymnasiums, mixed schools (gymnasiums and vocational schools), vocational schools (three-year and four-year), special schools, and the principals of the student dormitories.

The findings of the *Study* (2017: 31) of the Bureau for Educational Services' research on past training programs reveal the following:

1. The training of principals has significantly contributed to the improvement of efficiency of management of schools.
2. The main contribution to increasing managerial competencies of principals has been attributed to the following modules: Improving the quality of school work, Principal as a pedagogical manager; and Communication at school.
3. Training has greatly influenced the improvement of communication skills, democratic management of the school and working with people. The enormous impact of training refers to the skill of school management, the skill of assessing and organizing pedagogical work, as well as on the skills related to conflict resolution and the application of quality standards.
4. On the other hand, the perceived below-average contribution of the training was related to monitoring of the teaching process, expanding knowledge on contemporary methods and forms of teaching and learning, the skill of planning pedagogical work, and the skill of teaching. The least impact was made on the knowledge of schoolwork, knowledge of pedagogical process, and knowledge of laws and regulations.
5. The offered training, given its content, is mostly adapted to elementary school principals, and least adapted to the principals of elementary music school. An analysis led to the conclusion that three are basic orientations of managing educational institution: orientation towards people; orientation towards work conditions and orientation towards results (goal and development). The majority of principals belong to

the third type and remain dominantly engaged in the affairs related to the planning and organization of the work of the institution; management and administration of the institution; monitoring and analyzing the results of the work of the institution, interpersonal relations and school atmosphere.

6. It has been established that the job of the principal of educational institutions in Montenegro is significantly burdened with problems related to unfavorable working conditions and insufficient interest of the environment, local community, and parents in the work of the school. The next are the teacher-related issues: teachers' unwillingness to change, insufficient training and workload. Finally, there are problems concerning the safety of pupils in school, conflicting relationships, and lack of (or poor) students' achievements.
7. The ideal manager, in the opinion of the interviewed principals, is characterized by: firstly, the ability to set up a realistic and clear vision of school development and to organize, lead and develop a collective in accordance with this vision (developmental competence); secondly, the successful principal organizes the work of the school / institution in accordance with the law and individual qualities of the employees and is able to create favorable conditions and remove obstacles in the work of the institution (practical competency); thirdly, the successful principal is familiar with modern methods, forms and organization of pedagogical work, as well as with the methods and criteria for determining the quality of the work of the school (pedagogical competency); fourthly, the successful principal knows the principles of successful communication and ways of motivating people, shows success in mediation and conflict resolution, and democracy in decision-making (social competence). In addition to the above professional competencies, a successful principal in our conditions is characterized to a great extent by personal qualities, such as openness to people, cordial relationships, dedication, fairness, etc.

## A VIEW TOWARDS THE FUTURE

A leadership career and the level of principal professional development should be a matter of choice, so the leadership should not be a task which is forced or accidental. According to this concept, the choice of the right people to leadership positions is one of the key priorities of Montenegrin education policies. The regulations set official conditions for people who want to



become principals, and professional experience of working in the classroom is the main condition for placing someone in that position. The length of experience required varies from three to thirteen years (generally ranging between three and five years), and includes administrative experience, leadership and managerial skills, as well as the completion of special training programs.

Research in this area shows that educational leaders spend about 40% of their working hours on administrative matters, meaning that the roles of leaders of educational institutions need to be redefined, so that they could redirect their time and energy towards improving the training of teaching staff and quality of teaching (*How to Assess the Quality of School Management and Leadership?*, 2015: 46).

School leadership can be strengthened by engaging in three key activities, so it is necessary to:

- Enable school managers to focus more on improving the learning process rather than on administration. This requires the development of administrative support mechanisms so that managers can focus more on achieving better results in the areas of: learning/teaching, communicating with students and parents, and strengthening relationships with key partners, including businesses and local authorities.
- Strengthening mechanisms for the selection of managers and for the choice of right people for leading positions remains a real challenge. Measures that can help in the selection of managers can be as follows: an objective and professional analysis of the fields of work and the roles that leaders must assume; the competencies they should possess; establishing transparent criteria for the evaluation of candidates; establishing and redefining mechanisms for identifying potential managers and their training.
- Developing more efficient mechanisms for professional development of principals, which will be able to respond to the specific development needs of each participant.
- All the above points to the ever-growing need to develop and implement the concepts of lifelong learning and the professional development of all stakeholders in the education system, especially principals. This will completely eliminate the political influence on their work, in order to finally establish a system of professional management of educational institutions.

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## LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION – CONDITIONS AND CHALLENGES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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*Abstract.* The issue of leadership in schools is a particularly current problem in our country, given the knowledge that there can be no successful school without good leadership. For that purpose it is necessary to establish a system and mechanisms for training school directors in order to professionalize their function. The paper firstly gives the legal framework, preparation of principals, selection of principals, induction, licensing, career progression, etc). Then there is a display of the current state of educational leadership in the country, based on experience from practice and analysis of research conducted through Coaching-N in 2018 by prof. Petkovski and MSc. Hristovski, principal of school. At the end of the paper some recommendations are given. For the improvement of educational leadership in the country, it is necessary to make changes in the laws on primary and secondary education, as well as the law on training and taking the exam for school directors. It is necessary to establish a school or academia for school principals, which should be a kind of institute that, in addition to carrying out trainings, will carry out scientific research activities from the educational leadership and the development of the education and educational policy in the country.

*Keywords:* educational leadership, requirements for principalship, duties of principals, principals, academy, licensing, and career progression.

### INTRODUCTION

In many countries, development projects and other activities are implemented with the aim of providing a better quality of education. The increased interest in the quality of education is also due to changes in the field of education (Petkovski & Aleksova, 2004). Namely, it is about changes from the disciplinary aspect, i.e. educational technology. These changes result from the development of technique and technology, affirmation of entrepreneurship

and improved quality of life of people in different spheres, and increased awareness and culture among people.

Today's requirements for quality education can be provided only in effective schools where the teaching is delivered by quality teachers. Also, there are no effective schools without good executives – school leaders.

There is a consensus among educational researchers about the features of effective schools. On the basis of the literature used and the acquired knowledge and experience as a principal of a school, Petkovski in his doctoral dissertation gave a list of characteristics which characterize schools that are on the path of effectiveness (Petkovski & Joshevska, 2015).

- to be a safe and disciplined organization in which existed climate for teaching and learning;
- to have a clear mission and focused vision with precisely defined goals and objectives;
- to have a professional school leader;
- to have climate of high expectations of every individual in school;
- to put stress on the way in which the curriculum and teaching are organized and realized;
- to have an organized and permanent professional training of staff;
- to have a system for monitoring and measuring the progress of students and staff;
- to have local community support and cooperation with parents.

One should have in mind the fact that there can be no successful school without a good leader. The practice shows that there may be a bad school run by a relatively good principal, but there is no good school run by a bad principal. The issue of leadership in schools is a particularly current problem in our country. The basic prerequisite for having effective schools is the establishment of a system and mechanisms that can empower school principals so that they can professionally carry out their function. It should be known that a good principal, in principle, must be a good teacher, but does this not mean that any good teacher will be a good principal (Petkovski & Pelivanova, 2009).

It is clear that the initial training and professional and career development of the principals of the schools, which is the subject of this paper, is an extremely important role for the school improvement.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

According to the laws regulating primary and secondary education (Law on Primary Education, article 128, paragraph 1, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 103/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016, 127/2016 and 67/2017), the school's management authority is the principal. The Principal is responsible for the legality of the work and for the material and financial performance of the school. A person who meets the requirements for a teacher or a professional associate in school may be elected principal of a school; additional requirements are: at least five years work experience in education; having passed the exam for a principal; certificate (not older than five years) in English language proficiency; and having passed a psychological and integrity test. To carry out the psychological test and the integrity test, the State Examination Center hires licensed professionals from a professional institution. The principal's term lasts for four years, with the possibility of another consecutive term.

The Principal carries out the following activities (Law on Primary Education, article 130, paragraph 1, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 103/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016, 127/2016 and 67/2017): advocates and represents the school and is responsible for the legal operation, organizes, plans, and manages the work of the primary school; prepares a school development program, prepares a draft annual program of work, is responsible for the implementation of the annual work program; is responsible for achievement of the rights and obligations of students; performs the selection of teachers, professional associates and educators, and other administrative and technical staff in accordance with the law and acts of the school; performs the deployment of teachers, professional associates and educators, and other administrative and technical personnel; decides on termination of employment of teachers, professional associates, and educators and other administrative and technical staff according to law and collective contracts; controls the manner in which the professional records of employees are kept; encourages in-service training and improvement of teachers, professional associates, and tutors; organizes mentorship for trainee teachers, trainee assistants, and trainee tutors; observes classes in accordance with the plan for visiting classes of the annual program of work of the school, for which he/she makes recommendations and remarks after the completed visit that are attached to the professional file of the teacher; and monitors

the work of teachers, professional associates, and educators and advises them; monitors the work of the school pedagogue, psychologist, and other professional workers; cooperates with parents, informs the parents about the work of the school and changes in the rights and obligations of students; encourages and monitors the work of the community of students; ensures the execution of the decisions of the school board; adopts the systematization of the school's workplaces; decides on the conclusion of employment contracts; initiates procedures for the disciplinary responsibility of the teachers, professional associates and tutors; cooperates with health institutions in the municipality; and performs other activities in accordance with the law and the statute of the school.

The principal of a municipal primary or secondary school is elected and dismissed by the Mayor upon proposal of the school board of the school. The principal of the state primary or secondary school is selected and dismissed by the Minister for Education and Science upon proposal of the school board of the school (Law on Primary Education, article 132, paragraph *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 103/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016, 127/2016 and 67/2017).

The school board and the representative of the Bureau for Development in Education interview candidates who meet the requirements. Within seven days of the interview with the candidates the school board of a state primary or secondary school proposes to the Minister for education and science the two best candidates for election (Law on Primary Education, article 132, paragraph 12, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 103/2008, 33/2010, 116/2010, 156/2010, 18/2011, 42/2011, 51/2011, 6/2012, 100/2012, 24/2013, 41/2014, 116/2014, 135/2014, 10/2015, 98/2015, 145/2015, 30/2016, 127/2016 and 67/2017).

The training and examination of candidates for school principal is carried out in accordance with the Training and Examination Program. The program for training and examination of school principals is prescribed by the Minister of Education and Science, on the proposal of the State Examination Center (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 9, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15).

The program is implemented by trainers selected in an open competition by the State Examination Center. The trainers should meet the following general requirements: to have completed a master's degree in the relevant field for the implementation of the relevant module, and to have at least five years of work experience in educational and scientific activity and



experience as a trainer in the area of the contents of the module for which he/she is applying (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 6, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15).

The State Examination Center trains the candidates interested in becoming school principals and organizes the exam for principals, in accordance with the law. The program for preparing and passing an exam for principals and the manner of conducting the exam is prescribed by the Minister for Education and Science at the proposal of the State Examination Center.

The basic and advanced training for a candidate for principalship is conducted to enable the candidate to acquire the necessary professional competencies for successful organization, management of educational work, and administration of the work in the school.

The total duration of the training is 192 hours and it is mandatory. The training is implemented in six modules (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 9, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15):

- Application of Information and Computer Technology in Management in Education;
- Organization Theory;
- People in the Organization;
- The Principal as a Pedagogical Leader;
- Legislation;
- Finance.

The training is divided into (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 9, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15):

- group training that lasts 18 hours per module, allocated in 12 sessions of 90 minutes, performed in a period of two days,
- individual work 10 hours in duration of per module, during which the candidates prepare seminar work on the covered topics, and
- presentation for a period of 4 hours per module, where candidates present their seminar paper to the group and the trainer.

The module is considered completed if the candidate has attended at least 10 of the 12 training sessions per module and has successfully presented the seminar paper. Candidates who have successfully completed the training and passed psychological and integrity tests have the right to take the exam (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 9, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15).

After the training, the candidate applies to take an exam by submitting an application to the State Examination Center. In addition to the application, the candidate submits, the electronic record holder (CD) with six seminar papers from the modules and a certificate for a passed psychological test and an integrity test. The director of the State Examination Center appoints a responsible person from the Center to determine whether the candidate meets the requirements for taking the exam (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 10, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15).

The exam for principal is conducted for the purpose of verifying the professional competence of the candidates for school management, application of legal regulations, and organization of work in schools. A candidate who has passed the exam for principal is issued with a certificate. The form and content of the certificate for the passed examination for the principal of a school is prescribed by the Minister for Education and Science. The exam for principal is taken before the Examination Committee established by the director of the State Examination Center. The examination panel consists of a president and four members. The president and one member of the Examination Committee are employees of the State Examination Center, two members are employees in higher education institutions of the areas covered by the modules, and one member is from the Ministry of Education and Science, proposed by the Minister of Education and Science.

The principal exam consists of three parts (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 13, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15):

- practical testing of computer skills,
- testing of the ability to apply theoretical knowledge, and
- presentation and defense of the final seminar paper.

The first part of the exam is taken by using a computer to solve a number of tasks related to the practical application of software programs and applications used in education and in office work. The second part of the exam is taken by using a computer and consists of checking the theoretical knowledge and skills gained during the training. The third part of the exam consists of presentation and defense of the final seminar paper of the candidate.

The first and second part of the exam is technically carried out by the State Examination Center, and the third part of the exam is conducted by the Examination Committee. All parts of the exam are taken on the premises of the State Examination Center. The first, second and third part of the exam are taken in a room for taking the exam, specially equipped with material-technical and IT equipment, internet connection, and equipment for recording the exam.

The first part of the exam consists of a test with three tasks from the electronic system regarding the practical application of software programs and applications used in education and a test with three tasks from the electronic system regarding the practical application of software programs and applications used in office work. The electronic system contains at least 50 tasks that are prepared by experts engaged by the State Examination Center. The electronic system does not allow the existence of an identical test for the first part of the exam in one session for more than one candidate. The candidate solves tasks on a computer. The test tasks are evaluated with the points specified in the test. The first part of the exam is assessed as passed /not passed, based on the record from the passed electronic test submitted by the administrator to the Examination Commission. The entry in the first part of the exam is kept in the candidate's file. It is considered that the first part of the exam is passed by the candidate who, with correct answers to the test questions, achieved at least 60% of the total number of points envisaged.

The candidate takes the second part of the exam if he/she has successfully passed the first part of the exam. In the second part of the exam, the candidate on a computer solves 30 questions from the theoretical knowledge gained from the modules during the training. Questions are multiple-choice ; one option is correct, and three are incorrect. Test questions are evaluated with points specified in the test. The questions are prepared by the trainers and stored electronically, with 60 questions for each module, a total of 300 questions. The examination panel verifies the questions. The electronic system does not allow identical test content for the second part of the exam in a session for more than one candidate. The pass mark for the second part of the exam is 60% correct answers.

The candidate takes the third part of the exam if he/she has successfully passed the second part of the exam. For the third part of the exam, the candidate prepares, presents, and defends a completed seminar paper – a case study. The topic of the final seminar paper is received by the candidate after the completion of the training, computer-generated, whose content randomly determines the software of the electronic system from the list of topics. The topics from the list from paragraph 3 of this article are prepared by the trainers, with 20 topics from each module, ie a total of 120 topics. The Examination Commission verifies the topics.

The final seminar paper is prepared, presented and defended by the candidate within 30 days from the day of receiving the topic. The candidate completes the final seminar paper and defends it in front of the Examination Committee. The Examining Committee is quorate if all its members are

present. The decisions of the Examination Committee will be adopted by a majority of votes. The third part of the exam is assessed by the Examination Commission as pass/fail, based on the prepared, presented, and defended completed seminar paper. The candidate will be immediately notified of the assessment of the Examination Committee. It is considered that the candidate is successful if he/she has passed all parts of the exam. Candidates, who have not passed the exam at the third attempt have no right to take the exam for the next three years.

Advanced training is mandatory for principals who have passed the exam. For the purpose of upgrading knowledge, school principals are obliged to attend training for continuous professional development of at least four seminar days, with a total duration of at least 32 hours, over a one-year period. The training is organized by the State Examination Center. Trainers of advanced training are experts from the State Examination Center, educational institutions and institutions related to the topics of the Program for Advanced Training of Principals, determined by the director of State Examination Center (Law for training and exam for school principals, article 21, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 10/15, 145/15 and 192/15).

The program for the advanced training of principals is prescribed by the Minister, at the proposal of the State Examination Center, proposed in cooperation with the Bureau for Development of Education, the Center for Vocational Education and Training, the Center for Adult Education, and the State Education Inspectorate. For participation in advanced training, the State Examination Center for principals issues a certificate and records it. The form and content of the certificate for the participation of advanced training of principals is determined by the Principal of the State Examination Center. The candidate who has passed the exam is issued a certificate, signed by the President of the Examination Commission and the State Examination Center, within seven days from the day of the completion of the exam. The form and content of the Certificate for the passed exam for the Principal is prescribed by the Minister of Education and Science, upon proposal of the State Examination Center (Program for advanced training of principals, *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 219 on 14.12.2015).

## CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COUNTRY

The main problem in the selection of school principals,<sup>1</sup> established for over twenty years, is the high degree of politization. This is confirmed by the fact that from 1998 to 2006, with the change of the central government, principals of schools were also changed (in this period, the appointment of principals was under the competence of the Minister of Education and Science, according to the law). Since 2006, as the mayors of municipalities were changed, the principals of schools have also been changed (in this period according to the law the appointment of the principals was under the authority of the local mayor). With the change of local and central government, in most cases that means appointing principals from the ruling parties. This problem should have been avoided by the Law on Local Self-Government<sup>2</sup> and Law on Primary Education, according to which there are representatives from the staff of school boards, parents of students, in addition to representatives delegated by central and local governments. The number of teachers and parents of students is greater than the number of delegated representatives from the central and local government, but due to the high degree of politicization of society among all categories of representatives, party membership comes to the fore rather than the quality of the reported candidates for principal, in the interest of the school and students. This is a serious problem that needs to be overcome.

In addition, the training content and the manner of taking the exam for a school principal represent serious problems. This was identified through the views and opinions of the respondents from a survey conducted among principals of 109 primary schools and 27 secondary schools in our country in 2018 (there are 550 schools for primary and secondary education), by the authors of this work.<sup>3</sup>

Two instruments (scales for estimation) were implemented in the research, one related to the training and the exam for principals, i.e. the necessary topics for the advanced training of the already elected principals, and the second, related to the necessary knowledge and skills of the school principals, as well as the amount of time (in percentage) the principal spends in certain activities.

In regards to the training of school principals, very indicative answers (attitudes) of respondents were received according the content and manner in which exam for school principals is implemented. To the question:

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<sup>1</sup> National Program for Development of Education in 2005-2015, Foundation Open Society Macedonia (this program was approved by the Parliament in 2005)

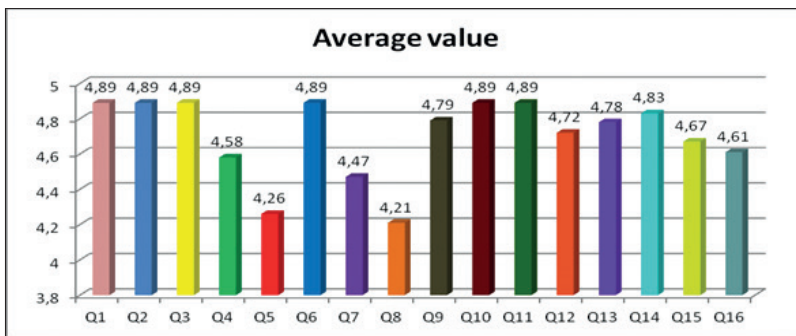
<sup>2</sup> Law on Local Self-Government, article 22 and 50. *Sluzben vesnik na RM*, No. 5/2002

<sup>3</sup> The results are in the process of publication.

“How do you evaluate the usefulness of the implementation of the module 1: Application of Information and Computer Technology in the Management of Education”, almost half of the respondents (47.6%) think that this module is not well conceived and that it does not function to improve the quality of school principals’ work. According to principals’ opinions, this tool can help in the management of school, but is of much less importance for the work of the school as a whole (and especially for improvement of the quality of teaching) than Modules 2 (Theory of Organization), 3 (People in the Organization) and 4 (Principal as Pedagogical Leader). This is the attitude of 53.5% of respondents. Likewise, the respondents consider that Modules 5 and 6 do not have a direct impact on the quality of teaching, but are important because mistakes in these areas result in sanctions and penalties for principals. Also, the general remark is that the manner in which the training is implemented is not the most appropriate (39.6% of the respondents), especially for modules 1, 5 and 6, because they are more theory-based and have few concrete practical examples. There are also notes on the time frame in which training is implemented, as 9 hours per day is too much for effective work. In this context, their position is that instead of two days, one module should be held over three days, and that the training should be implemented in regions, not only in the capital, Skopje. Also, the respondents noted that changes are needed in the direction of improving the quality and facilitation of the trainers. Finally, respondents believe that more emphasis should be put on training, rather than on the exam, in relation to the first two parts<sup>4</sup>, where time and not the factual knowledge is more important.

The following graph shows participant’s opinions regarding the necessary knowledge and skills of the school leader in the performance of the given activities. The responses were noted using the 1–5 Likert scale.

Figure 1. Participants’ opinions regarding the necessary knowledge and skills of the school leader



<sup>4</sup> Practical testing of computer skills, testing of the ability to apply theoretical knowledge

- Q1: It is important for the school principal to possess good communication skills
- Q2: It is important for the school principal to possess good planning skills for school work
- Q3: It is important for the school principal to possess good organizational skills
- Q4: It is important for the school principal to possess good leadership abilities
- Q5: It is important for the school principal to possess good abilities to provide professional help to teachers
- Q6: It is important for the school principal to possess good skills in managing human resources
- Q7: It is important for the school principal to possess good abilities to manage financial resources
- Q8: It is important for the school principal to possess good time management skills
- Q9: It is important for the school principal to possess good abilities for organizing and conducting meetings
- Q10: It is important for the school principal to possess good abilities to motivate employees
- Q11: It is important for the school principal to possess good abilities to build a good working environment
- Q12: It is important for the school principal to possess good conflict resolution skills
- Q13: It is important for the school principal to encourage teamwork
- Q14: It is important for the school principal to be a person with integrity
- Q15: It is important for the school principal to possess the ability to build good public relations
- Q16: It is important for the school principal to have a proactive attitude towards educational change and contemporary education tendencies

According to participants' responses, particular indicative findings are obtained regarding the engagement of principals in a few activities and how much time they spend in their implementation in everyday performance. These findings are systematized in the following table, where (in percentages) the approximate time per week the principals devote to the listed activities is given, and accordingly whether this is good and how much time principals should spend. The participants were told to allocate the time in percentages so that the total amount would be 100%. In the table given, the mean values are expressed in percentages of all participants in total.



*Table 1. Mean values expressed in percentage of all participants total for time that principals spend, time that principals would like to spend*

ACTIVITY	time principal spends (%) (Average)	time principal would like to spend (%) (Average)
Administrative matters – problems	10,21	5,13
Phone calls and e-mails	6,89	4,09
Financial matters – problems	9,37	7,06
Visit the classes	6,26	8,09
Works on planning the work of the school	8,84	10,01
Works on own professional development	5,68	8,05
Works to improve the work of the school	9,05	11,00
Meetings outside the school	4,84	4,05
Meetings at the school	4,74	5,06
Talking with the teachers	7,26	8,50
Conversations with professional associates	6,74	7,18
Conversations with administrative and technical staff	5,11	4,56
Conversations with students and their parents	6,47	7,06
Providing professional assistance to employees	6,42	7,19
Other	2,88	2,97

From the table, it can be concluded that principals spend more than a third of their time, in activities that do not have a direct impact on the provision and quality of teaching. The practice shows that in this context there are problems with school principals in terms of time management, as well as their ability to organize and conduct meetings.

Advanced trainings should be correlated with the career progression of the principals, which at this moment is not legally formalized. According to the above study, the school principals cite the following topics for advanced training:

- Decision Making and Problem Solving;
- Emotional Intelligence Leadership;
- Time Management;
- Coaching;

- Organizational Learning;
- Knowledge Management;
- Talent Management;
- Assertive Communication;
- Project Management.

## VIEW TOWARDS THE FUTURE

For improvement of educational leadership in the country, it is first necessary to make changes in the laws on primary and secondary education, as well as the law for passing exams for a school principal, in order to make an integral, consistent concept for initial training of school principals, as well as for their professional and career development (there is a law, but there are no by-laws in which standards and programs are defined). Specifically, this means the way in which the school principals will be trained before taking up their duties and the way of taking the exam for a principal. Also, advanced training of school principals needs to be better defined and clear standards and career progression criteria need to be established. This would reduce the impact of politization of the selection of school principals and improve the competencies of the school principals. Attaining higher levels in the career advancement ladder should be a factor whereby a principal should be elected for a larger number of mandates, and mandates should not therefore be restricted by law. It is not reasonable for a successful and effective principal to be replaced only because of a legal limitation.

It is necessary to establish a school or academy for school principals, which, for start, can be a special sector in the State Examination Center, and then, if the need arises, can also be transformed into a separate entity. Trainers should be permanently employed at a school or academy for school principals and hold master's or doctoral degrees in educational leadership. In fact, the proposed academy should also carry out research in educational leadership and educational policy in the country.

The previous attitude is confirmed in the 2018 OECD report.<sup>5</sup> Namely, the report states that more and more OECD countries are establishing master's programs and academies for school leadership in order to improve the capacity of principals.

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<sup>5</sup> The report is in the draft version presented at the workshop: "Review of the Evaluation and Evaluation System" on January 31, 2018. The Minister and other representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science attended.

In addition to gaining the necessary managerial and leadership skills, according to the draft OECD report, it is important for principals to develop skills for self-evaluation, but it is also important for them to develop their general knowledge and skills for teaching leadership (this is in the context of the role of the principal as coach in the school). This will help the school's evaluation to fit in with other aspects of school leadership, such as setting a school vision and planning for improvements (Ingersoll, Sirinides & Dougherty, 2017).

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## LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF SERBIA<sup>1</sup>

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*Abstract.* The paper deals with major aspects of educational leadership in Serbia. First, the legislative framework is presented which, in the last several years, has considerably focused on the roles and obligations of principals, as well as their formal training and licensing. Then, the findings of the research on principals' needs, problems and perspectives on leadership since 2000 are described. This section shows that principals are aware of the multitude of competencies that they need to have in order to professionally fulfill their duties, but that they also believe that many problems hamper them in their jobs: insufficient school funding, teacher employment policies, inconsistent legislation, poor selection procedures of principals, inadequate support from higher administrative levels and so on. Subsequently, the paper gives an overview of seminars, trainings and academic programs that comprise the current offering of professional development opportunities for principals. Among them, the master program developed within the Tempus project and the official state program developed by the Institute for the Improvement of Education are described in more detail. Finally, the authors present a set of recommendations for the improvement of educational leadership in Serbia.

*Keywords:* leadership in education, school principals, Serbia, professional development.

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## INTRODUCTION

The demand for better and more efficient leadership in education has consistently been part of the educational reform programs throughout the world. At the beginning of the 21st century, the interest in this topic rose rapidly due to the widespread belief, based on research findings, that the achievement of pupils is significantly related to the quality of leadership. These findings show that the effects of leadership on learning are indirect and also that, among all the factors related to schooling, by its contribution to pupil achievement leadership is second only to the quality of teaching (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004).

During the last several years, significant strides have been made towards improving educational leadership in Serbia, from providing legal framework for development of educational leadership to providing training through professional development courses and preparatory programs to creating resources to support principals in their everyday endeavors. The aim of this paper is to present the most important initiatives and activities undertaken in this area. Also, based on the results of research, contemporary literature and experiences from other educational systems in which leadership in education is highly developed, we aim to formulate recommendations for further improvement of leadership in education in Serbia.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Several important documents regulate principalship in Serbia. Two main legislative pieces are the *Strategy of development of education in Serbia 2020* (2012) and the *Law on the basics of system of education* (2017). Other relevant documents are: *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions* (2013), *Standards of the quality of work of educational institutions* (2018), and the *Rulebook on the training program and the license exam for the principals of educational institutions* (2018).

The *Strategy* declares that principals have a key role in ensuring the proper functioning of educational institutions, quality of work in the institutions, quality of teaching and learning, and quality of pupil achievement. It also states that the following actions need to be undertaken in order to improve principalship (*Strategy of development of education in Serbia 2020*, 2012): 1) depoliticize the selection of principals, as political parties often influence the selection and work of principals, neglecting professional criteria and standards; 2) make the legislative documents more precise in

the area of principalship, especially stressing the role of the principal as a pedagogical leader of the institution; 3) create the preparatory training for principals and, when selecting candidates for principalship, take into consideration their training success and previous professional experiences; also create a system of continuous professional development for principals; 4) devise the evaluation system for principals, where evaluation is to be based on success of a principal's professional development, success and standing of his/her institution, performance of the institution in external evaluation, and pupils' perception of the principal's success. Also, the *Strategy* stresses that the selection of principals is done at school and principals are selected by the teachers in school on the basis of their program proposal. While the *Strategy* clearly states the importance of principals in the education system and the need to improve their quality, it somewhat fails to more clearly and concretely delineate principals' roles. Furthermore, action plans that were derived from the *Strategy* did not include any activities related to principals.

According to the *Law on the basics of system of education* (2017) the principal is responsible for legality of the work and successful functioning of the entire institution. The principal is accountable to the school board and the minister. The *Law* lists 23 principal's duties which can roughly be categorized into four areas: 1) school's pedagogical activities; 2) financial, legal and administrative activities; 3) school quality activities, and 4) cooperation with various stakeholders. There are numerous reasons for which the minister can dismiss the principal from his/her principalship, from failing to maintain necessary documentation of the institution to being unable to ensure that the institution fulfills all the educational programs to disobeying the orders of the higher authorities (Article 126, ZOSOV, *Sl. glasnik RS*, br. 88/2017 and 27/2018).

In Serbia, principals should satisfy the following requirements: 1) pre-2005, a 4-year bachelor degree or post-2005, master degree; in both cases the bachelor degree needs to fit with the type of school in which one wants to be a principal<sup>2</sup>, 2) a license for a teacher or school counselor, 3) principal's training and license, and 4) at least eight years of working experience in school as a teacher or school counselor (*Law on the basics of system of education*, 2017). The principal's license has to be obtained up to two years after being appointed principal. As of this point, the license is designed as permanent,

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<sup>2</sup> This means that a teacher of mechanics (with a bachelor degree in mechanical engineering) in the vocational high school cannot become a principal of elementary school or pre-school, or that a classroom teacher (with a bachelor degree in classroom teaching) cannot become a principal of either academic or vocational high school or pre-school.

except when the principal has been charged for infractions regarding discrimination, violence, political activity in school and similar infractions.

The principal is selected after an open invitation has been issued by the school board. Candidates apply directly to the school. The school board forms an in-school commission which reviews the candidates' documentation and fulfillment of legal requirements, interviews the candidates and obtains opinions of the candidates from the school's teachers' council. If the candidate has previously been the principal, the commission is supposed to take into account their prior work as judged by the regional school authority's education counselor. The commission submits its report on the candidates to the school board, which then deliberates on and makes its selection of a candidate and submits this to the ministry. The minister has the final say in confirmation/refusal of the school's selection and is not obliged to select the school's preferred candidate (*Law on the basics of system of education, 2017*).

The principal is selected for four years. Principals can apply for an unlimited number of mandates, but their prior position in school is held for two mandates. After two mandates, if a principal is not selected for any consequent mandate or no longer wants to be a principal, s/he is offered available teaching position in the system or, if there is no such position, is treated the same way as other employees who are no longer needed<sup>3</sup> (*Law on the basics of system of education, 2017*).

In comparison to the previous laws on the basics of education system, the *Law* of 2017 specifies elements of the quality of education in the Republic of Serbia (a total of 13), two of which directly refer to principals' competencies and principals' professional development, thus giving more importance to principalship than before. However, in comparison to previous laws, the education system became more centralized. In the area of principalship, this is apparent in that: 1) the *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions* (see below) are no longer adopted by the National Education Council (NEC), but the minister, and 2) the minister appoints a principal, whereas before the minister only approved the school board's decision on the candidate. In comparison to the pre-2017 situation, the length of work experience prior to becoming a principal increased from five to eight years, and the principal's previous job became secure for two principal's mandates instead of one. Finally, in the earlier versions of the law, the principals' obligations were presented in 11 items, while in the 2017 *Law*, there are even 23 items listing principals' duties.

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<sup>3</sup> This usually means becoming redundant, a 'technological surplus', who either gets other duties within the system or is dismissed with an appropriate severance package.



In 2013 the NEC adopted *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*, which were created by the National Institute for Improvement of Education – IIE (*Sl. glasnik RS*, br. 38/2013). The latter is also in charge of preparation and realization of the training for principals and the licensing exam for principals (*Law on the basics of system of education*, 2017). The Standards consist of six areas shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*

1.	Leading the educational processes in school
2.	Planning, organizing and controlling the work of the institution
3.	Monitoring and improving the work of employees
4.	Developing cooperation with parents/guardians, school board, representative union and community
5.	Financial and administrative management of the work of the institution
6.	Ensuring the legality of the work of the institution

Each of these areas contains numerous indicators which detail the key activities for which the principal must be qualified as to successfully lead the institution and ensure the achievement of its goals. The purpose of the *Standards* is to ensure and improve the quality of work of principals, thus contributing to the achievement of general outcomes of education and training defined by law (*Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*, 2013). *Standards* primarily serve as the basis for the development of principal training, license exam and self-evaluation of principals.

*Standards of the quality of work of educational institutions*, enacted in 2018, which are used in self-evaluation and external evaluation of educational institutions, contain one Standard area – Organization of schoolwork and human and material resource management – which is usually taken to assess principals' work. The standards in this Standard area are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Standards of Area of quality No. 6*

1.	Leadership of the principal is in the function of improving the work of the school.
2.	The school operates a system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of work.
3.	Leadership of the principal enables the development of the school.
4.	Human resources are in the function of the quality of school work.
5.	Material and technical resources are used functionally.
6.	The school supports initiative and develops entrepreneurial spirit.

The *Standards* represent a revision of an earlier version of Standards from 2012 (*Sl. glasnik RS*, br. 7/2011 and 68/2012). No school has yet been evaluated using this new set of standards.

Finally, the newest document regulating the principalship in Serbia is the *Rulebook on the training program and the license exam for the principals of educational institutions* (2018). The *Rulebook* details the training program in accordance with the *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*, training providers, method of realization, method and procedure of taking the exam, assessment of the exam, and other topics. The program lasts between two and 13 days and is delivered in two ways: interactive face-to-face training in groups of up to 30 participants (up to four days) and individual online training (up to nine days). The *Rulebook* specifies different training for the following categories of candidates:

1. Principals of successful schools (those with the highest mark, i.e., with mark 4 on external evaluation<sup>4</sup> or those with mark 3, but with areas referring to principal's work marked with a 4) with at least six years of principalship experience: two days of face-to-face training;
2. Principals of less successful schools (those with lower marks on external evaluation), principals with less than six years of principalship experience, and principal "trainees" (teachers and counselors who wish to obtain a principal license): four days of face-to-face and nine days of individual online training;

<sup>4</sup> This is the mark for the quality of work of the institution obtained against *Standards of the quality of work of educational institutions*.

3. Principals who have a master, specialist, or doctoral degree in the field of education policy, management in education, or leadership in education: two days of face-to-face training and up to nine days of individual online training, depending on the judgement of the commission.

After finishing the training program, candidates prepare a portfolio documenting their competencies and report on the research they have undertaken in their institution. Portfolios and reports are presented before a commission appointed by the minister or provincial secretary and consisting of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MESTD), IIE and Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation (IEQE) representatives.

## CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

### **Overview of research on educational leadership in Serbia**

For the purpose of this paper, a review of relevant research conducted since 2000 to date has been provided. We selected those studies which were aimed at examining the problems that principals face in practice, their roles and tasks in the school context, and the competencies they need to successfully accomplish their function.

In the study about attitudes of primary and secondary school principals in Serbia towards important aspects of their work such as development planning, building the image of the school, organization of work, and the role of principals as managers, the authors concluded that principals were aware that they needed a high level of professional and social competence, and that they were ready to professionally improve themselves (Maksić, Đurišić-Bojanović & Avramović, 2002). In the opinion of the respondents, it was important that the school principal be a role model for associates, have a high level of work energy, be well informed, possess good skills for communication and conflict resolution, be persistent in the implementation of decisions, clear in his demands, and have high moral integrity.

In the framework of the international TIMSS study (2003 and 2007), primary school principals in Serbia assessed how much time they devoted to different roles and tasks. In the TIMSS 2003 research, the results showed that they mostly dealt with the instructional leadership, to a lesser degree with public relations and finance, then with administrative tasks, and least with monitoring and evaluating the work of teachers and other employees (Maksić & Đurišić-Bojanović, 2005). In comparison to 2003, in the second

cycle of research conducted in 2007, principals estimated that they were significantly more involved in administrative work and employee supervision, while they devoted significantly less time to pedagogical issues (Đurišić-Bojanović & Maksić, 2011). This finding was surprising because, since the educational reform began, schools were expected to have greater autonomy and the principal's focus was supposed to shift from the role of executor of centralized tasks to the role of leader and entrepreneur in the local community (Đurišić-Bojanović & Maksić, 2006).

In order to stimulate the professionalization of leaders in education, a survey of educational needs was conducted on a sample of 200 principals of primary and secondary schools in Serbia (Alibabić, 2007). A modified version of the Management Training Development Needs Analysis instrument, which has 35 items (activities of the school principal), was utilized. Respondents rated the weight, importance and frequency of these activities on 5-point Likert scales. According to the principals' assessments, for the 25 activities it was necessary to organize continuous formal and informal training, as the principals perceived them as difficult, important and frequent. Also, it was found that activities such as talks with students, employees and parents, pedagogical monitoring and counseling were highly ranked, which means that educational programs for principals, in addition to managerial, must include pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Within the international survey study TALIS 2013, issues of the professional preparation and development of primary school principals in Serbia were investigated on a sample of 186 principals (Petrović, 2015). The results indicated that professional preparation for school principals was not adequate. More precisely, most of principals in Serbia completed some form of accredited training for teachers, but a significantly smaller number of them completed training in the field of school administration or training for managers. Related to the principals' participation in different professional development activities (mentoring, research activities within professional networks, courses, conferences, etc.) in a year prior to this study, principals in Serbia were below the TALIS survey average. Also, nearly one quarter of principals did not participate in any professional development. Among the main obstacles, the principals stated the following: high cost of professional training programs, lack of incentives for participation in professional development activities, lack of suitable offers for professional development, and lack of support from employers.

Starting from the premise that in order to build support for the professional development of leaders in education it is necessary to first examine their real problems and needs, a mix-methods research was conducted within

the Tempus project “Master program in educational leadership” (EdLead) in 2014.<sup>5</sup> The quantitative study focused on competencies of Serbian principals in the area of educational leadership. The sample consisted of 200 elementary and secondary school principals from different regions of Serbia. The questionnaire designed for this purpose contained 82 items using a 4-point Likert scale which was focused on principals’ perceptions in respect of: 1) how important they perceived specific tasks to be part of their overall duties; and 2) the extent to which they perceived the need to improve their competencies in order to perform each task more effectively. The items were based on the indicators found in *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*. The results indicated that over two-thirds of the principals perceived that all tasks specified in the questionnaire represented important professional duties of principals, and stated that they either *mostly* need or *very much* need to improve their knowledge and skills in these tasks (Teodorović, Ševkušić, Stanković, Radišić, Džinović & Malinić, 2015a; 2015b). It seemed that domains related to financial and operational management of the institution were the most worrisome for the principals (Radišić, Stanković & Malinić, 2015).

The aim of the qualitative research was to gain insight into the barriers faced by school principals in Serbia and the competencies they needed to improve their performance. The focus group method was applied with principals, teachers and school counselors from pre-schools, primary and secondary schools in Serbia (ten focus groups). Also, there were seven in-depth interviews with heads of the regional school authorities of the MESTD, IIE, IEQE and representatives of the local government. Results of the qualitative analysis indicated two broad categories of barriers to effective school leadership in Serbia: 1) barriers related to the system as a whole (insufficient and insecure school funding; employment policy and evaluation of teachers’ work; inadequate selection of school principals and lack of their continuing professional development; legislative issues; a mismatch between the work of higher-level educational institutions; negative image of educational institutions in society); and 2) barriers related to the school as an organization (that come from principals, teachers, parents and other school staff). The analysis of participants’ responses about competencies which school principals need to have for effective school leadership identified a large number of skills and knowledge in various fields: instructional leadership, development and management of human resources, organizational development, communication competencies, knowledge of the education system and education policies, law and administration, financial management, project

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<sup>5</sup> See more details on the TEMPUS EdLead project at: <http://edlead.pefja.kg.ac.rs/>.

management, establishing identity as a leader (Teodorović, Ševkušić, Stan-ković, Radišić, Džinović & Malinić, 2014).

One more qualitative study with 20 primary school principals in Serbia was undertaken (Raković, 2018; Raković, O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2019). The aim of the study (based on in-depth interviews) was to generate theory about the perspectives of principals on their work. Data was collected in 2015. The qualitative analyses of data generated three levels of their perspectives: macro, mezzo, and micro. At the macro/societal level, the biggest problem they recognized was poor selection procedures of principals. At the mezzo level, principals' perspectives included their views on governance in the education system and related issues of accountability and autonomy. They felt unsupported in the implementation of educational changes and lacked trust in the central authority. And, at the micro level, their perspectives included their own roles and professional learning. The principals thought that the education system in Serbia required them to unreflectively be the implementers of state policies and also entrepreneurs helping to provide funds for their schools. Also, principals stated that the expectation to be entrepreneurs was not sufficiently supported by adequate professional learning.

Based on research review, we can conclude that in the past two decades the principals of educational institutions in Serbia have pointed to some of the main obstacles for effective leading of schools, and that they expressed the need to improve their professional skills in order to successfully perform numerous and complex tasks and roles. However, the first initiatives related to the system support for professionalisation of principalship did not appear in Serbia before 2013.

### **Overview of preparatory programs and support activities for principals in Serbia**

The first seminars for principals, as in-service training, emerged in the early 2000s, but they were not long-term<sup>6</sup>. The topics of the seminar were related to all the important aspects of the principals' work: organization and planning of work in the school, skills of successful communication, how to build a good image of the school, and how to incorporate entrepreneurship into the functioning of the school (Ivanović, 2000; Maksić, Đurišić-Bojanović & Avramović, 2002). In-service training programs for principals in the IIE's Catalog of the accredited programs since 2006 show that until the adoption

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<sup>6</sup> The analysis of pedagogical journals published in the period from 1950 to 2000 showed that topics dealing with leadership in education were of interest to researchers and practitioners in that period as well.

of the *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions* in 2013, there were very few special training programs for principals, but that principals were mentioned as a target group in most in-service teacher programs. In the Catalog for the period 2014-2016, there were 16 programs in the field of “Leading, management and legislature”, three of which were intended exclusively for principals and deputy principals (Pavlović & Žunić-Pavlović, 2015).

In 2018, after the *Rulebook on the training program and the license exam for the principals of educational institutions* was enacted, and at the initiative of the MESTD, the IIE started designing official training for principals. The content of the program consists of several topics (modules) related to *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*. Additionally, training is envisioned to help principals prepare their portfolio and undertake research in their schools. The mandatory part of the portfolio consists of basic information about the candidate and evidence that his/her leadership is based on regulations, mainly on *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*. An optional part of portfolio presents specific knowledge, talents, interests, and achievements of the candidate. Topics appropriate for research that the candidates undertake are: analysis of candidate’s own work, analysis of candidate’s school’s work, current or planned projects, and candidate’s professional interests. Chosen topics needs to have practical relevance for candidate’s institution and should be in the function of development of quality of education improvement of work efficiency or increase in accountability of employees and pupils. A two-day pilot training for 362 category 1 principals (those with more than six years of principalship experience and the highest marks on their school’s external evaluation) was held in the period from November 2017 to October 2018. After the *Rulebook* was enacted, this training was recognized as formal training for this group of principals. Scenarios for additional training days (in-person and online) are being developed. Training for other categories of principals was planned to commence in September 2019. The first license exam was organized in November 2018, and all appointed principals are expected to pass a license exam by the end of 2021.

A master program “Leadership in education” was developed in 2016 as the main goal of the TEMPUS project EdLead.<sup>7</sup> The program was based on the comprehensive needs analysis presented in the previous section, a review of educational leadership literature and extensive overview of preparation

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<sup>7</sup> The program was developed jointly by staff from four largest state universities in Serbia: University of Kragujevac, University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, and University of Niš, with valuable input from several other domestic and EU institutions, notably Institute of educational research from Belgrade, Serbia.



programs for principals around the world. The target group for the master program is mostly principals, but also vice-principals, school team leaders, school counselors, and employees in municipalities and regional school authorities. The master program was structured according to the three cycle system (60 ECTS) and consists of four mandatory courses: 1) Introduction to leadership in education; 2) Leading educational institutions; 3) Pedagogical leadership; and 4) Developing people in organization; and five elective courses (from which students select two): 5) Partnerships and communication; 6) Finances, law and administration in education; 7) Education policies and change management; 8) Educational systems in comparative perspective; and 9) Data and project management. There is also mandatory research practice, during which students carry out action research in their institutions. Finally, the master thesis focuses on the application of student knowledge and skills to relevant topics and problems in educational leadership. The courses are theoretically grounded, but are designed to be highly practical, interactive, and relevant to work in schools. Therefore, teaching methods consist of lectures, discussions, workshops, case studies, video clip analyses, text analyses, comparative analyses, practical assignments, etc. An important feature of the program is video-conferencing, which transmits lectures to remote locations.<sup>8</sup> The program aims to improve principals' knowledge and skills for real life, but also to prepare them for the license exam. For example, half of the master program credits (30 ECTS contained in courses 2–6) equip students with competencies required by the *Standards of the competencies of principals of educational institutions*. Also, one of the course assignments helps students start to prepare their portfolio, while action research and the master's thesis help them with research needed for the license exam.

Along with the development of the master program, five professional development (PD) courses for principals were developed in the TEMPUS EdLead project, some of which were accredited by IIE. These PD courses are categorized as courses for professional development of teachers, educators and school counselors, not specifically for principals, as there is still no rule-book that defines what in-service training for principals should include. The training lasts from two to seven days and is focused on the following areas: Leading educational institutions, Developing of people in organizations, and Action research. PD courses were aimed to be as similar as possible to the select courses in the master program, so that they could be partly interchangeable. A total of 195 participants attended those PD courses throughout 2016 and 2017. A total of 33 days of PD courses was held. There were

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<sup>8</sup> Two identical master programs, one at University of Kragujevac and another at University of Novi Sad, were accredited in January 2016 and 55 students in total were enrolled at those two institutions in October 2016.

also 316 additional principals of schools with marks 1 or 2 on external evaluation who attended the PD course Leading educational institutions.

Finally, there were additional activities that supported and promoted the field of educational leadership in Serbia. We highlight some of those that were produced within the TEMPUS EdLead program: 1) a resource center was established – an online platform presenting international documents, laws and rulebooks, literature reviews and research findings, meant to help principals in their everyday work; 2) a policy brief was formulated for policymakers with clear and concise recommendations on the needed improvements in educational leadership in Serbia; 3) a handbook for principals titled *Steering the quality of work of educational institutions* was created, with articles giving overviews, practical tools and recommendations regarding some of the regular leadership obligations of principals (Ševkušić, Malinić & Teodorović, 2017).

## VIEW TOWARD THE FUTURE

Although important strides were made toward improving educational leadership in Serbia during the last several years, there remain quite a few important undertakings to be considered in the future. These recommendations are based on contemporary literature on educational leadership, the practices of countries where leadership in education is highly developed, as well as on the results of research conducted in Serbia.

*Initial training.* State official initial training should be more extensive, with time in between training days to allow for practical application of what was learnt. The master program should receive state funding in order to continue to attract enthusiastic and motivated principals who desire a deeper study of educational leadership. Generally, master programs in education need to be recognized as a form of professional development of employees in education and thus be eligible for funding by local self-governments; this would significantly improve the current demand of professional development and enable more principals and other employees in education to partake in life-long learning.

*Selection of principals.* More stringent criteria for selection of principals should be defined in order to improve leadership in Serbian schools. Having such criteria dependent on qualifications and competencies would be one of the ways of reducing politicization of principalship. Talented teachers and school counselors should be actively recruited to become principals; in some countries (for example, in Singapore) this practice is an important

step toward successful principalship (Barber, Whelan & Clark, 2010). The recruitment could be done by the principals, local self-governments and/or regional school authorities. Motivated and effective teachers who are successful school team members should be groomed over the years and given increasingly more extensive duties in school, as well as preparatory training. There could even be a requirement in future of a person having to be a vice-principal prior to becoming a principal.

*Induction with mentoring.* Induction program needs to be prepared and implemented in schools with a new principal. Regional school authorities could select principal mentors – principals who are experienced, lead schools with the highest marks on external evaluation, and who have gone through mentorship training. These mentors could be recognized and motivated by the system through increased salary, enhanced leadership/career progression opportunities and/or reduction of the more mundane activities in school.

*In-service training* of principals is not yet established as there is still no rulebook that defines what in-service training for principals should include. Production of such a rulebook and creation of a pool of adequate PD courses aimed at principals should be a relatively easy accomplishment.

*Career progression.* There should be a serious contemplation in Serbia on how to retain and utilize the best principals in the system because there is no versatility of career path for principals: they can either apply to be re-selected in subsequent mandates or return to teaching. The most effective principals could progress toward becoming mentors to other principals, be assigned more difficult duties (such as leading low-achieving schools) or become resources for other schools, local self-governments and regional school authorities in a variety of important tasks (external evaluation, school development planning, formation of school teams, etc).

*Attractiveness of the profession.* Currently, the position of principal is not attractive because principals' salaries are low, obligations are many, and the profession does not have an established career ladder. In addition to raising salaries, distributed leadership should be made more formal, with more actors within the school (pedagogical teams, accountant, school secretary, school counselors) taking on more responsibilities. Establishing a variety of career paths for principals, such as described above, would also make principalship a more appealing profession.

*Autonomy of schools.* Research showed that principals need more autonomy to lead educational institutions. There are limitations in the area of financial, organizational and pedagogical autonomy of educational institutions in Serbia, and principals are not provided with sufficiently strong

leadership mechanisms that they could engage for the purpose of improving school performance. The recommendation for education policy would be to considerably enhance the autonomy of educational institutions in pedagogical, organizational and financial terms.

*Accountability mechanisms.* In spite of the recent developments in the area of licensing of the principals, there are still no strong professional criteria for the selection of principals and measurement and evaluation of their work, nor a defined and adequate system for rewarding and sanctioning principals for their achieved results. Likewise, principals claim that there is no accountability for teachers' work, which seriously hampers their ability to exercise their pedagogical function and stir improvements of teaching in schools (Teodorović, Stanković, Bodroža, Milin & Đerić, 2016). Even though there are mechanisms that principals can use to influence teachers (e.g., reduction of teacher's salary in certain situations), principals' perceptions indicate that the development of more sophisticated and well thought out accountability systems for principals and teachers should be among the priorities of the education policy in Serbia, while simultaneously developing adequate professional support for principals and teachers.

*Democratization of school leadership.* Bearing in mind that education itself is expected to shape new generations into responsible citizens who can build a functioning democratic and humane society, the democratic climate and democratic governance of schools are in this sense the utmost condition. The priority for education policy in this field should be to define, promote, and encourage such school structures, procedures and values that pose a democratic culture as the supreme value framework for the functioning of the entire education system, as well as any particular educational institution.

Keeping in mind that all actions and measures that are being implemented with the aim of improving the leadership practices in education should be evidence-based, research in this field should be intensified. Future research should, above all, focus on examining the effects of existing training, as well as on examining the satisfaction of the principals with the quality and usefulness of the training, in order to further improve them.

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## **BALANCING SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND HEAD TEACHERS' ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SCHOOLS IN SLOVAKIA**

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*Abstract.* The paper presents an analysis of the changes which have been introduced into the legislation on education in Slovakia. The paper, in its first part, presents an analysis of the transformation process which the system of education in Slovakia has undergone during the period of the last three decades. Within this process a great number of responsibilities have passed from the central authorities to local municipalities and individual schools. The changed conditions and the increased autonomy of schools meant that schools had to face new tasks and challenges. The new demands required new professional competences and calls for the professionalization of school leaders became part of a wider movement for school reforms. How the professional development of the school leaders is currently solved in Slovakia, what kind of education primary and secondary school head teachers are obliged to undergo, who are the main providers of this education, how it is provided, and how it is structured as to its content are described in the second part of the paper. The last part of the paper presents main results of research aimed at an evaluation of the scope of autonomy given to schools and powers given to head teachers from the point of view of an optimal amount of this autonomy in relation to actual needs and requirements of the head teachers.

*Keywords:* school legislation, school autonomy, powers of head teachers, head teachers appointment process, functional education of head teachers

### INTRODUCTION

Teacher shortages are one of the most serious problems of primary and secondary schools in Slovakia. There are two main reasons of this phenomenon. One is the aging of in-service teachers and the second one is the low attractiveness of a teacher profession. The result is that numbers of teacher novices incoming to practice are much lower than numbers of teachers retiring from the job (CVTI, 2016). This discrepancy is increasing from year to year since a significant number of in-service teachers leave their jobs due to the low attractiveness of the profession and low teacher incomes. Therefore, strategies to increase teacher retention are very important. As results

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of some research studies show (LPI, 2017), head teacher leadership plays a significant role in teacher turnover. It is one of the crucial determinants for teachers to stay either in a school or in the profession. While teachers directly influence pupils in their classrooms, head teachers impact both pupils and teachers in their school, promote organizational growth, influence changes, and create a positive school climate and culture. Since, from this point of view, head teachers are a key to teacher and pupil success, it should be important for both national and local authorities to develop policies that support head teachers throughout their careers.

The legislative changes introduced in Slovakia after the political changes in 1989 have changed the status of head teachers significantly as well as the scope of their duties and responsibilities. The key point of these changes is the autonomy given to schools and their leaders. A question is how this changed autonomy of schools is reflected in practice, what is the impact of these changes on school operations and the performance of the head teacher position, how professional development of head teachers in the new conditions is supported, and how head teachers perceive adequacy of the level of autonomy the schools and their leaders were given.

## MAIN LEGISLATIVE CHANGES IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Political changes in Eastern Europe at the end of the last century initiated transformation processes of the systems of education in these countries, and Slovakia was not an exception. The whole system of education in Slovakia, including school leadership, has undergone significant changes during the period of the last three decades. In the case of school leadership, the introduced changes were influenced by new conditions in which schools were operating. Schools obtained autonomous status, which meant that a great number of responsibilities were passed from the central authorities to local municipalities and individual schools. The objective was to empower school communities by giving schools greater decision-making authority over key aspects of their operation such as staffing and budgets.

The increased autonomy of schools meant that schools and their head teachers started to face new tasks and challenges. Calls for the professionalization of head teachers became part of a wider movement for school reforms. Previously, a head teacher was a practicing teacher with added technical and administrative duties, whilst from that time a head teacher was to be a professional, a full-time manager responsible for developing instructional, human, financial and physical resources to ensure the sustainable quality of the education offered and provided by the school.

The School Management and Governance Reform paid increased attention to ensuring the participation of local authorities, municipalities and regions in the administration of schools. This was specified and legalized by the so-called competency law of 2001, *Act No. 416/2001 on the Transition of Certain Powers from the State Administration to the Municipalities and Higher Territories* – the self-governing regions, and the Act of 2003, *Act No. 596/2003 on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government*.

Based on the given laws, the administration of schools and school facilities of local importance (kindergartens, elementary schools, language schools, school children's clubs, interest centres, leisure centres) was transferred to *municipalities*. The municipality controls their management and allocates funds to them, not only to the schools it establishes, but also to private schools and church schools in the municipality. For the transfer of state administration, funds are allocated to municipalities from the state budget. Municipalities run the administration of schools at secondary level while the head teacher leads this administration at primary level. The municipality appoints and recalls the head teachers of schools and school facilities belonging to its administration. The representatives of the municipality, along with the school council and the head teacher discuss the concept of school development, the budget of the school and the material and technical conditions of the school and school facilities, the municipality's requirements for the care of pupils and a report on the results of school education. In the municipality or in a number of municipalities with a common municipal office, the *educational authority* provides professional activities in the areas of education, youth, and physical culture.

The administration of secondary schools and school facilities surpassing local importance was transferred to *superior administrative units (self-governing regions)*. Self-governing regions establish and abolish secondary schools and school facilities that are being managed by them, and appoint and recall the head teachers of schools and school facilities that are being managed by them. Besides that they carry on economic supervision of the funds allocated to schools they establish, and provide meals and accommodation for pupils of secondary schools of which they are founders.

The *Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government* legalizes the strengthening of democratization in the management of education not only through the competences of local and regional self-government in management but also through the legalization of the broader competences of school councils – self-governing bodies of education. The implementation of self-government through a school council began in the 1990s by the adoption of the *Act on the State Administration in Education*

*and School Self-Government* of 1990 (Act No. 542/1990), in which the school council is defined as an autonomous body for the promotion of local interests of parents and educators in the field of upbringing and education. However, its function was defined only broadly, not specifically. The specification and particularization of its function is defined by the Act of 2003. It characterizes the school council as an advisory self-governmental unit of the school, which takes a stance on current school problems, promotes the interests of parents, pupils and teaching staff of the school and school facility, and performs the function of public control of the school's activities, but also conducts selection procedures for the head teacher, proposes candidates for appointment to this function, and also takes a stance on the conceptual intentions of the school and its school management budget.

In general, a head teacher is appointed and recalled by the founder of the school upon the proposal of the respective school council, on the basis of competition. The competition is announced by the founder through press or other mass media. Applicants for the head teacher position must fulfil the following requirements:

- qualification requirements of education for the given type of school or kind of school facility,
- at least five years teaching experience,
- first qualification exam including a defence of a written thesis, so-called attestation,
- personal and moral integrity requirements,
- good command of Slovak language in official contacts (members of national minorities),
- after appointment to the function the successful applicant must complete the appropriate form of in-service training (so-called functional education, which has to be completed within three years of appointment).

In addition to these requirements, each applicant is asked to submit to the selection committee his/her own proposal of a school development concept.

The selection committee consists of members of the respective school council and two other members, one delegated by the municipality and the other one by the State School Inspection. The members of the school council are elected representatives from school staff and parents, and delegates from the founder of the school are the municipal self-government and the social partners of the school. The school council usually has 5–11 members. In the case of an 11-member school council, two members represent pedagogical staff of the school, another member comes from the pool of non-pedagogical

school employees, four members are representatives of pupils' parents, and four representatives come from the school founder.

The nominee principal concludes the contract with the founder of the school for the period of five years. The number of periods in the head teacher position is not limited.

Responding to reflection on the application of procedures in practice, the *Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government* was twice amended in 2017. Introduced changes relate to a head teacher position and the repeated possibility to stand for a head teacher selection if the applicant is a person who was invited from this position.

Among the reasons which make it impossible for a recalled head teacher to reapply for this post was also recall because of a breach of obligations and legal enactments. This restriction was set without any exception, including violations like delayed property admission submission or violation of the ban on business due to negligence. The law amendment established that, if the legal violations were not serious, it was possible to reapply for the head teacher position.

The second change resolved absence of reasons for a head teacher's dismissal. In practice it was common that one of two different approaches was applied, mainly if a head teacher resigned from his/her function. One way this situation was solved was that the founder acknowledged this decision, without performing any further legal acts. Another approach to solving the same situation was that the founder, due to the absence of any regulations, recalled the head teacher after his/her resignation. To make these situations uniform, in relation to head teacher performance termination the following clauses (possibilities) were specified in the relevant paragraph: expiration of the mandate, resigning from the post of a head teacher based on a written announcement addressed to the school founder, recall from a head teacher's post, validity of the decision of the court on a ban on the capacity to enter into legal acts, elimination of the school from the system of education, and death or death presumption.

If a head teacher resigns from his/her position, his/her performance of the head teacher function will be terminated on the date of delivery of his/her written announcement to the founder, if a later date is not stated. Resignation cannot be withdrawn.

To be nominated for a head teacher position, i.e. to be a successful candidate, the applicant must gain absolute majority of the selection committee votes. If some members of the selection committee are not present at the selection, the number of the necessary votes does not decrease (the absolute majority only of the present members of the selection committee is not

sufficient for election). If no applicant obtains the absolute majority, the competition has to be repeated.

The scope of rights and duties of a school head teacher are set by the *Act on State Administration and School Self-Governance in Education*. A head teacher is responsible for observance of generally binding rules, study plans and syllabi, for professional and educational standard of educational work, for effective use of funds allotted for provision of the school activities, and for property management. The other duties of a head teacher are set by the *Work Order for educational staff and other employees of the schools and school facilities* issued by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic in 2010. These duties are:

- to manage, control and regularly evaluate the work results of school employees,
- to get subordinate employees familiar with organisation rules and labour legal rules,
- to create favourable working conditions and ensure security and health protection at work,
- to use equipment and funds obtained economically and purposefully,
- to provide for remuneration of employees according to legal rules and collective agreements,
- to create favourable conditions for elevating professional level of employees and for fulfilment of their social needs,
- to secure that no violation of working discipline takes place,
- to adopt early and efficient measures for protection of the employer's property.

In addition to these duties a head teacher fulfils the basic teaching load with consideration to the type of school and number of classes, or pupils. The scope of the load is set by the *Government Regulation 422/2009 establishing scope of direct teaching and direct educational activities of teaching staff as amended by Government Regulation 433/2012*. The basic load of head teachers ranges from 3 to 23 hours.

In accordance with *Education Act* amendments and supplements (*Act on the Education and Training and on the Change and Supplement to Some Acts as Amended by Subsequent Provisions*) a head teacher is responsible for:

- adherence to the state educational programs designed for the school s/he manages,
- drafting of and adherence to the school educational program and instructional program,

- elaboration and fulfilment of the annual plan of the in-service teacher training,
- annual evaluation of educational and professional staff.

A head teacher's employment is concluded by the founder of the school who appointed him/her to the function. The functional period of a head teacher is five years. By recalling his/her function employment is not terminated. The head teacher as a member of the management staff receives extra pay, which is terminated by the employer as a percentage share from the salary brackets of the highest salary grade s/he was ranked into. A municipality or autonomous region is obliged to provide legal counselling to head teachers.

The *Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government* includes the *Municipal School Council* among the self-governing bodies in education. The *Municipal School Council* focuses its activities on expressing, assessing and controlling public interests in schools within the municipality. It discusses the activity of a school and school facilities, the school development concept, the material and technical conditions of a school and school staff, and reports on education and educational outcomes of schools and school facilities. Its members are elected by employees of local schools and school facilities, pupils' parents, and the municipal council.

In the territory administered by the self-governing region, a *Territorial School Council* acts as a self-governing school authority. The composition of the *Territorial School Council* and its activity reflects the work of this body at the regional level, similar to the composition of the *Municipal School Council*, as its activity gets reflected at the municipal level.

According to the *Act on State Administration in Education and School Self-Government*, a body of school self-government, representing the students of a secondary school and representing their interests in relation to school management is the *Student's School Council*. It discusses the issues and measures of the school in the field of rearing and education, school rules, presents its proposals and remarks and elects and recalls its representatives on the school council.

### **Functional education of school leaders**

As mentioned above, after appointment to the function of a head teacher the successful applicant must complete the appropriate form of in-service training, so-called functional education. This education has to be completed within three years from appointment.



The main national provider of the functional education for school leaders is The Methodology and Pedagogy Centre, an institution for teachers' continuous education and training established by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Besides this, further providers of the functional education can be educational organizations of another central state administration authorities and higher education institutions or, in the case of pedagogical and professional employees of church schools and church school facilities, a church institution.

The goal of such education is to obtain appropriate professional competences necessary for performance of the school leader's position.

A graduate of the functional education should have broadened and improved his/her professional competence profile in:

- ability of professional development and self-development,
- ability to apply generally binding legislation in school (school facility) management,
- ability to create and implement a school (school facility) development plan,
- ability to apply project management rules in school (school facility) management,
- ability to manage the school (school facility) economically,
- ability to manage creation of the school and school facility educational programs,
- ability to manage realization processes of school and school facility educational programs,
- ability to manage self-evaluation of school and school facility educational programs,
- ability to create competence profiles for the pedagogical and professional employees of the school (school facility),
- ability to create systems of evaluation and remuneration of the work performance of the pedagogical and professional employees of the school (school facility),
- ability to create systems of professional development of the pedagogical and professional employees of the school (school facility).

The scope and content of the functional education is set by the *Decree No 445/2009 on continuous education, credits and attestations of pedagogical and professional employees*. The total scope of the education is 200 lessons, of which 164 are in face-to-face form and 36 in distance form. Duration of the education is a maximum 24 months from its beginning.

The content of the functional education of head teachers (school leaders) provided by the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre is divided into 6 modules, with two alternatives for module 5<sup>1</sup>. See the modules and their topics in Appendix 1.

To complete the functional education a participant has to fulfil (according to the *Act No. 317/2009 on Pedagogical and Professional Employees*) the following requirements:

- to participate in at least 80% of the total scope of the face-to-face education,
- to fulfil distance-learning assignments D1–D8 in written form according to given criteria,
- to write a final thesis, the scope of which is from 25 to 35 pages,
- to obtain a positive assessment from the thesis reviewer,
- to defend the final thesis successfully,
- to pass the final exam on a topic drawn from the content of the educational program modules.

The defence of the final thesis is done before a three-member committee. In the case of a failure in completing the functional education, participants can pass a second examination (defence of the final thesis or the second final exam) within 18 months after the date of the failed final exam, but only after six months at the earliest.

In consistency with the law, the functional education is valid for a maximum of seven years from its completion. Its validity can be prolonged by means of the functional innovation education, which has to be completed before the functional education validity expiration. Validity of the functional innovation education is five years from its completion. In contrast to the functional education, the following functional innovation education (functional innovation education I) is carried out only on the basis of face-to-face education. The scope of the functional innovation education I is 60 lessons, over a maximum 12 months from its beginning. The content of the functional innovation education I is divided into 5 modules.<sup>2</sup> See the modules and their topics in Appendix 2.

Functional innovation education I is followed by the functional innovation education II, designed for graduates of the functional innovation education I. The total scope of the functional innovation education II is 60 lessons, of which 48 lessons are carried out face-to-face and 12 lessons are in distance-learning form. Its duration is also a maximum 12 months from the

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<sup>1</sup> [https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/vzdelavacie\\_programy/funkcne\\_inov\\_pre\\_ved\\_pz.pdf](https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/vzdelavacie_programy/funkcne_inov_pre_ved_pz.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ([https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/vzdelavacie\\_programy/fiv1.pdf](https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/vzdelavacie_programy/fiv1.pdf)).

beginning of the education. Content of the functional innovation education II is divided into 5 modules ([https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/vzdelavacie\\_programy/fiv2.pdf](https://mpc-edu.sk/sites/default/files/vzdelavacie_programy/fiv2.pdf)). See the modules and their topics in Appendix 3.

### **Positive and negative aspects of the legislative changes in school leadership**

The transfer of competences in the management of education to municipalities and self-governing regions, and also their involvement in education through school councils and the problems associated with them was critically assessed by Beňo, Šimčáková and Herich in the *School Management and its Implementation* study (2007). When analysing the problematic areas of self-government in education, they pointed out that the state has renounced its responsibility for schools, but that local governments are not professionally prepared to manage it. The head teachers, according to the authors, were given more powers, but on the other hand, municipalities and higher territorial units, more often mayors of municipalities or officials of higher territorial units with meagre competencies in education, are taking their powers back. They therefore recommend precise clarification of the position of the school head teacher in relation to the founder of the school and avoiding less competent interference in the management of the schools by the founders. They recommend strengthening the powers of the head teacher in labour relations and defining the powers of the founder towards schools which act as legal entities. They criticize the fact that schools' status as legal entities led to overload of head teachers in the area of economic management of the school, at the expense of providing management of pedagogical quality. Furthermore, they recommend optimizing the network of schools according to the needs of the labour market and abolishing economically inefficient schools. The authors of the study further propose changing the composition of school councils and increasing the representation of teachers in them. Some of the respondents in research – both head teachers and teachers – proposed the removal of the authority of the school board to elect the head teacher. They recommended that head teachers be selected by a professional selection board. In the area of funding, the authors of the study recommend removing inter-institutional funding of schools through their founders (municipal and regional governments), as they often restrict funding under differing pretexts. Therefore, they recommend that funds be transferred directly from the state to the school account.

Apart from this critical analysis of the involvement of self-government in school governance, positive aspects can also be seen. These mainly concern the development of self-government, introduction of school councils,

and the activation of teachers, parents and older pupils in secondary schools to participate not only in formal school operations but also in “school life”. The problematic side is mainly the inappropriate proportion of representatives in school councils. As further positives we see the replacement of centralized management, applied over decades by the state administration, mainly through the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and in certain periods and areas, through individual regional departments of state administration (regional authorities, district authorities, district offices, regional school authorities) and territorial self-governance (municipalities, cities, and higher territorial units). Territorial self-governance has been, despite shortcomings in comparison with the state administration, closer to the problems of the schools located on the territory of the municipality, the town, or the region. By decentralization, territorial governments have gained more competences at the expense of state administration, which we see as improving the democratic governance of schools. Also positively valued is the increased attention of local self-government to the current education funding issues. Although the problem of school funding has still not been satisfactorily addressed, the municipalities and cities represented by the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia deliberately apply pressure to the state administration to raise funds for schools, particularly by increasing the percentage of allocated tax revenues.

### RESEARCH AIMED AT SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND HEAD TEACHERS’ POWERS

With greater autonomy given to schools, school leaders face much greater responsibility than school leaders did twenty years ago. The autonomy of schools and the responsibility of school leaders, especially head teachers, was broadened not only in relation to the financial and administration matters of the school, but also in education matters (new possibilities given to schools e.g. in relation to the introduction of new study programs, curricula modification, teaching method innovations, etc. (Obdržálek, Polák *et al.*, 2007; Obdržálek, Polák *et al.*, 2008; Pisoňová, 2016; Pisoňová *et al.*, 2014)). School leaders face great accountability for school and pupils’ results, responsibility for contributing to and supporting the school’s local communities, other schools, and other public services. Quality of leadership has been currently recognized as an important aspect of each school operation, influencing its outcomes and its pupils’ achievements (Lhotková, Trojan & Kitzberger, 2012; Pisoňová, 2011). School leadership has also become an education policy priority across OECD and partner countries (Pont, Nusche & Hopkins, 2008;

Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). In this context, the most often discussed and observed topic is the question of the relevant professional competences a school leader should have. Answers to this question should result from empirical findings reflecting the real needs and demands of practice (Bitterová, Hašková & Pisoňová *et al.*, 2011). That is why many researches have been focused in this direction (NCSL, 2006; Revai & Kirkham, 2013; Whitaker, 2002). On the other hand, only a little attention has been paid to the assessment of the state of the school autonomy in the context of the current needs and requirements of the practice.

Changed conditions and the increased autonomy of schools has meant that schools and head teachers are facing new tasks and challenges, mainly in the following four fields:

- financial management under the autonomy given to schools,
- educational changes of the re-assessed and redefined character and mission of schools,
- public management connected with the change from a bureaucratic and institution-led approach to a performance-driven one, with an emphasis on the services delivered to the users,
- knowledge management, focused on the institution's own needs and demands for continuous learning.

As was already mentioned, in common practice a head teacher very often acts not so much as a leader of the school as an institution, but rather as an administrator in a wider bureaucratic school system. One of the reasons behind this can be an inappropriate level of autonomy assigned to schools.

To estimate how much autonomy is currently given to schools in Slovakia and whether this amount of autonomy is sufficient for head teachers, a research study was carried out seeking opinions of head teachers on the issue (Hašková & Bitterová, 2018; Hašková & Pisoňová, 2018).

The main research question was whether the scope of the powers delegated to schools is consistent with the needs and conditions of school leadership practice, i.e. whether the current scope of school autonomy matches the tasks and problems that school leaders, especially head teachers, have to cope with in the common, everyday practice of their school management. From the main research question two partial questions resulted. These were:

- Research question 1: Which powers and responsibilities of schools should be increased?
- Research question 2: Which powers and responsibilities of schools should be decreased?

The attention was focused on primary and secondary schools specifically (ISCED 1–3). The adequacy of autonomy given to schools (the head teachers of these schools) was assessed in five fields of school leadership. A list of the five observed fields F1–F5 is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Fields in which the extent of school autonomy was assessed*

Item	Field
F1	The ability to act within the whole scope of the school's functioning
F2	School curricula matters; influence and impact on the school curricula and educational program of the school
F3	School financing, influence and impact on the school's budget and its management
F4	Selection, termination and employment of employees, both teachers and other personnel
F5	Administrative and operational management

The fields of powers given to head teachers (school autonomy) F2–F4 are in agreement with the approaches to this phenomena which were used in the frame of PISA and TALIS international monitoring (OECD–PISA, 2012; OECD–TALIS, 2013), where four major fields of school autonomy were specified, in particular instructional policies (e.g. curriculum and assessment), staffing, budgeting, and student policies.

The research sample consisted of 93 participants in the functional education of teaching staff and vocational training instructors (as mentioned in the chapter dealing with legislation, in Slovakia only persons with qualifications for teaching or professional training performance can be appointed to the position of a head teacher and in agreement with the Act 317/2009 these nominees are obliged to complete a so-called functional education course within three years of being placed in this career position at the latest). Forty-two of the respondents were head teachers and 51 were deputy head teachers of either primary/lower secondary schools (58 respondents), upper secondary schools (21 respondents) or secondary art schools (14 respondents). In total, the research sample consisted of 26 males and 67 females, the age range of whom was from 26 to 61 years old (an average of 47.3 years). Thirty-four of the respondents had been in a leading position for less than 5 years, 27 from 5 to 14 years, and 32 respondents for more than 15 years.

The task of the respondents was to assess the adequacy of the power they (the schools) have within each of the given five fields (items F1–F5). The assessments were recorded in a questionnaire in which the particular items referred to the given fields of head teachers' competences (F1–F5).

Respondents passed through these items twice and each time they gave their responses based on a different point of view:

1. At first the respondents expressed their opinions on the current state of the powers they have. They evaluated the extent of powers given to them to act on behalf of the school they manage in the specified key fields of school leadership. The respondents were asked to express their opinion using a 5-point scale: 1 – minimal powers; 2 – little powers; 3 – average powers; 4 – broad powers; 5 – very broad powers.
2. Secondly, the respondents expressed their opinions on the optimal state of powers they (the schools) should have in the specified key fields of the school leadership. The respondents were asked to express their opinions on whether the current scopes are adequate or whether they should be extended or reduced.

The collected data were processed in relation to different sub-groups of the respondents (created on the basis of various factors, e.g. gender, career position they hold, duration of their previous experience in the leading position, type of the school they lead) but no outstanding differences among the responses of the particular sub-groups of respondents were identified. (More details on differences among the respondents' answers depending on particular factors can be found in Hašková & Bitterová, 2018.) An overview of the main results obtained from the collected data for the total group of the respondents is presented in Table 2.

As Table 2 shows, average score values for all items are within the interval from 2.87 to 3.89, i.e. the school leaders evaluate the scope of the powers they currently have either as with average or broader powers. In their opinion, the broadest scope of powers they possess is in the field of administrative and operational management. Despite the expressed positive assessment of the scope of powers the school leaders have, at least half of the respondents still felt the necessity to broaden these scopes (see the demand to increase the given autonomy at items F2 – 49.5%, F4 – 53.8%; F1 – 67.7%, F3 – 79.6%).



*Table 2. Assessment score of the extent of school autonomy in the specified fields of school leadership and demands to change current extent of school leader powers and school autonomy*

Item	Assessm. score of the extent of school auton.	Decrease the autonomy		Adequate autonomy		Increase the autonomy	
	Average score	Frequency absolute	Frequency relative [%]	Frequency absolute	Frequency relative [%]	Frequency absolute	Frequency relative [%]
<b>F1</b>	3.28	0	0.0	30	32.3	63	67.7
<b>F2</b>	3.51	6	6.5	41	44.1	46	49.5
<b>F3</b>	2.87	2	2.2	17	18.3	74	79.6
<b>F4</b>	3.59	3	3.2	40	43.0	50	53.8
<b>F5</b>	3.89	4	4.3	61	65.6	28	30.1

The only exception is item F5 – extent of powers and autonomy in the field of administrative and operational management. The respondents assess the extent of powers and autonomy in this field as broad (item F5 – 3.89): 65.6 % of the respondents assess them as adequate, while 30.1% would like to have them increased.

The highest demand for an increased extent of powers and autonomy is in the item related to the field of school financing and budgeting (item F3). The respondents also declare this field as the one in which they are given the lowest level of powers. The opinion that reaching an optimal state of school management in Slovakia would require an increase in the current extent of powers and autonomy in the field of the school financing and budgeting is shared almost by more than three quarters of the respondents (item F3 – 79.6%).

Calls to decrease the scope of powers given to schools were isolated in the case of all five assessed autonomy fields, i.e. a general need to decrease any of the given fields was not shown. Although no differences were proved among different sub-groups in this study, more detailed analysis of the results showed a tendency that those who would appreciate even broader powers in the fields of administrative and operational management (item F5), which are already quite broad, are the head teachers. Deputy head teachers consider the level of school autonomy in this field as appropriate, and are satisfied with it. At the same time, respondents with 5–14 years of

previous practice in a leading position assess the current level of the autonomy and powers in the fields of staff recruitment, selection, employment and termination (item F4) as broad (average score 4.07) while the other two groups of respondents (i.e. respondents with previous practice in a leading position of less than 5 years and respondents with practice of more than 15 years) assess it as average (3.41 and 3.38).

## CONCLUSION

The answer to the main research question, whether the scope of the powers delegated to schools is consistent with the needs and conditions of school leadership practice, follows from the finding that school leaders evaluate the scope of the powers they have as average or broader. On the other hand, although the school leaders assessed the level of the powers they are given in a positive way (as average or broader), they still feel a need to have a broader scope of the powers and responsibilities, mainly in the field of financing and budgeting (the field in which, in their opinion, they have the lowest level of power). The second strongest call for the increase in autonomy was recorded in connection with the field of school activity as a whole. Calls to decrease the scope of powers given to schools were isolated in the case of all five assessed autonomy fields. So the answer to the main research question is: yes, the scope of the powers delegated to schools is sufficient. Answers to the particular research questions 1 and 2 show whether there is a need to optimize in some way the present state of school autonomy. Following the opinions of the school leaders such a need does exist, because the answer to the particular research question 1 is that powers and responsibilities of schools in all of the five given fields should be increased (a need to decrease any of the given fields does not occur).

As reviewed by the Grattan Institute (2013), a wide range of international studies shows that the direct influence of increased autonomy on learning achievements of pupils is relatively small. On the other hand, in PISA and TALIS, monitoring school head teachers' opinions confirmed the existence of this influence (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2013). Moreover as the data gathered in PISA 2009 monitoring showed, when autonomy and accountability are combined well, they tend to be associated with better pupil performance (OECD, 2011). Conceptually, leadership and autonomy can interact in two ways: autonomy allocated to a school may restrict the scope of leadership in daily operations or the ability to launch new initiatives, or leadership activities may be implemented to maximise the use of autonomy allocated to a school, remove existing limitations, broaden the scope of school autonomy

and create better conditions for school development and student learning (Cheng, Ko & Hoi Lee, 2016).

To achieve an optimal model of autonomy offered to schools proves very difficult, as an appropriate level of autonomy is dependent on both time and social conditions. Nevertheless, attempting to form a reality as close to an optimal state as possible is a worthy cause, as being shown in a variety of countries, not only Slovakia (Bush & Glover, 2003; EURYDICE, 2007; Leithwood, 2001; OECD, 2003; Townsend, 2007).

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*Appendix 1. Functional education of head teachers:  
Modules and their topics*

Modules and their topics	No. of lessons F to F form*	No. of lessons Distance form
<b>1. Introduction to education</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
Educational Program goals, content, structure and value basis	2	0
Rules for working together and communicating with each other	2	0
<b>2. Normative and economic management</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>
Legislation of binding force – Acts No. 596/2003, 245/2008 and 317/2009 and their impact on the participants of functional education career position	8	0
Legislation of binding force and internal regulations and directives of schools and school facilities	8	0
Economic control, generally binding legislation relating to the economic management of schools, school facilities	8	0
<b>3. School leaders self-development</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>
School leader' self-diagnosis	12	0
Selected managerial competences	6	0
Plan of own professional development	6	0
<b>4. Organization as a system</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>
Sub-systems of a school and school facility and their function in the school (school facility) development	4	0
Mission and vision of the school (school facility)	4	0
Analysis of the current state of the school (school facility) development	6	0
SWOT analysis of the school (school facility)	6	0
Design of school (school facility) development goals – theoretical and practical activity	8	4
Distance assignment D1:		
a) to prepare SWOT analysis of your school (school facility)		
b) on the basis of the SWOT analysis to formulate intentions of the school (school facility) development		
c) to concretize the intentions of the development into the school (school facility) development goals		

Creation of the development goal realization project – theoretical and practical activity	8	
Distance assignment D2: To propose an implementation project related to D1c		4
<b>5. A) Pedagogical process management</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>
Introduction into the pedagogical process management and professional (vocational) activities management	8	4
Distance assignment D3: To propose a goal of the own school (school facility) development which would be pedagogically formulated		
School self-assessment – topics:		
Areas of the school self-assessment	6	
Tools and methods of the school self-assessment	6	
Interpretation of the obtained data through the tools of the school (school facility) self-assessment	6	
Interventions for the school (school facility) improvement	6	
Distance assignment D4:		10
a) to specify areas of your school (school facility) self-assessment		
b) to propose tools and methods for your school (school facility) self-assessment relevant to the chosen areas		
c) to implement (test) the proposed tools and methods of your school (school facility) self-assessment in the chosen areas		
d) to interpret data collected by means of the tools for your school (school facility) self-assessment		
e) on the basis of the interpretation of the collected data to propose interventions for your school (school facility) improvement		
Innovations in pedagogical strategies	8	
Distance assignment D4: To process conclusions of the self-assessment in the selected areas and to formulate proposal to correct pedagogical strategies according to D4d and D4e		2



<b>5. B) Management of the processes of the pedagogical-psychological guidance</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>
Introduction into the school facility and professional (vocational) activity management	8	
Distance assignment D3: To propose a formulation of the pedagogical-psychological guidance aimed at your school facility development		4
School facility self-assessment – topics:		
Areas of the school facility self-assessment (diagnostic, advisory, therapeutic, preventive and rehabilitation)	6	
Tools and methods if school facility self-assessment	6	
Interpretation of the data collected by means of the school facility self-assessment	6	
Interventions for the school facility improvement	6	
Distance assignment D4:		10
a) to specify areas of your school facility self-assessment		
b) to propose tools and methods of your school facility relevant to the chosen areas (areas in the phase diagnostic, advisory, therapeutic, preventive and rehabilitation)		
c) to implement (test) the proposed tools and methods of your school facility self-assessment in the chosen areas		
d) to process interpretation of the data collected by means of your school facility self-assessment		
e) on the basis of the data interpretation to propose interventions to improve your school facility		
Innovations in the strategies of the pedagogical-psychological guidance	8	
Distance assignment D5: To process conclusions of the self-assessment in the selected areas and to formulate proposals to correct strategies of the pedagogical-psychological guidance according to D4d and D4e		2
<b>6. Personnel administration</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>
Introduction into the personnel administration	4	0
Competence profile of the pedagogical and professional employee	8	
Distance assignment D6: To propose pedagogical and professional employees competence profile resulting from the goal of the change D3		4

Manpower management	8	
Personnel administration	8	
Distance assignment D7:		4
a) to propose system of criteria and indicators to assess the staff sensitive to the change according to D6		
b) to create an application of the assessment system into the system of staff remunerating		
Evaluating and remunerating system of pedagogical and professional employees	8	4
Distance assignment D8:		
To elaborate a proposal of the development system of the pedagogical and professional employees of the school and school facility in dependence on the goal of the change D3		

\*face-to-face form

*Appendix 2. Functional innovation education I: Modules and their topics*

<b>Modules and their topics</b>	<b>No. of lessons F to F form*</b>
<b>1. Normative management</b>	<b>6</b>
Up-to date enactments regarding school and school facility management	2
Application of the enactments into internal school and school facility standards, rules of creating internal standards	2
Solution of model situations in accordance with the enactments	2
<b>2. Innovation trends in school and school facility management</b>	<b>6</b>
Innovation trends in school and school facility organization and management (global trends, European trends, education policy)	2
Inclusive environment design (basic notions, coordination of the inclusion, education of foreigners' children)	4
<b>3. Management of changes in schools and school facilities</b>	<b>24</b>
Self-evaluation of the school and school facility (self-assessment as a mean of the school quality development, phases of the self-evaluation, areas, goals and criteria of the self-evaluation, methods and tools of the self-evaluation, realization process of the self-evaluation, methods of data processing)	12
Management of the change of the school and school facility into the learning organization (creation of the goals in context of findings resulting from the self-evaluation, school and school facility as learning organizations and their main features – responses to environment changes)	12
<b>4. Personal leadership at change realisation</b>	<b>16</b>
Leadership of employees at change achieving (orientation of employees towards goals and the change, motivating and gaining trust of the employees, delegating responsibility to the employees, removing employee resistance)	8
Evaluation and development of the employees aimed at successful change achieving (professional standard and its use at evaluation and development of the employees, considering of the employee's competence profile in the context of the needs of the school and findings resulting from the self-evaluation, evaluation of the employees in the areas of the formulated competence profile, development of the employees in the areas of the change)	8
<b>5. Own personal development</b>	<b>8</b>
Self-knowledge and self-management	2
Working with time	2
Issue of stress	2
Prevention of the burn-out syndrome	2

\*face-to-face form

*Appendix 3. Functional innovation education II: Modules and their topics*

<b>Modules and their topics</b>	<b>No. of lessons F to F form*</b>	<b>No. of lessons Distance form</b>
<b>1. Normative management</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Up-to date enactments regarding school and school facility management	2	0
Revision of school documents in the field of subordinate legislation	2	0
Solution of model situations in accordance with the enactments	2	0
<b>2. Innovation trends in school and school facility management</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Innovation trends in school and school facility organization and management (global trends, European trends and education policy, synergy in modern management)	3	0
Development of the school and school facility in the area of inclusive environment design (coordination of the inclusion, application of the model of the inclusive environment into the school and school facility environment)	3	0
<b>3. Change of school and school facility</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>
School and school facility working with data (data as key sources for decision making, kind of data and their relevance, target groups, internal data and their use, external data and their use, school institutions informing the public, data processing by the means of ICT, presentation of the data and the processed information for different target groups)	12	0
Accountability of the school and school facility (internal development of the school and school facility and accountability, internal and external accountability, approaches to accountability)	6	0
Distance assignment: To formulate a problem of the school or school facility for a selected area of the school or school facility management, to collect data necessary for its closer identification	0	12
Critical reflection of one's own practice and searching for examples of good practice (reflexion of own practice and identification of problematic areas - working with the distance assignment output, use of the participants' experiences for creation of proposals how to solve the problematic areas, identification of good practice and cooperation of the school leaders)	6	0

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Methods of leadership supporting development of schools and school facilities (possibilities of the support and its focusing, team collegiate support of the employees, mentoring and coaching)	6	0
School climate and culture (development and changes of the school and school facility culture, development and changes of the school climate, diagnostics of the climate and culture, change setting based on the results)	6	0

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\*face-to-face form

## TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA BASED ON SOME SELECTED PROJECTS

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*Abstract.* This paper presents the significance of the role of the head teacher and the importance of the National School for Leadership in Education, founded in 1996 with the aim of empowering head teachers with ongoing new knowledge and skills, as well as Slovenian legislation referring to the conditions for head teachers, the procedure of selecting head teachers, their responsibilities as well as numerous tasks the head teacher has to perform. According to the data, most head teachers in Slovenia are female. Head teachers are facing numerous bureaucratic tasks, lack of time for pedagogical leadership, and inappropriate career development. Regarding the challenges mentioned, three current topics, programmes or projects, which include a large number of head teachers, are presented in the paper. The first deals with the development of the programme Managing and leading innovative learning environments which consists of three pillars: (1) Consultancy, (2) Distributed leadership, and (3) Managing head teachers' career. The second topic represents projects in the field of quality, and the third one tackles the field of entrepreneurial competences of head teachers and leadership teams. In spite of various projects and programmes in which the head teachers participate in order to acquire new competences, head teachers are still facing a lot of challenges on a daily basis. Only some of them are mentioned in the paper, such as cooperation or partnership with parents, amending the procedure of the appointment of head teachers, and the need for various forms of support, required by head teachers in their work.

*Keywords:* head teachers, innovative learning environments, quality, entrepreneurial competences, Slovenia.

### INTRODUCTION

The role of head teachers is one the most important factors in assuring the quality of learning and teaching young people in schools and other educational institutions. While there is little evidence of direct impacts and effects of the head teacher's leading on the students' achievements, most authors

in the field of leadership in education (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009; Male & Palaiologou, 2012; West-Burnham, 2009) mention the head teacher's indirect influence, which is shown mainly in creating the conditions for learning and teaching. Encouraging and ensuring professional growth of teachers are among the key factors influencing the quality of lessons.

Furthermore, the policy at the European level also emphasizes the significance of leadership and leadership teams. In their 2009 decisions the Ministers of education of the European Community (EU, 2009) communicated very clearly that successful leading of schools is the most important factor in creating an appropriate learning environment. In addition, the most recent Communication of the European Commission (EU, 2017) included supporting school leaders for excellent teaching and learning in the priority areas for the support of reforms in the field of education. Consequently, most European countries have developed programmes for head teacher trainings.

In 1996 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia established the National School for Leadership in Education, whose mission is to strengthen the abilities for leading. This entails the implementation of the principles of life-long learning of head teachers and education staff who carry out some leadership tasks. The support includes annual conferences for head teachers and assistant head teachers, various seminars and workshops, as well as publicizing and participation in national and international projects (<http://en.solazaravnatelj.si/index.html>). However, the main activity of the National School for Leadership in Education is the headship licence programme.

Due to the rapid changes in the role of head teachers, the ways of training are also changing, incorporating new topics and programmes. Both global trends and head teachers' needs in Slovenia have to be followed. At the moment, there are quite a few projects and programmes in progress in Slovenia, aimed at developing new competences of head teachers so that they will be able to cope with various roles they have to perform in the rapidly changing knowledge-based society.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

In Slovenia, schools are led by head teachers who, in addition to exercising pedagogical leadership, also manage their schools. The term 'school leader' defines a head teacher who exercises the function of a pedagogical (instructional) leader and has, in accordance with the framework act, i.e. Organization and Financing of Education Act (hereinafter referred to as: the ZOFVI), certain authority and responsibilities for the implementation



of the curriculum, for leading the whole pedagogical process, as well as for managing finance and the school processes according to the legislation. The number of employed technical, administrative and auxiliary staff is defined according to the number of enrolled students or classes.

Organisation and Financing of Education Act (2016) includes some articles, referring to the head teachers of educational institutions. Article 53 lays down the conditions the head teachers have to meet. The requirements for the appointment are as follows: to meet the requirements for being a teacher, to be a mentor or advisor for at least five years,<sup>1</sup> and to have or acquire the headship certificate. Newly appointed head teachers without the certificate have to complete it within their first year as acting head teacher. A head teacher has permanent employment as a teacher yet he/she performs the function of a head teacher for five years. This can be extended by subsequent elections. He/she is appointed and dismissed from the head teachership by the School Council, which is in charge of conducting both procedures. The School Council consists of 11 members, five of whom are representatives of employees, three representatives of the founder, and three representatives of parents or students in secondary schools.

Before the appointment (or dismissal) the School Council acquires an opinion from: the teachers' assembly, the local community where the school is located in the case of a kindergarten or primary school, parents' council, and students in the case of upper secondary educational institutions.

When the Council has selected the candidate for the head teacher from the applicants, the well-argued proposal for the appointment is submitted to the minister who is supposed to deliver an opinion. If the minister does not deliver his/her opinion within 30 days of the date the proposal was submitted, the Council may decide about the appointment of the head teacher without the minister's opinion.

Article 49 of the Organization and Financing of Education Act (2016) lays down the responsibilities of the head teacher who is the pedagogical leader and manager of a public kindergarten or school. As many as 23 tasks are included, connected with management and pedagogical leadership. Most of the tasks are difficult to distinguish as either managerial or pedagogical tasks, since they are mainly interconnected. They include: organisation, planning and managing the institution; organisation of mentorship for trainees; proposing promotion of education staff to titles and deciding on the promotion of employees to the higher salary brackets; taking care of cooperation with parents; responsibility for the quality assessment and assurance

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<sup>1</sup> Mentor, advisor and counsellor are titles that teachers acquire as a part of their career advancement.

with self-evaluation, and annual reports on the self-evaluation of school or kindergarten. However, some head teacher's responsibilities can undoubtedly be regarded as management: ensuring that decisions adopted by the state authorities are implemented; representing the school or kindergarten; being accountable for the legality of the institution's work; adopting decisions regarding the staffing structure of posts and concluding employment contracts, as well as ensuring the disciplinary accountability of employees.

The performance of head teachers is established annually by the School Council on the basis of the criteria defined for each level of educational institutions.

## CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE COUNTRY

According to the data by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, at the moment there are 853 head teachers in Slovenia. There are more women than men, and the average period of employment is 27 years (Table 1).

*Table 1. Head teachers in Slovenia (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, February 2019, KPIS)<sup>2</sup>*

Institutions	Total	Male	Female	Average employment period
Kindergarten*	108	7	101	25
Primary school**	483	170	313	28
Music school	67	36	31	23
Institutions for special needs***	21	13	8	26
Secondary school	160	76	84	27
Residence halls for students	14	5	6	29
Total	853	307	543	27

Legend:

- \* independent public kindergarten
- \*\* includes primary schools with adapted programme
- \*\*\* institution for education of children and juveniles with special needs

<sup>2</sup> KPIS (Personnel wage information system) is an application of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, aimed at accessing web applications by which the Ministry and educational institutions exchange information. According to the way of providing funds for the operation of the institutions, it is compulsory for primary education. Primary education institutions report in detail about each employee and that is the basis for providing the funds for the operation of the institution. Funds for the operation of kindergartens are provided by municipalities. Secondary schools are financed according to the number of students and the price of an individual secondary school programme.

There is little research on the leadership in education in Slovenia. Some data can be found within TIMSS, PISA and TALIS international studies, but those are not primarily concerned with the area of leadership. National research is mainly limited to master's or doctoral theses while extensive research on headship has not yet been conducted. The National School for Leadership in Education has conducted a few minor qualitative investigations as we wanted to take into account not only international trends but also the Slovenian context. Therefore, the challenges presented are mainly the result of long-term experience in working with head teachers and knowledge of the area of educational leadership.

*A lot of bureaucratic tasks.* Head teachers (or directors in case of upper secondary school centres) are relatively autonomous in several areas: selection of staff, allocation of resources for material costs, purchasing equipment for the school, designing the content of the elective part of the program, organisation of school work, ensuring the quality of educational processes, and cooperation with the environment, to mention only the most relevant references. Nevertheless, the operation of a school is limited by the growing number of rules in different areas, such as fire safety, personal data protection, regulations in the field of safe food, etc. Recently, agitation has been caused mainly by the new regulation of the teachers' working hours. It has been proposed by the Ministry that the 40-hour week should be recorded more precisely and transparently, i.e. teaching hours, meetings, preparations, professional development activities, etc. This causes a lot of administration but also teachers' dissatisfaction. In spite of the fact that each government promises less bureaucracy, in practice the latter is constantly increasing.

*Not enough time for pedagogical leadership.* The double role of head teachers – as pedagogical leaders and managers, as defined in the Organization and Financing of Education Act – is not something characteristic only for Slovenia. Most European countries report similar regulation (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). In Slovenia, there has been no consensus on separating the roles to managerial and pedagogical ones, neither among head teachers nor politicians. There is a prevalent general opinion that head teachers do not devote enough of their time to pedagogical leadership, as they are often weighed down by legal and financial responsibilities and are thus unable to spend more of their time on lesson observations, discussions about learning, or their own learning. However, the above are the essential dimensions of leading for learning (Southworth, 2011).

*Inappropriate career development of head teachers.* In Slovenia, teachers can be promoted to three titles: mentor, advisor and counsellor. They

are promoted on the basis of participation in various forms of training and additional professional work. However, there are no such opportunities for head teachers. They can be promoted as teachers, i.e. in their subject area in which they were active before they became head teachers. Achievements in leadership or life-long learning of head teachers are not taken into account in promotions. In other words, a head teacher could in theory remain a head teacher after obtaining the headship licence without any further training in leadership. Some amendments, which should encourage head teachers' professional development, are being prepared at the national level.

Therefore, the responsibility brought by the new role (from teacher to head teacher), and numerous changes require appropriate support so that head teachers are able to lead their employees successfully and thus ensure an appropriate environment for student learning. This is the reason why in 1996 the Government of the Republic of Slovenia established the National School for Leadership in Education (NSLE).

Slovenia has a well-developed system of lifelong professional development of school leaders. It begins with the pre-service programme, leading to the headship licence, which is one of the conditions for being appointed to the headship position. It lasts for one year (144 contact hours, 1 day shadowing, assignments, and self-study). It is aimed for head teachers, who are obliged to finish it within a year (app. 20% of participants) and for so called "candidates for head teachers" (app. 80% of participants). The latter can be any teacher who would fulfil the legal conditions for becoming a head teacher. Newly appointed head teachers can also participate in the program Mentoring for Newly Appointed Head teachers. It is intended to be systematic support and assistance for head teachers in the first term of headship. Later in their career head teachers can choose among several longer programs of at least one year duration, such as Leadership for Learning, Headship Development, and Head Teachers' Networks. All of them are based on the latest research findings and active methods of professional development. However, this is not the complete offer of professional development training opportunities for head teachers. There are annual conferences, shorter courses of 1 or 2 days, duration covering mainly new legislation and/or developing specific skills. They are delivered either by The National School for Leadership in Education (NSLE) or by other public or private institutions (*Pravilnik o nadaljnem izobraževanju in usposabljanju strokovnih delavcev v vzgoji in izobraževanju*, 2004).

The core of NSLE activities has been the pre-service programme leading to the official licence. Its main goal is to train participants for the tasks of school and kindergarten leadership and management as defined within

education legislation, as well as to develop competences contributing to personal and organisational efficiency. Participants of the program are head teachers and head teacher candidates (all those teachers that fulfil legal conditions to be appointed head teachers): The program is implemented in small groups of 18 to 21 participants so active methods such as workshops, work in groups, case studies, role playing, exchange of participants' experiences, and presentations of particular organizations can be used.

The programme for Headship Licence<sup>3</sup> consists of 6 compulsory modules:

- Introductory module: head teacher as a manager and as a leader, team building, learning styles, and change management;
- Organizational theory and leadership: organisational theory, models of school organisation, school leadership;
- Planning and decision making: vision, planning, approaches to decision-making;
- Head teachers' skills: managing conflicts, running meetings, observing lessons;
- Human resources: climate and culture, motivation, staff professional development;
- Legislation.

*Other programmes complement the initial training.* NSLE, and also the Faculty of Education of the University of Primorska, coordinate or participate in several national and international programmes. In this paper the focus will be on three themes, projects and programmes which are being implemented at the moment and include a rather large proportion of head teachers: a development programme titled Leading and Managing Innovative Learning Environments (VIO), Introducing and piloting model of assessing and assuring quality in education (OPK), and development of entrepreneurial competences in primary and secondary school (projects Entrepreneurial Competences for School Leadership Teams – EC4SLT, POGUM<sup>4</sup> and PODVIG<sup>5</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> More information about Headship Licence Programme is available on web page NSLE: <http://en.solazaravnatelj.si/Activities.html?#HeadshipLicenceProgramme>.

<sup>4</sup> POGUM (POdjetnost Gradnik za Upanja Mladih) is the abbreviation for the project coordinated by the National Education Institute Slovenia) titled Strengthening entrepreneurial competences and enhancing flexible transition between education and environment in basic schools.

<sup>5</sup> PODVIG (POdjetnost V Gimnaziji) is the project also coordinated by the National Education Institute Slovenia, titled Strengthening entrepreneurial competences and enhancing flexible transition between education and environment in gymnasias.

## DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: MANAGING AND LEADING INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (VIO)

The VIO programme started in 2016 and will be finished in 2019. It is co-financed by the European Social Fund, and supervised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. It consists of three fields or pillars: consultancy (SV), distributed leadership (DV), and managing head teachers' career (VKR). The fields ensure support on three interlinked levels: personal level (VKR), institutional level (DV), and the level of external support (SV) (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016). Teaching managers and developing their abilities for leadership takes place at three interlinked levels (NCSL, 2014). As it is emphasised that also more flexible forms of supporting head teacher's leading should be developed and that the contexts and contemporaneity of the designed programmes should be taken into account, particularly the intertwining of education and experiential learning in specific situations, the significance of life and work experience, reflexivity, interactivity, and support by colleagues and networking, the Consultancy pillar places great emphasis on the support to head teachers in their pedagogical and managerial function (Schleicher, 2012).

### **Level or Pillar Consultancy**

The starting points for Pillar Consultancy were the head teachers' needs in the Mentoring programme for newly appointed head teachers (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016). It was found out that head teachers need continuous and systematic support in pedagogical leadership and particularly in management (e.g. employment relationships, internal acts, and similar). That was pointed out also by the Association of Head Teachers. For that purpose, the National School for Leadership in Education has developed new forms of consultancy within Lifelong learning programmes for head teachers – training for leading schools and kindergartens II – IV in the period from 2011 to 2015: setting up e-support to head teachers providing examples and templates of internal acts and answers to questions, consultancy visits for the review of the educational institution internal acts and topical workshops. When the programme finished, the NSLE only kept answers to the current questions that head teachers address to the legal expert because other forms of support were not financed after the end of the projects. In the field of pedagogical leadership, NSLE employees have conducted only a few pilot consultancies that individual head teachers requested, but a systematic approach to consultancy has not been developed yet. VIO has been an opportunity to establish and develop consultancy as one of the NSLE activities.

The term “consultancy” means support where an external expert (in case of VIO project an expert from the NSLE or an experienced head teacher with the required references – head teacher expert) helps the head teacher analyse and improve practice in a specific situation or when dealing with a specific problem (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016). Consultancy is also a form of help which is not based on providing advice but serves as support for head teachers to look for own solutions (*Ibid.*). It is focused on current problems and adapted to everyday changes – i.e., it is very contextualised and encourages conscious decisions by the person who is being advised, which means that it does not offer actual solutions (*Ibid.*). Kubr (2002) defines consultancy as all forms of support or help in the content, process, and structure of tasks where the counsellor is not directly responsible for the implementation but helps those who are. In management, counsellors are usually specially trained counsellors, often experienced managers who have developed certain practice and possess the knowledge they can apply to support others. In case of VIO both aspects are linked, as counsellors are experts in the legal field as well as experienced head teachers or “head teachers experts” (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016).

Counsellors (in the legal field and experienced head teachers) assume various tasks. They are experts for the content; participants in problem solving, they look for and assess various possible solutions, encourage decision-making and implementation of the solutions, and they are also experts for the consultancy process and thinking practitioner (Kubr, 2002). According to the author (*Ibid.*), the counsellor has to have certain personal characteristics such as: reliability, flexibility, persistence, discipline, and professional self-confidence.

The evaluation for consultancy, which included head teacher experts, has been completed. Forty-two consultancies have been carried out, half from the area of management and the other half from pedagogical leadership. This form of consultancy is new in our system because head teacher-experts have not been involved in consultancy so far. In practice, two visits to head teacher-consultees were carried out in each case: the first one for definition of the problem, and the second one for searching for solutions. Between the two visits, the head teacher-expert and NSLE expert discuss possible solutions.

The participating head teachers praised such ways of work, except the time and location distances (in few cases). They liked the way of consultancy (counsellors did not impose their solutions), willingness to help, and the opportunity to exchange examples of good practice. This is one of the answers: “I always understood the course of counselling as a professional



discussion of problems and as help of the counsellor who already had practical experience in our challenges.” We were also interested in how the consultancy affected their leadership. Some of the answers are summarised as follows: “I received confirmation for my decisions; I have more professional self-confidence, I gained new knowledge, I gained a new perspective on school leadership.” Other questions referred to the organisation of the consultancy, support by the NSLE and sustainability.

### **Level or pillar entitled Distributed leadership**

Distributed leadership refers to the “middle management” who directs, organises, and leads the institution’s work together with the head teacher. Distributed leadership should support the head teacher’s leadership and management.

Distributed leadership is defined as the practice of leading which encourages engaging expert help which exists in the collective (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016). Distributed leadership is considered to empower leadership teams and as a way of thinking and acting which supports the development and changing of the educational institution. The design of this Pillar was based on an international project “European Policy Network on School Leadership” (EPNoSL), led by Kathy Kikis-Papadakis from the Foundation for Research and Technology (FORTH), Greece, and lasting from 2011 to 2014. Three partners from Slovenia participated in the EPNoSL Project: National School for Leadership in Education, Faculty of Education of University of Primorska and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Various materials were created within the EPNoSL project which could be used for training of teams, for example a publication titled *School Leadership for Equity and Learning: The EPNoSL Toolkit* (2015). Certain forms of distributed leadership existed in Slovenian practice, as exemplified by the role of assistant head teachers and heads of subject groups and class teachers, i.e., middle management (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016).

Different activities have been carried out in the framework of this pillar: investigating one’s own practice through different questionnaires, interviews and observations, identification of “good practice” of distributed leadership, development and implementation of the training programme for management teams, consultancy to management teams, networking among teams, sharing practice, peer support and collaborative learning. Different forms (models) of distributed leadership were piloted in the pilot schools.

## Level or pillar entitled Managing head teacher's career

The Glossary (2011) defines career as a process in which an individual plans his/her working, personal and educational path, which can take place independently or with the help of a counsellor. Different types of careers are listed, e.g. in addition to the vertical, also horizontal, expert or spiral career<sup>6</sup> (Kotur, 2012). It should be added that different types of careers can change and that in a certain time one type, e.g. vertical, prevails, which then changes into horizontal, and similar.

In the programme, Managing head teacher's career, the pillar is defined as empowering the head teacher for better self-knowledge, being aware of opportunities in society, strengthening decision-making skills, and transitioning along the career path (Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016), which is linked to different types of career.

Managing a head teacher's career pillar includes mentoring as well as consultancy, linked to the two head teacher's functions mentioned – leading and managing. Managing a head teacher's career pillar emphasises the development of career management skill (Ažman *et al.*, 2018). It is based on “the assumption that only a head teacher who possesses the career management skill can encourage such development in the education staff who, in turn, can strengthen it on the basis of their experience and knowledge with children, pupils and students” (Ažman *et al.*, 2018: 6). The programme developed and strengthened career management skill in five areas: knowing oneself, knowing the environment, decision-making, transition, and proactivity (Ažman *et al.*, 2018).

Four non-structured interviews conducted with head teachers in 2016 (in Erčulj & Goljat Prelogar, 2016) revealed that:

- the interviewed head teachers are facing the need for individual support and support by people who are important to them (e.g. other head teachers, family, colleagues);
- they know the areas where they are strong but sometimes they find themselves in circumstances where they would need help due to the versatility of the challenges at work;
- they do not think a lot about the future and plan their education on the career path loosely, although the system of re-election every five years forces them to consider that; and

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<sup>6</sup> Horizontal career means a shift in the same institution or between institutions, i.e. by changing the scope of work at the same level or by changing profession (Kotur, 2012). Expert career denotes a narrow focus or specialisation in one domain while spiral career means periodical changes of work domains, profession or specialisation (*Ibid.*).

- they have not thought about career development outside the area of education.

Work on the three pillars of the VIO programme will be concluded with design of a model of comprehensive support to head teachers and proposals for system solution for the implementation of the model.

## PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF QUALITY

Since 2010 the National School for Leadership in Education has been implementing national projects for implementing quality assurance in education (OPK). Training for self-evaluation and empowering schools for undertaking self-evaluation have been conducted in the projects so far. The new OPK project, which started in 2016, involves establishing self-evaluation indicators. OPK programme aims at defining a common concept of quality assessment and assurance at the level of educational institutions (the level of pre-schools, primary and secondary schools) and indirectly at the level of the educational system. The concept is being piloted within the programme. The goals of the programme are as follows:

- to establish a uniform system of quality assessment and assurance, to standardise the understanding and approach to the self-evaluation of schools and kindergartens while taking the area specifics into account;
- to strengthen the ability to implement self-evaluation at the system, organisational and individual levels;
- to develop and prepare the selected<sup>7</sup>, compulsory and selected reference frameworks and indicators for the introduction of improvements and the related self-evaluation of kindergartens and schools;
- to establish “professional cores”<sup>8</sup> at public institutions for supporting kindergartens and schools in assessing and assuring quality;
- to establish cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and professional cores for continuous, efficient and sustainable operation of the quality assessment and assurance system.

In addition to the National School for Leadership in Education, partners in the programme are the National Education Institute, Centre for Vocational Education and National Examination Centre. There are 32 participating schools, half of which are developmental and half of which are pilot schools.

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<sup>7</sup> They select only a few of them. This is agreed among partners in the consortium.

<sup>8</sup> Professional cores denote groups of experts within public institutions that will support schools during their self-evaluation and improvement process.

The developmental schools are involved in the development of quality indicators as active partners. Quality indicators and standards have been created for the following fields:

- learning and teaching (subfields: achievements by students or development and learning of children, professional development of education staff, and school climate and culture);
- management of schools;
- quality management;
- cooperation with the environment.

At the moment, it is somewhat unclear how self-evaluation of schools will be carried out. It is likely that it will be a combination of compulsory indicators, defined by the minister, and optional indicators, defined by schools according to their priorities. All the purposes of collecting data are not clear yet, either. It is certain, however, that self-evaluation results will not be used for ranking of schools. The solutions should be provided by the new White Paper, which is supposed to define the role of public institutions in the field of quality assessment and assurance.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCIES

We confirmed that from many aspects, managing a school is similar to managing a small company (Cencič & Štemberger, 2016). Head teachers play a prominent role in schools; it has been increasingly evident that they urgently need competencies in the area of entrepreneurship. The fact is that various educational changes demand entrepreneurial leadership (Hentschke, 2009). School heads need entrepreneurial skills in order to effectively manage their schools. Unfortunately, only very few universities offer formal entrepreneurship training for school heads.

One of the definitions of entrepreneurship, also adopted and supplemented by the Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education<sup>9</sup> (2014) is that entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action, to be innovative, take risks, plan and manage projects with a view to achieving objectives, and being able to seize opportunities (Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education, 2014). Entrepreneurial competencies are comprised of components that are deeply rooted in a person's background (traits, personality, attitudes, social role, and

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<sup>9</sup> The policy guidance document of the European Commission to support the entrepreneurship education across the European Union (EU) member states.

self-image) as well as those that can be acquired at work or through training and education (skills, knowledge, experience) (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Entrepreneurial competencies are closely linked with leadership and management competencies; while management competencies are about what managers should be able to do, leadership and entrepreneurial competencies are more about how people behave. Developing leadership and entrepreneurial competencies is about helping people to learn to behave in certain ways (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010). Entrepreneurial competencies require active methods of engaging learners to release their creativity and innovation; entrepreneurial competencies and skills can be acquired or built only through hands-on, real life learning experiences and with cooperation and partnership with colleagues (Entrepreneurship Education, 2013). For this reason, the European School Heads Association (ESHA) together with Newcastle University / North Leadership Centre (UK), EdEUcation LTD (UK), University of Jyväskylä / Institute of Educational Leadership (Finland), University of Primorska (Slovenia) and Bucharest University of Economic Studies (Romania) aim to develop a training course to equip school leaders and aspiring school leaders with the necessary entrepreneurial competencies to lead, manage and improve schools. The name of the project was Entrepreneurial Competences for School Leadership Teams (EC4SLT), and it lasted from 2014 to 2016.

One of the objectives of the project was to establish an enquiry network to identify best practice and identify gaps in provision in the delivery of four areas of entrepreneurial competence: (1) strategic thinking and visioning; (2) team building, personnel management and development; (3) communication and negotiation skills; and (4) financial resources mobilization and optimization. On the basis of a literature review, the four competence areas mentioned were broken down to corresponding competencies (EC4SLT, 2014).

In each participating country (Great Britain, Finland, Romania and Slovenia) four primary and secondary schools or other educational institutions were invited to take part in the project. As a result, in addition to the University of Primorska, the Slovenian team includes the following four partners: two primary schools, one high school and an institution engaged in work with deaf and hard-of-hearing students. The schools are located in different parts of Slovenia. Based on the criterion of "good example schools", these four schools were invited to participate in the project. The work in Slovenia in each school and at the University of Primorska was based on active teaching methods in workshops for all participating school teams. Workshops were run on the basis of cooperative learning and were mainly

organised in groups, which were (depending on the objectives) composed of members from the same school or from different schools. For each school critical points were also identified and cooperative action research aimed to improve the situation was planned and carried out. The final results of cooperative research (professional enquiry) were presented at the final international conference in Koper, Slovenia (13 June, 2016).

Among the implications for educational policies we point out training that emerges from practice for practice, through reflection and research, and it includes training at work, as well as coaching led by the project group. Learning at work, based on cooperative learning and reflection through research is the most efficient way of learning (EC4SLT, 2014). Education at school and at the university as well as the presentation of the results of the study is an example of active, cooperative learning and it develops partnerships among various institutions.

## VIEW TOWARD THE FUTURE

At the moment, the position of head teachers is rather complicated and requires system solutions. Head teachers' salaries were raised after year-long negotiations with the Ministry. Undoubtedly, one problem is that head teachers are constantly scrutinized by various stakeholders. There is a lot of pressure exerted by parents with whom a dialogue and partner relationship will have to be established, where the school will be able to protect its professional autonomy and parents will be involved in co-creation of the school policy. Trust between the parents and the school will have to be re-established and thus decrease the number of anonymous reports to the inspection service.

Currently, discussions on creating a new White Paper are starting. Undoubtedly, there will be changes also in the field of leadership in education, but at the moment there is no clear picture of the direction of changes. The appointment of head teachers should be reconsidered, as the present regulation is not appropriate. The procedure of obtaining opinions on the selection of the head teacher is complex, particularly when considering the fact that the opinions are not binding. The influence of employees is too large and a lot of head teachers find it difficult to adopt less popular decisions although they may be beneficial for students. Therefore, we are expecting a solution which will be democratic enough and at the same time contribute to higher professionalization of the head teacher's job. Fewer burdens with administrative tasks would also contribute to that.

Head teachers are of key importance in assuring quality in schools. They have to know the principles of leadership and implement them so that learning and teaching are improved. At the same time, they have to act as role models, followed by both the employees and students. They have to be flexible and responsive to continuous challenges they are facing; they should also continuously develop new competences for additional roles they play in society. Therefore, they need enough autonomy, and at the same time all of us who work in education have to provide them with appropriate support in the managerial and pedagogical field of their work.

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Slavica Ševkušić



Dušica Malinić



Jelena Teodorović

There are good arguments in favour of a publication about the development and current status of leadership in education in the context of the education policy and practice of Eastern and Central Europe. Indeed, compared to publications about educational leadership in Western Europe and Anglo-Saxon countries, there is a gap in knowledge... *Leadership in education - Initiatives and trends in selected European countries* reflects in a clear and readable manner the many developments and challenges of educational leadership in the selected countries and the work of many people who are committed to the scientific study of this field and to the development of schools and educational leaders.

**Prof. Em. Dr. Eric Verbiest, University of Antwerp, Belgium**

It is a great idea that the Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Serbia, Faculty of Education, University of Kragujevac, Jagodina, Serbia, and Hungarian-Netherlands School of Educational Management, University of Szeged, Hungary, have taken the idea to create very acute and topical material for education, school leaders and policy makers, and not only them: it is also very useful for students in higher educational institutions studying programmes of educational management and teacher education. This book gives us insight not only into educational leadership, but also the policy of education, the system of education, and vision of the future of the development of educational leadership.

**Prof. Paed. Dr. Ilze Ivanova, University of Latvia, Latvia**

The book reviewed here presents a range of qualities. The first of these is its cognitive value. The texts collected in the publication create a multi-voice and thus a rich picture of the experiences gathered during the process of development of leadership in education in selected European countries. It happened thanks to the careful selection of authors and the quality of the texts they have prepared... The book provides intellectual tools to analyze what happens when we undertake the effort to carry out changes in social practice. The message of the book is to encourage further exploration, emphasizing the ambiguity, ambivalence, and complexity of educational leadership.

**Prof. Dr. Henryk Mizerek, University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland**

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