

Desirable Support for Leadership in Education

This issue of the journal is built on texts that came out of the submissions presented at the 30th ENIRDELM conference, which took place in Prague between 15th and 18th September 2022. ENIRDELM, the European Network for Improving Research and Development in Educational Leadership and Management, was created in 1991 as a self-funded network promoting critical and friendly professionalism to deepen and share understanding of the perspectives of multiple stakeholders in education, and ultimately to make an impact on learning at all levels of education systems.

The topic of the conference was: Support for Leadership in Education as a Way to School Improvement. By support, various expert services provided both inside and outside schools are meant. As to those inside, it is mainly peer and collegial support in schools, mentoring support, supervision, and in some cases coaching. However, similar support can also come from the outside, both through professional networks (such as those of teachers of the same subject or another instance of common interest) and through the provision of expertise from other entities. We consider it important to support the school leadership in their work – school leaders in their respective schools should not be forgotten in these complex and heavily turbulent times.

The eight texts presented in this issue concentrate on this topic from various perspectives. Firstly, Kjersti Lien Holte debates the question of what kind of support school leaders need when using a no-homework policy after a top-down decision. This topic is engagingly presented through the participative action research design on a case study from Norway, using it to point out some of the paradoxes in the work of school leaders.

Ágnez Fazekas, Katalin Tóth Pjeczka and Tamás Kersánszi showcase research results on network-based school management in Hungary. In their submission, they refer to the meaning of how to perceive schools as a part of the socio-ecological system, that are able to recognise the resources of the environment and access them in the longer term.

Izabela Cytlak and Joanna Jarmużek debate the work of Polish schools with Ukrainian pupils that have left their country as a result of the Russian invasion. They emphasise the challenges in this sudden situation and the needs of these

schools and their school leaders to successfully manage this extraordinary situation.

Bohumíra Lazarová and her team then inform on their project carried out in six European countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Great Britain, Latvia, and Romania), focusing on coaching and other forms of collegial support in schools. Their data shows the differing and often lacking support of these forms of professional development in the school systems.

Tatjana Ažman and Mihaela Zavašnik confidently point out the potential of head-teachers' networks for leadership development, based on Slovenian experience. Networking is one of the essential strategies of leadership support and this text clearly proves it to be the case.

A philosophical perspective is presented in another text, written by Knut Ove Æsøy. It is a review of different perspectives on the world-views of professional practitioners, and a description of how a philosophical facilitator might help practitioners to adopt a coherent world-view. It is essential to harmonise their way of being by bringing their actions and thoughts in line with their character in order to reach this objective, as the author emphasises.

Another text from the team led by Ágnes Fazekas then gives an insight into the results of large-scale research aimed at investigating educational change in Hungary. They point to the links between the pre-pandemic school characteristics and Covid-19 crisis-responses and illustrate them by innovation cases.

Finally, Izabela Cytlak and Joanna Jarmużek highlight one example of support for educational leaders by creating and developing the „Training School project“, an example of a model for training future and current teachers in Poland.

The topics covered in this issue are diverse and prove the complexity of the task of managing and leading a school. Furthermore, they clearly validate the significance of specific support for school leaders in their work.

We wish our readers an engaging and inspiring read.

Milan Pol PhD

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Guest editors