Teachers as Agents of Change:
Supporting, Enabling, and Empowering

A KIX webinar

24th February 2021
Teachers as Agents of Change: Supporting, Enabling, and Empowering

Problem

How to:

• enable teachers to improve practice in their schools?

• enhance teachers’ commitment & mobilise their moral purpose?

Solution

Enable teachers to exercise leadership to build collaboration & embed changes in routine practice.

Provide support and enablement.

Strategies to empower teachers

Facilitative methods, using tools to scaffold reflection, deliberation and planning

Focus on teachers’ own concerns and agendas (+ consultation)

Workshops facilitated by trusted and experienced teachers

Principals use transformational leadership to build culture

Outcomes

Teachers design & lead their own development projects

Teachers organise to create networking opportunities

Teachers advocate for good practice and for teacher leadership itself
Amina Eltemammy  
CairoCam Network, Egypt

It is like: “inhaling fresh air in the middle of intense pollution”

The context of Egypt

- History of policy borrowing
- Resistance to change
- Low morale – teachers as victims

The power of teacher leadership

In our Teacher Led Development Work (TLDW) programme, teachers:

- reconnect with their values and identities
- reflect and self-evaluate
- consult and collaborate with colleagues to create knowledge
- learn in new ways – through innovating, trialing etc
- develop self-efficacy – see challenges as opportunities
Teachers Leadership in Moldova
Dr Rima Bezed, President, Prodidactica

- PhD study on teacher leadership
- Approved programme to support teacher leadership
- Leadership of other teachers: facilitator, coach, mentor, team leaders etc.
- Leadership through decision making and partnership
- Sustainable school reforms, influencing other teachers’ practices
- Networks at school level, at regional and national levels
- Professional learning communities
Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan
Saule Kalikova, Policy Advisor, Soros Foundation – Kazakhstan

Why do we support the idea of non-positional teacher leadership?
1) belief in teachers’ capacity to lead change
2) practical instruments and strategies that can support teachers’ professional learning in their work places
3) efficient and trust-based partnerships between researchers (university) and practitioners (school)

Why do we want to build teacher leadership capacity in Kazakhstan?
1) highly centralised educational system, wherein teachers are at the bottom of the hierarchy
2) schools function as state institutions and pedagogical universities (the vast majority) lost connection with schools

Why does Soros Foundation – Kazakhstan (also known as Open Society Foundation) support the Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan (TLK) initiative?
1) 25 years of experience in implementing an innovative educational initiatives and promoting the open society values in schools in Kazakhstan (for example, Step by step, Critical Thinking, Debate etc.)
2) The TLK initiative was launched in 16 schools in 4 regions of Kazakhstan in 2019.
3) providing support to educational reforms and improving the teachers’ status in Kazakhstan
The experience of non-positional teacher leadership

Dr Gulmira Qanay,
Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan initiative & Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, Kazakhstan

The teacher-led development work (TLDW) strategy

Step 1 Clarify professional values
Step 2 Identify professional concern
Step 3 Consult colleagues about the focus of development project
Step 4 Develop an action plan and design the project
Step 5 Consult colleagues about the action plan
Step 6 Lead the development project
Step 7 Network to build professional knowledge
Diane Campkin  
Wormley Primary School, UK

Newly Qualified Teacher  
Lack of status  
Perception of a lack of voice and agency

TLDW participant  
Gaining my professional voice  
Leading change through a structured programme

TLDW facilitator  
Empowering others to lead change  
Creating supportive and dynamic networks

MEd participant  
Strategic and focused planning to lead long-lasting, impactful change  
Developing a deep understanding of leadership

MEd facilitator  
An opportunity to share knowledge and experience to empower others  
Supporting fellow professionals to lead long-lasting, impactful change

HertsCam - A Journey of Empowerment
Developing students and teachers’ ICT skills to improve teaching and learning in school
Zhanibek BATYR,
physics teacher, school-gymnasium №83,
Nur- Sultan city, Kazakhstan

AIM + RESPONSIBILITY + ACTION = IMPACT

Through participation in the Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan initiative:

I became more motivated to exercise leadership and share knowledge.

Through intra and inter-school network events, I shared my professional concern and exchanged ideas with colleagues.

I had an opportunity to identify my professional concern, reflect and analyse practice.

My year-long project had an impact on students’ and colleagues’ practices both within and beyond my school.

I have learned that through leadership we (teachers) can achieve a lot.
The Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan (TLK) initiative
Dr Gulmira Qanay
Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan initiative & Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

Implementation process
• studying and piloting the approach (PhD & Taraz)
• planning the initiative
• building relationships
• recruiting schools / facilitators
• providing an induction conference
• supporting for monthly workshops in each school
• network event once a term

Scaling up
• consolidating current schools
• extending to new regions
• sharing the experience with policy makers and the professional community in Kazakhstan
• publishing our experience and teachers’ stories
Measuring and Understanding Change in the TLK Program

Dr Matthew Courtney, Assistant professor, Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education, Kazakhstan

Figure 3. Teacher Leadership in Kazakhstan Schematic Model

Note. Full results including item-factor loadings available from the corresponding author; 
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001; ns = not statistically significant.