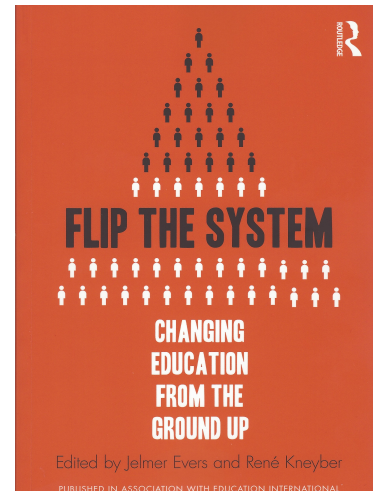


## A chapter in:

### **Teacher leadership and self-efficacy** **John Bangs and David Frost**

*Refer to this chapter like this:*

Bangs, J. and Frost, D. (2015) 'Non-positional Teacher Leadership: Distributed leadership and self-efficacy' in R. Kneyber and J. Evers (Eds.) *Flip the System: Changing Education from the Ground Up*, London: Routledge



The EFA Global Monitoring Report, published by UNESCO earlier this year, is a shocking reminder of the enormity of the educational challenge facing humanity as a whole. In relation to the quality of education, the report says that there are 250 million children who are unable to read, write, or do basic mathematics even though some of these are actually in school. This 'global learning crisis' is nothing less than an international catastrophe and, in spite of initiatives such as Global Education First, it is ongoing. In calling upon governments to take action, the Global Monitoring Report highlights the pivotal role of teachers.

An education system is only as good as its teachers. Unlocking their potential is essential to enhancing the quality of learning. Evidence shows that education quality improves when teachers are supported... (UNESCO, 2014)

Important as the UNESCO report is there is a significant omission. The strategies proposed seem on the face of it to be laudable; they include recruiting more teachers and better teachers; providing better training for teacher educators so they can improve teacher training; deploying good teachers to the locations where they are most needed; incentivising teachers with better career opportunities linked to differentiated pay scales; collecting better data about teachers so as to regulate and hold them to account; improving curriculum design; training teachers especially in assessment for learning. This is problematic however. While the UNESCO report is right in saying that unlocking the potential of teachers is essential, it appears to leave the teaching profession as the passive recipient of education reforms. It is perhaps less surprising that, in other recent reports, such as 'The Learning Curve' published by Pearson (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014), the teaching profession's role is wholly absent.

The debate on whether reforms are effective when they are imposed on the teaching profession is now up and running, most notably in the recent International Summits on the Teaching Profession (Asia Society, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) which have addressed this fundamental question. Indeed as long ago as the 1980s, Susan Rosenholtz (1987), for example, posed this question in the context of attempts to reform the USA education system: 'Education reform strategies; will they increase teacher commitment?'. The question is still of the utmost relevance today. It is clear from the evidence mentioned above and from other

sources (eg Fullan, 2011) that, for education systems to develop successfully, the teaching profession has to be the main partner in education reform. We argue here that high quality education for all young people and the developments of education systems are dependent on the potential within the teaching profession being successfully unlocked. We believe that, crucially, issues concerning teachers' self-efficacy, voice and leadership have to be at the centre of educational development at all levels.

In this chapter we draw from a number of sources: first, a study for Education International (Bangs and Frost, 2012) under the title of 'Teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership: towards a policy framework'; second, our experience of the series of international summits on the teaching profession, and third, the discussions in the Cambridge seminars hosted by LfL, OECD, EI and OSF (Frost, MacBeath & Swaffield, 2013), and fourth, the research and development that has taken place within the International Teacher Leadership initiative (Frost, 2011). We draw upon all of these to make the case for a fundamental shift in the role of teacher voice and leadership in relation to educational transformation. In particular we argue for non-positional teacher leadership whereby teachers can become energised and inspired to become agents of change with an enhanced sense of moral purpose.

We begin with a brief exploration of the concept of self-efficacy and its relationship to teacher leadership.

### **Self-efficacy and teacher leadership**

The OECD's Teaching and Learning International survey (TALIS) explored teachers' reported self-efficacy (OECD, 2005). A secondary analysis that followed focused on this, highlighting the link between teachers' efficacy beliefs and students' learning outcomes (Scheerens, 2010). Teachers who believe in their own efficacy will be resilient, able to solve problems and, most importantly, learn from their experience. Self-efficacy is linked to the concept of agency which is a fundamental human capacity which can either be enhanced or diminished by experience (Frost, 2006). Self-efficacy is a key dimension of well-being of course, but our interest here is in something more fundamental than simply having comfortable working conditions. Bascia (2008) argues that the link between teacher satisfaction and their effectiveness is more interesting than feelings and motivation. The organisational context and the nature of the professional culture are pivotal in enabling teachers to develop positive self-efficacy beliefs (Leithwood, 2006). The kinds of working environment associated with teacher self-efficacy beliefs includes 'participation by teachers in decisions affecting their work' and 'collaboration among teachers' (Tschannen-Moran and Barr, 2004). These are most likely to flourish within environments characterised by distributed leadership and operationalised through teacher leadership.

A distributed leadership perspective recognises that leadership involves collaborative and interactive behaviour through which organisations are maintained, problems are solved and practice is developed (Gronn, 2000, 2002; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004; MacBeath, Waterhouse and Oduro, 2004, Spillane, 2006). The OECD's 'Improving School Leadership'

report (Pont, Nusche and Moorman, 2008) advised schools to adopt distributed leadership but regrettably it emphasises managerialist strategies such as organisational structures and incentivisation through career structures and more rigorous accountability mechanisms. We have seen this sort of approach in the UK and OECD countries but the problem is that this denies the entitlement of *all* teachers to exercise leadership and to develop leadership capacity.

Distributed leadership fosters collaborative professional cultures within schools which can unlock untapped potential in teachers and increases the capacity of schools to meet the needs of pupils and enhance educational achievement. Researchers are also beginning to produce hard evidence of the benefits of distributed leadership; studies such as Hallinger and Heck's (2010) are finding positive links between collaborative forms of leadership and improved student outcomes. Distributed leadership also has the potential to shift principals and their senior teams away from micromanagement of staff and towards providing developmental support for teachers. In this environment, a climate of trust between the formal school leadership and classroom teachers can flourish. So the idea of distributed leadership is appealing, but it carries with it the hazard of being interpreted as a strategy whereby principals simply distribute management responsibilities within schools rather than engineer changes in culture which expand the capacity of teachers to lead.

In contrast, a key characteristic of the International Teacher Leadership (ITL) project's view of distributed leadership is that all teachers are entitled, as professionals, to initiate and lead change, contribute to knowledge building and to have influence, both locally within their own schools, and more widely through collective action (Frost, 2011; 2014). It is essentially about voice, but not merely with teachers as the subject of consultation from above, rather it implies the right to set the agenda and to both create and validate solutions to educational problems. The ITL project's approach to teacher leadership invites teachers, regardless of rank, position or delegated responsibility, to join a programme which provides support in the form of tools for reflection and planning together with a forum where teachers can discuss and share their experience of leading innovation.

The secondary analysis of the TALIS data talks of professional development that is integrated in everyday school practice and encompasses teachers' roles in 'secondary processes' through which they make their contributions as members of 'modern professional organisations'.

This additional emphasis on secondary roles is also promoted as part of the modernisation of the teaching profession. They include teachers as researchers, as receivers of feedback from colleagues, as innovators, as active colleagues, as collaborators of principals, and as manifesting what is sometimes called 'teacher leadership'.

(Scheerens, 2010: 191)

This is where we see the joining up of an agential approach to teacher and school development with a view of distributed leadership that is not only more democratic in nature but also carries with it the potential to build teachers' self-efficacy and so enhance their effectiveness. It may be supposed that teachers are happy to concentrate on the daily reality of their classroom practice, leaving the responsibility for decision-making and institutional

improvement to others. We put this to the test in a recent study for Educational International (EI) the global federation of teacher unions.

### **Gathering views of teachers and unions**

In 2011, EI commissioned an investigation of the extent to which teachers across the world have opportunities to influence the context and circumstances of their professional work and the value they put on this. The research generated data about the current environment and existing opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership, influence policy, shape professional practice, and build professional knowledge. It also explored teachers' links with colleagues in other schools and with the wider professional community. The purpose of this study was to provide an analysis that could assist teacher unions in putting forward policies that could lead to the enhancement of the confidence, professional knowledge, self-efficacy and professional development of teachers.

Our method was essentially qualitative with two dimensions, one involved teachers being invited to participate in 'survey workshops' in a range of countries, and the other was a series of interviews with officials in a number of teacher organisations. Data collection was guided by a common set of themes.

- teachers' leadership of innovation and development
- teachers' influence in policy and practice
- choice and judgement in matters of pedagogy
- leadership of continuing professional development
- teachers' roles in curriculum development
- responsibility for relationships and communication with parents
- school evaluation / inspection
- teachers' roles in assessment of pupils' learning
- teacher performance assessment / appraisal
- the creation of professional knowledge
- teachers' voice and influence
- strategies and policies that would enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy

(Bangs & Frost, 2012)

The questioning and discussion around these themes explored both current experience and teachers' aspirations regarding the scope of their professional roles. Focus group facilitators were provided with detailed guidance and the tools to support activities that would enable the participating teachers to reflect on their experience and articulate their views regarding their present circumstances and their hopes for the future.

The overall purpose of this survey was to enable groups of teachers to express their views about the extent to which teachers are currently able to take responsibility, have influence and contribute to the leadership of the development of practice in their schools. The activity

enabled teachers to express their views about the conditions that nurture teacher voice and influence, the extent to which teachers are consulted, and the strategies and policies that would enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy. In addition to indicating the extent to which they currently have influence, exercise judgement and take responsibility in relation to the above, the workshop enabled teachers to indicate the extent to which they believe that they *should* do so. That is to say respondents were asked to indicate both actual practice and the importance to them of these practices.

The survey was supplemented by interviews with teachers in England who were recipients of the Steve Sinnott Fellowships (Bubb, 2010) and alumni of the national teacher training programme, Teach First.

### **Outcomes of the EI study**

Our survey confirmed that, when it comes to policy making at both national and international levels, teachers themselves remain the ghosts at the feast. However the data indicated overwhelmingly that teachers, whether they are in the UK, Macedonia or Hong Kong, regard it as of the utmost importance to have influence on the direction of policy at the level of the system. A comment by a teacher working in the Bulgarian state school system reflected the views of many when she said this:

We want the inclusion of us, the ordinary teachers, in the development of documentation, criteria, state educational standards, curricula and textbooks; actually listening to teachers' opinions (Bulgarian teacher).

It might be assumed that, if given the opportunity to be more influential, teachers would merely clamour for higher salaries and better working conditions but even where these are shamefully inadequate teachers nevertheless express their moral concern for the needs of their students.

In our survey, teachers judged the provision of professional development opportunities according to the extent to which they enabled them to make a difference to their classroom practice. Most agreed that professional development should be 'teacher-led' although to some this was simply a matter of choice about which programmes they could participate in; for those who had experience of teacher leadership it usually meant that teachers should actually lead professional learning. This involves not only setting the direction and goals of their own learning but also taking the initiative to support the professional learning of their colleagues as well.

The curriculum is also a significant site of struggle even though in many countries a government mandated curriculum is now the norm. The major sticking point seems to be the role of teachers in the processes through which the official curriculum is designed. In Greece for example, it was reported like this:

Teachers that have a long experience in classrooms do not have a role in developing curriculum. Teachers should participate or at least give feedback on the curriculum.

(Record of group discussion in Greece)

Teachers in the main are happy to accept that other members of society have a right to influence the content of the school curriculum and that it is ultimately a political matter to some extent, but they clearly express two aspirations: first to be part of the process of curriculum review and planning, and second, to be free to use their professional expertise to decide how to operationalise the curriculum in their particular school contexts and classrooms.

The link between teachers and parents was also an important talking point in our survey workshops. There is an extensive literature to support the belief that parents have a key role to play in their children's education and that good liaison between home and school is essential (Desforges and Abouchar, 2003; Goodall, 2013). In our survey for EI, most teachers agreed that liaising with parents is an important dimension of their work, however, many teachers reported that only the Principal could communicate directly with parents. Teachers reported this as being demeaning, indicating a lack of trust, which is a word that crops up again when teachers are asked about the process of school evaluation. Most teachers readily agree that external agencies have a part to play but when judgements about the effectiveness of a school have no teacher input at all, the result can be demoralising. The evaluation of teachers was also an interesting point of discussion in our survey with many teachers feeling very negative about their experience of this but it is significant that the teachers who had participated in teacher leadership programmes were heavily in favour of mutual evaluation which goes hand in hand with peer coaching.

One of the themes in the study for EI was concerned with 'knowledge-building', a term which failed to strike a chord with many of the teacher participants. It was clearly not something they were accustomed to talking about. Perhaps this is unsurprising in the light of the OECD's findings on the question of knowledge management in education. This is the business of 'capturing, creating, distilling, sharing and using know-how' (Collison and Parcell, 2004) and it is something that education systems do not do well (CERI, 2008). Again, it was significant that those survey participants who were connected with teacher leadership programmes said that they see themselves as having key roles in the creation and dissemination of professional knowledge.

When asked for written responses to a question about what enhances their self-efficacy, teachers tended to focus on the need for respect and trust on the part of society and government. For many the message to policy makers was 'leave me alone!'. This message was heard loud and clear in Denmark and in the USA where one teacher said:

*Ninety-nine per cent of my interactions with administrators deals with the paperwork they need to justify or defend their actions. This slows me down and isn't constructive.*

(Teacher in the USA)

Most of the teachers consulted in our study expressed frustration at what they saw as meddling by politicians and in some countries, for example Turkey, teachers called for the de-politicisation of schooling.

Not all responses were protestations. This statement by a teacher in the HertsCam Network seemed to suggest that there is a room for optimism.

*My self-confidence and belief in making a positive difference is enhanced by feeling that my opinion is valued. Teachers are in close contact with pupils in everyday practice and thus have an immediate understanding of issues affecting the learning and well-being of pupils. Acknowledgement of this and consultation with teaching staff will empower a workforce with the confidence needed to drive development. (Teacher in HertsCam, UK)*

A common point made by teachers everywhere was that school principals have a key role in creating the conditions for enabling teachers to have a voice and to contribute to the development of policy and practice.

### **The teacher unions' perspective**

The teacher workshops were supplemented by interviews with senior officials and lay leaders of four teacher unions/federations in the United States, Canada, Norway and Australia. Union representatives were asked whether they believe that their core business is to raise the levels of teachers' self-efficacy, voice and leadership. Their response was an emphatic 'yes' and best summarised by the interviewee from the National Education Association in the US who said; 'teacher leadership is a concept whose time has come'.

Indeed Bascia's (2008) description of 'what teachers want from their unions'- e.g. professional development and learning, establishing the right to participate in decision making, articulating and promoting a positive professional identity - matches the approach of the unions represented in this study. Although not all unions currently choose to adopt this role, the evidence from our study is that they have the capacity to do so. The ideas that teachers put forward about enhancing their roles indicates the enormous potential available to unions, in both developing practical strategies which would enhance the professional capacity of teachers and in enhancing the force of unions' representations with employers and governments.

The teacher unions consulted in this study take a number of approaches to enhancing the professional capacity of their members. One focuses on enhancing the collective voice of teachers through, for example, through providing professional development and networks for teachers where the state is clearly unable or unwilling to do so. The AEU's relationship with the Australian Federal Government is an example of this. It targets areas of provision such as professional development for beginning teachers in remote areas with the aim of making a difference to teachers' lives. Indeed for a number of unions, including the four unions in our study, this approach has a wider policy purpose: that of enhancing the professional

community and professional self-confidence of teachers. Indeed it has been argued that continuing professional development should be seen as a dimension of educational reform and innovation rather than as discrete training or personal development programmes (Frost, 2012).

Another approach was to evaluate teachers' working conditions. Some unions such as the Teachers Federation of Ontario have started to question whether teachers' conditions of service need to reflect teachers' professional leadership. Its commissioned study argued that teachers' working conditions needed redefining so that factors that enhanced teachers' self-efficacy could be included (Leithwood, 2006). Such a move raises the question of whether teachers' conditions of service agreements which are purely protective are adequate enough to secure, for example, the right of teachers in schools to be able to offer and expect reasonable responses to their professional views. The evidence from our study and the wider ITL study (Frost, 2011) is that teachers not only expect to engage in discussion about their own areas of professional practice but expect to be involved as professionals in strategic discussions about school policies. Teachers' conditions of service should therefore enhance the capacity of teachers to lead professionally.

### **The future of the teaching profession**

The argument that teachers should shape their own professional lives in schools, and that their professional voice should be heard both individually and collectively, is now taking centre stage. The publication of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment 2012 has added to the evidence base. While PISA says that schools in higher-performing systems have more autonomy it also says that such autonomy will, 'not, of itself, result in better outcomes.'

Schools with more autonomy tend to perform better than schools with less autonomy when the school system, as a whole, uses such accountability arrangements as setting clear objectives of what students are expected to learn and sharing information about outcomes, and/or when principals and teachers work together to manage schools (OECD, 2013: 192).

OECD'S recent Teaching and Learning International Survey 2013 (OECD 2014) goes even further. It found correlations between high levels of teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction and professional collaboration. These findings led the OECD to give its clearest statement yet on the importance of teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership is important for many reasons...teachers who report that they are provided with opportunities to participate in decision making at a school level have higher reported levels of job satisfaction in all TALIS countries and higher feelings of self-efficacy in most countries.

The report concluded that school principals should share decision making and policy makers should provide guidance on how to cultivate distributed leadership in schools. The



significance of OECD's findings and recommendations cannot be underestimated. They can be used to challenge governments to support policies which enhance teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership. They also make EI's decision to commission its study look positively prescient. While we recognised the limitations of the survey on which this report (Bangs and Frost, 2012) is based, we believed that our evidence provided sufficient grounds to be able to identify a number of recommendations for policy makers to consider. Within our study we put these seven points forward as dimensions of an enabling policy environment.

1. Policy should lead to the provision of opportunities and support for teachers to exercise leadership in the development and improvement of professional practice.
2. Policy should seek to establish the right to be heard and to be influential at all levels of policy making including the content and structure of the curriculum.
3. Policy should protect and enhance teachers' right to determine how to teach within the context of collegial accountability.
4. Policy should support teachers in setting the direction of their own professional development and in contributing to the professional learning of their colleagues.
5. Policy should recognise the key role that teachers have to play in building collaborative relationships with parents and the wider community.
6. Policy should promote the role of teachers in pupil assessment, teacher appraisal and school evaluation.
7. Policy should enable teachers to participate in activities which lead to the creation and transfer of professional knowledge.

We believe these seven points could certainly provide the basis for teacher union policy initiatives to create system level guidance on teacher leadership and distributed leadership. However, on reflection there is perhaps one overarching policy dimension which should be added. All policies should be evaluated to see whether they enhance teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Other surveys confirm the importance of these recommendations. For example, evidence from a recent mass survey of teacher attitudes in the United States confirms the arguments that system wide improvement depends on enhancing teachers' voice. The benefits that teachers themselves say accrue from being involved integrally in determining practice and policies include: 'increased teamwork and collaboration among teachers', '(getting) policy in sync with best practices,' and '(putting) students first, creating more benefits to the students' (MetLife, 2010). This indicates a deep felt desire to influence proactively the discourse about what works in teaching.

Some policy makers will take a lot of convincing that teachers have the appetite or the capability to enact their professional lives in the ways referred to above. However, persuasive evidence is provided by a recent study on ‘non-positional teacher leadership’ in 15 countries. The evidence presented there supports the view that:

...teachers really can lead innovation; teachers really can build professional knowledge; teachers really can develop the capacity for leadership, and teachers really can influence their colleagues and the nature of professional practice in their schools. However, what is abundantly clear is that teachers are only likely to do these things if they are provided with appropriate support (Frost, 2011: 57).

The concept of *teacher leadership* carries the potential for focusing on a range of activities and conditions which enhance the professional capacity of teachers.

### **Teacher leadership and professional capacity**

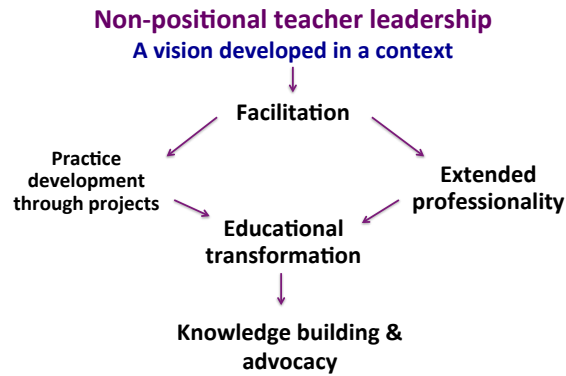
Teacher leadership has been promoted as a key lever in educational reform for many years, particularly in the USA (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Notable milestones in the literature include: ‘*Assessing the prospects for teacher leadership*’ (Little, 1988), ‘*Teacher Leadership: What are we learning?*’ (Lieberman, 1992), ‘*Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders*’ (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 1996), ‘*Developing teacher leaders: How teacher leadership enhances school success*’ (Crowther *et al.*, 2002) and ‘*Teacher Leadership*’ (Lieberman and Miller, 2004). In the American literature it is a common assumption that in order to exercise leadership, teachers need to occupy the position of ‘teacher leader’. An alternative approach was adopted in the International Teacher Leadership initiative in which it is assumed that leadership does not have to be related to a position but is an essential dimension of teacher professionalism.

(Teacher leadership) ....whereby teachers can clarify their values, develop personal visions of improved practice and then act strategically to set in motion processes where colleagues are drawn into activities such as self-evaluation and innovation. This approach rests on the assumption that the enhancement of human agency within a culture of shared responsibility for reform and the outcomes for all students is essential for learning for all members of learning communities (Frost, 2011: 10)

This approach could be referred to as non-positional teacher leadership.

### ***Non-positional teacher leadership***

The book published in October 2014 - ‘*Transforming Education Through Teacher Leadership*’ (Frost, 2014) - contains accounts of teacher leadership which, collectively, explicate a theory about teacher professionalism and educational transformation. This theory has been enacted and operationalised by teachers and those who facilitate teacher leadership in the HertsCam Network and sister networks linked by the ITL initiative in a total of 15 countries. It could be summarised with the aid of this diagram:



The vision is for a strategy that provides expert facilitation that would enable the majority of teachers, not just the talented or ambitious few and not just those designated as teacher leaders or those who occupy a formal position in the organisation, to become the new professionals that Fullan called for in the early 1990s (Fullan, 1993).

The vision portrayed in the book is operationalised through the idea of the development project whereby individual teachers are invited to identify a professional concern and then act strategically to address it. Leadership in this context is conceptualised as influence (Yukl, 2010; Fairman and Mackenzie, 2013). The facilitation that supports this is school-based and it is self-sustaining because it is provided by experienced teachers rather than by experts from local government, universities or private providers. There is good evidence from the work of HertsCam and the sister networks within the ITL initiative that teachers can develop the capacity to organise and create the infrastructure for professional development and support for teacher leadership (Frost, 2011). Essential features of the approach include:

- individualised, time-bounded project work that mobilises teachers' moral purpose and taps into their capacity for agency
- school-based workshops led by experienced teachers who have the skills to facilitate
- a well designed set of tools that support reflection, planning, consultation and discussion
- networking arrangements that enable teachers not only to build professional knowledge together but also to inspire each other to act strategically to bring about change

The outcomes of such development projects is school improvement, which is commonly understood in terms of increased levels of student attainment, but what is important is the practice development that contributes to improvement. The development of practice includes that which builds capacity for learning and organisational capacity. Teacher leadership as construed here changes the professional culture of the school. Arguably such practice development creates 'knowledge in situ' but through teachers' networks it can be subject to a

dialogic process which adds to professional knowledge in the system. This is not codified and turned into professional standards but can be discerned in the exchange of accounts and ideas between teachers at network meetings and in their published stories. A key dimension of such stories is their power to inspire others and mobilise moral purpose.

There is evidence that this can work both in contexts such as the UK and in more challenging scenarios such as Bosnia & Herzegovina (Frost, 2011). New programmes based on the non-positional teacher leadership were launched in Palestine and Egypt in October 2014. It is envisaged that further adaptations of the tools and techniques used will show that the model has potential for universal application which can address the global learning crisis identified by the UNESCO report (2014).

There are two reasons for suggesting that this model of non-positional teacher leadership is the way forward. First, this approach goes to the heart of the matter by focusing on the question of teachers' moral purpose or commitment. This seems to be universal in that, with the right kind of support, teachers everywhere can experience a reigniting of their professionalism and enhancement of their sense of moral purpose. Second, this approach is a low-cost option because the creativity, drive and expertise come from the teachers themselves. This is not just a matter of cultivating teachers' capacity to improve their own and their colleagues' practice, but it is also about enabling teachers themselves to become the main source of support for teacher leadership. Teachers who facilitate programmes of support for teacher leadership and organise network opportunities do so for the professional satisfaction it brings rather than because of financial incentives which means that relatively low levels of funding can enable this to happen.

Whether the emphasis is on the work of teacher leaders or on the exercise of leadership on the part of all teachers, there is nevertheless a degree of consensus that educational reform demands that teachers need to be empowered and enabled to be influential.

The OECD's own policy has developed since 2011. Its Background Report for the International Summit on the Teaching Profession (ISTP) (OECD, 2011) provided strong implicit backing for the concept of teacher leadership when it quoted the International Labour Organisation and UNESCO call for 'professional freedom and the active participation of individual teachers in deciding a range of professional issues - curricula, pedagogy, student assessment and issues relating to the organisation of education.' (ILO/UNESCO, 2006: vi) More directly the Background Report emphasised the importance institutional arrangements which enabled professional led standard setting and quality assurance in teacher education, induction, performance and career development (OECD, 2011). Indeed the OECD followed these comments up by providing a summary of our report for EI in its background document for the 2014 international summit (Schleicher, 2014). The Teaching and Learning International Study 2013 emphasised the importance of teacher leadership and highlighted the fact that teachers who participated in decision making at school level experienced higher levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy. It went on to recommend that:

it is not only worth school principals devolving some of the responsibility for school-level decision making to teachers, but policy makers should consider providing guidance on distributed leadership and distributed decision making at a system level (OECD, 2014: 7).

### **Individual and collective voices**

All the evidence points to the opportunities now available to the teaching profession and its unions to promote and define teacher leadership and, using the accumulating practice and evidence, to argue for teacher self-efficacy, voice and leadership to be at the centre of systemic teacher policies. The role of teacher unions in enhancing the capacity of teachers to show professional leadership is essential. Teacher unions can exercise leadership on behalf of teachers but can also empower their members as individuals to act strategically on initiatives which may be driven by values and principles not necessarily in line with current policy. Indeed as Bangs and MacBeath argue, this form of leadership could be described as collective teacher leadership (Bangs and MacBeath 2012).

The International Summits and the dialogue they create provide powerful support to teacher unions which seek partnership with governments and employers in creating teacher policies. The evidence from our study is that a number of teacher unions already encourage teachers' professional autonomy and leadership. They provide high quality professional development and promote evidence-based policies on the curriculum, assessment, standards, pedagogy, and evaluation. Crucially they provide the sites for their members to discuss and contribute to those policies. Despite the turbulence facing public education we believe there are significant new opportunities for all teacher unions to enhance teachers' efficacy, voice and leadership and ensure that teachers' voices are heard in the processes of educational reform.

In conclusion, we hope we have made the case for enabling teachers to exercise leadership independently of management roles and organisational structures. There is now abundant evidence that teachers are able to embrace an extended mode of professionalism in which they are influential in matters of policy and practice. They can direct their own professional learning and support that of their colleagues. They can contribute to the development of policies on improving their own schools and the wider system. It is crucial to note, however, that this is not a matter merely of allowing this to happen but one of positively enabling it. In such enablement, while school principals have the prime responsibility to create the conditions which favour teacher leadership teacher unions can also have a significant role. What is urgently needed is a policy climate which makes it easy for these enabling conditions to be developed.

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