

**Introducing teacher leadership to the Middle East:
starting with Egypt and Palestine**

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Abstract

Amina Eltemamy and Hanan Ramahi are pursuing their doctoral studies in educational leadership at the University of Cambridge under the supervision of Dr David Frost. Both are introducing non-positional teacher leadership (NPTL) in their respective countries of Egypt and Palestine by conducting programmes aimed at NPTL development. This paper presents their work to date, as they are about to commence their interventions.

We begin with brief biographies which are an important part of this endeavour because we will both be acting as agents of change and facilitators of the programmes we discuss below. We deal first with one of us, Amina Eltemamy, and then the other, Hanan Ramahi.

Biographies

Amina Eltemamy is an Egyptian teacher, with a bachelors degree in Business Administration from the American University in Cairo. Amina found her passion in teaching, as she worked as an Economics teacher in a private school in Egypt. She then pursued her Masters degree in educational leadership and school improvement at the University of Cambridge. In her Masters thesis, Amina explored the perceptions of the teaching profession of a group of teachers working in Egyptian state schools. Among the findings of the study was that many Egyptian teachers were deeply concerned that they are often regarded as service delivery agents rather than professionals who take an active role in the leadership of change and deprived of the opportunity to lead innovations in their fields. Teachers aspired for a wider role in leading educational change which was anticipated would lead to better collective status, greater personal satisfaction and increased confidence in their capabilities. Therefore, through her PhD, Amina is trying to introduce an intervention in Egypt that will give teachers the chance to be leaders of educational reform.

Hanan Ramahi is a Palestinian-American, raised and educated in the United States of America, with a bachelors degree in History and Comparative Literature from the USA, a masters in Educational Administration and Leadership from Palestine, and an MPhil from the University of Cambridge in Educational Leadership, where she is currently pursuing her PhD. In 1994, following the creation of the Palestinian National Authority, she returned to Ramallah, Palestine, to contribute to state building. At the time, the newly established Palestinian Ministry of Education was unequipped to provide education in the English medium to the influx of English speaking youth who were returning with their families to the Palestinian territories from Anglo-American countries. Therefore, in 1995 Hanan co-established a private kindergarten through secondary school with a specialised Arabic-English bi-lingual academic programme. As director, Hanan now hopes to use her school as a platform for developing and establishing NPTL and for developing it within the Palestinian context, where she views her familiarity with Western and Arab societies as a means to informing and advancing her doctoral research.

Context

Egypt and Palestine are part of the region known as the Middle East, or the Arab world. They are linked by geography, the common language of Arabic and the religion of Islam. They have a similar culture intertwined by history and politics. Egypt encompasses an area ten times the size of Palestine. It has an estimated population of around 87 million people (CAPMAS, 2014). The Palestinian Territories comprise the discontinuous and relatively small areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and have a population of nearly four and a half million with an estimated 7 million living abroad as refugees or nationals of other countries (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Despite this disparity, the two countries share enough characteristics to allow us to hypothesise about the significance of NPTL to teacher reform in the Arab region, with implications for developing countries, emergent education systems and conflict areas. Below we present the context of each country in relation to our topic.

Egypt

The January 2011 revolution in Egypt and subsequent political developments have had dramatic impact on Egyptian society at the political, economic and social levels (Ahmed & Elkhatee, 2012), with consequences to the education system and implications for effective teacher reform. Politically, post-revolution Egypt has been dominated by two parties each espousing diametrically opposed ideologies (World Bank, 2013). Their agendas translated into partisan education policy and favouritism in ministerial recruitment. Economic instability exacerbated an already ailing economy and public service sector (POMED, 2014). The ongoing political tension has severely affected the economic and financial environment that continues to deteriorate (World Bank, 2013). Socially, Egyptian society has become polarised over political affiliation (El Masry, 2013) leading some to intolerance of political difference. Rising socio-political tensions have led to growing violence, even among students in schools.

For the education system in Egypt these worsening conditions come at a time when the quality of education has been severely deteriorating for the last 30 years due to corruption, centralisation, bureaucracy and ineffective reforms (Ibrahim, 2010; MENA-OECD, 2010). So much so that the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2013-2014 rated Egypt as the worst country in the world for primary education (Schwab, 2013). With ‘teacher quality’ cited as the single most important school variable influencing student achievement (OECD, 2009, 2011), the state of the teaching profession may be a key indicator of the reasons behind an educational crisis on such a national scale.

An underdeveloped, underpaid and undervalued Egyptian teaching force seems to confirm this suggestion. The majority of teachers are appointed with no pedagogical background (Elbaradei & Elbaradei, 2004) and receive low quality training that is implemented with a

general attitude of indifference (AHDR, 2003; MENA-OECD, 2010). Consequently, they are not trusted to lead development in their schools (Eltemamy, 2012) and have minimal decision making power or influence (Ibrahim 2010; Sayed, 2006). Financially, low teaching salaries have demoralised teachers (Ibrahim, 2010) and forced many to take on additional jobs (AHDR, 2003; MENA-OECD, 2010). Socially, teachers suffer from low social status (Badrawy, 2011). Egypt's dismal teacher situation is the setting for fundamental teacher reform that empowers and reinstates dignity, with the possibility of improved financial situation.

Palestine

The political situation in Palestine has had an equally dramatic impact on all facets of life, including education (Nicolai, 2007). For an appreciation of the significance of teacher reform to the Palestinian context it is important to understand the forces that shaped education in Palestine. Historically, Palestine has been a site of international and regional interests (Barakat, 2007). This has resulted in education being controlled and administered by foreign rule from the arrival of the Ottoman Empire in 1517, through British rule, Israeli occupation, Egyptian and Jordanian control up to the establishment of the PNA in 1994. Ruling powers varied their education agendas to maintain the status quo (Barakat, 2007), suppressing the Palestinians from the opportunity to manage their education system according to their needs and aspirations (Asaad, 2000; Van Dyke and Randall, 2002).

Under Israeli military occupation from 1967 to 1993 education deteriorated severely (Asaad, 2000) reaching emergency proportions by 1993 (Rigby, 1995). The effects could be seen at three policy levels: curriculum, teachers and facilities. Teachers were selected based on their political views and teacher education was essentially non-existent (Nicolai, 2007). Thus when in 1994 the Palestinian National Authority was established, the newly formed Ministry of Education inherited an outdated, amalgamated and fragmented education system that needed extensive time, effort, expertise and resources to reconstruct (Barakat, 2007). Subsequently, foreign sponsored programmes inculcated the local education system with foreign agendas and values that hindered the development of a Palestinian education philosophy, vision and reform strategy (Affouneh, 2007; Ramahi, 2013). 'Traveling reforms' (Steiner-Khamisi, 2010: 324) of foreign extraction and their detrimental consequences on local education systems appears to be a trend throughout the Arab region (Akkary, 2014).

Similar to their counterparts in Egypt, the majority of teachers in Palestine have no background in pedagogy. A 2013 Ministry directive mandating that all teachers hold teaching diplomas has yet to be enforced (Ramahi, 2013). Impact of recent reform efforts in teaching quality by national institutes remain questionable (Shinn, 2012). And while teacher status may not be as inferior as those of Egyptian teachers, salaries are too low to attract high

performing university graduates. The need for locally-informed and driven teacher reform seems timely for a historically unrepresented and disenfranchised people as the Palestinians.

Rationale

Our discussion of the political, economic and social settings of Egypt and Palestine in relation to their national education systems with a focus on the teaching profession and teacher reform illustrates common features between these two countries of the Middle East. First, government plays a central role in reform strategies and implementation. Second, the majority of teachers lack educational background in pedagogy. Third, teacher development is ineffective due to traditional methods or non-contextual foreign sponsored programmes. Fourth, teachers are disempowered, reactive to top-down initiatives and reduced to service providers. Fifth, teacher status and morale are at an all time low. Sixth, the quality of teaching is substandard or the lowest by international standards. Finally, limited national resources hinder investment in effective development strategies.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list but is rather indicative of some of the more salient features common to the Egyptian and Palestinian educational contexts that may be shared to various degrees by other countries in the Arab Middle East. For example, studies conducted in the more affluent Gulf region illustrate similar disparity between foreign-based reform initiatives and educational outcomes (Akkary, 2014; Thorn, 2011). Some authors recommend engaging foreign, namely Western, concepts with local Islamic values for a blending of theory and praxis (Albon, 2009; Reynold *et al.*, 2007). This discussion may extend to education systems in developing countries, emergent education systems and conflict areas.

The magnitude of the transformation needed to improve the education systems of Egypt, Palestine and countries facing similar challenges, we believe, requires that action be taken at both the systemic and individual levels. In focusing on the individual, human agency needs to be enhanced for teachers to recognise their potential as change agents in the moral pursuit of education (Frost, 2006). A fundamental aspect of human agency is leadership, which when fostered can make a difference beyond one's immediate confines in realising one's moral capacity (Frost, 2008a). Accordingly, teacher leadership can be a vehicle for transforming the teaching profession into one of agency for educational change with potential to mobilise the largest force in the education sector to foster innovative and improved teaching practices (Frost, 2012; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2009) that can improve learning (Lieberman and Miller, 2011) and lead to a 'better world' (Crowther, 2009).

The significance of teacher leadership rests in its capacity for change at the personal, professional, organisational and system levels (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). For a concept

with potential for such vertical impact, there is suggestion for equal horizontal, or international, applicability (Frost, 2011). Given the contextual nature of schooling (Sperandio *et al.*, 2009) and educational reform (Simkins, 2005), and socio-cultural bases of conceptual understandings (Dimmock and Walker, 2010; Shah, 2010), teacher leadership may be an adaptable concept amenable to cross-cultural transfer and application. However, in order to explore teacher leadership's capacity for travel we need to identify the particular from within the discourse on teacher leadership.

Teacher leadership: the non-positional model

Within the literature on teacher leadership attempts continue to be made to arrive at a coherent understanding and operational feasibility. Most commonly the exercise of teacher leadership is conceived as a process of influence (Yukl, 1989) operating at the instructional, professional and organisational levels (Harris, 2003), with some adding personal and interpersonal dimensions (Mangin, 2005).

More recently, arguments have centred on the formality or otherwise of teacher leadership roles and positions. Formal positions comprise mid-level management that take on full-time or part-time duties in conjunction with a teaching schedule. Less agreed upon, however, are concepts of informal leadership roles, which is attributed by some to in-class practices or outside classroom involvement (York-Barr and Duke, 2004). The distinctions of formal and informal have taken root in the literature with equal capacity to influence teaching and learning processes.

Accordingly, Frost and Durrant (2002, 2003) question whether the term informal could be taken to mean simply the absence of a formal position and not that of leadership practice. They distinguish between functions that are described as leadership by others and deliberate activity that is planned and exercised by individual teachers. The terms positional and non-positional are suggested as more useful for distinguishing between appointed teacher leaders and wilful, self-directed teachers exercising leadership as personal, professional organisational and systemic influence (Frost, 2012; Frost and Durrant, 2003).

Non-positional teacher leadership

The non-positional model views teacher leadership as activity that features collaboration and mutual support for human agency. The analytical lens of distributed leadership is useful in portraying the unit of analysis as not leaders and what they do but the leadership activity itself and how it is played out (Gronn, 2002; Spillane *et al.*, 2004). Non-positional teacher leadership (NPTL) focuses on contextuality and relationality to highlight leadership as a

flowing and emergent activity present in the interconnectedness of school members rather than a static phenomenon represented by hierarchical roles (Gronn, 2003).

NPTL rests on a deliberate and self-directed exercise of leadership that seeks to make change at the professional, organisational, cultural and policy levels (Frost, 2008b; Bangs and Frost, 2012). Far from being a haphazard activity, it is rooted in principles, based on strategy, involves procedures and tools, and requires the support of school members and external expertise (Frost and Durrant, 2003). Frost (2000, 2012) is among the first to advocate NPTL for its ability to challenge the orthodoxy of hierarchical school organisation and prescriptive teacher development, and its capacity to foster innovative teaching practices and build a knowledge base for reform. An extension of the debate about distributed leadership and leadership capacity building, it invites all teachers in the exercise of leadership to mobilise creative forces in the collective drive to teacher reform for school improvement.

More specifically, NPTL is a willful activity of human agency realising moral purpose through exercising leadership by means of inquiry and collaboration. It is a systematic reflective practice that entails clarifying values, having a vision and strategising (Frost and Durrant, 2003; Durrant and Holden, 2006). Frost sees leadership as a fundamental aspect of humanity that needs to be fostered in everyone where agency is the ability to make a difference beyond one's immediate confines in realising one's moral capacity (Frost, 2006, 2008a, b). Accordingly, it is an entitlement and a goal in itself rather than a means (Frost, 2012). Thus lies its emancipatory and empowering capacity to activate the potential of individual teachers within schools and to extend beyond top-down, implementation of impersonal and non-contextual professional development programmes. NPTL accords with the TALIS Report (OECD, 2009), which posits that individualised forms of support for teacher development rather than whole-school or system-wide reform offer scope for considerable improvement of teaching and learning.

Developing NPTL requires two considerations: enabling conditions and planning. The first comprises headteacher leadership, organisational structure and school culture. Headteachers need to orchestrate a supportive school structure and cultivate a cultural ethos that facilitates teacher leadership work and activities (Frost and Durrant, 2004). Frost *et al.* (2000) created the teacher-led development work (TLDW) framework as a strategy that enables teachers to engage in job-embedded knowledge-building within a large community of schools. A key feature is inquiry as a leadership strategy, where teachers explore appropriate literature, collect and present data to colleagues as a basis for reflection, discussion and deliberation. Rather than a research methodology, its goal is teacher development and school improvement. The framework has been successfully applied in the award-bearing HertsCam network in the UK (Mylles, 2005; Hill, 2011). Teacher-led projects enable teachers to exercise leadership

and network events enable them to share innovative teaching practices and build a knowledge base about teacher leadership to inform teacher reform (Frost, 2014; Mylles, 2006).

Among the strengths of the framework is its adaptability to contexts of diverse settings. The International Teacher Leadership initiative (ITL) adopted the TLDW framework in a research and development project involving researchers and practitioners in 15 countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Turkey and UK). ITL seeks to identify principles, strategies and tools for teacher leadership development that can be applied in a range of schools, policies and cultural settings (Frost, 2011). An ITL study in Turkey illustrates the significance of creating conditions that foster NPTL as a means to school improvement (Bolat, 2013). Another in Portugal highlights the role of context to NPTL development (Flores, 2013).

The international scope of the ITL initiative and the studies it generated confirm NPTL's capacity for cross-cultural adaptation and application (Frost, 2011). Equally important is the plentiful literature on TLDW as a facilitation tool for developing NPTL within the HertsCam Network (www.hertscam.org.uk). Accordingly, we recognise in NPTL a suitable and timely reform strategy for the educational contexts of Egypt and Palestine, and identify the following NPTL features as underpinning our selection:

- enhanced agency that leads to empowerment and restored professional status
- reflective practice that fosters job-embedded learning and offsets professional under-qualification
- collaboration facilitated by dialogue that enhances participatory practices and a sense of collective agency
- networking that extends communities of learning beyond the confines of the school or country
- knowledge-building that liberates individuals from the orthodoxy of external expertise and hierarchical knowledge dissemination, and top-down reform

These represent the more urgent features of NPTL for our national education settings, which we believe apply to contexts of similar political and economic conditions. NPTL's capacity for transformation at the individual, professional, organisational and system levels will rest on the extent of its facilitation. We now turn to a discussion of each of our plans to develop NPTL in Egypt and Palestine.

The programmes

The HertsCam programme is well established with a set of comprehensive and refined tools and procedures for developing NPTL. The International Teacher Leadership (ITL) project adopted the programme and adapted it in 15 countries. Among the outcomes of research into these programmes was: the refinement of a set of friendly-context tools and procedures; evidence that TLDW can work in different educational systems and socio-cultural contexts; and an example of certification not needing university or government sponsorship. For the programme to be conducted, we will adopt the HertsCam model and adapt the ITL tools and procedures to suit school setting. Below is a discussion of adaptations made to the programme.

School-based sessions

We aim to maintain the HertsCam model of a series of school-based sessions. There are usually only six in the course of a year so as not to burden teachers' workload. For the same reason sessions will similarly be held for two hours on school site. The option will be given to participants whether to hold the sessions after working hours or on weekends, and the school will provide childcare and lunch for teachers with young children. However, some of the concepts of NPTL and approaches of TLDW will be new to teachers in Egypt and Palestine. Therefore, we will divide the first session into two for the following reasons: it affords us more time to introduce new concepts and approach, and generate discussion around understanding; it is an opportunity to ensure that the entire teaching staff is familiarised with programme concepts; once the programme commences teachers' familiarity with programme concepts will reduce the potential growth of a gulf in the school's professional culture between programme participants and non-participants. In Palestine, this will be used as an opportunity to engage all teachers in activity aimed at clarifying professional values and concerns.

In the programme in Egypt there will be an additional life-coaching session led by a professional motivational speaker. The aim of this session will be to persuade teachers of their ability to make a difference despite the challenges of the educational system.

Supervision

The novelty of the TLDW approach and concepts of NPTL lead Hanan to extend the supervisions to four instead of three with the possibility for a fifth. These meetings provide teachers extended opportunities to ask questions that they might feel embarrassed or awkward about during sessions, and assure them of individual support and guidance along the way. The meetings will be of 20 to 30 minute duration and supervised by the primary researcher with a co-tutor in an observational role in the first instance. The presence of the co-tutor is important to help build capacity for supporting teacher leadership in the future although the

presence of two tutors may be inhibiting for the teacher concerned. This will be monitored carefully.

In the Egyptian case, supervisions will be limited to two sessions for each participating teacher because of the large total number of teachers involved from the four schools. Further assistance will be offered by co-tutors.

Network events

The HertsCam Network model consists of five network events spread evenly throughout the academic year when teachers meet to share and build knowledge. Our programmes will limit the events to two as we suspect teachers will not be ready for an event early in the process. Accordingly, network events will take place during the middle and end of the programme.

In Egypt, the networking will involve teachers from the four schools participating in the programme. As to Palestine, since the school participating will be the only one conducting the programme, teachers from other schools will be invited to participate. Those will be state schools currently conducting project work as part of a Palestinian MoEHE and US NGO-sponsored Leadership and Teacher Development Program (AMIDEAST, 2012). The first network event will be an opportunity to recruit teachers from other schools to present at an annual conference.

Annual conference

In the HertsCam programme an annual conference is held during April. This is intended to be a high profile event to showcase the work of the network as a whole. In the case of Palestine we will adopt a similar approach with the second network event. During this time teachers from other schools who have done project work will be invited to present and display posters alongside programme participants. The event will be high profile and attended by Ministry officials and distinguished members of the educational and local community, and will conclude with the presentation of programme certificates and awards to participating teachers with coverage by local media. It is likely that something similar will occur in Egypt.

Portfolio

The programme will require completion of a portfolio of evidence of leadership activity and project work. One of the aims of the portfolio will be to promote reflection on these two dimensions. However, the literature on the use of portfolios as a tool to promote reflection in developing countries and emergent education systems indicates failure in some instances (Bush *et al.*, 2011). This may in part be due to traditional pedagogical practices using summative assessments that most teachers were educated in. Therefore, although our approach will not be as Bush *et al.* talk about it, we expect it to pose a challenge and will thus focus on its guidance and facilitation.

Ethical guidelines are not universal and must be context-driven (Gil and Bob, 1999). Accordingly, participants will be asked to formulate their own ethical code at the start of the programme to enable alignment with local cultural values and norms, with the only requirement that it not conflict with the school's stated ethical guidelines.

Programme certification

Participants who complete the programme will receive certificates that are jointly sponsored by the ITL project and their school. The possible links with university-based or ministry related accreditation will be explored.

Tutors

The programme features facilitation by what is referred to throughout the ITL network as 'tutors'. The role involves convening and facilitating a series of school-based sessions featuring workshops to support planning and reflection. In our programmes Amina and Hanan will act as the primary tutors and will be assisted by co-tutors. Induction and support will be provided for these co-tutors

Participants

Teachers who volunteer to participate in the programme will be required to complete a simple application form. This will be intended to serve two purposes: to limit selection to achieve a manageable number of group members and to raise the status of the programme in the eyes of teachers who may otherwise take the matter lightly.

In adopting the HertsCam Network and International Teacher Leadership models, we are each adapting the tools and instruments of the TLDW framework to accord with our educational, organisational and socio-cultural contexts.

Setting up the conditions in participating schools in Egypt and Palestine

Teachers can lead change for the improvement of teaching and learning when the means for their support are made available (Frost, 2011; Frost and Durrant, 2003). Support is provided through three main school components: headteacher leadership, organisational structures and cultural features (Frost and Durrant, 2004). In order to conduct a programme aimed at developing NPTL through TLDW, we undertook to set up the initial conditions necessary for providing the means for its support.

To do so, Amina travelled to Cairo, Egypt and Hanan to Ramallah, Palestine, in June, 2014. These visits comprised the first stage of the intervention, which was accomplished by doing the following:

- introduce TLDW to senior leadership and ensure understanding of its concepts
- engage teachers in reflecting on the school's professional culture, merits of their professional development and vision of effective professional learning
- introduce TLDW to teachers and invite them to participate voluntarily
- identify programme team and initiate programme planning
- ensure the readiness of co-tutors to assist in running the programme

Introducing TLDW framework to senior leadership

TLDW and NPTL comprise concepts are new to the participating schools. Therefore, a primary concern was to ensure that members of the senior leadership teams understand these concepts. The TLDW concept was introduced in a session in which we drew on the evidence and materials from HertsCam Network and the ITL initiative. The former was important for explicating the foundation and development of the programme (Hill, 2011; Mylles, 2006); the latter was crucial for establishing its international appeal and adaptability to local contexts (Frost, 2011).

The innovative and empowering nature of the programme, and its potential for teacher and school cultural transformation (Frost, 2008a) was the focus for creating interest among senior leadership. We emphasised the idea of teachers leading change in teaching practice through a project of their own choosing and concern with potential for intellectual and social capital capacity expansion (Frost, 2012). This was particularly well received for its potential for long-term impact in Egypt and Palestine.

Engaging teachers in reflecting on the school's professional culture

The second step in preparing the school for the programme was to engage teachers in a discussion of the school's professional culture and the merits of their previous professional development experiences; we also sought to elicit their vision of improved professional learning. In Palestine, this took place during an activity that jointly involved senior leadership

and teachers. The activity comprised of a school self-evaluation focusing on the professional culture. School self-evaluation is a means to improving schools through critical self-reflection of the quality of teaching and learning without reliance on external parties (MacBeath, 2005). The aim was to impress upon teachers that the school would be embarking on significant change that involved them directly (Frost 2008b; Frost and Durrant, 2003). In the Palestinian context this was accomplished through the following two exercises.

The first exercise comprised a teacher audit of the school's professional culture based on portraiture of the school organisation. Portraiture is a methodology that attempts to combine empirical and aesthetic description in speaking to broader audiences to link inquiry to public discourse and social transformation (Laurence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis, 1997). Hanan led the exercise by using a tool from the ITL project, which the programme team adapted for the school context. Teacher responses to the audit varied widely. Statistical results were not the purpose of the exercise but it was effective in engaging teachers in discussion of professional culture.

The second exercise involved teachers evaluating the school's professional development programme dating back to its inception. Then Hanan solicited teachers' opinions of their effectiveness, concluding with recommendations for improvement. The hope was that teachers would suggest changes that coincide with the ideas underpinning TLDW. Fortunately, most of their recommendations did. Members of the senior leadership team noted that 'teacher recommendations are very important and take the school to a new stage of teacher development.' In addition to creating awareness among teachers for the need to improve professional development, this exercise was successful in demonstrating to senior leadership teachers' readiness for TLDW. This was crucial for reinforcing the headteacher's commitment and not merely compliance (Gurr, *et al.*, 2006; Lok & Crawford, 2004).

This exercise was facilitated by Hanan's role as a member of the school's senior leadership. However in Amina's case, she is considered an outsider to the four schools she plans to work with in Egypt and thus was unable lead such an activity. Commencing the intervention in such a way might lead some headteachers to regard the exercises as assessments of their performance. Therefore, in accessing the school culture Amina relied on conversations during meetings with the leadership team and teachers from the participating schools. This exercise will be repeated throughout the year following the establishment of rapport.

Introducing TLDW to teachers and inviting participation

Similar concerns were raised by teachers in Egypt concerning professional development initiatives run in their schools. Through a presentation that Amina presented to teachers

clarifying the TLDW concepts and inviting participation, teachers expressed their dissatisfaction with much of the training they have attended. They saw the TLDW programme as a way to restore their confidence and ability to be part of a meaningful process of professional development. Although there were concerns that teachers might not be motivated to join the programme, surprisingly teachers were seeking all possible advice to increase their chances of being selected to be part of the programme. This was particularly the case with teachers who did not have good command of the English language, as their modest English language skills had limited their options for professional development.

In order to facilitate the participation of all teachers, Amina committed to translating all the TLDW workshop material into Arabic, especially given that teachers identified their concern about the lack of useful educational resources for teachers in Arabic. It also became one of the aims of the project to publish a book in Arabic that includes the success stories and innovations of participating teachers. Provision of a set of tools and resources in Arabic enhances opportunities for collaboration between schools and teachers in Egypt and Palestine given their common language of Arabic, and beyond into the Arab region.

Identifying the programme team and initiating programme planning

Teachers' positive response to the TLDW preparatory activity confirmed to senior leadership the relevance and timeliness of the programme to their schools and generated their interest in learning more about the programme in both our cases. Programme teams (PT) were established in Egypt and Palestine, one in each school, to guide the intervention.

Co-tutors from each school were identified, who are expected to assist in running the workshops and offer support for teachers. They will also act as co-researchers as their observations and feedback will be incorporated into periodic reviews of the programme. As part of the programme team, co-tutors are expected to contribute to the process of adapting the tools and materials for the workshops. Choosing co-tutors from within schools expands school's capacity to support teacher leadership.

Ensuring co-tutors are able and prepared to assist in running the programme

Co-tutors from the participating Egyptian school will visit the University of Cambridge, Faculty of Education, during September 2014, to attend a short induction course organised and led by Dr David Frost to enable facilitation of the TLDW programme. It is hoped that by exposure to the international dimensions of the programme their motivation and enthusiasm will be enhanced. The visit will include seminars at the University of Cambridge and a visit to

a school that is part of the HertsCam Network where the TLDW programme is conducted. This will provide co-tutors with the opportunity to learn from experienced facilitators in the HertsCam Network, and make full use of the library and other facilities. They should be identifying the school improvement priorities and the possible interests of participating teachers. Discussions will include additional logistics, such as changes to the academic year calendar.

In the case of the Palestine programme co-tutors will be provided with the necessary support and induction in situ.

The preliminary stage of our interventions was successful. By the end of our visits, senior leadership had understood the concepts that underpinned TLDW and were committed to their facilitation. Equally important, teacher understanding of professional culture had been enhanced. Teacher voices were heard in a joint senior leadership-teacher discussion that led to a shared vision of the school's future professional culture and their role in changing it. Excitement and anticipation was generated for participating in the programme during the coming academic year.

Challenges

Non-positional teacher leadership is part of a leadership discourse that is distinct from the socio-cultural, political and educational experiences of teachers in Egypt and Palestine. Our contexts continue to be influenced by the heroic leadership paradigm, which remains embedded in the minds of many educational reformers (Waterhouse & Moller, 2009). The strong culture of hierarchy and seniority in the Arab world might not welcome what may be perceived as a challenge to the status quo of some headteachers and a potential threat to their strongly-held interests. It has been suggested that some headteachers are sceptical about involving teachers in decision-making (Hammad, 2010). In addition, centralisation, which is common to our education systems, is a major obstacle facing the emergence of devolved forms of leadership (Simkins, 2005).

Another challenge is the sensitivity to criticism where some teachers do not accept other teachers criticising their work (Wachob, 2011) or observing their classrooms while they are teaching. Some teachers' unfamiliarity with skills in constructive criticism may also lead to rejection or alienation of intra-teacher advice. All this may obstruct professional concerns from being shared and limit dialogue about professional issues.

Similarly, we believe that teachers in our contexts will be challenged by the concept of professional reflection and reflexivity. This is partly due to teachers' neglect of academic

literature in addition to the one right answer mentality. We expect these issues to pose challenges for tutors leading the TLDW workshops involving reflection and self-evaluation activities.

Finally, a general passivity towards the teaching profession we believe affects teacher enthusiasm and agency, leading many teachers not having the confidence to initiate change or be part of knowledge creation. Unfortunately, this may be due to the fact that a sizable number of teachers find themselves in the profession from a lack of alternative employment opportunities.

Conclusion

In this paper we trace the background, context, rationale and argument for introducing non-positional teacher leadership in Egypt and Palestine. We discuss the programme we have adopted and adapted for developing NPTL through the TLDW framework and our respective plans, including the initial reconnaissance and the challenges we expect to face. As we embark on conducting our programmes in contexts of similar characteristics and facing comparable challenges, we are filled with the hope that NPTL will not only inspire change within the teaching profession by empowering teachers to lead educational reform and innovation, but in equal measure to transform these same individuals to act agentially in improving their lives and communities.

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