



COSERE

Support for Collegiality in Schools

A Handbook

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Introduction

Some of the authors of this publication have already collaborated in previous years on an EU transnational project that focused on forms of collaboration in schools¹. The results of this project inspired us to further collaboration, this time focusing on the support of collegiality in schools by school leaders. We are convinced that all forms of collegial support, which we dealt with in the previous project, benefit from collegial culture in schools. However, building it is not easy, and school leaders play an important role in this.

The quality of schoolwork and collaboration within and between schools, mutual learning of people in schools and across schools has become a strong topic that has already been the subject of a number of publications. International research and development projects offer comparisons of schools, school systems and school policies across different countries and provide the opportunity to transfer experience and examples of good practice in order to continuously improve the quality of learning in schools and school systems. A number of related concepts are associated with collegiality – collegial climate, collegial culture, collaboration, and collaborative learning in and between schools.

Of course, a collegial culture is not only conducive to the well-being of the school and the satisfaction of the adults at school. Primarily, it has a significant impact on the learning processes of students, it is the basis for increasing the professionalism of teachers and the overall quality of schoolwork. Therefore, we can consider collegial culture as the basis of organisational learning, i.e. learning schools.

This publication is one of the main outputs of the COSERE project², which aims to (1) identify the needs of educational leaders in their efforts to enhance the culture of collegial support in schools, to enhance the understanding of various support forms and their impact on staff and school development; (2) to gain practical experience of using the diverse techniques and methods through a continuous professional development course; and (3) to share the best practice among consortium partners and deepen their knowledge.

Within this framework, we present a Handbook on Support for Collegiality in Schools that focuses on how to support different forms of collegial support. We do so in several chapters. First, we put the topic into a broader international context, showing how collegiality and collaboration in schools are perceived in international surveys and reports, and what kind of support schools in project partner countries receive

1. Coaching for Staff Professional Development in Education (CoDe), Erasmus+ project CoDe 2019-1LV01-KA201-060345, duration 2019-2022

2. Collegial Support for Resilience and Growth in Education (COSERE), Erasmus+ project 2022-1LV01-KA220-SCH-000086643, duration 2022-2025



in terms of the development of collegiality. This chapter also includes short descriptions of the situation in Cyprus, Czech Republic, Georgia, Ireland, Italy, and Latvia.

In the second chapter, we focus on schools as learning organisations, communities and learning networks. We discuss their main characteristics and the potential for collegiality in schools and school systems.

The third chapter is focused on the characteristics and forms of collaboration and collegiality in schools. Attention is paid to their main characteristics, typical forms of implementation, differences and commonalities in mentoring, coaching and supervision.

In the fourth chapter, we focus on the culture of collegiality, the role of school leaders in its development and support in schools, but also the limits and obstacles to collegiality in the school environment.

Finally, the fifth chapter explores data from our questionnaire survey, conducted among school leaders in the countries of the project partners. This identifies the concrete realities, the experiences, and the educational and other needs of school leaders in their efforts to enhance the culture of collegial support. On this basis, we formulate some recommendations mainly for school leaders striving to develop a culture of collaboration and collegiality in the school.

The publication is intended for all those who are interested in the topic of collegiality in schools and its support, especially school leaders. At the same time, it serves as an extended text to the training modules that were created within the project.

1.

A SCHOOL POLICY FRAMEWORK



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In this section, we will focus on how collegiality or collaboration in schools is perceived in some international surveys and reports, and what kind of support schools in partner countries receive in terms of the development of collegiality.

1.1 Political challenges across countries

Schools are nowadays urged to learn faster than ever before in order to deal effectively with the growing pressures of a rapidly changing environment. The skills that students need to contribute effectively to society are changing constantly, however, our school systems are not always keeping up (Schleicher, 2015).

Therefore, increasing the professionalism of teachers has become a challenge for schools and the focus of education policy in a number of countries. A number of international surveys point to collaboration and forms of collegial support as a means of increasing professionalism and improving the quality of schoolwork. For instance, the international, large-scale survey of teachers, school leaders, and the learning environment in schools TALIS 2018 (The Teaching and Learning International Survey) (OECD, 2020) considers peer regulation and collaborative culture as one of the five pillars of teacher professionalism (alongside career opportunities, knowledge and skill base, prestige and standing, and responsibility and autonomy). The same report also mentions forms of collaboration that have been neglected in schools so far, which have the potential to increase the professionalism of teachers. However, it should be taken into account that the situation varies not only between OECD countries, but also between schools in individual countries.

Nevertheless, the results of the TALIS 2018 survey show that teachers collaborate with their colleagues in a number of ways. The two most commonly reported types of collaboration are “discussing the learning development of specific students” (61% of teachers) and “exchanging teaching materials with colleagues” (47%). Professional collaboration that involves more interdependence between teachers, such as observing other teachers and providing feedback, participating in collaborative professional learning, and team teaching is less frequent. For example, only 9% of teachers in OECD countries provide observation-based feedback to colleagues at least once a month. At the same time, teachers who take part in the more interdependent forms of collaboration report higher levels of job satisfaction and self-efficacy. Positive views on collegiality (i.e. having good interpersonal relationships with colleagues) are widespread across OECD countries. An average of 81% of teachers report that they work in a collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support, and 87% of teachers agree that teachers in their school can rely on each other (OECD, 2020).

The EU Council conclusions on European teachers and trainers for the future also stress that it is beneficial to offer various training models (EURYDICE, 2021) and invite member states to provide impactful and research-based continuous professional development opportunities for people working in schools, based on collaboration, peer observation and peer-learning, guidance, mentoring and networking. The same report goes on to point out that teachers in the EU reported the highest participation in “information transfer”-style professional development activities that do not necessarily involve much interaction between participants. With reference to the TALIS 2018 data, it is stated here that lower secondary teachers reported lower levels of participation in peer-based and collaborative modern-type professional development activities. In the EU, 37.9% of teachers reported engaging in peer and/or self-observation and coaching; 31.4% in professional network activities; 19.8% in observation visits to other schools; and only 12.9% visited business premises, public organisations or non-governmental organisations as part of their professional development (EURYDICE, 2021, p. 88).

International surveys have been showing a lack of collegial collaboration in some schools (and countries) for a long time (e.g. TALIS), and the issue of promoting collaboration and collegiality in schools is thus becoming more important. As in other professions, it is important to have a core network of practitioners who collaborate regularly. In teaching, such professional collaboration takes the form of team teaching, providing feedback after classroom observations, engaging in joint activities across different classes, and participating in collaboration-based professional development.

Among the goals and policy pointers the following are emphasised (OECD, 2020, p. 29):

- **Develop a collaborative culture within schools** (harness the potential of collaborative professional development and professional learning communities to initiate and spread a school culture of collaboration, foster a collegial climate within schools to encourage voluntary collaboration among teachers, and build collaboration champions and distributed leadership within schools).
- **Foster mentoring and peer feedback as key attributes of professional work** (foster a growth mindset and a culture of formative feedback within the profession, encourage and mainstream the most impactful forms of feedback according to teachers, and encourage mentoring and feedback at all stages of the career).

The OECD report (2020) also mentions that it is necessary to promote school-based, collaborative and active professional development that responds to local needs and is adapted to school-specific contexts. Collaboration of professionals is considered as another powerful mechanism to stimulate teachers' ongoing professional learning. The TALIS survey affirms the importance of collegiality for collaboration, since teachers who agree that there is a collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support also tend to engage more often in professional collaboration in all countries and economies. It can be viewed as a positive that, over the past five years, views on collegiality have improved in around one-third of the TALIS countries and economies with comparable data.

Current goals for school policies and schools do not neglect the role of school leadership. A need to enable school leaders' time to foster instructional leadership is recognised (OECD, 2020, p. 41). School leaders need to encourage and support teachers to take an active part in induction and mentoring activities. It could be useful to allocate a certain number of hours of paid non-teaching time dedicated to mentoring activities within teachers' weekly or monthly schedules.

1.2 Role of national contexts (from national reports)

As part of our research, we were interested in the national documents that promote collaboration and collegiality in schools. In the following section, we offer information on some of the trends in the project partner countries related to building collegiality in schools.

Cyprus

Collegial support in Cyprus has no official foundation at the national level. It is one more "issue" and responsibility to be taken into account by the school leaders and the school staff members themselves.

With a strict school schedule time-wise, collegial support, though beneficial and valuable in common sense terms, is almost impossible to achieve, and it may not exist in the daily, weekly or monthly school life of a school leader or a school staff member. This leads to more teachers' professional dissatisfaction, professional loneliness and isolation, leading them to self-isolation, self-underestimation, and depression.

An urgent need for authorities to support and officially contextualise collegiality emerges. Advancing the role of the school leaders in making collegial support an official responsibility is needed. Space and time should be devoted for collegial support and good practices need to be shared. At the same time, investing in collegiality through continuing professional development (CPD) initiatives, hosted/organised by experts should enhance collegiality in schools advancing the school life, the leader's role and the teacher's work process and outputs-wise.

Interestingly, once established and promoted, collegial support can take various forms structure-wise in the Cypriot educational system, based on the potential of each:

- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Groups of educators may collaborate regularly to discuss teaching methods, student progress, and curriculum development.
- **Peer Observation and Feedback:** Teachers may observe each other's classes and provide constructive feedback to improve instructional techniques.
- **Collaborative Lesson Planning:** Educators may work together to plan lessons, share effective teaching strategies, and create engaging learning experiences.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Experienced educators may mentor newer teachers, offering guidance, sharing insights, and supporting their professional growth.
- **Workshops and Training:** Workshops, seminars, and training sessions where educators may learn from each other and from experts in the field can be organised.
- **Resource Sharing:** Sharing teaching materials, educational resources, and best practices among colleagues can be another collegial support practice.

Fostering a culture of continuous improvement and professional growth among educators should be encouraged and may be critical. It promotes a sense of community within schools, as well as personal, professional, and group satisfaction. It also encourages innovation, and ultimately benefits student achievement and well-being.

It goes without saying that collegial support should be fostered in the Cypriot educational system, with collegiality becoming a top priority of school leaders' agendas, and, before that, the Ministry of Education's agenda. In Cyprus, collegial support in education refers to a collaborative and supportive environment among educators to enhance teaching practices, professional development, and student learning outcomes. It can involve teachers and educational professionals working together, sharing knowledge, resources, and experiences to improve the quality of education. These are the first steps being taken towards successfully establishing a culture of collegial support, with further steps to be taken in the future.





Collegial support in schools in the Czech education system is given a lot of attention, with a number of projects on the topic being carried out in the past few years. The reality of school practice faces a significant number of limitations however, especially those related to time and finances, but apparently personal ones as well, specifically limited competences and leadership skills. Collegial support between educational professionals has risen in importance especially in connection with inclusive education, changes in the FEP (Framework Educational Programmes, the national curriculum created for individual school types/levels and on which school educational programmes are established), advances in IT, and the impact of Covid-19 which further intensified dialogue on the topic (Tomková et al., 2020).

The Czech education system is particular because of significant differences between schools (Koubová & Čihák, 2023) in their economic footing and human resources. The practical reality and theoretical concept of collegial support or collaboration between teachers can, therefore, be quite distinct from one another. Support is quite random; in some schools it is formalised, while in others it is promoted by the school administration, including through projects. Therefore, collegial support remains a challenge for many schools.

Czech school legislation does not mandate collegial support, but it rather implicitly counts on CPD finding its way to schools mostly in the form of mentoring, coaching, supervision, and other forms of collegial support. The introduction of new beginner-teacher status has gotten more attention, and the associated new legislation establishes compulsory mentoring for these teachers. However, mentor-teachers who must introduce new teachers do not have a clearly defined scope for this activity in the legislation so far.

New strategic school documentation, Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030+ (MEYS, 2020), points out the necessity of mutual support of and collaboration between teachers rather generally. In Part 3.1, titled “Comprehensive career training and support system”, it is stated (MEYS, 2020):

“In addition to the professional and personal development of teachers, its purpose will also be to

meet the educational needs of schools, their teachers, headteachers and other teaching staff, so that these needs are met to a greater extent directly at the school. ...The further training of teaching staff will have a keen focus on methodological support for the transformation of schools into learning organisations and effective forms of training for teaching teams, such as professional peer sharing, ongoing support directly in schools, synergies and cooperation between local schools. ...

The main aim of the training courses and methodical support will be to facilitate mutual learning and support within the teaching teams of schools and between schools, and to transfer proven and functional innovative methods. Teachers will be supported in the joint preparation of teaching by reflecting on it and viewing it as a natural part of teaching work.”

The development of specific forms of collegial support in schools is supported by a number of projects (usually supported by the EU and carried out under the administration of National Pedagogical Institute (NPI). An example of these projects is **the System of Support for Professional Development of Teachers and School leaders**, which aimed to create, verify and implement a system of comprehensive modular support that contributes to an increase in professional development - both of the leading administration employees in school leadership, and teachers in subjects’ didactics. This was achieved through professional fellowships using the wide spectrum of collegial support forms and professional development with defined quality criteria (SYPO, undated).

An example of another similar EU project is the **Strategic Thinking and Planning in Schools and Regions**. As a part of this project (alongside other outputs), centres for supporting schools were established in participating regions. These served as hubs where school leaders could ask for help for their school or the individuals in it, such as requesting the help of a mentor or coach, amongst other solutions.



The development of a collaborative culture in Georgia's general educational institutions has attracted considerable attention from the state and international projects during the past ten years. Schools are required by law to plan and carry out procedures through collaboration and collegial relationships. In particular, according to the national curriculum, every public school must include a collective body of teachers whose primary objective is to foster collaboration between teachers.

The Professional Standards for Teachers also require that teachers collaborate with their colleagues for the purpose of self-development and mutual development in order to improve students' academic results (Government, 2019). In addition, one of the duties of teachers, as stated in the Professional Development and Career Advancement Scheme for Teachers, is to collaborate with their colleagues to improve student achievements and the school culture (Government, 2018).

It is noteworthy that the 2022-2032 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia places a strong emphasis on the importance of carrying out programs that can foster collaborative processes at schools (Government, 2021). Moreover, the Standards for the Authorisation of General Educational Institutions in Georgia strongly emphasise that all processes taking place in the school must be based on collaboration and communicated to members of the school community (National, 2023).

The first steps in terms of collegial support in Georgia began in 2004 and carried on until 2007 through the "Ilia Chavchavadze" project, an initiative aimed at developing school networks and fostering a supportive collegial environment within educational institutions.

Later, from 2013 to 2015, the National Centre for Teacher Professional Development launched the project "In-service Professional Development of Teachers" with the intention of fostering a culture of mutual collaboration in schools and enhancing the effectiveness of teachers' performance through peer learning, which would ultimately improve the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools. The project was implemented in approximately 10% of public schools in Georgia. The schools created

professional development teams made up of representatives of school administrations and subject departments.

In 2016-2019, the "Professional Development Project for Teachers and School Directors" was launched, implemented under the general education component of the "Millennium Challenge Fund – Georgia" through the financial support of the second compact of the US "Millennium Challenge Corporation" (MCC). Through quarterly meetings, the project's planned activities helped to establish standards of collaboration both inside and between schools. The project covered all public schools across Georgia.

At the same time, all public and private schools joined the centralised system of teacher professional development and career advancement in 2015. One of the system's tasks was to empower schools, which, first of all, meant encouraging in-service professional development by supplying teachers with an opportunity to share successful experiences and engage in professional dialogue (National, 2015).

Evaluation panels set up in the schools assessed the activities the teachers carried out as part of the aforementioned scheme. The on-site presence of a teacher evaluation team and a facilitator for teacher development might be seen as an important step toward the decentralisation of schools.

In 2016, the National Centre for Teacher Professional Development, with assistance from the World Bank, evaluated the "Implementation of Teacher Induction, Professional Development, and Career Advancement Scheme" (National, 2016).

In 2018, the National Centre for Teachers conducted a study on the implementation of the "Teacher Induction, Professional Development, and Career Advancement Scheme". As a result, a number of important factors were identified that had a significant impact on the processes taking place in the schools engaged in the scheme. Problems were reported in particular with the work of the evaluation groups in schools, namely, members of the evaluation panels in some cases did not have relevant expertise to qualitatively assess the activities carried out by their colleagues (National, 2018).

The abolition of in-school evaluation teams was one of the key modifications to the scheme in 2019-2020. Now, granting the status of a leading teacher and a mentor was made possible through an external mechanism – an exam and external observation.

It is worth noting how international studies have evaluated collegial practice in Georgian schools. The collaboration between teachers was found to be beneficial in the research carried out by TALIS. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS, 2013; TALIS, 2018), evaluated the quality of collaboration among teachers who reflected on how often they participated in different activities. The findings show that a large number of teachers in Georgia are involved in collaborative activities. Based on this parameter, Georgia is significantly ahead compared to other countries participating in the research (TALIS, 2018). More than half of educators (51%) have experience participating in school-based teacher networks promoting professional development.

As part of the above study, for the purpose of evaluating the collaborative culture in the school's decision-making process, school leaders were offered general questions and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that their school's employees actively participate in the school's decision-making process. According to the results obtained, head teachers in Georgia generally agree with the statement that employees in their schools are offered opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, while a third of head teachers agree or fully agree that they make important decisions independently. Compared to the TALIS average, a relatively small portion of school directors in Georgia declare that their schools offer opportunities for parents and students to participate in decision-making. However, if we compare other parameters, the opinions of the Georgian school directors are similar to the mean TALIS indicators (TALIS, 2013; TALIS, 2018).



Ireland





Research surrounding the state of collegial support within Ireland's education sector is growing apace, however it remains a largely underexplored topic. Some crucial academic perspectives have emerged over the years and established its study as a vital component in reshaping Irish structures and institutions, some of which have begun to take proactive steps to introduce measures such as observation programs, mentorship schemes, and collaborative learning communities to promote professional growth and knowledge exchange among educators.

While they were referring specifically to tertiary education, Clarke et al.'s (2015) work on collegiality in the Irish context is valuable for consideration at all levels. They propose that "education institutions should create opportunities for academics to become meaningfully engaged at all levels of the institution... develop meaningful communication systems that are not focused only on information Transmission... [and] promote a culture of academic collegiality supported by policies and procedures regarding consultation and decision making" (Clarke et al., 2015). Moreover, the capacity and appetite for such a radical overhaul has existed at the primary and secondary school

levels for quite some time, with Cannon and Moran's 1998 work revealing that "the majority of teachers work in an organisational setting capable of supporting a collegial approach to whole school evaluation. A significant number of respondents described the climate in their school as 'motivated', which might be taken as evidence of an internal capacity of a school to change". All but one of the surveyed participants in this study expressed an interest in collaborative teaching or training efforts alongside their fellow educators, with "formative colleague observation... a powerful means of reviewing their work and developing teaching strategies" (Cannon & Moran, 1998). This form of collegial support as a catalyst for "staff development is a very neglected dimension in primary schools" (Cannon & Moran, 1998) in particular.

Despite growing knowledge of the importance of promoting collegial support and some key achievements in its mounting implementation, Ireland faces several challenges in sustaining effective support mechanisms on a national scale. Challenges such as resource constraints, institutional support, resistance to change, sustaining long-term effects, and communication barriers all persist. Furthermore, there exists



today (albeit to a lesser extent than at the time of their writing) Cannon and Moran's logistical reality that "only half of the teachers [they] surveyed stated that they experienced a participative style of leadership in their schools. An equal proportion of teachers categorised school leadership as hierarchical, a finding that would appear to correspond to findings in other studies" (1998). Speaking to a seemingly national phenomenon that has been reported at all levels of education, "Over two thirds (64%) of academics" in Clarke et al.'s 2015 study "experienced a lack of collegiality. Over two thirds (64%) did not view themselves as participants in decision making processes".

Resource constraints have been found to be an impediment to the nationwide rollout of extensive collegial support programs. Adequate funding and time allocation are crucial for universal access to valuable professional development. Although the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) addresses this in Ireland by providing a range of resources and support, more needs to be done to effectively support collegial professional development. Another significant challenge is that of institutional support, or in this case, the lack thereof.

The extent of institutional backing can greatly impact the effectiveness of collegial support endeavours. All things considered, there exists a universal understanding in the Irish education sector that collegial support has the capacity to be used as an effective catalyst for impactful change. As discussed, the appetite and ability for such a change to be enacted is not lacking. The vast majority of barriers then, as is often the case when it comes to transformative institutional improvement, exist at the material level. Support for collegial support can only be truly realised with institutional recognition of educators' concerns and suggestions, and action being taken thereafter to address them.

In its advice on implementing collegial support in education, Ireland's Council for Special Education makes reference to the old Irish proverb "*Ní neart go cur le chéile*". This means "there is no strength without unity" and is a powerful reminder that, however much we research every facet of collegial support, the premise underpinning its significance is a simple one. To navigate the sometimes-tumultuous seas of institutional change, we must all row together.

Italy



Collegial support in Italian schools has not been studied at the national level. The concept of collegial support does not exist in the Italian school context. However, this analysis of the need for collegial support is based on the assumption that collegial support refers to collaboration and teamwork amongst staff to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

Over the last ten years the role of the teacher in Italy has been fast changing to meet new challenges imposed by a global transformation of society. As a matter of fact, in the introduction of the 2016 – 2019 Plan for the training of teachers by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR), the following is stated:

“The profound transformations of Italian society and the challenges to be faced at the European and global level impose, today more than ever, special attention to the development of cultural, social, and human capital, which represents the set of fundamental factors for sustaining and accelerating the growth of our country” (MIUR, 2016).

Challenges faced by teachers include classroom management, the effect of youth culture and the digital world, new modes of learning and communication, etc. This scenario of a continuously and fast changing school has brought a radical change: teaching is no longer only about hands-on lesson time. Indeed, today’s learning environment goes way beyond traditional methods of teaching and teachers need to be equipped and supported to cope with that new learning environment. The Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) recognised the need for teachers to be equipped with skills that enable them to adapt to the dynamics of the “global village”. The Law 107/2015 is the main framework text for this adaptation. The need for ongoing teaching professional development is recognised as an essential priority not only for improving educational quality but also for maintaining teachers’ high levels of professionalism. Consequently, policy-makers have been working on strategies to provide teachers with more opportunities for training and skills development. Teachers in Italy are required to engage in CPD activities to maintain their professional competence and keep up to date with changes in education. Indeed, the Law 107/2015 on education system reform states that in-service training for

teachers is mandatory, ongoing, and systemic (Riforma, 2015).

In order to facilitate teachers’ obligation to fulfil their professional training, the S.O.F.I.A platform was launched in 2017 by the MIUR. Teachers can find all the courses and initiatives provided directly by schools or by accredited bodies and associations. S.O.F.I.A enables the management and monitoring of training. Individual schools are free to quantify the number of compulsory hours of in-service training and define which activities are considered valid to fulfil the in-service training requirement.

The MIUR determines the areas in which teachers must update their skills and competences, however it is the school leader within each institution who is in charge of dictating the guidelines and also proposes specific training proposals within the Three-year educational offer plan (PTOF). Ultimately, each teacher is free to choose whether they want to attend these internal courses or external ones, as long as they are accredited by the MIUR. Annual mid-term assessment is conducted on the basis of a report submitted by each teacher on the training they have undergone during the given period and a yearly final assessment in which the teacher demonstrates whether they have achieved an adequate level of training in relation to the PTOF objectives. If a teacher fails to prove sufficient professional development achievement, they will be assessed the following year. As a consequence, the proper continuous professional development of teachers remains at the discretion of each individual teacher.





If, generally speaking, the main forms of collegial support include mentoring, peer tutoring, and coaching, these are not common practices in the Italian school system. Mentorship as a method for support between staff is foreseen by the MIUR but is circumscribed to new hired teachers as incoming training. Indeed, the "Formazione in Ingresso – Neoassunti" is a program aimed at providing training and support to newly hired teachers (*neoassunti*). The program is part of the broader efforts to improve the quality of education and professional development for teachers in Italian schools. Mentorship is a crucial part of the program. Mentors – experienced teachers – may be assigned by the school leader to work closely with newly recruited teachers to provide guidance, discuss best practices, and offer support. The mentoring path involves a total commitment of 50 hours and is carried out through synchronous training activities aimed at improving laboratory teaching; mutual of teaching action, which is also supported by targeted operational instrumentation; and the reworking of professional skills guided by specific sections of content and tools provided online by the National Institute for Documentation Innovation and Research (INDIRE) (Ministero dell'Istruzione e Merito, 2022).

Overall, the following report aims at going beyond the theoretical context of collegial support in the national context of Italy in order to provide an overview of the situation in practice. It seeks to identify what collegial support practices are already in place, how useful they are, how successful school leaders are at implementing these practices, and to highlight the needs of school leaders for implementing collegial support or improving their ability to do so.



During the last decades, Latvia's education has paid more and more attention to collegial support in learning environments. The state document "Educational development guidelines for 2021-2027 Future skills for future society" was adopted in 2020 to show the main directions Latvia's education system should follow in the next few years. It pays serious attention to teachers' professional development including 'regular, continuous, needs- and evidence-based, effective and personalised improvement of professional competence available to every teacher'. The document outlines two tasks which show different forms of collegial support:

Task 1: To create sustainable professional experience exchange and collaboration networks.

In order to promote mutual learning of pedagogues, the transfer of educational innovations and good practices, to strengthen belonging to the profession and work motivation, as well as to implement the operation of the school as a learning organisation, it is planned to develop collaboration between educational institutions and groups of pedagogues, the movement of teacher mentors and other forms of collaboration during the guidelines period. In addition, it is planned to strengthen collaboration between educational institutions and sectoral, as well as NGO experts, in order to ensure the transfer of knowledge and practice and the development of relevant competencies for educators. Such collaboration is especially important in professional education.

Task 2: To ensure high-quality and regular assessment and improvement of the professional competence of pedagogues, methodical and consultative support, purposefully coordinating the involvement and collaboration of various parties.

In order to ensure accessible, regular and high-quality professional support for every pedagogue, a strategic and systemic approach to the professional development of pedagogues will be strengthened. That means:

- annual and evidence-based determination of the professional development needs of pedagogues (using pedagogue competence assessment tools and methods; education quality monitoring data on school performance indicators, etc.) at the level of the education system, municipality, educational institution in accordance with education development and policy priorities;
- targeted and needs-based planning of professional development of pedagogues at the national and local government level to ensure the development of current professional competencies for all pedagogues in all fields of study (planning of learning content and evaluation, development of cross-cutting skills, including digital skills, aspects of social-emotional learning, etc.);
- implementation of a unified and strategically supervised professional development system, ensuring effective collaboration of various involved parties and the use of the existing methodical and consultative support network, i.e. see the activities of study field coordinators and learning consultants in municipalities; the capacity of State Education Content Centre (VISC) in coordinating professional development, methodical and consultative support (support related to the organisation and implementation of the learning process, the welfare of pedagogues, etc.) and strategic supervision will be strengthened, as well as the capacity in coordinating professional development in cultural education (www.likumi.lv).

Support for changing the teaching approach carried out by the project "Competence Approach to Curriculum" (School 2030) is another huge change in Latvia's education system. The goal of the project is to develop, approve, and successively introduce in Latvia an approach to teaching general education from preschool years to high school by which students would gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for life today.

Within the framework of the project, a revision and improvement of currently valid curriculum documents, development and approbation of a renewed curriculum, and the development of subject programs and learning materials, including for children with special needs or health disorders, is also envisaged.

To achieve the goals of School 2030 an important role is played by the school as a learning organisation.

A school that supports the learning of each student and implements an immersive learning approach operates

as a learning organisation that is constantly changing and adapting to new circumstances. In it, students, teachers, school leadership and other staff learn individually and together to achieve their own and common goals.

- The school as a learning organisation has four main elements:
- a vision of the involvement of all students in learning
- teamwork and mutual learning
- knowledge and innovation culture
- leadership support for development (www.skola2030.lv)

To ensure teamwork and mutual learning and leadership support for development various support forms are gradually introduced in Latvia's schools. Highly-skilled teachers can acquire new skills and the role of becoming a learning consultant-expert.

If we look at the existing experience, we see that there are programs organised and funded at the city or state level, and at the same time there is support at the level of schools that are chosen by school leaders based on the needs of teachers, which we can talk about in general terms.

In schools, positive support experiences include teacher collaboration, learning, and support groups, including learning counsellors and mentors as individualised support for the teacher, school leaders-coaching, and supervision for teams and teacher groups.

Programs offered at the city and state levels cover both mentoring and coaching and supervision, separately for school leaders and teachers.

Mentoring. Mentoring is used for both young educators starting their careers and experienced teachers in times of change. The programs offered to mentors pay attention to the mentor-mentee relationship, what a mentor does and their role, skills and the mentee's responsibility. The programs also include experience exchanges – an opportunity to get to know the experiences of other schools in the municipality. Additional topics include how to help the new teacher with mentoring, how to maintain enthusiasm, how to keep young specialists in preschool, and what kind of support to provide.

Although a new practice that is still exploring the best way to function on a day-to-day basis, we can mention educational technology mentorship. This program is designed to evaluate and improve the mentoring experience according to the needs of the school and new teachers. Lessons include sharing experiences in implementing the mentoring process, the opportunity to discuss the roles and responsibilities of mentors, mentors' learning and growth needs, and the role of an educational technology mentor for purposeful use of technology in learning.

Supervision. This support is offered by individual supervision providers based on the needs of educators. Looking at the experience, we see that supervision programs are used:

- For school leadership. The supervision program is designed to enhance the participants' understanding of the principles of professional relationship formation, the causes, complications and possible solutions, their ability to identify their own needs and those of others, as well as their self-evaluation capacities and ability to identify avenues for further improvement.
- For the school management team, particularly on the topic of developing action algorithms when faced with cases of emotional and physical aggression.
- To improve the professional competences of educators and support staff in identifying the risks of early school-leaving, to increase self-efficacy in working with students exposed to the risks of early school-leaving, as well as to promote awareness of one's own resources in order to reduce the risks of burnout syndrome.

Coaching. The program most often offered to school leadership and career counsellors presents the basics of using coaching tools in individual and group counselling in an educational institution. The program about coaching in the work of school leadership promotes the professional management competences of the heads of educational institutions, as well as providing the opportunity to practically learn basic coaching skills through conversation, trying out practical coaching methods for employee development and task delegation. The program gives an opportunity to evaluate coaching skills and create a growth plan for development. There are also a number of special programs that integrate different support approaches.

Teacher in-service training in Erasmus+ Project "Teaching to Be"

Teachers' orientation towards professional development, stress management, and the development of socio-emotional skills is closely linked to the quality of the education process, pupils' learning achievements, and personal development. Teachers' stress and burnout pose problems for their health and for the education system as a whole. Educators therefore need professional development and practical tools to foster professional development and well-being, self-regulation, collaboration, empathy and other socio-emotional learning skills in their daily work.

Business leader – for school leader

The goal of this program is to ensure the exchange of experience between successful entrepreneurs and school leaders, improving the financial literacy and management skills of school leaders in general.

There are challenges to be taken into account in order for this type of support to be effective. The support must be appropriate to the needs (mentoring, supervision, coaching) and form (individual or group), as well as the amount of time, and regularity. For example, one supervision or coaching session could be considered an acquaintance rather than full-fledged support. When a new teacher starts working, mentor support would be the first thing that's needed. For experienced teachers, meanwhile, supervisors or coaching would be more useful for support.

Other challenges include the willingness of the teachers and school leaders themselves to engage with and accept the support offered. Furthermore, the school as a learning organisation influences the delivery and acceptance of support, cultivated through trust, safe emotional relationships, and acknowledgement of the possibility of making mistakes and talking about problems at work in search of solutions. All parties must be willing to work together effectively to achieve program goals.

2.

SCHOOLS AS LEARNING ORGANISATIONS, COMMUNITIES AND LEARNING NETWORKS



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In this part of the publication, we will focus on the following questions:

What are learning organisations and learning professional communities?

What are the characteristics of a school as a learning organisation?

What are learning networks?

2.1 organisational learning and learning organisations – old topic, new challenges for schools

The concept of the learning organisation began to gain popularity in the late 1980s. While the literature is disparate, it is generally agreed that learning organisation status is a necessity, is suitable for any organisation and that an organisation's learning capability will be the only sustainable competitive advantage in the future.

Schools nowadays are required to learn faster than ever before in order to deal effectively with the pressures of a rapidly changing environment. In this context, a growing body of scholars, educators and policy makers have argued for reconceptualising schools as 'learning organisations', which they consider the ideal type of school organisation for facilitating organisational change, innovation, and even effectiveness, i.e. improvements in the learning outcomes of students and other important outcomes (Kools & Stoll, 2016).

Definition of learning organisation

Learning organisations, as well as organisational learning, do not have a single interpretation, and the characteristics of these concepts are refined by different authors.

Most scholars see the learning organisation as a multi-level concept involving individual behaviour, teamwork, and organisation-wide practices and culture. A learning organisation is a place where the beliefs, values and norms of employees are brought to bear in support of sustained learning; where a "learning atmosphere", "learning culture" or "learning climate" is nurtured; and where "learning to learn" is essential for everyone involved (Kools & Stoll, 2016).

A learning organisation is one in which people are constantly expanding their abilities, where new ways of thinking are nurtured, where people are constantly learning how to learn together (Senge, 2006). Similarly, Silins et al. (2002) say that schools can be considered learning organisations when they engage in environmental scanning, develop shared goals, foster collaboration, encourage risk-taking, and provide opportunities for professional development.

A learning organisation is very much an open system, as many scholars have pointed out (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Senge et al., 1990). The characteristics of open systems are their relation to and interaction with the environment as well as the ability to scan and discover changes in that environment. Senge et al. (2012, p. 5.) emphasise not only the idea of openness, but also of voluntariness or devotion in learning schools. They describe the school as learning organisation as one that is:

Re-created, made vital, and sustainably renewed not by fiat or command, and not by regulation, but by taking a learning orientation. This means involving everyone in the system in expressing their aspirations, building their awareness and developing their capabilities together. In a school that learns, people who traditionally may have been suspicious of one another - parents and teachers, educators and local business people, administrators and union members, people inside and outside the school walls, students and adults - recognise their common stake in the future of the school system and the things they can learn from one another.

Characteristics of Learning organisations

The five disciplines identified by Senge et al. (1990) that a learning organisation should possess are:

- Team learning – emphasis on the learning activities of the group rather than the development of team process.
- Shared vision – ability to unearth shared ‘pictures of the future’ that foster genuine commitment and enrolment rather than compliance.
- Mental models – deeply held internal images of how the world works.
- Personal mastery – continually clarifying and deepening personal vision, focusing energies, developing patience, and seeing reality objectively.
- Systems thinking – the ability to see the bigger picture, to look at the interrelationships of a system as opposed to simple cause-effect chains; allowing continuous processes to be studied rather than single snapshots.

Örtenblad (2002) offers a typology of learning organisations and describes four types or aspects that all have to be implemented to be called a learning organisation:

- organisational learning – which is focused on the storage of knowledge in the organisational mind. Learning is viewed as the applications of knowledge at different levels (i.e. single- and double-loop learning); organisational learning is understood as a process that takes place in learning organisations.
- Learning at work – this understanding connects to the debate whether learning and knowledge are context-dependent or not. Rather than through formal courses which should play a limited role in the learning because it is difficult to apply this type of learning in practice.
- The learning climate – this perspective may also include structural elements, provided that the focus is not on the structure itself but on the facilitative character of the structure. A learning organisation is one that facilitates the learning of all.
- The learning structure – this perspective stresses flexibility and the structure. The learning organisation is one with an organic structure with a high degree of flexibility.

All of the above-mentioned aspects of a learning organisation are interrelated and contribute to the description of a learning organisation.

How do we recognise a learning organisation?

As the concept of learning organisations (and schools) gained popularity and increased in importance, the question began to arise: How do we recognise a learning organisation (school)? Gradually, tools for assessing learning organisations began to emerge. For example, Watkins, and Marsick (2003, p. 139) constructed the Learning Organisation Questionnaire, which includes the following dimensions:

- Create continuous learning opportunities.
- Promote inquiry and dialogue.
- Encourage collaboration and team learning.
- Create systems to capture and share learning.
- Empower people toward a collective vision.
- Connect the organisation to its environment.
- Provide strategic leadership for learning.

Based on the Watkins' and Marsick's (2003) Dimensions of the Learning Organisation Model, Kools and Stoll (2016) proposed the development of an integrated School Learning Organisation (SLO) model in which the collective endeavour is focused on:

- developing and sharing a vision centred on the learning of all students,
- creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff,
- promoting team learning and collaboration among all staff,
- establishing a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration,
- embedding systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning,
- learning with and from the external environment and larger learning system,
- modelling and growing learning leadership.

The importance of a learning organisation in today's context

Naturally, the concepts of organisational learning and learning organisation are related to a number of questions and doubts. Can organisations learn at all? Or just the people in them? It is obvious that learning can be observed in people in an organisation, but the reflection of the learning outcomes of people in the organisation in the performance or results of the organisation is emphasised.

Organisational learning taking place in learning organisations contributes to increasing the professionalism of people in the organisation, increases the quality of work, supports innovative processes in organisations and thus better adaptation of the organisation and people in it to changing external conditions. In schools, learning should translate into improving the quality of teaching and, in particular, facilitating pupils' learning processes. Thus, the condition of a learning organisation is a change in behaviour that moves the organisation to the desired state.

The concept of learning organisations is not new and learning schools have been talked about and written about for decades, but schools are still facing new challenges that are associated with turbulent changes in society. Today's Europe is exposed to new topics that provoke a number of often explosive discussions: e.g. migration and inclusion, LGBT+ trends and the waning influence of families, the green deal, energy and economic threats. These are topics affecting the whole of society, which shape the forms of today's and future schools. Society polarises over these topics, and it is often not easy to reach a consensus of values. Today's pupils perceive uncertainty, contradictory information and often heated discussions, and it is not always easy to find one's own identity in these difficult times. This is one of the reasons why we are seeing an increase in anxiety among young people, and the topic of well-being in schools is also coming to the forefront.

Within this socio-political framework, schools are looking for a new assignment for their mission, and all the more emphasis must be placed on the discussion of goals and values and on the collaboration of all actors in schools. Thus, the concept of schools as learning organisations is still alive and well and it is worth trying to understand this concept from different perspectives and in different contexts.



2.2 Characteristics and forms of learning communities

In the professional literature, we encounter different forms of learning groups, which are characterised by close collaboration. Vangrieken et al. (2015) focused their research on collaboration in schools and identified and described several forms of such groups.

School as learning community

In addition to the concept of school as a learning organisation, a school characterised by development and learning is often referred to as a learning community (e.g. Leonard, 2002; Pol, 2007). The concept of learning communities found its application in educational contexts towards the end of the 20th century, when a number of empirical studies and other papers on the subject appeared in professional journals (Du Four, 2004, Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004).

School as a community is characterised by an organised arrangement around relationships, shared values, and opinions. People in communities feel interdependent and create the conditions needed for the shift from "I" to "we" (Mitchell & Sackney, 2001; Pol, 2007). Similarly, Bryk and Driscoll (1988) state that schools organised on the principle of communion can be characterised by a system of shared values related to school and education, joint activities, and a culture of "care" in interpersonal relationships. These relationships are characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and trust (Pol, 2007). The school as a community entails teachers collaborating; they are bonded together to a set of shared ideas and ideals, rather than individualism and isolation (Leonard, 2002).

An important characteristic of learning communities is the specific relationships between community members (such as mutuality, sense of belonging, loyalty, trust, etc.).

School as professional community, school as professional learning community or communities of practice

Other authors specify terms such as school as professional community (Lomos et al., 2011), school as professional learning community (e. g. Achinstein, 2002; Westheimer, 2008) or school as community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The terms professional community (PC) and professional learning community'(PLC) are often used interchangeably (Lomos et al., 2011; Vangrieken et al., 2015), but some authors reflect on their differences (Achinstein, 2002). Teacher **professional communities** are described as groups of teachers that are unified in their concern with professional endeavours, or a group of people across a school who are engaged in common work; share to a certain degree a set of values, norms, and orientations towards teaching, students, and schooling; and operate collaboratively with structures that foster interdependence.

Professional learning community includes those subsets of teacher professional communities that focus on learning together with and from colleagues and they are generally restricted to a school site (Westheimer, 2008).

Sometimes professional (learning) communities seemed to be perceived as a school-level construct, capturing the whole school as a P(L)C (or even teachers from different schools or school sites) instead of a subset of teachers (e.g., Birenbaum, Kimron, & Shilton, 2011; Leonard, 2002; Vangrieken et al., 2015).

In more detail, the collaboration of teachers in specific practice is focused on communities of practice (CoP). CoPs can be perceived as the building blocks of PLCs (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Practice is seen as the source of coherence of a community. In this conception, community of practice is not seen as a distinct form of collaboration, but the aspect of practice is seen as one of the binding elements in a community.

2.3 Networking in schools

The learning community can be understood more broadly as a professional learning network. Professional learning communities and networks are now seen as agents of change in schools. It is about collective learning by teachers and sharing practices in response to the different needs of pupils.

The results of the research suggest (Lazarová et al., 2020) that networking within and between schools is a relatively common phenomenon with a growing trend. The complexity of the various topics associated with current changes in society seems to contribute to this development. It is therefore not surprising that the emergence of teacher networks is often initiated by external actors or by some new situation (e.g. school-political entities, usually through projects), i.e. in response to current challenges such as inclusive education, reading literacy, the use of ICT etc. The results of the analysis of the interviews suggest that school leaders are very inclined to create networks – both within and between schools, as they are aware of their potential for teachers' professional development as well as their own.

Definition and meaning of networks

The network is understood as a plastic structure, a social and technological phenomenon. Networks are focused social entities characterised by a commitment to quality and principles, focusing on outputs, supporting innovation and change. Professional learning networks are seen as a mechanism for generating new knowledge that has the potential to promote positive change (Muijs et al., 2014).

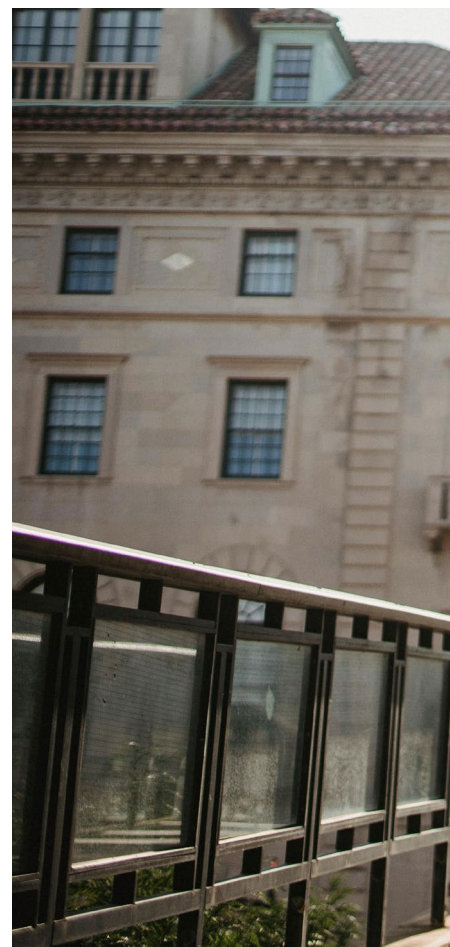
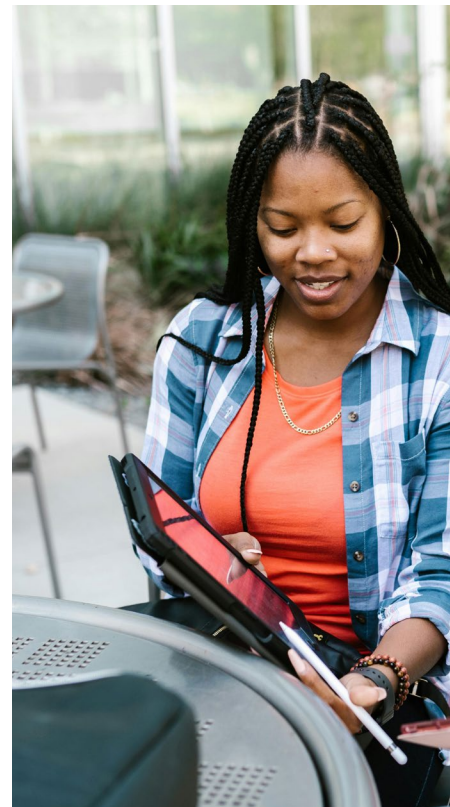
The main idea of learning networks is to encourage teachers to discuss certain issues, reflect on them and adapt their practice to the goals of the schools. Teachers learn from each other in networks, creating a group identity tied to a common teaching context. The beginning of such a collaboration can be the sharing of ideas, opinions, and specific practices in a safe atmosphere, all with the aim of optimising the learning of all students (Poortman & Brown, 2018).

In schools, networks are responsible for the dissemination of good practice, the professional development of teachers, capacity building, the link between centralised and decentralised structures, and the processes of restructuring and re-culturation of educational institutions and systems (OECD, 2003).

Forms of networks

Networks in schools are formally and informally organised, and in many cases, they are created under the pressure of joint projects. There are networks within schools that do not have to work on a specific project but are connections across the school that facilitate and speed up learning processes when needed.

In the context of education, the term network can refer to the internal network of teachers at a single school, or also to the external national or even transnational breadth of school collaboration (Chapman & Hadfield, 2009). Networks within the school are used to exchange experience and knowledge within the school, external networks are usually used to exchange good practice. According to some research, teachers are more likely to participate in networks within their school





than in networks between schools, which to some extent limits the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience (Lazarová et al., 2020).

What do the networks focus on in schools?

As part of the international project Leading Learning by Networking (Erasmus+ project, 2017-2020), a survey was conducted on how school leaders perceive the reality and support of professional learning networks in schools (Lazarová et al., 2020). The results suggest that school networks focus on a number of different topics, but these are mostly close to the primary process, i.e. teaching and learning (i.e. teaching methods, curriculum content development etc.). According to school leaders, the purpose of organised networks is primarily to share experience and information, but also to disseminate materials, methods and new ideas. It is common to involve networks in development activities, whether it is the reproduction of teaching materials or the search for and institutionalisation of new approaches to solving problems in teaching.



3.

CHARACTERISTICS AND FORMS OF COLLABORATION IN SCHOOLS



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In this section, we address the following questions:

What are the main characteristics of collaboration and collegiality in schools?

What are the usual forms of collaboration in schools?

What are the differences between mentoring, coaching, and supervision, and what do they have in common?

3.1 The key dimensions of collaboration

Collaboration is mentioned as one of the key conditions of the concepts of schools as learning organisations, professional learning communities, and communities of practice (e.g. Bolan & McMahon, 2004). Kools and Stoll (2016, p. 22) in their study focused on the analysis of definitions of learning schools identified collaboration, or the dimension “Encourage collaboration and team learning”, as one of the basic characteristics of learning schools.

Features of collaboration

The following features are attributed to the phenomenon of collaboration (Cook & Friend, 1991, p. 6):

- **Collaboration is voluntary.** Administrators or others with administrative authority may mandate that individuals work in proximity to each other, but selecting collaboration as a style is the choice of participants.
- **Sharing a common goal.** However, the authors point out that it can sometimes be a problem to agree on goals that are based on the main mission of the school, as they may include the specific goals of many entities.
- Collaboration requires **parity** among participants. This includes the idea that individual participants contribute equally to the work, and that their contribution is as valuable as that of another. Similarly, the profits from the collaboration are shared equally by the participants (Pol & Lazarová, 1999)
- Collaboration includes **shared responsibility** for decisions and outcomes. Parity creates the basis for the required shared responsibility for decisions. When professionals share responsibility for making decisions, they should also share accountability for the outcomes. In collaboration if a problem occurs, it is shared, too.
- Collaboration includes **sharing resources**. Contributing resources, whether time, money, materials, or anything else, assists in the development of the sense of ownership.

In addition to the characteristics, Cook and Friend (1991) also propose that collaboration has some elements that are needed for it to begin but that grow in strength as collaboration occurs. For example, collaboration requires that professionals trust one another enough to undertake a collaborative activity. The meaningfulness of effort, belief in success, the style of communication, etc., also play a role (Pol & Lazarová, 1999).

Other authors also confirm that collaboration presupposes task-related focus, including working and reflecting together for job-related purposes (James, Dunning, Connolly, & Elliott, 2007). In the case of collaboration, this working together includes the partners in the process doing all their work together as opposed to collaboration in which partners split the work and combine each of their partial results into the final outcomes (Vangrieken et al., 2015).

The relationship between collaboration and collegiality

If the focus in this text is on promoting collegiality in schools, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between collaboration and collegiality. It is not uncommon for these concepts to be perceived identically, and both are considered to be key characteristics of learning schools.

Although the terms "teacher collaboration" and "collegiality" are not always uniformly defined, it is clear – and research shows this – that they are decisive factors contributing to school improvement and teacher development (Kelchtermans, 2006).

Shah (2011) points out that the term collegiality is often used interchangeably with 'collaboration' and she believes that its exact meaning remains conceptually vague in the literature. In this, she is referring to the definition of collegiality centred on collaborative relationships and interaction among colleagues and shared responsibility in a group.

Vangrieken et al. (2015) compare the definitions of the terms collaboration and collegiality in the concept of Kelchtermans (2006) and Bovbjerg (2006), and they sum up that collaboration is seen as different from collegiality. Kelchtermans (2006) distinguished collaboration as being a descriptive concept from collegiality. Collaboration tends to refer to cooperative actions while the latter focuses on the relationships among colleagues. Collegiality has an inherent positive value, it is defined as consisting of relationships with colleagues as obligations based on mutual sympathy, solidarity based on an equal work situation, etc. Collegiality is used to describe the quality of the relationships among staff members in a school and has a normative dimension because it often includes a positive value, referring to good relationships among colleagues, and is part of the organisational culture.

Jarzabkowski (2002) tried to differentiate between collegiality and collaboration by defining collegiality as teachers' involvement with their peers on any level, be it intellectual, moral, political, social, or emotional. Collegiality encompasses both professional and social interaction in the workplace while collaboration mostly relates to the professional sphere of relationships. According to Lieberman and Miller (1999) teacher collegiality refers to the quality and impact of professional relationships whereby teachers openly and continually investigate and critique school/classroom practice with a view to improvement. Collaboration is seen as a subset of collegiality (Jarzabkowski, 2002; Little, 1999), which implies actually working together on a joint project or towards a common goal.

Datnow (2011) distinguished between collaborative cultures that support and stimulate spontaneous collaboration and contrived collegiality. While a collaborative culture originates from teachers perceiving collaboration to be valuable, productive, and pleasant, contrived collegiality results from administrative regulation obliging teachers to collaborate.

3.2 Forms of collaboration in schools

According to Vangrieken et al. (2015), it can be summarised that collaboration can be defined as joint interaction in the group in all activities that are needed to perform a shared task. This concept is not static and uniform, but different types of collaboration can occur with varying depths.

Collaboration and collegiality can take different forms and therefore can have different values (Kelchtermans, 2006). They comprise different styles and intensities and cover a wide range of topics. Little (1990) distinguished four different types of collegialities situated on a continuum ranging from independence to interdependence and include:

- storytelling and scanning for ideas,
- aid and assistance,
- sharing, and
- joint work.

These types of collaboration, or collegiality, include a number of partial activities that can take place at school.

Collaborative activities can be viewed on a continuum ranging from one-off interactions to strong and regular cooperative actions between teachers. There is not yet a consistent understanding of which collaborative activities are most beneficial to learning for teachers and students, especially because of the different ways collaboration can be structured (Reeves, Pun, & Chung, 2017). The authors cited discussions with others, collaboration in planning, sharing teaching experience, visiting another classroom, and working together on new ideas as some examples of collaborative activities.

Kelchtermans (2006) found that mentoring, induction, workshops, and shared planning periods, among others, are all labelled as forms of collaboration in different studies.

Lavié (2006) focused on the areas of collaboration in the school, and distinguished multiple existing discourses that described collaboration in the professional literature, which included: cultural collaboration, collaboration for school effectiveness, collaboration to create a school-as-a-community, restructuring discourses, and critical discourses.

The TALIS study from 2018 (OECD, 2020) also focused on the areas of work of teachers and collaboration in schools. It provided an opportunity to identify the different ways in which teachers work with their colleagues for instructional purposes and how often they engage in these activities. Collaborative activities were categorised into two groups, based on the nature of interaction among teachers. Some collaborative activities imply a deeper level of collaboration among teachers and a high degree of interdependence among participants. These two groups are:

- **professional collaboration:** team teaching, providing feedback based on classroom observations, engaging in joint activities across different classes and participating in collaborative professional learning,
- **simple exchanges or co-ordination between teachers:** exchanging teaching materials, discussing the learning development of specific students, working with other teachers to ensure common standards in evaluations and attending team conferences.

It is obvious that even this list of activities is not exhaustive and that it is only a rough categorisation that cannot capture the specific forms of deeper collaboration that are described in the literature.

In addition, there are a number of specific forms of collaboration (sometimes referred to as methods), such as reflective groups (Sørmo, 2016), co-teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995), supervision (Sturt & Rowe, 2018), mentoring across teacher age groups (Lazarová et al., 2016) or coaching (Lofthouse, Leat, & Towle, 2010). It can be assumed that these specific forms of collaboration can be classified as deeper professional collaboration – participating in collaborative professional learning. However, they can be provided by colleagues, as part of collaboration between schools, or by external experts. The use of these and other forms of collaboration to support teachers' professional development requires openness, trust, and willingness on the part of teachers to participate in these activities. At the same time, the TALIS results indicated that these methods of "deeper collaboration" are less frequently sought after in schools (OECD, 2020, p. 149).

For the sake of completeness, it can be added that the aforementioned TALIS research (OECD, 2020) then focuses more specifically only on methods of providing feedback, such as observation of teachers' classroom teaching, student survey responses related to teachers' teaching; assessment of teachers' content knowledge, external results of teachers' students, students' school-based and classroom-based results and self-assessment of teachers' work. However, it is clear that giving feedback may or may not meet the characteristics of true collegial collaboration.

The results of TALIS highlight that the form and depth of collaboration varies not only from school to school, but from country to country there are more or less centralised or formalised support systems for peer collaboration in schools.

Teachers are more likely to report that the feedback they received had a positive impact on their teaching practice when they hold positive views on collegiality. However, it is not clear exactly where specific collaborative activities should fall on the continuum or which collaborative activities may be the most beneficial. Definitional inconsistencies make it difficult to get a clear understanding of what mechanisms make teacher collaboration effective or ineffective, as there are also many studies that present negative consequences of incorporating teacher collaboration (Reeves, Pun, & Chung, 2017). Undoubtedly, all this also depends on the method of implementation and the context of collaboration.

The COSERE project, within which this text was created, is a loose follow-up to the Erasmus+ project CoDe, in which we gathered some experience with the use of mentoring, coaching and supervision in schools in the project partner countries. The outputs of this "Desk research" are published on <https://cardet.org/resources/CoDE/interactive-environment/EN/index.html#/>.

This follow-up project aims to promote collegiality in schools, which facilitates all forms of collaboration between teachers that have implications for professional development. We pay special attention to the development of mentoring, coaching and supervision in schools as specific forms of collaboration between teachers. Mentoring, coaching and supervision are methods to cultivate professional development based on the collaboration of experts and have already been described in detail in many professional publications.



3.2.1 Mentoring

Mentoring provides an opportunity to improve students' learning outcomes through teachers learning with and from each other. Mentoring enables teachers to reflect on their practice and to question what they do as they go about their teaching. As a means of collegial professional learning, mentoring requires careful planning and effective implementation so that it becomes embedded into the culture of the school (A Learning, 2010). Little (1990) ranks mentoring among the strong forms of peer support, i.e. those that have a clear impact in practice. Mentoring is considered one of the oldest models of collaboration to support human development.

Definition of mentoring

Zachary (2005, p. 3) defines mentoring as a reciprocal relationship of collaboration and learning between two or more people who share a mutual responsibility to achieve the aims of the mentee. Learning becomes a basic process, aim and product of mentoring. Similarly, Kochan and Pascarelli (2003) considered successful mentoring a process within which two or more people are voluntarily educated (shaped) in a mutually respectful and close relationship focused on achieving certain objectives. Mentoring guidance is based on a voluntary relationship of trust.

If the school has mandatory mentoring for novice teachers, then it makes sense to differentiate between teacher introduction and mentoring. However, these terms are often used synonymously, and it is assumed that even if mentoring is formally mandated, the mentee is encouraged to express his or her learning needs.

Who is a mentee?

Target groups of mentoring, however, are not uniformly delineated. Very often, mentoring is perceived synonymously with the process of induction of new teachers or sharing experience with the younger ones (Portner, 2005). Thus, some publications on mentoring relate only to the guidance of novice or student teachers, but we see mentoring as a form of peer support across age groups of teachers.

Who is a mentor?

The mentor is usually an experienced teacher providing support and assistance to teachers to enhance their professional growth and success at work (Jonson, 2008).

A teacher-mentor does not have to be more experienced only in terms of "age and length of practice" but is more experienced in a certain area (e.g. writing projects, working with ICT etc.), which means that in the peer concept of mentoring, a younger teacher can also be a mentor to an older teacher. Therefore, some authors make a clearer distinction between mentoring and induction of novice teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Also, the mentor does not necessarily have to be a teacher of the same subject, it depends more on their ability to establish a good partnership with the mentee. An important issue is the pairing of mentors and mentees. It is always more advantageous if the mentee can choose their mentor themselves.

A mentor should be a capable teacher, who should have (loosely according to Jonson, 2008):

- Ability to impart effective teaching strategies.
- Knowledge of the curriculum to be taught.
- Ability to listen actively.
- Ability to communicate openly with the mentee.
- Sensitivity to the mentee's needs.
- Ability to lead the mentee in a non-directive way and leave him or her free choice of different styles.
- Ability to care and provide support without judgement.

Each mentor should then have access to supervision and further education. The training of mentors is not always clearly defined in school systems, but multi-year supervised training is envisaged.

Successful mentoring

Mentoring publications usually highlight the following conditions for successful mentoring:

- **Establishing a relationship between mentor and mentee.** The relationship is based on voluntariness and trust. The relationship is equal partnership and learning. In terms of duration, it tends to be medium-term and long-term, depending on the achievement of the objectives.
- **Setting specific mentoring goals.** The goals of mentoring leadership are usually determined by the mentee (in agreement with the mentor), but the needs of the organisation can also be taken into account in some way (e.g. when the school needs teachers to improve in a specific area) (Lazarová et al., 2016). Generally speaking, the mentor supports the mentee, facilitates their reflection and learning processes, empowers them and gives them courage.
- **Diverse leadership methods.** The mentoring process, procedures and work techniques used vary depending on the mentee's goals, context, needs and learning style, as well as the mentor's experience and competencies. However, the essential work tools and skills of a mentor are active listening, observation of teaching, conducting an interview, providing feedback, using various techniques and tools to diversify collaboration and increase efficiency (e.g. evaluation questionnaires, etc.). (A Learning, 2010; Jonson, 2008; Lazarová et al., 2016).
- **Evaluation of mentoring.** Mentoring must be effective. The effectiveness of mentoring is evaluated by the mentor together with the mentee on an ongoing basis, even after the end of the collaboration.

It should be emphasised that each mentor works differently according to their abilities and possibilities, but adheres to the basic principles of successful mentoring.

Forms of mentoring

Both internal and external mentoring is carried out in schools. Each of these forms has its advantages and disadvantages.

Internal mentoring – is provided by teachers at school. It is therefore assumed that training is available for all teachers who are motivated and interested in mentoring and who intend to change the culture in schools (usually supported by projects and/or school budgets). Internal mentoring thrives in a collegial culture and tends to be less financially demanding. However, it is not uncommon for subsidised projects to be a good starting point for the development of internal mentoring and strengthening collegiality. Mentors who promote peer learning should be valued and supported in some form.

External mentoring – can be provided by external mentors, or in various school systems they are more or less officially established mentors who can be hired and paid via the school budget or with project funding. To solidify this arrangement and justify the resource-allocation, mentors should have clearly defined education or training requirements.



3.2.2 Coaching

Like mentoring, coaching does not have a single definition, but the basic principles of coaching are the same.

Definition of coaching

In broad terms, coaching is defined as "*a process that provides people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective*" (Peterson & Hicks, 1995, p. 41). It is a non-directive, equal interaction between the coach and the coachee which increases the potential, self-confidence, awareness, and responsibility of both individuals.

Van Nieuwerburgh and Barr (2016, p. 2) give a definition: a one-to-one conversation that focuses on the enhancement of learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee using questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge within a supportive and encouraging climate.

The essence of coaching in general is

- To help the individual to change in the direction and in the way they desire and to help them to follow the path they choose.
- Coaching supports individuals at all levels to achieve what they want to be.
- Coaching creates consciousness, reinforces choice, and leads to change (What is coaching, undated).

Coaching is about unlocking potential in order to maximise performance – it's about bringing out the best in people (Creasy & Paterson, 2005).

Who is a coachee?

Coaching has historically been more tied to the corporate sphere, but in recent decades has been considered a suitable tool for professional development in the school environment as well. Coaching in the school environment is sometimes related more to school management, but a number of authors describe various forms of coaching for teachers (e.g. Denton & Hausbrouck, 2009).

Who is a coach?

A coach does not have to be an expert in the profession (teacher), they are an expert in the coaching process. If they are to be an expert in the coaching process, then perhaps even more than in the case of a mentor, emphasis is placed on their training in the field of coaching. It is more typical for coaching to invite an outside professional coach to the school, although again, different educational contexts and systems must be taken into account.

Coaching is grounded in five key skills:

- establishing rapport and trust,
- listening for meaning,
- questioning for understanding,
- prompting action, reflection and learning,
- developing confidence and celebrating success (Creasy & Paterson, 2005).

Good coaches develop a feel for when to listen and when to ask the right questions. Through practice, they understand when to support and when to challenge. They help learners to diagnose needs, design options, experiment with behaviour and consolidate success (Creasy & Paterson, 2005).

Similar to a mentor, a coach also evaluates the usefulness of their work, educates themselves, is in contact with their professional community and seeks supervision.

Successful coaching

Coaching, like mentoring, can take a number of forms depending on the needs of the coachee, the experience or focus of the coach, and the context. Similar to mentoring, the coachee enters the process voluntarily. The relationship tends to be short-term. Coaching is characterised by a non-directive approach; the coach does not advise, does not provide his/her own expertise in the given profession, and supports the individual in learning and self-improvement.

In coaching, as well as in mentoring, it is possible to use a number of tools (e.g. evaluation, analytical, diagnostic and supportive, such as coaching cards, etc.).

Whilst coaching takes many different forms, coaching is principally a joint enterprise in which:

- One person supports another to develop their understanding and practice in an area defined by their own needs and interests.
- The coach will help the learner to identify a clear focus upon which to work.
- A positive rapport is established with the coachee, wherein needs and concerns are listened to intently.
- Probing questions that help clarify the area for development are asked, challenging the coachee to raise their awareness of the issue in focus.
- The coach will help the learner identify new behaviours and help them embed improved performance.

Coaching often involves integrating new or alternative approaches into the professional's existing repertoire of skills and strategies (Creasy & Paterson, 2005).

In successful coaching, both the coach and learner take responsibility for ensuring that new and improved practice ensues. It is also important that successes are celebrated.

Differences between coaching and mentoring

It is obvious that the definitions of coaching and mentoring contain common features (general goals – development and learning, voluntary relationship, positive influence on performance, equal relationship,

non-directiveness, etc.), and the process itself can be similar in many ways (client outcomes as the ultimate goal, client support, use of various methods of working with the client, process evaluation, etc.). However, as already mentioned, the definitions of individual authors differ in some respects, as the experience with forms of mentoring and coaching in practice is diverse. This is also evidenced by the results of our surveys in the CoDe project, where the interviewed professionals who were educated in mentoring and coaching often did not strictly distinguish between these professional practices. In mentoring, coaching procedures are also used – see: <https://cardet.org/resources/CoDE/interactive-environment/EN/index.html#/>.

Thus, the key differences can be summarised:

- A mentor is an expert in the profession, whereas a coach is an expert in the coaching process, the coach is not more experienced in the given professional field. A mentor is usually a more experienced colleague; someone very familiar with a particular culture and role, who has influence and can use their experience to help an individual analyse their situation in order to facilitate professional and career development (Creasy & Paterson, 2005).
- A coach's primary role and responsibility is to help employees get better at a particular skill. Conversely, mentors use their experience working in a specific organisation to empower and educate mentees.
- The coach always supports the coachee as an accessory to the process, while mentoring support from a more experienced colleague can be more traditionally educational. As an expert in the profession, a mentor can also share their own experience, knowledge, and possibly provide advice. But it's up to the mentee what to do with that advice.
- The relationship between a mentor and a mentee is considered to be more intense and long-term than that of a coach and coachee.
- Both mentoring and coaching can work in organisations on a formal and informal level. The informal forms usually provide more security as their main attribute is voluntariness. Internally or externally provided mentoring or coaching has its advantages and disadvantages (finance, feeling of safety, accessibility, etc.).

3.2.3 Supervision

In some school systems, supervision has also found its way into schools, although originally it had a key place in the context of counselling and social work.

Definition of supervision

The term supervision evokes a "detached view", so it can sometimes occur that – in some systems – a mandated, formalised process emerges, which has a greater element of control. Supervision can be an evaluation of compliance with standards and procedures of work, professionalism and ethics. However, it is clear that supervision, which has control features, does not always have to be formative in nature.

For practical reasons, teacher supervision in many school systems has been closely related to the teacher performance evaluations. This actually goes against the purpose of supervising, which is to stimulate professional growth and development (i.e. Sullivan & Glanz, 2013).

If supervision is also to have an impact on professional development and strengthen collegial relationships, a humanistic concept of voluntary peer-supervision, i.e. non-directive and supportive, is preferred. In this concept, supervision should – similarly to mentoring and coaching – provide a safe space to explore uncertainties and difficulties in work. It is a way to reflect on what might be happening for the teacher and the context that informs their actions and behaviours. In supervision, the teacher finds time and space to rediscover energy.

Supervision brings a greater clarity to their work and creates an opportunity for change (Shohet & Shohet, 2020).

Who is a supervisor?

If we understand supervision as a kind of control process, then the supervisor could be a superior – the school headmaster, for instance. In the practice of schools, we are more likely to encounter "observations" - visits by principals to teachers' classes, who then provide feedback to teachers. However, directors usually do not have time for real supervision, and the superior-subordinate relationship usually limits the openness of the supervised. In addition, some directors usually provide supervision rather intuitively, as they do not always have training in supervision (April & Bouchamma, 2015). In non-directive peer-supervision, a supervisor can be any colleague who can establish and maintain a collegial relationship, conduct a conversation, and provide formative feedback (DuFour & Eaker, 2004).

The supervisor should have knowledge and experience in the topics they supervise, but it depends on the objectives of the supervision. In the case of relationships, a psychologist can also be the supervisor of the teacher, for example, while in the case of teaching procedures, it would be more appropriate for the supervisor to have direct experience with teaching to provide proper feedback.

Also, a good supervisor should continuously evaluate their work, educate themselves in supervision and supervision tools, and seek supervision of their own work.

Who is a supervisee?

Any teacher who needs to consult their work procedures or who is recommended to participate in supervision. Therefore, the supervisee does not necessarily learn a new skill, the process mostly resulting in a change in the way they look at work, work processes, and work or client relationships (with teachers, management, pupils, parents etc.). Usually, it can be the supervision of a procedure in a specific situation or a relationship with a specific individual. Changes in the way you look at your work and relationships lead to changes in your beliefs and work practices.

Successful supervision

Similar to mentoring and coaching, supervision can take many forms and can use a number of procedures and tools. The main tools are observation, a well-conducted interview, and some method of providing feedback. As already mentioned, peer-non-directive supervision is more suitable for professional development and the promotion of collegiality in schools. In this setting, similar principles apply as in mentoring and coaching. The supervisee should enter into the supervision relationship voluntarily and determine the topic and goal of the supervision themselves.

The supervisor must stimulate the teacher's self-confidence, perform in-class observations, provide feedback and discuss relevant teaching and learning issues with them (Sullivan & Glanz 2000). Observation schemes, scales and other evaluation tools are used in the supervision of teaching, their use always depending on the knowledge, skills, creativity and experience of the supervisor.

Models of supervision

As already mentioned, in school practice we can encounter both a directive and collaborative model - some authors speak of autocratic and democratic supervision. In autocratic supervision, conflict, friction, and antagonism can soon develop.

As far as the forms of supervision are concerned, depending on the context and objectives, individual face-to-face supervision can also be supplemented with team supervision of two varieties:

- colleagues help the teacher in their development and bring their perspective to the topic
- the goal of supervision is set jointly by the team and concerns everyone, e.g. the topic of team functioning, relationships in the team etc.

Climate for Coaching, Mentoring and Peer Supervision

At the end of this section, we find it useful to refer to the publication Creasy and Paterson (2005), which clearly guides the reader to the main principles of building a culture of coaching and mentoring in schools. According to Clutterbuck (2003), they also mention the main requirements for building a successful climate for coaching, which are equally valid for mentoring and peer-supervision:

- There is good understanding about what effective coaches and learners do.
- There are strong role models for good coaching practice.
- People welcome and actively seek feedback (even the most senior leaders).
- People are able to engage in constructive and positive confrontation.
- Coaching is seen primarily as an opportunity rather than as a remedial intervention.
- There is mutual responsibility for coaching between leaders, coaches and learners.
- People are recognised and rewarded for their activity in sharing knowledge.
- Time for reflection is valued.
- There are effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing barriers to professional learning.
- People look first within the school for promotion.
- Personal growth, team development and organisational learning are integrated, and the links between them clearly understood.

Summary – highlights

- Collaboration and collegiality in schools take on different intensities, depths and forms.
- Imposed, mandated collaboration and collegiality tend not to have a significant impact on professional development, can remain only at a formal level and are not sustainable.
- Frequently described forms of peer-collaboration at school include mentoring, coaching and peer-supervision.
- The definitions of mentoring, coaching and peer-supervision are not always uniform. If they are to have an impact on professional development, the principle of voluntariness and secure relationships applies.
- Mentoring, coaching and peer-supervision processes can take very different forms. It is primarily a creative work in which the main tools are listening, observation, interviewing, providing feedback and a number of other supporting techniques (scales, questionnaires, diagnostics, models, standards, cognitive maps, portfolios, drawings, etc.)
- Mentors, coaches and supervisors evaluate the effectiveness of their work.
- Mentors, coaches and supervisors should be trained in the field (there are different educational requirements in different school systems), continue their education and seek supervision.

4.

COLLEGIALITY IN LEARNING SCHOOLS, ITS SUPPORT AND LIMITS



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In this section, we ask ourselves the following questions:

What is a culture of collegiality?

What is the role of school management in promoting a culture of collegiality in the school?

What are the limits and obstacles to collegiality?

4.1 Collegiality and a culture of collaboration and collegiality at school

Professional communities, which are considered essential to professional growth and school improvement, are characterised by a culture of collegiality or collaborative cultures (Miller, 1999).

The concept of collegiality

Collegiality can be understood as **positive interpersonal relationships among teachers and a sign of an environment conducive to collaboration**. Through increased interactions and interdependence, frequent collaborative actions among colleagues also reinforce positive relationships, strengthen trust, and support and enhance the overall school climate (Rutter, 2000).

Campbell and Southworth (1992) suggested that many people use the term as if it is commonly understood, but that understanding generally only amounts to the concept that teachers should 'work together'. Their review of collegiality concludes that 'collegiality is a hazy and imprecise notion' (Campbell & Southworth, 1992, p. 65).

Hargreaves (1994) suggested that there is no such thing as 'real' or 'true' collegiality or collaboration, but many forms of each exist and each serves a different purpose with a different consequence. Hargreaves (1994) further states that the **term 'collegiality' is vague and imprecise, and therefore, is open to interpretation**.

Thus, the definitions of collegiality are rather vague, but scholars agree that collegiality is based on the quality of interpersonal relationships between colleagues in schools, which provide the basis for a collaborative working environment (OECD, 2020). The research of TALIS suggests a **characteristic of collegiality**, which has been investigated (operationalised) using the claims:

- the school has a culture of shared responsibility for school issues,
- there is a collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support,
- the school staff share a common set of beliefs about teaching and learning,
- the school encourages staff to lead new initiatives,
- teachers can rely on each other (OECD, 2020).

Teachers' collegial contact and engagement through different collaborative activities can define their everyday working conditions, which, in turn, determine satisfaction with their jobs (OECD, 2020). TALIS findings indicate the importance of collaborative professional learning for instructional improvements and innovation in teaching.

A culture of collaboration and collegiality

The concept of a culture of collaboration and collegiality evokes the anchoring of processes of collaboration and collegial relationships in the environment of a particular school. Culture is defined as *“the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic ‘taken-for granted’ fashion an organisation’s view of itself and its environment”* (Schein 1985, p. 6). The organisational culture determines what forms of collaboration are possible in the school but, at the same time, teachers working together, exchanging ideas, etc. strongly contributes to the content and form of the culture, its sustainability and changes.

Nias summarises that **collaborative culture is built on a belief in the value of openness, tempered by a respect for individual and collective security**, which typifies the core of that culture (Nias 1999, p. 235).

TALIS (OECD, 2020) data make it possible to test the relationship between the frequency with which teachers engage in deeper forms of collaborative activities and teacher collegiality. Teachers’ engagement in professional collaboration is regressed on teachers’ perceptions of collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support and the possibility of teachers relying on each other. As expected, in all countries and economies participating in TALIS, teachers who agree that “there is a collaborative school culture characterised by mutual support” also tend to engage more often in professional collaboration.

Essential for the successful collaborative school culture are **interpersonal relationships, mutual support, trust and solidarity** (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Jarzabkowski, 2002). Collaborative cultures comprise evolutionary relationships of openness, trust, and support among teachers where they define and develop their own purposes as a community.

Hargreaves (1994) also takes up the term “collaborative culture” and argues that in a collaborative **culture teachers work together voluntarily and spontaneously, without an external agenda**. The collaboration is clearly development-oriented, pervasive across time and space and to a large extent unpredictable. As such a “collaborative culture” fundamentally differs from a culture of “contrived collegiality”, “individualism” or “balkanisation”.

4.2 The role of school leaders in promoting collegial culture

Without underestimating the role of school policy and local conditions (in other words, context), there is no doubt that school management plays an important role in promoting collegiality in schools. The above-mentioned OECD reports also highlight the key and active role of school leaders in developing a culture of collegiality and collaboration in schools.

School leadership can shape the degree of collaboration as well as the culture of collaboration in the school. Fostering a collaborative culture of collegiality is often associated with the concepts of distributed, shared or transformational leadership.

Distributed, shared or transformational leadership

Research based on a **transformational leadership** perspective shows that leadership actions of school leaders are strong predictors of collaborative actions between teachers (OECD, 2020). School leaders who promote distributed decision-making among a wide range of stakeholders in the school, including teachers, parents and students, may also foster teacher collaboration within the school. Based on the findings of TALIS

2013, **there is a positive relationship between the opportunities for stakeholders (such as staff, parents and students) to participate in school decisions and teacher collaboration** (OECD, 2014).

Also according to Khourey-Bowers et al. (2005), one major criterion for change in school culture is the transformation of traditional peer relationships into collegial relationships. Traditional aspects of school culture, including professional autonomy and social isolation, can be supplanted by implementation of a **shared leadership model** as one component of systemic professional development by promoting the use of inquiry and collaborative problem-solving strategies both in the teachers' meeting rooms as well as in classrooms.

Also, based on research within TALIS (OECD, 2020), the important role of school principals, including the role of delegation, was mentioned among the main policy pointers that can strengthen a culture of collegiality and collaboration in schools. **School leaders can delegate the task of fostering a collegial climate and boosting collaboration** in a broader sense to a "collaboration champion". Individuals show diverse dispositions for collaboration, teamwork, interpersonal skills and abilities for leadership in this area, but some people are natural team workers and collaborators. **Schools should aim to capitalise on their predispositions and talent to help them become collaboration champions within the school.**

The role of school leaders in promoting collegiality

A number of authors enumerate the tasks for school principals in their efforts to improve learning processes in schools by building a culture of collaboration and collegiality, or collegial networks. Verbiest (2008) divides these tasks into three groups and thus formulates three basic roles of school heads:

- **The role of 'culture developer'** means providing support for the formation, dissemination and embedding of shared values, views, and standards in the service of an inclusive professional learning culture.
- **The role of 'educator'** means fostering the intensity and quality of the individual and collective learning processes of team members so that profound learning takes place.
- **The role of 'architect'** means building structures, processes and systems in schools and amongst schools that enhance personal and interpersonal learning capacity development.

For a more detailed description of these roles, we can refer to the text of Verbiest (2008). A number of other authors mention the role of school principals in building collaboration and collegiality from specific perspectives, but their recommendations can also be related to these roles.

The role of culture developer

This role is reflected in the recommendations of a number of authors. In policy pointers formulated on the basis of TALIS (OECD, 2020) research, the key role of school leaders in developing a climate conducive to collaboration is underpinned. This is an area where they can express leadership and have an impact, as building teachers' sense that they can rely on each other is an effective way to boost collaboration within schools. But trust and interpersonal relationships are built over time and cannot be mandated. One way to initiate this process could be for school leaders to multiply opportunities for teachers to work with one another on small projects, team-teaching arrangements or collaborative professional development, as a way to develop a new school culture and change mindsets.

The school head's job is to foster a safe and open environment where teachers trust each other and learn together. It's an "open door" culture where people aren't afraid to ask questions, accept feedback, work through mistakes, and open up their classroom to colleagues. It is therefore a matter of tearing down the traditional individualistic school culture.

If a director is to foster such a culture, they must be **a model** of it. Success in building a culture of collegiality

therefore lies, among other things, in the personality of the leader – in their emotional intelligence and social skills. Thus, leaders building a culture of collegiality should themselves have the skill to have a safe conversation and provide formative feedback. They should be knowledgeable in team leadership and social psychology.

The role of educator

The school leaders as an educator should delegate, create a strong sense of purpose, motivate their teams, and attract and retain talent (Creasy & Paterson, 2005). According to the aforementioned authors on the topic of coaching culture, school management should focus on some main principles, which may include:

- Collegiality as a whole and the various forms of collaboration must make sense. Teachers and management should agree on the needs of the school and there must be clear benefits for the school and the individuals involved.
- It is necessary to clarify what the requirements are for teachers, what behaviour is expected of them and also what will need to be learned.
- It is necessary to build capacity for various forms of collaboration in the school (educate mentors, coaches, etc.), invest in the education of teachers and school management.
- School leaders, as educators, help to increase understanding of all forms of collaboration in the school and motivate teachers to cooperate and be open.
- School leaders guide teachers to evaluate effectiveness and work with evidence.

In order for the school management to fulfil the role of an educator, it must have knowledge of deeper forms of collaboration and evaluate the educational needs of people in this area.

The role of architect

School leaders can design opportunities for collaboration, especially deeper forms of collaboration that increase collegial contact among teachers (OECD, 2020). Similarly, Vangrieken et al. (2015) implicitly mention the director's role as an architect when they state that a lot of actions can be undertaken to support the many components of the collaborative process (e.g., realising task interdependence, developing clear roles for the members, establishing a defined focus for collaboration).

School leaders, in their role as architects, create transparent systems for collaboration which require that they:

- provide needs analyses and plan activities,
- create and support teams. It is considered necessary, also, to reflect on the structure of teams (Vangrieken et al., 2015),
- determine responsibilities in teams and delegate,
- provide the necessary training for teachers and teams, including supervision,
- evaluate and supervise quality.

However, the role of the architect applies not only to tasks and people or teams, but also to organisational matters:

- rethink teachers' schedules and school time, and optimise classroom time to design and implement effective pedagogical practices,
- provide spaces for meetings and group learning,
- provide material support for collaboration,
- develop a remuneration system.

Last but not least, the task of the management is to open schools externally, to create networks not only within schools, but also with other schools. To develop collaboration, it is necessary to use and build external links and networks that support ongoing work and provide new expertise, knowledge and stimuli for reflection and development. Such links and networks help sustain and develop all forms of collaboration within the school (Creasy & Paterson, 2005).

Finally, it should not be forgotten that directors also need support if they are to successfully manage their role as promoters of a culture of collegiality. They also develop relationships with their fellow principals from other schools, participate in coaching, mentoring or supervision activities (mainly as mentee, coachee and supervised/supervisee). We must not forget their support from the founder, school management boards, etc.

4.3 Limits of collegiality and collaboration

Although collegiality and collaboration are concepts that are considered to be key conditions for school development, a number of authors also point out some of the risks and limits that are associated with efforts to develop collegiality in schools.

Kelchtermans (2006) based on a review of the research literature shows that those virtues and benefits are not as self-evident as one may think. It is argued that collaboration and collegiality can take different forms and contribute to different agendas, not all of which can be positively valued.

Contrived collegiality

The first risk, which many authors point out, is contrived collegiality. Collaboration that is mandated by school leaders (contrived collegiality) may lead to reduced collaboration among teachers (Hargreaves, 1994, Leonard & Leonard, 1999). Hargreaves & Dawe (1990) point to the difference between collaborative culture and contrived collegiality: Contrived collegiality consists of administratively contrived interactions among teachers where they meet and work to implement the curricula and instructional strategies developed by others. Collaborative cultures foster teacher and curriculum development. Contrived collegiality enhances administrative control.

Similarly, Vangrieken et al. (2015) draw attention to the importance of intrinsic motivation. In reality, it may often be the need to collaborate that pushes teachers towards collaborative work instead of an intrinsic desire residing from awareness that students as well as teachers benefit from collaboration. When teacher collaboration mainly resides from top-down initiatives and definitions of needs, this might lead to contrived collegiality and superficial rather than deep-level collaboration. This feeling of being obliged to collaborate can encourage a recalcitrant and apprehensive attitude towards collaboration.

Sometimes teachers are under pressure to collaborate because of strategic and political documents and projects for which this is a necessity. A number of projects are aimed at developing collaboration – in whatever form – in schools. This entails an "obligation" of collaboration. Not only does forced collaboration generally disregard the initial strengthening of feelings of trust and reciprocity required in true collaboration, but it also does not help to meet goals and, ultimately, weakens after the end of the project. An imposed collegiality in which the teacher finds no meaning is usually not sustainable.

Closed-mindedness of collaboration teams

Another risk to the development and sustainability of a culture of collaboration and collegiality is the closed-mindedness of collaborative teams. Teachers sometimes get used to working in pairs (e.g. mentoring, peer-supervision) or in small teams and close themselves off from the outside world. This then has a low impact on the development of continuous learning processes across an organisation. Usually, there is also a lack of evaluation in such close collaboration.

Superficiality of collaboration

Even though research has repeatedly confirmed a positive relationship between collaboration and teachers' perceived professional certainty, that relationship was not very strong (Munthe 2003, p. 810). As mentioned by Little (1990), it depends on the intensity or depth of collaboration. Collaboration and collegiality that only address the 'how to' question seem to contribute more to the status quo than to change or improvement (Kelchtermans, 2006).

The imposition of collaboration often takes place on a formal and superficial level, because it does not make sense to teachers and does not demonstrate clear benefits.

Personal qualities and experience and composition of teams

When we talk about the limits of collaboration, we cannot fail to mention the personality traits and experience of teachers, their attitudes and the composition of the team of teachers. It is not always possible for the school head to choose the most compatible teachers and create ideal teams. Teachers' personal characteristics, like attitudes, personal efficacy, perception of feasibility or meaningfulness etc., proved to determine teachers' participation in professional learning more than characteristics of the tasks or the environment. (Kelchtermans, 2006). Teachers may also have had a bad experience (e.g. mentoring, coaching, receiving feedback) and may be suspicious and resistant to further offers of collaboration. Therefore, it is important not only to educate the team on the issues of collaboration and peer support, but also to select external mentors, coaches or supervisors who will provide teachers with a good experience of collaborating on professional development.

The need for independence

The need for independence is also related to personality traits and experience. Although teachers usually positively value the idea of collaboration, at the same time they often report "finding comfort in the norms of independence and privacy because the alternative – collaboration – [carries] with it the threat of exposure, ridicule, loss of face, and even job loss." For teachers, an important drawback is related to a threat towards their strongly appreciated individual autonomy and independence. (Abrahams 1997, p. 421, Kelchtermans, 2006, Vangrieken et al., 2015). Nias (1999) mentions the need to maintain a balance between autonomy and collegiality. In a similar vein, Achinstein (2002) focuses on the need to remain "autonomous" in some views and attitudes, and considers this to be a major challenge for professional communities. In authentic professional learning, the key is to find a balance between on the one hand maintaining interpersonal ties and connectedness in a caring community, and on the other, sustaining constructive criticism (in which differences in opinion and beliefs can arise).

Vangrieken et al. (2015) point out that a strong-rooted culture of individualism, autonomy, and independence appears to be profound in education. There is thus a need for a change of mentality in the case of teachers and education in general. Without an essential amount of openness to collaborate, every effort pushing teachers towards collaboration may become lost in a culture of contrived collegiality.

Strain and stress

Collaboration can also bring increased load and stress or even increase the risk of burnout syndrome, especially if it is not supported in terms of time, space and material, and if there is no clearly defined system. Johnson (2003) rightly questions the claim that teacher collaboration would reduce workload, since meeting and exchanging has to be done 'on top' of the standard job. Although his study provides evidence for the benefits and positive impact of teacher collaboration, he also warns that "it would be naïve at best, and dishonest at worst, to suggest that all teachers benefited" (Johnson, 2003).

Teachers in schools where great demands are placed on professional growth and improvement in any form may feel pressured into various activities regardless of their needs, interests, abilities, family context, current situation, etc. Pressure from management and social pressure across the school can be detrimental, increase fatigue and lead only to formal collaboration.

Bureaucracy

We have already mentioned that deeper forms of collaboration are often launched within the framework of projects or externally financed. However, European and other projects are usually associated with administration, which puts a burden on the team members – both teachers and school management. Some schools are not interested in projects financed from outside because of the high administrative demands.

However, some obstacles to building a collegial culture in schools are of a broader contextual nature and are related to the state of society and the quality of the school system in a particular country.

Summary – Highlights

- A culture of collegiality is characterised by the quality of interpersonal relationships between colleagues in schools, which provide the basis for a collaborative working environment.
- Essential for the successful collaborative school culture are mutual support, trust and solidarity.
- The openness of the school to the outside world and the creation of networks within the school and with other schools are important.
- School leaders play a key and active role in developing a culture of collegiality and collaboration in the school.
- Distributed, shared or transformational leadership are frequently mentioned forms of leadership that have a positive effect on the development of a culture of collegiality.
- The school leaders plays the role of culture developer, educator and architect.
- The main limits of a culture of collegiality and collaboration include contrived collegiality, closed-mindedness of collaborative teams, superficial collaboration, personality traits and experience, team composition, the need for teacher independence, burden and stress, and bureaucracy.

5.

PROMOTING COLLEGIALITY IN SCHOOLS - EXPERIENCE AND NEEDS OF SCHOOL LEADERS



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In the first part of the COSERE project, we set ourselves a task to identify the concrete realities, experiences, and educational and other needs of school leaders in their effort to enhance the climate/culture of collegial support. To this end, we designed a questionnaire that we sent to school leaders in each partner country. The main aim of this part of the text is to present the data from this survey.

5.1 Objectives and main questions

The objective of our “Desk research” was to identify the concrete realities, the experience, beliefs, and educational and other needs of school leaders in their effort to enhance the climate/culture of collegial support.

The term “collegiality” or “culture of collegiality” is discussed more extensively over the previous chapters. In the questionnaire, we focused on the promotion of selected characteristics of collegial culture, forms of collaboration, and their sustainability. In particular, we were interested in respondents' sense of self-achievement in the given areas. In the introductory part of the questionnaire, we briefly explained to the respondents how we perceive the concept of collegiality, or the culture of collegiality at school.

We asked the questions as follows:

- *What experience with supporting collegiality in the school do the leaders of schools have? Respectively, **how successful do they believe they are** in the individual areas of providing support for the development of collegiality in the school?*
- ***What educational and other needs** do the school leaders of schools have in regard to the development of collegiality in schools?*

For the purposes of this text, we can also ask other questions:

How does the data differ from one partner country to another?

What recommendations for educational modules do the data indicate?

5.2 Research tool

In order to collect data in individual partner countries, we created a questionnaire that included scales and open-ended questions. We based our construction of the questionnaire on the available expert literature which focuses on the collegiality in (see the description of the individual parts of the questionnaire).

We asked school leaders how successful they feel in promoting collegiality in individual areas (see later - parts B, C, D, E) and in the second part we asked how the school head feels to be a model for such behaviour (F), how they perceive well-being at school (G), and finally we asked how competent they feel in promoting collegiality (H). In essence, we proceeded from their experiences, feelings, and beliefs, to their needs.

At the beginning of the questionnaire, we informed respondents about its purpose, assured them of the voluntary nature of entering the questionnaire, the anonymity of the data, and their right to withdraw from completing the questionnaire at any time.

Furthermore, we structured the questionnaire into several areas. Each area contained a different number of items and one open-ended question at the end, where respondents could freely express their opinion on the area.

The structure of the questionnaire is as follows:

Part A: Demographic and school data. We asked the type of school, size of school, length of the experience in the role of school leaders, and gender identity.

Part B: Unity of purpose – support of shared aims and values of schools. One of the important characteristics of the culture of collegiality in the school, according to a number of authors, is a shared vision (Vesso & Alas, 2016; Peterson & Deal, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Shah, 2011; Gruenert, 2005, etc.). We formulated four items (plus an additional open question), with respondents indicating their feeling of the success in fulfilling this task on the scale

not at all successful 1 2 3 4 5 6 fully successful.

Part C: Support collaboration in trust and safe climate. The culture of collegiality is characterised by the collaboration of teachers with one other and with other subjects, and there can be a number of specific forms of collaboration. The process of successful collaboration requires trust, a safe environment, and breeds a sense of satisfaction and security (Andrews & Lewis, 2002; Campbell & Southworth, 1992; Hoerr, 2008; Jarzabkowski, 2002; Lieberman & Miller, 1999; Little, 1982; Shah, 2011, etc.). In this part, six items (plus an additional open question) were formulated, with respondents indicating their feeling of success in fulfilling this task on the scale

not at all successful 1 2 3 4 5 6 fully successful.

Part D: Providing tools and creating conditions. A number of authors draw attention to the conditions that need to be created for collegial support to be successful, using a number of tools to do so. In this section, we asked about the forms of collegial support that are created by the school management and what resources the management provides for this (e.g. according to Creasy & Paterson, 2005; Koskenranta et al., 2022, etc.). In this part, ten items (plus an additional open question) were formulated, with respondents indicating their feeling of success in fulfilling this task on the scale

not at all successful 1 2 3 4 5 6 fully successful.

Part E: Sustainability – maintaining collegiality. It is not uncommon for authors to draw attention to problems with the low sustainability of collaboration and collegiality. If some forms of collaboration are started within the framework of projects, there is a risk that they will end with the implementation of the project. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasise sustainability and create tools to ensure that collaboration is embedded in the school culture (Doyle, 2016; Schmidt et al., 2017; van Nieuwerburgh & Barr, 2017; McKie, 2022; Vesso & Alas, 2016). In this part, seven items (plus an additional open question) were formulated, with respondents indicating their feeling of success in fulfilling this task on the scale

not at all successful 1 2 3 4 5 6 fully successful.

Part F: Understanding the individual role in supporting collegiality as a model of behaviour. A school leader must be a model of collaboration, openness, sharing, and education. In this section, we did not ask whether the director felt successful or unsuccessful, but rather how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement (Creasy & Paterson, 2005; Lazarová et al., 2020; Verbiest, 2008). In this part, six items (plus an additional open question) were formulated, with respondents indicating their feeling of success in fulfilling this task on the scale

fully agree 1 2 3 4 5 6 fully disagree.

Part G: Understanding the satisfaction, wellbeing and quality of teachers' work. A culture of collaboration and collegiality has a positive impact not only on the quality of teachers' work, but also on their well-being and job satisfaction. (Andrews, & Lewis, 2002; Shah, 2011; Van Maele et al., 2011). In this part, we used six items and a scale measuring headmasters' beliefs about the quality of work, satisfaction or well-being of teachers.

I am not convinced about it at all, I couldn't provide any evidence of that 1 2 3 4 5 I am convinced about it, I could provide a lot of evidence of that.

Part H: Self-assessment of school leaders' own skills for maintaining collegiality.

At the end of the questionnaire, we asked school leaders how satisfied respondents are generally with their ability to promote collegiality in schools and how they perceive their need to learn in this area. We used one item and scale.

I have a lot to learn in this area 1 2 3 4 5 6 I feel very successful in this area.

At the end of the questionnaire, we asked open questions aimed at assessing the respondents' own strengths, what they consider the most important, what they would advise their colleagues and fellow school leaders, and what specifically they would like to learn in this area.

What are your strengths in promoting collegial support in your school?

What do you think is most important in your effort to promote collegial support in school?

What would you suggest to other school leaders for the promotion of collegial support?

What type of training could help you to better support the processes of collegial support in your school?

5.3 Methods of data gathering

In all participating countries, the data was gathered using the same version of the online (Google form) questionnaire between April and June 2023. The questionnaires were translated into each national language. In each country, the partners chose their own approach for the data collection in regard to their own capacities and reflecting the local context. The original plan was to gather 50 responses minimum from each country from the school leaders disregarding the level or the type of schools (elementary schools, lower secondary and higher secondary schools). Data was gathered anonymously.

In Cyprus, they launched the COSERE research during the School Leaders Annual National Conference in Nicosia, which was widely participated by 170 school leaders. At the same time, CARDET hosted an open call through its social media. 43 fully filled-in questionnaires were successfully gathered.

In the Czech Republic, the partners gathered the data in partnership with the educational centre Vysočina Education. This educational institution has strong connections with the schools in the region. Data hence reflect the experience and needs of school leaders in the area of building collegiality in the school especially from the Vysočina region. In total, 230 schools were approached, specifically the school leaders at schools, in two calls. 77 fully filled-in questionnaires were successfully gathered.

In Georgia, in total, there are 2080 public school leaders in the country; therefore, the research population included 2080 individuals. During the study, a simple probabilistic sampling was applied, within which 142 school leaders were randomly selected for the research. All school leaders constantly collaborate with the National Centre for Teacher Professional Development.

In Ireland, the respondents were reached out via a mass email, to which 20 people responded. It was focused on teachers' experiences and needs in promoting collegial support in schools.

In Italy, the respondents were reached via a mass mail sent to the 6439 e-mail addresses of schools that are part of CESIE's network. A total of 50 school leaders answered the questionnaire.

In Latvia, all Latvian schools received the questionnaire via e-mail. Additionally, e-mails were sent to each of our partner schools separately. Information was disseminated via Facebook profiles, closed groups, and the website www.visc.gov.lv. After two weeks, reminders to fill out the questionnaire were sent to schools. In total, 48 respondents filled out the questionnaire.

5.4 Results of the Desk research (quantitative part)

In this section, we present the results of the desk research. The limits of this survey should be taken into account, as there are no representative samples in any country (except perhaps GE) and the number of respondents varies considerably from country to country. We expected that the samples would not be representative, and that was the reason why we also included open-ended questions in the questionnaire. In this way, the results can provide relevant insights into the experience of school leaders and their educational needs.

Tables and graphs show both the overall results and the results in each country. However, the differences can only be interpreted with great caution. For the sake of simplicity, we will use the country-specific abbreviations in the following as follows:

- CY – Cyprus
- CZ – Czech Republic
- GE – Georgia
- IR – Ireland
- IT – Italy
- LV – Latvia

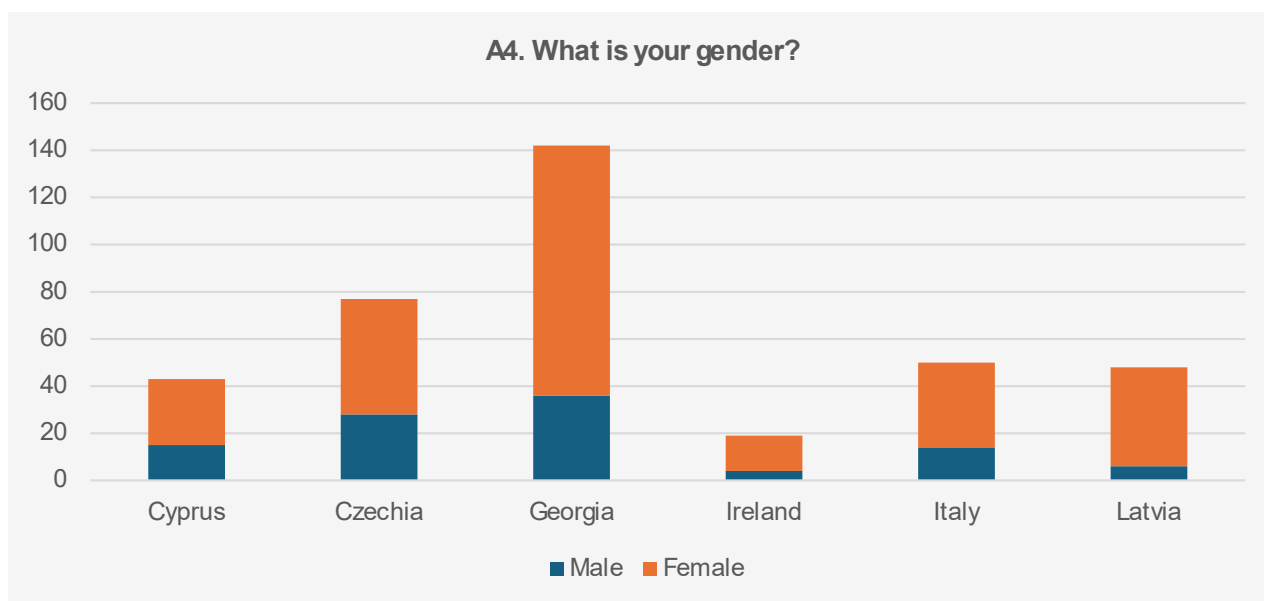
Demographic data

A total of 379 school leaders participated in the survey, of which 276 were women and 103 were men. The representation of male school leaders and female school leaders is shown in Table 1.

GENDER

Table 1: Gender of respondents (in %)

	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
Male %	27,2	36,4	25,4	21,1	28,0	12,5
Female %	72,8	63,6	74,6	78,9	72,0	87,5



Graph 1: Gender of respondents

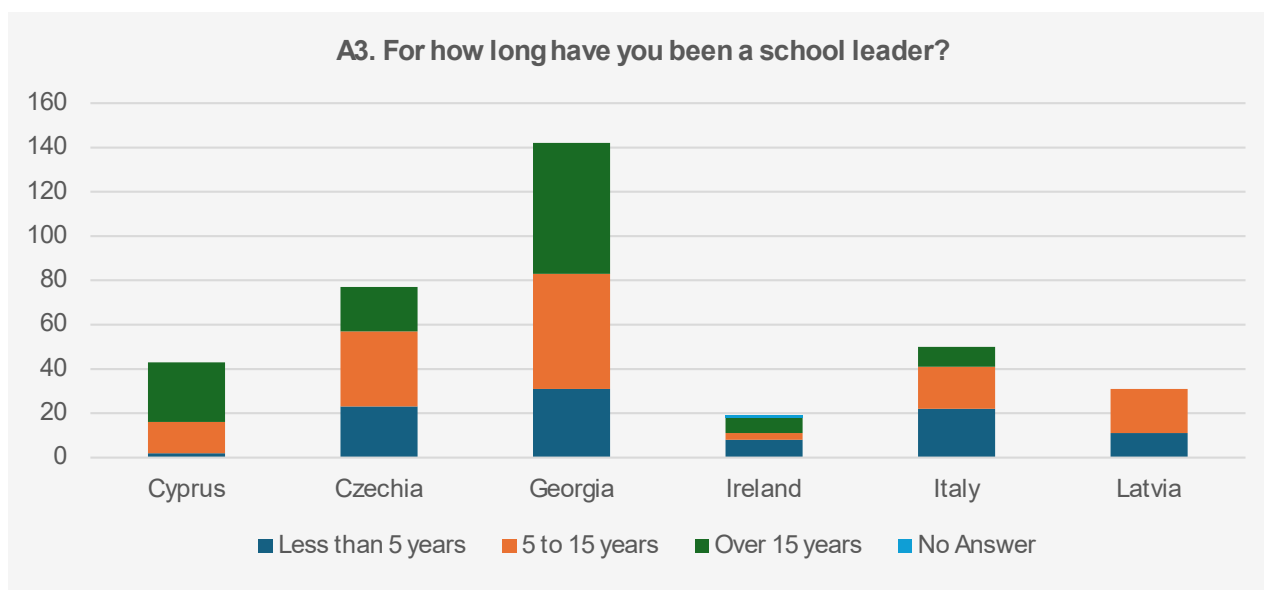
The results show that in all countries there was a higher percentage of female school leaders participating in the survey.

LENGTH OF THE PRACTICE

School leaders with higher experience are the most represented in the survey – a total of 142 (37,5%) school leaders with experience from 5 to 15 years and 122 (32,2%) school leaders with experience over 15 years. 97 (25,6%) had less than 5 years of experience (1 answer was missing).

Table 2: Length of the practice in school leaders' role (in %)

	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
Less than 5 years %	4,7	29,9	21,8	42,1	44,0	35,5
5 to 15 years %	32,6	44,2	36,6	15,8	38,0	64,5
Over 15 years %	62,8	26,0	41,5	36,8	18,0	0,0
Missing answer %	0,0	0,0	0,0	5,3	0,0	0,0



Graph 2: Length of tenure in school leaders' role

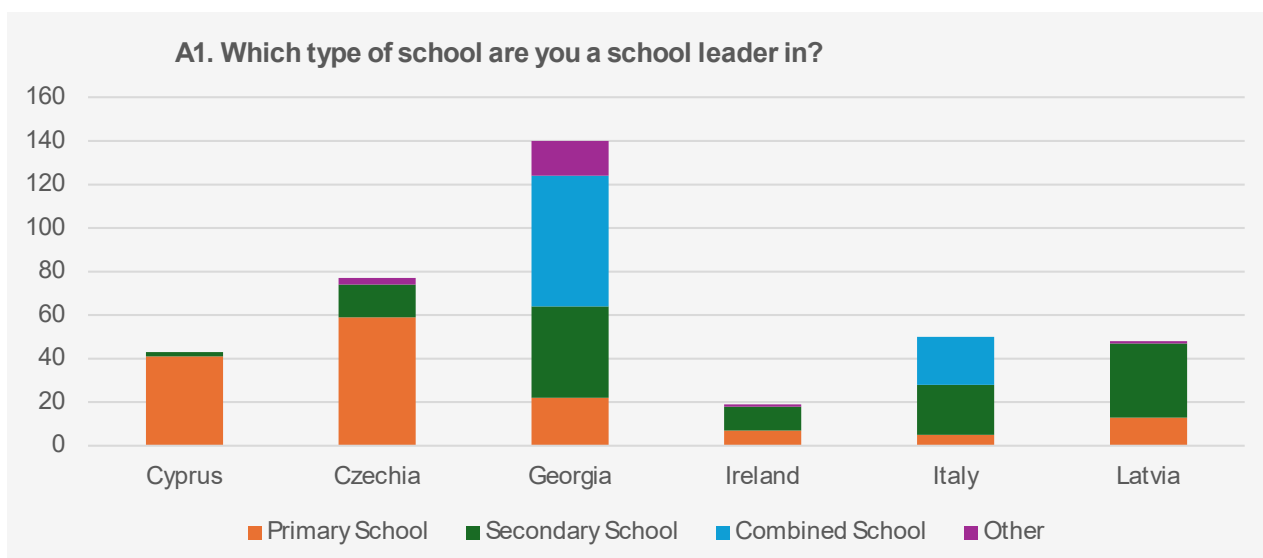
The table and graph show that directors with different lengths of experience participated in the research, and in this respect the sample was varied. An exception is LV, where directors with more than 15 years of experience did not participate in the research. The most experienced respondents come from CY and GE, the least experienced from IT and LV.

TYPE OF THE SCHOOL

We used the questionnaire to survey the management of all types of schools so that the sample was as diverse as possible. Primary schools (147 primary schools) and secondary schools (127 upper secondary schools) were the most frequently represented in the whole sample.

Table 3: Type of the school (in %)

	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
Primary school %	95,3	76,6	15,7	36,8	10,0	27,1
Secondary school %	4,7	19,5	30,0	57,9	46,0	70,8
Combined school %	0,0	0,0	42,9	0,0	44,0	0,0
Other school %	0,0	3,9	11,4	5,3	0,0	2,1
Missing answer %	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0



Graph 3: Type of the school

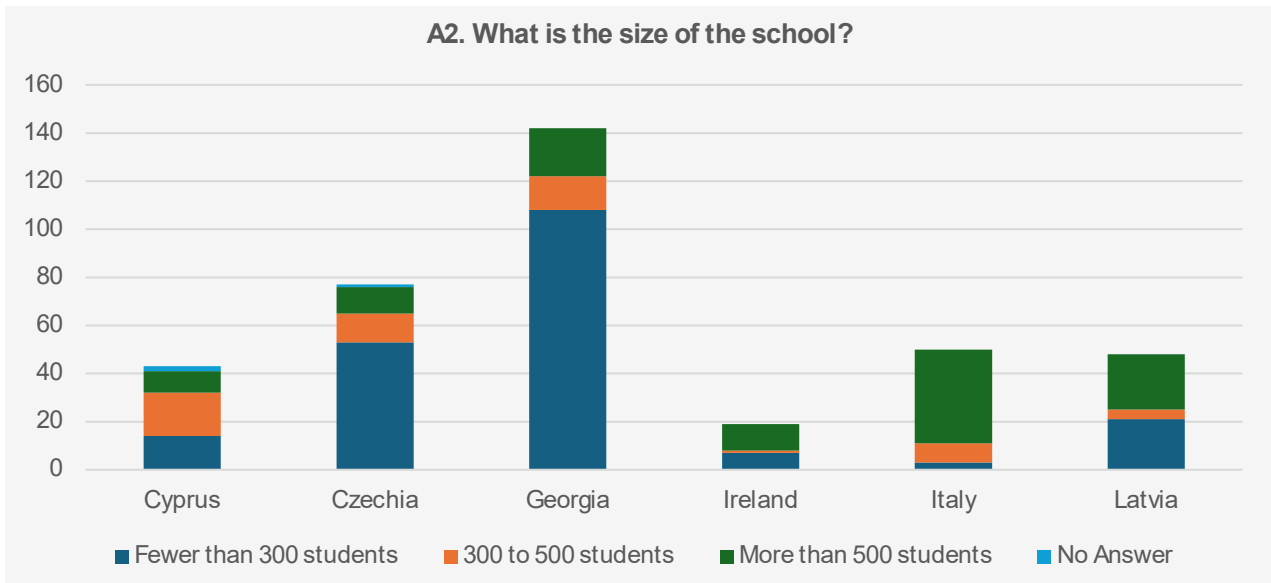
In CY and CZ, the research was carried out mainly by school leaders of primary schools. In some countries (especially in GE and IT) these are so-called combined schools, which include both primary and secondary education.

SIZE OF THE SCHOOL

Schools are similarly diverse in terms of their size. In the whole sample, the largest number of schools were small institutions with up to 300 pupils (206 schools), and the least represented schools were medium-sized schools, i.e. from 300 to 500 pupils (57 schools).

Table 4 Size of the school (in %)

	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
Fewer than 300 pupils %	32,6	68,8	76,1	36,8	6,0	43,8
300 to 500 pupils %	41,9	15,6	9,9	5,3	16,0	8,3
More than 500 pupils %	20,9	14,3	14,1	57,9	78,0	47,9
Missing answer %	4,7	1,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0



Graph 4: Size of the school

In CZ, GE and LV, the questionnaire was typically answered by school leaders of smaller schools, while data from IT is typical for a country with larger integrated schools.

A sense of success for school leaders with the promotion of collegiality

First, we asked respondents how successful they felt in each area (B-E) of supporting collegiality at school (average values of all items). The results are shown in Tables 5 to 8.

Table 5: Unity of purpose – support of shared aims and values of schools

B. Indicate on the scale how successful you are in achieving the following	All	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
...that employees in the school identify with the goals and directions of the school	4,52	4,02	4,43	5,16	4,52	4,40	4,56
...that employees in the school identify with the school's values	4,60	4,07	4,52	5,25	4,58	4,62	4,58
...that school employees identify with the idea that it is necessary to help each other in order to improve the quality of teaching	4,63	4,05	4,57	5,38	4,84	4,34	4,62
...that employees identify with the belief that professional growth is the base of the quality of teaching	4,53	3,98	4,46	5,40	4,58	4,24	No Data
Mean	4,57	4,03	4,49	5,30	4,63	4,40	4,60

Scale: 1 = not at all successful, and 6 = fully successful

Table 6: Support collaboration in trust and safe climate

C. Indicate on the scale how successful you are as a school leaders in achieving	All	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
...full of trust, where teachers communicate with each other about their successes and failures	4,40	4,14	4,51	5,05	4,21	4,16	4,33
...where teachers help each other and share their know-how	4,56	4,19	4,60	5,19	4,68	4,14	4,58
...where teachers collaborate in teams across the school	4,38	4,12	4,43	4,96	4,26	4,12	4,40
...where teachers observe each other in classes, co-teach etc.	3,75	3,58	3,73	4,69	3,26	3,52	3,75
...where teachers experience satisfaction and well-being]	4,29	4,12	4,77	4,74	3,84	3,86	4,43
...where teachers experience good relationships and meet each other not only on professional themes	4,51	3,95	4,74	5,43	4,05	4,16	4,73
Mean	4,32	4,02	4,46	5,01	4,05	3,99	4,37

Scale: 1 = not at all successful, and 6 = fully successful

Table 7: Providing tools and creating conditions

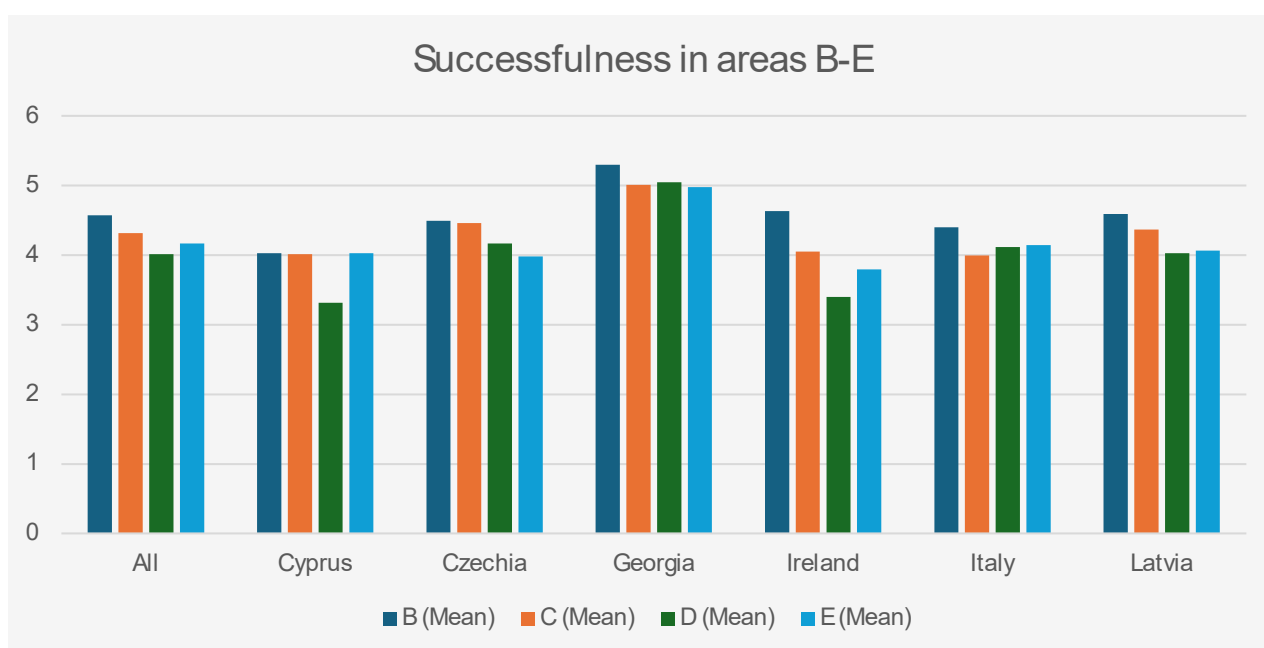
D. Indicate on the scale how successful you are as a school leader at the following	All	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
...creating a physical space for teachers and collaborating teams to meet (free rooms, quiet areas...)	3,79	2,98	4,12	4,94	2,89	3,76	4,06
...providing teachers with realistically available time for activities aimed at collegial support	3,86	2,93	4,34	5,04	2,89	4,14	3,83
...provide teachers with guides and information on how to support their colleagues in a safe way	3,94	3,32	4,08	5,14	3,42	3,78	3,92
...provide teachers with tools for identifying their needs and creating personal development plans	3,84	3,10	3,96	5,08	3,11	3,98	3,83
...provide financial resources to support those teachers who promote collegial support across the school and are models of such behaviour	3,57	2,57	4,42	4,24	2,79	3,82	3,60
...provide teachers with external professional support	3,80	2,93	3,79	4,90	3,47	3,86	3,83
...enabling teachers to be trained in mentoring, coaching or supervision	3,77	2,95	3,64	5,37	3,21	3,76	3,68
...supporting teachers to implement new teaching strategies or technologies	4,46	4,00	4,40	5,24	4,00	4,52	4,60
...encourage the sharing of best practices and pedagogical innovations among the teaching staff?	4,53	4,48	4,24	5,25	4,21	4,92	4,06
...provide opportunities for professional development for teaching staff	4,57	3,93	4,73	5,27	4,00	4,65	4,85
Mean	4,01	3,32	4,17	5,05	3,40	4,12	4,03

Scale: 1 = not at all successful, and 6 = fully successful

Table 8: Sustainability – maintaining collegiality

E. Indicate on the scale how successful are you as a school leader in	All	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
...evaluating the effectiveness of collegial support	4,04	3,72	3,90	4,99	3,68	3,90	4,02
...rewarding desired behaviour of teachers in this area	4,18	3,60	4,47	4,75	3,71	4,32	4,26
...creating rules and principles for mentoring, coaching and other forms of collegial support	3,65	3,63	3,40	4,63	3,37	3,42	3,45
...including newly coming teachers into the system of collegial support	4,33	4,40	4,11	5,22	4,06	3,92	4,29
...providing regular support for teachers, mentors, and coaches ... (i.e. supervision)	3,77	3,81	3,25	5,04	3,22	3,88	3,42
...promoting a positive and inclusive school culture and climate	4,63	4,67	4,17	5,16	4,37	4,86	4,54
...providing support and advocating for the wellbeing of teaching staff	4,57	4,37	4,60	5,04	4,16	4,72	4,50
Mean	4,17	4,03	3,98	4,98	3,79	4,15	4,07

Scale: 1 = not at all successful, and 6 = fully successful



Graph 5: Feeling of success in individual areas (summary table), average values

Scale: 1 = not at all successful, and 6 = fully successful

Graphs and charts indicate that in all areas, GE school leaders feel most successful. However, the data must be interpreted as a subjective "feeling" rather than an objective reality. Of the four areas given, respondents feel slightly more successful in area B – Unity of purposes: support of shared aims and values of schools. Overall, school leaders in the area of D – Providing tools and creating conditions, feel the least successful, especially in CY and IR. However, it is precisely in these countries that the individual items in this area appear

to be the least consistent. It seems that school leaders in CY lack external support and training in mentoring or coaching for teachers and are often unable to provide teachers with space and time for collegial collaboration, or to find financial resources for such activities, but the last three points also seem to apply to IR. In general, obtaining financial resources for the development of collegiality seems to be a problem, with the exception of CZ, where education is (over)saturated with a number of European projects and where a large number of nonprofits operate in the field of education.

In area C, school leaders admit a partial failure in terms of motivation of teachers to engage with peer-observation in classrooms or to co-teach. Data from area E indicate less success in creating a system for regular collegial support activities and in supporting teachers – internal mentors, coaches, etc.

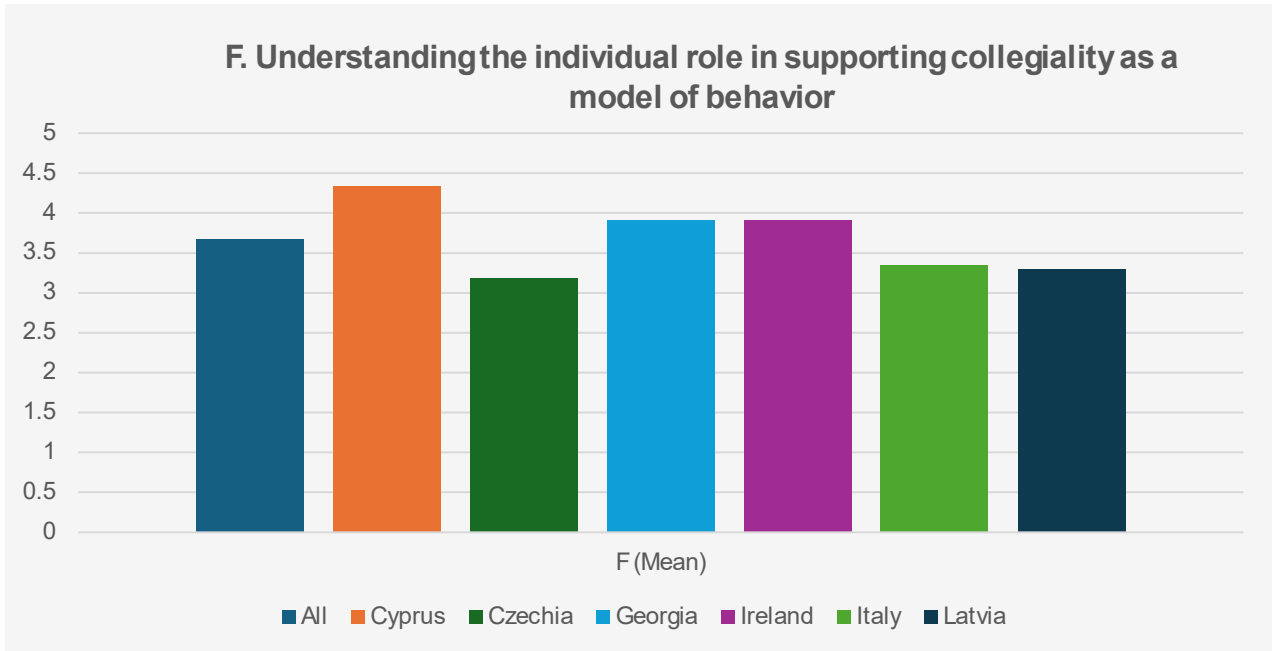
Role of the school leaders

In the other items (area F), we focused on how school leaders understand the areas that are important for promoting collegiality and how successful they feel in their role as promoters of a culture of collegiality and as a model of professional behaviour.

Table 9: Understanding the individual role in supporting collegiality as a model of behaviour

F. Indicate on the scale your dis-/agreement	All	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
I understand the aims and processes of collegial support (mentoring, coaching, supervision etc.	3,66	4,42	2,95	3,89	4,32	3,14	3,25
I am able to educate my team and support teachers in the area of collegial support	3,61	4,05	3,13	3,92	3,89	3,34	3,35
I am a model of collegial behaviour	3,78	4,93	3,01	4,01	3,79	3,40	3,51
I regularly collaborate with a coach, mentor or supervisor	3,78	4,72	3,52	3,95	4,00	3,34	3,13
I am able to create a functional system for the implementation of all forms of collegial support in the school	3,62	4,07	3,17	3,92	3,84	3,44	3,25
I regularly educate myself in the area of collegial support	3,57	3,86	3,35	3,80	3,63	3,44	3,34
Mean	3,67	4,34	3,19	3,92	3,91	3,35	3,31

Scale: 1 = fully agree 6 = fully disagree



Graph 6: Understanding the individual role in supporting collegiality as a model of behaviour
 Scale: 1 = fully agree 6 = fully disagree

In this table and graph, it is worth noting the responses of CZ respondents, who admit that they do not understand the goals and processes of mentoring, coaching or supervision very well and also do not feel like a model of behaviour in this regard. On the contrary, the data indicates that CY school leaders feel they are the strongest in this area compared to other countries. It is also interesting to note that, compared to other items, school leaders are the least likely to agree that they regularly educate themselves in the area of collegial support.

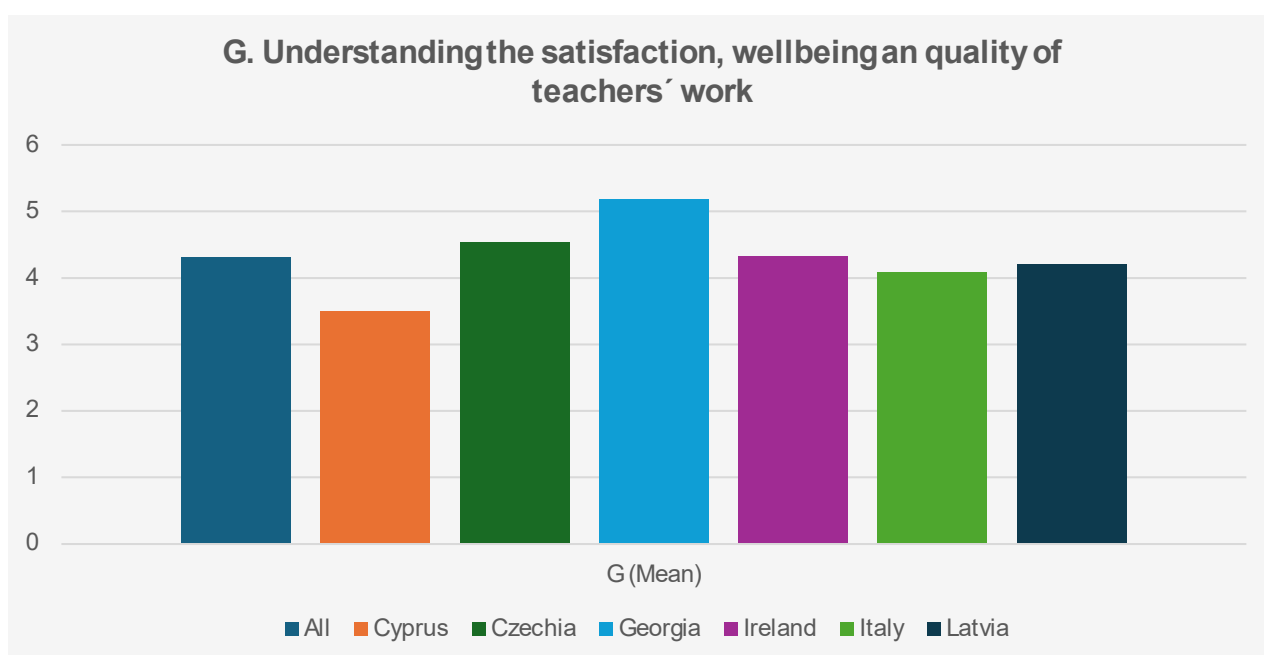
Satisfaction, wellbeing and quality of teachers' work

Since a culture of collegiality in a school should have a positive impact on the quality of teachers' work and their sense of job satisfaction, we asked, using the following six items, how school leaders perceive this area.

Table 10: Satisfaction, wellbeing and quality of teachers' work

G. I think that in my school, teachers tend to do the following	All	CY	CZ	GE	IR	IT	LV
...continuously improve their work and innovate teaching	3,66	4,42	2,95	3,89	4,32	3,14	3,25
...have positive attitudes toward teaching and pupils	3,61	4,05	3,13	3,92	3,89	3,34	3,35
...don't experience stress or/and burnout	3,78	4,93	3,01	4,01	3,79	3,40	3,51
...experience trust and safety	3,78	4,72	3,52	3,95	4,00	3,34	3,13
...are satisfied with their work	3,62	4,07	3,17	3,92	3,84	3,44	3,25
...feel the commitment to the school	3,57	3,86	3,35	3,80	3,63	3,44	3,34
Mean	3,67	4,34	3,19	3,92	3,91	3,35	3,31

Scale 1 = I am not convinced about it at all, I couldn't provide any evidence of that
 6 = I am convinced about it, I could provide a lot of evidence of that



Graph 7: Satisfaction, wellbeing and quality of teachers' work

Scale 1 = I am not convinced about it at all, I couldn't provide any evidence of that
 6 = I am convinced about it, I could provide a lot of evidence of that

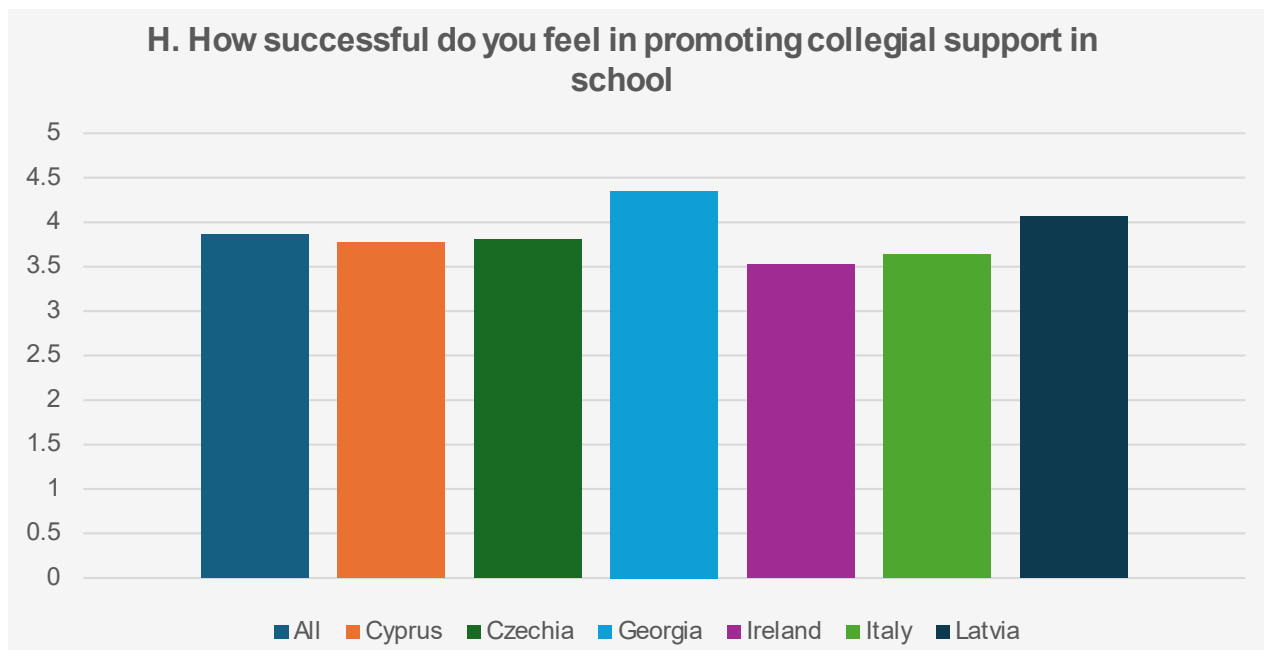
GE school leaders seem to have the most positive view of the quality of teachers' work and job satisfaction. However, GE school leaders are also more positive than others more generally, rating their success higher across all areas of collegial support (B, C, D, E), so their tendency to respond more positively is consistent and would suggest some correlations between a sense of success and a positive view of teachers' work and satisfaction.

At the same time, however, the data confirms that school leaders (including GE school leaders) perceive stress and burnout tendencies in their teachers. The item asking about stress and burnout was lower rated

for all countries in this area and was not consistent with the other items. It also seems that CY school leaders rate their teachers the least positively in these areas, and GE school leaders in particular are significantly more positive.

School leaders general self-evaluation in promoting collegial support

At the end of the quantitative part of the questionnaire, we asked respondents how they generally rate their success in promoting a culture of collegiality and collaboration at school, or whether they feel that they still have a lot to learn in this area.



Graph 8: Overall feeling of successfulness in promoting collegial support
 Scale: 1= I have a lot to learn in this area 6 = I feel very successful in this area

Overall, school leaders seem to feel more likely to be successful in promoting collaboration and collegiality in the school, with GE respondents feeling the strongest sense of accomplishment in this area. The data in areas B, C, D, and E show the areas in which they feel more successful, and in which they report less success, in more detail.

5.5 Experiences, needs and recommendations of school heads (qualitative part)

For each of the areas (B-E) of the questionnaire, we asked respondents open-ended questions that respondents could answer freely. The questions were mainly directed to their needs in the given area, or what would help the respondents to be even more successful in the given area. Respondents willingly answered the questions, but the answers in all areas were very similar and repetitive. As such, we processed the data for all four areas together. As far as individual countries are concerned, the answers were very repetitive, so it seems that teachers across school systems are more or less troubled by similar problems and face similar challenges.

At the very end of the questionnaire, we asked the school leaders four open-ended questions. The answers to three of them (*What are your strengths in promoting collegial support in your school? What do you think*

is the most important in your effort to promote collegial support in school? What would you suggest to other school leaders for the promotion of collegial support?) again showed the same trend, and in order not to burden the text with the same or similar data, we processed them together again. The last open question was directed specifically at the educational needs of school leaders (*What type of training could help you to better support the processes of collegial support in your school?*). This question is crucial for our project, so we worked on it separately.

The answers to all the open questions have therefore been arranged into several categories according to their content, which we describe and supplement with selected direct testimonies of respondents.

5.5.1 According to the respondents, what is the key to successfully building a collegial culture in the school?

Interpersonal relationships in school

It was to be expected that interpersonal relationships in the team of teachers played a crucial role. Across all partner countries, respondents mentioned that well-functioning, collaborative teams are characterised by the following characteristics: mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual help, effective communication, and trust.

To achieve such a climate, respondents recommend in particular supporting: agreement on values and goals, setting rules of communication and creating teams (teambuilding) in regard to the issue of age and gender. To this end, according to the respondents, it is important to organise not only collaborative workshops and other working groups, but also to promote various forms of informal meetings. Informal meetings were mentioned by many respondents. Some want to invest more time in organising informal activities because they believe that a culture of openness and learning can "unlock the potential" of teachers. They consider it a great challenge to work with teachers' resistances, and they consider it important to motivate them to step out of their "comfort zone".

The school leaders also mentioned that it is necessary to create well-structured teams for a good climate, not only according to the abilities of teachers, but also according to age and gender. Some (e.g. CZ) complained about the lack of men and young teachers at school.

Examples

Planning and conducting informal activities, going to the countryside together with colleagues - arranging picnics and outings, corporate evenings. (GE)

More frequent informal meetings, and professional conversations in a relaxed atmosphere... I try to provide an environment, in meetings and individually, but I am not always successful. I admit that both I and the teachers lack knowledge and understanding. (LV)

It is necessary to trigger mechanisms that generate trust in peer learning as peer learning is often viewed by teachers with suspicion because they fear being judged by their colleagues... Improve and increase the number of meetings with school staff in order to get to know and enhance the professional and human potential of each institutional figure on the staff. (IT)

Teachers – personality and professionalism

Along with the issue of workplace relationships, respondents cited the influence of personality and professionalism (quality) of teachers. As far as the personality of teachers is concerned, according to the respondents, the following personal characteristics and skills are particularly important for the development of collaboration:

motivation, good will, ability to learn, courage and perseverance, personal involvement and presence of teachers, commitment, ability to support others, etc.

In addition to the personality of teachers, they also mentioned the necessary professional qualities of teachers, which are important for building collegial support, and drew attention to the need for their further education, for example, in psychological topics and forms of collegial support, but also in leadership. This could strengthen "middle management", which should become a model for other teachers and motivate them to collaborate.

Examples

Teachers must set their aims themselves – so they can be motivated. Unified teachers' beliefs help. (CZ)
I think the attitude of the teachers is the most important. If they are open and willing to make a difference, willing to help, and always be there, then it will work... teachers being aware of the common goals of the school and link their individual goals to them. Professional development events organised in the school, e.g. "Pedagogical Lab" sessions, projects, and courses. (LV)
Supporting teachers so that they take training in teaching, coaching, or supervision. ... Training should be provided, for example by psychologists. (GE)

Other questions are related to the development of teams. The school leaders desire the possibility to employ (choose) teachers fitting the team well. In some countries, the school leader can choose the teachers (sometimes in collaboration with the founder) but cannot fire them without a good reason. On the other hand, some school leaders pointed to limits in terms of the ability to choose teachers for teams and the stability of teams. Some respondents feel that newer teachers often do not come from university with the necessary expertise, and they need to focus more on working with them.

Examples

Currently out of 157 teachers in the law staff, 60% are substitute teachers and vary every year – amongst the permanent teachers 70% are over 40-50 years old. (IT)
Non-problematic teachers e.g. teachers who lack discipline, who do not communicate well with children and parents... In these cases, the problems are complex!!! Everyone involved has a PROBLEM! The parents, because the lesson is not done properly or there is so much disruption in the classroom that sometimes the consequences are serious... e.g. the emotional insecurity of students and parents (not to mention even the safety and health issues of students and teachers). Also, there is grumbling from teachers who are competent and effective that e.g. they are taking on extra responsibilities and these are not shared equally... for obvious reasons... I remind you that in Cyprus the school leader does not select his/her staff nor can s/he make any changes. But s/he has to use them in the best possible way.... (CY)

Internal and external support – experts in schools

The sharing and fulfilling of aims and values of the schools would benefit from employing specialists in school (school psychologists, logopedists/speech-therapists, specialist pedagogues, teaching assistants, internal mentors, etc.), as well as from introducing the position of a mentor / supervisor.

School leaders mentioned here the need to find a good supervisor or mentor for teachers, education of the whole team, and the creation of a sustainable functional system of collegial support. It seems that educated mentors, directed in-school teams, and supervision implementation are a benefit. School leaders appreciate when they have trained mentors on the team of teachers and consider it beneficial to the whole team in mentoring. However, the condition is the selection and training of internal mentors, their support, and remuneration.

It is important to create a supporting team involving active and voluntary teachers. These "powerhouses" then attract more teachers into the activities of collegial support.

Example

We created a broader leadership of collegial support consisting of teachers, assistants, educators, school leaders deputies and school leader. The majority of that team completed mentoring training We offer a variety of forms of collegial support and teachers can choose the support that fit them (CZ).

School leaders also mentioned the need for external educational and professional support by inviting experts from various fields, but support from external mentors, coaches, and supervisors is usually not a matter of course in schools.

They also welcome the possibility of exchanging experiences with other schools and school systems, but at the same time they are aware of the obstacles in terms of time and funding of external expertise.

Examples

Support of external mentor is needed... To have a mentor or coach so that every teacher can follow up with an expert. I do interviews with staff in person, but it's a lot of time, but worthwhile. (CZ)

Collaboration with other schools, sharing experience, collaborative school projects... (GE)

I would also like to have the expertise of a subject matter expert and standard training material. ...I would like experts and specialised training for all. (CY)

I believe increasing the amount of observation and co-teaching in schools will greatly improve teacher's collaboration. These observations should be followed by an open discussion about the lesson. ... In-school mentoring and time for exchange of tacit knowledge would be a benefit. (IR)

Personality and role of a school leaders

School leaders realise they should become the models of collegial behaviour themselves (i.e. I try to be an example of such a behaviour I am a mentor I completed education in mentoring ... I believe I am a role model).

In addition, respondents were able to name personality traits that they consider essential in directors to build a collegial culture, and many also consider them to be their own strengths. These include, for example:

- Openness and communication (to be available, to have an "open door", hearing somebody out, listening, openness to other opinions, open and welcoming attitudes, being able to receive criticism, find consensus and solutions, providing with information, respect and equality, calm communication, equal communication, willingness to discuss, trust in people, manage conflicts ...)
- Helpfulness and friendliness (willingness to help, do not stress teachers, human approach, be kind and non-judgemental, tolerance, empathy, well-being, intuition...)
- Other personality traits (patience, liberality, consistency, propriety, enthusiasm, activity, commitment, calm, self-reflection, positive view...)

Some older school leaders also mentioned the importance of their own long-term experience.

Examples

Willingness and open to this new challenge ... I feel I am open and approachable. (IR)

I do not separate myself from the rest of the school staff. I do not limit myself to my supervisory role but coordinate and collaborate with colleagues. I listen to their concerns and try to help them solve problems as they arise. (CY)

I am a team person, always trying to see the good first and in every situation, looking for solutions and knowledge. (LV)

Other required characteristics of school leaders related to professional skills as well as the tasks they had to do to succeed in their schools mentioned included:

- Work in a team and with a team (team structure and size, working with new teachers, team training, team leading, joint collective events, creating trustful and safe climate, fostering a sense of belonging...)
- Individual methodical support for teachers (evaluation dialogs, consultations with teachers, involving and motivating staff, being interested in people and talking to them...)
- Creation of a system of collegial support (set plans and roles, have a clear vision, set clear rules for collegial sharing, build a safe milieu, documentation of activities, dissemination of good practices, carry on surveys, self-evaluation ...)
- Getting support from internal and external experts (teachers' mutual visits in classes, sharing good practices, organise trainings and promote moments for discussion [e.g. focus groups], activate courses and services in collaboration with external organisations, gather requests for training from teachers and propose trainings accordingly, organise learning groups, open lessons, interdisciplinary collaboration groups...)
- Collaboration with external institutions (organise activities outside of school, collaborate with other schools, dealing with external subjects ...)
- Providing resources (create spaces and time to ensure financial support, projects, rewarding results ...).

Examples

Introducing an effective monitoring and evaluation system in the school, implementing projects that will engage the school community to the maximum extent possible. ...Creating the rules and principles for various forms of teaching, coaching and collegial support. (GE)

The most important thing in promoting collegial support in the school is the delegation of responsibilities, the school director must be fair, unbiased, and must create equal conditions for all members of the school community. Only by using these strategies can schools create a culture built on healthy, secure, and democratic ideals. (GE)

Some say they have to be "strong leaders" who can change the culture of an organisation. For that, however, the school leaders mention they need support as well, so as not to be alone in the pursuit of this goal.

Unsurprisingly, the school leaders state that administration and organisational management of the school takes a lot of time, and they need more time for presenting their own vision to all incoming teachers and for supporting the team. They need to organise work better to have time to support teachers (self-management, time management).

More time and less workload

Across all countries, school leaders mentioned that building a culture of collaboration and collegiality limits workload and lack of teachers' time. Burden, stress and lack of time are mainly caused by:

- administrative tasks (bureaucracy)
- high number of pupils in classes (in some countries, i.e. CZ)
- inclusive education (specialised individual care for pupils with special educational needs)
- work with non-motivated pupils
- high number of lessons (teaching load)
- working at multiple schools (i.e. GE)

There is therefore not much time left for the development of relationships and some school leaders mention

that it would be helpful to reduce the time allotted to direct teaching work.

Examples

Teachers should have less paperwork and be granted freedom to devote more time to the student and the school. ... Less workload and working in one school will help teachers to allocate time for interpersonal relationships. (GE)

Allowing more time for teachers to plan and communicate with each other. ... Longer lunch breaks. (IR)

There's not really time to implement [collegial activities], everyone is busy, with their own work and their own things. ... in a preschool with a 12h working day it is relatively more difficult to plan staff workloads so that there is enough time for joint work, as you must be with the children practically all the time. (LV)

School policy, society, and other external impacts

While school leaders are aware of their role and responsibilities in fostering a culture of collaboration and collegiality, not everything they state is within their power. A number of demands were related to the external support of schools. Some school leaders lack the support from the side of the school founders (or local government, community, etc.). In some countries, unstable or incomprehensible school policies do not make the situation any easier, and superior institutions often burden schools with administration.

Examples

In previous years, the Ministry supported technical education, so we prepared workshops with partner primary schools and taught pupils to work with tools. Suddenly, information began to appear in the media about the need to focus on general education and that technical schools would be changed to lyceums. New information has appeared about another model of compulsory schooling (8 + 2 years). So, the goals keep changing so fast that the whole team of teachers can't identify with it. (CZ)

Clearer guidelines and strategies/policies from the Ministry. Anything that is not compulsory, there is resistance to pushing it forward, especially when it concerns something new (innovation). Also, after the covid period, colleagues seem to be setting other priorities ... e.g. filling the curriculum and gaps created... For everything, framing and support from the Ministry of Education and Culture is necessary. (CY)

Creating an appropriate accountability mechanism - an external monitoring system would be good, as it can help teachers feel more responsible to fulfil to the maximum extent possible the duties imposed on them under the teacher's professional standards and their employment contracts. (GE)

Unsurprisingly, the school leaders say that greater financial support for schools and teachers would help as some also lack needed physical spaces (rooms or other) where teachers could meet in peace to share their visions and experience.

Examples

We have the lack of financial resources, the lack of appropriate infrastructure, and we need equipment (computers/laptops) ... Today, due to infrastructural issues, schools are sheltered in other school buildings. We do not have an environment equipped with technologies or essential literature, where staff members could meet to share their experiences, ideas, and opinions in a cosy atmosphere. (GE)

Provide financial resources-more monetary supports in place. ... Smaller class sizes to try new teaching tools with... more IT support and more access for students to IT currently 8 new staff and none have been provided with a school laptop to have the ability to connect to classroom projectors. (IR)

I believe that having designated rooms/areas for collaboration meetings would be of benefit to all teachers. As of now, most schools do have a meeting room of some sort, but these are generally used for management meetings, and would often be unavailable. Teachers often end up having small meetings in the staff room. Having a timetabled room in which departments meet every so often to collaborate would be beneficial. (IR)
Greater economic resources, financial incentives for teachers based on merit. Reduce the size of educational

institutions. (IT)

Due to lack of co-presence and financial resources, mentoring activities are very difficult to organise ... additional funds to adequately recognise the work of the many teachers who work with great skills and well beyond working hours. (IT)

Of course, infrastructure plays an important role - shared lounge, insurance, ergonomic furniture. In some schools, there is no space for teachers, no room (except a desk for their work papers and personal stuff). (LV)
The school is ready for collegial support; however, the implementation is hampered by the fact that teachers work at several schools or leave the school immediately once the classes are over, sometimes we do manage to provide help, but still it must be permanent and consistent. (GE)

What I can do, I do at the school level, but the school system (as I know from theories) is also influenced by external systems. (LV)

Regarding external influences, some school leaders also mentioned the attitudes of parents, society and the media, which sometimes complicate the work of teachers and do not contribute to the well-being of the teaching profession.

Examples

Positive public attitudes, clarity of political goals and stability, legal protection for teachers by the legislator... (because teachers sometimes feel that their rights are not protected strongly enough). (LV)

Less disinformation from media side ...!!! (CZ)

When asked what school leaders would like to improve in their school, we also met with some ambiguous answers (Nothing, I don't know ...), while others mentioned a number of areas they would like to improve in their school, which are in accordance with the categories above. Suggestions for improvement related to work with teachers, self-improvement and organisational changes. However, a number of respondents repeatedly pointed out obstacles that relate not only to the people on the school team, but above all repeatedly to school policy and the school system.

5.5.2 What would respondents suggest to other colleagues – school leaders?

The answers to this question were almost identical to the answers to the previous open questions and could be similarly categorised into the areas of "specific skills and personality traits" and "needed measures" (see Personality and role of the school leader).

Respondents emphasised the influence of the context of the school. Every school needs something different - different measures and specific skills, behaviours of the school leader, etc. In any case, they generally advised a preference for small steps rather than fast changes; not to hurry.

School leaders also recommend submitting projects which might help to launch the system of collegial support. They consider collegial support a matter-of-course in every school team and believe that it is necessary to create a system of some description. Without the initial financial support, it is often uneasy; therefore, it is important to strive for the support from the side of school politics.

Examples

Use the financial support from EU projects for starting collegial support ... Do the pressure to the school system (as far as collegial support as a supported system for all schools ... Start with yourself, don't overload

teachers with unnecessary things, collaboration between school teams, talk to teachers, and support each other. Multiply pedagogical freedom! (CZ)

Know the strengths of your team that can be strengthened and promoted in your daily work and the weaknesses that can be worked on so that they do not get in the way of your full work. (LV)

Give time and space for this, time and space is an important parameter of success. (CY)

Have hours available to encourage collegial initiative, focus less on administrative and bureaucratic activities to devote more time to collegial support ... Create a small, trained and prepared group that serves as a flywheel and driving force for all the others for a global involvement of all players, at all levels; within which the headmaster is a driving force for innovation and a desire to learn new techniques, strategies, methodologies for his own professional and personal growth. (IT)

5.5.3 Educational needs of school leaders

Lastly, we posed the most important question for our project: What preparation/education in the area of the support of collegiality in schools would the school leaders need? Some of the respondents could not specify their educational needs, prioritised other needs, or reflected a bad experience with certain past courses.

Examples

I don't know ... I don't know the options ... I don't have such a need ... It is not possible to specify ... This is always the same It must be in high quality. (CZ)

I need the time and financial support, not education. (GE)

I would like to improve my knowledge of how to create a functional system for implementing all forms of collegial support in a school when resources (human, time, material) are scarce) ... There are too many different types of training! ... I need more confidence in what I am doing and the skills to do it. (LV)

Topics of education/training

On the contrary, some respondents expressed a strong need for education/training for themselves, their representatives and the whole team. Coaching and mentoring were the topics mentioned most frequently, with some respondents indicating that these options were difficult to access.

Respondents also expressed interest in education/training, especially in psychological and managerial topics:

- Social psychology (active listening, communication, assertiveness, working with an all-female team, how to explore/detect manipulation, how to persuade others, reflective interview techniques...).
- Management and leadership, and working with people (management styles and human resources management, management of conflict situations, team building and corporate events, staff management, how to conduct individual interviews with employees...).
- Psychology of personality (how to recognise psychological processes and the thinking of the individual, personality typology, causalities of failure, adult psychology, analysis of life examples ...).
- Psycho-hygiene (well-being, fostering a safe school, management of emotions, individual psycho-hygiene, empowerment ...).
- Other topics for the school leaders and the whole team (education in teaching quality, subject matter, curricula, creating an inclusive school environment, multifaceted training regarding objectives, experiential learning, training in counselling, teacher psychology, civil education, contemporary pedagogical approaches in theory and practice...).

Examples

I would happily attend seminars on new approaches to human resources management ... In order to improve

the collegial culture. I would like to have more information about the activities conducted in this field in modern schools. Appropriate literature, finances. (GE)

I am aware that I need specific training as a manager who can promote coaching learning for his or her teachers. (IT)

Forms of education

The school leaders were also, however, quite interested in the varying forms of education. It seems that among the preferred forms are webinars (which save time) and practical training. It is clear, however, that some topics are not suitable for online courses and face to face practice is needed (mentoring among others). Without rejecting theory, directors often demanded courses which were more practical in nature, thereby making information and methods immediately applicable in practice. They consider the following to be useful forms of education:

- Practical education and experiential workshops (methods, reflection, discussions...).
- Comprehensive training (involvement in the process, more day-training, skills training...).
- Conferences, international meetings, participation in European Programmes
- Educational visits (sharing experience and good practice, field trips to schools, meetings with other school leaders, case studies...).
- School audit (evaluation from experts, growth-oriented feedback...).
- Mentoring, coaching or supervision (some directors have expressed interest in having their own mentor, coach or supervisor...).
- Self-study (available literature, research...).
- Common education for the whole team (in-school training, internal, personalised for the school with its specific needs and profile, tailored courses...).
- Webinars and online education (mostly due to time constraints, the directors stated a preference for such courses, which can be both theoretical and serve to share practice).

Examples

Mixed on online training and face-to-face workshops to suit the time and interest of teachers. ... Ongoing training and support tailored to the particular needs of your school. (IR)

Courses, and seminars in this field are well attended, everything is clear in theory. I would like to see it put into practice. Now, I would like to know more about the real day-to-day experience of other big schools (not the glorified version). It is clear that in smaller schools collegial support, collaboration works more effectively, in large schools I have not yet come across a really meaningful, regular process (it looks more like a tight tail). (LV)
Since I started this job 11 years ago, I have always found that we focus on training managers and avoid changing the regulatory framework to support our work. I don't like military metaphors, but it is definitely like taking care of the physical training of an army left without weapons. (IT)

Conclusions

Using a questionnaire for school leaders, we found out their experiences and educational (among other) needs. We managed to process a total of 379 questionnaires filled-in by school leaders from all six partner countries, representing different types of schools. From the quantitative and qualitative results, it is clear that school leaders have similar experiences and needs, with respect to different contexts and specifics.

The quantitative data indicated that, overall, respondents feel marginally more successful in the area of Unity of purposes: support of shared aims and values of schools. So, they seem confident that they can explain the goals to teachers and encourage consensus on them. Overall, they feel the least successful in the area D – Providing tools and creating conditions. It is possible that this area is greatly influenced by the

possibilities of school leaders to create time space and provide collaborating teams with physical facilities, adequate education and financial rewards. The criticism relates to the often-insufficient support on the part of founders and school management of the political variety, such as management boards, etc. However, compared to other areas of the questionnaire, school leaders are the least likely to agree that they regularly receive training in the area of collegial support. The question is whether suitable courses are not available for them, or whether they suffer from a lack of time or finances.

The qualitative part of the questionnaire provided more insight into the issue, although the answers frequently repeated and plenty of them did not bring any unexpected findings. That is why we have compiled the answers together and have shown some national specifics in some places on quotes.

It is clear from the responses that the school leaders consider this topic to be important, are interested in it, and are trying to implement a number of measures to develop a culture of collaboration and collegiality. Based on their own experiences, respondents point out some key conditions for the development of a collegial and collaborative culture, such as an open climate, effective communication, teacher personality, team structure, internal and external expert support for teachers. However, a big limitation is the high workload and administrative burden on teachers, stress and a tendency toward burnout, as a result of which there is low motivation and the will to collaborate on tasks and innovate in teaching.

The school leaders would welcome education of internal mentors who would become “powerhouses”, form the “core team” of motivated teachers, act as models of behaviour and, ultimately, further the goal of collegial support across the school team. Across countries, however, respondents reference external barriers that limit their efforts. They lack a stable and supportive school policy and support from superior institutions, including better funding and equipment for the school.

Some school leaders are not educated in the field of collegial support and express their need not just for this education, but for more external support from experts and sharing of experiences with other schools and colleagues as well. Like teachers, though, school leaders are overloaded with organisational duties in the school and often do not have the capacity for real educational leadership and pursuing their own education.

Respondents then referenced a series of educational needs in this area. Most often they discussed the necessity of a practice in providing collegial support (mentoring, coaching...) as well as exposure to other (mainly managerial and psychological) topics. They also mentioned the need to open the school to the outside world and to collaborate with external institutions, experts, fellow school leaders from other schools, etc. Projects at the national and international level are considered to be a useful catalyst for positive changes in schools, providing the first good experience with collaboration on a meaningful task, as well as presenting a financial source for the school's education and development.

The limit of the research is its relatively low number of respondents from heterogeneous types of participating schools (primary schools, secondary schools). The data are therefore not generalisable, but they clearly indicate certain trends. Similar responses from school leaders from different countries point to similar experiences and challenges in all partner countries. Due to the different numbers and stratified samples from individual countries, we did not aspire to compare the results.

The intention of the data collection was to create a basis for topics that will be fulfilled by educational modules for school leaders (and other interested parties) in the area of support for collaborative and collegial support. We believe that this task has been fulfilled and that the whole text can become at least a small inspiration for school heads and school policies across European countries.

Concluding words and recommendations

Support for collegiality in schools and in school systems is an essential prerequisite for schools to be able to fulfil what is expected of them today, so that students and teachers' time in institutions is marked by meaningful interactions, and so that the relationships and models of behaviour exemplified for young people are worthy of emulation.

Much needs to be done to make this happen. Below are some recommendations based on research as well as on teaching practice. We wish those who are trying to promote collegiality in schools and school systems every success in their efforts.

Recommendations

The following section contains key points as recommendations for school leaders (and other interested parties) striving to develop a culture of collaboration and collegiality in their institution. What should attention be focused on?

- **Supporting collaborative climate in schools.** Promoting a safe environment, open communication, and collaboration in schools. Joint formal and informal activities, and bonding activities to strengthen cohesion among colleagues.
- **Sharing goals, visions, and ideas.** Setting goals in collaboration with teachers and sharing them across the team supports their motivation to meet goals. Supporting teachers in formulating and setting goals, reconciling school and personal or professional goals.
- **Working individually with teachers.** Work with unmotivated teachers, burnout prevention, respect to individual needs. Setting personal objectives and support for individual growth. Support of individuals benefits from collaboration. Individual interviews with teachers.
- **Providing professional support for teachers.** Human resources development. Internal and external coaches, mentors and supervisors. Mediate a good experience with collegial/expert support. Education for teachers in mentoring. Investing in expertise in the field of collegial support.
- **Setting rules and system creating.** Support of class observations, tandem teaching, etc. Rules for communication, rules for sharing and collaboration of teachers, evaluation of the efforts, rewarding achievements.
- **Building and supporting teams.** Team structure, interconnectedness of different generations in schools, selection of teachers, support of new teachers. Team education and supervision.
- **Revision of school leader's role.** The school leader as an architect, educator and model of collaboration. Transformational and distributed leadership. Education of directors in methods of collegial support. The school leader as a coachee, a mentee.
- **Educating school leaders.** Education in supervision, coaching and mentoring. Education in psychological and managerial topics, psycho-hygiene, time management.
- **Supporting school leaders.** Sharing with colleagues and fellow school leaders, external expertise. Conferences, internships.
- **Building an open school.** Collaboration between schools, examples of good practice, international experiences and visits, national and international projects.
- **Providing school with material and time conditions for collegial learning.** School equipment, technology, space, meeting time, compatible schedules, financial resources, etc.
- **Asking for support from the side of superiors and school politicians.** Time burden for teachers and school leaders, school funding, bureaucracy, empowerment of headmasters, appropriate and accessible educational programs. Attractiveness of the teaching profession.

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