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CHAPTER 9

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## **Developing Leadership and Management Capacity for School Improvement**

**MUHAMMAD MEMON, TIM SIMKINS,  
CHARLES SISUM & ZUBEDA BANA**

I always felt that the majority of us are normally thrown into the field either by chance or circumstances ... we enter into our professional lives with hardly any relevant education, professional qualifications, and in some cases, even without basic skills. We are expected to learn along the way ... pedagogical leadership qualities are to be acquired through rigorous practice, not by scientific formulae ... like the artists, the head teachers must learn the habits of highly effective people, base their leadership on sound principles, and work ceaselessly to improve their art ... they have to acquire knowledge and practice, negotiate with the context and respond to day-to-day challenges of the school management affairs. (Quote from a head teacher's valedictory speech during graduation ceremony)

### **Context and Background**

The quotation above comes from a school head teacher who had participated in an Advanced Diploma programme at the Institute for Educational Development at the Aga Khan University (AKU-IED) in Karachi, Pakistan. This chapter focuses on issues of leadership and management capacity for school improvement in Pakistan and beyond, through what has been learned from research and development at AKU-IED in cooperation with schools, both in Pakistan and in other areas of the developing world. It draws particularly on the experiences of the Advanced Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management and two research studies conducted jointly by

faculty of AKU-IED and Sheffield Hallam University to understand the role of head teachers in secondary schools in Karachi. Where not otherwise stated, observations and claims arise from experience and findings of research studies, details of which will be provided later in the chapter.

The organizational and management structure of the education system in Pakistan varies from province to province. The majority of primary schools in the public sector do not have established head teacher positions because of financial constraints and their small size. Senior primary schoolteachers are designated as head teachers by providing them with some special allowance. However, they tend to focus more on their academic than management roles. Experience and observation suggest that they find it hard to maintain a balance between their academic and management roles due to a lack of role clarity and of adequate professional development. Secondary schools, similarly, are mainly managed by head teachers who are promoted on a seniority basis from among teachers, although a small number of head teachers are appointed through direct recruitment by the provincial Public Service Commission. The newly recruited head teachers in the public sector have neither management training nor experience of managing schools effectively. In contrast, the private sector mainly recruits its head teachers on merit rather than seniority, although the majority of them also do not have relevant management experience and training. Unlike primary school head teachers, secondary head teachers in the public sector tend to focus on management rather than academic aspects of their role, and this can also lead to an imbalance between their academic and management roles. The majority of head teachers, primary or secondary, in public or private sector, are deployed without any kind of induction or orientation. Thus, they only learn 'tricks of the trade' on-the-job through 'trial and error' methods to manage their schools. This has made them good 'fixers' rather than good 'problem solvers'. Moreover, the prevalent centralized and hierarchical education system does not allow them to go beyond the maintenance, compliance and conformity functions of their role. The head teacher quoted above acknowledges this situation.

Endorsing this analysis of the inadequacies of the school system's administrative and managerial capacity, the National Education Policy of Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 1992) indicated, 'Substantial changes are required to be made in the administration of education to improve the efficiency of the systems' (p. 60). In the spirit of this statement, and realizing the importance of the role of educational leadership in managing schools effectively, successive governments of Pakistan have initiated a series of education reforms. However, no major breakthrough is evident for developing leadership and management capacity to improve the quality of education.

### The Response of the AKU-IED

The AKU-IED was established with a mission to become and remain a leader in educational reform and improvement aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of schools and other educational institutions especially in developing countries (see Chapter 1 in this volume). Hence, AKU-IED is committed to building the leadership and management capacity of public and private school systems (including Aga Khan Development Network [AKDN]), through human resource development. In order to achieve this, the AKU-IED initiated a number of professional development programmes ranging from two months to two years in the area of teacher education and educational leadership and management. These programmes evolved as a result of the acknowledged needs of stakeholders including teachers, head teachers, and education officers/inspectors in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, including Zanzibar. Research suggests that schools are unlikely to be successful in implementing changes effectively until key players have a shared vision about school improvement. The overall purpose of these programmes, therefore, is to promote a culture of pedagogical leadership, which invests in capacity building by developing social and academic capital for students, and intellectual and professional capital for teachers (Sergiovanni, 1998). He further suggests that: ‘Pedagogical leadership develops human capital by helping schools become caring, focused, and inquiring communities within which teachers work together as members of a community of practice’ (p. 37).

In order to develop schools as ‘learning communities’ or ‘communities of practice’, the AKU-IED offers the following programmes:

1. Master in Education – M.Ed. (Teacher Education) Programme. This is a two-year programme aiming at developing participants as exemplary teachers, teacher educators and effective researchers. The programme is offered to serving schoolteachers from public and private (including AKDN) sectors. The first programme was offered in 1994. On completion of the programme, graduates work with colleagues in their respective schools as Professional Development Teachers (PDTs). (See Chapter 3 in this volume.)
2. Certificate in Education (formerly known as a Visiting Teacher) Programme. This is a two-month long programme (240 contact hours) offered to serving schoolteachers from the above systems for improving their content knowledge and pedagogical approaches, including classroom management skills. The first programme was offered in 1995. This programme is developed and delivered by PDTs, which is one of the significant features of the programme. (See Chapter 5 in this volume.)
3. Advanced Diploma in Education (formerly known as Advanced Diploma in Subject Specialist Teaching) Programme. This is a one-year field-based programme (400 contact hours) offered to schoolteachers from the above systems who have acquired a Certificate in Education. The first

programme was offered in 1998. The purpose of this programme is to enhance teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and action research skills for becoming effective classroom practitioners.

4. Advanced Diploma in Education: Educational Leadership and Management (formerly known as an Advanced Diploma in School Management [ADISM]) Programme. This is a one-year field-based modular programme (400 contact hours) offered to serving and aspiring head teachers from public and private (including AKDN) schools. The first programme was offered in 1997. The purpose of the programme was to develop serving and aspiring head teachers as pedagogical leaders for enhancing the quality of education in schools.
5. Certificate in Education: Educational Leadership and Management (formerly known as a Certificate in Educational Management) Programme. This is a ten-week field-based programme (300 contact hours) offered to education inspectors, officers, serving and aspiring head teachers in and outside Pakistan. The purpose of the programme was to enable the participants to become effective pedagogical leaders for working with teachers on their professional development on-the-job.

All these programmes are considered to be important in their nature and purpose since they have contributed towards building individual and institutional capacity. However, the Advanced Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management programme, being longest in duration, is of special significance in creating leadership at the school level. AKU-IED's mission statement highlights explicitly the importance of pursuing effective school leadership and management by raising the level of competence of head teachers and other key school decision-makers. Effective head teachers do not just need technical skills; they should acquire emotional, intellectual, professional and managerial skills to manage their schools effectively. Therefore, professional development becomes paramount in developing head teachers in order to meet the increasing demands of their role.

Before discussing the evolution of the programmes in educational leadership and management, we will outline some of the issues that these programmes have been designed to address as indicated in existing literature from developed and developing worlds.

### **The Need for Building Leadership and Management Capacity through Professional Development Programmes**

Literature on school improvement suggests that educational leadership plays a vital role in making education reforms successful. For example, de Grauwe (2000) argues that:

Much research has demonstrated that the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed, more than on the abundance of available resources, and that the capacity of

schools to improve teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the quality of leadership provided by the head teacher. (p. 1)

Fullan (2001) considers capacity building to be an integral part of school improvement initiatives: without it, in his view, the desired results will not be achieved. Taking this notion further, Harris (2001) maintains that 'Capacity building is concerned with creating the conditions, opportunities and experiences for collaboration and mutual learning' (p. 261). Thus schools may not be able to improve until an adequate capacity is developed through collaboration and cooperation. Juma and Waudu (1999) suggest that institutionalization of learning and capacity building would not take place until the head teachers are trained.

School leadership and capacity building are not mutually exclusive. Hence, it becomes essential that the education system should promote school leadership by providing relevant exposure and professional development provision; otherwise the quality of education will not improve. Lack of education leadership in Pakistan seems to be one of the major contributing factors affecting the quality of education. Hoodbhoy (1998) indicates that the present education system is affected by the lack of sound management, leadership and governance principles. Memon (2000) argues that without effective school leadership schools would not become effective. This suggests a need for building leadership and management capacity in schools.

Consequently, professional development programmes for practising and aspiring head teachers are a growing feature of school systems in many developed and developing countries (Teacher Training Agency, 1998; Memon 2000; Hallinger, 2001; Tin, 2001; Wenchang & Daming, 2001; Wong, 2001). Preparing head teachers through developing their skills, competence, knowledge and attitudes for institutional capacity building will help them to move beyond 'perfunctory management functions' to the level of an effective school leadership. Ramsey (1999) reminds us that school leadership requires certain special abilities and that, while preparing programmes for improving school leadership, approaches should be developed enabling head teachers to become effective problem solvers and decision-makers. He maintains, further, that 'Good leaders routinely think ahead; plan in advance; try to forecast developments; play out possible, probable, and preferable scenarios in their minds; figure out where current conditions are leading; and anticipate how people may react to alternative courses of action' (p. 123).

Virtually all the available literature on school effectiveness and school improvement is drawn from the experience of developed countries and emphasizes the role of leadership, particularly that of the principal in achieving, maintaining and improving school quality. It proposes various models of leadership, but has been strongly influenced by more than 20 years' work on 'transformational leadership' (Leithwood et al, 1996) which places a strong emphasis on the role of leader in setting a vision for the school, typically focused around improved teaching and learning, and

effectively inspiring and stimulating others in a commitment to the pursuit of this vision. Some international studies outside education have suggested that transformational qualities are seen as key aspects of 'good' leadership in most cultural contexts (den Hartog et al, 1999). In other words, unlike some other styles of leadership, they are not culture-specific. However, approaches to leadership that overemphasize the role of inspirational leaders are increasingly being challenged in the literature by models which emphasize more invitational and dispersed models of leadership (Stoll & Fink, 1996; Gronn, 1999). Furthermore, a number of writers about the education system of Pakistan and other developing countries have expressed considerable doubts about the degree to which head teachers either do, or might be expected to, act effectively as leaders in their schools (Ali et al, 1993; Warwick & Reimers, 1995; Memon, 1998). The reasons for this are various. One lies in the highly bureaucratic and hierarchical structures and rules which govern most school systems, especially those in the public sector. Another relates to the limited professional development and socialization experienced by most teachers and, indeed, by many head teachers. Yet another is associated with national cultures which may encourage dependency, autocratic management styles and aversion to risk (Hofstede, 1980, 1991).

Professional development programmes for school leaders and managers, we suggest, need to take account of the findings of research on school improvement, but they also need to recognize the importance of context and consider how far findings and recommendations which have emerged from research largely undertaken in developed countries can be translated to the very different historical, cultural and economic contexts of developing countries. This requires a thorough understanding of how head teachers and others behave in these different contexts, the reasons for this behaviour, and whether such translation is appropriate for all sorts of reasons, including ethics, western hegemony, and so on.

### **Developing Programmes in Leadership at the AKU-IED**

Keeping in view the centrality of the role of head teachers in managing schools effectively, the AKU-IED started by conducting a series of monthly workshops for serving head teachers to develop their management and leadership skills and competence for improving schools. This led to the development of a tailor-made Advanced Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management programme. A programme development committee was formed, consisting of serving head teachers from public and private school systems including the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, AKES, P along with AKU-IED faculty. The committee assessed the professional development needs of head teachers. The programme was delivered with the assistance of Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom through two Higher Education Link Programmes funded by the United Kingdom

Department for International Development (DFID) and managed by the British Council, Karachi. The overall aim of the programme is to develop head teachers as 'pedagogical leaders'. The programme should contribute towards building leadership and management capacity for improving schools. The programme has the following major objectives for head teacher participants:

1. develop their analytical skills to reflect on their current roles and responsibilities in relation to effective leadership practices;
2. develop their understanding of their role as pedagogical leaders;
3. understand the use of information and communications technology as a tool for school improvement;
4. develop understanding about the dynamics of school effectiveness and improvement and the implications for overall school development;
5. develop skills and competencies for conducting action research for improving educational processes;
6. understand the notion of mentoring and develop their mentoring skills to work with staff in their respective schools;
7. understand the relevance and dynamics of school-community partnerships for making the school effective;
8. understand the notion of monitoring and develop skills related to performance indicators; and
9. develop a framework for school development plans based on the felt needs and future demands for their improvement of school performance.

Serving and aspiring head teachers of public and private school systems participate in the programme. A majority of the participants are female. The course participants are selected through rigorous admission process. This includes short-listing of candidates based on the selection criteria approved by AKU's Board of Graduate Studies followed by interview and writing reflections on the given management scenario.

The programme comprises 10 modules of 400 contact hours, of which 112 contact hours are assigned to a school-based practicum guided by the faculty during field visits. The programme has a flexible schedule; five modules are covered during the summer and winter vacations and the remaining five modules are offered through weekend sessions. Details of the modules are as follows:

- Reconceptualizing roles and responsibilities.
- Using information and communications technology.
- Conducting action research for school improvement.
- Developing pedagogical leadership.
- Developing effective leadership and management practices.
- Understanding professional development.
- Developing mentoring skills.
- Managing school community relationships.
- Monitoring and evaluating school performance.

- Developing action plans for school improvement.

### Some Salient Features of the AKU-IED Programme in Educational Leadership and Management

As mentioned earlier, this programme is significant in the way that it deals with a group of professionals who are directly responsible for improving the quality of education in schools. This programme is linked to AKU-IED's other programmes in the area of teacher education and educational leadership that serve as a source of synergy for developing a 'critical mass' through creating the cultures of 'collaboration' and 'cooperation' required for capacity building (see Figure 5).

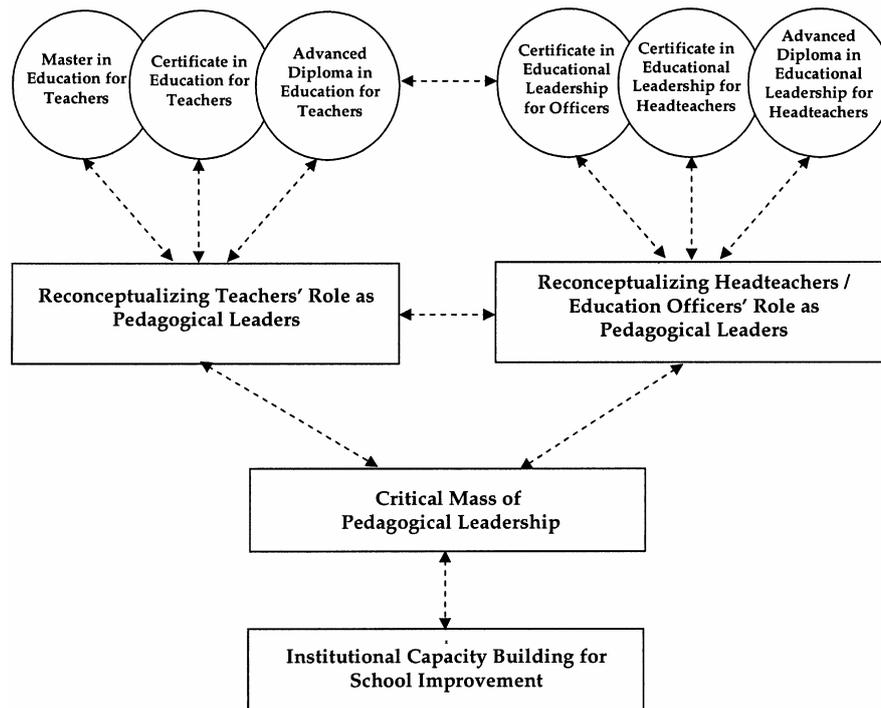


Figure 5. Capacity building through interlinked professional development programmes.

The overall aim of these programmes is to promote pedagogical leadership through developing shared understanding of school improvement strategies among the key players such as Board of Governors, parents, teachers and others who can contribute towards creating a 'critical mass' for managing change effectively in schools. One of the common features of these

programmes is to develop critical thinking skills through reconceptualization of participants' roles as effective pedagogical leaders.

Particular features of the programme for head teachers are:

1. Course participants are provided with ample opportunities to unpack their management practices based on routines. Reconceptualization enables participants to examine their existing notions and practices of leadership and management and explore alternatives for enhancing their effectiveness as pedagogical leaders (see Memon, 2000).
2. Case studies, action learning, role-play, brainstorming, cooperative learning and group discussion are used as major instructional strategies in order to facilitate the course participants' learning.
3. Each module has a number of independent learning sessions in which the course participants are expected to discuss selected articles from the literature on educational leadership (for example, Bennis, 1989; Covey, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1992; Goleman, 1995; Fullan, 1997; Sergiovanni, 1998; Leithwood, 1999; Memon, 2000; Fink & Resnik, 2001) and school improvement (for example, Barth, 1990; Fullan, 1997; Stoll & Fink, 1997; Harris, 2001) in their action learning sets. The readings are provided to them on day one of the programme. They are encouraged to make the best use of the library, computer and internet facilities. During independent learning time, participants are expected to meet and discuss their learning with their assigned tutors.
4. Course participants discuss issues related to school leadership and management practices in groups across the school systems and explore alternatives to improve these practices.
5. The programme has an in-built field-based component through which each participant is visited and shadowed at least three times by one faculty member during the programme to provide feedback for institutionalization of their professional learning.
6. The participants maintain reflective journals as a part of their programme requirement and share these with the tutors from time to time in order to seek feedback on day-to-day issues emerging in their schools. The reflective process of writing also helps them to seek alternatives in order to resolve their issues successfully and create a better management scenario in their schools.
7. The participants are expected to visit at least two school systems of their peers and learn from each other's experiences.
8. After completion of the programme, faculty members carry out school visits in order to check progress made by the participants in their personal and school improvement plans, developed as part of the final module. Here, faculty and participants engage informally in reflective discussions.
9. The faculty member plays a vital role as a 'critical friend' by providing constructive feedback to the participants. This has been considered as one of the main strengths of the programme as the participants feel that it

helps them to get professional support and guidance on-the-job in the application of new professional knowledge and skills.

All modules in the programme include a formal evaluation procedure.

### **The Associated Research Studies**

The first piece of research involved an in-depth study of the roles of six Government and non-Government school head teachers using initial and follow-up interviews and the completion and analysis of diaries describing the demands, choices and constraints experienced in their roles (Simkins et al, 1998). This study identified three key sets of relationships which frame the ways in which head teachers have to manage schools. These are: relationships with their governors, including trustees or government education officers; relationships with parents, students and the community; and relationships with employees, especially teachers. We concluded that differences in the contexts in which head teachers work have significant effects on how they play their roles. In particular, those working in the Government school system (the majority of schools) and in the non-Government school system (operated both by trusts and by private boards) tended to respond in different ways to their differing contexts:

- Government head teachers worked within a governance regime dominated by relatively bureaucratic rules and structures whereas non-Government head teachers were subject primarily to the direct and personal influence of trustees and system managers.
- Government head teachers managed their teaching staff through direct supervision exercised through face-to-face contact and tours of the school. Non-Government head teachers, in contrast, operated delegated management through systems of middle managers and meetings with these.
- Government head teachers tended to see themselves as ‘superordinates’ and consider teachers as ‘subordinates’ whereas non-Government head teachers consider their teachers as colleagues and work with them for their professional development.
- Government head teachers tended to see the influence of parents as an interruption or a threat whereas non-Government head teachers saw parents positively as clients to be served.

These findings can be linked to differences in the ways in which Government and non-Government school head teachers manage their schools. In particular, Government school head teachers saw themselves as having considerably less freedom than did non-Government school head teachers to manage key aspects of their role related to curriculum, staffing, and relationships with parents and students. In part this arose from real differences in powers – for example, Government head teachers have no

powers to appoint or dismiss staff and cannot create management structures differentiated by salary.

The second research study followed three graduates of the programme, using three interviews undertaken over a period of 12 months from their graduation to explore their experiences of attempting to implement change (Simkins et al, 2001; Simkins, Sisum & Memon, 2003). The study enabled us to explore in more detail how head teachers' personal efficacy is affected by the interplay between expectations generated by the national culture of Pakistan, the powers and accountabilities placed on heads by the school system within which they work and their own individual personalities and life histories.

These studies enabled us to gain an understanding of secondary headship in general as well as the interplay between these head teachers' roles and their experience of professional development provided for them by AKU-IED. This research data was further complemented by internal evaluations of the programme and by our own personal experience of working with the participants. Research findings suggest that national culture as an important variable has influenced leadership behaviour which is mediated by system and personal factors.

### **Impact of the Educational Leadership Programme on Developing Leadership and Management Capacity Building**

Information gathered during visits made by faculty to all participants' schools throughout the programme, surveys conducted within the final module on school development planning and follow-up of the programme suggests a major shift in participants' thinking, attitude, behaviour and practice.

The majority of the graduates have introduced school-based professional development programmes to create a culture of community of practice. As one of the participants said;

In fact, I kept trying to penetrate my previous limited notions on 'my role'. This showed how much ignorant I was to the task that was mine ... I had never conceptualised or seen my role as a head. Indeed I have lost the use of valuable time in many aspects ... I feel that I have played the 'informational leader' role, as I have merely been passing information to others, and that too in a manner not satisfying my conscience. (Quote from reflective journal of female head teacher from non-Government school)

Working with parents, staff, trustees and students to develop or revise school vision and mission statements has become common practice of Advanced Diploma graduates in Government and non-Government schools alike. A minority of head teachers also spoke enthusiastically about their team working with the PDTs and other AKU-IED graduates. Many head teachers have either started or improved their monitoring of teaching and learning in

classrooms and giving feedback to teachers. It is evident from the school visits, that the head teachers now emphasize what makes a good lesson from the point of view of the learner, including the importance of clear lesson objectives, pace in lesson delivery, differentiation of tasks to match students' intellectual capabilities and acknowledgement of a variety of learning styles and student motivation. It is also evident that a majority of the participants have started working as pedagogical leaders. One participant, in her reflective journal, mentioned that

A pedagogical leader is one who develops the students and teachers to empower and enhance their performance. I must be concerned with the social and academic benefit of my students and the intellectual and professional capacity of the teachers. I must try my level best to inculcate the habit of 'questioning'. We must have a quest for inquiry. To become a true pedagogical leader one needs to travel a long road. (Quote from reflective journal of female head teacher from non-Government school)

The development of more effective middle managers, particularly in their team leadership roles, has been the development target for some head teachers. Some schools have a sharper and more defined approach to school planning. There are signs of the head teachers developing their coaching and mentoring roles with staff. Production and management of improved learning resources has been a focus for others. For example one participant said:

I began to realize how much time I have wasted in operational details which is nothing but a part of administration. I give topmost priority to the planning, organizing, execution, monitoring and evaluation. I feel that, as a pedagogical leader, I need to have vision, mission, commitment and insight into my role. (Quote from reflective journal of female head teacher from Government school)

During the programme follow-up visits by faculty, many head teachers from both Government and non-Government schools expressed the view that they had gained personally and professionally from the programme. Furthermore, many had attempted to introduce some changes in their schools to reflect the improvement agenda to which they had been introduced. However, there is considerable evidence that the ability of participants to translate management and leadership learning into sustained changes in practice in their schools was seen as heavily constrained by the contexts in which they worked. For example, one participant from a Government school told us, 'Actually I am free to do what I want, providing I do not go against the rule. The future development of this school is 100% my will', thus displaying at one and the same time both his sense of professional autonomy and self-belief to run his school as he wants but also understanding that there were limits imposed by his own and others' views of his role within a professional context.

During the programme we observed a practice of working together on common themes, sometimes within conference settings. On each occasion there has been a general acceptance that such joint sessions are very fruitful, as all parties can begin to develop a better understanding of how each group 'sees' the community of practice and to develop new ways of working together. As one participant said:

We must be open to welcome ... and encourage others to learn from their experiences....As a head teacher I feel an inadequacy in myself. I must be willing to learn ... we have no business more important than getting totally and passionately involved in making our schools effective learning organizations. (Quote from the reflective journal of a male head teacher from a Government school).

Such cooperative activity, more regularly scheduled within the AKU-IED programmes, could increase the likelihood of successful team working on everyone's return to their school context. This has occurred within the programme framework as well as informally in many places, including the AKU-IED's social area, in head teachers' offices during school visits, and within the settings of several school improvement conferences. Further conversations also took place between individual faculty members and programme participants within tutorial sessions and module evaluation.

The participants' views and their practices suggest that the majority of them were able to develop skills such as team building, conflict resolution, participatory decision making, time management, mentoring, action research, conducting effective meetings, school development planning, mobilizing resources and reflective thinking, and so on. As one participant said:

Prior to joining the programme I never asked myself questions such as: Why did I never sit down and question about my role?, Why did I behave with my teachers in an unprofessional manner?, Why did my personal disposition affect my professional life?, And why did I never put students' welfare and excellence at the heart of my profession? (Quote from a head teacher's valedictory speech during graduation ceremony)

The above reflections of the programme graduates provide us with some evidence that the graduates have already moved to new directions of improving schools. In particular, there has been a cross-fertilization of ideas and understanding and identification of mutual challenges faced by colleagues who are leading schools in the public and private school systems. The school visits, as part of the programme, have been a major determinant of this increased understanding. Comments received from the participants during the programme evaluation processes and also during the follow-up underlined how their involvement in a wide variety of teaching and learning approaches in the programme proved very powerful in challenging their own

thinking and school practices concerning teaching, learning and leadership. The participants often commented on how their own school and their earlier teaching careers had been dominated by very didactic teaching methods and coercive styles of leadership. These views were further supported in the outcomes of our research, where specific questions were asked concerning participants' views on the strengths and weaknesses of the programme (Simkins et al, 2001).

### **Challenges for Developing Capacity Building for School Improvement**

Despite the significant impact of the programme, our research findings indicate that the majority of head teachers experienced difficulties in sustaining change and improvement in their schools. At a general level in Karachi, from where most of the participants are drawn, the social, economic and political contexts of the schools in the public sector are seen by most of their head teachers to prescribe almost all that they might attempt in terms of school improvement. In the perceptions of head teachers interviewed in our research, the bureaucracy in the education department provides little in the way of practical, professional or emotional support for head teachers. Non-Government schools are often characterized by relatively distant Boards of Trustees. Both Government and non-Government school systems seldom give their head teachers any clear direction and many do not have a job description. Few people in positions of governance in either sector have extensive knowledge about education or what the purpose of a school might be beyond maintaining the status quo in society. Those who have participated in the programme have encountered difficulties such as lack of support from their school system, lack of professional autonomy, lack of resources, conflicting expectations of different stakeholder groups and a predominantly top-down directive management approach; the last of which is not exclusive to the Government system. Also, it is difficult to find any single or identical model or norm of collaborative culture in different schools because of the individual school culture.

Given these pressures and difficulties arising from the context of schools, the examples of school change described above must be considered indicators of some success. AKU-IED's 'critical mass' theory of school improvement is still based on the belief that collaboration will bring about the desired changes. However, our research findings and our experience of working with graduates suggest that although many head teachers have provided a platform for PDTs to form a culture of collaboration and cooperation in schools through working together on the tasks assigned by them, there is still a need for head teachers to consider themselves as an integral part of the whole process of team building and collaborative culture.

These considerations mean that, at this stage in the development of the programme, it is difficult to make any firm statements about the longer-term

robustness of the changes in head teacher and school management practice which the programme has stimulated, or of the degree to which specific initiatives are linking into wider, whole-school planned strategies for improvement. Evidence from our research (Simkins et al, 1998, 2001; Simkins, Sisum & Memon, 2003) suggests that, for most head teachers, change is generally an incremental, even piecemeal process, and that the personal style that individual head teachers choose to adopt in leading and managing improvement varies considerably, as does the degree of quality, consistency and perseverance in their approaches. There is also some indication that many head teachers find it difficult to sustain even the more piecemeal changes, perhaps in part because they are just piecemeal but also because of the weight of constraints under which they must operate. The most successful examples of holistic approaches to change are found in the private sector schools where there may already be significant demand or encouragement and support for such changes and where head teachers' personal, and perhaps social, background gives them the motivation and confidence to lead change effectively. In her study Farah et al (1996) found that 'if the head is competent and also has a high status in the community, her [his] access to leaders and her [his] influence with other community members positively affects what she [he] can do for the school' (p. 146).

We should acknowledge that the difficulties of translating professional development experience into sustained school improvement are not unique to Pakistan. Some studies from other countries have shown how difficult it is to sustain improvements in school for any length of time (Stoll & Fink, 1996; Fink, 1997, 1999; Shaw, 2001). Nevertheless, the critical question for those considering the future planning of school leadership development at AKU-IED is how the current programme delivery can be made more effective, not just in aiding participants' to reconceptualize their head teachers' role and triggering the motivation for change, but also in determining their ability to translate that new thinking into practical strategies in their school communities that increase the chances of genuine school improvement becoming effectively embedded in their schools.

We noticed that, where examples of more robust change resulting from the programme were identified, these seemed to occur where either or both of the following two conditions existed. First, the local context of the school system and its community either encouraged initiative among its head teachers, or at least did not challenge a head teacher's right to act in an innovative way. And secondly, the head teacher had the personal qualities necessary to achieve change in difficult circumstances such as strong values and a clear vision, considerable self-confidence, a high degree of optimism about what is possible and the skill to work with and involve people, bringing them 'on board' in the change process. These are the characteristics typically attributed to transformational leaders, mentioned earlier. Evidence collected from interviews and school observations in our study sample of eight head teachers indicated just one clear example of such leadership.

### **Recommendations for Developing Leadership and Management Capacity**

Our research findings suggest that development work with head teachers would benefit by being much more focused on the professional and personal characteristics of the head teachers themselves, rather than simply on their acquisition of a body of school improvement knowledge and management techniques. Unless we give our head teachers time and opportunity to address what it means to *be* a head teacher leading change, what it *feels* like to be in such a challenging and at times isolated role, and how important it is to develop new models of working with others, then significant progress is unlikely.

Much of the work of AKU-IED, particularly the work on leadership development, is based upon conceptual models taken from North America and western Europe and yet the application of these concepts is taking place in a very different social, religious and economic culture. Rather than assert the appropriateness of pedagogical leadership models to Pakistan's schools, it may be better to explore how realistic it is as an aspiration for most head teachers working within systems that themselves often lack a clear embedded vision of educational purposes. There is a need to develop leadership approaches that respond at both philosophical and practical levels to the social, political and economic constraints within which school leaders must work. It is in the exploration of such issues and their development into indigenous practical strategies for school leadership and school improvement that perhaps the future programme, and similar programmes in other and differing cultural contexts, stand to make the most progress.

There is a need to give support to head teachers beyond the end of any professional programme. Head teachers need support to help them embed their new ideas, to develop and practice new roles and, at times, to be encouraged to show bravery over leadership decisions.

I have learned a lot myself, but to implement, that is not easy ... I feel some pride in myself that I am more confident ... after giving a head teacher this type of course, if you don't support him, I am 100% sure that he will not change. (Quote from an interview from Government school head teacher)

One possible way of providing this post-programme support or mentoring for graduates would be to develop and utilize the capabilities of the growing number of more experienced school principals and head teachers who have been successful members of earlier cohorts and are now starting to make progress in the long haul of school development. Such support would be hugely strengthened if it were combined with more collaboration between this and other programmes at AKU-IED. The challenge here is for AKU-IED faculty to collaborate in designing and implementing programmes in ways that would have teachers, head teachers and education officers collaborate for school improvement. Support from the district education

officers or the board of directors in the non-Government schools is necessary for the head teachers. We noted that those education officers who participated in AKU-IED professional development programmes were much more supportive and caring than others. Leadership and management development programmes must take account of the demands and constraints which particular school systems place on head teachers and others and of the consequent range of choices that are actually available to them (Stewart, 1982).

### **Conclusion**

We can see that the findings from this research and developmental experience accord closely with what we quoted earlier from existing literature regarding doubts about the degree to which head teachers either do, or might be expected to, act effectively as leaders in their schools (Ali et al, 1993; Warwick & Reimers, 1995; Memon, 1998). The reasons offered, such as highly bureaucratic and hierarchical structures and rules which govern most school systems, especially those in the public sector, the limited professional development of head teachers, and a national culture which encourages dependency, autocratic management styles and aversion to risk (Hofstede, 1980, 1991), have all been borne out in this research. We can see that the role of leadership and management in schools is yet to be recognized fully in public and private school systems of Pakistan.

As de Grauwe (2000) indicated, the leadership role of the head teacher is critical and requires new non-traditional managerial skills. There is a need to focus on the personal dimension of leadership development, adopt a more integrated approach to such development within the individual school, and open up a debate on system constraints to school improvement addressing the issue of performance efficacy at a number of levels. The AKU-IED programme has been successful in providing participants with skills and competencies. However, the issue of educational leadership and management must be addressed in its real context for developing adequate capacity.

Our findings suggest that, while pedagogical and improvement-oriented leadership is not impossible in Pakistan, its emergence requires unusual circumstances and extraordinary personal qualities among those in leadership positions. Such circumstances and qualities may be quite rare, especially in the Government school system. Its emergence also requires development programmes that are sensitive to cultural context as indicated by Shaw and Welton (1996) and Shaw (1998). Since educational leadership and school improvement are inseparable, AKU-IED might valuably review *all* its programmes and ensure that leadership and school improvement stay as common threads across the programmes.

Lastly, although AKU-IED's programmes in general and its Advanced Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management in particular are designed carefully in line with school system needs related to school

improvement, their overall impact is hampered by school systems' policies and plans and attitudes of their superordinates. The majority of head teachers seem to have been working in the situation portrayed by Cummings (1997) that

training programmes are not guaranteed to have the desired impact if they are not accompanied by other changes which actually empower principals altering their status from that of last-line implementer of central decisions to first-line innovators of a flexible and responsive system. In the absence of empowering reforms, principals may consider the lessons shallow in that they are at the bottom of larger hierarchy and everything they initiate is ultimately subject to review. If they do well, they will be ignored. If they do poorly, they will be sacked. (p. 230)

It is clear that sustainable development has to address the wider systems within which head teachers work and AKU-IED must review development within this wider frame. This challenge is being tackled currently through work with education officers and administrative leaders in several regions of Pakistan. However, effecting changes to ways of thinking in a wider context and culture goes beyond the immediate scope of AKU-IED and takes us into human development at the national or international scale. The Aga Khan Development Networks provides opportunities for wider influence but the challenge will be to create or enable the governmental structures that encourage in-depth field-based development on a wider scale.

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