
Building a Consensus on School Leadership for Quality Education in Africa

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Julien Dillensplein 1 bus 2A, 1060 Brussels, Belgium

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Responsible Editors:

Jocelyne Cyiza Kirezi and Jef Peeraer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To tackle the learning crisis in Africa, effective school leadership is recognised as being essential to address factors that are underlying this crisis. School leadership is an important element contributing to influence education actors to work towards better learning and also, more resilient education systems. Together with the government of Rwanda and the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), VVOB – education for development, initiated the African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) to ignite and promote the potential of school leadership in improving quality of education in Africa. To lay the foundations for the Centre, an exploratory scoping review of the empirical research on school leadership in Africa was carried out (Bush et al., 2022). The study offers insights into what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent, based on empirical research. The resulting working paper provides insight into key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership, the features of effective and scalable Professional Development (PD) for school leaders as well as on how local, national and regional policies promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices in Africa. Based on the findings, recommendations are made with regards to activities of the ACSL to promote school leadership.

To further strengthen the foundations of the African Centre for School Leadership, in a next step, VVOB sought to draw on the opinion of experts in the field and across Africa to provide a critical eye to the findings from the review. At the same time, the experts were requested to provide their opinion on the recommended directions of the African Centre, including on further research. The Delphi method was selected as a method for validating the findings from the scoping review and for building a consensus on key activities of the African Centre for School Leadership. The Delphi method is as a group process involving an interaction between the researchers and a group of identified experts on a specified topic, through a series of surveys. A panel of experts was put together, representing key stakeholders of the ACSL, including regional strategic partners, government partners, policy makers, researchers, development partners and providers of PD services to school leaders in Africa. Starting from the experts that were already involved in setting up the Centre, and through snowballing, a group of sixteen experts was identified (including seven female participants) to participate in the Delphi study.

For this Delphi study, the findings of the scoping review were rewritten into statements on school leadership in Africa, organized around nine topics. The recommendations for the Centre were rewritten into stated ambitions of the Centre around four focus areas. During the first Delphi round, the panel of experts could suggest additional statements. In the second Delphi round, a resulting one hundred and twelve statements on school leadership in Africa, and twenty-four stated ambitions for the African Centre for School Leadership were presented to the panel of experts. On a scale from 1 to 10, they could express to what extent they agreed with the statements and share their opinion on the importance of the stated ambitions for the Centre. In this round, they could also provide qualitative feedback to share the arguments underlying their assessment of the statements. This feedback, as well as the mean scores on all the statements, were shared back anonymously to the panel during a hybrid workshop between the second and third Delphi round. The experts were considered to be in consensus, when statements and stated ambitions had a Standard Deviation lower than 1.60. Statements on which no consensus was achieved in Delphi round two were presented once more in the third and final Delphi round.

The panel of experts were in consensus and agreed that effective school leadership should lead to enhanced student wellbeing and equity, reduced dropout and improve the quality of education overall, and this through raising the quality of teachers, along with supporting the development, motivation, and retention of effective teachers. It was agreed that therefore, a successful school leader must have the skills to establish the direction of the school, manage it as an organization, and create a positive and safe learning environment for students. The experts also agreed that more female school leaders are needed in Africa to improve gender equality. They argued that in some African countries, senior leaders' support and the influence of hierarchy is a barrier to distributed school leadership. They observed that in many countries in Africa teaching experience remains the main requirements for school leadership ascension, and that even though there is limited evidence on the impact of PD and on how PD works, effective preparation and development of school leaders makes a difference on quality of education. The experts agreed that PD must include a range of leadership development activities, such as peer observation, peer mentorship, work tasks, feedback systems, on-the-job training, as well as building relationships; and gender responsive, and gender transformative pedagogy should be included in the PD content. For sustainability, they agreed that a close collaboration is needed between PD providers and government. Finally, they agreed that national policies are important in raising awareness about leadership and district or regional leaders are key in shaping the educational landscape.

However, there was controversy, and no consensus was achieved on statements whether school leadership should lead to improved public examination outcomes and raising the performance of a typical student. There was no consensus neither that school leadership practices should include promoting and using ICT in teaching, learning and management. There was no consensus that women are more likely to be effective instructional leaders than men, amongst the experts. In general, the panel of experts recognized that with regards to the state of school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa, there was evidence supporting most statements but not enough for generalizations at continental level. While there was interest in the concept of Ubuntu leadership amongst the experts, the argument was brought forward that the Ubuntu philosophy should be understood as a universal value, not only specific to Africa. The experts did not have a consensus on PD having to be mandatory, and regarding including ICT, financial literacy, and management techniques in the content of school leadership PD.

Regarding the four focus areas of the African Centre for School Leadership, the panel of experts reached a consensus on all stated ambitions. They asserted that it will be important for the Centre to assist and support countries in the development of clear policies that promote school leadership development and to engage with governments across the continent to put school leadership 'on the map'. There was strong agreement on the importance of supporting the development of long-term PD trajectories where participants engage with both theory and practice and on the importance of capacity building of PD providers and bringing together these PD providers and national governments to ensure school leadership PD is embedded within national education systems. The experts found it important that the Centre should conduct studies on the effectiveness of school leadership PDs and on the impact of school leadership on quality of education. Other areas of research that were seen as important include the interplay between gender and school leadership and school leadership models rooted in the African context. As such, they agreed that the Centre should be the 'go-to' place for research and information on school leadership in Africa, that advocacy should be based on research insights and knowledge production, that scholars, policy makers practitioners and pan-African bodies will be essential and that convening all partners in regular conferences on school leadership will be essential. In general, the experts emphasized that the Centre should be acting in an advisory role to governments.

The Delphi method has proven to be an appropriate method to discuss the findings from the scoping review and the proposed way forward for the Centre. The Delphi method provided an opportunity for the panel to debate and finetune their opinion, to create better insights and ownership for the proposed solutions. In three survey rounds, along with a feedback session in between the last two rounds, a broad consensus was found on most statements on school leadership in Africa and on the importance of all stated ambitions of the African Centre for School Leadership. This suggests that the conclusions from the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa accurately reflected the views of the experts across the many countries and individual experiences. A number of statements on school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa remained controversial, and no consensus was found amongst the experts, notably on the interplay between gender and school leadership and on the potential of school leadership models that are rooted in the African context, such as Ubuntu School Leadership. It was concluded that these topics need further exploration and research.



INTRODUCTION

In Africa, over the last decades, countries have made substantial improvements in insuring access to basic education; however, progress on access to quality education for all has been lagging. The learning crisis has been attributed to education systems' difficulty to address one or more key challenges impacting learning, including unprepared students, poor teaching quality, focus on educational inputs that do not drive learning, and weak school management. Effective school leadership is recognised as being essential to address all these factors because it is an important element contributing to influence education actors to work towards better learning and also, more resilient education systems. To achieve this, it calls for reorienting school leaders' roles to focus on learning outcomes and providing opportunities to professional development on effective school leadership. To ignite and promote the potential of school leadership in improving quality of education in Africa, the government of Rwanda is collaborating with VVOB – education for development and the Association for Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), to set up an African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL). The Centre will support governments and governmental agencies in the education sector to build supportive school leadership systems with the objective of improving teaching and in turn learning outcomes.

To build the theoretical foundations of the Centre an exploratory scoping review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa was conducted. This review on school leadership in Africa offers insights in what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent, based on empirical research (Bush et al., 2022). Two hundred twenty-seven (227) empirical studies that focus on school leadership, and leadership development in Africa, were included in the study and the review zoomed in on the following research questions (RQ): what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa, what key competences and practices are associated with effective school leadership, what are features of effective and scalable professional development (PD) for school leaders and how national and regional

policies promote or inhibit school leadership practices. In addition, the review provides key recommendation on the Centre's focus areas: (1) the development and re-development of policies and PD, (2) the delivery of PD through capacity development of PD providers, (3) monitoring, evaluation, and research, and (4) knowledge mobilisation, advocacy and sector coordination. Bush et al.'s (2022) review showed that effective school leadership is understood as having positive effects on student achievements and school leadership competencies tend to follow global school leadership models. The concept of Ubuntu leadership could be an emerging school leadership model for the African continent; but further research is needed to explore and develop the concept. The link of gender and school leadership revealed inequalities in both leadership roles and leadership effectiveness. It is argued that for PD to influence school practice, it needs to be long-term PD in which participants engage with theory and practice. Further the review recommends strategies for African governments to improve teaching and learning; including, providing support to governments to develop clear policies and to promote school leadership in Africa and promoting PD that prepares school leaders to perform their roles. The review recommends working together with PD providers to ensure that school leadership PD is included in the national systems. A pan-African research programme is suggested to study the school leadership impact on quality education and the effectiveness of PD on school leadership.

Following this review on school leadership in Africa, an additional step was taken by the ACSL with the purpose of building a consensus on school leadership in Africa, to further strengthen the foundation of the Centre's work. Using the findings of the scoping review as a starting point, the ACSL sought to draw on the opinion of experts in the field and across Africa to provide a critical eye to the research and to share their opinion on the key insights. We wanted to know:

- To what extent do experts and key stakeholders agree with key findings from the scoping review with regards to school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa?
- To what extent do experts and key stakeholders agree on the importance of the stated ambitions of the African Centre for School Leadership to promote effective school leadership?

Calling together experts to both review the initial research and provide input into the future direction of the ACSL required a novel approach.



METHODOLOGY

The Delphi method was selected as an appropriate method for confirming the applicability and significance of the findings from the scoping review, to ensure their uptake. The Delphi method, which was created by the Rand Corporation in the 1950s, is defined by Yousuf (2007) as a group process involving an interaction between the researchers and a group of identified experts on a specified topic, usually through a series of questionnaires. Delphi methods have been used for a number of reasons, including forecasting (Gallego & Bueno, 2014), planning (Ma et al., 2011), policy (Landeta, 2006), or decision making; often when there is uncertainty around specific issues. Literature has focused also on proving the veracity of the method (Boberg & Morris-Khoo, 1992; Donohoe et al., 2012; Fink-Hafner et al., 2019; Hsu & Sandford, 2007; Niederberger & Spranger, 2020). Garavalia & Gredler (2004) noted that the technique allows for minimal influence of researchers while allowing for more inclusion of participants in the data collection process, as well as demonstrating the use of participants opinions and ideas in the research process. According to Rowe et al. (1991) four principles define the Delphi method: anonymity, iteration, controlled feedback and statistical summary of group responses. Belton et al. (2019) further emphasize that Delphi studies are considered rigorous when they include six steps: setting up the Delphi study, software/delivery choice, developing question items and response scales, providing feedback between rounds, account for dropout, and analyse the results.

In this study, the Delphi technique is being used to come to consensus around specific issues related to school leadership and the promotion of school leadership in Africa. The technique enabled the researchers to consult experts and key partners of the African Centre for School Leadership, for the following objectives:

- To corroborate the findings of the scoping review of the empirical research on school leadership in Africa; and
- To develop a consensus on activities through which the Centre can support African governments and PD providers in the promotion of effective school leadership on the continent.

For corroboration and validation of the findings of the scoping review, the research questions are the same as for the scoping review itself: RQ0: What constitutes Effective school leadership; RQ1: What key competencies and practices

are associated with effective school leadership in Africa?; RQ2: What are key design features of effective and scalable PD for school leaders as effective school leaders in the African context?; and RQ3: How do local, national, and regional policies on the African continent promote or inhibit school leaders' engagement in effective leadership practices?

In addition, the Delphi study intended to gather views on key activities within the four focus areas of the Centre that were identified through the scoping review:

- Focus Area 1: Policy development
- Focus Area 2: Support to PD providers
- Focus Area 3: Support on M&E and Research
- Focus Area 4: Support on communication, advocacy, knowledge mobilization and sector coordination

Study instruments

The questionnaire developed for this study referred to key findings of the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa. Researchers reviewed the findings on every research question of the review and developed a set of statements around the research questions, with nine sub-categories, that were formulated in such a way that experts could share to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements. In the first Delphi round, the panel of experts was requested to contribute additional pertinent statements that spoke to the topics.

In two subsequent survey rounds, round 2 and 3, closed-ended questions focus on assessing the extent to which experts agree or disagree with the key findings from the review of empirical research on school leadership and additional statements provided by the experts in round 0; with a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (Totally disagree) to 10 (Totally agree). For instance, for the overarching question (RQ0) on what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa the statements were:

- School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced student outcomes, especially in public examinations.
- School leadership is effective when it leads to reduced student dropout.

Some statements were about the current state of school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa, for example:

- Most African countries do not provide opportunities for leadership preparation and development.
- Teaching qualification and teaching experience are the main requirements for school leadership in many African countries and therefore head teachers are often appointed because of a successful record as teachers.

See Annex 1 and Annex 2 for all the statements regarding school leadership in Africa. After each set of statements, open-ended questions were provided for experts to provide argumentation on their opinions regarding the statements.

Another set of statements was provided with stated ambitions of the Centre, around the four focus areas, and experts were asked to rate the presented statements on their importance: on a scale from 1 (Not important at all) to 10 (Extremely important). For instance, for the focus area on 'Development of policy and Professional Development' the statements were:

- The Centre will engage with governments across the continent to put school leadership 'on the map', beginning with those countries committed to enhancing school leadership as a step towards quality education.
- The Centre will place particular emphasis on the role of school leaders as instructional leaders.
- The Centre will promote the development of PD of school leaders that address the complexity of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and recognize the challenges and opportunities of school leaders on the African continent.

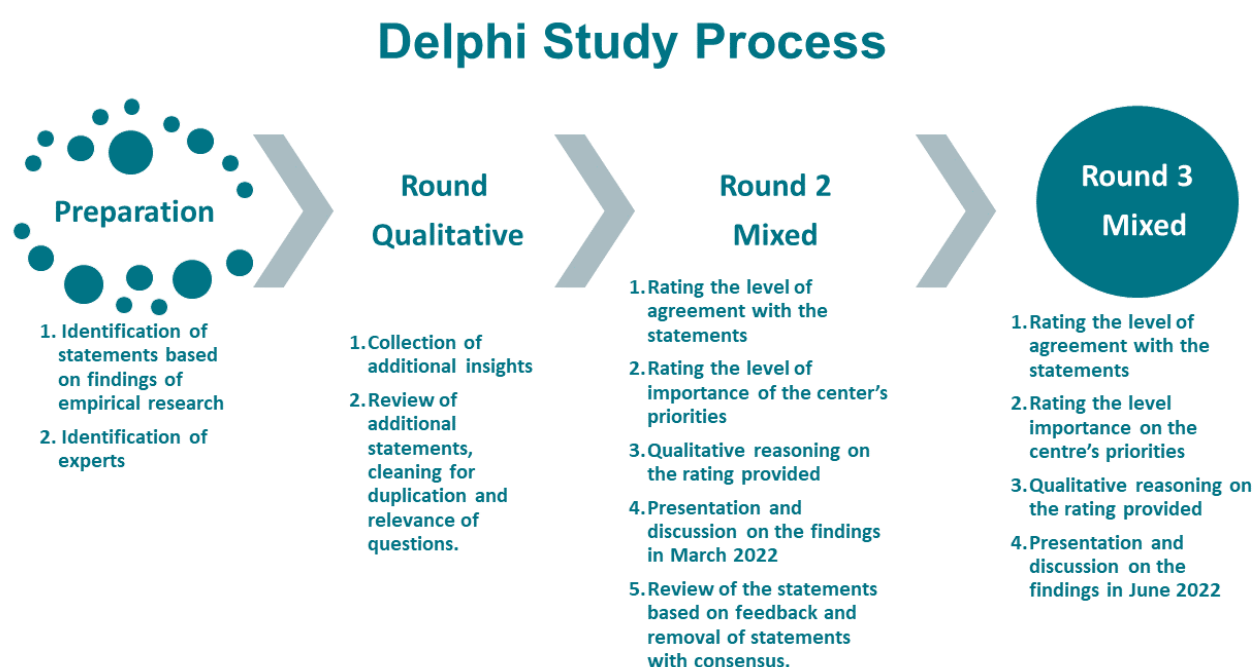
See Annex 3 for all stated ambitions for the African Centre for School Leadership. Again, open-ended questions provided room for experts to give a narrative of their reasoning when scoring the statements.

Data collection through Delphi rounds

To facilitate the dialogue and achieve consensus on school leadership in Africa, structured interactions with experts were introduced in a three-round Delphi process (see Figure 1), through a series of online questionnaires. The survey questionnaires were shared with experts through email in an online form (Using KoboToolbox). Between the second and third round, a workshop was organised for experts in a hybrid modality (in-person and online) to anonymously present and discuss the feedback of the experts that was provided by them through the open-ended questions in the second round and to share the mean scores on all the statements.

To prepare for the Delphi rounds, the key findings of the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa were organized in a set of nine categories. **In round 1**, these findings were introduced as statements to the panel of identified experts. The experts were requested to share additional insights around the main research questions, based on their experience and expertise on the topic. The survey was administered online in March 2022, approximately one week before round 2. Round 1 resulted in a list of additional statements, they were then added in statements presented in Round 2.

Figure 1: Data collection process through Delphi rounds



In the subsequent Delphi round or **round 2**, experts were asked to clarify the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the presented statements (i.e., 112 statements) on school leadership and PD and to rate the importance of the stated ambitions (i.e., 24 statements) of the African Centre for School Leadership. The survey for round 2 combined a set of closed-ended and open-ended questions. During a hybrid panel workshop, organized in-person in Kigali and remotely for online participants, the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa was presented to the panel of experts, as well as information collected in the survey round 2 (anonymously).

Following the panel workshop held in Kigali, some statements (i.e., 34 out of the 71 statements presented in round 2) were revised or rephrased, to address comments that were discussed. The revision considered some statements that experts said were generalising and did not consider the diversity of contexts on the African continent; therefore, for example, the statement "Minimum quota of 30% female school leaders is needed in many African countries to improve gender equality" was rephrased as "More female school leaders are needed in many African countries to improve gender equality." Another aspect of the remarks examined was the fact that some statements included numerous concepts that needed to be evaluated separately.

In the final round, **round 3**, again a survey combining a set of closed-ended and open-ended questions was provided to experts. Only statements on which no consensus was achieved in round 2 were presented once more. Overall, 71 statements on school leadership and PD and 7 statements on the African Centre for School Leadership were included in this round. From the discussions during the panel workshop in Kigali, experts were invited to reassess statements on which no consensus was achieved and were encouraged to provide input on rating of specific statements through the open-ended questions.

Characteristics of experts

Hsu & Sanford (2007) characterise the selection of experts as a key stage in the design of a Delphi study. It is crucial to choose a diverse group of experts to accurately reflect the range of opinions on a given subject and produce conclusions that are more credible and accurate (Belton et al., 2019). In the selection of an expert as an individual, the literature suggest to consider the closeness to the topic at study (Devaney & Henschion, 2018) including for instance the number of publications and/or membership of relevant institutions. Another important element considered in the selection of experts is the number of experts to include in the study and their availability.

In this study, we put together a panel of policy makers, PD providers, experts, and development partners on the African continent to build a consensus in what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent. This panel consists of experts that were already involved in the discussions on the African Centre for School Leadership, including potential regional strategic partners, government partners, policy makers, researchers, development partners and providers of professional development services to school leaders. Through snowballing, additional experts were identified to be part of the panel. Gender was included as criteria for the selection of experts, to have a balanced gender representation in the panel. Based on these criteria a panel composed of 16 experts; including 7 female experts; were identified based on their expertise in school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa.

Table 1: Overview of participants per Delphi round

Category of partnership	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Regional, strategic partner	1	2	1
Operational partner, providing PD services for school leaders	2	2	2
Development partner	2	2	2
Learning partner/Researcher	4	4	5
Other (Specify)	1	1	0
Gender	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3
Female	5	5	5
Male	5	6	5
Total	10	11	10

From the 16 experts that were contacted through email and requested to fill in the first-round survey (i.e., round 0), 10 (63% response rate) responded in round 1. In round 2, two more participants responded to the survey, and one did not, therefore the response rate improved to 69% (11 respondents). In round 3, the response rate moved back to 63% (10 respondents) because one respondent that did not respond to round 1 responded in this round and two participants from round 1 did no longer respond.

Analysis

The objective of the Delphi method is to come to a consensus on the topic under study. However, consensus itself can be a contentious issue as it may be defined in different ways. According to McKenna (1994) consensus should be associated with 51 % agreement among respondents while Sumsion (1998) and Green et al., (1999) recommends 70 % and 80 % respectively. Other studies suggest using standard deviation and argue it should be less than 1.5 according to Christie & Barela (2005).

In this study, with statements on school leadership in Africa on a 10-point answering scale with a range from 1 (Totally disagree) to 10 (Totally agree); and statements on ambitions for the African Centre for School Leadership on a 10-point answering scale with a range from 1 (Unimportant) to 10 (Very important), statements and stated ambitions with a standard deviation lower than 1.60 are considered as statements on which there is a consensus amongst the panel of experts.

The data from the different rounds was exported from Kobo Toolbox into a spreadsheet file and analysed using Stata.

In the second Delphi round, experts were asked to mention why they tended to agree or disagree with specific statements. Their input on these open-ended questions was analysed thematically. The researchers grouped similar opinions around the key themes and this qualitative input was fed back to the panel of experts during the hybrid convening in between the second and third Delphi round. The experts asked to re-assess their statements in the third Delphi round and had a final opportunity to elaborate on their agreement or disagreement, again through open-ended questions.

Limitations of the study

There are limitations to the Delphi method itself as well as to this study. A commonly defined limitation of the Delphi method is the inability to generalise to the entire population. Further, with very few exceptions, researcher rarely try to replicate findings or follow up on forecasts due to changing contexts and the applied nature of Delphi methods (Etemad et al., 2021). However, for the purpose of this study, the process did produce 'valid' results. Given that experts selected were not necessarily a homogeneous group. It is likely that these results may differ if another group of experts with different backgrounds were gathered for another Delphi process.

Ethical considerations

All experts were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights and were invited to ask any questions prior to their engagement in the study. Respondents were asked to confirm their consent prior to answering the survey. The surveys were anonymous, as is standard procedure in Delphi Studies. Discussions that took place following each round were moderated by the researchers.



RESULTS AND FINDINGS

In this section, we first present the overview of original statements from the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa, and how in the first Delphi round, statements have been added. Afterwards, we present how consensus was achieved from Delphi round 2 to Delphi round 3 and we zoom in on the argumentation underlying non-consensus and how this was dealt with in the subsequent Delphi rounds.

Results round 1

In round 1, in total 70 statements were presented to experts: 53 statements regarding the four main research questions and 17 statements regarding the four areas of intervention for the Centre; the research questions (RQ) were disaggregated into 9 sub-questions or topics (Q). See Table 2 for an overview of the questions and the number of statements per question.

In this first Delphi round, experts were first asked if they had more insights and statements to add. On average, experts were satisfied with the proposed statements, and while experts reacted differently on each question, at least one expert provided an additional statement on each question. These additional statements were then reviewed by the researchers, aligned with how other statements were formulated and reordered to relevant questions and focus areas when necessary; this resulted in 66 additional statements.

Results round 2 and 3

In round 2, in total 112 statements were presented to the experts regarding **school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa**, 59 more statements compared to the first round. Among these statements, experts reached consensus on 45 statements (40%) in round 2. As can be found in the Table 3 in Annex 1, the mean of the scores suggest that experts tend to agree or strongly agree with these statements, with the mean scores assigned on a scale from 1 to 10 ranging from 6.3 to 9.4. The lowest mean score is on a statement on gender interaction with school leadership in Africa and the highest mean score was on statements on what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa and on features of school leadership PD effectiveness.

Fifty-seven (57) statements on which no consensus was achieved in round 2, were presented again to the panel in round 3. To explain the lack of consensus in round 2, experts explained during the panel workshop that as statements mentioned or started with "In Africa ...", and this was perceived as too generalizing. These items were rephrased for round 3 and some others were split in two separate statements. In round 3, consensus was achieved on 42 statements. For 29 statements, no consensus was achieved.

Regarding the **stated ambitions of the Centre**, 24 statements were presented to experts in round 2, this represents 7 more statements compared to round 1. Consensus was achieved in round 2 on 17 statements. The remaining 7 statements were presented again in round 3 and the panel of experts reached consensus on all the statements in this round.

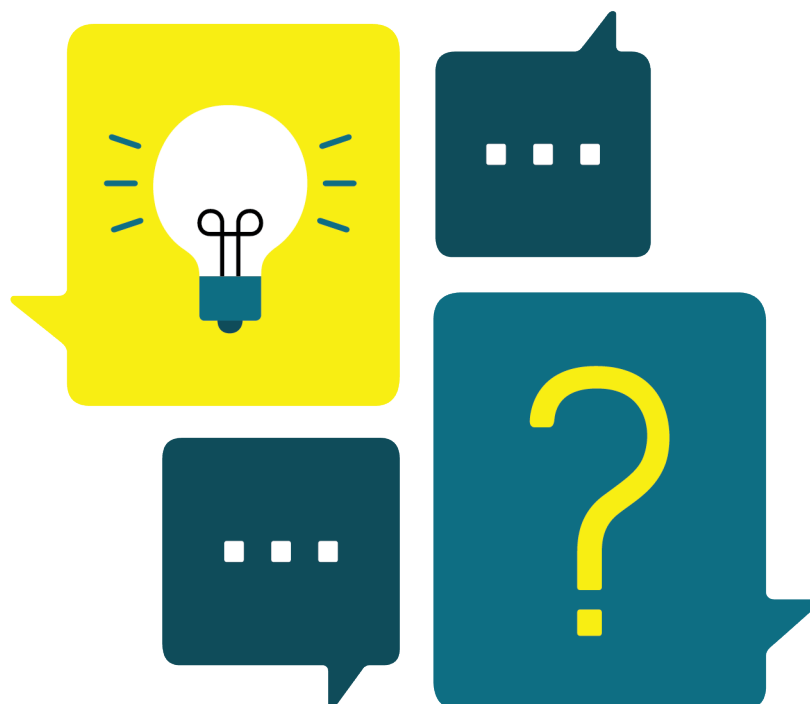


Table 2: Overview of statements per research question and per round

Question	# statements presented in round 1	# additional statements provided by experts	# resulting statements in round 2	# statements with consensus in round 2	# Statements round 3	# statements with consensus in round 3	No consensus
Statements on school leadership in Africa (from the review of empirical research)							
RQ0: What constitutes effective school leadership in Africa?	4	16	20	11	10*	8	2
RQ1: What are the key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership in Africa?							
Q1.1: Competences of effective school leaders	10	4	14	10	4	4	0
Q1.2: Practices of effective school leaders	8	10	18	11	8*	6	2
Q1.3: The current state of school leadership in Africa	6	5	11	0	11	7	4
Q1.4: Gender interaction with school leadership in Africa	3	6	9	0	10	1	9
RQ2: What are the key features of effective and scalable Professional Development (PD) for school leaders in Africa?							
Q2.1: Features of school leadership PD effectiveness	5	4	9	6	4	1	3
Q2.2: Features of school leadership PD sustainability and scalability	5	2	7	3	4*	2	2
Q2.3: The current state of school leadership PD in Africa	8	8	16	4	12	8	4
RQ3: How do local, national and regional policies promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices in Africa?	4	4	8	0	8	7	1
Total number of statements	53	59	112	45	71	44	27
Stated ambitions of the African Centre for School Leadership							
SA1: Development of policy and professional development	5	3	8	4	4	4	0
SA2: Delivery of professional development for school leaders through capacity development of professional development providers	4	3	7	5	2	2	0
SA3: Monitoring, evaluation, and research on the effectiveness of school leadership and school leadership development	3	1	4	3	1	1	0
SA4: Knowledge mobilization, advocacy, and sector coordination through multi-stakeholder dialogue	5	0	5	5	0	0	0
Total number of stated ambitions	17	7	24	16	7	7	0
Total number of statements	70	66	136	62	78	51	27

Note: *Explains the difference in the number of statements in round 2 and 3 for topics where statements were amended in round 3 and divided into two different questions.

Findings

The process of the Delphi method, using three survey rounds of along with a feedback session in between the last two rounds, allowed to find broad consensus on some statements on school leadership in Africa and on the importance of all stated ambitions of the African Centre for School Leadership. Overall, for most statements and all stated ambitions, the panel of experts was in consensus and agreement, which suggests that the conclusions from the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa accurately reflected the views of the experts across the many countries and individual experiences. Some statements on school leadership in Africa remain controversial, with no consensus of the panel of experts. While the section on results presents the overview of how consensus has been achieved for statements and stated ambitions over the survey rounds, this section with conclusions zooms in on the original research questions. For further details, Annex 1 and Annex 2 present the statements where consensus was reached and those on which experts did not reach consensus, respectively. Annex 3 presents the stated ambitions of the Centre. Consensus on the importance of these stated ambitions has been achieved for all statements.

School leadership and school leadership PD in Africa

Responding to what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa, the findings suggest that there is agreement (mean scores from 9.3 – 9.4) and consensus ($SD < 0.82$) that effective school leadership should lead to enhanced student wellbeing, reduced dropout, and equity (i.e., a specific focus on improvement for marginalized groups within a school). Statements that concentrated on improving public examination outcomes and raising the performance of typical student raised controversy and no consensus was achieved on these statements. Experts argued that enhancing learning should not focus on the national examination only neither on one typical student but should rather ensure that all learners are considered. In addition, experts strongly agreed (mean score = 9.1, $SD = 0.70$) that effective school leadership should lead to improve the quality of education through raising the quality of teachers, along with supporting the development, motivation, and retention of effective teachers. Other concepts where experts agreed upon relate to working with parents and sharing responsibilities with teachers.

In response to the question, what are the key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership in Africa, all the statements presented to experts were generally agreed upon. There was consensus in Delphi round 3, that a successful school leader must have the skills to establish the direction of the school (mean score = 9.4, $SD = 0.70$), manage it as an organization, including management of the school resources (mean score = 9.4, $SD = 0.52$), and create a positive and safe learning environment for students (mean score = 9.3, $SD = 1.01$), in addition to promoting gender and inclusive education in schools and creating a positive school culture. Considering the practices of an effective school leader, experts were in agreement and consensus that effective practices should include transforming the school environment to be child-friendly and gender-responsive, supporting teachers' professional development, ensuring effective communication and collaboration with all school stakeholders, developing teaching and learning, building school vision and establishing school goals, and having a regular and timely school self-evaluation for school improvement. Controversy (with $SD \geq 1.60$, including in Delphi round 3) was found around whether these practices should include promoting and using ICT in teaching, learning and management. The argument was that in some countries schools do not have access to ICT infrastructure thus this would be complicated for the school leader to put this in practice. Another controversy was found around whether school leadership practices should include redesigning and enriching the curriculum. The argument here was that redesigning and enriching the curriculum is not the responsibility of the school leader, rather adapting the curriculum to the environment of the school.

Examining the general state of school leadership in Africa and emphasizing on the difficulties encountered there, experts agreed that challenges in adopting distributed leadership remains the ability to secure senior leaders' support (mean = 8.74, $SD = 0.95$) and the influence of hierarchy (mean = 8.4, $SD = 1.26$). However, there was less agreement (mean = 7.6, $SD = 1.51$) regarding the lack of mutual trust hindering distributed leadership in some African countries. No consensus was found around the possible lack and inadequacy of leadership competences and practices in some countries in Africa (mean = 8.2, $SD = 2.04$), and about Ubuntu leadership being a strong approach to school leadership in Africa because of its unique aspects of leadership (mean = 7.5, $SD = 2.4$). The argument was brought

forward that the Ubuntu philosophy should be understood as a universal value instead of being specific to Africa. Looking at the interplay between gender and leadership, the topic also led to a debate amongst the panel of experts. In Delphi round 3, the experts agreed (mean = 9) with consensus (SD = 1.33) that more female school leaders are needed in Africa to improve gender equality. However, on other statements experts did not reach consensus, also the level of agreement on the statements was the lowest compared to other topics presented. For instance, there was less agreement (mean = 5.6) and controversy (SD = 1.96) on the statement that “Women are more likely to be effective instructional leaders than men”. Experts recognize that there was evidence supporting most statements but not enough for generalizations at continental level.

Considering the question on the key features of effective and scalable PD for school leaders as effective school leaders in Africa, there is a strong agreement (mean = 9.4, SD = 0.67) amongst experts that gender responsive, and gender transformative pedagogy should be included in the PD content. There is also agreement (mean = 9.2) and consensus (SD = 0.87) that PD must include a range of leadership development activities, such as peer observation, peer mentorship, work tasks, feedback systems, on-the-job training, as well as building relationships. On the other side there was no consensus (SD \geq 1.60) regarding including content in ICT, financial literacy, and management techniques. To ensure that PD programmes are sustainable and scalable, experts strongly agree (mean = 9.0, SD = 1.34) that a close collaboration is needed between PD providers and government and that PD beneficiaries need to take ownership of their own PD and commit themselves to learning and personal professional development (mean = 8.8, SD = 1.32). There is no consensus (SD \geq 1.60) that PD needs to be offered by a recognized institution and whether PD needs to be mandatory.

Considering the current situation of school leadership PD in Africa, experts strongly agree that in many countries a teaching experience remains the main requirements for school leadership ascension (mean = 9.0, SD = 0.94), and that even though there is limited evidence on the impact of PD and on how PD works, effective preparation and development of school leaders makes a difference on quality of education in Africa (mean = 9.0, SD = 1.34). More controversy (SD \geq 1.60) was found around that statement that school leadership PD in Africa is mostly informal idiosyncratic, self-directed, that it does not seem to follow a specific pattern and that it is not informed by evidence of what works.

Lastly, on the question regarding how local, national, and regional policies promote or inhibit school leaders’ leadership practices in Africa, experts strongly agreed on the importance of national policies in raising awareness about leadership (mean = 9.1, SD = 0.74) and the importance of district or regional leaders in shaping the educational landscape (mean = 9.0, SD = 0.82). There was no consensus (SD = 2.53) on one statement that the key decision in whether to contemplate decentralization in education systems is whether to give power to school leaders instead of to local district officials.

Way forward for the African Centre for School Leadership

Considering the recommendations on the four focus areas of the Centre, experts eventually – in two subsequent Delphi rounds – reached consensus (SD $<$ 1.60) in all the statements presented to them. In general, experts emphasized that the Centre should be acting in an advisory role to governments instead of taking the lead in the implementation.

Regarding the development of policy and professional development (focus area 1), experts assert that it will be important for the Centre to assist and support countries in the development of clear policies that promote school leadership development (mean = 9.3); and, to engage with governments across the continent to put school leadership ‘on the map’ (mean = 9.0).

On the intervention area around the delivery of professional development for school leaders through capacity development of professional development providers (focus area 2), the experts assert the recommendations as important, with strong agreement on the importance of supporting the development of long-term PD trajectories where participants engage with both theory and practice (mean = 9.1, SD = 0.83). There is also consensus on the importance of ‘capacity building of PD providers that ensures that PD trajectories meet the needs of aspiring and in-service school leaders on the continent’ (mean = 9.00, SD = 1.00), and that the African Centre for School Leadership will bring together PD providers and national governments to ensure school leadership PD is embedded

within national education systems and offered to a significant number of school leaders in various stages of their professional development (mean = 9.00, SD = 1.18).

Regarding monitoring, evaluation, and research on the effectiveness of school leadership and school leadership development (focus area 3), experts assessed all the statements presented as being very important including that the Centre should conduct studies on the effectiveness of school leadership PDs and on the impact of school leadership on quality of education. Other areas of research that are seen as important include the interplay of gender and school leadership and school leadership models rooted in the African context, such as Ubuntu school leadership.

Lastly, concerning knowledge mobilization, advocacy and sector coordination (focus area 4), experts assert as important that the Centre would be the 'go-to' place for research and information on school leadership in Africa, that advocacy should be based on research insights and knowledge production, that scholars, policy makers practitioners and pan-African bodies will be essential and that convening all partners in regular conferences on school leadership will be essential. However, it was emphasized that for this to be possible there is a need for partnership with existing PD providers and universities and financial investment are needed, mostly in human resources.





CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Results from the first Delphi round, where the panel of experts was given the opportunity to add additional statements about school leadership and school leadership PD in Africa, made clear that there is a strong interest on school leadership and school leadership professional development in Africa. The panel of experts developed 59 statements to add to the findings of the review and they added 7 stated ambitions for the African Centre for School Leadership. While this resulted in an extraordinary long survey for Delphi round 2 and 3, the continued participation of the panel members and the active participation in the exchange and feedback session between the last two Delphi rounds is a strong indication of their commitment towards the promotion of school leadership on the continent.

In Delphi round 2 and 3, broad agreement and consensus was found on the majority of statements and stated ambitions of the African Centre for School Leadership. This suggests that the review of empirical research on the topic is accurately reflected in the views of the experts across the many countries and individual experiences. On 78 statements and stated ambitions on which no consensus was found on Delphi round 2, for the majority, consensus was found in Delphi round 3. For some statements, this was due to modifications of how the statements were phrased. For most statements, this was based on the discussions and exchange that took place between the experts in between the last two Delphi rounds. Belton et al. (2019) note that the Delphi administrator has many options in modifying the method. Barrios et al. (2021) also demonstrate how feedback from rounds can lead to greater consensus over time. The Delphi study and exchange between experts validated the findings of the review of empirical research, and this with regards to the state of school leadership in Africa, the key practices and competencies of effective school leadership that have been identified, features of effective and scalable professional development on school leadership, and the importance of national and regional policies. The Delphi study and exchange between the experts moreover allowed to build a consensus on the directions of the African Centre for School Leadership to

take with regards to support in policy development, delivery of PD services, monitoring, evaluation and research, and knowledge mobilization, advocacy, and sector coordination.

In 27 statements on school leadership in Africa, consensus was not reached. Kattirtzi & Winskel (2020) suggest that this may be because the field has not yet defined these or that there is a need for further exploration, as is also suggested in other Delphi studies (e.g. in Etemad et al.(2022)). For the African Centre for School Leadership, these statements on which no consensus was achieved provide opportunities for future exploration, investigation, and research. Of special interest are the statements regarding the potential interplay between gender and school leadership, and statements regarding Ubuntu school leadership as a potential model for effective school leadership, rooted in the African context. Both research avenues offer significant opportunities for exploratory and ground-breaking research.



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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Statements on school leadership in Africa with consensus (SD < 1.60)

Considering statements on school leadership in Africa (from the review of empirical research), consensus has been achieved (SD ≤ 1.60) on 87 items in Delphi round 2 and 3 combined.

Table 3: Statements on school leadership in Africa with consensus (SD < 1.60)

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
RQ0: What constitutes effective school leadership in Africa?				
School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced student wellbeing.	9.4	0.81		
School leadership is effective when it leads to reduced student dropout.	9.3	0.65		
School leadership is effective when it leads to increased equity (i.e., a specific focus on improvement for marginalized groups within a school).	9.3	0.65		
School leadership is effective when it leads to high quality of education as a result of raising quality of teachers.	9.1	0.70		
School leadership is effective when it leads to the development and sustenance of a culture of learning amongst teachers and students.	8.9	1.22		
School leadership is effective when it leads to Instructional/ pedagogical improvement.	8.9	1.38		
School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced teacher motivation.	8.9	1.14		
School leadership is effective when it leads to building impactful relationships inside and outside the school community.	8.9	1.30		
School leadership is effective when it leads to the revitalization of a failing school.	8.9	1.64	8.8	1.48
School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced engagement with parents and the community.	8.8	1.33		
School leadership is effective when it leads to building a professional learning community of teachers.	8.7	1.79	8.8	1.14
School leadership is effective when it leads to a positive school culture and engaged school community.	8.7	1.27		
School leadership is effective when it leads to the achievement of school goals.	8.5	1.97	8.8	1.14
School leadership is effective when it leads to promoting positive values (e.g., fairness, integrity, and compassion) in students.	8.5	1.21		

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced diversity.	8.4	1.69	8.5	1.18
School leadership is effective when it leads to shared responsibility, collaboration, and cultivation of leadership in others.	8.3	1.62	8.9	1.10
School leadership is effective when it leads to the development of collaborative action across different school constituencies.	8.3	1.85	8.7	1.16
School leadership is effective when it leads to retention of effective teachers.	8.2	1.78	8.2	1.32
School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced student outcomes.	7.5	2.66	9.1	0.99
RQ1: What are the key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership in Africa?				
Q2: Competences of effective school leaders				
Effective school leadership is about fostering a positive and safe learning environment for students.	9.3	1.01		
Effective school leadership is about promoting gender responsiveness and inclusive education in schools.	9.1	0.94		
Effective school leadership is about creating a positive school culture, ensuring consistency in teaching and learning including proactive school mindset.	9.1	0.94		
Effective school leadership is about developing empowerment, support, and trust.	8.8	1.33		
Effective school leadership is about understanding others' needs, negotiating, and prioritising needs.	8.7	1.27		
Effective school leadership is about transforming teachers through their job satisfaction, commitment, and self-efficacy.	8.7	1.19		
Effective school leadership is about distributing or sharing leadership, encouraging collective decisions, engaging school communities in collaboration and teamwork.	8.7	1.19		
Effective school leadership is about setting direction by articulating the school vision.	8.6	1.80	9.4	0.70
Effective school leadership is about involving all stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, and the school community.	8.5	1.44		
Effective school leadership is about developing teachers, and leading teaching and learning.	8.5	1.69	8.8	1.03
Effective school leadership is about introducing clear strategies for instructional leadership, including monitoring, notably through classroom observation.	8.5	1.75	8.6	1.35
Effective school leadership is about resource mobilization for teaching and learning.	8.5	1.37		
Effective school leadership is about assessing available resources, attending to others' needs, and raising expectations and commitment to organisational goals.	8.5	1.51		
Effective school leadership is about management of the school as an organization, including management of the school resources.	8.3	1.62	9.4	0.52

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Q1.2: Practices of effective school leaders				
Effective school leadership practice includes transforming school environment to be child friendly and gender responsive, while taking into account the needs of girls and boys.	9.3	0.90		
Effective school leadership practice includes supporting teachers' professional development.	9.2	0.75		
Effective school leadership practice includes developing teaching and learning.	9.0	1.18		
Effective school leadership practice includes building school vision and establishing school goals.	9.0	1.26		
Effective school leadership is about utilizing student-level data to make school- and class-level decisions.	8.8	1.40		
Effective school leadership practice includes effective communication and collaboration with all school stakeholders.	8.7	1.74	9.1	0.74
Effective school leadership practice includes providing coaching and mentorship to teachers.	8.7	1.19		
Effective school leadership practice includes monitoring, encouraging, and empowering school staff.	8.7	1.19		
Effective school leadership practice includes creating a productive school culture, offering individual support, and inspiring followers to better outcomes.	8.6	1.12		
Effective school leadership practice includes developing good relationships with parents and the community.	8.6	1.36		
Effective school leadership practice includes having a regular and timely school self-evaluation for school improvement.	8.5	1.69	9.0	0.94
Effective school leadership practice includes inculcating values and ethics in all stakeholders in schools.	8.5	1.21		
Effective school leadership practice includes managing the school resources.	8.3	1.68	8.6	1.07
Effective school leadership practice includes providing instructional resources and developing clear instructional goals for student learning.	8.3	1.49		
Effective school leadership practice includes providing an orderly environment.	7.8	2.23	8.3	1.34
Effective school leadership practice includes distribution of authority.	7.7	1.62	8.8	0.92
Effective school leadership practice includes delegation of authority.	7.7	1.62	8.2	1.32
Q1.3: The current state of school leadership in Africa				
In Africa, successful adoption of distributed leadership depends on the support of senior leaders.	8.1	1.81	8.7	0.95
The influence of hierarchy in some African countries is a barrier to distributed school leadership.	8.0	1.79	8.4	1.26
Distributed school leadership in Africa is mostly allocative, with leadership being delegated to ease the burden of overworked head teachers and with the head teacher remaining in control with firm reporting requirements.	7.6	2.38	8.4	0.70

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Transformational school leadership is important as a framework for navigating school transitions in Africa while moving from a neo-liberal orientation to the decolonial turn.	8.2	1.60	8.4	0.70
In many African countries, behaviour change and transformation amongst the school leaders is too slow to respond to challenges and opportunities in education systems.	8.0	1.95	8.2	1.14
Distributed school leadership is emerging in Africa and is at an early stage of development.	7.6	2.11	8.0	1.05
A lack of mutual trust in some African countries is a barrier to distributed school leadership.	7.7	1.95	7.6	1.51
Q1.4: Gender interaction with school leadership in Africa				
More female school leaders are needed in some African countries to improve gender equality.	6.3	2.41	9	1.33
RQ2: What are the key features of effective and scalable Professional Development (PD) for school leaders in Africa?				
Q2.1: Features of school leadership PD effectiveness				
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD content needs to include gender responsive and gender transformative pedagogy to address the existing gender and equity gaps.	9.4	0.67		
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD needs to involve longer term initiatives in which participants engage with theory and practice extensively.	9.2	0.87		
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD needs to consist of a variety of leadership development experiences, including mentoring, job assignments, feedback systems, on-the-job experience, peer observations and developmental relationships.	9.2	0.87		
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD needs to address leadership capacity and skills training, so that instructional leadership can develop into sound leadership practices.	8.8	1.33		
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD needs to include all senior and middle leaders, and not just heads and principals	8.6	1.57		
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD content needs to include teaching and learning, learning and assessment, health and safety, and research in education.	8.6	1.21		
For school leadership PD to be effective, PD content needs to include emerging issues in education.	8.2	1.72	8.8	1.03
Q2.2: Features of school leadership PD sustainability and scalability				
For school leadership PD to be sustainable and scalable, close collaboration between PD providers and government is important.	9.0	1.34		
For school leadership PD to be sustainable and scalable, PD beneficiaries need to take ownership of their own PD and commit themselves to learning and personal professional development.	8.5	1.69	8.8	1.32
For school leadership PD to be sustainable and scalable, there needs to be a clear monitoring and evaluation framework to track PD outcomes and lessons learnt.	8.5	1.57		

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
For school leadership PD to be sustainable and scalable, PD needs to be designed to target gaps in specific skill domains while focusing attention on the differing roles and responsibilities, school size and resources, gender, and the location of the population that the school serves.	8.3	1.56		
For school leadership PD to be sustainable and scalable, PD needs to address standard based frameworks in order to increase leadership and system credibility.	7.7	2.05	7.9	1.45
Q2.3: The current state of school leadership PD in Africa				
Even though there is limited evidence on the impact of PD and on how PD works, effective preparation and development of school leaders makes a difference on quality of education in Africa.	9.0	1.34		
Much of the current PD provision to school leaders in Africa relates to small and isolated activities, often with limited long-term benefits.	8.9	1.22		
Teaching qualification and teaching experience are the main requirements for school leadership in many African countries and therefore head teachers are often appointed because of a successful record as teachers.	8.5	2.02	9.0	0.94
In self-paced school leadership PD initiatives in Africa, principals mostly focus on complying with Ministry of Education expectations regarding their management roles.	8.5	1.44		
Most African countries do not provide opportunities for leadership preparation and development.	8.2	1.54		
A standards-based approach to school leadership PD simplifies the complex and holistic role of principals but underestimates the significance of context.	8.1	1.92	8.7	0.95
A coherent Africa-wide leadership PD framework would make a significant difference to school leadership and school quality.	8.1	2.34	8.4	1.07
The many providers of PD for school leadership in Africa do not seem to create opportunities to learn from each other.	8.0	2.28	8.5	0.71
Leadership PD in most African countries is fragmented and uneven in content and quality.	7.9	1.87	8.5	1.51
In some African countries, the limited impact of school leadership PD is due to poor resources and infrastructure.	7.6	2.58	8.8	1.03
Adopting a standards-based approach to school leadership PD seems to be helpful in this phase of promoting school leadership in Africa, as it can articulate official expectations of principals, and identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of school leaders.	7.6	2.06	8.5	0.97
There is a weak basis for undertaking evaluation as an integral part of school leadership PD in Africa.	7.5	2.73	8.3	1.06

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
RQ3: How do local, national and regional policies promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices in Africa?				
National policies are important in raising awareness about leadership and leadership learning for effective schooling.	8.2	2.44	9.1	0.74
District or regional leaders are an important part of the educational landscape in many countries as they form a middle tier position between national policy makers and school leaders.	8.5	1.75	9.0	0.82
Transformational school leadership is constrained by government policies.	7.0	2.76	8.5	1.18
There is an absence of incentives and recognition for effective school leaders.	7.5	1.63	8.3	1.06
Most decisions are made by national or local government with limited scope for school leader initiative.	8.0	1.79	8.3	0.82
Leadership practices across Africa are greatly influenced by historical context and language of instruction.	7.8	1.83	8.2	1.14
There is little evidence of government 'ownership', or 'buy-in' for large-scale leadership PD, across Africa.	7.7	1.90	8.1	0.99

Annex 2: Statements on school leadership in Africa with no consensus ($SD \geq 1.60$)

No consensus ($SD \geq 1.60$) has been achieved in Delphi round 2 and 3 on twenty-seven (27) items.

Table 4: Items with no consensus on school leadership in Africa

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
RQ0: What constitutes effective school leadership in Africa?				
School leadership is effective when it leads to enhanced public examination results.	7.45	2.54	7.6	1.71
School leadership is effective when it leads to an increase in the achievement of a typical student.	6.73	2.49	7.0	1.76
RQ1: What are the key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership in Africa?				
Q1.2: Practices of effective school leaders				
Effective school leadership practice includes promoting and using ICTs in teaching, learning and management.	7.73	2.22	8.0	1.89
Effective school leadership practice includes redesigning and enriching the curriculum to enhance high quality teaching and learning.	6.64	2.93	6.6	3.07
Q1.3: The current state of school leadership in Africa				
Instructional school leadership is challenging in many African countries because school leaders have difficulty balancing their administrative and instructional roles.	8.5	1.69	8.0	2.26
In many African countries, the education policy framework is inadequate to guide leadership competencies and practices.	8.2	2.04	8.2	2.04
In some African countries, there is a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities for various leadership positions, such as deputy principals, resulting in inefficient delegation of leadership tasks.	7.5	2.16	7.7	2.58
Ubuntu leadership may emerge as a strong approach to school leadership in Africa because of its unique aspects of leadership, such as assessing available resources, attending to others' needs, and raising expectations and commitment to organisational goals.	8.3	1.68	7.5	2.42
Q1.4: Gender interaction with school leadership in Africa				
The biggest obstacle to female leadership in Africa is patriarchy through which males are seen as natural leaders while females are seen as more effective in subordinate and supportive roles.	7.9	2.17	7.9	2.92
The cultural context in the rural schools provide men with the opportunity to dominate leadership positions because they are taken more seriously than women	7.4	2.46	7.8	2.53
Several cultural, structural, economic, and social barriers (such as gender stereotypes) exist in African countries for women to access and enact school leadership positions.	8.4	2.38	7.7	2.95
Minimum quota of female school leaders are needed in some African countries to improve gender equality.	6.3	2.41	7.2	2.49
In African countries, few women aspire to leadership positions due to a lack of self confidence in school leadership.	6.3	2.80	7	2.91
As role models, women school leaders may impact the students and teachers differently than men.	7.2	1.83	6.6	1.65

Annex 3: Level of importance of the focus areas for the Centre

All statements presented around the recommended intervention areas for the centre reached consensus.

Table 5: Statements on focus areas for the Centre with consensus on importance (SD < 1.60)

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
SA1: Development of policy and professional development				
The Centre will assist and support countries in the development of clear policies that promote school leadership development.	9.3	1.42		
The Centre will engage with governments across the continent to put school leadership 'on the map', beginning with those countries committed to enhancing school leadership as a step towards quality education.	9.0	1.55		
The Centre will place particular emphasis on the role of school leaders as instructional leaders.	8.9	1.38		
The Centre will promote the development of PD of school leaders that address the complexity of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and recognize the challenges and opportunities of school leaders on the African continent.	8.5	1.37		
The Centre will develop standards at the regional and national levels to provide clarity on what is understood under school leadership competences and effective school leadership practices.	8.3	1.74	8.8	1.23
The Centre will engage with leadership that seeks to disrupt the deleterious effects of material poverty, intellectual poverty, reading difficulties and other forms of deprivations experienced by large numbers of learners in schools across the continent.	7.9	2.70	8.4	1.43
The Centre will place particular emphasis on the role that effective school leaders play in key education reforms on the continent, such as the introduction of competence-based curricula, play-based learning, ICT-enabled teaching, and distributed leadership.	7.8	2.56	8.6	1.26
The Centre will place particular emphasis on developing framework for recruitment and appointment of heads and principals.	7.6	2.80	8.1	1.45
SA2: Delivery of professional development for school leaders through capacity development of professional development providers				
The Centre will assist PD providers in the development of longer-term PD trajectories where participants engage with both theory and practice.	9.1	0.83		
The Centre will build the capacity of PD providers to design and develop a variety of PD trajectories that meet the PD needs of aspiring and in-service school leaders on the continent.	9.0	1.00		
The Centre will bring together PD providers and national governments to ensure that school leadership PD is embedded in national education systems and offered to a significant number of school leaders in various stages of their professional development.	9.0	1.18		
The Centre will assist PD providers in the delivery of PD in a variety of blended modalities that meet contextual requirements.	8.8	1.08		

Statement	Round 2		Round 3	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The Centre will develop PD content on Ubuntu school leadership, introducing principles of equity, social justice, equality, cognitive justice, reciprocity, mutuality, and democratic participation, amongst others.	8.7	1.42		
The Centre will ensure that PD providers have in-depth knowledge about the local context in which school leaders operate, to ensure relevance.	8.4	1.75	8.5	0.85
The Centre will assist PD providers in integrating emerging educational issues in the content of PD	8.1	2.17	8.6	1.17
SA3: Monitoring, evaluation, and research on the effectiveness of school leadership and school leadership development				
The Centre will institute a continent-wide research programme that studies effectiveness of PD on school leadership and looks into the impact of school leadership on quality of education.	9.3	1.01		
The Centre will play a role in the research and further development of school leadership models that are rooted in the African context, such as Ubuntu school leadership.	9.3	0.90		
The Centre will carry out research on the interplay between gender and school leadership in Africa.	9.1	1.38		
The Centre will develop indicators and tools for consistent monitoring and evaluation of PD initiatives on school leadership on the continent, allowing for high quality data collection, analysis, and reporting.	8.5	1.86	9	0.47
SA4: Knowledge mobilization, advocacy, and sector coordination through multi-stakeholder dialogue				
The Centre will bring together scholars, policy makers and practitioners interested in school leadership and leadership PD and build a strong school leadership network on the African continent that would be influential in sharing knowledge and enhancing leadership quality.	8.9	1.04		
Partnerships with governments, other NGOs, and universities, and pan-Africa bodies, such as the African Union (AU), are central in the initiative.	8.8	1.17		
Research insights and other knowledge products on school leadership in Africa will be a key input for the Centre for continued awareness-raising activities and to inform interested governments, organizations, and individuals.	8.7	1.35		
The African Centre for School Leadership will become the 'go-to' place for research and information on school leadership in Africa.	8.6	1.50		
Hosting an annual or biennial leadership conference will be an important statement of the aims and intentions of this pan-African body.	8.6	1.50		



VVOB – education for development
Julien Dillensplein 1 bus 2A
1060 Brussels
Belgium

T • +32 (0)2 209 07 99
E • info@vvob.org

in VVOB

🐦 @VVOBvzw

f VVOBvzw

www.vvob.org

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