WORKING PAPER

School Leadership in Africa

A Review of Empirical Research

2022

Content

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

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*, 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 lay the foundations for the Centre, this working paper explores and reviews empirical research on school leadership in Africa that will inform the subsequent implementation phase of the Centre.

The review starts with an analysis of the current pattern of knowledge production on school leadership on the continent and then investigates what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa through three subsequent research questions:

- What are key competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership in Africa?
- What are key features of effective and scalable continuous professional development for school leaders as effective school leaders in Africa?
- How do local, national, and regional policies in Africa promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices?

To address these research questions, the authors conducted an exploratory scoping review of academic literature on school and educational leadership in Africa. International literature is also cited, to facilitate comparisons between African and global empirical evidence. The initial analysis of more than 200 selected sources highlights that knowledge production on school leadership in the 54 African Countries is dominated by a small number of mostly anglophone countries. The analysis on the content shows a focus on leadership models, and leadership Continuous Professional Development (CPD), showing the growing awareness of the importance of school leadership for quality education and for school heads to have specialist training. This working paper comprehensively summarises the main findings of the review around the key research questions.

Zooming in on what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa, the concept of effective school leadership is described as one that leads to the achievement of school goals, notably those relating to student outcomes. Effective school leadership is understood as having positive effects on student achievements and learning outcomes through setting direction, empowering and developing teachers, and leading teaching and learning. This reflects a focus on instructional school leadership in international research (one of several school leadership models). Nevertheless, the review notes that implementation of instructional school leadership is challenging and often not put into practice. While school leadership is often defined in respect of the principal, shared and distributed school leadership models are also being discussed in research on school leadership in Africa. A third often-referenced school leadership model is that of transformational school leadership, including evidence on the positive links of this school leadership approach with school effectiveness. The review examines the interplay between gender and school leadership as an emerging theme, with on the one hand evidence of a gender gap in school leadership positions, and on the other hand indications of differences in leadership styles and effectiveness between male and female school leaders. While most studies on school leadership competences align with international school leadership models, of interest in the review is the concept of Ubuntu leadership, potentially an emergent approach/model on school leadership in Africa. The concept of Ubuntu highlights unique competences and aspects of leadership, starting from assessing available resources, attending to others' needs, and raising expectations and commitment to organisational goals.

Regarding professional development of school leaders, the review shows that while there is limited evidence on the impact of CPD and on how CPD works, school leadership CPD receives growing attention and advocacy in some African countries. In addition, the review describes that currently CPD initiatives are often small, isolated activities, often with limited long-term benefits. It is argued that for CPD to influence school practice, CPD need to be longer term initiatives in which a large number of participants engage with theory and practice extensively. Regarding sustainability and scalability of CPD, close collaboration between CPD providers and government is seen as important, indicating an embeddedness of CPD initiatives in education systems. The review notes that adopting a standards-based approach to school leadership CPD seems to be a helpful phase in promoting school leadership in Africa, as it can articulate official expectations and identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of school leaders. At the level of policies, the review describes that at the national level, few African countries have a school leadership policy in place and there is little evidence of government 'ownership' or 'buy-in' for large-scale leadership CPD across Africa. While the international agencies tend to recommend decentralisation as a route to school improvement, evidence on legislative frameworks and governance indicates that most African countries are highly centralised, with little discretion to schools and local communities. This review found no evidence on regional approaches to school leadership and school leadership CPD.

Based on the knowledge produced on school leadership in Africa and the

trends reported, the review and this working paper offers a foundation and entry point for the African Centre for School Leadership in supporting African governments and governmental agencies to promote effective school leadership.

In a first step, the Centre will support countries to put school leadership on the map. The Centre will begin with a limited number of countries that are committed to enhancing school leadership, then backed with potential success stories and evidence on the impact of school leadership on school improvement create a dialogue with additional countries on the continent. In follow-up, the Centre will assist and support countries in the development of clear policies that promote and inhibit school leadership development. Additionally, the development of standards at the regional and national levels will provide clarity on what is understood under school leadership competences and effective school leadership practices. The Centre will then promote the development of CPD of school leaders that address the complexity of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and recognises the challenges and opportunities of school leaders on the African continent. The Centre will build the capacity of CPD providers to deliver a variety of CPD interventions that meet the CPD needs of aspiring and in-service school leaders on the continent. Based on the evidence of what works, the Centre will assist CPD providers in the development of longer-term CPD trajectories where participants engage with both theory and practice and in the delivery of these trajectories in a variety of modalities that meet contextual requirements. At the same time, the Centre will bring together these CPD providers and national governments to ensure that school leadership CPD is embedded in national education systems and offered to a significant number of school leaders in various stages of their professional development.

To address knowledge gaps on school leadership in Africa, the Centre will institute a continent-wide research programme that studies effectiveness of CPD on school leadership and investigate the impact of school leadership on quality of education. In addition to exploring the effectiveness of various school leadership models and approaches on school leadership practice and school improvement, the Centre will play a role in the further development of school leadership models that are rooted in the African context, such as Ubuntu school leadership. Also, the interplay between gender and school leadership will be on the research agenda of the Centre. To support CPD providers, a learning partner of the Centre will develop indicators and tools for consistent monitoring and evaluation of CPD initiatives on school leadership on the continent, allowing for high quality data collection, analysis, and reporting. 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, organisations and individuals. As such, the Centre will bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners interested in school leadership and leadership CPD and build a strong school leadership network on the African continent that will be influential in sharing knowledge and enhancing leadership quality. Facilitating partnerships with governments, development partners, universities and pan-Africa bodies, such as the African Union (AU), will be central to the success of the initiative.
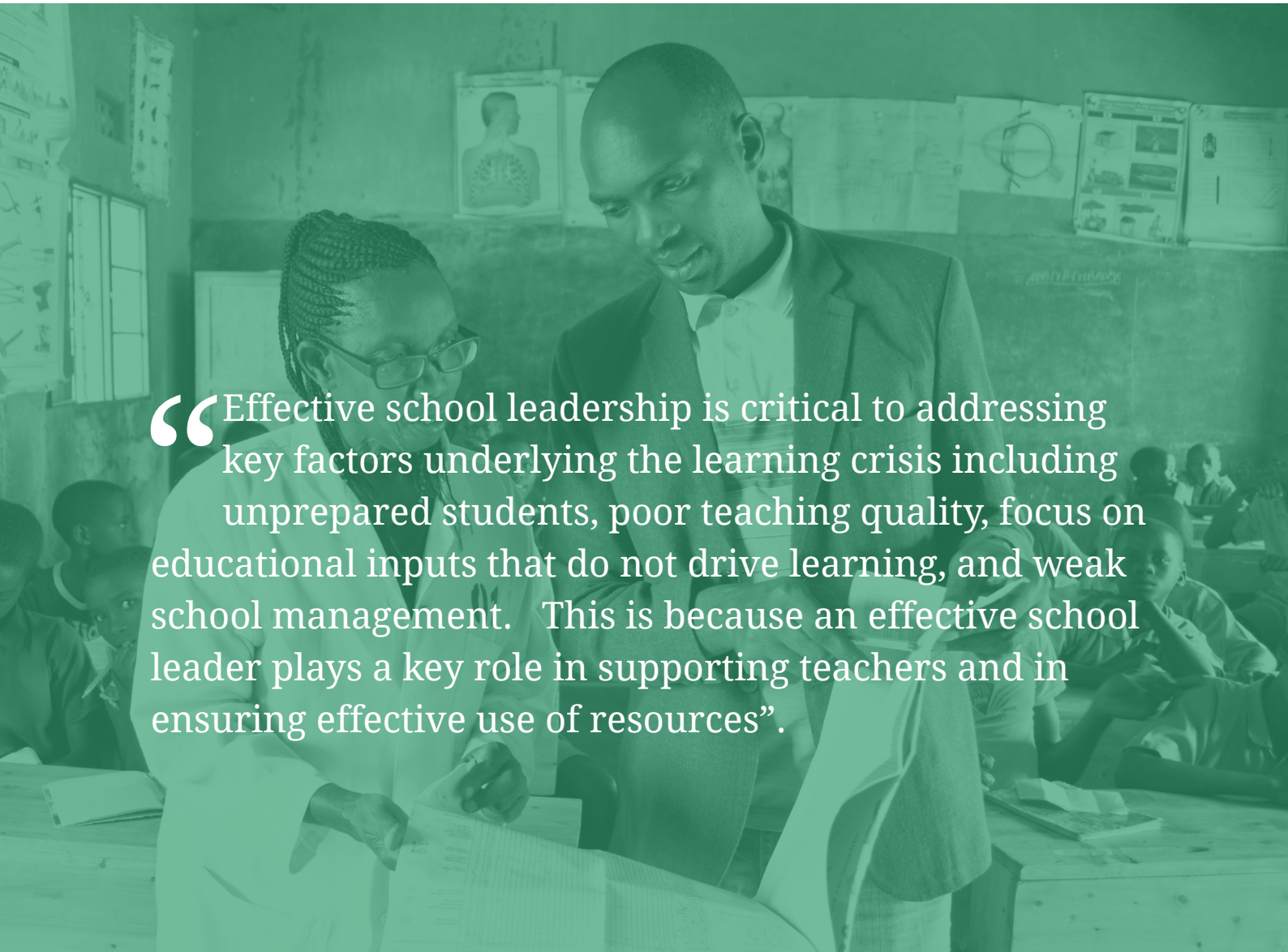
Photo: GPE/Kelley Lynch

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Access to basic education has significantly increased in the majority of countries in Africa over the past two decades. However, progress towards access to quality basic education for all is still slow in the region. The World Development Report of 2018 indicates that being in school is not a guarantee for learning. Children from poor families and remote areas can expect to do the least amount of learning, particularly when they are female or have a disability (World Bank, 2018). The recent covid-19 pandemic and subsequent health measures that followed in many countries, have led to increased learning loss and the need for catch-up strategies and re-enrolment. Moreover, in Africa, demographic growth contributes to growing student enrolment, stretching resources over a much larger body of students, especially in secondary education (Mastercard Foundation, 2020). At the same time, Africa's young and growing population positions the region well to realise the benefits of a demographic dividend. Preparing youth, and in particular young women, with the skills they need to enter the global workforce will play a critical role in unlocking that potential (Mastercard Foundation, 2020).

The 2018 World Development Report attributed the learning crisis to education systems struggling to foresee in one or more of four key school-level ingredients for learning: unprepared students, poor teaching quality, focus on educational inputs that do not drive learning, and weak school management (World Bank, 2018). Effective school leadership is critical to addressing all factors underlying the learning crisis. This is because an effective school leader (also referred to as principal or head teacher) plays a key role in ensuring effective use of resources and in supporting teachers. The Education Commission's 2019 "Transforming the Education Workforce" report indicates that teachers are at the heart of the learning process; however, the roles of school leadership and management are also strongly associated with better education outcomes. The report highlights improved school leadership as one of the key

elements necessary to leverage the broader education workforce for better learning and more resilient education systems (Education Commission, 2019a). Global Partnership for Education (2019) highlights the role of head teachers for teacher professional development and states that ongoing support from head teachers and school and district leaders is necessary for sustainability of teacher training. Also, to address new challenges and to create opportunities, school leaders play a critical role. School leaders now have to engage with a combination of various issues, trends and opportunities such as covid-19 recovery, technology integration, new skill demands and related introduction of competency-based curricula. A synthesis of two decades of research on school leadership by Grissom et al. (2021) recommends that investing in successful school leadership strategies is likely to have a very large payoff given the magnitude and scope of principals' impacts on students and schools.

The report of the Education Commission (2019) shows that this requires reorienting school leaders. Although school leaders are increasingly viewed as instructional leaders, in practice they tend to focus on administrative and supervisory activities and are rarely selected or supported to lead activities that enhance student outcomes. The shift towards instructional leadership at the school level can be facilitated by training school leaders to undertake instructional leadership and provide the necessary tools; and strengthening decentralised educational leadership capacity to provide coaching and support for school leaders to develop such leadership skills. Similarly, Global School Leaders in its evidence review report of 2020 shows that school systems are increasingly oriented toward improving the learning levels of students, and this necessitates school leaders' roles to be focused on delivering these outcomes. However, school leaders are hampered in their ability to lead toward these outcomes because, among other factors, they have limited opportunities to attend pre- or in-service training. Especially in many Sub-Sahara African (SSA) countries, teaching experience remains the main path to principalship; this means that many school heads are ill-prepared to meet the challenges posed by the changing nature of their job (Biamba & Odero, 2016).
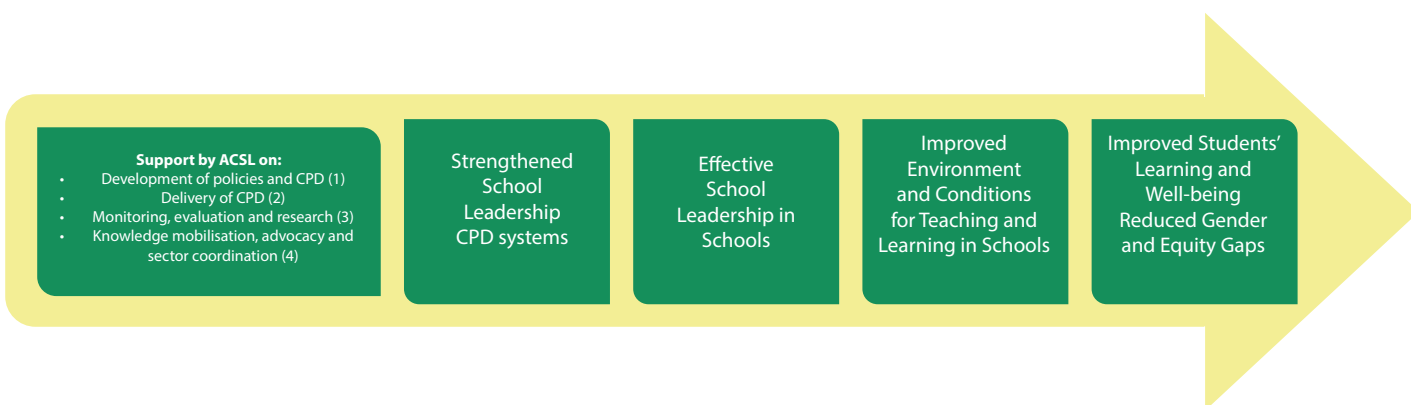
"Effective school leadership is critical to addressing key factors underlying the learning crisis including unprepared students, poor teaching quality, focus on educational inputs that do not drive learning, and weak school management. This is because an effective school leader plays a key role in supporting teachers and in ensuring effective use of resources".

THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

To address these challenges in education systems in Africa and to ignite the potential of school leadership to improve quality of education, an African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL) is being set up. The Centre will support governments and governmental agencies in the education sector to build a supportive school leadership system with the objective of improving teaching and in turn learning outcomes. The Centre will do this through provision of support on: (1) the development and re-development of policies and CPD, (2) the delivery of CPD through capacity development of CPD providers, (3) monitoring, evaluation and research, and (4) knowledge mobilisation, advocacy and sector coordination. While the Centre will promote effective leadership at various levels in education systems on the continent, the focus of this support is at the level of schools and leaders in these schools. As depicted in the Theory of Change (ToC) in Figure 1 below and supported by international evidence on the effects of school leadership, it is understood that supportive educational leadership at policy level will enable effective and scalable professional development of school leaders resulting in effective leadership in schools. Effective school leadership in turn will support effective school-based teacher professional development and support, resulting in improved quality of teaching and ultimately improved learning and wellbeing and reduced gender and other equity gaps.

Figure 1: Theory of Change of the African Centre for School Leadership

Support by ACSL on:
- Development of policies and CPD (1)
- Delivery of CPD (2)
- Monitoring, evaluation and research (3)
- Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy and sector coordination (4)

Strengthened School Leadership CPD systems

Effective School Leadership in Schools

Improved Environment and Conditions for Teaching and Learning in Schools

Improved Students' Learning and Well-being Reduced Gender and Equity Gaps

The Centre is currently in its foundation phase and various partners are being engaged. It is to be hosted in Rwanda, one of the key strategic partners. The ambitions of the Centre and it's envisioned key support areas will be described in more detail in the last section of this working paper, building on the review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa.

The African Centre for School Leadership that will be hosted in Rwanda, aims at supporting African governments to build a supportive school leadership system with the objective of improving teaching and, in turn, learning outcomes.

AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While there is growing knowledge production and research on school leadership in the global south, much of the literature on school leadership underlying the ToC depicted above, emanates from the global north. At the same time, there are many developing countries with significant learning challenges, relating to resources, classroom teaching and leadership (Bush & Oduro, 2006), as well as with potential solutions for addressing these challenges, also in African schools, that leaders within and outside the continent could learn from. To lay the foundations for the Centre, the broad aim of this study is therefore to explore and review empirical research on school leadership in Africa and to identify what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa.

This working paper starts with an analysis of the current pattern of knowledge production on school leadership on the continent. The empirical research that has been produced on school leadership in Africa is analysed to provide insights into what constitutes effective school leadership. Starting from the overarching question of what is regarded as effective school leadership in Africa, the paper explores three subsequent research questions:

1. What are key competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership in Africa? The review explores the competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership, notably in respect of the leadership models deployed by school leaders.

2. What are key features of effective and scalable continuous professional development (CPD) for effective school leaders in Africa?
   The review examines literature on leadership preparation and continuous professional development (CPD) for school leaders. It includes discussion of the content of CPD, in terms of aims, curricula and materials as well as delivery processes.

3. How do local, national, and regional policies in Africa promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices? The review also examines the impact of context, defined in terms of national policy and local considerations, on leadership practice.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Literature search

To address the overarching question, and the research questions, the authors conducted a scoping review of academic literature on school and educational leadership in Africa.   International literature is also cited, to facilitate comparisons between African and global empirical research. The selection of literature was organised thematically, focused on pre-determined search terms, and emergent topics. These are:

1. Educational leadership
2. School leadership
3. Principals and head teachers
4. Deputy head teachers
5. Middle leaders, including heads of departments
6. Leadership models
7. Leadership preparation and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
8. Leadership and gender

Most of these themes were pre-determined, based on the authors' extensive knowledge and understanding of school leadership in several contexts. However, the initial review of the literature showed a significant number of sources focused on leadership and gender, so the "emergent" topic was added to the list of themes.

The academic sources reviewed for this paper emerged from the Mendeley search application and Google Scholar. A supplementary search was conducted on the African Education Research database. A total of 792 sources were identified and these were reviewed to establish whether they were of sufficient quality and matched the agreed brief for the review, focusing mainly on 21st century outputs. Sources reporting research findings included quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies, from all non-predatory publishers, including post-graduate theses. Of the initial 792 identified sources, 227 that focused on school leadership, and leadership development in Africa, were included in the final report. These sources were first analysed by country and by the eight themes identified above,

with some sub-themes, notably in respect of school leadership models. Afterwards, the sources were analysed to address the overarching question on what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa and the subsequent research questions. A separate search, using the same sources, criteria and search topics, was used for French and Portuguese literature. Despite considerable searching, and the use of 424 French literature sources, and 105 Portuguese sources very little material was found to support the brief.

This working paper aims to provide a comprehensive summary of the review. The full report with reference to the 227 sources is available upon request. A limited number of case studies of school leadership CPD are described in this working paper to illustrate and expand on some of the findings of the review, zooming in on initiatives of national governments and tertiary education institutions in supporting school leadership CPD on the continent. Particular interest goes to the case of school leadership CPD in Rwanda, as host country of the African Centre for School Leadership with significant school leadership policies and CPD in place.

The scoping review of the academic literature on school and educational leadership in Africa includes journal articles and theses. International literature is also cited to facilitate comparisons. The selection of literature is organised thematically, focused on pre-determined search terms, and emergent topics:

1. Educational leadership
2. School leadership
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Of the initial 792 identified sources, 227 that focused on school leadership, and leadership development in Africa, were included in the final report.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION ON SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

The pattern of knowledge production in and on Africa is very mixed with substantial sources in a few countries, modest outputs in other countries, and little or no evidence of academic literature in most nations. Table 1 summarises the academic sources available by theme for the 32 countries where relevant sources have been found, in rank order:

Table 1: Analysis of knowledge production by theme in 32 African countries

COUNTRY	Region	Ed. L.	Sch. L.	Principals HTs	Deputy HTs	Middle leaders	Models	Prep/CPD	Gender	Total
South Africa	South	3	3	4	0	4	13	10	4	41
Nigeria	West	0	2	5	0	0	13	6	2	28
Kenya	East	0	6	0	0	0	12	5	3	26
Ghana	West	0	2	0	0	0	8	8	1	19
Tanzania	East	1	2	0	0	0	8	4	1	16
Zimbabwe	South	1	2	0	1	0	3	1	7	15
Ethiopia	East	0	1	1	0	0	5	3	1	11
Cameroon	West	1	1	1	0	1	2	3	0	9
Botswana	South	0	1	1	1	0	4	2	0	9
Uganda	East	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	1	8
Egypt	North	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	5
Rwanda	East	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	5
Namibia	South	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	4
Zambia	Central	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	4
Lesotho	South	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3
DR Congo	West	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Equatorial Guinea	West	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Eritrea	East	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Malawi	East	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Morocco	North	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sudan	East	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Angola	Central	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Benin	West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Djibouti	East	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Eswatini	South	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Guinea-Bissau	West	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Libya	North	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Mozambique	East	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Senegal	West	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sierra Leone	West	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Somalia	East	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
South Sudan	East	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Algeria	North	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total		**12**	**27**	**17**	**2**	**5**	**87**	**55**	**22**	**227**

Table 1 shows how knowledge production is dominated by just six countries which collectively provide almost two-thirds of all publications on Africa. A further six countries provide another 20% of the total. There may be several reasons for this dominance, for example that most of the top-ranked countries are English-speaking and that educational leadership and management as fields of study and research developed first in English-speaking countries. Global knowledge production on these themes is still dominated by the US/UK/Australia axis, with significant outputs also from Canada and New Zealand.

Table 1 also shows the dominance of two leadership themes chosen by authors. More than a third of all knowledge production is focused on leadership models. This section focuses primarily on the key issue of how to lead, and this may explain this emphasis. Almost a quarter address leadership Continuous Professional Development (CPD), showing the growing awareness of the need for school principals to have specialist training. In contrast, there is remarkably little research about the role of deputy heads or middle leaders, such as heads of department. This shows that knowledge production is very uneven, in terms of themes as well as countries.

The next section of this working paper summarises how the data from the review serve to address the research questions.

Knowledge production across Africa is very mixed with substantial sources in a few countries, modest outputs in other countries, and little or no evidence of academic literature in most countries.

More than a third of all knowledge production is on leadership models. Almost a quarter address leadership Continuous Professional Development (CPD), showing the growing awareness of the need for school principals to have specialist training.

OVERARCHING QUESTION:
What is regarded as effective school leadership in Africa?

Defining what is understood by 'effective' school leadership is contested, but it often refers to enhancing student outcomes, especially in public examinations. The findings from the literature on school and educational leadership in Africa reflect international research on the importance of setting strategic direction, empowering and developing teachers, and leading teaching and learning. These are perceived to be indicators of effective school leadership. This connects to international evidence (e.g., Leithwood et al., (2006) that leadership accounts for up to 27% of variation in student outcomes, as measured by public examination results. Similarly, Leaver et al. (2019) found evidence from 65 countries participating in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that school leaders moving from the bottom 25% to top 25% of their quality management score was associated with a large increase in student learning outcomes, equivalent to an additional three months of schooling for every year.

Several sources discuss the role of the principal in enhancing student achievement, for example in Namibia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Egypt and Kenya. Two papers from Kenya address the important issue of the relationship between leadership and student outcomes. A study by Obama et al. (2015) established that schools which embraced more democratic and participatory leadership styles, and encouraged group work and team spirit, performed significantly better in the Kenyan examinations than those that used more autocratic leadership styles. Nzoka & Orodho (2014) found that school managers applied several strategies to improve academic performance of students, including monitoring instructional processes and student assessment, subsidising Government funding through free day sec-

ondary education, using income generating activities, and adopting guidance and counselling programmes. Despite these efforts, however, according to the authors, the expected improved students' academic performance was not realised, because most school managers had not undergone management training.

The notion that effective school leadership relates to enhanced student outcomes leads to a view that principals and other leaders should focus on instructional leadership. Hallinger & Lee (2014) argue that 'instructional leadership from the principal is essential for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools'. However, instructional leadership has been criticised because it focuses 'too much on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority' (Hallinger, 2003). It tends to ignore or underplay the role of other leaders such as deputy principals, middle managers, leadership teams, and classroom teachers. Robinson et al. (2008) analysis of published research shows that 'the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to make a difference to students'. Bush et al. (2021) overview of instructional leadership in six African countries (Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) concludes that education ministries should articulate that the role of the school principal is primarily that of a professional leader, focused on developing teaching and learning. They add that principals should introduce clear strategies for instructional leadership, including monitoring, notably through classroom observation, with constructive feedback designed to encourage beneficial change rather than to damage teacher confidence.

The sources reviewed for this overarching question indicate the increasing importance of instructional leadership in many parts of the continent. There is advocacy for this model because of its perceived benefits, for example in Nigeria (Bello, 2015) and Ghana (Abonyi & Sofo, 2019). There is also evidence of the efficacy of instructional leadership in enhancing student learning, for example in Kenya (Mutuku, 2018). However, several studies point to the challenges inhibiting principals from acting as instructional leaders. Mestry (2017a) argues that South African principals 'repudiate' their role in managing teaching and learning. Tedla (2012) says that the time of Eritrean principals is not focused on instructional leadership while Allieu (2019) notes that most heads in Sierra Leone are not practicing instructional leadership. Mestry et al. (2013) comment that South African principals need to balance their administrative and instructional roles appears relevant to leaders across the continent.

There is increasing importance of instructional leadership in many parts of the African continent and evidence of the efficacy of instructional leadership in enhancing student learning. However, several challenges inhibit principals from acting as instructional leaders and the need for school leaders to balance their administrative and instructional roles appears relevant to leaders across the continent.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1:
What are key competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership in Africa?

The review explores the competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership, notably in respect of the leadership styles and models deployed by school leaders. As noted above, there is extensive research and literature on leadership models and styles, with 87 sources reviewed, from 23 countries. As also reflected in the international literature, the most frequently discussed models and underlying competences and practices are instructional, distributed and transformational leadership.

Instructional leadership is increasingly emphasised and endorsed (Bush, 2020), especially since there is a direct link between instructional leadership and enhanced student outcomes, as already described in the section on the overarching question on effective school leadership above. The notion of effective school leadership however is often defined only in respect of the principal, focusing on the most senior leader, rather than considering broader notions of leadership, embracing senior and middle leaders, and collaborative constructs such as leadership teams. This bias is reflected in the literature on Africa, where there are only two studies of deputy heads and principals and only five focused on middle leaders. Bulawa & Mhlauli (2019) claim that deputies play a 'very significant role' in school management in Botswana, working closely with heads and enacting tasks delegated to them by the formal leader. The study of Mthiyane et al. (2019) in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa notes the need for middle leaders to balance their monitoring role with support and collaboration.   The three other South African papers link middle leaders to aspects of distributed leadership, in respect of teacher development (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018), instructional leadership (Moeketsane et al., 2021), and the role of middle leaders in school management teams (SMTs) (Bush & Glover, 2013). The study of Ebot & Obi (2018) in Cameroon notes the tension between hierarchy and the need to encourage participation, for example through teacher leadership.

Delegation or distribution can thus be understood as a key competence and practice for school leaders. The papers on distributed leadership examined for this review indicate considerable interest in this model in Africa. Foremost, there is some advocacy for this model, for example in South Africa (Botha, 2014; Williams, 2011). As noted by Dampson et al. (2018), in Ghana, and by Sibanda (2018) in South Africa, successful adoption of distributed leadership depends on the support of senior leaders. Also, there are several barriers to distributed leadership, notably the influence of the hierarchy, in Botswana, described as MoE (Ministry of Education) 'interference' (Moswela & Kgosidialwa, 2019), in South Africa (Du Plessis & Heystek, 2020; Naicker & Mestry, 2012) and Ethiopia (Dagnew, 2017). Where distribution is evident, it is at an early stage of development, described as 'emerging' in Cameroon (Ebot Ashu, 2018), or as 'largely allocative' in Nigeria (Imoni, 2018). Some sources utilise different terms to describe leadership distribution. These terms include: participative (Angola, Nigeria, and Uganda), collaborative (Botswana), shared (Botswana), or democratic (several countries). These models all relate to leadership that involves teachers as well as school leaders but Grant (2006) and Mokhele (2016), referring to South Africa, caution that teacher leadership can flourish only if supported by principals.

Several papers on transformational school leadership in Africa also discuss principals' characteristics, skills, and practices. This is also a solo model, that includes building school vision, establishing school goals, offering individual support, creating a productive school culture, and inspiring followers to better outcomes. It has strong, heroic, and charismatic features linked to the personality of the principal and one weakness is that effectiveness is so dependent on this individual that it may not be sustained when the principal departs. Some studies report positive links between transformational leadership and school effectiveness, but these are mostly indirect, via teachers.

Collectively, they show that principals' transformational leadership practices produced positive effects on teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and self-efficacy. Leadership practices promoting effectiveness include monitoring, encouraging, and empowering school staff. Urio's (2012) study on school leadership in Tanzania found that the best performing leaders were able to set direction by articulating the school vision, encouraging collective decisions, engaging school communities in collaboration and teamwork, as well as developing empowerment, support, and trust. Salem's (2016) survey of Egyptian teachers concludes that perceived effectiveness was linked to four specific leadership practices – providing an orderly environment, supporting teachers' professional development, providing instructional resources, and developing clear instructional goals for student learning. Tesfaw (2014) found a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' job satisfaction in Ethiopian government secondary schools. Similarly, Sabwami (2021) revealed that principals' transformational leadership practices had a significant effect on teachers' commitment in Kenyan public secondary schools. Ofoegbu et al. (2013) concluded that Nigerian school heads were more transformational and transactional in their preferred leadership styles and that most principals monitor, encourage and empower their staff to ensure effectiveness. Luyten & Bazo (2019) show how a combination of transformational leadership and professional learning communities increased teacher commitment in Mozambique.

The competencies and practices expected of school leaders are sometimes encapsulated in formal standards documents. One prominent African example is the Rwanda Basic Education Board (2020) Professional Standards for Effective School Leadership. Inspired by the eight dimensions of successful leadership identified by Day et al. (2009), five sets of standards are identified: creating a strategic direction for the school, leading learning, leading teaching, managing the school as an organisation, and working with parents and the wider community. These topics fit what Bush & Jackson (2002) describe as an 'international curriculum' for school leadership preparation. The document outlines the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competences required to achieve the five standards. These are normative statements and assessing whether, how, and to what extent, they are achieved is challenging. As described by Peeraer et al. (2014), the dimensions and standards can be used to map training needs and to develop professional capacity development for school leaders. Adopting a standards-based approach to school leadership CPD is helpful in articulating official expectations of principals, and in identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of school leaders. It also provides the potential for consistency across the education system, regardless of school type or location. However, standards have also been criticised for atomising the complex and holistic role of principals and for underestimating the significance of context (Bush, 2018).

A significant issue arising from the review is whether women lead differently from men, which might suggest different characteristics and practices. Before looking into differences in leadership style, data from across 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa that participated in the 2019 PASEC assessment (PASEC, 2020) describes a large gender gap in school leadership, where only 22 per cent of surveyed students attended a school with a female head teacher. Several papers from different countries report on the barriers to women accessing and enacting the principalship.   In South Africa, Ndebele (2018) discusses 'negative attitudes' from parents and teachers, adding that male dominance of school leadership is part of the 'entrenched culture'. There are echoes of Martínez et al.'s (2021) 'self-exclusion' in Chabaya et al.'s (2009) Zimbabwe study, where women had not attempted to apply, discouraged by gender stereotypes and low self-esteem.   Martinez et al.'s (2021) 'double standards' are evident in Kenya, where women are negatively affected by 'deeply embedded social structures'. In Benin, Hygin & Ayena (2021) report that women felt confined to the role of stay-at-home-mother while, in Ethiopia, they feel socialised into accepting family roles (Dagnew et al., 2020), also a feature in Tanzania (Mbepera, 2015). Shava et al. (2019) comment that cultural, structural, economic, and social barriers continue in Zimbabwe even after women become principals. Across the PASEC-participating countries, learning outcomes at the end of primary school for both girls and boys in female-led schools are higher (PASEC, 2020). That women lead more effectively than men, is reflected in research across Africa. In Zimbabwe, Moyo et al. (2020) describe that women's leadership is more collegial, collaborative and caring than that of men. Similarly, Nosike & Oguzor (2011) report that Nigerian women principals exercise more democratic styles, a view supported by Aladejana & Aladejana (2005), who state that Nigerian schools headed by women are

'better managed'. In contrast, however, Oyedele et al. (2010) argue that Zimbabwean teachers perceive women principals to be ineffective. If indeed women lead and manage more collaboratively than men, and this is more effective, this has implications for both women and men. Further research can look for underlying causes for these differences instead of attributing it directly to (biological) differences between men and women.

The research of effective school leadership practices and competencies mainly comprises studies using international (mostly western) models. An emergent approach in Africa is Ubuntu leadership, discussed by Elonga Mboyo (2019) in respect of the Democratic Republic of Congo and by Kalabo (2017) in Zambia. The fundamental assumption behind the Ubuntu school leadership theory lies in the humanistic African philosophy of what it means to be in the world, summed up in the idea that we are because of others. Kalabo (2017) discusses culture, context, and perceptions in the discourses of leadership in Africa, as they relate to the Ubuntu leadership philosophy. Elonga Mboyo (2019) highlights unique Ubuntu operational patterns of understanding others' needs, negotiating and prioritising needs, assessing available resources, attending to others' needs, and raising expectations and commitment to organisational goals.

The best performing leaders are able to set direction by articulating the school vision, encouraging collective decisions, engaging school communities in collaboration and teamwork, as well as developing empowerment, support, and trust.
Delegation or distribution of leadership can be understood as a key dimension of effectiveness, but successful adoption of distributed leadership depends on the support of senior leaders.
Ubuntu leadership could be emergent approach on school leadership in Africa highlighting unique aspects of leadership, starting from assessing available resources, attending to others' needs, and raising expectations and commitment to organisational goals.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2:
What are key features of effective and scalable CPD for school leaders as effective school leaders in Africa?

In most countries, school leaders begin their professional careers as teachers and progress to headship via a range of middle and senior leadership and management roles. This leads to a widespread view that teaching is their main activity, and that a teaching qualification and teaching experience are the only requirements for school leadership. Bush & Oduro (2006) note that 'throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals to be trained as school managers. They are often appointed because of a successful record as teachers with the implicit assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point for school leadership'.

The review examines literature on leadership preparation (pre-service), leadership development (in-service) and continuous professional development (CPD) for school leaders in Africa. The emphasis on scalability is vital as much of the provision discussed in this review relates to small, isolated, activity, often with limited long-term benefits. There is growing realisation that headship is a specialist occupation that requires specific preparation. The reasons for this paradigm shift include the expansion of the role of school principal, the increasing complexity of school contexts, recognition that preparation is a moral obligation, and awareness that effective preparation and development make a difference (Bush, 2018). This connects to shifting notions of identity, as teachers transit to leadership.

There is substantial knowledge production on leadership preparation and leaders' CPD in Africa, with 55 outputs, representing 25% of all sources reviewed for this report. Almost all these papers focus on in-service CPD, rather than pre-service preparation. Leadership learning and skills development is found to be mostly informal, idiosyncratic and self-directed and does not seem to follow a specific pattern (Sofo & Abonyi, 2018; Wamba, 2015). Moorosi & Komiti (2020) identify four forms of preparation: during teacher education courses, self-development initiatives, such as masters' degrees, experiential preparation, and in-service training and networking. Ebot Ashu (2020) notes that leadership training consists of a variety of leadership development experiences, including mentoring, job assignments, feedback systems, on-the-job experience, peer observations and developmental relationships. Discussing the content of self-paced initiatives, Okoko et al. (2015) and Imoni (2020) find that principals mostly focus on complying to Ministry of Education expectations regarding their managing roles. Other evidence discusses the need for principal development and advocates for structured formal, compulsory, and mandatory CPD, including in Botswana (Pheko, 2008), South Africa (Mestry, 2017b), Kenya (Kaume -Mwinzi, 2016), Ghana (Suaka & Kuranchie, 2018), Ethiopia (Gurmu, 2020), Malawi (Wamba, 2015) and Uganda (DeJaeghere et al., 2009). Furthermore, Arikewuyo (2009) and Okimb (2019) stress that trainings should be offered by recognised institutions, leading to formal qualifications. Some studies discuss specific skills leading to leadership development with the argument that with relevant leadership capacity, instructional leadership develops into sound leadership practices (Naidoo, 2019). Ebot Ashu (2020) argues that teaching and learning, learning and assessment, health and safety, and research in education are essential for leadership development. Arikewuyo & Onanuga (2005) suggest additional skills such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and modern management techniques. Okoko et al. (2015) argue that standard based frameworks are sought to increase leadership and system credibility. Nevertheless, DeJaeghere et al. (2009) suggest the need for designing training to target gaps in specific skill domains and to give attention to the differing roles and responsibilities, school size and resources, gender, and the location of the population that the school serves.

Two formal leadership programmes, in South Africa and Ghana, are particularly significant as they incorporate fea-

tures of effective and scalable school leadership CPD. The South African Department of Basic Education established an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE School Leadership), that was piloted in six provinces from 2007. The official evaluation (Bush & Glover, 2012) offers a positive picture of this initiative, with evidence that schools participating in the programme improved their school leaving examination results twice as fast as those with no ACE graduates. There were also largely positive reports on specific features of the programme, including mentoring (Moorosi, 2012), networking (Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2012) and the portfolios used for assessment (Chikoko et al., 2011). The Ghana government collaborated with the University of Cambridge, UK, to initiate a Leadership for Learning programme. Two papers (Jull et al., 2014; Malakolunthu et al., 2014) report that the programme has become 'embedded' in some Ghanaian schools.

Another interesting CPD initiative is provided by VVOB – education for Development, in partnership with the Government of Rwanda and the University of Rwanda – College of Education. A CPD Diploma Programme in Effective School Leadership was developed and initiated for a selection of school leaders in each administrative sector in 2014-2016 (Uworwabayeho et al., 2020). The Programme was scaled up and offered to all school leaders (headteachers and deputy headteachers) in basic education in 17 out of 30 districts by 2021. The CPD Diploma Programme is complemented with CPD support for school leaders in professional learning networks, facilitated by trained sector education inspectors. An evaluation report by VVOB & Education Development Trust (2017) describes that participation in professional learning networks intrinsically motivated headteachers primarily through the building of positive relationships with others, both within and outside the school. The CPD Programme connects to the Rwanda Basic Education Board (2020) Professional Standards for Effective School Leadership. These five standards relate to the Ministry of Education's strategic priority to have an effective school leader in every Rwandan school and serve to define the roles, responsibilities and functions of school leaders.

Due to the expansion of the role of school head teacher and the increasing complexity of school contexts, there is a growing realisation that headship is a specialist occupation that requires specific preparation. It is also clear that effective preparation and development of school leaders make a difference.

Adopting a standards-based approach to school leadership CPD 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.

For CPDs to influence school practice, CPDs need to be longer term initiatives in which a large number of participants engage with theory and practice extensively. For sustainability and scalability, close collaboration between CPD providers and government is important.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3:
How do local, national, and regional policies in Africa promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices?

National policies are important in raising awareness about leadership and leadership learning for effective schooling. In very successful education systems, for example China and Singapore, there are national principal preparation programmes, orchestrated by national government and implemented by universities or other delivery partners. However, there is little evidence of government 'ownership', or 'buy-in' for large-scale leadership CPD, across Africa. The South African principal programme is one significant exception, but this initiative was not sustained. Bush et al. (2021) study of instructional leadership in six sub-Saharan Africa countries found that there was either no policy on school leadership or that the policies were too general to provide a sound basis for leadership action. The present review also found very few national school leadership policies. Local policies are even less common although the Gauteng province in South Africa founded and nurtured its own leadership centre, the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (Bush & Glover, 2016).

Schools operate within a legislative framework set down by national governments. A key aspect of such a framework is the degree of decentralisation in the educational system. Many African countries are highly centralised, with little discretion to schools and local communities. International agencies tend to recommend decentralisation as a route to educational improvement. The OECD, for example, links autonomy to accountability and student outcomes. 'When accountability and autonomy are intelligently combined, they tend to be associated with better student performance' (OECD, 2011). A counterargument is that some of the most successful education systems in the world, for example in respect of Programme for Student Assessment (PISA) outcomes, are highly centralised, including in China and Singapore. Five papers address decentralisation in Africa, two from South Africa, one from Malawi, one from Namibia, and one on Zimbabwe. In Namibia, Pomuti & Weber (2012) discuss the implementation of decentralised cluster-based change. They examine the ideologies of school inspectors, principals, and teachers, and conclude that these participants characterise the process as authoritarian, bureaucratic, and managerial. They argue that, whereas the new reforms are based on collegiality and participatory democracy, the apartheid era reverence for authoritarianism, hierarchy and bureaucracy has not changed. The ideologies of Namibian education bureaucrats have determined how policy translates into practice. The empowerment and autonomy envisaged by school clustering has been constrained by the decisive roles the central Education Ministry and its regional officials continue to play. Similarly, Kufaine & Mtapuri (2014) argue that the process of decentralisation in Malawi is incomplete because it has

not been decentralised to the school level. In contrast, South Africa's educational system has devolved significant powers to school governing bodies, comprising the head teacher, teachers, community members and parents. Bamberg (2003) argues that such committees form the indispensable link between the school and community; they turn schools into centres of community life, a government priority since the late 1990s. However, Christie (2010) comments that the new policies are underpinned by a tangled network of regulations on governance, labour relations and performance management, which bring complexity to the task of running schools. In addition, the enormous inequalities that continue to exist between schools mean that the work of principals is very different in different contexts. Chikoko (2007) comments that, while decentralised school governance in Zimbabwe has developed a sense of ownership of schools among stakeholders, factors such as the rigid national educational regulatory framework, and the uneven distribution of power within schools, hamper the decentralisation process. A key decision for education systems considering decentralisation is whether to empower only its own district officials, or to devolve power to school leaders. District leaders are an important part of the educational landscape in many countries as they form a middle tier between national policy makers and school leaders. Bantwini & Moorosi, (2018) argue that, in South Africa, districts play a vital role in continuously collaborating, guiding, leading, and challenging schools to raise standards. Significantly, however, Lassibille (2016) research in Madagascar shows that interventions targeting schools directly are more effective than those implemented via districts.

There is no evidence of a regional approach to leadership CPD.

National policies are important in raising awareness about leadership and leadership learning for effective schooling. However, there is little evidence of government 'ownership', or 'buy-in' for large-scale leadership CPD, across Africa.

A key decision for education systems considering decentralisation is whether to empower only its own district officials or to devolve power to school leaders. District leaders are an important part of the educational landscape in many countries as they form a middle tier between national policy makers and school leaders.

DISCUSSION

The review is an exploratory scoping review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa. Studies have been selected from quality, non-predatory publishers by the authors (established researchers in the field), based on pre-defined themes and subthemes. No additional analyses on research methods, sample sizes or effect sizes have been applied and the review includes a mix of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies. The continent-wide review of more than 200 sources reveals the extent and nature of knowledge production across the continent and shows vast differences in what is known about school leadership in the 54 African countries. Knowledge production is dominated by a limited number of mostly anglophone countries. Content-wise, knowledge production on school leadership on the African continent focusses on leadership models, especially instructional and distributed approaches, and leadership CPD. This reflects a growing awareness of the importance of school leadership for quality education and the need for specialist training and professional development of school leaders. In contrast, little is known about the work of deputy principals or middle leaders such as heads of department. This working paper comprehensively summarises the current state of affairs on school leadership in Africa, as well as trends in school leadership approaches and CPD. At the same time, a number of gaps are identified.

Effective leadership may be defined as leadership that leads to the achievement of school goals, especially those relating to student outcomes. Effective school leadership in Africa is understood as having positive effects on student achievements and learning outcomes, through setting direction, empowering and developing teachers, and leading teaching and learning. This reflects international research, and the focus on instructional leadership, as well as a bias towards the notion of effective school leadership being defined in respect of the principal.

Photo: GPE/Kelley Lynch

When focusing on school leaders' competences, several leadership models are presented in research on school leadership on the African continent, with particular interest in instructional leadership. While the review recognises the importance of the model and presents some evidence on the link with student achievement, there is substantive reflection on particular challenges for African school leaders to balance their administrative and instructional roles. Evidence suggests that instructional leadership is often not put into practice. Next to instructional leadership, there is some interest in transformational leadership as a leadership model. Most of the identified studies on transformational leadership report positive links between transformational leadership and school effectiveness, again mostly indirectly, via teachers. The review examines the interplay between gender and school leadership as an emerging theme. On the one hand, several studies point to barriers for women to take up school leadership positions. On the other hand, some research highlights differences in leadership styles and approaches, describing that women lead more effectively than men. More research is needed to explore the gender barriers as well as underlying reasons for differences in leadership practices. While most studies on school leadership competences align with international school leadership models, of interest is the concept of Ubuntu leadership. Ubuntu leadership could be an emergent approach on school leadership in Africa highlighting unique aspects of leadership, starting from assessing available resources, attending to others' needs, and raising expectations and commitment to organisational goals. The Ubuntu school leadership model also aligns with a growing interest in the model of distributed or shared school leadership. While the research on distributed school leadership in Africa is still limited, it can indicate a normative shift away from solo leaders, towards shared leadership models. In research on distributed school leadership, deputy head teachers are mentioned, but their role and effects at the level of schools is less studied. The review also includes little information about the perceived status of school leadership positions, the accompanying benefits and incentives for school leadership professional development.

When it comes to professional development of school leaders, there is advocacy for the importance of school leadership while the professional development of school leaders receives significant attention in some African countries. However, there is limited evidence on the impact of CPD and on how CPD works. The review also does not include information on the connection between school leadership and professional advancement such as the pathways for professional development, as well as on how school leadership is assessed, tracked or rewarded. The review does identify the value of formalisation and recognition of school leadership CPD, but it provides little background on who currently provides school leadership CPD, including the role of universities and to what extent they are prepared for this role. Still, from the review, the research suggests that to influence school practice, CPDs need to be longer term initiatives in which a large number of participants engage with theory and practice extensively. For sustainability and scalability, close collaboration between CPD providers, researchers and government is important, indicating an embeddedness of CPD initiatives in education systems. While the research and insights in various school leadership models indicate the complex and holistic role of school leaders, adopting a standards-based approach to school leadership CPD 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.
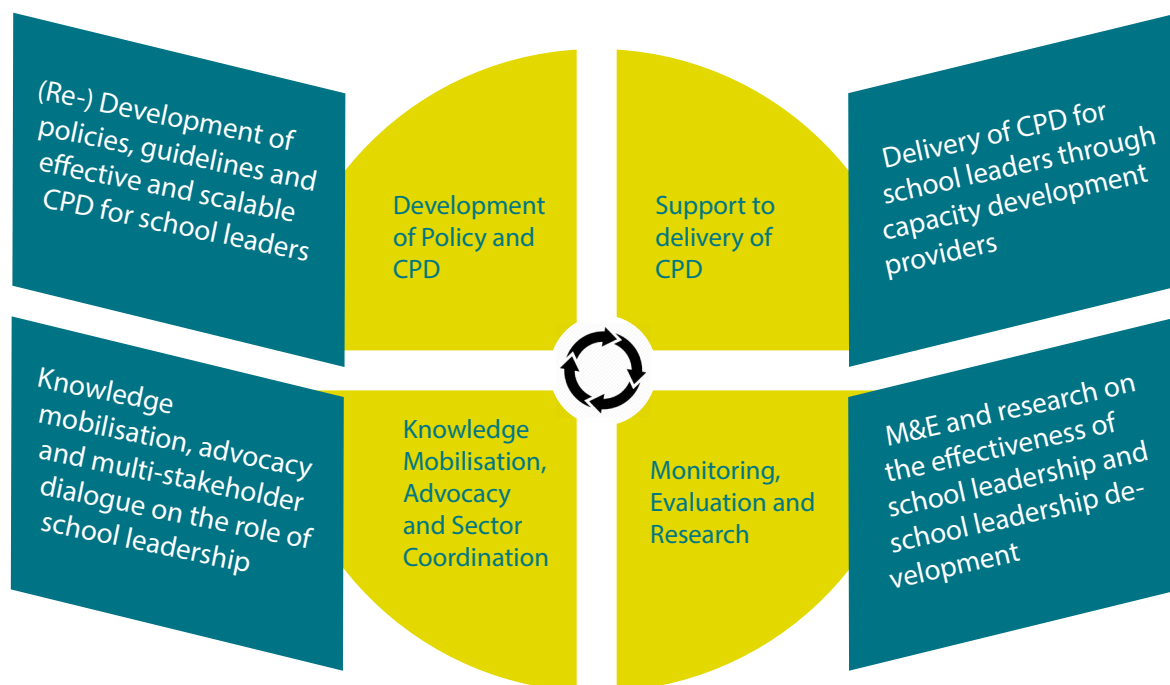
Focusing on policies, it is clear that at the national level, there are few countries that have a school leadership policy in place, let alone clear policies that promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices. As such, there is little evidence of government 'ownership', or 'buy-in' for large-scale leadership CPD, across Africa. While the international agencies tend to recommend decentralisation as a route to school improvement, the research on legislative frameworks and governance indicate that most African countries are highly centralised, with little discretion to schools and local communities. Several papers address decentralisation in Africa but these mostly report incomplete decentralisation, with devolution to district officials rather than to school level. A significant number of studies on decentralisation are included in the review, but the role of districts in between national governments and schools remains less clear. The review found little or no evidence on regional approaches to school leadership and school leadership CPD.

The growing body of knowledge on school leadership in Africa and the trends reported in this working paper offer a good starting point for recommendations with regards to the further support on promotion of effective school leadership that will be offered by the African Centre for School Leadership. The target group of the Centre includes education policy makers and school leaders' professional development providers, in first instance government agencies, but also development partners (DP), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and Civil Society Organisations (CSO), who in turn target educational leaders at decentralised levels of the education systems and both in-service as well as aspiring school leaders. The general objective of the Centre is to assist these governments, government agencies and other partners in Africa, to build national and regional capacity in promoting effective school leadership. It will use the best expertise available in the region to ensure the delivery of high-quality continuous professional development (CPD) services, research and policy advice.

Recommendations coming from the working paper can be linked to the four intervention areas of the African Centre for School Leadership that are also visualised in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Core support areas of the African Centre for School Leadership

(Re-) Development of policies, guidelines and effective and scalable CPD for school leaders

Development of Policy and CPD

Support to delivery of CPD

Delivery of CPD for school leaders through capacity development providers

Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy and multi-stakeholder dialogue on the role of school leadership

Knowledge Mobilisation, Advocacy and Sector Coordination

Monitoring, Evaluation and Research

M&E and research on the effectiveness of school leadership and school leadership development

1. Development of policy and professional development

While some countries recognise the importance of school leadership for quality of education, and many resources advocate for school leadership CPD, the review recommends engaging with governments across the continent to put school leadership 'on the map'. The Centre will begin with a number of countries committed to enhancing school leadership as a step towards quality education, linked to Sustainable Development Goal 4. These will be countries that have significant knowledge production on school leadership in Africa and/or with significant school leadership initiatives in place. In a next phase and based on success stories and evidence on the impact of school leadership on school improvement, a dialogue with additional countries on the continent can be initiated.

Once school leadership is put on the map, the Centre will assist and support countries in the development of clear policies that promote school leadership development amongst others by further decentralisation of respective education systems. The development of standards at the regional and national levels can provide clarity on what is understood under school leadership competences and effective school leadership practices.

Based on such standards and qualification frameworks, the Centre will promote the development of CPD of school leaders that address the complexity of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and recognise the challenges and opportunities of school leaders on the African continent. Particular emphasis will be placed on the role of effective school leaders in key education reforms on the continent, such as the introduction of competence-based curricula, play-based learning, ICT-enabled teaching and distributed leadership.

2. Delivery of professional development for school leaders through capacity development of professional development providers

The Centre will build the capacity of CPD providers to design and develop a variety of CPDs that meet the CPD needs of aspiring and in-service school leaders on the continent. Based on the evidence of what works, the Centre will assist CPD providers in the development of longer-term CPD trajectories where participants engage with both theory and practice and in the delivery of these CPDs in a variety of blended modalities that meet contextual requirements.

At the same time, the Centre will bring together these CPD providers and national governments to ensure that school leadership CPDs are embedded in national education systems and offered to a significant number of school leaders in various stages of their professional development.

3. Monitoring, evaluation and research on the effectiveness of school leadership and school leadership development

To address the growing knowledge base on school leadership in Africa, the Centre will institute a continent-wide research programme with African-based education researchers that studies effectiveness of CPDs on school leadership and looks into the impact of school leadership on the quality of education. Such research will apply consistent cross-country research designs, allowing for learning between partner countries of the Centre. Such research can be coordinated by a leading learning partner working in collaboration with the Centre.

In addition to exploring the effectiveness of various school leadership models and approaches on school leadership practice and school improvement, the Centre will play a role in the further development of school leadership mod-

els that are rooted in the African context, such as Ubuntu school leadership. Regarding the interplay between gender and school leadership, more research is needed on the barriers to school leadership positions and differences in leadership styles and effectiveness between male and female school leaders.

To support CPD providers, a learning partner will also develop indicators and tools for consistent monitoring and evaluation of CPD initiatives on school leadership on the continent, allowing for high quality data collection, analysis and reporting. Baseline information will be captured prior to the ACSL intervention, followed by monitoring and tracking the activities, outputs, outcomes, lessons learnt and short-, medium- and long-term impact of the Centre over time (as per the Theory of Change).

4. Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy and sector coordination through multi-stakeholder dialogue

The African Centre for School Leadership will become the 'go-to' place for research and information on school leadership in Africa.

Research insights and other knowledge products on school leadership in Africa will be key for the Centre for continued awareness-raising activities and to inform interested governments, organisation and individuals. Such activities will include participation in relevant conferences and seminars. Hosting an annual or biennial leadership conference will also be an important statement of the aims and intentions of this pan-African body.

As such, the Centre will bring together scholars, policy makers and practitioners interested in school leadership and leadership CPD and build a strong school leadership network on the African continent that would be influential in sharing knowledge and enhancing leadership quality. Partnerships with governments, other NGOS, and universities, and pan-Africa bodies, such as the African Union (AU), are central in the initiative.

It is with this background that the review of empirical research in school leadership on the African continent was conducted as the first foundational study of the African Centre for School Leadership. This working paper on school leadership in Africa offers insights into what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent, based on empirical research. The working paper provides insight into key competencies and practices that are associated with effective school leadership, the key features of effective and scalable CPD for school leaders as well as on how local, national and regional policies promote or inhibit school leaders' leadership practices in Africa. In a next step, a representative panel of policy makers, CPD providers, researchers, experts and development partners on the African continent will be brought together to discuss this empirical research and to build a consensus on what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent.

The review of research on school leadership in Africa confirms that there are gaps in school leadership support on the African continent and recommends four areas of support that the African Centre for school leadership can offer:

1. The development of school leadership policies and guidelines and effective and scalable professional development programmes for school leaders. This requires engaging with governments across the continent to put school leadership 'on the map' starting with countries committed to enhancing school leadership as a step towards quality education.

2. The delivery of professional development programmes for school leaders through capacity development of professional development providers. To have an impact, school leadership CPD programmes should be long-term, embedded in national education systems and offered to a significant number of school leaders.

3. Monitoring, evaluation and research on the effectiveness of school leadership and school leadership development; The Centre will institute a continent-wide research programme to address the limited knowledge base on school leadership in Africa and develop tools for consistent monitoring and evaluation of CPD initiatives on school.

4. Knowledge mobilisation, advocacy and sector coordination through multi-stakeholder dialogue. The Centre will become the 'go-to' place for research and information on school leadership in Africa and build a strong school leadership network that bring together scholars, policy makers and practitioners interested in school leadership and leadership CPD on the African continent.

As a next step, a representative panel of policy makers, CPD providers, experts and development partners will be brought together on the African continent to discuss this empirical research and to build a consensus on what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent.

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