

**Title:** Building Consensus on Key Competencies and Practices Associated with Effective School Leadership in Africa.

**Thematic clusters:** Educational Leadership, policy, and governance

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**Abstract (150-250 words):**

The Government of Rwanda in collaboration with VVOB – education for development and other key partners initiated the African Centre for School Leadership (ACSL). This Centre which will be hosted in Rwanda aims at supporting African governments to build a supportive school leadership system with the objective to improve teaching and in turn learning outcomes. To build theoretical foundation for the Centre, two studies were conducted. The first study was a review of empirical research on school leadership in Africa providing insights into what constitutes effective school leadership on the continent. It highlights key competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership, factors influencing effective and scalable professional development for school leaders, and insights into how local, national, and regional policies support or hinder school leaders' leadership practices in Africa. The second complementary study focused on consensus building on what constitutes effective school leadership in Africa. Building on these two studies, this paper focuses on creating a consensus about key competencies and practices associated with effective school leadership. In three survey rounds, using the Delphi technique, experts reached a consensus that effective leaders set direction for the school by communicating the school vision, promoting collaborative decisions, engaging school communities in cooperative and teamwork activities, and generating empowerment, support, and trust. More controversy was discovered, however, when assertions were more generalising. It is therefore argued that effective school leadership competencies and practices are contextual to country specific settings.

**Keywords:** Effective School leadership, consensus building, competencies, practices, Africa

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