

# 5 Manager Leadership

## Context

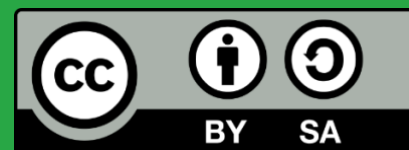
The main objective of the Strategic Partnership EICON is to **support organizations / institutions providing vocational education and training (VET) to become more inclusive using information and communication technology (ICT)**. Organizations / institutions that are active in VET are particularly in need for guidance on how to further develop, as they often have to work towards multiple aims simultaneously, i.e. inclusion usually is one among many other aims. **EICON particularly explores the inherent potential and synergies in the overlapping section between education, inclusion and digitalisation.**

## How to use this list of inclusion opportunities?

There is no 'one best way' for any organization / institution active in VET to increase its inclusive capacity with ICT. Rather, each organization / institution needs to find its own solution that then fits perfectly to its respective situation and requirements. Therefore, this list of inclusion opportunities aims to guide organizations / institutions through a process of reflection and planning. List entries contain both examples of good practice and innovative examples and focus specifically on inclusion potential in an organisation.

Lists of opportunities may be used by different groups: **teachers, managers** of VET institutions / organizations and **facilitators** that support these organisations in organizational change processes. These lists have a slightly different focus depending on the respective role, so make sure you select the ones that fit to your role. Teachers use them, for example, to formulate requirements for their management with regard to the procurement of new ICT. Facilitators in turn can use the lists to discuss and decide on possibilities for specific ICT change projects together with the organisation's representatives. Managers can also use the lists to identify potential uses of ICT for inclusive leadership.

EICON (Enhancing inclusion capacity of educational organizations / institutions providing VET with information and communication technologies (ICT)) is an ERASMUS+ KA2 Strategic Partnership for vocational education and training during 2018 - 2020 (Grant Agreement No.2018-1-DE02-KA202-005110). This list of inclusion opportunities has been developed in the context of EICON. It represents the results of discussions among the experts involved in the project as well as a subsequent public consultation process that involved a wider audience in reviewing the intermediate results.



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## Leadership

‘Effective leadership’ has been identified as a particularly powerful factor for successful inclusive education that finally leads to employment at the open labour market. This means: investing in effective leadership could be a ‘game changer’. Leadership encompasses different *responsibilities* that – individual, team-based or decentralised – leaders need to fulfil. The following collection of responsibilities is used to structure this list:

1. Developing, shaping and pursuing a vision
2. Acting as a change agent
3. Improving teaching and learning practice
4. Creating a positive, motivating and inclusive atmosphere / climate
5. Management of individuals, teams, data and processes<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Developing, shaping and pursuing a vision

This first responsibility relates to the future of the organization / institution: where does it need to go, what is the right direction? *Inclusion* could be seen as a as general as possible vision for an organization / institution active in VET, in reality most probably being combined with further clarifying aspects what the organization / institution wants to become.

Effective school leadership requires leaders to look ahead. The anticipation of the future (or of different futures!) is a key component of strategic management; it observes developments in the closer (e.g. changes in learner characteristics of beginners cohorts, changing attitudes of regional employers, local / regional labour market developments) or wider environment (e.g. megatrends, policy changes) of the organization and gathers appropriate data on these developments. Once this data on trends and developments has been collected, it needs to be assessed, to which extent those developments could be seen as opportunities or rather threats for the organization and its specific vision. Finally, based upon these results, suitable strategies need to be developed to e.g. defend threats or to make use of opportunities that may occur (usually as part of a so-called SWOT analysis). These activities might be relevant to be viewed for possibilities to be supported by ICT.

#### Experiment with ICT which ...

- ☐ collects data from **publicly accessible sources** (e.g. online databases, statistics offices).
- ☐ collects data through **own surveys** among relevant stakeholders (e.g. employers, chambers).
- ☐ **prepares this data** in a meaningful way, e.g. to be able to recognize correlations better.
- ☐ **shares this data** among those who should know about it.
- ☐ **presents this data** in a helpful way (e.g. easy option to export to presentation software or for online publication on your own website).
- ☐ performs an **assessment of the data** (e.g. possibilities for checking the consistency of the data).
- ☐ performs an **interpretation of the data** (e.g. encouraging different perspectives on the data to stimulate different interpretations).
- ☐ derives **strategies** based on the conclusions (e.g. by guiding you step-by-step through a data-based strategy development process).

<sup>1</sup> The Wallace Foundation (Ed.): The School Principal As Leader: Guiding schools to better teaching and learning. January 2013, New York, USA.



## 2. Acting as a change agent

Organizations / institutions are under permanent change, due to ever changing internal as well as environmental conditions. While it is relatively simple to *define* new structures, procedures, responsibilities etc., it is quite complex and difficult to *implement and safeguard* these changes *permanently*. The challenge is that members of the organization / institution (i.e. staff and other stakeholders) tend to be more or less resistant to changes, hence change processes need to be accompanied appropriately.

The people (internal or external) who drive the change process forward are called change agents, and leaders can take the role as a change agent as well. These change agents are individuals who know how to get people in an organization involved in solving their own problems. A change agent's main strength is a comprehensive knowledge of human behaviour, supported by a number of intervention techniques / strategies, with expertise in the behavioural sciences and in the intervention technology of organizational design. There are many possible intervention strategies from which a change agent may choose. This list of inclusion opportunities is based on six specific assumptions<sup>2</sup> and examines in this context the role that ICT can play.

### Experiment with ICT which ...

- ☐ supports you in working with **groups / teams** (considered as the basic building blocks of an organisation) in the process of change.
- ☐ **reduces inappropriate competition** between parts of your organisation (e.g. increasing transparency of processes or decisions).
- ☐ supports you to **develop more collaborative conditions** in your organisation (e.g. by sharing good practice among staff, enabling peer groups).
- ☐ **enables decentralised decision-making** by those who have the best knowledge about the issue at hand, irrespective of a particular role or level of hierarchy.
- ☐ facilitates you to continuously **manage affairs against goals**, at the level of the organization, of subunits of your organization and of individuals.
- ☐ supports you to develop **open communication, mutual trust, and confidence** between and across levels.
- ☐ allows **active participation** in the planning and conduct of the change of those affected by a change, so that they can develop a sense of ownership.

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<sup>2</sup> See R. Beckhard (1969). Organization development: strategies and models. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley. pp. 26–27



### 3. Improving teaching and learning practice

Effective leaders shall offer further professional development opportunities to all staff, including teachers, to ensure quality in education. Furthermore, they should also contribute to the development and implementation of individualised and flexible curricula for learners, and to the provision of different pathways and options that allow for exploration (i.e. horizontal) or progression (i.e. vertical) to match the learners' needs. Both aspects could be understood as approaches to better understand and address the professional needs of teachers and the educational needs of learners.

**Experiment with ICT which supports you in .....**

- ☐ **identifying** teachers' professional development needs.
- ☐ **addressing** appropriately professional development needs.
- ☐ **evaluating** the effectiveness of professional development.
- ☐ **identifying** learners' educational development needs.
- ☐ **addressing** appropriately learners' educational development needs.
- ☐ **evaluating** the effectiveness of educational development.
- ☐ effectively **sharing results** of the evaluation of professional and educational development among teaching staff to discuss measures for further / continuous improvements.

### 4. Creating a positive, motivating and inclusive atmosphere / climate

School leadership needs to develop an inclusive policy, where differences among learners are considered a 'normal' part of the educational culture, and to create an atmosphere of motivation and commitment. The following aspects of ICT might be supportive in this endeavour:

**Experiment with ICT which supports you in ...**

- ☐ **showcasing inclusive practice or behaviour** to the whole organization in an appreciative way.
- ☐ **showcasing** staff, learners and key stakeholders as **one community**.
- ☐ **communicating** all relevant issues in a **timely** manner to all stakeholders.
- ☐ generating **individualized communication** so that the recipients feel better addressed.
- ☐ identifying the **intrinsic and extrinsic 'anchors'** of those who need motivation to change towards the organization's / institution's vision (e.g. anonymous web-based surveys, quick mood polls).



## 5. Management of individuals, teams, data and processes

And finally, leadership also encompasses the practical management of people and of processes. Here, ICT can possibly play some of its known strengths.

### Experiment with ICT which supports you in ...

☐ efficiently **coordinating multi-disciplinary / multi-professional teams** (e.g. in finding time slots suitable for meetings).

☐ easily **booking resources** such as rooms or equipment for team meetings.

☐ **documenting, distributing and storing results** of team meetings efficiently.

☐ performing **team meetings in a mixed mode** (i.e. both face-to-face as well as virtual participation e.g. via video conferencing tools).

☐ providing suitable **tools** for discussion, exchange and decision-making in team meetings, also in mixed mode (i.e. with face-to-face as well as virtual participation).

☐ appropriately supporting learners in the **transition to employment** once they left physically the organization.

☐ supporting and staying in touch with **employers** during the transition phase of learners and beyond.

☐ **distributing leadership**, i.e. to move away from a top-down approach towards teamwork and collaborative problem solving, or in cases where administrative and pedagogical responsibilities are distributed by default.

☐ **linking (local) leadership** also with a **regional level** where such structures exist or are meaningful.

☐ **maintaining a good level of information** and **providing data** relevant to management (e.g. performance data) wherever this management is allocated (i.e. in distributed leadership settings) and whenever it is needed.

