



# MenSI

Mentoring for  
School Improvement

## D2.1 School-to-school mentoring in Europe

Models of whole-school peer  
networking

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v. 7 May 2021





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# Introduction

This report is an output of the MenSI project Task 2.1 Desk research: Deliverable 2.1. It aims to describe different types of mentoring between schools in Europe, including examples and case studies, with particular reference to models of digitally supported innovation and solving shared challenges between schools. The report includes the results of a literature review, survey and interviews.

The report aims to serve as a succinct overview of the state of the art in school-to-school mentoring in Europe and an outline of effective and affordable models and scalable strategies. The focus is networking, clustering or partnering between two or more schools where the school is the primary unit of analysis and the purpose is to address a policy challenge. The models include ‘top-down’ mentoring initiatives that support whole school take-up of a broad range of innovative digital practices in teaching and learning, ‘regional hub’ models (those successfully piloted in the LSL project along others being implemented by education ministries) and ‘bottom-up’ strategies with limited or no ministry support where mentoring is provided by ‘self-starter’ learning labs (e.g. in the Future Classroom Lab network) acting as Advanced Schools. Digital products used to support mentoring are also be analysed and recommendations made.

The report comprises six sections:

- The methodology used to gather and analyse information
- The rationale behind mentoring between schools
- Top-down models of school collaboration
- Bottom-up models of school collaboration
- Success factors in school-to-school mentoring.



# 1 Methodology

This report builds on a preliminary survey of 18 education ministries conducted to inform the development of the project proposal and a more in-depth survey of project partners at the start of the project that involves interviews as well as an online questionnaire, with a view to identify and document cases where whole-school peer-learning methodologies have been used (both successfully and less successfully) in at least ten European countries. A particular focus of both surveys is to identify scalable funding modalities and incentives for schools involved in school-to-school mentoring. An important aim was to identify suitable models to recommend to schools taking part in the project and to provide evidence to underpin guidance.

In addition, the report summarises the findings from research, published reports, articles and case studies (focusing on Europe but including material from other countries) which document how whole-school peer-learning methodologies have been used (both successfully and less successfully), with particular reference to cases which focus on digital technology in school improvement. Interim findings from the literature review were shared with partners before they completed the survey and interviews.



# 2 School-to-school collaboration: why and how?

When schools work together, whether in networks, clusters or partnerships, a range of goals can be achieved, including supporting horizontal decision-making and solving complex problems; sharing responsibilities and creating synergies between stakeholders; promoting knowledge-sharing and the dissemination of practice and enable innovations to evolve more quickly; enhancing the professional development of teachers and supporting capacity-building in schools; and optimising the use of time and resources (European Commission, 2018)<sup>3</sup>. Figure 1 summarises the core characteristics of networks between schools and how they may vary according to needs.

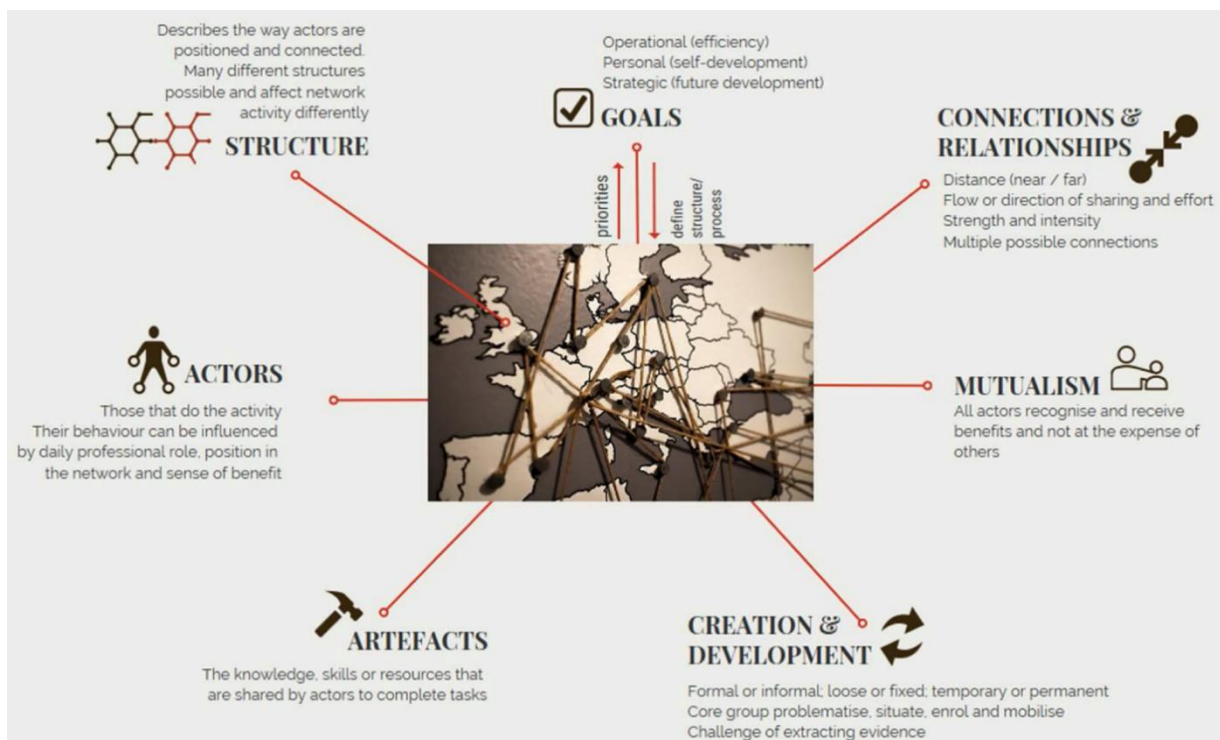


Figure 1: Network components (European Commission, 2018<sup>4</sup>)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)



The benefits of collaboration and networking can be summarised in the term ‘social capital’: “the sum of resources through social relations and networking”, according to Cambré (2019)<sup>5</sup>. From this perspective, success is “the goodwill available to individuals or groups. Its source lies in the structure and content of social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available” (Adler and Kwon (2002) <sup>6</sup>. This is more important for organisations with a focus on innovation, quality and flexibility and can range from cooperation – to share information, resources and expertise – to collaboration, to jointly produce an output that no single organisation or person can achieve in isolation.

Collaboration in education is under-defined and the literature reflects the complexity and multi-faceted nature of school-to-school collaboration in practice. This poses a challenge for a literature review of the field, assert Armstrong et al (2020), particularly if the aim is to address issues of effectiveness, impact and improvement. Research in this area of the field is predominantly qualitative in design, they observe, being “a likely consequence of the nebulous and intangible nature of collaboration, a concept that has proved difficult to ‘measure’”<sup>7</sup>.

One of the main criticisms levelled at school-to-school collaboration is the lack of tangible evidence as to the difference it makes to teaching and learning. In particular, critics have emphasised a paucity of evidence for the positive impact and influence of such activity on student progress and outcomes (e.g. Croft, 2015<sup>8</sup>). There have been very few studies that have set out explicitly or exclusively to focus on the direct influence of school-to-school collaboration on student outcomes. Rather, where student outcomes are discussed they tend to be considered as one of a number of different areas that school-to-school collaboration might impact upon. “At best, the findings are mixed”, conclude Armstrong et al (2020<sup>9</sup>).

School-to-school networks can have an important positive impact on educational quality, and ultimately on learner attainment. A large-scale longitudinal study covering 43 school districts in nine US states found that collective leadership at both the school and district levels were associated with higher student achievement. In those districts which had taken steps to build trust and support professional learning communities, schools made more strategic use of systematic assessment and data analysis, and ultimately improved student learning outcomes. In another study, of 200 schools which formed professional learning communities for reading teachers in an urban district in Texas, statistically significant improvements were found in student achievement, while teachers perceived a positive impact on student learning<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Pr. Dr. Bart Cambré, 2019, Antwerp Business School presentation

<sup>6</sup> Adler & Kwon, 2002

<sup>7</sup> School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>8</sup> <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rev3.3248#rev33248-bib-0038>

<sup>9</sup> School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)



There appears to be a higher degree of confidence within the literature as to the influence of school-to-school collaboration on teachers and teaching. This reflects the predominantly qualitative nature of the research in this area of the field in which practitioner and school leader testimonies, while open to reasonable questions of validity, remain a key source of evidence. Professional development appears to be fertile ground for school-to-school collaboration, with a number of studies reporting favourable outcomes in relation to this theme.<sup>11</sup>

Joint activities between schools take place in three types of grouping: networks, cluster and partnerships. While participants in all three aim to exchange knowledge, skills and resources for mutual benefit, networks tend to have established relationships between participants and may work towards a shared goal, and clusters may not necessarily work towards a shared goal<sup>12</sup>. Whether networks, clusters or partnerships, power relationships can also vary between top down and bottom-up models.

Schools may choose to work together voluntarily, because of a common interest or priority. This approach is bottom-up, grassroots-driven, although top-down enabling conditions may be in place (e.g. a collegiate culture, encouragement of openness, autonomy and empowerment). On the other hand, some pressure may be applied to encourage collaboration. Ainscow et al (2006<sup>13</sup> cited in Armstrong et al, 2020<sup>14</sup>) identify two types. Incentivised networking, typically around a centrally driven initiative, is top-down: the networking takes place primarily because government wants it to happen, there is an external reward, and it would not take place without it. Forced networking is also top-down, but more directive and takes place for example when a school is performing poorly and is partnered with a higher-performing school or group of schools.

Three types of school collaboration can be distinguished (European Commission, 2018). School collaboration as a tool for educational governance provides accountability and resource management at different levels within the system, both vertically (national, regional and local) and horizontally (between schools, and with other key stakeholders at a defined scale). They may be top-down, centrally imposed in order to provide structure and simplify communication, but may also be bottom-up, when schools with a degree of autonomy (i.e. official approval to work together) choose to work closely together to share human and physical resources. Such collaboration does not have to be for governance or administration. They can help overcome the isolation of schools and educators by providing opportunities for organised professional exchange, development and enrichment OECD (2003)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2018) ET2020 Working Group Schools. Networks for learning and development across school education [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Ainscow et al (2006), <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rev3.3248#rev33248-bib-0007>

<sup>14</sup> School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>15</sup> OECD (2003). Towards New Models for Managing Schools and Systems Part 1 chapter 3 "Networking for Educational Innovation: A Comparative Analysis" Anne Sliwka



A second type is informal teacher social networks and resource-sharing platforms<sup>16</sup>, evolving at some distance from national policy making on a peer-to-peer basis between schools or teachers. The open educational resources platform [Klascement](#) by the Belgium Flemish Community is an example of resource sharing (although close to policy making).

The third type, policy or practice incubators, is the most commonly reported in the two surveys conducted for this report. Here, schools work together to innovate, test and experiment, often in the context of pilot projects or initiatives, with specific policy challenges in mind, such as tackling school under-performance, early school leaving, or supporting the educational inclusion of newly arrived migrant children. Cooperation like this, according to the OECD (2003)<sup>17</sup>, can support strategic development and spread innovative educational practices. Top-down models like this typically enable a policy priority to be implemented or solutions to policy issues to be piloted, often under favourable circumstances, for example, suspension of ‘business as usual’ to create the conditions for innovation in the form of regulatory exemptions, additional funding, or the provision of extra staffing or infrastructure. These networks are inherently hierarchical in nature, initiated by government. In some cases, there may be a lead school or schools at the apex of a pyramid and other schools learning from it. In others, the initiative is driven from above, but schools are equals, working together under external management and, sometimes, supervision. Despite their prevalence, centrally driven initiatives may not necessarily be the most effective way to facilitate sustainable collaboration between schools, according to Hayes and Lynch (2013)<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> European Commission (2018) ET2020 Working Group Schools. Networks for learning and development across school education: Guiding principles for policy development on the use of networks in school education systems.

[https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> OECD (2003). Towards New Models for Managing Schools and Systems Part 1 chapter 3 “Networking for Educational Innovation: A Comparative Analysis” Anne Sliwka

<sup>18</sup> Hayes, G. and Lynch, B. (2013) Local partnerships: blowing in the wind of national policy changes. *British Educational Research Journal*, 39 (3) pp. 425–446.



# 3 Top-down models of school collaboration

There are numerous examples of school networking in MenSI project partners' countries in which ministries of education identify or recruit schools to work together on a specific policy challenge, ranging from school improvement in general to more narrow foci such as supporting gifted children.

In several countries the policy challenge is improving schools and fostering innovation. The approach is typically to establish a network of schools leading the way to act as innovation incubators and beacons of good practice. Examples include innovative schools in Croatia, 'Scio schools', makerspace schools, 'methodological cabinets' (Czech Republic), the Basis school network (Hungary), space, time and teaching innovation (Italy), and a network of innovative schools in Belgium. Schools in these networks generally receive support and encouragement from the education ministry or a government agency, giving them the motivation and confidence to experiment and even take risks. Schools keep in touch with each other and share developments through workshops and conferences and online networking. Teaching School Hubs in England are schools selected for their excellence and funded to open up to visitors and disseminate their good practices to other schools. Also in the UK (England) is a government-initiated scheme to set up 24 so-called 'free schools' in 2011 in areas of higher disadvantage to act as a stimulus for school improvement to other schools in the area facing the same challenges. Evaluation showed that the approach was successful, at least for the free schools if not for those nearby (NFER, 2021<sup>19</sup>). This example is unusual in that the schools were established not to mentor others but to inspire (or indeed to threaten, compete, challenge, and provoke) to change and to demonstrate that alternative approaches could work, as measured by inspection, examination results, and student recruitment. The evaluation found a number of successful outcomes for the new schools, if not for others in the area: more were judged outstanding by inspectors than others, and they were more popular with parents. There are now over 550 such schools in England.

In these models, there is little formal mentoring either of each other or of other less advanced schools, but more a process of informal learning between these pioneer schools. Evaluation may take place to inform future policy making with evidence of what is effective and scalable.

Other projects narrow down the innovation to new approaches to teaching and learning. In Portugal for example, a Pilot Project of Pedagogical Innovation explores innovative educational environments, pedagogical differentiation, methodologies, and formative assessment. In Belgium,

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/news-events/press-releases/new-report-10-years-of-free-schools/>



two learning networks (one for primary and one for secondary education) have been established by GO! around a digital platform for personalised learning and professionalisation: sharing good practice, asking questions and updating each other. Each school that uses the platform has to nominate one teacher to join the network. After a couple of sessions, there was an increase in enthusiasm and eagerness to learn, but there was resistance at first as some participants were obliged to participate. In Hungary, a national best practice collection and exchange platform ran between 2011 and 2015 called “school bag” ([iskolatáska](#)), with searchable databases of approved mentors, professional development courses, teaching aids and best practices. Schools could purchase best practice descriptions, pedagogical resources, study visits, consultations, etc. The school owning the best practice decided how to exploit it and published the expected fee. However, the system was not financially sustainable and was closed down after a few years.

Other groupings of schools focus on capacity building of teachers and school leaders. Croatia has School mentoring to support policy priorities, The Czech Republic School leader live ([Ředitel naživo](#)) and Teacher live ([Učitel naživo](#)), Hungary Institutional development mentors, and Italy Avanguardia Educative (Italy).

In several countries schools facing specific policy challenges are brought together to share concerns and learn from each other. In Italy and Croatia school networks have been established to overcoming problems of size and isolation: a small school network in Italy) and an e-islands scheme in Croatia. Hungary has a number of single-issue networks of schools. For STEM, since 2000, schools with the label [Eco-school](#) take part in local, regional and national conferences, accredited teacher trainings (including a head teacher training programme), and regional and national knowledge transfer hubs, called [source centers](#). Other school clusters are brought together by the education ministry to share and address common policy challenges together, such as overcoming social disadvantage, reducing early school leaving, and supporting gifted children. The [talent development network](#) aims to mobilise mentors and experts to meet the needs of gifted children. Talent points ([tehetségpont](#)) search for gifted children, support them with career or other advice, give them individualised support and detect local talent development initiatives. Talent support councils ([tehetségsegítő tanács](#)) connect a broader spectrum of stakeholders. Talent development workshops ([tehetséggondozó műhely](#)) are typically a school with expertise in nurturing talent in certain areas. There are various workshops and other forms of knowledge transfer available in the network.

Finally, several school networks aim to foster the update of digital technologies, for example, digitising schools in Croatia, ICT innovation in the Czech Republic. Digital education in Hungary, the Digital Transition Plan and Learning Laboratories for methodologies for ICT curriculum integration (Portugal), the network for digital innovation, a network of ICT-coordinators for specific clusters of schools (Belgium). The Living Schools Lab project falls into this category, and this is now described in detail.



### 3.1 The Living Schools Lab project

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The Living Schools Lab<sup>20</sup> project, 2012-2014, was a top-down, incentivised participation initiative aiming to meet a policy challenge: to increase schools' overall digital capacity. Project partners (some participating in MenSI as well) put in place a multi-layered network or ecosystem across 12 countries involving, not only 'vanguard' schools, but also schools, classes and individual teachers at less advanced levels of ICT implementation. The project built a network of teachers collaborating on the effective use of ICT in schools. To build the network, two Advanced Schools and five Advanced Practitioner Schools were selected by partners in each country. The network promoted a whole-school approach to ICT use, scaling up best practices in the use of ICT between schools grouped into two levels of technological proficiency:

- Advanced Schools: where technology is embedded in teaching and learning across the whole school; and
- Advanced Practitioner Schools: where technology is only partially embedded within the school.

The participating schools were supported through peer-exchanges in regional hubs, pan-European teams working collaboratively on a number of themes, and a variety of opportunities for teachers' ongoing professional development. Observation of Advanced Schools showed that regional hubs created a successful model for developing a mentoring and collaboration relationship between schools at a national and regional level.

In the project, the hubs were facilitated by National Coordinators, who coordinated the meetings and were able to add a wider perspective and network of contacts to the benefit of the hubs. The other major benefit of the regional hub was the opportunity to share practice in the local language, supported by virtual forums in the project's online Community of Practice. National Coordinators were the main point of communication and contact for the LSL schools at national and regional level. They were in charge of coordinating across the schools, supporting the development of the regional hubs, linking to wider perspectives, and coordinating the observation visits and dissemination through a Community of Practice and national focus group.

A common planning framework and language was developed to help sharing among schools. Every school was encouraged to write its own STEPS Plan (Share, Teach, Evidence, Plan, Support) and "Showcase, Demonstrate, Validate", to identify a single aspect of school development using ICT that would be developed as part of the project. Schools/teachers were then encouraged to share their STEPS Plans with other teachers and schools in the regional hub meetings and across pan-European collaborative groups. Regional hub meetings took place on average once a term. These were held either face-to-face or virtually depending on geographic location. Meetings were supported by local regional hub forums, facilitating the exchange of ideas on an on-going basis. A common planning framework and language helped sharing among schools. Every school was encouraged to write its own STEPS Plan to identify a single aspect of school development using ICT

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<sup>20</sup> <https://fcl.eun.org/lsl>



that would be developed as part of the project. Schools/teachers were then encouraged to share their STEPS Plans with other teachers and schools in the regional hub meetings and across pan-European collaborative groups.<sup>21</sup> Participating schools received a lump sum of 1,000 Euros each in recognition of their contribution to the project. Unlike MenSI, the LSL project did not consider different ways to incentivise or reward mentor schools.

Collaboration around common themes, working with other teachers on their STEPS Plan in school, through the regional hubs, and for some at a pan-European level, proved an important way to support and connect often isolated, innovative teachers to encourage a whole school approach to using ICT. This process included sharing the STEPS Plan around a selected theme, to provide a focus within the school, supported by the school senior management; at regional hub and European level: working on common themes, such as 1:1 devices, sharing and demonstrating practice across schools.

Based on the observation visits, the idea of Collaborative Schools was developed into a Framework for Mainstreaming Change, used to summarise evidence under four different categories which define the different levels of “connectedness” observed in Advanced Schools: Reactive; Responsive; Connected; and Inter-connected.

The LSL process of regional hubs, with a common framework and language of STEPS Plans encouraged schools to share practice and monitor school development plan progress. Working with peer schools inspired and stimulated ideas for innovation and created opportunities for teachers and students to work together across different schools.

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<sup>21</sup> A whole school approach to technology-supported change – D1.3 Final Summary Report of Living Schools Lab project, Sep 2014  
[https://fcl.eun.org/documents/10180/19008/D1p3+Final+publishable+summary+report\\_LSL+project+v20141125.pdf/0d08540b-3c14-4153-ae79-b1db85ef1dc5](https://fcl.eun.org/documents/10180/19008/D1p3+Final+publishable+summary+report_LSL+project+v20141125.pdf/0d08540b-3c14-4153-ae79-b1db85ef1dc5)



# 4 Bottom-up models of school collaboration

Two examples from the UK (England) illustrate some differences between top-down and bottom-up models of schools learning from each other. The EdTech Demonstrator Programme is an initiative of the current government; the Department for Education explicitly want “a top down and prescriptive approach” in which schools identified by external experts as leading edge in the use of digital technology act as demonstration sites for other less advanced schools to visit and learn from. This programme replaces a previous initiative, the ICT Register which, although centrally animated (by the London Grid for Learning), grew organically and successfully to a peer network of 650 largely self-organising schools with a strong bottom-up non-prescriptive approach.

Across the range of grassroots and bottom-up school to school networking is the notion of a self-improving system in which schools support themselves and each other to raise standards of teaching and learning and address educational issues<sup>22</sup>: “Networks bring together individuals or institutions in a horizontal partnership, where the rationales are democratic exchange, and mutual stimulation and motivation, rather than top-down reforms.”<sup>23</sup>

The role of national policy makers within these networks can vary considerably, but typically conforms with one of two broad approaches: Enabling or facilitative – arm’s-length support to school networks that have developed organically, such as through the provision of infrastructure to support collaboration; and Directive or interventionist – using policy directives or programmes to tackle educational underperformance via peer learning between schools, and/or ensuring that high performing schools have a clear mandate to transfer their skills and expertise to others within the system.

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<sup>22</sup> Greany, 2015: <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rev3.3248#rev33248-bib-0053> in School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>23</sup> OECD (2003). Towards New Models for Managing Schools and Systems Part 1 chapter 3 “Networking for Educational Innovation: A Comparative Analysis” Anne Sliwka



## 4.1 School initiated co-operation to achieve a common goal

Project partners provided examples of schools (or more precisely people in schools) deciding to work together, some goal-driven, others to provide mutual support (although there are overlaps between the two types).

Examples of goal-driven co-operation between schools can be found in Belgium and the Czech Republic. In Belgium (Flemish Community) learning platforms is a bottom-up network of school leaders, IT-coordinators and teachers. They wanted an educational platform that matched their vision and had features missing in existing products. The network made a list of criteria and met monthly with an invited representative of an ed tech company (e.g. Google, Microsoft) to find out about the different solutions on offer. The network, according to the MenSI partner, “has a lot of dynamic, everyone is motivated to participate, and there are a lot of different backgrounds, but on the other hand people come and go, it’s too open. The network is being “carried” by a couple of people.”

In the Czech Republic, [Trvalá obnova školy](#) (TOŠ) is a network of schools working together with the goal of changing the internal climate of the school, introduce new methods of work and manage change in education. [In a video](#), the founders describe success factors: having shared goals and values, diversity, and healthy relationships. They also talk about rivalry between-schools and the disadvantage of putting neighbouring schools together, which may cause trouble, the Importance of diversity in the network, organising visits to schools where teachers see colleagues teach and learn from them. Sharing openly is most important here. Kruh spolupracujících škol is a project connected to TOŠ involving 37 mostly elementary and kindergarten schools from all over the country. Also in the Czech Republic is [Učitelská platforma](#), an association of teachers with a goal to improve the work conditions and the quality of teaching; it plays an active role in negotiations with the ministry of education.

An example of schools, or more accurately school leaders, setting up their own network to provide mutual support can be found in Belgium (Flemish Community). ‘Twenty years of collegialism: the Besellers’ is a network of some twenty schools in Ghent to enable head teachers to discuss questions and problems. The principle is that as a school head you no longer stand alone and learn from each other in an atmosphere of trust. In the Czech Republic Síť inkluzivních is a network of inclusion-friendly schools established in 2013 sharing a common concern to maximise openness and access for all learners. [Učíme online](#) is a grassroots activity of over 500 volunteers from the non-profit organisation Česko.Digital in cooperation with the American Academy, GUG.cz, Google ČR, Microsoft ČR and other partners. They provide continuous support to teachers, organising webinars, etc. to help teachers with distance learning and how to embed it in teaching. Although bottom-up, this initiative is not school-initiated.



## 4.2 Schools as learning organisations

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Whatever the type of collaboration between schools or their motivation, cooperation is enhanced if schools see themselves as learning schools in which both teachers and learners are learning and developing. This is particularly the case when schools are engaged in the first type of network (policy or practice incubators) and networking on a voluntary basis. A learning school is generally part of a network with other schools, thereby “enabling co-construction of educational progress, as well as nesting individual schools within a supportive framework of governance, higher education institutions, parents and guardians and the local community” (ET2020 Working Group Schools, 2018<sup>24</sup>). Nine principles lie behind the concept of the learning school according to the European Commission (2018<sup>25</sup>), including recognising that school leaders and teachers should be acknowledged and respected for their expertise and their contribution to developing the education system at different levels and that education systems should provide opportunities for school leaders and teachers to develop leadership competences that support them in strategic thinking and planning.

Implicit in bottom-up initiatives is a degree of autonomy at school level, giving them some control over decisions. Taken further, the autonomous school may define itself as a learning organisation, responsible for the development not only of its students but also of its teachers.

In the United Kingdom (Wales), the majority of schools are now developing as learning organisations<sup>26</sup> and use the School as a Learning Organisation (SLO) model as the basis for continuous development. The starting point for schools to begin their SLO journey is the SLO survey which schools can complete annually to support their ‘professional learning journey’<sup>27</sup>. Survey results highlight key strengths, areas for development and ways of working to enable all staff to develop professionally. Belgium (Flemish Community) has produced a vision document *Professionele Leergemeenschap* (Professional Learning Communities, PLCs) and detailed guidance for schools, for example, developing a school into a PLC as a process of integral school development, PLCs as a conceptual framework and common language to talk about and shape change processes, strategies the school leader can use to develop a PLC, and how to use current innovations in the school to strengthen the PLC.

Self-review is a key element of the learning school, many making use of self-evaluation tools such as the [eTwinning School label](#) which recognises schools that are leaders in digital practice<sup>28</sup>, eSafety

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<sup>24</sup> Networks for learning and development across school education [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> European Commission (2018), Teachers and school leaders in schools as learning organisations: Guiding principles for policy development in school education [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs4-learning-organisations\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs4-learning-organisations_en.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/schools-as-learning-organisations/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/professional-learning-journey/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/tutorials/digital-competence-the-vital-htm>



practice<sup>29</sup>, innovative and creative approaches to pedagogy<sup>30</sup>, promoting continuous professional development<sup>31</sup>, and promoting collaborative learning practices with staff and students<sup>32</sup>.

SELFIE<sup>33</sup> is a widely used tool for schools to assess digital competence and whole school integration of technology. Based on the DigCompOrg framework<sup>34</sup> SELFIE is a free, online tool to help schools ‘assess how they use digital technologies for innovative and effective learning. With SELFIE, schools can take a snapshot of where they stand in their use of digital technologies, taking on board views of teachers, students and school leaders. This self-assessment process can help start a dialogue within the school on potential areas for improvement. SELFIE also allows a school to monitor its progress over time.’ The SELFIE tool<sup>35</sup> can be useful in the context of the learning school as it sets out the dimensions of a digitally competent educational organisation and enables schools to assess where they stand with digitally supported learning. It can be used in combination with teacher individual self-assessment and the recently launched SELFIE-T for teachers to self-assess their pedagogical digital competence.

Further information on schools as learning organisations can be found in:

Camberwell, VA (2016), *Schools as learning organisations*. Australian Council for Educational Research<sup>36</sup>. A concise and clear guide for schools embarking on school-initiated improvement. Five steps in a school improvement cycle are described: current situation; desired improvements in outcomes; improvement strategy; evidence of improved outcomes?; reflection and learning: “Each school improvement cycle provides the foundations for a school’s next improvement efforts”.

Harris, A. & Jones, M. (2018) Leading schools as learning organizations, *School Leadership & Management*, 38:4, 351-354<sup>37</sup>. A short editorial arguing that aspiring to be a learning organisation is not the same as becoming one. It suggests that school leaders ask questions before embarking on school improvement, such as What exactly does it mean for a school to become a learning organisation and how exactly is this fulfilled? What are the clear steps, what are the necessary conditions and what are the necessary evaluative processes? The editorial concludes: “If the school as a learning organisation is to be more than just the latest label, then leaders at all levels in schools will need this to be their shared ambition, their core purpose, and their collective focus for school improvement.”

Kools, M., George, B. & Steijn, B. (2020) Developing schools as learning organisations —“Why” and “how”? *European Journal of Education*, 55(1), 3-8<sup>38</sup>. An editorial challenging the view that a school that is a learning organisation deals better with the changing external environment, facilitates change and

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/support/esafety-and-etwinning.htm>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/latest/practices/engaging-teaching-and-learning.htm>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/tutorials/expanding-your-professional-de.htm>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/get-inspired/kits.cfm>

<sup>33</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital_en)

<sup>34</sup> Kamylyis, P., Punie, Y. & Devine, J. (2015); Promoting Effective Digital-Age Learning - A European Framework for Digitally-Competent Educational Organisations. [http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC98209/jrc98209\\_r\\_digcomporg\\_final.pdf](http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC98209/jrc98209_r_digcomporg_final.pdf).

Framework: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomporg/framework>

<sup>35</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital_en)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.acer.org/files/Schools-as-learning-organisations.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326275120\\_Leading\\_schools\\_as\\_learning\\_organizations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326275120_Leading_schools_as_learning_organizations)

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338766088\\_Developing\\_schools\\_as\\_learning\\_organisations-Why\\_and\\_how](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338766088_Developing_schools_as_learning_organisations-Why_and_how).



innovation, induces improvements in the human resource outcomes of school staff, such as job satisfaction and self-efficacy, and ultimately enhances student learning. The authors argue that, “although the concept of the learning organisation has inspired the hearts and minds of a steadily growing body of scholars, educators and policy makers worldwide for some 25 years, relatively little progress has been made in advancing the concept—either in research or in practice”, concluding that the evidence on the construct or key characteristics that make an education institution a learning organisation is still thin.

Kools, M. and Stoll L. (2016), “What Makes a School a Learning Organisation?”, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 137, OECD Publishing, Paris<sup>39</sup>. This paper aims to work towards a common understanding of the school as a learning organisation concept that is both solidly founded in the literature. The paper provides an in-depth analysis of the learning organisation literature in general, and within a school context. It identifies and operationalises the characteristics of the school as learning organisation in an integrated model that consists of seven overarching ‘action-oriented’ dimensions: 1) developing and sharing a vision centred on the learning of all students; 2) creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff; 3) promoting team learning and collaboration among staff; 4) establishing a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration; 5) establishing embedded systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning; 6) learning with and from the external environment and larger learning system; and 7) modelling and growing learning leadership. The dimensions and underlying key characteristics are intended to provide practical guidance on how schools can transform themselves into a learning organisation and ultimately enhance student outcomes.

OECD (2015), *Schooling Redesigned: Towards Innovative Learning Systems, Educational Research and Innovation*, OECD Publishing, Paris<sup>40</sup>. This report describes common strengths around a series of Cs: Culture change, Clarifying focus, Capacity creation, Collaboration & Co-operation, Communication technologies & platforms, and Change agents. It suggests that growing innovative learning at scale needs approaches rooted in the complexity of 21st century society and “learning eco-systems”. It argues that a flourishing middle level of change around networks and learning communities provides the platform on which broader transformation can be built. This report is a succinct analysis presenting original concepts and approaches, illustrated by concrete cases from around the world.

Kools, M. and Stoll L. (2016), “What Makes a School a Learning Organisation?”, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 137, OECD Publishing, Paris<sup>41</sup>. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of the learning organisation literature in general, and within a school context. It identifies and operationalises the characteristics of the school as learning organisation in an integrated model that consists of seven overarching ‘action-oriented’ dimensions: 1) developing and sharing a vision centred on the learning of all students; 2) creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff; 3) promoting team learning and collaboration among staff; 4) establishing a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration; 5) establishing embedded systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning; 6) learning with and from the external environment and larger learning system; and 7) modelling and growing learning leadership. The dimensions and underlying key characteristics are intended to provide

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<sup>39</sup> <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlwm62b3bvh-en>.

<sup>40</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264245914-en>.

<sup>41</sup> <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5jlwm62b3bvh-en>.



practical guidance on how schools can transform themselves into a learning organisation and ultimately enhance student outcomes.

### 4.3 School-to-school peer reviewing

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Although a school can review its performance internally and conduct self-reviews without reference to other schools, and external review may provide a more objective judgment, both are not without weaknesses. As Van Petegem and Cautreels note: "In external evaluation, there is a risk that the "accountability perspective" will put a mortgage on possible school development and that schools will therefore be more likely to engage in "window dressing"; in the case of internal evaluation, the danger is not imaginary that it will acquire characteristics of "navel gazing" because the criteria against which the quality of the school is weighed up is mainly determined by the school itself"<sup>42</sup>. They argue that peer reviewing can be more effective and objective, bringing the gap between external and internal evaluation, and, crucially, enabling gains in teachers' and school leaders' professionalism.

Often related to the policy goals of school improvement, quality assurance and spreading good practice, peer reviewing involves teams of two or more schools visiting each other's school in order to gather information about the quality of the school visited. Although peer reviewing in this context traditionally involves on site mutual class observation and work shadowing, tools such as Iris Connect can support remote lesson observation (see for example ONVU, 2020<sup>43</sup>).

Schools visiting each other is an example of bottom-up collaboration if initiated by the schools themselves, voluntarily acting as 'critical friends' to each other, identifying strengths and weaknesses, sometimes as preparation for more formal inspections. Such a model is in use in Belgium (described in Van Petegem and Cautreels, 2013) based around trained teams of teachers and / or heads of two or more schools who visit each other on a voluntary basis to ask specific questions and collect information about the quality of the school visited and the efforts it makes to improve that quality. They give a value judgment on this and make recommendations to further develop and improve the quality of the work in the visited school. The process consists of a number of steps. First, a visitation team is created and receive an introduction to school visitation in general and their role as a member of a team. Because quality is a subjective and complex concept, a clear reference framework is agreed in advance with all involved. During the visit, they individually carry out activities (interviews, observations, review of documents, panel discussions) and take part in team activities (exchanging experiences, formulating conclusions, drafting of a visitation report) based on consensus. As the process usually focuses on quality, the visited school may present a concrete school improvement project being worked on. Conclusions are presented. They are more

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<sup>42</sup> Van Petegem and Cautreels (2013) Collegiale Visitatie: een strategisch instrument voor schoolontwikkeling (=Peer review: a strategic instrument for school development [https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische\\_documenten/00001XU8.pdf](https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische_documenten/00001XU8.pdf)). In Dutch, access restricted.

<sup>43</sup> ONVU Learning, 2020. Learning From Experienced Teachers Through Video-Based Observation. <https://www.onvulearning.com/blogs/learning-from-experienced-teachers-through-video-based-observation/>



than a summary of findings: a value judgment must, based on the professional judgment of the members of the team. Recommendations are formulated for possible school improvement. The visited school is free to decide whether or not to take this peer advice into account when continuing to improve quality. Visitation is concerned only with the here and now and from there to lead to recommendations for the future of the school. The focus is specifically aimed at possible future developments and quality improvements at the visited school. The process brings into play whole school characteristics including self-reflection, openness to innovation, communication, professionalisation and leadership.

In *Schools visit each other. A lever for school development* (2009)<sup>44</sup>, after a description of peer review and the associated objectives, an overview is given of the cornerstones and starting points of this method. The scenario of the Peer Visitation project (2006-07) is outlined and the working method used here is compared with the visit of the inspectorate as a 'critical friend'. On the basis of evaluation data, the authors<sup>45</sup> formulate the following points of attention for future peer review projects: attention should be paid to the involvement of the school teams and to the training of the chairpersons of the peer review teams; the methodology of the 'examination of pupil work' should be refined and the survey of participants should be adapted. The authors conclude from this research that peer review is not only a strategic instrument for quality assurance but can also improve the policy effectiveness of schools.

Also in Belgium, in the 'I see, I see what you don't see' initiative<sup>46</sup>, adult education centres started an ambitious programme of peer reviews in 2017, across networks and provincial borders. This enabled them to learn a great deal from each other. The link with a new inspection methodology is a bonus. In a scheme with an element of top-down networking, the adult education professional development team has been making use of peer reviews in which teams, including teachers, school boards and technical advisors from two or more centres visit each other in turn, with the aim of improving quality, exchanging ideas and learning from each other. One benefit of a top-down component is that the professional development team provide concrete guidance to schools to help the visit run optimally and ensure that peer visits are more than 'just a visit to the neighbours'.

In similar vein, in the Hospitality and learning initiative<sup>47</sup>, teachers learn from each other when they open the classroom doors, via 'hospitality'. It is an effective tool for teachers to professionalise by sharing expertise. Teachers are 'guests' in a classroom where a teacher demonstrates an innovative or alternative educational approach. This hospitality can be tackled systematically by using the KORTUA methodology (translated as Framework, Observation, Reflection, Application, Exchange, Action<sup>48</sup>). There are five steps in the model: agree the focus; formulate the learning question; lesson

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<sup>44</sup> Van Petegem et al (2009), "Scholen visiteren elkaar (1)", in Basis magazine, February 2009.

[https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische documenten/00001VGA.pdf](https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische%20documenten/00001VGA.pdf). In Dutch.

<sup>45</sup> Van Petegem et al (2009), "Scholen visiteren elkaar" (2), in Basis magazine, March 2009.

[https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische documenten/00001VMR.pdf](https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische%20documenten/00001VMR.pdf)

<sup>46</sup> [https://mijnpro.g-o.be/mijn-organisatie-site/kennis-informatie-site/beleidsbib-site/Documents/In Dialoog 2020-01p38-43.pdf](https://mijnpro.g-o.be/mijn-organisatie-site/kennis-informatie-site/beleidsbib-site/Documents/In%20Dialoog%202020-01p38-43.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> *Hospiteer en leer* (= *Host and Learn*) in School Visie, no. 3 December-January 2013-14 pp. 14-17.

[https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische documenten/SenV20131201p14-17scan.pdf](https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische%20documenten/SenV20131201p14-17scan.pdf) In Dutch, access restricted

<sup>48</sup> [https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische documenten/senv20150401p28-30scan.pdf](https://gemeenschapsonderwijs.sharepoint.com/sites/app-godoc/Elektronische%20documenten/senv20150401p28-30scan.pdf)



observation; feedback; implement – the visiting teacher/s apply what they have observed. The scheme includes notes on the model’s pitfalls and benefits, optimal conditions and steps in the process, including practical examples. A similar approach is advocated by Van den Branden (2019) who argues that observing a colleague’s lesson makes you a better teacher and ensures improved learning outcomes; it’s a positive form of copying and imitation, as Van den Branden puts it: "Teachers need to cheat more<sup>49</sup>".

Peer reviewing between schools tends to lead to the schools involved drawing up and implementing improvement plans. Follow-up may involve schools acting as mentors to each other, in which people with more experience or knowledge in one school support their peers in the reviewed school.

Further information can be found in:

Coleman, C., Sykes, W. & Groom, C. (2017) *Peer support and children and young people's mental health. Research Review*. DFE-RR671. London: DfE<sup>50</sup>. This report commissioned by the UK (England) Department for Education presents the findings from a literature review of available models of peer support that support and improve children and young people’s mental health, their key features and evidence of their effectiveness. It aims to provide evidence on the practical implementation of existing peer support programmes and how this relates to their effectiveness. The review aimed primarily to identify interventions with a focus on mental health. However, the review also included peer support for related topics such as bullying, transitions, wider wellbeing and friendship.

Mentoring & Befriending Foundation (2010) *Peer Mentoring in schools. A review of the evidence base of the benefits of peer mentoring in schools including findings from the MBF Outcomes Measurement Programme*. Manchester: MBF<sup>51</sup>. A report on research to review the success of peer mentoring and the outcomes which peer mentors and mentees have achieved within schools throughout England. Findings reveal that programmes that are more formalised and include training, support and management of mentors are more beneficial in terms of impact.

## 4.4 School-to-school mentoring

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Mentoring of individual teachers, particular early career teachers, is widespread, effective and well researched. It can be defined as a “support structure at school whereby more experienced teachers assist less experienced teachers” (OECD, 2019). It can be a collective activity involving all teachers, or, more commonly, a mentor is “a teacher within the same school who is responsible for providing guidance, advising [and challenging] another colleague. Such mentors are not necessarily more

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<sup>49</sup> Interviewed in “Collegiale visitatie: “Leraren moeten meer spieken””, in Klasse 10 December 2019  
<https://www.klasse.be/214572/collegiale-visitatie-leraren-moeten-meer-spieken/> In Dutch.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/603107/Children\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_s\\_mental\\_health\\_peer\\_support.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/603107/Children_and_young_people_s_mental_health_peer_support.pdf)

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/peer-mentoring-in-schools-a-review-of-the-evidence-base-of-the-benefits-of-peer-mentoring-in-schools-including-findings-from-the-mbf-outcomes-measurement-programme#>



senior hierarchically, although they usually have more experience in the specific school or in the job” (European Commission, Eurydice, 2018). Mentoring can trigger deep reflection and a rich learning opportunity for the mentor, “often including self-critically re-examining taken-for-granted ideas or aspects of the workplace” (Kelchtermans et al, 2019). Poor-quality mentoring (e.g., by being a simple ‘buddy’) however can deprofessionalise and demotivate, especially if there is a dominant ‘overcommitted mentor’ uncritically imposing themselves and their practice as the only right answer to the job challenges. Without training and support for the mentor there is a danger that mentoring is based on implicit assumptions, deficit thinking and a remedial perspective, seeing the mentee as a partly-formed entity (Kelchtermans et al, 2019). Langdon et al (2019) argue that “professional development for mentors needs to be mandatory and to support access to external perspectives”. Mentors may be experienced teachers but that does not imply they know how to mentor. Simply giving someone the title of mentor is insufficient for effective mentoring; quality mentor training that goes beyond technical bureaucratic aspects of induction is necessary.

Mentoring of teachers entering the profession is mandatory in almost all EU education systems (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018)<sup>52</sup> but mentoring between schools however, on a whole-school basis, is less widespread and little researched. Muijs (2010)<sup>53</sup> found that empirical research within this area of the field is under-theorised and predominantly evaluation based, having emanated largely from practitioners and researchers with a school improvement focus. A paper by Armstrong et al (2020) reports that the potential for school-to-school partnership and support to act as a vehicle for educational improvement and equity is well documented in literature although the extent to which this plays out in practice remains contested. The authors argue that the notion of school improvement through partnership and professional dialogue is compelling but in practice there are pitfalls and barriers that often hinder or prevent meaningful collaborative activity. Moreover, there are debates surrounding the strength and depth of evidence within this area of the field and uncertainties over whether, how and to what degree collaboration between schools can facilitate educational improvement and equity.

Lord et al (2008)<sup>54</sup> identify six challenges associated with mentoring and coaching according to the research literature (in rank order): time and workload pressures; the requirements of the mentor/coach role; understanding and expectations; gaining the commitment of the workforce; the profile of the workforce; and workplace culture. Three conclusions for schools based on the research evidence are worth highlighting. First, the reflection promoted by effective mentoring and coaching approaches in turn encourages a collaborative learning culture in organisations. For schools, this is particularly important, as it may alleviate some of the sense of professional isolation

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<sup>52</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018. Teaching Careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>53</sup> School Effectiveness and School Improvement Muijs (2010). <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/rev3.3248#rev33248-bib-0091> . Quoted in School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>54</sup> Pippa Lord, Mary Atkinson, Holly Mitchell *Mentoring and Coaching for Professionals: A study of the research evidence*. National Foundation for Educational Research Northern Office October 2008 <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/2003/mcm01.pdf>



(identified in the literature). Second, mentoring and coaching activities may be more influential when they ‘fit’ the wider context of an organisation, and/or when they are part of a wider programme of professional development. School leaders should consider their school’s professional development context and programme when developing mentoring and/or coaching approaches. Third, organisational support and strategic planning should also be a priority for school leaders when developing mentoring and coaching activities. Promoting a learning and collaborative culture, providing a framework for implementing mentoring and coaching, and training leaders in mentoring and coaching seem to be important for the effectiveness of mentoring and coaching schemes in schools.

Further reading on mentoring:

Centre for the Use of Research and Evidence In Education (CUREE). (2005). *Mentoring and Coaching CPD Capacity Building Project: National Framework for Mentoring and Coaching*. London: DCSF<sup>55</sup>. This short practical guide describes clearly the difference between mentoring and coaching, the skills required to be successful and what makes effective mentoring and coaching. While both mentoring and coaching are structured, sustained processes, mentoring “supports professional learners through significant career transitions” and coaching “enables the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner’s practice”.

Education Endowment Fund (2018) *Mentoring*<sup>56</sup>. This web site aggregates research evidence to summarise the cost-effectiveness of various forms of intervention. In this report, mentoring is defined as “pairing young people with an older peer or volunteer, who acts as a positive role model”. It notes that mentoring has increasingly been offered to young people who are deemed to be hard to reach or at risk of educational failure or exclusion. The impact of such mentoring varies but, on average, it is likely to have very little impact on attainment. Positive effects tend not to be sustained once the mentoring stops, so care must be taken to ensure that benefits are not lost. Community-based approaches tend to be more successful than school-based approaches. Mentor drop-out can have detrimental effects on mentees.

Hobson, Andrew & Malderez, Angi. (2013). *Judgementoring and other threats to realizing the potential of school-based mentoring in teacher education*. International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education. 2. 89-108<sup>57</sup>. This article identifies root causes of the failure of school-based mentoring of beginning teachers to realise its full potential. The findings point to a failure to create appropriate conditions for effective mentoring in England at the level of the mentoring relationship, the school, and the national policy context. Implications of the findings include the need to achieve a greater degree of informed consensus on the meaning and purposes of mentoring in teacher education, and to ensure that mentors of beginner teachers are appropriately trained for the role. The article identifies the practice of judgemental mentoring or “judgementoring” as an obstacle to school-based mentoring realising its potential and an impediment to the professional learning and

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.curee.co.uk/files/publication/1219925968/National-framework-for-mentoring-and-coaching.pdf>.

<sup>56</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/mentoring/>

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280180988\\_Judgementoring\\_and\\_other\\_threats\\_to\\_realizing\\_the\\_potential\\_of\\_school-based\\_mentoring\\_in\\_teacher\\_education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280180988_Judgementoring_and_other_threats_to_realizing_the_potential_of_school-based_mentoring_in_teacher_education)



wellbeing of beginner teachers. It also points to worrying indications that judgementoring may be becoming, through accrued experiences, the default understanding of mentoring in England.



# 5 Success factors in school-to-school peer networking

A range of factors can hinder inter-school collaboration. Research in the UK (England) (2015<sup>58</sup>) identifies at least six: threats to school autonomy; perceived power imbalances between schools; additional workload associated with the collaborative activity; difficulties in establishing shared objectives and common goals; issues when funding for the collaborative activity ceases; and a marketised national policy context that fosters and actively encourages competition.

On the other hand, there are a number of commonalities within the literature with regards to the conditions that can potentially support or facilitate purposeful collaboration between schools. Chief among these are themes relating to leadership (including coordination, shared responsibility and capacity building) and relational factors (including trust and clear communication). Contextual features such as a history and pre-existing culture of collaboration also appear frequently<sup>59</sup>. Harris (2008)<sup>60</sup> highlights principles that need to be at the core of an effective online development network, in particular a clear purpose, mission and community values; bringing in new members and changing external contributors and facilitators over time; a clear plan of action to catalyse change; infrastructure to enable individuals to assess their capacity to contribute; and feedback and a perceived return on investment.

According to a study of school-to-school collaboration in England (Department for Education, 2015)<sup>61</sup>, there are a number of commonalities within the literature with regards to the conditions that foster effective inter-school collaboration, the most frequently cited being strong leadership;

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<sup>58</sup> UK (England) Department for Education Effective school partnerships and collaboration for school improvement: a review of the evidence. 2015. Armstrong. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/467855/DFE-RR466\\_-\\_School\\_improvement\\_effective\\_school\\_partnerships.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467855/DFE-RR466_-_School_improvement_effective_school_partnerships.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>60</sup> Harris, A. (2008) Leading Innovation and Change: knowledge creation by schools for schools, European Journal of Education, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2008, pp. 219 - 228

<sup>61</sup> UK (England) Department for Education Effective school partnerships and collaboration for school improvement: a review of the evidence. 2015. Armstrong. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/467855/DFE-RR466\\_-\\_School\\_improvement\\_effective\\_school\\_partnerships.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467855/DFE-RR466_-_School_improvement_effective_school_partnerships.pdf)



well-defined and robust structures and processes; a history of collaboration; clear communication; and a sensitivity to context.

According to Stott, A., et al (2006)<sup>62</sup> a key factor in establishing, developing and sustaining school-to-school learning networks is that participants should have ‘sufficient clout’ in terms of their status, skills or roles and responsibilities. Figure 3 shows the importance of leadership in building successful networks. In some cases, it was crucial to the operation of a network sub-group that participants had ‘sufficient clout’ in terms of their status, skills or roles and responsibilities.

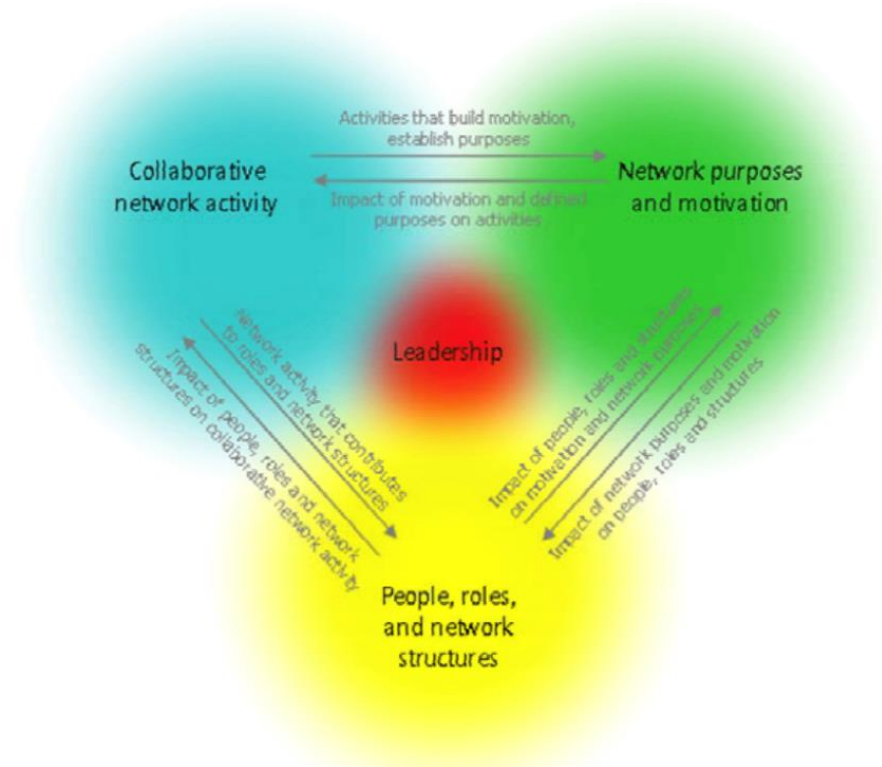


Figure 2: Success factors in networks<sup>63</sup>

Schools need to be carefully and contextually matched so that they are able to provide mutual challenge and critical friendship informed by evidence as to their strengths and weaknesses<sup>64</sup>.

The European Commission ET2020 Working Group 2018<sup>65</sup> set out eight key factors in successful networks:

<sup>62</sup> How do school-to-school networks work? [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253469781\\_How\\_do\\_school-to-school\\_networks\\_work](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253469781_How_do_school-to-school_networks_work)

<sup>63</sup> How do school-to-school networks work? [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253469781\\_How\\_do\\_school-to-school\\_networks\\_work](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253469781_How_do_school-to-school_networks_work)

<sup>64</sup> School-to-school collaboration in England: A configurative review of the empirical evidence. Paul Wilfred Armstrong, Chris Brown, Christopher James Chapman. 25 November 2020 <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3248>

<sup>65</sup> 2.3 Guiding principles for policy development on the use of networks in school education systems [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs5-networks-learning_en.pdf)



- **Goal-setting and shared goals.** A shared vision is needed to inspire the cooperation of different actors, in the interest of school development. Clear shared goals should be defined the first stage in network development, in order to engage the appropriate actors in an appropriate structure. Goals may be redefined as the network evolves.
- **Autonomy, accountability and flexibility.** Attention should be paid to the decision-making capacity of different actors and their sense of agency and responsibility. Flexibility within policies may encouraged increased activity. Self-assessment - may help identify or motivate new network actors; help existing members identify their own needs; and contribute to network development with an increased sense of ownership.
- **Motivation and benefits.** An open and supportive environment supports inter-school and inter-professional exchanges. The interests of different actors should be balanced within and between different system levels, as friction and competition between schools or other actors can undermine the cohesiveness of networks. It is important to demonstrate that the inputs (in time or resources) are proportionate to the outputs.
- **Roles.** Cooperation between teachers as key actors should be supported by: a) providing time for dedicated activities, b) assuring recognition; c) giving them a voice, and d) assuring a climate of trust. Actors should be aware of their role as networking activity may be different to their daily professional tasks. Effective distribution of leadership is particularly important.
- **Capacity building.** Teacher collaborative competence should be developed through CPD. There should be both horizontal and vertical cooperation, taking care not to overload particular actors. Mediators between network points may need specific support.
- **Cross-sectoral working.** Action should identify points of shared interest and align policy development cycles of different areas. Evidence-based policymaking and practice requires connections with and between teacher-led experimentation, and expert pedagogical research.
- **Network development.** Networks should be flexible. They may be temporary or longer term and may exist as an initial phase in establishing and embedding a culture of collaboration. They may also make lasting connections of which project activity may be one part; guided by the actors. Managing or acting within networks can inform decisions about distribution of resources.
- **Impact, quality assurance and evidence.** Monitoring and evaluation is central to understanding the effectiveness of networks and self-reflection is key to ongoing development. Network developers should consider how progress and outcomes will be measured, define key indicators, and to decide how and by whom they will be measured. Appropriate data generated by networks should be taken into account at local and national levels of decision-making.

Finally, *Nine principles for effective school-to-school peer review* (NAHT, 2019)<sup>66</sup> offers nine tips on peer reviewing between schools:

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<sup>66</sup> NAHT 2019 The Principles of Effective School to School Peer Review <https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/structures-inspection-and-accountability-news/the-principles-of-effective-school-to-school-peer-review/>



- **Committed to better outcomes for all** – There is a shared responsibility to establish improvement across all schools and not just one's own, including the sharing of good practice identified in reviews. The desire for mutual gain is imperative for success.
- **Action focused** – Peer review is set up with the intention of acting as a result of the review, whether to address a deficit or to get even better. Peer review provides evidence of strengths and areas for improvement but is not a standalone activity. Reviews must be part of wider processes that provide sustained support for evidence-based improvement.
- **Rigorous and objective** – The team should always consist of peer leaders with the professional distance to give a truly honest appraisal of where the school is in its journey and the experience to insightfully present evidence.
- **Structured and robust** – The approach used in the review should have a clear structure so that the evidence collected is impartial, defensible and is action-focused, with all actions owned by the reviewed school.
- **Expert and evidence led** – The reviewers should be given the training and support to be(come) experts in peer review; their diagnosis of school performance should be rooted in evidence, as should any suggestions about potential actions.
- **Done with, not to, the school** – Peer review drives more transparent and honest self-review, should engage as much of the school workforce as possible and always be reciprocated.
- **Open and trusted** – The reviewed school is able and willing to expose its vulnerabilities, in order to elicit new perspectives on the challenges it faces.
- **Builds deeper relationships** – Peer reviews lead to abiding collaborative partnerships which can evolve over time to enable stronger, closer working in local clusters. There is also an opportunity to share more widely as part of a national drive for improvement.
- **Commitment to continuous improvement** – Peer review itself should always be kept under review and providers of peer review programmes must have embedded structures and processes to evaluate the effectiveness of the process and commit to continuous improvement.



# Conclusion

Although this initial report outlines different types of cooperation and networking between schools, the focus of the MenSI project is on both top-down and bottom-up clusters of schools, possibly around a hub, working together to address one or more policy challenges.

With this in mind, twelve key messages emerge from the literature and project surveys on whole school collaboration:

- Professional development is fertile ground for school-to-school collaboration, a number of studies reporting favourable outcomes in relation to this theme.
- Strong and committed leadership is essential for coordination, shared responsibility and capacity building.
- Participants need to have status and skills and clear roles and responsibilities if the intervention is to be sustained.
- Trust and clear communication are important conditions for success.
- Have a clear plan of action and well-defined and robust structures and processes.
- There should be a clear purpose, mission and community values.
- Goals should be agreed and shared. Recognise that there may be difficulties in establishing shared objectives.
- Consider bringing in new members and changing external contributors and facilitators over time.
- Ensure the digital infrastructure is in place to enable individuals to contribute.
- Convey the message that there a tangible return on investment is expected. Show that the additional workload associated with the collaborative activity will have dividends. MenSI partners should discuss how this can be recorded in the project. How can it be measured or evaluated, particularly for the mentor schools?
- If there is no history of collaboration between schools (as in Portugal, for example, apart from their participation in the LSL project), steps have to be taken to establish trust and cooperation.
- Schools need to be carefully and contextually matched. Be sensitive to perceived power imbalances between schools.

However, there are areas where research evidence is thin, in particular how to sustain cooperation and networking between schools, through for example incentive and reward schemes and evidence of how specific incentives or rewards have enabled mentor (as opposed to mentee) schools to see a tangible return on their additional workload.



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# Annex 1: MenSI partner survey February-March 2021

This survey was completed by the six targeted partners in the MenSI project: Belgium BE, Croatia HR, Czech Republic CZ , Hungary HU, Italy IT, Portugal PT.

Survey:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx#FormId=8Rgd4hIhz06mfNIK7b0Ys3P4WSH\\_EEBNuBuq5x1G6utUOVpIS0xFQzM1VTM3R0tQVFQxRVJDSzJWMS4u&Token=384396008d6145caae9c8dcb78c2f95b](https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx#FormId=8Rgd4hIhz06mfNIK7b0Ys3P4WSH_EEBNuBuq5x1G6utUOVpIS0xFQzM1VTM3R0tQVFQxRVJDSzJWMS4u&Token=384396008d6145caae9c8dcb78c2f95b)

Responses:

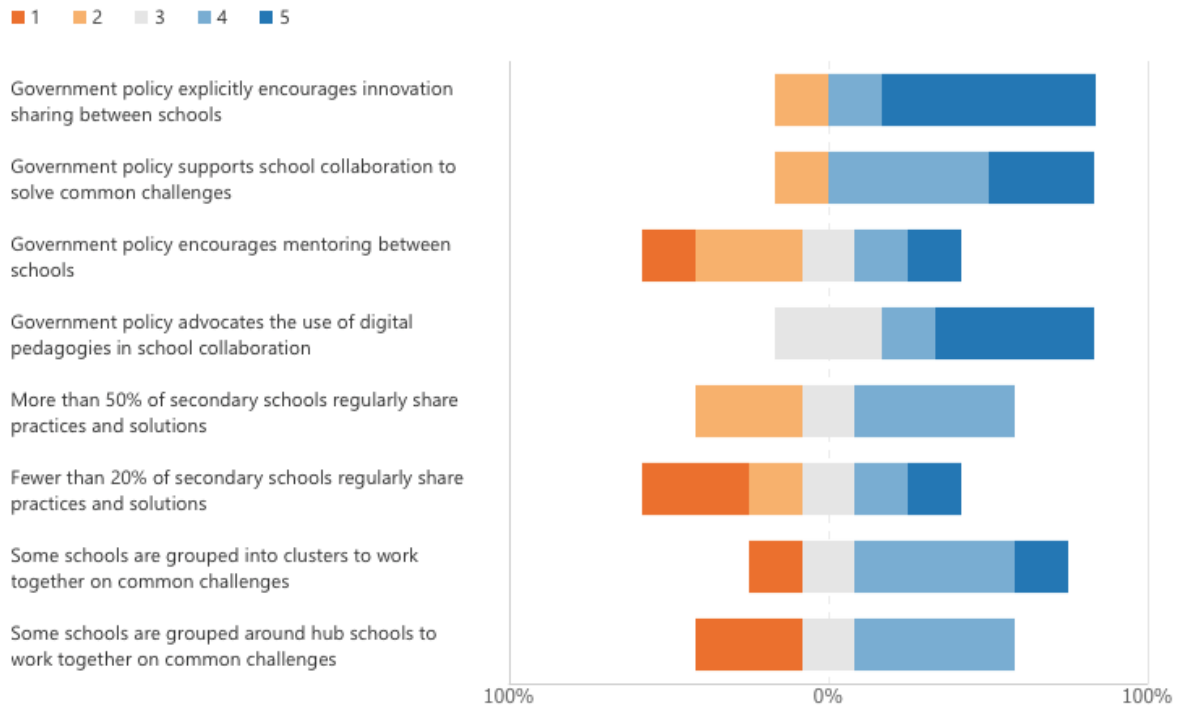
[https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx#Analysis=true&FormId=8Rgd4hIhz06mfNIK7b0Ys3P4WSH\\_EEBNuBuq5x1G6utUOVpIS0xFQzM1VTM3R0tQVFQxRVJDSzJWMS4u&Token=384396008d6145caae9c8dcb78c2f95b](https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPage.aspx#Analysis=true&FormId=8Rgd4hIhz06mfNIK7b0Ys3P4WSH_EEBNuBuq5x1G6utUOVpIS0xFQzM1VTM3R0tQVFQxRVJDSzJWMS4u&Token=384396008d6145caae9c8dcb78c2f95b)

Please see a short summary of the results in the following pages.



### Q1: To what extent are the following statements true for your country?

Responses are on a five-point scale from 1 Not at all true to 5 Very true.



#### Commentary:

1. In only two countries (IT and HU) does government encourage mentoring between schools, although five encourage innovation sharing and school collaboration and four using digital pedagogies in school collaboration.
2. A majority of secondary schools share practices and solutions in three countries (BE, HU and PT) while in IT and HR fewer than 20% do so.
3. There are clusters of schools to solve challenges in four countries (but not at all in HR). Hub schools feature in three countries but not at all in PT and HR.

### Q2: Who organises school mentoring in your country?

- Only by ministry or municipality 0
- Mainly by ministry or municip... 1
- Mainly by schools themselves,... 3
- Only by schools themselves 0
- There is no or very little schoo... 2





Commentary:

1. School mentoring is organised mainly by schools themselves, plus a little by ministry or municipality in IT, BE and CZ, and in HU mainly by ministry or municipality, plus some by schools themselves. In PT and HR there is no or very little school mentoring at present.

**Q3: In your opinion, what factors made / make whole-school peer-learning projects successful?**

IT:

Actions that contribute to:

- Solving real problems such as assessment, multi-age classroom management, motivation, team teaching/co-design
- Visiting specific contexts, meeting people, working with peers, visiting a school to understand how learning spaces are arranged
- Reward teaching activities that impact on teachers' professional careers (e.g. participation in conferences, summer schools, training activities, video tutorial to see teaching practice)
- Empowering other learning communities such as teachers in facing an issues or difficult challenges.

BE:

- A blended (physical and digital) approach
- Experience (and a mind shift) from schools
- Support by policy
- Setting achievable goals together
- Reflecting on what we learned in the hub. Realising the hub is an added value

CZ:

- High motivation of participants
- Ability to gain for the school/kids when participating
- A good project leader

HU:

- Benefits for both the mentor and the mentee schools
- Relevant content
- Permanent animation and financing
- Engagement and cooperation of many teachers.

PT:

Networking between schools has promoted activities such as:



- Sharing practice and expertise about Distance Learning, Curriculum development, different kinds of Teaching and Learning approach, inclusive education, innovative space learnings, collaborative work between teachers, for example
- Engaging further with specific topics based on the policy priorities
- The Community of Practice logic implemented in some Pilot Projects, to share ideas and examples of methodologies, activities, and resources
- Taking part in professional development activities, e.g., webinars and workshops (online and on-site)
- Contributing to the project's outputs such as the MOOC, recommendations and guidelines targeted at other schools and policymakers.

HR:

- Engaging all teachers.
- Providing continuous support, on the teacher-teacher level, but also school-leadership- teacher level
- Shared responsibility.

#### **Q4: Describe three issues that prevent successful school partnerships in your view**

IT:

- High competition among teachers because of the School Leader
- Formal and authoritative leadership
- High fragmentation among secondary school teachers.

BE:

- Not setting supported and achievable goals with all partners.
- Obliging schools to participate
- Monitoring the hub too much.

CZ:

- Low motivation of participants
- Confusing and non-motivated leader

HU:

- End of projects
- Competitive attitude and lack of collaborative culture
- Passive learning (showcasing best practice with little follow-up of adaptation)
- Impact not measured or communicated.



PT:

- Schools are not always available to share their difficulties, for fear that they will weaken their image
- Schools do not always have levels of deep internal reflection, which allows a sharing of practices with other schools.
- When competitive dynamics exist between schools, those bring difficulties to a collaborative practice

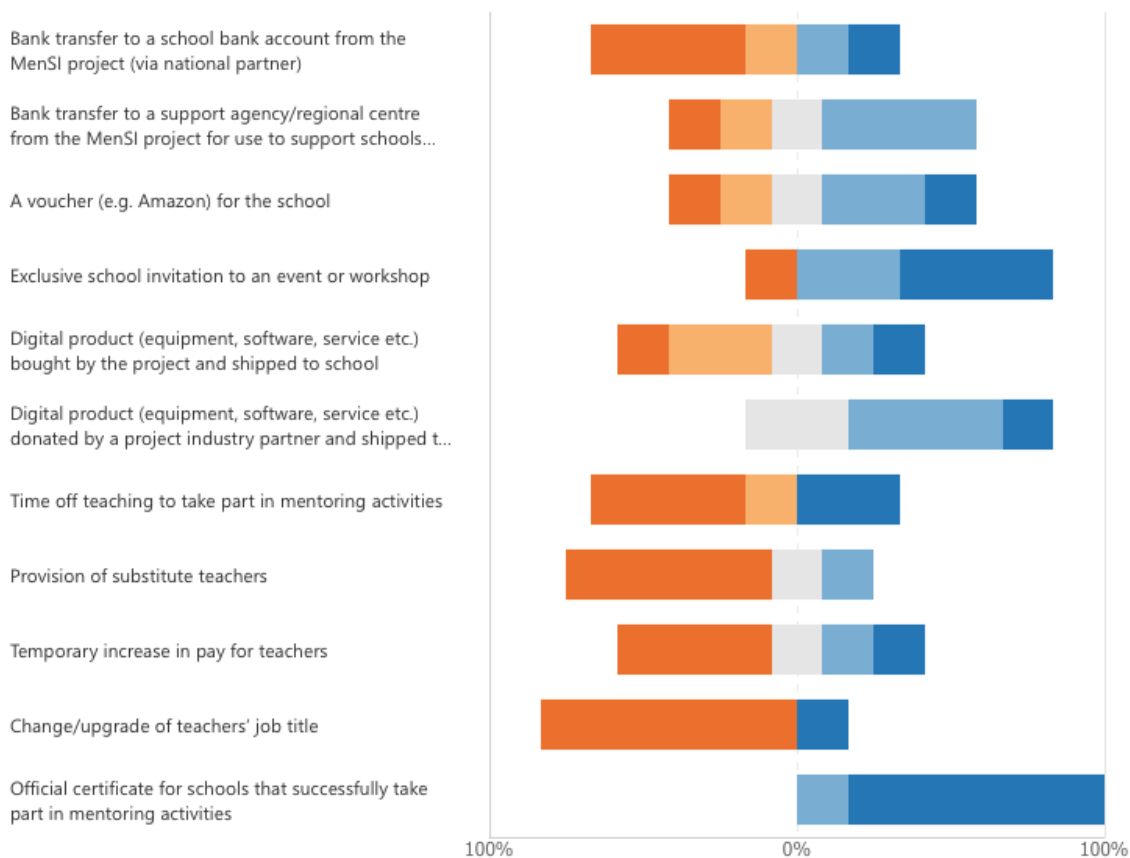
HR:

- Lack of motivation, because teachers don't see why this project is beneficial for them
- Lack of support by school leadership
- Active participation of only a small number of enthusiastic teachers at school.

**Q5: Which of the following incentives could be used in your country (technically and legally)?**

*1 Impossible ... 5 Possible and easy*

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5



Hungary added: We can sign a contract with the maintenance centre who can allocate money to a school in exchange for dedicated tasks. This can cover hourly rate of involved teachers or



substituting teachers, a flat rate for travel costs, or coffee and snacks. Direct payments: we can contract individual teachers and pay them, and we can reimburse actual travel costs of teachers even if they are not our employees. If eligible, we can purchase and distribute grocery vouchers to cover small meetings coffee break costs. It is very hard and time consuming for us to purchase digital products. We can't influence teaching time and substitution.

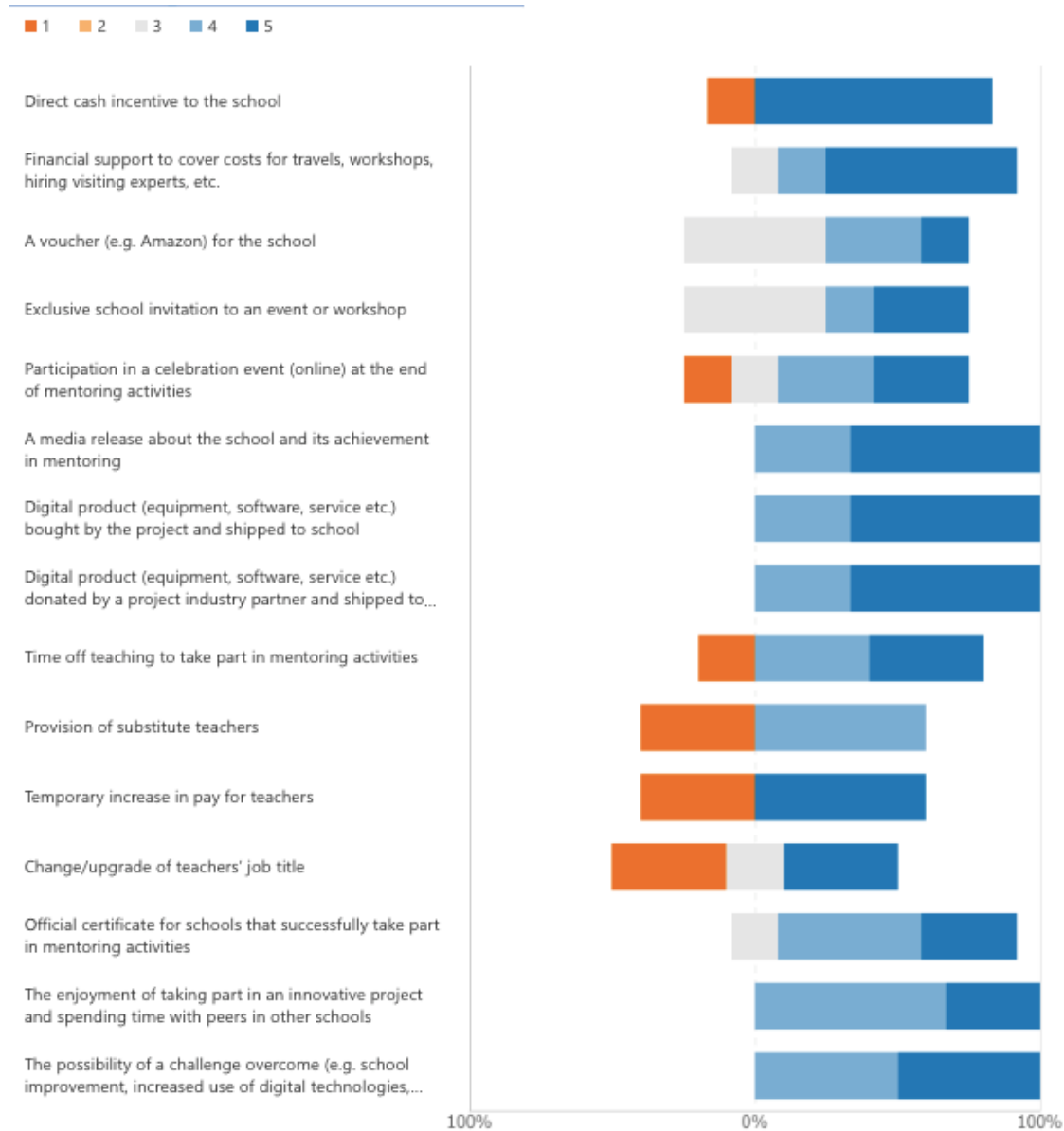
Commentary:

1. The only incentives possible in all countries are an official certificate and donated digital products. There is at least one country where any other incentive is impossible, but, conversely, each incentive is possible in at least one country.
2. Bank transfers to schools are possible in only two countries: BE and HR. It is possible to do so to a support agency in 3-4 countries but difficult in IT and HR.
3. One other incentive was suggested: Certificates for teachers for successful participation in the project (rather than only mentoring activities).



## Q6: Which of the following incentives would best motivate schools and teachers in your country to take part in school-to-school mentoring activities?

1 Not at all ... 5 to a great extent



Comments by HU:

- Vouchers are generally fine but Amazon especially is not a good example
- Reimbursement of travel and other additional costs is not a motivational factor, but a general expectation towards any project, since travel costs are relatively high compared to teachers' salary.
- Some of the factors might become an incentive over time, but might not attract teachers from the start, they might be sceptical at the beginning: spending time with peers, exclusive events, or overcoming a challenge.



Commentary:

1. The incentive most strongly supported is cash to schools, followed by a media release and digital product bought by the project or donated. Six other options were also supported by all: financial support, a voucher, an exclusive invitation to an event or workshop, a certificate, the intrinsic enjoyment and a challenge overcome.
2. Incentives that are not supported by at least one partner are cash for schools, participation in a celebratory event, time off, substitute teachers, pay increase and job title upgrade.

**Q7. Is there any other incentive that would motivate schools and teachers in your country to take part in school-to-school mentoring activities?**

IT: Visiting other schools

HU: Fun, community-building activities with peers in other schools, international travel (for those who speak English).

PT: The possibility of improved student learning outcomes

HR: Official certificate for teachers to be used for career advancement

**Q8: Thinking about current or past regional hubs or clusters that encourage and support innovation, please describe their key features:**

**Italy**

**AVANGUARDIE EDUCATIVE**

*Avanguardia Educativa* is a research-action project born from an autonomous initiative of INDIRE (the Institute that since the year of its birth – 1925 – has investigated and supported the most advanced educational experiences in Italy) to examine possible propagation strategies and systematization of innovation, with particular attention to enabling factors and any that hinder dissemination. The project was subsequently transformed into a proper Movement – officially constituted on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in Genova – open to all Italian schools; its mission to identify, spread and implement educational practices and models designed to reconsider the organization of *Didactics*, *Time* and *Space* for teaching in a knowledge society in continuous evolution. The Movement is the result of a joint action of INDIRE and 22 founder member schools who signed a *Programming Manifesto for Innovation* consisting of 7 challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century school, the so-called «horizons», which clarify and vivify the *Avanguardia Educativa* vision. Having tried out one or more paths of innovation inspired by the *Manifesto*, these 22 schools were thus also the first to lead *Avanguardia Educativa*.

The paths of innovation inspired by the *Manifesto* have become the so-called «Ideas» that schools participating in the Movement – substantiated by a service of assistance/coaching in a blended



mode – can adopt and try out in their curricula. In addition to the possibility of adopting one or more of the Ideas, schools participating in the Movement can propose innovation experiences that demonstrate their congruity with the horizons of the *Manifesto*, according to a basic principle: to promote ‘contagion’ of innovation from the bottom up, that is, from school to school. The Movement is therefore open to the participation of those schools that know how to identify innovation, make it implementable and break it down so that it is feasible, sustainable and transferable to other situations with the prerequisites; that consider ICT a tool to overcome the inertia and space-time limitations of ‘traditional’ educational activities. The Movement is a constantly growing Community of Practice which increases its quota from year to year: since 2014, *Avanguardie Educative* has embraced more than 1222 institutes between the schools piloting the Ideas (head schools) and participating schools which are trying out one or more of these Ideas. These have been joined by a hub of schools which ensure at a regional level – together with local expert trainers – a complex series of informative, training, dissemination and support activities for the schools of the Movement and the innovation processes.

The Movement was inspired by the observation that often brand-new and potentially innovative teaching practices ensue from the exceptionality of a single person or are the result of a context that produces a particular alchemy; in both cases, most of the time, the change generated runs the risk of remaining confined to the original environment, without the chance of coming forth. With this in mind, *Avanguardie Educative* creates the preconditions for implementing an innovation that is transferable and sustainable – that goes beyond the concept of good practice – through tools designed together with the schools already engaged in important experimentation at a national level (those heading the project) and in actions of support in the Community of Practice, online, and face-to-face.

The research (Punie, Bocconi, 2012) and the experience of INDIRE confirm that innovation does not work if it arrives exclusively from above, but – on the contrary – it ‘takes root’ and is not rejected if dynamics of ‘contagion’ are triggered. The strategy underlying *Avanguardie Educative* is precisely to systematize change among a network of players who, both by leveraging the possibilities offered by scholastic autonomy and by identifying alternative solutions, have already taken the first steps along the tortuous road to innovation. All of which serves to prepare the ground for an innovation model that is effective and sustainable; through a process that begins from experience and ends in a systemic change, by degrees, passages, and the fusion of ideas.

The Ideas of the Movement were developed from observation and analysis performed by INDIRE researchers in compliance with the principles of the *Manifesto*, and they represent the ‘Ariadne’s thread’ to find a path through the complex labyrinth of innovation. Each Idea – consultable in the «Gallery of Ideas for Innovation» on [avanguardieeducative.indire.it](http://avanguardieeducative.indire.it) – contributes to the pursuit of the Movement’s main objective: rethinking the school model so that it can respond to the needs of a knowledge-based society in rapid evolution, and which today, instead, seems increasingly distant from the dynamics that characterize the social contexts outside the diversified demand of knowledge users» (Moscati, Nigris and Tramma, 2008) and promote a vision of the school and that,



for the most part, continues the structural peculiarities that have characterized teaching for almost two centuries in a perspective of the unidirectional transmission of knowledge.

By proposing more flexible and dynamic teaching methods with respect to the traditional lecture-based model, *Avanguardie Educative* wants to mend the rift between «the unique educational proposal of the institution and e school that can respond to the educational needs of the students, by activating processes aimed at stimulating critical, reflective and creative thinking, to favour the personalization of the paths of learning and teaching, to welcome the opportunities offered by ICT and digital languages. But not only: the Movement is also attempting to bring forth the creative potential that lies inside schools and that takes on new forms also thanks to the interaction between teachers, students and their families and a constant dialogue with local authorities, businesses, and other stakeholders.

### ***The selection process for schools***

In the *Avanguardie Educative Movement* there are 2 main mentoring roles: Regional hubs and Idea mentors. The selection criteria for “Regional hubs” schools is an open public call, against specific features, such as

- Networking skills
- Innovative organizational practice
- Innovative teaching/learning practices
- Use of digital tools/technologies

A commission examines the candidates and selects the Regional hubs for dissemination activities.

The selection criteria for Idea mentors are based on INDIRE researchers’ onsite visits carrying out a specific protocol for the visits, made up of:

- classroom observation
- desk analysis of important documents
- interviews with teachers, school leaders and students (and other crucial stakeholder)
- focus groups with teachers, school leaders and students (and other crucial stakeholder)
- school visit.

After this, the research team in charge of assessing the Idea mentor writes a report and proposes either their selection or their rejection.

### ***Costs***

The cost for Regional Hub schools as for organizing travels, materials and so on are covered by INDIRE. There is a sort of annual “contract” covering expenses. As for Idea mentors, the only expenses covered are for travel and accommodation in case of F2F seminars.

### ***Their organisation and management***



INDIRE coordinates the Ideas through research teams. Idea mentors work closely with Idea research teams. There is a central coordination ad for Hub schools as well. Regular organizational meetings are held online and F2F. The main contact points are - inside the schools - the Principal and the AE contact person and the Idea experts.

The AE has several web channels for communication:

- website, with plenty of information material
- live webinars
- social media (twitter and Facebook pages)
- presence of Indire researchers in many boards, training courses, etc.

The INDIRE AE research team is made up of more than 25 people.

There are 29 Hub schools and 56 Idea schools in Italy but public calls and nomination of Idea mentors are always increasing.

### ***The involvement of school leaders***

School leaders are the main reference point for AE. “Adopting” ideas or adhering to the Movement is a systemic action and requires the decision of the school community and its leader.

The F2F/online training meetings deal with leadership as well.

### ***F) Organisations providing support***

AE is an INDIRE initiatives. Structural Funds have been used to sustain the Community. Educational regional authorities promote AE efforts but do not provide any funds. The MoE knows it and often “uses” AE as a source of information and of know-how.

### ***The impact***

AE schools are about 1/8 of all Italian schools. The impact is not easy to measure, even though we are trying to detect it with research instruments.

### ***Their scalability to the whole country***

AE is potentially scalable to all Italian schools.

### ***Platforms, apps, tools and services used for connecting schools to each other***

As described above, we use social media, website, mailing lists, conferencing apps, and all means for connecting schools among them and INDIRE teams with the schools. AE is also federated with other school networks.

## **B: PICCOLE SCUOLE**



## General description

*Piccole scuole* is a research-action project born from an autonomous initiative of INDIRE (the Institute that since the year of its birth – 1925 – has investigated and supported the most advanced educational experiences in Italy) to support the permanence of school in geographically disadvantaged territories, to maintain an educational and cultural center and to fight the phenomenon of depopulation.

The project promotes renewal actions for small schools, providing them with resources and educational tools useful to keep up with the change, at the same time enhancing their skills and original characteristics. Specific objectives are:

- designing and experimenting didactic models suitable for the management of multi-classes and conceived to overcome isolation;
- offering specific training to teachers who work in geographically disadvantaged contexts, with particular attention to internal areas;
- planning interventions for the professional development of teachers;
- disseminating good educational practices;
- promoting the Small Schools Cultural Movement and networking between schools;
- improving synergies between local government and research institutions

In collaboration with MIUR, it was possible to retrieve the dimensions typical of a "small school", and to reconstruct a map of the phenomenon (<https://piccolescuole.indire.it/ricerca/infografica-dati/>). At the same time, it was possible to reconstruct the historical identity of Italian small schools (<https://piccolescuole.indire.it/ricerca/timeline-test/>), and to realize an exhibition on border schools (<https://issuu.com/indire/docs/confini2019-piccolescuole>) that can be installed by the Small Schools of the Movement (<https://piccolescuole.indire.it/home-test/#1581094537052-0c2044f4-d258>)

In 2018, tools for indirect training on innovative methodologies were defined; in this context, Small schools “quaderni operativi” were born through the recovery of the format of Mario Lodi’s “biblioteca di lavoro” (<https://piccolescuole.indire.it/quaderni/>). Currently, 7 notebooks in the “Tools” series and 3 notebooks in the "Studies" series have been released, and the “Stories” series has been launched.

The project aimed to support the birth and growth of the National Small School Movement, which has seen an exponential increase in the number of members since 2017. Currently, there are more than 400 comprehensive institutes and over 2500 small buildings that adhere to the Movement (<https://piccolescuole.indire.it/il-progetto/>). Most schools are located in the 71 Internal Areas on the national territory (ref. National Strategy Internal Areas). Such an increase was achieved by offering training courses to teachers who experience difficulties due to geographical isolation, and through the recovery and promotion of practices useful for the educational and organizational support to school and its stay in the territories. The project has allowed small schools to fully



participate in the national education system, to start an innovation process, and to avoid the risk of marginalization.

### ***The selection process for schools***

In the Piccole scuole Movement there is no selection process for polo schools to support improvement at the local level. The Movement supports massive or laboratory training actions to which all the small schools of the movement access through a selection. The training lab defined as "adults" aims to provide the teachers of the institutes belonging to the Small School Movement with the tools for didactic and organizational improvement in contexts of geographic isolation and small dimensions. The "Training Pact" formula was introduced, namely a document that defines the mutual commitments that bind together the teacher under training, his/her community of membership represented by the Headmaster, and Indire. For 2018, the following training topics were identified: service learning, spaced learning, digital didactic content and heuristic dialogue. In addition, a laboratory on "Internationalization and innovation", proposed by Indire to the MIUR CEO, has been integrated into the training package. Currently, numerous paths have been activated, from the Movement's schools in order to create reference and accompanying schools for innovation in the fragile territories of the country. It is in the design phase that a directory of innovation professionalism in the small school is developed, a system to find and select expert figures able to trigger processes of cascading innovation in isolated territories.

### ***Costs***

The cost for lab and training path are covered by INDIRE or local municipalities.

### ***Their organisation and management***

INDIRE coordinates the Movement through research teams. The research team deals with following or intercepting innovative paths or ideas with reference to the trajectories of the Small School Manifesto: enhancing the territory in the curriculum, multi-classes, technologies for educational forms to support isolated classes.

The Piccole Scuole has several web channels for communication and instrument for dissemination

- website, with plenty of information material
- live webinars
- The Notebooks of the Small Schools
- social media (twitter and Facebook pages) and thematic groups
- presence of Indire researchers in many boards, training courses, etc.

The INDIRE Piccole scuole research team is made 12 people.

### ***The involvement of school leaders***



School leaders are the main reference point for Piccole scuole. Joining the Movement and promoting innovation paths made of training, visiting and experimentation is a systemic action and requires the commitment of the school community and its leader.

### ***Organisations providing support***

Piccole scuole is an INDIRE initiatives. Structural Funds have been used to sustain the Community. Educational regional authorities promote Piccole scuole collaborate by also financially supporting initiatives led by the Movement by the research group with direct assignments to Indire. The MoE and local school governance knows the Movement.

### ***Impact***

Identification of small schools as not a minor but a structural phenomenon of the Italian educational context, which includes 45.3% of all Italian primary schools, and 21% of lower secondary schools, for a number of students equal to 591,682. Involvement of about 1300 teachers and managers in laboratory training through assignments (MIUR, USR, Regions, Foundations) and about 16000 teachers and managers in solidarity and massive training initiatives proposed by the Small Schools Movement, for the experimentation of innovative teaching forms. Activation of a European working group which envisages the involvement of 12 countries in order to create a European NETWORK of small schools following the theme of "Rural Development" to which the European Commission has paid attention.

### ***Their scalability to the whole country***

Piccole scuole is potentially scalable to other small schools network

### ***Platforms, apps, tools and services used for connecting schools to each other***

As described above, we use social media, website, mailing lists, conferencing apps, and all means for connecting schools among them and INDIRE teams with the schools.

## **Belgium**

### **Purpose**

- connecting with similar minded people and sharing good practices.
- a platform where you can ask questions, share news or opportunities.

**Selection process for schools:** Mostly open, no criteria.

### **Costs incurred and how funded**

- most of the time hubs aren't directly financial funded.
- personal cost (coordinator) and some catering costs.

### **Organisation and management**



Most of the time a member of creator of the hub takes the roll of coordinator. He gets the time to stimulate, moderate and follow-up on the hub.

**Involvement of school leaders:** depending on the hub: in some cases there's school leaders take part themselves. In other cases they indirectly participate by sending some teachers, IT-coordinators, ... to the hub.

#### **Organisations providing support**

- Also depending on the goal of the hub.
- Organisations sometimes participate as guest to provide new insights or knowledge.

#### **Scalability to the whole country**

- We have regional hubs (=school groups) implemented in whole Flanders.
- Other hubs (e.g. for ICT-coordinators) are mostly started by people across Flanders. They network, come together, ... in digital ways. If there is a physical meeting, it's mostly in the capital Brussels.

#### **Platforms, apps, tools and services used for connecting schools to each other**

- The most used platform by regional hubs (school group) is Smartschool. We see an increase in the usage of MS Teams and Google to connect to schools and work together.

### **Hungary**

**Basis schools:** their purpose is to present best practice in any topic. Selection of schools happens periodically, and they all have a mandate for the same time intervals. Their activities are supported by Educational Authority regional support centres. Costs are covered by Educational Authority, but very little costs get covered: basis schools' motivation is mainly based on the associated prestige. Basis schools have an annual programme disseminated locally, typically consisting of presentations and classroom visit opportunities, open to the regional teacher community.

**Mentors:** there are mentors who support subjects while others support horizontal areas, such as institutional development or ICT. Mentors are practicing teachers, who have less classroom teaching hours, they typically visit other schools on one day of a week. They get travel costs reimbursed. Head teachers can demand mentoring service for any staff member, and Educational Authority regional support centres send out mentors based on these needs. Schools don't need to pay for the service. Mentors don't officially represent their school, but they circulate ideas between their own school and the schools they mentor.

**Eco-schools:** their purpose is to spread environmental education in schools (and in kindergarten). They have a holistic approach, that includes in-class instruction, informal learning opportunities, and also ecological footprint of the institution. Eco-schools promote active learning, and would typically have collaborations with other local stakeholders (national parks, NGO-s etc.) who would help learning about natural concerns or values in the region. Eco-schools are organized in clusters. Both normal eco-schools and hub leading schools are selected in a complex process, and mandates



have to be renewed periodically. The activities are funded centrally, the network is animated by Educational Authority.

**Network on early school leaving:** schools with high proportions on early school leaving were invited to participate in a programme financed from EU structural funds. Participating schools benefited from many workshops, CPD opportunities, and a mentoring system for at-risk pupils. The school network was one element of the intervention, animated by Educational Authority. Thematic weeks: there are three national thematic weeks each year: digital thematic week, environmental thematic week and finance and entrepreneurship thematic week. Schools are encouraged to implement hands-on, project-based activities during the weeks. Participation is not compulsory. Each thematic week have non-governmental partners who support the campaign. Schools are encouraged to share best practice on websites, and to participate in competitions with their project plans. Earlier years' project plans can be looked up for inspiration.

## Portugal

Schools in Portugal have not yet implemented a Mentoring work philosophy. In Portugal we have Regional teams to support and monitor innovation process and curriculum development in each of Portugal's five geographical areas – the North, Centre, Lisbon and outskirts, Alentejo, and Algarve. Four government agencies collaborate within the regional teams: The National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training (ANQEP), the Directorate for Schools (DGEsTE), the General Directorate for Education (DGE) and the General Inspectorate for Education and Science (IGEC). Regional teams support schools in different ways. These include: answering any queries schools may have, visiting participating schools, encouraging schools and teachers to participate in regional meetings, and promoting learning between teachers in local networks. The regional teams across geographical areas use the same model to support participating schools in their regions. In addition, they meet regularly to exchange experiences and learn from each other.

## Croatia

We used to have Moodle virtual classrooms for teachers of all subjects, for each subject there was a classroom, e.g. English teachers from all primary schools used a virtual classroom to share best practices and learn together. Several teachers served as mentors, they were seconded to the Ministry and their job was to prepare learning materials for teachers, moderating forums, assessing teacher work and assigning badges for their completed work.

School leaders had their virtual classrooms.

The support was provided by an International Expert Group organized by the British Council. The BC experts provided training for the Mentor team comprised of teachers seconded to the Ministry, who then provided support to all the other teachers.

This process lasted for 2,5 years and it had a huge impact on the teacher population in Croatia as all of them were involved in some kind of online PD. We used Moodle and Office 365 tools.



# Annex 2: Findings from a survey of ministries of education

Note: data collection took place in 2019, before the start of the project. Detailed analysis and reporting took place after the start of the project.

Despite a multitude of projects and initiatives, many related to digital technologies, transferring and scaling innovation remains a seemingly almost intractable policy challenge, with no easy answers. In 2020 our education systems still comprise a small percentage of pioneering and innovative teachers and schools and there is limited transfer of excellence from them to others. There are, of course, schools in all countries with a culture of well-developed ICT strategies and highly innovative practices, but they often work in isolation resulting in a growing digital gap between a minority of schools that are regarded as ‘advanced’ and a much larger cohort who are not leveraging the advantages of ICT-based pedagogies.

To accelerate the digital transformation of schools in Europe, there is a need for: transnational sharing, discussing, spreading and adopting of innovative practices; a greater focus on whole-school approaches to implementing innovative use of ICT; and new models of school-to-school mentoring. This last point is key. Although there is no shortage of examples of success at spreading innovation from teacher to teacher, there appear to be fewer successful instances of schools learning from each other through peer networking, clusters or hub and spoke arrangements. One European Schoolnet project however, the Living Schools Lab, enjoyed a considerable measure of success in promoting whole school change through schools working together on a model of advanced schools (with more developed digital practices) acting as hubs, providing guidance and support for less advanced schools. Could a new project using this model be designed? Would it fit the policy priorities and build on key initiatives of ministries of education?

With this in mind, European Schoolnet carried out a survey of ministries of education to gain an up-to-date view on:

- the extent of mentoring and policy support for innovation sharing and digital pedagogies
- regional hubs or clusters that encourage and support innovation in local schools
- whole school peer-learning projects



- incentives and rewards (financial or otherwise) provided to schools or teachers for sharing and collaborating
- evidence of the impact and sustainability of five European projects
- teacher mentoring policies and initiatives that include digital technology

The online survey, open from 14<sup>th</sup> November to 20 December 2019, comprised a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. All 34 European Schoolnet Steering Committee members were invited to complete the survey.

By early January 2020, responses covering 18 countries were received, from AT, BEnl, HR, CZ, DK, FI, EL, HU, IE, IT, MT, PL, PT, SK, ES, SE, CH, TR. There is of course no way of knowing the situation in countries not represented in responses, but it may be that policies and practices in these countries are less focused on the topic of the survey: mentoring and digital pedagogies.

### Question 1: Policy support for innovation sharing and digital pedagogies

The chart below shows the spread of responses indicating strong or very strong support for nine statements related to the extent of mentoring and policy support for innovation sharing and digital pedagogies.

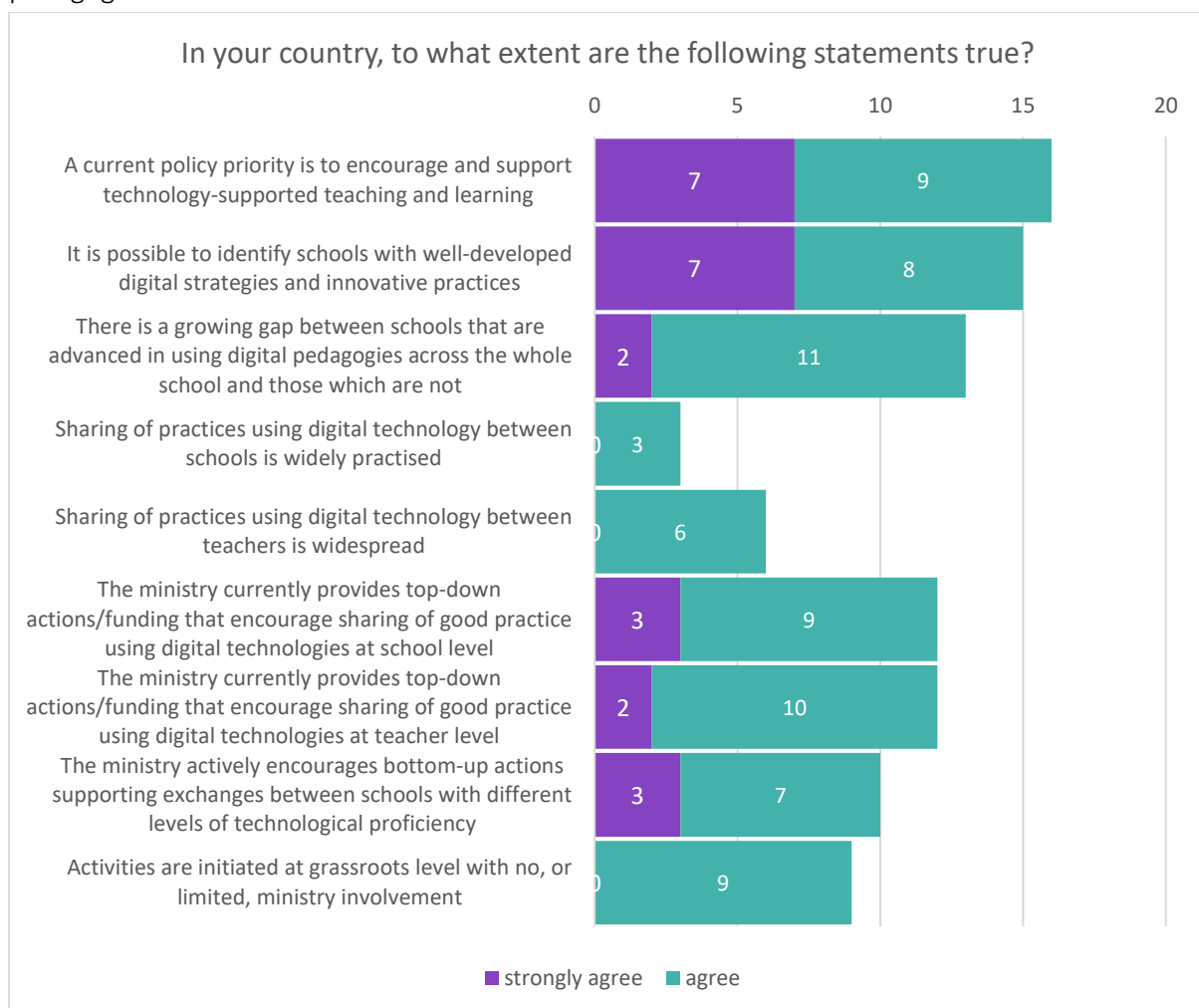


Figure 3: Policies and practices



These responses suggest the following:

- Technology-supported teaching and learning is a policy priority in almost all (16 of 18) countries participating in the survey;
- 15 countries are able to identify leading edge schools in terms of innovation and digital strategies;
- In most countries (13 out of 18) there is a growing gap between digitally advanced schools and others;
- In only three countries is sharing practice between schools widespread, although there is more (6 out of 18 countries) between teachers;
- 12 of the 18 countries have initiatives and/or provide funding to encourage sharing digital good practice at school and teacher level;
- There are active measures in 10 countries to encourage grassroots exchanges on digital practices;
- There are grassroots initiatives with little or no ministry involvement in 9 countries.
- Countries in which the ministry currently provides top-down actions/funding that encourage sharing of good practice using digital technologies at school level are Croatia, Ireland, Italy (all strongly agreeing), Austria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey;
- Countries in which the ministry currently provides top-down actions/funding that encourage sharing of good practice using digital technologies at teacher level are Croatia, Ireland (both strongly agreeing), Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey;
- Countries in which the ministry actively encourages bottom-up actions supporting exchanges between schools with different levels of technological proficiency are Croatia, Denmark, Ireland (all strongly agreeing), Austria, Finland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.

## **Question 2: existing regional hubs or clusters that encourage and support innovation in schools**

Most respondents described initiatives to promote innovation and sharing via clusters, centres and networks, but there are few examples identified thus far of schools acting as hubs.

Selected key points in response to this open-ended question:

- Austria: eEducation is a national network of schools engaging in digital school development. More than a third of all Austrian Schools are engaged it.
- Croatia: there is a mentor team that supports teachers and schools at national, regional, local and school level.
- Denmark: CRAFT is the ministry's networking activity, a cooperation with municipalities and schools about innovative problem solving with IT as the accelerator of both processes and product. CRAFT supports the everyday practices of schools where cooperation, innovation, problem solving and the use of IT in a global world are focal points. A practitioner network on technology understanding aims to support regional and local capacity building on technology



understanding in elementary schools and municipalities and to obtain a comprehensive dissemination of the expertise.

- Finland: 27 regional tutor teacher networks provide support, e.g.:
  - Innokas: teachers' and pupils' digital skills
  - Majakka: sharing good practices in basic education
  - Loisto: sharing good practices in early childhood education and care
  - Luke: sharing good practices in upper secondary education
  - Digital pedagogy networks such as Digikilta, connecting the 20 biggest cities
- Hungary: a network of regional support service centres (Pedagogical Educational Centres) provide services for teachers, including formal and informal professional development opportunities. Twice a year they organize local CPD event series, where local schools show each other their best practices, either by holding presentations or by lesson observation opportunities. Centres delegate CPD mentors (professional consultants) to schools to provide individual help to teachers. Many consultants are practising teachers in a school of the region, with fewer classroom teaching hours. Centres operate a Basis School Network. Basis Schools are recognized as especially innovative schools, or schools with a strength in a particular field. Basis Schools try to reach out to other schools in the region and they organize lectures, lesson observation opportunities and peer-to-peer exchange opportunities.
- Ireland: PDST [Ministry funded agency] developed a framework of CPD for schools and teachers. They have established primary and secondary school clusters called DigCoPs (Digital Communities of Practice). Approximately 8-10% of all schools in Ireland are represented on these. Also, the Ministry has funded a three-year programme supporting innovation in both Digital and STEM clusters. There are 41 of these clusters across the country with 210 schools participating. This cluster type model is also being used to support leadership development, creativity and schools in disadvantaged socio-economic areas.
- Italy: 72 areas were identified by the SNAI ([National Strategy for Internal Areas](#)) to receive support for school innovation.
- Portugal: Groups of teachers act as ministry ambassadors in face-to-face sessions, sensitizing and forming teacher communities in the adoption of innovative methodologies, many involving digital technologies. Some isolated municipalities support schools by offering mobile devices and financial support for events to share teaching experiences.
- Sweden: GR Education is a regional development arena that works with the entire chain - from children and young people to municipal managers and politicians. Nowhere else in Sweden is there such a broad and deep collaboration on learning. It involves 240,000 students of all ages, 20,000 teachers, 1,500 school leaders and 1,300 schools.
- Turkey: the Education Information Network ([EBA](#)) is a portal of the Ministry of National Education that encourages and supports innovation in schools.

### Question 3: whole-school peer-learning projects

Respondents were invited to describe any whole-school (not practitioner) peer-learning projects with three types of focus.



Whole-school projects related to **general school improvement** exist in only four countries. In **Finland** the national tutor teacher program (2016-2021) includes peer-learning projects focused on general school improvement, but these projects are mainly local. In **Hungary**, there is a complex action plan available for schools where the risk of early school leaving is high. The methodology is called Support for the Prevention of Early School Leaving (in Hungarian abbreviated as ILMT), which calls for a committee to be set up within school to define an action plan specific to that context leading to a whole-school development process. Regional support centres organize workshops to help institutions learn from each other. In **Ireland**, the 'Forbairt' leadership programme has clusters of schools working together on school improvement. In **Turkey**, eTwinning projects support whole school peer learning.

Whole-school projects with a **specific focus** exist for: **STEM**, Belgium/Flemish community, Ireland - an eHub pilot brings physics to students learning through the medium of Irish in isolated schools via video conferencing and support; **small or remote schools** (Ireland, Croatia (islands), Turkey - infrastructure projects for small or remote schools to access internet and information technologies); **socially disadvantaged children**, (Ireland (with an arts focus), Hungary - schools involved build strong connections with other stakeholders, including other schools, social sector institutions, NGOs, local government and parents).

At least eight countries have school projects focused on **digital technologies**: in Hungary (an e-Schools project for all primary and secondary schools), Denmark (a practitioner network to support regional and local capacity building on technology understanding in elementary schools and municipalities and to obtain a comprehensive dissemination of the expertise), Finland (national tutor teacher program (2016-2020) projects focus on digital technologies), Hungary (the emphasis is on school-level innovation; schools organize peer learning events (CPD days, workshops, webinars etc.) and set up online teacher communities, exchanging practices), Ireland (as above, 8-10% of schools on DigCoPs and 41 clusters of 210 schools on STEM/Digital clusters), Spain (computational thinking), Sweden (experience in two pilot municipalities indicates that the entire force chain needs to be involved, there needs to be an overarching structure for collaboration and co-planning, and a clear division of roles and clear responsibilities between the parties involved), and in Turkey (the FATIH Project providing digital learning technologies to schools).



#### Question 4: Funding of good practice sharing

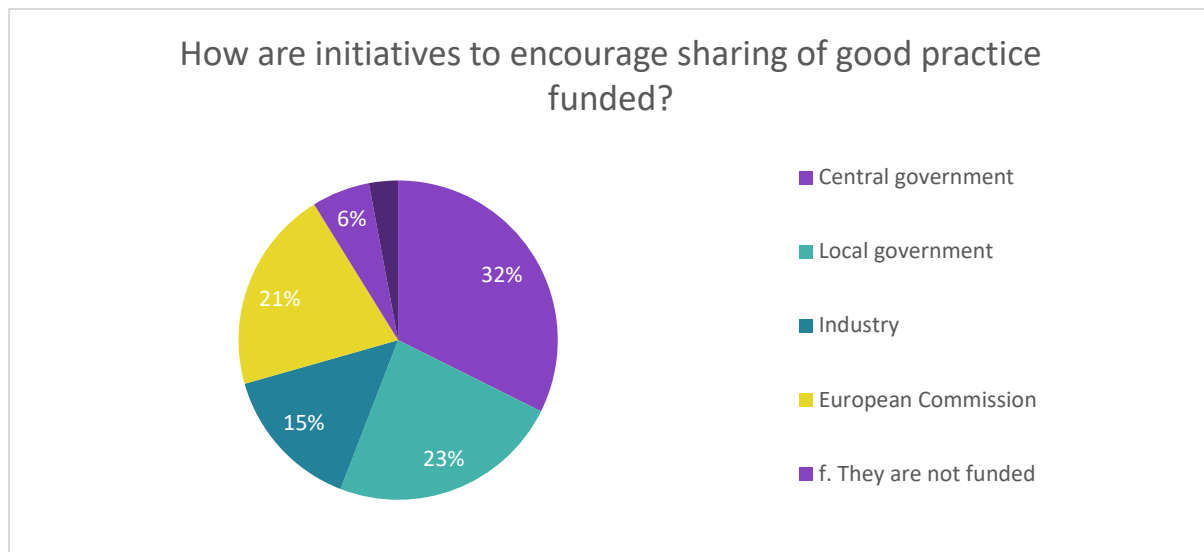


Figure 4: Funding sources

Responses indicate that central and local government is the most frequently mentioned source, followed by EC funding. In five countries (15% of the total number of items ticked), industry funds activities.

#### Question 5: incentives and rewards

Related to the previous question, participants were asked to describe any incentives and rewards (financial or otherwise) provided to schools or teachers for sharing and collaborating.

A wide range of incentives is mentioned, ranging from cash to increased job satisfaction and professional recognition (but Denmark report none). The following types of incentives are mentioned by respondents:

- Schools may apply to ministries for project funding (Austria)
- Opportunities for CPD (such as visiting a conference abroad) are financed for teachers who play a central role in the eEducation Network (Austria)
- Support and coordination (Belgium Flemish Community)
- A policy award system for the best teachers every year and promotion through earning extra points for OER, good practice sharing, work on projects, etc. (Hungary)
- eTwinning Quality Label or Prizes (Czech Republic; Italy; Portugal)
- Small financial support for publication and sharing on the national educational portal (Czech Republic)
- Rewards (mostly certificates) on various IT competitions (Czech Republic)
- Government funds to education providers, mostly municipalities (Finland)
- Local funds from municipality to teachers or teacher teams (Finland)
- Tutor teacher of the year (Finland)



- A Digital Teacher Prize given annually to the teachers who upload the best project plans to an open database. Project plans should include innovative digital technology use. Winners of the prize usually win money. (Hungary)
- A Digital Theme Week encourages teachers to upload project plans to an open database. Projects should be possible to implement during the annual Digital Theme Week. Winners usually win digital equipment (software or hardware) for their schools; it is usually technology providers who offer prizes. (Hungary)
- Intrinsic rewards: teachers see clusters as an opportunity for professional learning. There might be a promotional impact at the school level due to this school improvement work (Ireland)
- Rewards by [private foundations](#) in support of innovation at school or teacher levels (Italy)
- A competition for the National Network of Programming and Robotics Clubs aims to promote a community through the dissemination of public presentations and the sharing of reference practices. The selected clubs are financially supported by the Ministry of Education. (Portugal)
- Several faculty groups are offered the opportunity each year to participate abroad in peer training and sharing sessions, including the Future Classroom Lab (Brussels) (Portugal)
- In some regions, participation in innovative projects is recognised for the professional career (Spain)
- Recognition and, at local level, a salary increase (Sweden)

#### Question 6: Lasting impact of major projects

The next set of questions asked about the impact of five projects and their legacy.

- **Living Schools Lab** (2012-2014; a whole-school approach to ICT use, scaling up best practices in the use of ICT between schools with various levels of technological proficiency. Eleven ministries participated and of these seven responded, only three reporting any continuing activity in either of the two Advanced Schools acting as mentor or hub (Czech Republic, Finland and Ireland, where the secondary school involved could be considered as a hub for many schools to visit and link in with). Five countries said that the Advanced Schools could probably be reactivated (Belgium Flemish Community, Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland and Portugal). They would be motivated to continue, according to respondents, by being offered extra budget, mentoring and financial support of involved teachers, direct funding, opportunities for school support at whole-school level, opportunity to visit schools in other countries, opportunities to network and spark innovation. They discontinued their role as mentor because of the lack of sustainability of the project and the fact that the teachers changed school or moved out from the system.

Therefore, in only one country (Ireland) could a LSL school be considered to be still active, five countries said reactivation is possible, but financial support would be needed. It is noteworthy that whole school projects often in practice rely on one or two teachers, and if they change school the momentum is lost.

- **INDUCAS** (2017-18; an online network of mentors with a dedicated website and activities to improve their ability to support newly appointed teachers and give them the best start in their



careers). Only four countries participated in the project and there were no responses to questions on this project.

- **Mentoring Technology-Enhanced Pedagogy**, (MENTEP, 2015-2018: a policy experimentation that developed the TET-SAT self-assessment tool which enables teachers to reflect on their digital pedagogical competency development). 13 ministries participated in the project. Of these, three had no information and three said that numbers are low or zero. Ireland, although not a partner, gathered a baseline of current practice using SELFIE and TET-SAT. No (Denmark) or very few (Finland) schools are using TET-SAT since the project ended; four countries had no information.
- **SELFIE piloting** (ongoing, an online questionnaire for schools to assess their level of digital readiness). Four countries responding to the survey participated in the piloting: Belgium Flemish Community (50 in the pilot, currently over 100), Ireland (approximately 80 schools), Italy ('hundreds') and Spain (125 schools). Croatia has developed their own tool for digital maturity and every school has used it. Asked if schools might be interested in follow up peer learning activities related to SELFIE, there seems to be an interest in continuing with SELFIE (unlike TET-SAT), in at least four countries (Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain).
- **EUN Academy / Teacher Academy** (ongoing online professional development courses via MOOCs). Asked if there any ongoing networks or communities of practice arising from participation in the MOOCs, seven countries had no information, three said there were none and in Turkey teachers take part in the networks or communities arising from participation in the MOOCs, covering ICT in Education, STEM and Initial Teacher Education.

#### Question 7: national teacher mentoring policies and initiatives that include digital technology

Finally, participants were asked to describe any national teacher mentoring policies and initiatives that include digital technology. Responses suggest that overall there are few (of note: Croatia, Hungary, Ireland) which are specifically about mentoring and digital technology, although several may include this topic and approach. Projects generally involve training sessions or the provision of advisers, or (in Ireland) induction of newly appointed teachers.

#### Policies and initiatives for teachers, supporting individual professional development:

- AT: [Tailor-made CPD](#) on the basis of a competence check
- HR: [Mentors team School for Life](#)
- CZ: Učitel naživo, methodological cabinets
- FI: [Tutor teacher program](#)
- EL: National Center of Public Administration
- HU: Digital professional consultants (previously known as ICT consultants) are available for teachers
- IE: We have a formalised induction process for newly qualified teachers called Droichead
- PT: The Learning Laboratories initiative developed in partnership with European Schoolnet disseminates methodologies for ICT curriculum integration validated in European pilots.
- ES: Common Digital Competence Framework for teachers



- TR: <http://www.eba.gov.tr/>

### For school leaders, supporting whole school change and innovation

- AT: No central initiatives, but professionalisation courses run by local Pedagogical Colleges with varying degree of use of technology
- HR: [Strategy of digital development](#)
- CZ: Ředitel naživo
- FI: [Tutor teacher program](#)
- EL: National Center of Public Administration
- HU: In the currently running structural funds' digital pedagogy projects, mentors help whole-school change.
- IE: Formalised mentoring of newly appointed school leaders and a coaching facility available to experienced school leaders.
- IT: [avanguardieeducative.indire.it](http://avanguardieeducative.indire.it)
- PT: The L2C project aims to foster shared school leadership and networking through involvement and capacity building in schools. Through self-assessment, training and best practice sharing, schools will have the opportunity to learn, discuss and develop shared leadership in the areas: STEM education (science, technology, engineering and math); innovative use of ICT in digital education and citizenship.
- ES: Common Digital Competence Framework for teachers
- TR: <http://www.eba.gov.tr/>

### For other teachers

- CZ: various national conferences on different subjects
- FI: - [Tutor teacher program](#)
- EL: National Center of Public Administration
- HU: Different kinds of consultants are available for teachers: subject specific consultants and consultants knowledgeable in a horizontal field (disadvantaged children, children in need of special attention, assessment and evaluation etc.)
- IE: Many maths teachers participate in the lesson study model of CPD
- PT: In the 2019/20 school year, DGE, in partnership with the Mathematics Teachers Association, is developing the MatemaTIC pilot project. This project is aimed at teachers and students of the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, from 40 School Groups, selected by invitation.
- ES: Common Digital Competence Framework for teachers
- TR: <http://www.eba.gov.tr/>

## Coordinator



## Partners



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#MenSI-schools

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