

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF LEBANESE SCHOOL
LEADERS AND TEACHERS OF BUILDING SCHOOL CAPACITY FOR
SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

by
STEPHANIE GABRIELLA JAMIL JUREIDINI

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Education
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

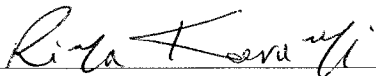
Beirut, Lebanon
February 2018

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

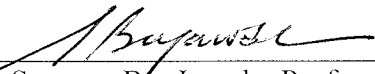
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF
LEBANESE SCHOOL LEADERS AND TEACHERS OF
BUILDING SCHOOL CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE
IMPROVEMENT

By
STEPHANIE GABRIELLA JUREIDINI

Approved by:



Dr. Rima Karami Akkary, Associate Professor
Department of Education



Dr. Saouma BouJaoude, Professor
Department of Education



Dr. Munir Bashshur, Professor
Department of Education

Data of thesis defense: February 7, 2018

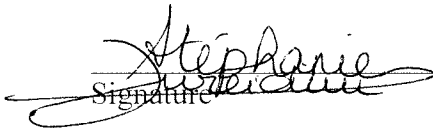
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

I, Stephanie Gabriella Jamil Jureidini,

Master's Thesis Master's Project Doctoral Dissertation

authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies for research or educational purposes.

authorize the American University of Beirut, three years after the date of submitting my thesis, dissertation, or project, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.


Signature

12-02-2018
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis was accomplished because of the help and support of several people that I would like to thank very deeply.

First and foremost, I thank God for the wisdom, the strength and the peace of mind that He alone can give.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to my advisor Dr. Rima Karami-Akkary. Thank you for the passion that you have toward learning, a passion that is so contagious and inspiring. I cannot thank you enough for not allowing me to give less than my best and for helping me grow into my potential. I am so grateful for having you as my advisor and mentor. You did not only immensely enrich my Masters journey, but you also taught me by example how mentoring should be: you were nothing less than a great model worthy of emulation. I appreciate and treasure everything you have taught me.

I want to extend my gratitude to the committee members Dr. Bashshur and Dr. BouJaoude. Thank you for your willingness to serve on my committee. I appreciate your valuable comments and insights that helped me improve the quality of my work.

I also want to express my deep gratitude to my family. Mum, Dad, Alain and auntie May, you were very encouraging during the whole journey. I know that without you, I would not have been where I am today. Thank you for inspiring me to learn more, for believing in me and for encouraging me during the whole process. Without your unwavering support, it would have been hard to complete this journey successfully.

Last but not least, I am very grateful to the teachers and leaders who agreed to participate in the study. Without your willingness to participate, this research would not have been possible. Thank you for the interest you showed and for the time you gave me. I very much appreciate your willingness to share with me your thoughts and experiences.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Stephanie Gabriella Jamil Jureidini for Master of Arts

Major: Educational Administration and Policy
Studies

Title: An Investigation of the Perceptions of Lebanese School Leaders and Teachers of Building School Capacity for Sustainable School Improvement

This study examined the perceptions of Lebanese leaders and teachers about building school capacity for sustainable school improvement. It has a threefold purpose: (1) to identify the perspectives of teachers and leaders regarding building school capacity for improvement, (2) to analyze the perceptions of the leaders and the teachers through comparing their perspectives with what the literature recommends regarding building school capacity, (3) to come up with an action plan that would support the school in better building its capacity for sustainable improvement. The study adopted a qualitative case study design and employed the grounded theory methodology. Data included relevant school documents, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews, and journal notes. Data were analyzed and coded using the constant comparative approach. The findings of the study reveal that the perception of the leaders and the teachers regarding building school capacity for sustainable improvement converges in some aspects with the recommendations of literature while in others it does not. However, even though there is some alignment with what literature proposes as effective ways to build the school's capacity for improvement, participants do not seem to have a framework from which they are operating purposefully, as people's actions and ideas seem reactionary and on prompt rather than strategically thought off. Drawn from the study results, recommendations for practice are suggested in the form of an action plan and recommendations for research are also proposed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	xiv

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background.....	1
B. Statement of the Problem and Rationale.....	2
C. Research Questions.....	4
D. Significance of the Study.....	5
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
A. School Reform: An Overview	7
B. Building Human and Social Capital.....	10
C. Organizational Learning and Organizational Development.....	11
D. Capacity Building for School Improvement.....	12
E. Enabling Factors for Building School Capacity for Improvement.....	15
1. Securing External Support.....	16
2. Providing Continuous Professional Development.....	18

3.	Engaging in Action Research.....	21
4.	Developing Collegial Trust.....	22
5.	Building Capacity for Shared Leadership.....	24
6.	Attending to the Affective Reactions Toward Change.....	30
7.	Structuring Schools Around Professional Learning Communities	35
F.	Leadership for Building School Capacity for Improvement.....	37
1.	Effective Leadership: Leithwood and Riehl’s Model.....	37
2.	Leadership that is Sensitive to the Sociocultural Context.....	38
3.	Collaborative Leadership.....	39
G.	School-Based Initiatives for Building School Capacity.....	39
1.	Hong Kong Preschool Initiative.....	40
2.	South Wales School-Based Initiative.....	41
3.	New Zealand Initiative	42
H.	School Reform in the Arab World.....	43
1.	Building School Capacity in Egypt.....	45
2.	Change Initiative in the UAE.....	47
3.	TAMAM, an Arab Initiative for School-Based Improvement.....	48
I.	Conceptual Framework.....	53
III.	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	55
A.	Research Design.....	55
B.	Study Site and Participants.....	59
1.	Study Site.....	59
2.	Characteristics of the Participants.....	60

C.	Data Collection Tools.....	62
1.	Journal notes.....	64
2.	Individual Interviews.....	64
3.	Focus Group Interviews.....	66
D.	Data Analysis.....	67
1.	Qualitative Analysis.....	67
2.	Quality Criteria.....	68
E.	Limitations of the Study.....	70
IV.	RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	72
A.	The Change Initiative: Integrating Technology in the Classrooms....	72
B.	Building School Capacity for Improvement.....	84
1.	Capacity Building as Training.....	84
2.	Capacity Building as the Outcome of Collaboration.....	84
3.	Capacity Building as Social and Emotional Support.....	85
4.	Capacity Building as Expert Support.....	86
5.	Capacity Building as Aligning Specialty Area with Task Distribution.....	86
C.	Ideal Process of Change.....	87
1.	Triggering Change.....	87
2.	Building a Shared Vision.....	91
3.	Piloting the Change Initiative.....	95
4.	Ensuring Flexible Planning.....	98
5.	Setting a Formal Evaluation Process.....	99

D. Challenges Faced During Implementation.....	102
1. Inadequate Training.....	102
2. Lack of Time.....	103
3. Resistance to Change.....	106
4. Teachers who do not Value Collaboration.....	107
5. Lack of Sufficient Funding.....	108
E. Leadership Qualities and Actions.....	109
1. Leadership Qualities.....	109
2. Leadership Actions.....	113
F. Organizational Conditions for Building School Capacity for Improvement.....	116
1. Targeting Sustainability while still Aiming at Renewal.....	116
2. Responsive Continuous Training.....	117
3. Shared Decision-making.....	120
4. Well-established Trust.....	123
5. Facilitated Teamwork and Collaboration.....	128
6. Data-driven Decision-making.....	131
7. Reflective Practice.....	132
8. Availability of Necessary Resources Before and During the Implementation.....	132
G. Summary of the Results.....	134
1. Building School Capacity for Sustainable Improvement: Leaders' Perception.....	134

2. Building School Capacity for Sustainable Improvement: Teachers' Perception.....	136
V. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	138
A. Discussion of the Results.....	138
1. Capacity Building: from the Perspectives of Teachers and Leaders.....	139
2. Ideal Process of Change.....	140
3. Challenges Faced during Implementation.....	145
4. Leadership Qualities and Actions.....	147
5. Organizational Conditions for Promoting Capacity Building for Change.....	149
B. Conclusion.....	155
C. Action Plan: Increase the School's Capacity to be in Sustainable Improvement.....	161
1. Reallocate Responsibilities and Form a Leadership Team.....	164
2. Build Leadership Capacity of the Lead Team and Train its Members on Developmental Supervision.....	166
3. Form PLCs to Expand Building School Capacity for Improvement.....	167
D. Recommendations for Further Research.....	168
 Appendix	
A. INITIAL INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	170

B. REVISED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	173
C. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	176
D. SAMPLE OF CATEGORIZING DATA UNDER THEMES.....	177
E. REFERENCES.....	179

TABLES

Table	Page
1. Responsibilities and Cycle the Participants Teach.....	61
2. Data Collection Tool(s) used for Each Research Question.....	63
3. Frequency of Responses of the Research Participants.....	80

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Main improvement goal and operational goals of the action plan.....	161
--	-----

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

There is wide agreement that successful school reform is not an easy task to fulfill (Fullan, 1993; Harris, 2000; Stoll, 2009). There are several characteristics that should be present for successful change to take place, and building school capacity for change is a very critical one. The literature provides an explanation of the different factors that affect building capacity for sustainable school improvement. One of the crucial factors is the presence of effective leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) that is collaborative (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Slater, 2008), and that takes the sociocultural context of the school into consideration (Ylimaki, Bennett, Fan, & Villaseñor, 2012). Other factors include providing the staff with professional development (Newmann, King & Youngs, 2000), attending to the affective reactions to change (Hall, Wallace & Dossett, 1973), creating professional learning communities in the school (Hord, 2009; King & Newmann, 2001; Senge, 1990, as cited in Dinham and Crowther, 2011), using external support (Harris, 2001), developing collegial trust (Cosner, 2009), developing leadership capacity (Lambert, 1998, 2003; Slater, 2008), and using action research as a means to building school capacity (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010; McNiff, 2002).

The fact that many recent articles deal with the issue of sustainable school improvement indicates that there is a widespread agreement that it is a timely issue worthy of further examination.

On the other hand, research has shown that one of the challenges of having successful change is ensuring successful implementation and sustainability of that change (Louis, Toole & Hargreaves, 1999). This challenge is not foreign to the Arab

world since the attempts to inducing change are viewed as falling short of yielding positive results: they did not influence what was actually happening in the school and more precisely in the classroom (Bashshur, 2005). Furthermore, international researchers point at a prevalent scarcity in the knowledge about the implementation process of successful school reforms (Harris, 2000; Louis et al., 1999), calling for studies that examine the implementation process and for communicating to policy makers the different variables that affect this process. This would both lower the risk of failure of the implementation (Karami-Akkary, 2014) and would enable the development of change initiatives that are closely connected to the needs of practitioners at the school level (Karami-Akkary & Rizk, 2011).

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

Despite the growing awareness about the importance of sustainability of improvement as a key sign of success, there is still a major gap when it comes to translating this awareness into practice. According to Dinham and Crowther (2011), “sustainable capacity remains largely a pipedream in the policies and practices of most schools and educational jurisdictions around the world ”(p. 19). Also, as Harris (2000) and Louis et al. (1999) show, even the few successful change initiatives did not add to the knowledge base: no records were kept about the process that those schools underwent in order to become more effective.

The same problem persists in the Arab world where schools face major challenges when it comes to successful implementation of change and improvement. In this part of the world, there are many attempts at improvement however, a lot of those attempts are western born designs “parachuted” into the existing organizational culture of Arab schools (Bashshur, 2005) and thus are not grounded in the context of the Arab

world and do not respond to its specific needs. Added to that, there is a reported lack of research on school improvement (El Amine, 2005) and on building school capacity, which is mainly due to the fact that there are no records of the reformers' work highlighting their success stories and the challenges they faced during implementation (El Amine, 2005). Thus, there is a considerable need for research that tackles school improvement in the Arab world. Consequently, it would be of great value to add culturally grounded information to the existing Arab literature about school reform especially that knowledge is culturally bound and cannot be transferred without testing its applicability to other cultures (Hallinger, 1995).

On the other hand, Bashshur (2005), El Amine (2005), Karami-Akkary and Rizk (2011) agree that building capacity is strictly viewed as offering the necessary technical skills that would allow the school personnel to implement the new change, rather than providing the systemic conditions that help change initiatives to achieve the goals they were set to achieve. As many of his counterparts recommend, Bashshur (2005) states that there should be a drastic shift in the way school reform is being handled in the Arab world. A main component of that shift consists of focusing on building the capacity of the school personnel and of empowering them to become the change agents in their schools, rather than focusing on developing plans that the school personnel should implement. Hence, one of the aims of this study is to investigate what are the actions that Lebanese school leaders (principal and coordinators) undertake to develop school capacity for sustainable school improvement.

Several models emerged from international research studies aiming at investigating the process of building school capacity for improvement. These models were explored and used as the theoretical background guiding the data analysis of this

study. Leithwood and Riehl's model for successful leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), the model of leadership in the sociocultural framework (Ylimaki et al, .2012), Mitchell and Sackneys' (2011) framework for building school capacity for sustainable school improvement, the concerns based adoption model (Hall et al., 1973), and the TAMAM model for building school capacity (Karami, Saad & Katerji, 2012) guided the examination of the leadership of the principal and coordinators in terms of the extent to which it promotes or hinders building the school's capacity for sustainable change. Also, these models were used to investigate the discrepancies present between these models and the perceptions of the leaders and the teachers about building school capacity for sustainable improvement. In this study, the term 'change initiative' refers to an initiative that involves multiple actions and decisions, and signals a new strategic direction that the school will go into.

Research Questions

This study follows the action research methodology and thus was conducted using the action research cycle that encompasses collecting data, analyzing the data to assess the needs and developing an action plan. In order to assess the needs, the researcher inquired about the perceptions of Lebanese teachers and school leaders (coordinators and principal) in the school under study through asking the following questions:

1. What does building school capacity for sustainable improvement mean?
2. What does an ideal process of change encompass?
3. What are the challenges faced during the implementation process specifically the challenges that relate to capacity building for sustainable school improvement?

4. What are the leadership qualities and actions that promote building school capacity for sustainable improvement?
5. What are the organizational conditions that promote building the school capacity for sustainable improvement?

Significance of the Study

This study has significance to both theory and practice. When it comes to theory, it is adding to the scarce knowledge base about the process of school improvement in the Arab world. Also, it increases our understanding about the implementation process of building school capacity for sustainable improvement in international literature and in the Lebanese context. Furthermore, the study could be a starting point for larger scale studies that intend to undergo an in-depth examination of the process of building school capacity. Besides, it can serve as a good reference for international scholars interested in comparing the actions done to build capacity in the Arab world, and more precisely in the Lebanese context, with those done in their countries. In addition, the study adds to the small repertoire of studies following the action research methodology. As Herr and Anderson (2005) claims, there are more articles about action research than articles exposing actual action research studies, which could be partly because those who go into the process of action research are more interested in coming up with the results that would benefit their practice, rather than in informing studies that could be used in other settings. This research study hence responds to recommendations of international scholars like Herr and Anderson (2005).

On the other hand, the findings of the study are of value to practice. These findings have particular significance to Lebanese leaders, because they allow them to understand how Lebanese leaders (principal and coordinators) and several Lebanese

teachers in a certain context define and perceive capacity building for sustainable school improvement. Acquiring such an understanding is the starting point toward designing strategies aiming at building school capacity for sustainable improvement, because it allows practitioners to pin point the challenges that should be addressed to start the process of capacity building. Also, this study sheds the light on processes followed to build school capacity for sustainable improvement in the Lebanese context. Moreover, this knowledge may inform pre-service and in-service training of principals, since the results of this investigation provide information about specific actions that could be done by school leaders to build school capacity. Furthermore, the action plan developed for the school in which the study was done could be beneficial for schools that have a similar profile. The plan is very valuable since reports that emerged from conferences, aimed at discussing the lack of successful initiatives for reform in the Arab world, do not include evidence based practical strategies that would help leaders in their quest for sustainable school reform, but rather consist of reflections that are not based on empirical data (El Amine, 2005). Finally, this study is of added value for policy makers who design large and school wide reforms.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the study aims at examining the perceptions of Lebanese school leaders (principal and coordinators) and teachers about capacity building for sustainable school improvement, and at investigating the actions of the leaders (principal and coordinators) aiming at building school capacity for sustainable change, this chapter starts by presenting the theoretical understanding and empirical evidence on capacity building for school improvement. The chapter then examines the available literature that tackle school reform in the Arab world, trying to find out what it is saying about sustainable school improvement in this part of the world. Finally, it concludes with the conceptual framework that guided the research endeavor.

In order to find theoretical and empirical evidence that are relevant to the study, the researcher searched the literature using several databases which are ERIC, Education Research Complete, Google scholar and Shamaa, and using the following keywords: ‘school’, ‘capacity building’, ‘change’, ‘improvement’, ‘Arab world’, ‘sustainable’. The researcher limited her search to articles that are scholarly and/ or peer reviewed.

School Reform: An Overview

Scholars agree that bringing about change in schools is not an easy task to accomplish (Fullan, 1993; Stoll, 2009). Stoll (2009) captured this complexity when she stated, “while school improvement is outcomes-oriented, it is a process: a journey with many subtleties that even the richest of case studies can’t capture” (p. 2). School improvement or change has been a topic of interest for educational scholars, and has been defined as a change in the results of the schools on pre- and post- set indicators or

the alteration of behavior of the school personnel (Louis et al., 1999). The approach to school reform changed throughout the years since the 1980s, period during which school improvement started to take shape as a specific body of approaches. Three distinct phases delineate the changes in the paradigm of school reform. The International School Improvement Project (ISIP) shaped the first phase and the initiatives during this phase were peculiar by their focus on organizational change, on having schools evaluate themselves, and on having individual teachers and schools develop ownership for the changes that are being implemented. Hence, this phase is characterized by decentralization and its focus on the individual school. However, the shortcomings of the initiatives during this phase are that they were very weakly related to students' outcome and thus did not influence classroom practice. As for the second phase, it started in the early 1990s and was formed because of an interaction between the school improvement and the school effectiveness approaches, as there was a call to merge them. The effectiveness approach contributed to the second phase through providing schools with the value-added methodology for judging school effectiveness and for dividing schools into their component parts of departments and teachers, while the improvement approach contributed through offering the schools guidelines and strategies on how to implement changes, which aided schools to induce improvement at the level of the class. Finally, the last phase emerged in the mid-late 1990s. It was brought forth because of the discontent with the previous reforms in several countries that did not yield any considerable successful results, as they did not seem to impact student achievement as expected. Also, this disappointment was because the contributions of the school improvement communities did not positively influence school improvement in schools. The third phase, which we are still in, differs from the

other two in several aspects. First, more emphasis is given to students' outcomes. Instead of focusing on altering the processes of schools, the focus shifted toward examining whether the changes implemented have any effect on students' achievement. Second, more attention is given to the learning level of teachers and to how they teach, as well as to the level of the school. Hence, the initiatives during this stage focus on altering the knowledge and teaching behaviors of teachers to positively influence improvement in the classroom. Third, the structure of schools is being altered to make sure that knowledge, both practical and theoretical, is made use of through organizing collaborative staff development. Fourth, both quantitative and qualitative data are used to measure quality. Fifth, more focus is given to assure that programs are implemented as planned. Sixth, more awareness is developing regarding the crucial factor of changing the school culture to be able to start change and sustain it. Seventh, more attention is given to warranty that the change initiatives and programs relate to and impact practitioners and practice. Finally, more emphasis is given to capacity building, which doesn't only include working on the knowledge of the teachers, but that also encompasses developing midterm strategic plans and using external support intelligently (Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001).

According to Fullan (1993), for successful school reform to take place, the top-down initiatives for change should converge with the bottom-up efforts for change, which is only possible when practitioners are prepared to have the necessary professional skills to play a role in the change process. This view can be developed when the staff members undergo the needed training to develop their skills, and when they are provided with the appropriate conditions conducive for them to assume their new role. Thus, for efficient school reform to take place, investing in teachers and

supporting them as professionals is key (Hargreaves, 2007). Also, for it to be sustained, having continuous capacity building is crucial because having short termed and quick fix solutions will lead to short lived change (Stoll, 2009). This leads us to the importance of capacity building for school improvement, which is the process leading to building human and social capital and thus leading to building school capital.

Lastly, effective reform requires continuous evaluation of the impact of school improvement. According to Louis et al. (1999), there are several questions that need to be asked in order to evaluate a school reform initiative. According to them, these questions are the following: Did the people involved embrace the improvements? Was the implementation process proper? Will the stakeholders stay devoted to this change and will it still fulfill its original purpose? Did the new innovation become an integral part of the mission of the organization and will it be maintained? Did the school reform have a positive effect on students?

Building Human and Social capital

Human capital and social capital are concepts that are being given sufficient attention in the education literature. Hargreaves (2001) posits that human capital is made up of the 'knowledge and experience' that those involved in the school have, and which influence the attainment of school goals. On the other hand, Coleman (1988) claims that social capital encompasses the abstract resources that result from connections that individuals have with each other, and from the social structures that frame those relationships. It comprises social trust, the relationships that create outlets for new information, and finally the norms, expectations and sanctions that the social group establishes, and which guide individual behavior (Coleman, 1998). A successful school activates its social and intellectual capital to reach the outcomes of distinction

both morally and intellectually, through using high leverage strategies that demand low teacher energy but yield high outcomes (Hargreaves, 2001).

According to Coleman (1988), social capital can be developed through having social relations between the individuals in the organization however, it is most likely increased when a high level of interconnectedness characterizes these relations, because that would allow the members of the social group to cultivate and maintain common rules and sanctions, which are the scale against which behavior is compared. According to Granovetter (1973), another important feature that plays a role in the development of social capital is the presence of strong ties between the individuals of the social group. Those strong ties are translated in the quantity of time that individuals spend together, in the strength of emotions they have toward each other, in the reciprocal disclosure of information to each other, and in the help they offer to each other. On the other hand, human capital can be developed through intentional learning activities, and through interactions that take place among the different members of the group.

Organizational Learning and Organizational Development

Peter Senge (1990) relates the development of human and social capital to organizational development. According to him, sustainable school improvement can only be achieved if it is coupled with organizational development. Namely he advocates for the development of professional learning communities as critical to supporting the professional growth of the individuals working in them, and consequently to ensuring the self-renewal of that organization. He states that these communities should have as their purpose to come up with new knowledge and to maintain this new knowledge in the organization. According to Senge (1990), when a professional community in an organization works on bringing forth “new knowledge” and makes sure that the

necessary structures are available for this new knowledge to be constantly revisited and redeveloped, the capacity of the organization to improve and to sustain its success is significantly increased (as cited in Dinham & Crowther, 2011). King and Newmann (2001) share Senge's view about the importance of enabling the development of the organization as a whole through building its organizational capacity. They consider that the staff's capacity does not only include individual teachers' professional development, but also encompasses organizational learning since individual professional learning alone cannot induce a collective and whole school progress in students' learning. This organizational learning can occur through the presence of a professional learning community, in which all members cooperate to achieve the common purpose they set for the students, participate in reflective inquiry, and are given the chance to have a say in school decisions when it comes to policies and school activities.

Capacity Building for School Improvement

Several scholars consider capacity building to be central to inducing and sustaining school improvement. Different researchers use different terms to refer to capacity building, which reflect what aspect they put emphasis on. Lambert (1998, 2003) uses the term building leadership capacity, which she defines as "an organization's capacity to lead itself and to sustain that effort when key individuals leave" (Lambert, 2003, p. 4). Hence, she brings forth the importance of having skillful and broad-based participation in the process of building the school's capacity to be in lasting improvement. On the other hand, Newmann et al. (2000) use the term school capacity and define it as the collective power of all the staff to increase students' achievement at the level of the whole school. They suggest that professional development that targets the five key aspects of capacity enables building the capacity

of the school. The first aspect is teachers' knowledge skills and disposition: teachers should be professional and competent in teaching and in assessing what are the curricula that best fit their learners, and must set high expectations for all their students. The second aspect is program coherence, which is the extent to which programs for students' and teachers' learning are consistent and convergent, are focused on clear learning objectives and are continuous over a period of time. The third aspect is related to technical resources: education that enhances student achievement requires technical resources, such as high quality academic curricula, books and materials, educational tools, assessment tools, school facilities, test equipment, computers, and a suitable space for work. The fourth aspect is the presence of a professional community that is based on the use of individual teaching competence in organized group projects, and that includes clear and shared learning goals, staff collaboration, professional inquiry and teacher influence. This aspect of capacity draws attention to the educational significance of social resources in school. Finally, the fifth aspect is principal leadership: school capacity requires effective leadership since the principal has the legal authority to influence all the aspects of capacity mentioned above.

While Lambert (1998,2003) highlights the need for developing leadership capacity in the school, Newman et al. (2000) provide a more comprehensive view to building the school's capacity. On the other hand, Mitchell and Sackney (2011), use the term building the capacity for a learning community, which reflects the emphasis they put on building professional communities. They propose that the personal capacity, the interpersonal capacity and the organizational capacity should be established simultaneously to build the capacity for a learning community, capacity that would allow the school to undergo profound improvement. Developing the personal capacity

consists of having professionals work on developing convergent relationships between their actions, their beliefs and their knowledge, which is done through reflection. As for developing the interpersonal capacity, it involves having individuals work collaboratively in order to share knowledge about the process of forming effective teams and about efficient actions. Finally, the organizational capacity consists of gradually installing shared leadership, having constant collaboration between the school members and developing supportive structures. Thus, Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) view about the importance of developing the organization as a whole to enable capacity building converges with both Senge's (1990) (as cited in Dinham & Crowther, 2011) and King and Newmann's (2001) emphasis on the importance of concurrent organizational development rather than only individual learning. Similar to Mitchell and Sackney (2011), Stoll (2009) highlights the learning aspect of building the school's capacity. She uses the term capacity for learning and defines it as the learning of individuals and of the whole school, which involves permanent thought provoking and focused reflection about their professional responsibilities, their philosophies, their competencies, their drives, and their actions.

However, despite this difference in emphasis, the aim of building all those capacities is to build the capacity of the school to be operating effectively and in a sustainable manner (Al-Mahdy, 2012), and thus to improve students' achievement (Newmann et al., 2000). Hence, they aim to build the capacity of the school to be in sustainable improvement, which is defined by Hargreaves (2001) as the capacity of the school to maintain its standards through effectively handling change in an environment characterized by variability and reform and which, according to Bain, Walker and Chan (2011), is built through "a set of coherent, deliberate strategies enacted at a whole

school level to positively influence the knowledge, skills, and priorities of individuals and the school as a collective as together they seek to implement change”(p. 701).

Building school capacity for sustainable change is still a goal that schools are aiming to achieve but in vain. According to Dinham and Crowther (2011), building school capacity for improvement remains mostly an aspiration present in the policies and operation of most schools and of most educational authorities worldwide. Since schools are part of a larger context that is in continuous change, those institutions are experiencing drastic changes in the surroundings in which they are living, which is making it crucial to develop their capacity for sustainable school improvement (Dinham & Crowther, 2011). Consequently, it is crucial for schools to find a way to have sustained capacity because as Dinham and Crowther (2011) stated, “where capacity is not built or sustained, schools’ futures can be threatened (p. 620).”

Despite the wide agreement on the importance of building school capacity, little is known about the process that the schools go through to successfully build their capacity for sustainable change. Thus, there is a need to know how to translate research findings on capacity building to practical successful actions that schools could follow (Bain et al., 2011). Therefore, as Bain et al. (2011) formulated it, there is a need for explaining how “organizational support for capacity building for sustained change is theorized, developed and applied” (p. 703).

Enabling Factors for Building School Capacity for Improvement

According to Mitchell and Sackney (2011), seven characteristics should be present in the practices of the school in order to develop its capacity for sustainable improvement. The school should have shared values and goals as well as a clear and common vision that all the personnel agree on. Also, the culture of the school should

encourage teamwork and cooperation, and the members of the organization should be engaged in collective learning to develop shared understanding. In addition, the school should emphasize continuous introspection about practice as well as ongoing experimentation and should base decision-making on data. Finally, it should have a culture that promotes trust and must encourage the development of communities of leaders. This view of the necessity of building leadership capacity is in line with the social and human capital perspective that leadership must not be confined to one person but should rather be shared (Smylie & Hart, 1999).

Lambert (1998) mentions common features as those exposed by Mitchell and Sackney (2011) but also adds some characteristics that they did not include and presents them as conducive to building the school's leadership capacity. She believes that the school should develop "an infrastructure of support that is aligned with the work of the school" (p. 12). This infrastructure includes providing the staff with professional learning opportunities and developing a clear mission and philosophy, elements that were mentioned by Mitchell and Sackney (2011). However, she added that it is imperative to have clear procedures for recruiting staff members, to have monetary, time and human resources, to have clear policies and clear work structures, and finally to develop links with the community. Many of those factors considered by Mitchell and Sackney (2011) and by Lambert (1998) as enabling building the school's capacity for improvement were also discussed by other scholars and will be elaborated in the following section.

Securing External Support

A component that several studies examining building school capacity omitted is using external sources of support as key for building capacity for sustainable

improvement. However, Harris (2001) believes that this is crucial for building the capacity for school improvement. In her study (Harris, 2001), she exposes the role of the Local Education Authority (LEA) in the UK as an external agent of change. The LEA sent an advisor to each school that wanted to implement a school reform called “Improving the Quality of Education for All” (IQEA). According to Harris (2001), the LEA advisor helped the schools by making sure that the implementation of this reform converged with the individual needs of these schools, by putting some pressure on the schools to plan for the practical actions that they need to perform, by making sure that the actions done as part of the reform initiative converged with the national and local demands, and by making sure that these schools were progressing toward implementing the reform. It is worthy to mention that the LEA advisor had an extensive knowledge of the school he/she is working with. Moreover, the LEA helped teachers understand data about the schools’ effectiveness and helped them focus on the most pressing issues that needed to be addressed. After the school planned to implement the reform, the LEA provided advice and strategies on how to apply it and provided emotional, technical and practical support throughout the process. The advisors provided timely adequate training that allowed the schools to apply the change more successfully, and evaluated the work that was being done, thus inviting the staff to reflect on their progress. Moreover, LEA advisors helped teachers build professional communities within the school and outside the school. Also, they ensured that the components of the reform were translated into the policies and the classroom practices, and they helped the school in developing leadership that is participative and transformative, as such leadership allows the staff to feel ownership of the change. In conclusion, according to Harris, the

presence and the quality of this external agent support were critical to the success of that improvement initiative (Harris, 2001).

Providing Continuous Professional Development

Professional development is mentioned as crucial to building the school's capacity for improvement and is found, in a study by Newmann et al. (2000), to do so through targeting the three aspects of school capacity which are teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions, professional community and program coherence. The study conducted in nine elementary schools in the United States aims at investigating the degree to which professional development affects three of the five key characteristics of school capacity (teachers' knowledge, skills and dispositions, the presence of a professional community and having program coherence), which in turn enhance students' achievement through positively influencing instruction. It also intends to explain the reasons why in some schools professional development affected school capacity more than in others. Out of the nine schools studied, two were found to have comprehensively addressed capacity building, while one was found to have addressed it very mediocly. The characteristics of professional development of the three schools in the two extremes of the continuum were discussed.

The first school that effectively increased its capacity through professional development used an external ready-made program and implemented it. One of the features of the school's capacity that was influenced by this initiative was the knowledge and skills of teachers, since the professional development sessions focused on content knowledge and on particular teaching strategies that were aligned with the new curriculum. Another characteristic that was affected was the development of a shared goal for students' achievement. This was made possible because the entire

school adopted a specific program and worked on implementing it. A third factor that was impacted was the school culture; it became a collaborative one. The program that was followed encouraged staff collaboration as the whole school was working collaboratively on the same goals and time was set on the schedule for teachers to work cooperatively in grade level teams. A fourth characteristic that emerged was having teachers' input heard and taken into consideration and giving teachers some room to be creative in the way they implement the curriculum. Finally, program coherence was the fifth developed aspect of the school's capacity for improvement. The professional development activities converged with the goal that the school set in terms of using this preset program in order to increase students' achievement, and the preset program itself was coherent (Newmann et al., 2000).

In contrast with the first school, the second that effectively increased its capacity through professional development developed its own curriculum and its own methods of assessment and instruction. Prior to the beginning of the year, teachers asked essential questions about their practice, and throughout the year they would reflect on them and inquire about them during regular meetings. Those were opportunities for professional development to occur. Also, the school developed specific performance outcomes for several subject areas and focused on improving practices of literacy teaching by equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge. This approach to professional development also contributed to the development of several aspects of the organization's capacity for improvement. The first facet of capacity that was developed was teachers' skills, knowledge and dispositions. Among other tasks, teachers developed the curriculum and the performance outcomes, and were constantly inquiring and reflecting about student's

performance. Another feature of capacity that was influenced was the development of a collaborative culture and of a common purpose for students' achievement. The latter was made possible because teachers had to collaborate throughout the year to develop both the curriculum and the performance outcomes, and to reflect on student's achievement. A third characteristic that emerged was the ability of teachers to influence policy and decisions regarding their professional development: the input of the staff was conveyed to the decision makers through the input of the lead teams. Finally, coherence was another feature of capacity that was enhanced. Professional development contributed to coherence in instructional programs in both math and literacy when it comes to performance standards and assessment, but did not enable coherence in teaching strategies and in the curriculum across grade levels (Newmann et al., 2000).

On the other hand, the school that was found to have mediocre professional development did not have a clear structure for input to be given, the decision-making process did not include staff members, all the faculty received a training on literacy but this training was not the same for all. Teachers believed that this training increased their knowledge however, it was not found to support the development of a professional community and of program coherence (Newmann et al., 2000).

Despite having several schools enhance their capacity through professional development, some schools were able to do so more than others, and according to the researchers, this is due to some characteristics of some of the schools that contributed to having a higher effect of professional development on the organization's capacity. One of those characteristics is the initial capacity of the school. When the school had a higher capacity to start with, professional development had more effects on the school's capacity. A second feature that played a role in having a greater contribution of

professional development on the school's capacity is the presence of leadership that focuses more on school-wide professional development rather than on individual professional development, that channels funding and support toward serving this focus, and that creates an environment characterized by trust and collaboration and where teachers have high expectations for students' achievement. Added to those two characteristics, funding was shown to have a positive correlation with an increase in the effect of professional development on the school's capacity. On the other hand, the presence of supportive policy and of external technical assistance had no direct implication on the use of comprehensive professional development (Newmann et al., 2000).

Engaging in Action Research

Since reflection on practice (King & Newmann, 2001; Mitchell & Sackney, 2011) as well as data driven decision-making are part of the actions that should be done to build the school's capacity (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011), developing the skills of the staff to conduct action research is considered to lead to developing school capacity for improvement through building individual capacity. Action research is "a form of research carried out by educators in their everyday work settings for improving their professional practice" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 346). Through action research, all the parties involved learn how to reflect on their own work and become more aware of the significance of evaluating their practices, leading to a greater willingness to be held accountable for their performance (McNiff, 2002). Also, it empowers practitioners since it is - as opposed to traditional research - not typically done by experts, which conveys to them that they are professionals who are capable of inducing change (Gall et al., 2010). Developing the skills of the staff to conduct such research could constitute 'on

the job professional development', which is related to practice and which is collaborative. Those two characteristics of efficient professional development were shown to have positive outcomes on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Additionally, the collaboration that can take place during the participative action research process would also contribute to the development of a collaborative culture, aspect mentioned as crucial for capacity building.

Developing Collegial Trust

Trust is mentioned as a prerequisite to building collaborative leadership (Slater, 2008) and consequently as having a main role to play in developing the capacity of the school (Cosner, 2009). Mitchell and Sackney (2011) highlight the importance of trust in building a learning community, and thus in inducing profound improvement in schools. According to them, without this trust, the staff's energy would be switched from learning to self-preservation, people wouldn't be willing to take risks that are indispensable to improve the school, and a culture of isolation will prevail (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). They conceive trust to mean that "people can be counted on to do what they say they will do, to own up to mistakes they make and to clean up any mess in which they find themselves" (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 57). And thus, they suggest that people should not necessarily be moral models to be trustworthy, but they rather need to be dependable when it comes to their practices and to be accountable for the outcomes. Mitchell and Sackney(2011) add that principals have a role to play in developing this trust: if the principal is to build trust with the staff, he/she is to know the hopes, ambitions, and wants of individual staff members, and he/she should voice out honestly his own goals for the school, as this would help him/her win the confidence of

the staff as well as of the students and their parents. Further, for the principal to nurture and to sustain this trust, his actions must converge with what he/she says, he/she should trust others, he/she should develop positive relationships with all the staff members, he/she has to have a common vision with the staff, he/she should show the people he/she works with that he/she is concerned about them and that he/she backs them up. Yet, Mitchell and Sackney (2011) add that building trust is not solely the responsibility of the principal, but rather the responsibility of all the members of the school community however; the role of the leader is to start walking the path toward building this trust.

Added to the suggestions of Mitchell and Sackney (2011) regarding developing trust, a study conducted by Cosner (2009) revealed other actions that enable building trust. This study conducted with eleven principals who were considered as having successfully built their school's capacity for improvement examines the actions and perceptions of these principals about building trust. The data were gathered through conducting in-depth interviews and collecting relevant documents. The results of this study show that the principals consider trust as a crucial component that should be present in their organizations and five of the eleven principals participating in the study took key actions to improve the general nature of staff interactions by creating, stressing, and/or enforcing norms. Principals decided to increase the time during which the staff interacts with each other through increasing the time of department meetings, through providing more opportunities for teachers to interact during staff meetings, and through encouraging collaborative learning during site-based professional development. One principal decided to eliminate staff meetings and to replace them with small group meetings that would allow for more interaction to occur between different staff

members. These groups included mentoring and induction groups, teacher leadership and problem solving groups, book clubs and social events club. In addition to providing and altering structures to increase the interaction between teachers, the principals took several actions that resulted in the increase of collegial trust. Several principals developed in their staff skills for conflict resolution. For instance, one principal shared that when a teacher approached him to talk about a conflict that happened, the principal discussed with this teacher ways that could help her resolve the conflict without having to resort to him. Moreover, the principals worked on developing and strengthening the leadership and facilitation skills of the teachers, and they started by gradually asking all the teachers to solve collectively some issues from some of little importance to others that were more critical (Cosner, 2009).

Building Capacity for Shared Leadership

Smylie and Hart (1999) believe that leadership that aims at developing human and social capital requires “a change in the nature and function of leadership itself” (p. 438). Leadership is found to have a major influence on capacity building and distributed leadership is associated with successful capacity building for school improvement (Dinham & Crowther, 2011). Slater (2008) claims, “school reform may be achieved and sustained more effectively when improvement is not dependent on one person but is a shared responsibility amongst staff, students and parents” (p. 59).

Having collaborative decision-making and dividing control is mentioned in several studies as being key for building school capacity for change. A study done to investigate the correlation between the leadership style and changes in student learning asserts that conclusion. It shows that collaborative leadership affects school capacity, which in turn affects growth in student learning. The effect of collaborative leadership

and school capacity was found to be reciprocal with a more significant effect of capacity on leadership rather than of leadership on capacity (Hallinger & Heck, 2010).

Similarly, Lambert (1998) advocates for building capacity for shared leadership since she believes that an improvement will not succeed if it relies on one individual, and emphasizes that “the school must build its own leadership capacity if it is to stay afloat, assume internal responsibility for reform, and maintain a momentum for self-renewal” (p. 4). She claims that leadership is a shared process of learning that engenders change. According to Lambert (1998, 2003), building leadership capacity will result in broad-based participation in leadership, where participants are competent and have the necessary skills, knowledge and dispositions to be involved in it. A school that has high leadership capacity comprises several characteristics. First, the principal, teachers, parents and students participate competently in leadership (Lambert, 2003). A second characteristic is the presence of data driven decision-making. Data is collected through inquiry and will be reflected upon in order to come up with decisions (Lambert, 2003). Time is provided to allow for inquiry and reflection to take place. Feedback loops are developed to have all the stakeholders be involved and informed about what is happening. A third characteristic is having broad involvement, collaboration and shared responsibility that is reflected in roles and actions (Lambert, 2003). This is possible because teachers do not consider themselves as only responsible for their classroom but would rather perceive themselves as responsible for the success of the whole school. This shift in roles and responsibilities creates collaboration that was not present when teachers felt that they can only have an impact on their classroom (Lambert, 1998). Broad-based participation can occur through the presence of representatives of the different stakeholders who can sometimes take decisions by themselves and other times

get back to the members and ask for their feedback. Also, such participation can be done through the presence of groups that would enable the school's work to be done. Such groups are grade level teams, interdisciplinary teams etc. This demands that the members be skilled in developing a common goal with the group, in communicating properly, in facilitating group processes and in resolving conflict. Also, the participants should be familiar with the tenets of adult learning and with how change and transition take place as well as with their repercussions on those involved in them. Such competencies can be developed through training, coaching, discussing the different approaches related to those skills, and through having them modeled in front of them and giving them the opportunity to practice them with guidance (Lambert, 1998). A fourth important characteristic of a school with leadership capacity is having reflective practice become customary in the school with the time to be involved in it (Lambert, 1998, 2003). Finally, a fifth characteristic is having students' achievement and data about it as the most important information used and reflected upon in order to come up with decisions that would lead to improvement. Such information should not be solely circulating between teachers but should also be reflected upon with students and parents who can add a considerable amount of knowledge about their children, which could be relevant when taking decisions for improvement (Lambert, 1998).

School principals have a very important role to play in developing shared leadership capacity since they will have to exercise "special skills of initiation, support and visioning" (Lambert, 1998, p. 24). They will have to develop a culture of collegiality, replacing a possibly existing culture of dependency on the authority, which would enable the development of adult-to-adult relationships between all the school staff members (Lambert, 1998, 2003). In order for the principal to develop the

leadership capacity in the school he/she needs to (a) be aware of himself and of his values; (b) have an understanding about the history of the school, its strengths and its needs; (c) know about the leadership qualities of the school personnel; (d) evaluate both formally and informally the leadership capacity of the school; (e) pledge that he/she will work hand in hand with the employees to improve the current state of the school; (f) develop trust; (g) establish norms and common understanding with the school staff members about the way decisions are taken; (h) develop a shared vision with the employees; (i) enhance leadership capacity in others; (j) develop communication between the staff and call for discussions about teaching, learning and leading and ensure that they are continuous; (k) develop a cycle of inquiry; (l) develop objectives and plan to enhance students' learning ; (m) have a two-sided relation with the district personnel (Lambert, 2003).

For a school to develop from a low leadership capacity school to a high leadership capacity school, the role and actions of the principal are not the same throughout the process but rather change depending on the stage the school is at with regards to leadership capacity. This is revealed in a study by Lambert (2006), which aim is to examine how fifteen Canadian and American low leadership capacity schools became high leadership capacity schools. The results of the study reveal that thirteen out of the fifteen schools passed through two phases before reaching high capacity: the instructive and the transitional phase. During the instructive phase, the principal played the role of a teacher: He instructed teachers on how to cooperate, how to have dialogue, how to take part in inquiry and how to use data to inform decision-making. Also, he taught them best instructional practices, communication skills, conflict resolution and accountability. Thus, during this phase, the principal was using his authority to start up

cooperation, to take decisions and to contest incompetence. During the transitional phase, the principal played more the role of a guide and a coach. He coached the staff to develop a shared vision, to participate in leadership, to use inquiry, to question deeply engraved beliefs, to pinpoint and resolve problems and to locate resources. Finally, in high leadership capacity schools, the principal acted more as a colleague and he shared responsibility with the staff. Schools moving toward becoming high leadership capacity schools had internal cohesion. They had gradually developed, through the instructive, transitional and high capacity phases, a comprehensive conceptual framework, a continuous increased level of students' achievement, competent and distributive leadership, value-driven work and finally a professional culture. Schools progressively developed into a planned state of sustainability for durable improvement (Lambert, 2006).

Developing teacher leadership is at the core of building shared leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003). To become a teacher leader, the teacher passes through different phases before he/she develops his/her identity as a leader and maintains it, stages during which getting support from a professional learning community is crucial. This is revealed in the results of a case study, done on a first grade teacher (Grace) in a small k-8 school, which purpose is to examine the change process she went through, as she was involved for a whole year in a practitioner research group that supported her to assume her new role as a staff development leader for writing instruction in school (Vetter, 2012).

The results of the case study show that Grace passed through the following change process. The first step that she underwent was to imagine herself in the new position of being a teacher leader. Through this phase, she had to create a vision of the

kind of leader she wants to be. Grace had a clear vision of the way she will lead but she was not sure how to put it in practice in her new role as the staff development leader. During this phase, the practitioner research group supported her by brainstorming with her ways she can enact the identity that she envisioned for herself. While the group was doing that, it was clear that Grace showed some resistance and some of her perceptions about the staff she is working with came to the surface: she shared that she is fearful that a lack of participation would emerge. Despite that, the group continuously challenged her to concentrate on the vision she has previously set for herself. Thus, during this stage, it was clear that Grace was struggling with the idea of whether it was of any value to be part of this project and to struggle with resistance that she still didn't face, and her group was always pushing her forward through showing her that she can lead even if some resistance arises. Hence, her participation in this research group enabled her to verbalize her fears and allowed her to receive comments and validations that assisted her in both enacting this new position and starting with the process of change. The second stage was to actually act out the position that she perceived for herself, which was being a leader who has information to pass to her staff about teaching writing. She was struggling to find ways to evaluate the efficacy of what she was doing but her practitioner research group was providing her with some ideas. During this phase, Grace positioned the staff as resistors, which impacted the way she positioned herself: she couldn't view herself as a leader before sensing that her colleagues accepted her leadership, which happened when she was able to be considerate to their needs. It took a whole semester of monthly workshops for most of her colleagues to be comfortable with her being a leader. The research group reinforced Grace's positioning as a leader through providing her with the support needed against

all the resistance she was facing. During the third stage, Grace continued enacting her position in spite of all the resistance. Throughout this stage, the research group kept on validating her positioning as a leader and offered feedback and advice about the way to go about things. The fourth and last stage in this change process was for Grace to realize the effects of her leadership. After presenting at a conference about her work, Grace realized that her leadership led to positive results. At this stage, she positioned herself as a leader who effectively assumed a new position that fostered change in her school.

Thus, the results of the case study suggest that teachers can be the agents of their own change when they are put in a setting that enables them to learn from significant experiences and to safely work through tensions of self and practice. Also, it proposes that it is important for such groups to challenge teachers to create a vision for the kind of practitioners they want to be, which demands from them to reflect on who they are and to develop new positioning (Vetter, 2012).

Attending to the Affective Reactions Toward Change

Another factor that is key for the development of the school's capacity to be in constant improvement is to have the school attend to the affective reactions of the staff toward change. The concerns based model developed by Fuller suggests that prospective and in-service teachers go through a hierarchy of concerns. These concerns refer to "the feelings, thoughts, and reactions individuals have about a new practice, or innovation" (Hord & Hall, 1984, p. 5). According to this model, when the person first encounters a new situation, the first concern that emerges is the 'concern for self'.

During this stage, the person worries about the impact of this new situation on him/her, and his/her adequacy to deal with it. When this concern is resolved, it is replaced by a

‘concern for task’ that consists of having the person focus on the demands of the activity itself. In turn, when this concern is dealt with, it is replaced by a ‘concern for impact’, during which the teacher thinks about the impact that his/her teaching is having on the students (Hall et al., 1973). Drawing from this model, Hall, Wallace and Dosset (1973) developed the concerns based adoption model (CBAM) suggesting that whenever an innovation is introduced, those implementing it pass through a continuum of three stages of concerns. When the person first faces a change, his/her behavior will be ruled by a ‘concern for self’ and he/she focuses on how this innovation will affect him/her. As these self-concerns are resolved - after the person becomes aware of the change and recognizes its implications on him/her - he/she moves on to a ‘concern for task’ and focuses on how to accomplish the task itself. When the latter is resolved - after having the person learn the routines of the new task - he/she becomes concerned about the influence that the innovation will have on others. Thus, in each stage one specific concern is more intense than the others (Hall, et al., 1973).

CBAM is constituted of two basic dimensions, which are the stages of concern (SOC) about the innovation, and the levels of use (LOU) of the innovation. The SOC exposes seven developmental stages of teachers’ concerns about school innovations: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and refocusing concerns. Throughout the awareness stage, the teacher is either not or scarcely interested in the innovation, while in the informational stage he/she develops an overall awareness and interest regarding the change. During the personal stage, the teacher reflects on his/her role in this innovation, on its demands as well as on how able he/she is to fulfill them, while in the management stage he/she starts thinking about the tasks to be done as well as the requirements of the innovation and the needed resources.

Throughout the consequence stage, the teacher concentrates on the effect of the innovation on students' learning, evaluation and outcome, while in the collaboration stage his/her attention drifts to coordination and cooperation with others concerning change matters. Finally, in the refocusing stage, the teacher aims at deriving more universal benefits from the innovation (Hall & Hord, 1987). Those concerns are considered to be developmental and thus if the lower concerns are not being resolved, they would exacerbate and resistance would arise. As a result, the change would be hindered from moving to higher levels of implementation (Hord & Hall, 1984).

As for the LOU, it includes seven levels as follows: the non-use level (level 0), the orientation level (level 1), the preparation level (level 2), the mechanical level (level 3), the routine level (level 4), the refinement level (level 5), the integration level (level 6), and finally the renewal level (level 7). During the non-use level, the user has very little or no awareness at all about the innovation, while in the orientation level he/she gathers information about the innovation and how it will influence him/her. Throughout the preparation level, the user adjusts to the usage of the innovation for the first time and then moves, during the mechanical level, to trying to be proficient in the tasks related to the innovation. However, this often leads to shallow and fragmented use. During the routine level, using the innovation becomes a habit and very little thought is given to how it can be improved, while in the refinement level the user modifies the use of the innovation to reach better impact on his students but fails to synchronize his work with that of the total system. Finally, throughout the integration level the user joins his/her efforts with that of his colleagues to have a collective effect on their common sphere of influence, while in the renewal level he/she reflects on how he/she has been

using the innovation, and works on finding ways to increase its impact and on developing new personal and system goals related to it (Hall & Hord, 2001).

While the stages of concern expose the concerns that the adopter of the innovation faces, the level of use dimension aims at describing the knowledge, skills, and behavior of the adopter (Hall & Hord, 2001). Nevertheless, when joined, they portray both the affective and the performance dimensions of the adopter of the innovation. In order for the innovation to advance efficiently, each level of use should be accompanied by a specific stage of concern as follows: the awareness stage should be paralleled with the non-use phase, the informational stage with the orientation phase, the personal stage with the preparation phase, the management stage with both the mechanical phase and the routine phase, the consequence stage with the refinement phase, the collaboration stage with the integration phase and finally the refocusing stage with the renewal phase (Hall & Hord, 2001). When the level of use is ahead of its parallel stage of concern, this indicates that the implementation process is in danger of failure and thus, the concerns should be dealt with before moving to another level of use (Hall & Hord, 2001).

This model has repercussions on how change agents introduce an innovation (Hall et al., 1973). It proposes that moving the employees successfully through their concerns has a direct impact on the success of the implementation of the innovation (Haslam & Pennington, 2010). Since change is a highly personal experience, CBAM advises that the change agent should be alert to the different needs of the teachers and should intervene in order to fill those needs (Hall et al., 1973). For instance, when the change agent pin points a teacher who is still at the self-concern stage, he/she can initiate consultation or a training that would help that teacher resolve this concern and

move to the next stage (Hall et al., 1973). Another example is having senior teachers, who have been teaching for long, experience concern for self in a very intense manner. Having those teachers be exposed to a training that only tackles the impact that the change will have on students and the way to use it independently would aggravate those concerns rather than help the teachers overcome them (Hall et al., 1973). Hence, there is a need to assess the level of concern the teachers are at, as well as to pin point in which level of use they are to develop an efficient intervention that would enable a successful adoption of the innovation (Hall et al., 1973).

According to the CBAM, it is crucial for the leader to tackle the concerns of the stakeholders that are going to implement the change. However, he/she needs to do so in a manner that wouldn't push those involved to concentrate on the negative aspects, which would lead them to protest. This is done through conveying to them that their concerns are listened to and are understood, while also keeping them concentrated on a positive vision for growth. Bridges and Mitchell (2000) urge leaders to focus on conveying the "Four P's of Transition" which stress relations with and concern for people. Those four P's are as follows:

1. The Purpose: the reason for participating in this endeavor
2. The Picture: the way things will feel and be when the aim is fulfilled
3. The Plan: the way the aim is achieved
4. The Part: the contribution one makes to move the change forward

People tend to naturally focus on fulfilling their own personal needs and that's why there is a need for the leader to motivate them to collaborate to solve the problems that the organization is facing. For that to happen, the leader needs to link people's concern to the 'Four P's of Transition' mentioned above. When the stakeholder perceives the

'purpose', the 'picture', the 'plan' and the 'part' as being congruent with his/her concerns, this will lessen his/her resistance. As Kotter (2003) (as cited in Haslam & Pennington, 2010, p.7) stated in an interview:

People change their behavior when they are motivated to do so, and that happens when you speak to their feelings. You don't have to spend a million dollars and six months to prepare for a change effort. You do have to make sure that you touch people emotionally... Employees need to understand that the changes are not oddball ideas being pushed by the bosses. They need to see short-term wins that demonstrate the validity of the change vision (concerns about impact). If the win is not ambiguous, is visible (concerns about task), and is of value to people (concerns about self), then people will say, "yes, I get it" and be more likely to help make change happen.

Structuring Schools Around Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning Communities (PLCs) are a way to develop the capacity of a school for improvement, since several of the steps considered as enabling the development of the school's capacity converge with the development of professional learning communities, and are also a result of developing those PLCs. According to King and Newmann (2001), a strong professional community is characterized by the presence of a well-defined collective goal for student learning, of cooperation between the different members of the school to attain this goal, of reflective professional inquiry by the practitioners that would enable them to tackle the challenges they encounter and finally, of chances for the staff to have a say in the school's activities and policies. Dufour (2011) elaborates in more details the aspects of PLCs that King and Newmann (2001) propose. He posits that in a PLC, staff members are organized into groups in

which cooperation happens. They dedicate their group endeavor on certain questions such as: (1) whether they know what knowledge, skills and dispositions they aim at developing throughout the course, the year and the unit they are teaching, (2) if there are clear standards to measure student's achievement and whether these standards can always be applied, (3) whether there is a common format for formative assessment in order to continuously check on students' learning, (4) if formative assessment is used in order to pin point which students are facing challenges, for the sake of offering them timely and systemic interventions that would provide them with the added time and support they need to become proficient, (5) if data is used to measure each person's efficiency as well as the effectiveness of the group, and whether these results help all the staff learn from each other in ways that positively influence their classroom practice, (6) if all the members of the group work interdependently in order to achieve SMART goals that are Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Time-bound, (7) if they institutionalized their regular improvement process, (8) if their decisions are driven by common knowledge about effective practices rather than by mere opinions, (9) if they show commitment to having all students learn at high levels, (10) if the team time is used to tackle those critical issues. The critical issues that Dufour (2011) expose as being issues that are the central focus of PLCs reveal his emphasis on the fact that PLCs are characterized by collaboration between the different school members, by having a clear common goal for students' learning and by having the purpose of this collaboration be the betterment of students' learning.

The practices in PLCs are not identical to those in other techniques of teamwork and Spencer (2016) describes some of the major practices that differentiate PLCs from other ways of teamwork. First, members of PLCs gather for a minimum of

once a week for them to be able to have timely discussions about instruction. Second, leaders such as the principal and the assistant principal are part of those PLCs, and they play the role of colleagues who are perceived as equals rather than supervisors of the process. They empower the teachers by letting them choose what will be discussed and by giving them control over what is taking place during those meetings. Third, the members of the PLC are held accountable for the time they are spending and this is done through having them keep notes about what has been discussed and decided during the meetings and what they plan on discussing during the following meetings. Fourth, the PLC members communicate what they do with the community, for the community to understand that the time allocated for that purpose yields positive results. Finally, for PLCs to maximize their positive influence on students' achievement, they balance the time they provide to dealing with issues related to assessment, to curriculum development and to developing instructional materials, and they ensure the access to appropriate resources such as technology.

Leadership for Building School Capacity for Improvement

Building school capacity for improvement demands the presence of an effective leader (Lambert, 1998, 2003; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) who practices both collaborative leadership (Slater, 2008), and leadership that is sensitive to the socio cultural context (Ylimaki et al., 2012).

Effective Leadership: Leithwood and Riehl's Model

To be successful in building school capacity for school improvement, principals should first be effective leaders. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) claim that there are three basic practices that are not inclusive of all that is needed for effective leadership in any environment, but are prerequisites for it. According to them, leaders

should set the directions that the organization is aiming to follow. They accomplish that through developing a common vision, generating shared meanings that would support the school's vision, conveying high performance expectations, encouraging all the staff to work toward school goals, assessing the school's performance, and finally communicating the school's vision and inviting others to give feedback. Also, leaders should develop people through providing them with ongoing intellectual prompting and development, providing them with individualized support and finally through being a good role model. Furthermore, leaders should develop the organization through empowering the school culture, undertaking structural changes in their school that would promote better school performance, promoting collaboration between the staff, and finally developing ties with the environment for the sake of developing efficient inter-organizational relations, shared meanings and cumulating support (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Leadership that is Sensitive to the Sociocultural Context

Different contexts and capacities demand different capacity building strategies (Stoll, 2009). Accordingly, Ylimaki et al. (2012) added the sociocultural dimension to the framework that Leithwood and Riehl (2003) developed. They claim that a successful leader takes into consideration the sociocultural context of the organization through being mindful and aware of the characteristics of his context. Moreover, he/she develops capacity building that is culturally bound, and thus makes sure that instruction is culturally grounded and that the decision-making converges with the moral standards of the community. Finally, the leader encourages the development of a democratic atmosphere in which culturally responsive practices are adopted. Such leadership that is sensitive to the sociocultural context is found to enable the three practices that

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) posited as being necessary for successful leadership that influences positive change (Ylimaki et al., 2012).

Collaborative Leadership

Since the presence of a collaborative culture is key for developing school capacity for sustainable improvement, it is important to comprehend how such a culture can be promoted. Lambert (1998) suggests that collaborative leadership is the key to promoting this type of culture that is conducive to sustainable improvement. For that to happen, a shift in the way leadership is conceived needs to take place. In addition, there should be a redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders, as well as a redefinition of the distribution of power.

The principal has an essential role in promoting collaborative leadership. This is shown in the results of a study (Slater, 2008) conducted with parents, administrators, and teachers, in which their beliefs about the way the principal of their school promoted collaborative leadership were examined. According to them, to practice collaborative leadership, a leader should be willing to empower others, should be ready to let go of his personal interest that accompanies his role as the sole leader, and should be aware that his worth does not emanate from his position. All the participants emphasize that building trust and reflective listening are the most significant skill that a leader needs to have. They note that it is important for the principal not to come with a preset agenda because he/she would not be open to the ideas of the staff and therefore true collaboration will not happen (Slater, 2008).

School-Based Initiatives for Building School Capacity

Since one of the goals of the study is to uncover the process of building school capacity, it would be beneficial to review some initiatives that aimed at building school

capacity in different parts of the world. Several attempts at building school capacity for sustainable school improvement include some of the actions that the literature, reviewed above, recommends as necessary to building the school's capacity for improvement. In what follows three school-based initiatives are reviewed.

Hong Kong Preschool Initiative

One of the initiatives to develop the capacity for change took place at a Hong Kong preschool, with the assistance of consultants from higher education institutions, in response to a new curriculum policy that the government issued. Close examination of the initiative showed that the organization passed through two main processes: reconstructing and re-culturing. The school went through a shift from the status quo to the exploration stage and then to the implementation stage. During the status quo stage, and in response to the issuing of the new policy, the principal of the school appointed three teachers as coordinators who were part, along with the principal, of the core team of the school that was responsible for coordinating and managing the change in the curriculum, as well as for assuming the responsibilities of a previous senior teacher who used to check the lesson plans and approve them. During this stage, the communication between the teachers and the coordinators consisted of a one-way communication in which the coordinators only voiced out the principal's views to the teachers. Thus, despite the structural changes reflected in the development of the core team, things were still being done in the same way they were done before. During the exploration stage, the university consultants met with the core team in order to clarify their responsibilities and roles, which helped in creating a common purpose. After consulting with the core team and the teachers, it was decided that lesson plans would be prepared during staff meetings to increase two-way communication between the core team and the teachers.

This opened communication channels between the teachers and the core team. As a result, the core team was sharing its views about the lesson plans and had discussions with the teachers about issues related to their teaching. As time passed, teachers were more eager to share their experience with the core team and with their coworkers, which set up the ground for the development of a culture of cooperation, collegiality and interdependence, and helped in opening discussions about the obstacles they were facing in terms of implementing the new policy. With the consultants' guidance, the core team had a clearer idea of the change process. Finally, in the emerging implementation stage, a collegial culture started emerging. Professional development needs were pin pointed by the consultants, building a culture of inquiry and collaborative conversation was promoted, and the consultants debated with the core team and the teachers about their thoughts on what the priorities for change should be. At the end of the school year, the core team was more equipped to lead the school into the change process (Ho & Chen, 2013). Thus, in this initiative, the consultants worked on developing the personal, the interpersonal and the organizational spheres (Mitchell& Sackney, 2011).

South Wales School-Based Initiative

Another initiative of a school-based change implemented to increase students' achievement in a group of South Wales schools encompasses different aspects of the school's capacity that Mitchell and Sackney (2011) expose. This initiative shows that building a school's capacity is a gradual process that takes time and during which the leader tunes his actions to the stage the school is at. The schools in this initiative passed through three periods: the pre-acceleration period, the acceleration period and the post-acceleration period.

During the pre-acceleration period, most of the schools were struggling and their students' achievement was not up to the demanded standard. Most of the leaders diagnosed the situation of their school and some of them found that their schools were ready and open to change, while others were faced with resistance. The goal of the leaders in this stage was to change the culture of their school to converge it with the set vision. The leaders were leading determinedly and resiliently and were encouraging collaboration and creativity, while sharing responsibility with the staff for the failure or success of the new initiatives. On the other hand, during the acceleration stage, the schools were undergoing many changes on different levels. Resistance has decreased and thus the odds were in favor of the leader who focused on expanding the change to more fronts. Moreover, there was a change in the location of leadership with middle managers having more input in the change process and more leadership roles to assume. Bottom-up change initiatives increased, collaboration, teamwork and links with the external environment were developing and professional development activities were led by staff from the school. On the other hand, in the post acceleration period, there was a change in the locus of leadership with more autonomy to the staff and more roles for them to play in strategic planning. Additionally, an increased emphasis was given to the process of teaching and learning, and more data-driven evaluation and monitoring was being done (Connolly, Connolly & James, 2000).

New Zealand Initiative

A study aimed at examining the journey of a primary disadvantaged school in New Zealand, which was considered by the educational community as having achieved a major progress in two years, reveals that this school undertook actions with a focus on building school capacity within the context of a school-based initiative. The results

show that having a common vision that encompasses both the judicial requirements and the school's stakeholder's wants and ambitions played a crucial role in enhancing the capacity building process. Also, it was found that having the school's stakeholders be the change agents is very important. Capacity building is concerned with change, which will lead to disequilibrium that can only be managed when the school stakeholders are the change agents. In this school, all the school members were considered agents of change and thus were empowered and included in the decision-making and each member clearly knew his roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that the school's culture played a major role in building the school's capacity. Throughout the process of building the school's capacity, the culture of the school became one that encourages collaboration, interdependence, and constant learning. In addition, professional development played a major role in the capacity building process. It helped in molding the school into becoming a learning community that enables knowledge to be exchanged collaboratively, and enables stakeholders to be both reflective on their practices and more receptive to innovation. In contrast with the other reviewed initiatives, this initiative of capacity building accorded a big emphasis to the relationship between the home and the school. This relationship was considered as necessary because it decreased the negative effects of the external environment especially in the case of disadvantaged kids. The results demonstrate that when the home and the school goals are aligned, the effects of the change that is being undertaken would be maximized (Stringer, 2009).

School Reform in the Arab World

School reform in the Arab world is faced with several challenges. First, as El Amine (2005) posits, there is a lack in the empirically based knowledge about school

reform in the Arab world. This is so because first practitioners do not keep records about what they have done, and second because there are no new innovations that are grounded in the Arab sociocultural context and that would add to the knowledge base (El Amine, 2005; Karami-Akkary, 2014). Furthermore, conferences that were held to discuss school reform in the Arab World did not lead to specific practical recommendations to inducing change. They rather concluded with thoughts that are neither based on previous empirical studies about the implementation process or about the influence of reforms on students, nor on reliable knowledge base (El Amine, 2005; Karami-Akkary, 2014). This lack of information leads Arab policymakers to rely solely on copying international best practice while developing their reform, which results in initiatives that are detached from the context of schools in the Arab region (Karami-Akkary, 2014; Bashshur, 2005; El Amine, 2005). What also contributes to the limited knowledge base is the fact that the majority of the reform initiatives are driven by a political agenda that does not converge with the wants of educators and with the specific situation of the school (Bashshur, 2005; El Amine, 2005). Moreover, change in the Arab world is mostly understood as consisting of introducing innovations without necessarily finding a rationale for their adoption and a way to have them deeply embedded in the organization to maintain their influence (Karami-Akkary & Rizk, 2011). This leads to the innovations not having an impact on students' outcomes (Bashshur, 2005; El Amine, 2005). Additionally, having policy makers not consider the specific context in which the reform will be implemented and them not thinking ahead of time about the challenges they will face in the implementation process (Karami-Akkary, 2014; Bashshur, 2005; El Amine, 2005), as well as the lack of interaction between those who decide about the content of the reforms and between the

stakeholders who will be responsible for its implementation (El Amine, 2005), lead to failure in implementation. The case of the unsuccessful implementation of the Lebanese curriculum is a living proof of the existence of this problem: the planned scope and quality of the goals of the initiative were not reached during the implementation, creating a big gap between the planned effects and the actual effects of the initiative (El Amine, 2005).

Building School Capacity in Egypt

Egyptian schools are still far from successfully building their capacity to be in sustainable improvement, which is an added proof that successful capacity building is still an endeavor that many schools in the Arab world are failing at (Karami-Akkary & Rizk, 2011). A study conducted in Egypt, which aims at examining the capacity of Egyptian schools to be in constant improvement, reveals the failure of those schools to build their capacity to be in constant improvement, because of the major challenges that hinders the capacity building process. This study, that adopted a case study design, examined the perception of teachers about the capacity of their school to be in constant improvement and identified the differences in capacity between schools that are accredited by the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation and others that are not in order to identify the most important factors impeding the school's ability to continuously improve, and to present some recommendations from the perspective of the study participants on how to overcome those challenges. The participants of this study are four elementary schools in Cairo and include a group of teachers, principals, and quality managers in the department of Education. Two of the schools are governmental non-accredited primary schools while the other two are experimental governmental accredited primary schools. Data were collected through

interviewing twenty-one teachers, four principals and seven quality managers, as well as through analyzing questionnaires sent to a hundred and forty-seven teachers (Al-Mahdi, 2012).

The results of the questionnaires reveal that even the schools that are shown to have higher capacity than the others are shown to still have low capacity for improvement. The participants in the study agreed that there are challenges that face building the school's capacity for improvement, and some of those challenges are the following: (a) lack of material resources, (b) dissatisfaction of the teachers with the curriculum content and design and them not participating in its development, (c) low salaries, (d) teachers not buying into the benefits of continuous improvement, (e) lack of trainings in schools, (f) teachers not benefitting from the trainings that are being given to them and perceiving training as not beneficial and not related to their actual needs, (g) teachers feeling that they have a lot of duties while not receiving additional incentives, (h) absence of self-evaluation, (i) centralization of decisions at different administrative levels in the ministry of education and weak participation of executive and staff levels in policy development and in taking decisions related to them, (j) reluctance of distinguished candidates to pursue school leadership positions because of the lack of incentives. Also, the results of the study reveal that experimental and accredited schools have higher overall capacity for improvement than those that are not. This could be due to having in those accredited schools less density of students in the school and in the classes, to having more financial and technological resources, and to having a better work environment (Al-Mahdi, 2012).

The researcher offers recommendations as to how Egypt can develop the capacity of its schools to be in improvement and some of them are the following:

changing the structure of school leadership in a way that would enable having shared leadership, encouraging the establishment of effective partnerships between the school and the outside community, developing a system to prepare and train school leaders, and finally ensuring continuous support from national and local school authorities to schools (Al-Mahdi, 2012).

Change Initiative in the UAE.

Another evidence of unsuccessful school capacity building in the Arab world is found in the conclusion of a study conducted in the UAE that reveals that teachers did not buy into a change initiative implemented in schools all over the country, which is a major component of building the school's capacity to implement the change and which, if absent, hinders the successful implementation of the change. This qualitative study aims at studying the feelings and experiences of sixteen Arab female secondary school English language teachers pertaining to three different schools in the UAE after a top-down change in the curriculum. The decision to change was taken by the ministry and consisted of changing the official books of English for grades ten to twelve (Troudi & Alwan, 2010).

The authors conclude that it was clear that the teachers did not buy into the change: they criticized all of its aspects and many disregarded the techniques that were introduced in this innovation and they continued using the old methods. Thus, they implicitly resisted it. Teachers' feelings went through three main stages, which mirrored an alteration in their attitude toward the change. At first, teachers were content with the change and they embraced it. However, when they got exposed to the course materials, their satisfaction turned into displeasure and exasperation. This was due to being overloaded and committing errors in teaching plans, which in turn brought on some

stress with regards to going through the whole of the syllabus before the end of semester exam. Finally, teachers who had already used the book a year earlier were more comfortable using it the second year because they learnt from mistakes of the past year and found as well as applied new solutions to dealing with the shortcomings they faced (Troudi & Alwan, 2010).

The authors recommend having teachers participate in curriculum change through including them in curriculum development processes. This would disable the development of negative psychological feelings such as marginalization and powerlessness. Also, they emphasize the importance of having the leaders of change address the feelings of those involved in curriculum innovation while planning for it, as this would enhance their morale. Moreover, taking teachers' feedback into consideration would decrease resistance, as well as issues during implementation, and would remove the need to boost teachers' morale. Finally, they suggest that whenever top down decisions are inevitable, teachers should be kept in the loop (Troudi & Alwan, 2010).

TAMAM, an Arab Initiative for School-Based Improvement

In the midst of scarcity of school based initiatives that focus on building school capacity for improvement, TAMAM, an Arab school-based initiative for school improvement seems to offer some promises. The project is aiming at changing the status quo by shifting the way educational reform is planned and implemented in the Arab world. The initiators of this project had two main concerns that motivated them to launch this initiative. Their first concern was the lack of empirical and culturally grounded knowledge about best educational practices, while their second concern was the poor quality of professional development in the Arab world. TAMAM pioneers a

new way for building school capacity in the Arab cultural context that aims at initiating, managing and sustaining school improvement (Karami et al., 2012). What makes TAMAM different from other initiatives for change is that it uses action research as a methodology to bridge the gap between research and development. As a result, its capacity building design was developed and refined through an iterative process of close monitoring of the implementation process, making it more responsive to the sociocultural contextual factors.

The TAMAM participants. Participants in the TAMAM project include three educational stakeholders: representatives from universities, practitioners in schools and decision makers either from the ministries of education or from private schools. A group of university professors and educational researchers at the American university of Beirut formed the project steering team (PST) whose role is to start up the implementation of the project and provide the impetus for its completion (<http://tamamproject.org>).

TAMAM currently encompasses eight countries and includes forty-six schools, three hundred fifty educational professionals trained on school based improvement, and seventeen researchers from eight different universities in the Arab world (American University of Beirut, Lebanese University, Sultan Qaboos University, Qatar University, Princess Noura Bint Abdulrahman University, Ahfad University for Women, American University in Cairo, Assiut University) (<http://tamamproject.org>; Katerji, personal communication, January 16 , 2018).

TAMAM's strategic goals. TAMAM has three strategic goals. The first goal is to enhance students' learning by building a community of practitioners who will be agents of change in the ministries of education, the schools, and the universities. This is

done through developing the skills of schoolteachers and building their leadership capacity for continuous school improvement, as well as through having an impact on how the coaches (university and ministry personnel) conduct professional development. The second goal is to enhance communication between schools, to build bridges between schools and the civil society, and between schools, universities and the ministries of education. The third goal is to build a theoretical understanding of effective school improvement that is based on evidence and that is rooted in the context of the Arab world (Karami et al., 2012).

The TAMAM professional development process. TAMAM adopts a bottom up approach to school improvement where practitioners at the school level are expected to initiate change and design innovative interventions to address salient problems of practice. This approach necessitates a certain level of competencies among school practitioners, and renders the capacity building activity necessary to achieve the goals of the school innovative intervention. TAMAM believes that building leadership capacity is key for inducing and sustaining improvement at the school level. This leadership capacity is built through a professional development (PD) program that aims at developing the following skills and competencies: participative leadership, inquiry, evidence based decisions, decisions and actions driven by needs, reflective dialogue and practice, evolving design planning, professional collaboration, de-privatization of practice, job embedded experiential learning, mentoring, and systematic documented practice. These competencies are developed and refined throughout the project until the end of its second phase however; most of them emerge by the conclusion of its first phase (Karami et al., 2012).

The professional development activities are divided into three phases. The first phase has as its objective to build the capacity of a school team, and includes having the team select and work on an improvement project under the guidance of coaches (university coaches, PST team and school-based coaches). During this first phase, most of the TAMAM skills and competencies exposed above are developed through having the school teams undergo a journey that consists of several steps. The teams start by pinpointing the need and developing the objectives for improvement. After that, they move to planning that encompasses developing the initiative for change, developing an action plan, and developing a plan for continuous monitoring. Finally, they implement the plan, evaluate it and take a decision of where to go next. The decision could be to share the experience with other teams or schools, to take administrative decisions, to reconsider the plan that was developed or to repeat the journey by pin pointing a new need. When this cycle is finished, phase one of the professional development activities would be over (Karami et al., 2012).

The second phase of the professional development activities consists of changing roles: the school improvement team will play the role of coaches in their schools, replicating the role that the PST assumed during the first phase, and hence will build the leadership capacity of other school members for the purpose of expanding the TAMAM learning experience to the whole school. During this phase, the TAMAM learning experience is institutionalized and the culture of the school is molded accordingly (Karami et al., 2012).

Finally, the third phase of the professional development activities is all about spreading this project to other schools in the same countries or in other countries.

University coaches or school-based coaches would be responsible for overlooking the startup of the project in those new schools (Karami et al., 2012).

TAMAM's approach. TAMAM's approach is based on the PST's belief that adults learn best through experience coupled with mentoring. This is why the school teams are trained, through job embedded professional development, on how to choose what area they want to examine, and on how to collect, analyze and come up with actions for reform without the PST providing directives. Also, TAMAM believes that an alteration in behavior is "self-generated", which leads it to stress on altering the framework that mold peoples' thoughts and behaviors, and to use inquiry and reflective practice, in order to aid school teams in becoming aware of their beliefs, and in challenging them to get to know and seek alternative perspectives and end results as part of them being change agents in their schools (Karami et al., 2012).

TAMAM's monitoring process. TAMAM believes in the importance of monitoring which goal is to gather data about the process that the initiative undergoes, through deliberate, constant, and systematic documentation. For this reason, both the school teams and the PST do monitoring. This monitoring informs the school teams about the success of their improvement plan and allows the PST to keep track of the progress of the implementation of the project, to inform both its emerging plan and design approach, and finally to provide timely data about the impact of the project. Also, this continuous monitoring allows TAMAM to celebrate its achievements, which would boost the morale of all the stakeholders. A very important feature of the TAMAM monitoring process is having every TAMAM member play a specific role in it (Karami, ElSaheli, Sarrieddine & Katerji, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

Five theoretical models that are reviewed above are the anchors of the research process: Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) model of capacity building for sustainable school improvement, Leithwood and Riehl's model for successful leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), the model of leadership in the sociocultural context (Ylimaki et al., 2012), the concerns based adoption model (Hall et al., 1973) and finally the TAMAM model for building school capacity (Karami et al., 2012).

According to these models, building school capacity for sustainable improvement has as its goal the betterment of student achievement (Newmann et al., 2000) and consists of several actions done at the school level to positively affect both the school as a whole and the knowledge, the skills and priorities of the school staff through the process of change (Bain et al., 2011). Several factors and conditions provide the necessary climate for building school capacity for change. Leadership plays a major role in promoting building school capacity. Such leadership should be sensitive to the sociocultural context (Ylimki et al., 2012), should meet the concerns of those implementing the change (Hall et al., 1973) and should aim at building leadership capacity in the school (Lambert, 1998, 2003; Slater, 2008). This requires the presence of an effective leader (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) who adopts a collaborative leadership style (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Slater, 2008). Providing the staff with adequate professional development (Newmann et al., 2000) and building professional learning communities (King & Newmann, 2001; Senge, 1990, as cited in Dinham and Crowther, 2011) constitute other major contributors to building the school's capacity. Finally, the use of external support (Harris, 2001), developing trust (Cosner, 2009) and the use of

action research (Gall et al., 2010; McNiff, 2002) are added organizational conditions that can serve the process of building the school's capacity.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study explored capacity building for sustainable school improvement to develop an understanding about this phenomenon from the perspective of school leaders (principal and coordinators) and teachers in a Lebanese school. Also, it investigated the perspective of these practitioners regarding both the challenges they have experienced during the process of building school capacity, and the factors that promote school capacity building. These perspectives were analyzed and discussed in light of the theoretical understanding that the researcher developed from reviewing Leithwood and Riehl's model (2003) for successful leadership, the model for leadership in sociocultural contexts (Ylimaki et al., 2012), the TAMAM model for building school capacity (Karami et al., 2012), Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) model of capacity building for sustainable improvement, and finally the concerns based adoption model (Hall et al., 1973). The study also aimed at developing an extensive action plan that merges what theory recommends with the practical information gathered from the study to help the school better build its capacity for improvement.

Research Design

This study was conducted using a qualitative case study research design to achieve an in-depth understanding about the perceptions of the leaders (principal and coordinators) and the teachers about their experience with school based improvement and capacity building for sustainable improvement in the context of a Lebanese school. As Merriam (1998, 2009) claims, case study qualitative research aims at revealing the personal meaning that participants accord to different events and according to Weingand (1993), qualitative research has a special feature not found in quantitative

methodology since it allows the researcher to examine the participants in their social context and it provides an understanding about the phenomena under study. Moreover, it can uncover and explain both internal and external behavior (Weingand, 1993). Qualitative research follows an interpretivist approach that is defined by Gall et al. (2010) as involving “the belief that social reality has no existence apart from the meanings that individuals construct for it” (p. 15). As Merriam (1998, 2009) claims, qualitative interpretive research has as its premises that individuals make sense of reality through interacting with their social worlds, and the aim of research is to understand the different perspectives of reality that the participants have.

The study adopted a case study design because the researcher’s aim is to focus on one confined system, which is the school, and to gain an in-depth understanding about the process of building school capacity in this specific context. Case studies are used to achieve a deep understanding of a certain phenomenon within its context and of the meaning that participants construct (Gall et al., 2010; Merriam, 1998, 2009). As Gall et al. (2010) claim, a case study involves “in-depth investigation of the meanings that individuals ascribe to particular instances of a phenomenon, known as cases, in their natural settings” (p. 274).

Since a sub- goal of the study is to find, through collaborating with the stakeholders in the school, solutions to problems the school is facing regarding capacity building for sustainable school improvement, this case study also followed the guidelines of action research. Participatory action research aims at examining, restructuring and reforming social practices (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 2005). Its objective is to come up with solutions to problems meaningful to stakeholders through taking into consideration their perspectives and voices. Thus, it is an examination that is

undertaken ‘with’ internal stakeholders in an organization rather than done ‘to’ or ‘on’ them (Greenwood & Levin, 2005). It involves methodical reflection in which evidence should be provided to justify claims, and whose purpose is not merely to produce new knowledge, but also to induce progress in the individual both personally and professionally or to inspire the organization (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

The process of action research, which calls for the systematic identification of problems and the search for solutions, differentiates it from other traditional research that targets the production of knowledge that is generalizable and applicable to other contexts (Gall et al., 2010). Action research follows a spiral of self-reflective cycles that involve (1) planning for a change, (2) implementing the change and observing the process of implementation, (3) reflecting on the implementation, (4) planning while taking into consideration the results of the previous plan, (5) implementing the new plan, (6) reflecting on the implementation (Tyler, Bretherton, Halafoff, & Nietschke, 2008; Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 2005). Since this research is part of a Master’s thesis and thus has a limited scope, the researcher focused on the first part of the action plan cycle, which includes (1) identifying the need through conducting both an extensive literature review and an extensive investigation of what is happening in the school and (2) devising a plan of action. Hence, this study does not include the implementation of the plan or its evaluation. Since action research accords a crucial role to local knowledge and does not consider it less important than expert knowledge (Greenwood & Levin, 2005), the researcher solicited the views of the staff in order to develop a better understanding of the problem and to come up with an adequate action plan. Thus, the researcher did collaborative action research in the form of consultation where local opinions are solicited and then analyzed. After that, the researcher decided on a

course of action as recommended by Herr and Anderson (2005).

Finally, this study was guided by the grounded theory methodology for its data collection and analysis. Grounded theory, which originates from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967), suggests that researchers who adopt a qualitative methodology can conclude with a theoretical understanding based on the analysis of the data they gathered (Gall et al., 2010; Merriam, 1998, 2009). Thus, such researchers do not aim at verifying a preset theory or hypothesis through gathering data, but they rather gather data to discover a theory (Gall et al., 2010). Grounded theory proposes several steps that should be followed. First, the researcher transcribes the data gathered from the field and chunks it into segments. Following that, the chunks are grouped under categories of recurrent themes (Gall et al., 2010) (see Appendix D). The Leithwood and Riehl model for successful leadership (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), the model for leadership in the sociocultural context (Ylimaki et al., 2012), Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) model of capacity building for sustainable improvement, the concerns based adoption model (Hall et al., 1973) and the TAMAM model for building school capacity (Karami et al., 2012) were used to formulate a theoretical framework for the study. Thus, the researcher inductively developed conceptual categories from the data first gathered from the field, and compared this initial data with new data and with the literature reviewed. This process allowed the researcher to derive a theoretical understanding of capacity building for school improvement grounded in the data collected, yet informed by the existing theoretical models.

This study aims at answering the following research questions. From the perspective of Lebanese teachers and school leaders (coordinators and principal):

1. What does building school capacity for sustainable improvement mean?

2. What does an ideal process of change encompass?
3. What are the challenges faced during the implementation process specifically the challenges that relate to capacity building for sustainable school improvement?
4. What are the leadership qualities and actions that promote building school capacity for sustainable improvement?
5. What are the organizational conditions that promote building the school capacity for sustainable improvement?

Study Site and Participants

In this section, the study site, the school population characteristics, as well as the rationale behind selecting the staff members included in the study are described.

Study Site

This study was conducted in a small private K-12 school that caters to around three hundred students. This school is a well-known school in the Beirut area and has been there for more than a hundred years. Its language of instruction is English, it follows the Lebanese curriculum and gives the option to foreign students to study the American program when they reach grade nine. This school is neither an innovative school nor a failing or stagnant one. It is rather an average performing school that has a good reputation in its surroundings. The assumption is that like most schools in Lebanon, this school undergoes attempts at improvement. An example of such an attempt in the school under study was the recent introduction of smart boards in classes. The researcher did not choose an exemplary school or seek a school that has the reputation of being innovative because the aim is to study what is most likely the case in typical rather than atypical schools. For data collection, the researcher recorded journal notes, collected relevant documents and inquired about the improvement measures that

were done in the school and that the staff members know about, and asked about the measures that have accompanied this improvement, as well as about their perceptions about capacity building.

Characteristics of the Participants

The school includes a principal who has been in her position for more than thirty years, four coordinators who have more than ten years of teaching experience and thirty-two teachers who are mostly senior teachers (more than fifteen years of experience) and mid-career teachers (between three and fifteen years of experience) as defined by Pogodzinski (2014), and Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy (2007). Since the study focuses on capacity building for sustainable improvement, having a school with mid-career and senior teachers allowed the researcher to capture a broad range of perspectives especially that senior teachers are found to be more likely to resist change since it develops in them a sense of anxiety because they have developed routines and have a sense of security in the status quo (Chaar, 2013). The administrative staff was not included in the study, keeping the focus on the academic dimension of the school. Since the researcher wanted to ask the participants about a change initiative that was previously undertaken by the school, the teachers that were new to the school were not interviewed, which happen to include two novice teachers. Also, after having conducted two interviews with teacher assistants, the researcher decided to exclude them since their answers showed that they are marginalized and that their job is almost clerical. Besides excluding teacher assistants from the interviews, the researcher also decided, after conducting two interviews with part timers, not to pursue more interviews with them because their answers revealed that they were not involved in school matters especially when it pertains to improvement initiatives. Consequently, eighteen teachers

along with the four coordinators and the principal were the participants in the study (see table 1). Out of the eighteen teachers participating in the study, ten are mid-career teachers, eight are senior teachers, three hold a Bachelors degree only, nine hold a Bachelors degree and a T.D., two hold a Masters degree, three hold a technical degree and one did not complete her Bachelor degree. Added to the participants mentioned above, since the researcher teaches part time at the school, she participated in the study through recording journal notes.

Table 1

Responsibilities and Cycle the Participants Teach

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Participant code</u>	<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Participant 1	T1	secondary	Teacher
Participant 2	T2	elementary, middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 3	T3	middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 4	T4	elementary and middle	Teacher
Participant 5	T5	middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 6	T6	elementary and middle	Teacher
Participant 7	T7	elementary	Teacher
Participant 8	T8	preschool and elementary	Teacher
Participant 9	T9	elementary	Teacher
Participant 10	T10	preschool and elementary	Teacher
Participant 11	T11	middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 12	T12	preschool	Teacher
Participant 13	T13	elementary	Teacher
Participant 14	T14	elementary, middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 15	T15	middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 16	T16	preschool	Teacher
Participant 17	T17	preschool,	Teacher

		elementary, middle and secondary	
Participant 18	T18	elementary, middle and secondary	Teacher
Participant 19	C1	preschool, elementary, middle and secondary	Coordinator
Participant 20	C2	preschool, elementary, middle and secondary	Coordinator
Participant 21	C3	preschool, elementary, middle and secondary	Coordinator
Participant 22	C4	middle and secondary	Coordinator
Participant 23	P	preschool, elementary, middle and secondary	Principal

Data Collection Tools

Since this study is qualitative, it must generate a thick description of the view of the participants on capacity building for sustainable improvement, which are later compared to the models of successful leadership and the capacity model stated above. To gather such data, the researcher recorded journal notes, conducted individual interviews that include open-ended questions, conducted focus group interviews as well as individual interview aimed at member checking and collected relevant documents (see table 2).

Table 2

Data Collection Tool(s) Used for Each Research Question

<u>Research Questions</u>	<u>Methods for Collecting Data</u>	<u>Number of Respondents</u>
What does building school capacity for sustainable improvement mean?	Individual interviews	18 teachers and 5 leaders
	Focus group interviews	10 teachers and 2 leaders
What does an ideal process of change encompass?	Individual interviews	18 teachers and 5 leaders
	Focus group interviews	10 teachers and 2 leaders
What are the challenges faced during the implementation process specifically the challenges that relate to capacity building for sustainable school improvement?	Individual interviews	18 teachers and 5 leaders
	Focus-group interviews	10 teachers and 2 leaders
	Journal notes	
What are the leadership qualities and actions that promote building school capacity for sustainable improvement?	Individual interviews	18 teachers and 5 leaders
	Focus-group interviews	10 teachers and 2 leaders
	Journal notes	
What are the	Individual interviews	18 teachers and 5 leaders

organizational conditions	Focus group interviews	10 teachers and 2 leaders
that promote building the	Collecting documents	
school capacity for		
sustainable improvement?		

Journal Notes

Since the researcher has been teaching few hours at the school and hence had easy access into it, she was keeping a journal in which she recorded observations as a participant observant. Those observations were only used to support data that was already gathered from the individual and focus group interviews and hence to add to the credibility of the data. These observations allowed her to unveil actual behavior in the actual social setting rather than intended behavior.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with the principal, the four coordinators and eighteen teachers who have been in the school for more than a year. The researcher did not include teachers who joined the school during the year when the study was conducted since the aim is to examine a change initiative that the school already adopted in previous years. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), interviews that generate most data are those that are not structured and that are not confined by preset specific questions. Thus, semi- structured interviews were conducted during which probing and follow-up questions were used. In the first three interviews conducted, the researcher started asking the participants about their understanding about capacity building and sustainable improvement. In case the participants did not have an already existing conception about the concept, she used probes and shared orally, as needed,

with the interviewees how literature defines it, which helped them be more expressive. After that, the participants were asked about a change initiative that the school underwent, and about the measures taken to build the school's capacity to implement this initiative. Also, the participants were asked about the challenges that were faced during the implementation process of this change and of building school capacity, and about the measures that were taken to facilitate the implementation of this improvement initiative. Finally, they were asked about what they believe should be done by the leaders to better build the capacity of the school (see appendix A for the list of individual interview protocol questions). However, after conducting three interviews, the researcher realized that most of the participants were struggling to answer the question about the definition of capacity building, which led them to be apprehensive toward the rest of the interview questions. Because of that, she decided to leave this question till the end of the interview, and after leaving some room for them to answer the question without probing, she asked them to read the definition of capacity building as literature explains it and to comment on it. After that, the participants were asked about the activities they think would enable the school to reach its capacity and then were asked to read what the literature considers as being conducive actions that lead to capacity building and to comment on it. Also, one question was added at the beginning of the interview that asked the participants about their perceptions regarding what an ideal change process encompasses (see appendix B for the list of the revised individual interview protocol questions). The interviewees' consent was taken before they were audiotaped. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) noted, some people might not be at ease with sharing "sensitive information" while being recorded. Moreover, the researcher conducted on the school premises a sixty minutes individual interview with the

principal whose aim was member checking and during which the principal was asked to provide feedback on the themes that were generated. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim in preparation for data analysis.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews are a type of interview during which a group of people are involved in a discussion that is facilitated by a skilled interviewer (Gall et al., 2010; Merriam, 1998, 2009). In order to do member checking and triangulate the data, one focus group interview with three teachers, one focus group with seven teachers and one focus group with two coordinators were conducted. The participants in the focus group were selected conveniently based on their availability. During these interviews, the participants were asked to give their feedback about the themes that were generated after coding the individual interviews (see appendix C). These interviews were sixty to seventy five minutes long, were audiotaped, transcribed and coded and were conducted after analyzing the data gathered from the individual interviews and from the journal notes and after generating the main recurring themes. This allowed the researcher to make sure that the data gathered from the journal notes (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) as well as from the individual interviews are credible from the perspective of the participants. Also, conducting focus groups allows the researcher to interview several people at the same time and to have richer data, since the participants are not only being subjected to the questions and comments of the interviewer but are also listening to the answers of their colleagues, which could help them recall important information they would like to share (Gall et al., 2010).

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

In a case study qualitative research methodology, the researcher starts data analysis during data collection in order to find the major themes and to alter or add to the data collection procedure, for the sake of shedding the light on more issues regarding the phenomenon under study (Gall et al., 2010). The data were analyzed using interpretational analysis that is defined by Gall et al. (2010) as “the process of closely examining and grouping elements in case study data to fully describe, evaluate, or explain the phenomenon being studied. The goal of interpretational analysis is to identify constructs, themes, and patterns that best make meaning of the data from a case study” (p. 281). Thus, the researcher read the individual interview transcripts and derived themes from the different segments of data, organized all the data under these common themes and then interpreted them to answer the research questions of the study. The final step of the analysis was to compare the themes to the models used as the theoretical framework of this study. Thus, the analysis of the data was done in five stages: (1) coding the data, (2) comparing the data of different participants through using the constant comparative method, which consists of comparing one chunk of data to another chunk of data in order to conclude similarities and differences as outlined by Merriam (1998, 2009), (3) developing common themes, (4) organizing all the data under the common themes, (5) comparing the themes that emerged from the interviews with the models chosen as the theoretical framework of the study. The responses of the leaders and the teachers were organized in a table (see table 3) in the form of themes and sub-themes. The frequency of each theme was recorded reflecting the number of participants that mentioned this theme in their responses.

The second step of data analysis involved developing a profile, from the perspectives of the teachers and the leaders, of the ideal process that comprises the organizational conditions and the leadership qualities and practices needed for building the school's capacity for change, and also involved exposing the challenges faced when building the school's capacity.

To protect the privacy of the participants, each participant was given a code. The code starts with T and is followed by a special number if it is a teacher, while the code starts with C and is followed by a special number if it is a coordinator. As for the principal, she was not given a code but was rather referred to directly.

Quality Criteria

Several quality criteria were adopted in this study and measures were taken to address them. Each criterion and the measures used to abide by these criteria are presented in this section.

The first quality criterion is internal validity. Internal validity is as Merriam (1998) defines it, the extent to which the findings reflect reality. Merriam (1998, 2009) suggests several measures to ensure internal validity, which are triangulation, member checks, long-term observations, peer-examination, collaborative or participatory research, and finally clarifying the researcher's assumptions at the beginning of the research to minimize his biases. The measures that the researcher took in this study are triangulation, member checks with the leaders (principal and coordinators) and with the teachers, coding checks, clarifying the theoretical framework that is the anchor of the study, writing before data collection what the researcher predicts the perceptions of the participants will be, recording journal notes and making herself familiar with the culture of the school. Triangulation consists of using diverse sources of data, different means to

collect data, different researchers to analyze the data and different theories to check the findings (Gall et al., 2010). Triangulation was performed through conducting individual interviews and focus group interviews, through recording journal notes and finally through gathering relevant school documents. Both the documents collected and the journal notes provided answers to the same questions but through different data collection tools. However, the documents gathered were very limited, as the only documents available and related to the focus of the study are the yearbook, as well as the rules and regulations document distributed to the staff at the beginning of the year. On the other hand, member checks comprise of asking the participants to review the research report for them to check whether what is written is accurate and comprehensive (Gall et al., 2010). The focus groups allowed the researcher to perform this member check. Moreover, the researcher performed coding checks by recoding the data after two weeks from the initial coding and by asking another researcher to code ten percent of the data for her to compare between the coding of the second researcher and hers.

The second quality criterion is external validity or transferability, which is concerned with how much the results of the study can be applicable and generalized to other situations (Merriam, 1998, 2009). To meet this criterion, the researcher gave a thick description of the context and of the situation of the school through describing the characteristics of the participants.

The third quality criterion is reliability, which refers as Merriam (1998) suggests, “to the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (p. 205). However, since this is a study dealing with human behavior that is not fixed, it is impossible to ensure that this behavior can be replicable. Instead, as Merriam (1998, 2009) suggests, “rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, a researcher

wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense” (p.206). According to Merriam (1998, 2009), to have consistency between the findings of the study with the data gathered three techniques could be used. The first technique is triangulation, the second technique is having the researcher clarify his/her position in terms of what assumptions he/she has regarding the topic under study and finally, the third technique is audit trail that consists of presenting in details how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206-207). The researcher adopted the three techniques that Merriam (1998, 2009) suggests to ensure that reliability is being met. The researcher collected data from individual interviews, from journal notes and from documents gathered and she clarified her conceptual framework that is derived from literature and that guided her thinking throughout the study. In addition to those techniques, the researcher kept a journal in which she kept a record of the data collection process and described her reasoning throughout the analysis process.

Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations that need to be considered. First, because of the limited free time that the teachers have, many interviews were conducted in two phases, which made getting at abundant data challenging. Also, it made it more difficult for the teachers to link what they said during the second part to what they said previously during the first part of the interview, and it made it more difficult for the researcher to ask about discrepancies in their answers. Second, because of the limited free time that teachers have, the researcher was not able to have all the seven teachers stay till the end of the focus group interview. Third, it was not possible to have all the leaders participate in the focus group interview. The second and the third factor made the study

lose an essential criterion that consists of having the participants interact together,
which would have enriched the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study explored the perceptions of teachers and leaders about building school capacity for sustainable school improvement. It has a threefold purpose: (1) to identify the perspectives of teachers and leaders regarding building school capacity for improvement, (2) to analyze the perceptions of the leaders and teachers through comparing their perspectives with what literature recommends regarding building school capacity, (3) to come up with an action plan that would support the school in better building its capacity for sustainable improvement. This chapter reports the findings of the study in six sections: the first section describes one change initiative that the school underwent. The second section, answers the first research question through presenting the definition of the participants regarding building school capacity for improvement. The third section answers the second research question through describing what an ideal change process encompasses from the perspective of the participants. The fourth section answers the third research question through exposing the challenges faced during the implementation of the change initiative. The fifth section answers the fourth research question through displaying the leadership qualities and actions that the participants in the study consider as enabling the process of building the school's capacity for improvement. Finally, the sixth section answers the fifth research question through presenting the organizational conditions that are, according to the participants, conducive to building the school's capacity for improvement.

The Change Initiative: Integrating Technology in the Classrooms

Teachers' experiences with change and building capacity were explored by

asking the teachers to recall a change initiative that they have experienced at their school. The aim of asking the participants to narrate the process of a specific change that was implemented in the school was for the researcher to construct an understanding of how innovations are introduced there, and of the perspective of the teachers and the leaders on the capacity building process that took place. Thus, in the following section, the narrative of an implemented change initiative that the participants in the study agreed in considering as a major innovative intervention that took place in their school is described, through the eyes of the teachers and the leaders.

The school under study has undergone several change initiatives during the last five years. However, when the researcher asked the participants about one major change initiative that was implemented recently, the majority mentioned the integration of technology in instruction, and more specifically the introduction of the use of smart boards in the school, as the most prominent change initiative implemented. Hence, following is an account, from the perspectives of the teachers and the leaders at this school, of how this change initiative was introduced and implemented.

A year ahead of the implementation of the change, the teachers were sporadically exposed to the idea that smart boards might be installed in classes. Teachers reported that they informally heard colleagues holding leadership position at the school talk about it. They recounted that the leaders asked for the opinions of the teachers informally and mentioned that this change might be implemented. At the end of that school year, a general meeting was held, during which the teachers were formally informed that few smart boards have been purchased and that they will be put in some classes for use at the beginning of the next school year. As planned, at the beginning of the following school year, few boards were placed in the KG classes and

two boards were installed in two rooms that could be used by the elementary and secondary classes. Gradually, during the subsequent years, more boards were added.

Based on the responses of the study participants, the decision to put the interactive boards in the school was taken singlehandedly by the principal, and teachers' needs and priorities were not tapped into. Many teachers and coordinators stated that they had no say at all when it comes to this decision however, they said that their contribution to the change initiative came during the implementation stage, as they had a role to play regarding the scope of implementation. According to them, it was their input that led to the introduction of more boards. As T15 noted, "yes we had a say in the decision, not of putting the first board but in installing the other boards, yes we had a major say into it." Likewise, T10 shared that "till the day it was put we did not have much say in it but after we did". However, some teachers pointed out that prior to taking the decision of putting the boards, the principal consulted with few teachers about their opinion. C1 explained:

I think this came from the top, it was a top down change. It was driven by the admin, by the principal basically. And it was done this way. Some of the input in the administrative team was taken into consideration as to how to implement it but I think the decision was made by the principal basically to put the boards.

The researcher's observations confirm what the teachers said. Most of the school wide changes done in this school are decided upon by the leaders and sometimes only by the principal but after that, teachers are given room to share their input and at many instances they are asked for their feedback. On the other hand, when the change is instructional and is at a classroom or cycle level, the principal goes by what the teachers say and she repeatedly says to the teachers that they are the experts, that they know

more and that their opinion will guide the decision-making. One example of that is the change of the kindergarten report cards. The principal met with the teachers and they came up collaboratively with its format and its content. Also, it is clear that the principal does not only aim at gathering the feedback of the teachers, but she also asks for students' opinion whenever the change is directly related to them.

According to the principal, choosing whom to ask regarding introducing the boards in the classes was based on the readiness of the person to cooperate and thus, those who were ready to do so were brought into the process early and were asked for their input. Also, she claimed that those who were forthcoming in expressing their views were asked for their input more frequently than others. She noted, "some were more verbal than others. People who had previous experience and exposure were more verbal because they were more at home with what was happening." According to the teachers and some leaders, the decision taken faced resistance from many teachers who did not buy into it and all the teachers who were not previously exposed to smart boards were fearful, and seem to have questioned their capacity to meet its demands. Despite the resistance, the principal thought that she would move with those who are convinced and are enthusiastic about the change initiative, and then the others would move along when they realize the positive effects of the change. Thus, the principal was strategic in imposing the change and did not set expectations for full implementation at the beginning, gradually inviting participation to cushion the negative initial reactions. As the principal explained, "it was not designed where each teacher had to use it by force or by order. We left a bit of leeway for them to be comfortable and use it when they are comfortable." According to her, this gradual implementation decreased teachers' resistance and hence the challenges faced.

According to the respondents, the vision of the change was mentioned in passing during meetings however, it seems that there were no deliberate actions taken by the principal to ensure that it is clearly articulated and disseminated to all the teachers. Some teachers shared that they deduced the vision by themselves. One example is what T17 asserted, “I concluded it. Maybe it was told but not very clearly, maybe it was said that we are modernizing but through the discussion. It wasn’t given its time alone.” Another respondent (C1) also explained, “formally in the sense written on a document? I don’t think it was written in a document, but it was discussed and promoted and resisted and re-promoted.”

According to the teachers and the leaders, there was no attention as to the training they will be receiving in order to be prepared for the implementation of the change initiative. They were called during the summer vacation and were told that after few days they had to attend a three-day training during which they need to have a laptop with them. Several respondents shared that it was very hard for them to get laptops at such a short notice, since many of them had to buy one and did not have the financial means to do so. Also, the teachers explained that the training was very fast and condensed, was purely technical, did not include any emotional support, was not continuous, and that no further training was offered to them. Moreover, they added that while the current staff members received a brief training, the newcomers were not trained formally but were asked to meet with the IT specialist at school to get acquainted with the basics of how to use the boards. The principal explained that no formal training was offered to newcomers because they have access to online resources, which are enough for them to be able to use the boards. The observations of the researcher confirm that in the school, new-comers are not formally and adequately

introduced to what is happening in the school and to how things should be done. Also, the journal notes reveal that on one hand teachers verbalize that they are not happy with the lack of trainings, but on the other hand they complain about having to stay after school for trainings.

Teachers explained that following the training, many took the initiative to create a WhatsApp group with the trainer. That was the only outside support they got during the implementation. However, according to the teachers, after some time, the WhatsApp group stopped being useful as the trainer stopped answering their questions.

Teachers also reported that during the training, they were told that it is required from them to develop a lesson related to the interactive boards and that they had a month to prepare it. Several teachers shared that the process of developing the lesson was nerve wracking and many got a tutor to help them do it. T17's statement explains how having to prepare this lesson increased the anxiety of teachers and resulted in feelings of inadequacy. Some went as far as reporting that the training was more of a go along experience rather than a meaningful learning experience:

They said it in a way that this lesson should be perfect and so on. They gave us the wrong image. They did something that is fake, and some teachers asked a tutor to do the lesson for them. Practically speaking we didn't benefit from it. We just panicked.

Moreover, teachers' responses reveal that though the administration encouraged them verbally to help each other, however, it did not provide the needed support in terms of aligning teachers' schedules to provide them with a common meeting time. As a result, teachers explained that cooperating with other teachers was the outcome of a personal initiative. As T10 remarked, "the admin was not into the

details of what we do. You help each other or no it's your business." However most of the teachers felt that there was a spirit of cooperation and that teachers were lending a helping hand to those who needed it. Very few teachers argued that competition rather than collaboration was present. The observations of the researcher corroborate what teachers said. Indeed, the spirit of collaboration is very clearly present at school. For instance, when the teachers started using the program to input the grades for the first time, the researcher noticed that they were helping each other out of personal initiative. However, no specific free time was allotted to them to team up and work on it together.

As for the evaluation and monitoring of the change related to the smart boards, teachers reported that throughout the process, their work was monitored informally through sporadically questioning them about their usage of the boards, and through observing them occasionally in class. A leader (C1) reported: "I went to the classrooms for observation. We had a checklist done for observations, but it was for general observation. But that year we were focusing a bit more on the board, how is it being used." On the other hand, evaluation was also done informally. Teachers were asked to give their feedback orally about the technicalities of the usage of the board. As T6 explained, "usually every time when we had a meeting or something of this sort she would ask us what do you think, is it good or not?" There were no clear criteria or standards against which the change was evaluated. As T7 explained, the leaders were asking the teachers for feedback much more at the beginning of the implementation than in later phases. He noted that this strategy indirectly secured the acceptance of the teachers without them needing nor demanding the results of a formal evaluation of the potential merit of this intervention:

Yes at the beginning after we started using them then finish it became like a

habit and we are okay with everything and maybe because not a lot of negative comments came out. So finish it was supposed that we are happy with the results.

According to the principal the evaluation couldn't but be informal; she argued that it could only happen through questioning the teachers and the students since implementation was not enforced at the beginning.

In what follows, the compiled themes and subthemes that emerged from the leaders' and teachers' responses during both the individual interviews and the focus group interviews are presented.

Table 3

Frequency of Responses of the Research Participants

	Frequency of Responses of the Research Participants in the individual interviews		Frequency of Responses of the Research Participants in the focus group interviews	
	Responses of Teachers N=18	Responses of Leaders N=5	Responses of Teachers N=10	Responses of Leaders N=3
Building School Capacity for Improvement	18	5	10	3
Capacity Building as Trainings	8	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
Capacity Building as the Outcome of Collaboration	5	0	10	3
Capacity Building as Social and Emotional Support	4	0	10	3
Capacity Building as Expert Support	2	0	10	3
Capacity Building as Aligning Specialty Area with Task Distribution	2	0	10	3
Ideal Process of Change	18	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Triggering Change	17	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Leaders and/or teachers as triggers of change	12	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Parents and/or students as triggers of change	7	1 coordinator	9	3

Designated team as trigger of change	1	Principal 2 coordinators Principal	3	3
Building a Shared Vision	8	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Vision as set by leaders	3	1 coordinator Principal	10	3
Vision as set with teachers	5	2 coordinators Principal	3	3
Vision as informed by the experience of other schools	4	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
Piloting the Change Initiative	11	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Ensuring Flexible Planning	3	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
Setting a Formal Evaluation Process	15	3 coordinators Principal	10	3
Challenges Faced During Implementation	18	5	10	3
Inadequate training	12	0	10	0
Lack of time	13	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
No time to collaborate	5	3 coordinators	10	3

No time to be innovative	1	Principal	10	3
Rushed implementation	2	1 coordinator	10	0
Resistance to Change	4	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
Teachers who do not Value Collaboration	3	0	10	3
Lack of Sufficient Funding	2	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
<hr/>				
Leadership Qualities and Actions	18	4 coordinators Principal		
Leadership Qualities	18	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Has good communication skills	13	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
Is assertive	4	0	10	3
Is friendly and approachable	5	2 coordinators	10	3
Is an encourager	2	1 coordinator	10	3
Leadership Actions	18	4 coordinators Principal	10	3
Maintain open and inclusive communication	14	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
Reward creativity and good work	3	2 coordinators Principal	10	3
<hr/>				
	18	5	8	3

Organizational Conditions for Building School Capacity for Improvement				
Targeting Sustainability while still Aiming at Renewal	18	2 coordinators	8	3
Responsive Continuous Training	12	4 coordinators Principal	3	3
Shared Decision-making	18	4 coordinators Principal	8	3
Consultative decision-making	15	4 coordinators Principal	7	3
Collaborative decision-making	3	0	1	0
Well-established Trust	15	4 coordinators Principal	8	3
Facilitated Teamwork and Collaboration	17	4 coordinators Principal	8	3
Data-driven Decision-making	17	4 coordinators Principal	8	3
Reflective Practice	7	2 coordinators Principal	8	3
Availability of Necessary Resources Before and During the Implementation	11	4 coordinators Principal	8	3

Building School Capacity for Improvement

The first research question inquired about the way teachers and leaders define capacity building for sustainable improvement. Most of the participants (leaders and teachers) perceived capacity building as: a) trainings; b) the outcome of collaboration; c) social and emotional support; d) expert support; and e) aligning specialty area with task distribution.

Capacity Building as Trainings

During the focus group interviews, both teachers and leaders agreed that training is a crucial activity that facilitates the development of the school's capacity for improvement, while only eight out of eighteen teachers, the principal and two coordinators mentioned that without probing during the individual interviews (see table 3). They stated that sending teachers to trainings through workshops enables the school to build its capacity, as it keeps the teachers' mind stimulated and ready for learning, which makes it more likely that the teachers would be open to new ideas and practices. As T13 argued:

If the leader doesn't send the teacher to do training, this teacher would have his mind asleep. So now if I want to introduce to him the promethean after five years and he didn't do any training anywhere, he won't accept it easily. But the teacher if he is sent one year then the other and the other he will be prepared.

Capacity Building as the Outcome of Collaboration

During the individual interviews only five teachers mentioned that collaboration enables building the school's capacity for improvement. However, there was an overall agreement among the teachers and the leaders during the focus group interviews about that (see table 3). Some teachers mentioned collaboration across

different departments in the school, while others mentioned collaboration among the teachers and between the teachers and the leaders. T11 explained, “discussion should be practiced not only talked about. Also cooperation for example doing teamwork between the English teacher and the Arabic teacher.”

Capacity Building as Social and Emotional Support

While only four teachers mentioned, during the individual interviews, social and emotional support as crucial for building the school’s capacity to be in constant improvement, all the leaders and the teachers agreed during the focus group interviews that it is a key component (see table 3). One coordinator (C1) stated during the focus group interview:

sometimes we forget that we spend the largest part of our lives in the setting of the school, eight to nine hours which are the best chunk during which we are alert. Suppose I am here and I am neither supported socially nor emotionally from the morning till the evening. For sure it will be detrimental.

According to the teachers, the leaders need to encourage teachers and appreciate their efforts. Also, they must build the teachers’ self-confidence through providing them with constant feedback about their performance and through reassuring them that what they are doing is right. As T3 explained, “when the teacher is confident that what she is doing is right and she knows what she is doing then she can do well in conveying the information to the student.” Also, the respondents suggested that it is imperative that critical feedback is given in a positive and constructive manner for it to enhance teachers’ learning. Finally, teachers pointed out that leaders need to work on developing an agreeable work atmosphere in which teachers feel trusted and don’t feel threatened by their leaders, and in which their main concern is not to maneuver around

things to avoid criticism. One teacher (T17) explained:

In this way, all my capacity I am putting it for the improvement of the school. I am not putting my capacity not to hear remarks and so on. So this is very important. To have an atmosphere that is comfortable.

Capacity Building as Expert Support

Although only two teachers noted without probing, during the individual interviews, that having expert/technical support from their coordinator allows the teachers' capacity to be developed, teachers very strongly agreed with that during the focus group interviews and considered it to be one of the most important elements of building school capacity (see table 3). Also, there was a widespread agreement about that among leaders. Teachers argued during the individual interviews that it is crucial to have a specialized coordinator for each subject rather than one coordinator for several subjects, since this would allow him/her to give more time to the teachers and to provide ideas that are relevant to each subject matter. One teacher (T8) considered this specialized help as a necessary component of capacity building. He asserted, "we don't know its importance because we do not have a coordinator for each subject but it is very important. He tells us what to do, he gives us ideas to positively help the students."

Capacity Building as Aligning Specialty Area with Task Distribution

All the leaders and the teachers agreed during the focus group interviews that having teachers teach classes in their specialty area, rather than giving them responsibilities that do not relate to their field of expertise, is an important factor in building the school's capacity for improvement. However, during the individual interviews, only two teachers mentioned it as a key component to building the school's capacity for improvement (see table 3). According to one of those two teachers (T10),

this would allow teachers to focus on doing what they know best, which would decrease the possibility of having errors. She stated:

I am not with having a person carry all the load. I am not with having me teach French Arabic and art. I am with having me only teach and concentrate on one subject like they do outside Lebanon. That way you decrease the risk of having mistakes and you will have more efficiency.

Ideal Process of Change

When asked about their perception of the ideal process of change, most teachers suggested a sequence of steps to follow to ensure the success of the change initiative. These steps will be reported under the following headings: (a) triggering the change, (b) building a shared vision, (c) piloting the change initiative and lastly, (d) setting a formal evaluation process.

Triggering Change

There was a widespread agreement among leaders and teachers that change can be triggered by teachers, leaders, parents, and students.

Leaders and/or teachers as triggers of change. All the teachers concurred that both teachers and leaders can trigger change. Despite having only six out of sixteen teachers note that for a change to be effective, the leaders should trigger it, and having twelve out of sixteen teachers claim that teachers should have a crucial role to play in initiating it, there was an overall agreement among the teachers about that during the focus group interviews (see table 3). Some teachers put more emphasis on the leaders than on the teachers. As T17 remarked, it is the job of the principal to pinpoint the needs that are present in the school and to provide solutions to address those needs. She

suggested that “the responsibility of the principal is not to overlook things, he/she should always be planning, monitoring, comparing.”

On the other hand, those who emphasized the role of the teachers argued that teachers’ expertise and their constant contact with the students allows them to bring forth new ideas. As T6 contended, “from our experience we know that this is good, this is not good, that we should change this or that.”

Similarly, all the leaders agreed that both leaders and teachers can trigger change. During the individual interviews, three coordinators and the principal emphasized the importance of having teachers initiate change, while all the coordinators as well as the principal claimed that the leader can be the trigger of change (see table 3).

Parents and/or students as triggers of change. Most teachers agreed during the focus group interviews that students and parents should be given room to trigger change (see table 3). None of the teachers mentioned parents as key players in triggering change prior to probing during the individual interviews. Yet, two out of the sixteen teachers, who were probed during the individual interviews, claimed that parents must have a role to play when it comes to initiating change (see table 3). As T13 suggested, “(...) parents’ committee should play a very important role, a meeting of parents’ committee and teachers’ committee (...)” Teachers who agreed with that during the focus group interview argued that parents’ role should not be decisive but rather should be restricted to giving their opinion. One teacher (T17) justified that stance by saying that most parents nowadays lack the sufficient knowledge or are not sufficiently involved in their children’s education, which hinders them from giving informed opinions. Thus, their opinion should not be given a lot of weight in the decision-making process.

As for having students trigger change, five out of sixteen teachers claimed during the individual interviews that students should be the impetus for change and that their ideas should offer a considerable contribution to the changes happening in the school (see table 3). As T1 proposed, “even the students get the innovative idea. This way I will reach the improvement of their capacity. Because they are not receivers. They are active.” Similarly, T15 suggested that students’ ideas be heard and taken into consideration and that when a change is thought about, students should be told about it and it should be discussed with them. However, all the teachers agreed that students should not have a decisive power when it comes to which change should be implemented, but that their role is rather to highlight what their priorities are and to share their opinion about their needs and wants.

Similarly, there was a widespread agreement among the leaders that parents and students can trigger change (see table 3). The principal and one coordinator (C2) suggested during the individual interviews that parents could have a role to play in triggering change, and suggested that they can do so through a parents’ committee, while all the leaders in the focus group interviews agreed that parents and students can equally initiate change. One coordinator (C1) argued for that during the focus group interview and stated, “good leaders do not only listen to students’ and parents’ opinions but rather seek them.”

Designated team as trigger of change. Most of the leaders concurred that a team designated to come up with new ideas could trigger the change. However, there was no consensus between the teachers about its benefits. During the focus group interviews, some teachers disagreed with creating a team that would be responsible to trigger change, while during the individual interviews one teacher along with two

coordinators and the principal mentioned it without any probing (see table 3).

According to them, this team comes up with innovations and would work on planning for the change initiative. The teacher who mentioned that (T5) named this team the 'resourcing department' and suggested that its responsibility would be to look up for new ideas. He added that the people on this team could either be part time teachers or could have as their full-time job to research and plan. He stated:

The teachers or the people who work in it don't teach or teach partly, so they have free time to go to the Internet, to read, to get ideas. When you give time to the person and if he is gifted, he will come up with ideas.

As for the principal, she perceived this team as made up of students, teachers and parents who will assess the needs, have statistics to build on etc. On the other hand, one of the coordinators (C2) proposed that a committee made up of parents, teachers and administrators could be established and would take care of the initial steps of the change. She explained:

We should probably come up with a committee, maybe we could involve the parents in this committee as well, (...) we can for instance choose people from the parents' committee or suggest a different committee and choose people from the teachers' body and come up with a body that would be responsible for the first step of this change. Because I have people talking about change in the school, I hear it all the time. This is the only way to go, to form a committee.

When choosing the team members, one of the coordinators (C4) emphasized the importance of selecting trustworthy members of the teaching staff to work with. Those teachers would be representative of the different subject matters and would play the role of catalysts with the other teachers. She explained:

Maybe you would choose a certain group not all the teachers to work with.

You would pick a group you trust and on which you can rely and which you think will get you somewhere but at the same time you need to give them time.

Building a Shared Vision

Teachers and leaders agreed that it is important to have a shared vision of the change. While the focus group participants were unanimous about that, eight out of sixteen teachers, four coordinators and the principal mentioned, during the individual interviews and after probing, that having a shared vision is a very important component of a successful change process (see table 3); however, there were variations in their perception of the process needed to reach this shared vision. According to most of the teachers, setting the vision is the responsibility of the school formal leaders. They viewed setting the vision as a first step that needs to be followed by having those leaders convince the others about its promises, which would lead them to commit to it. In opposition to the teachers' view, the leaders argued that formulating the vision can be a shared endeavor between the leaders and the teachers or can be developed by the leader depending on how much the teachers have a role to play in the implementation of the change.

Vision as set by leaders. Most of the teachers believe that the leader must develop the vision of the change and that he/she needs to convince the teachers about it. When probed, three teachers reiterated during the individual interviews that though it is the responsibility of the leaders to set up the vision, they emphasized the importance of having teachers buy into this vision. All the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interview. According to them, it is essential for all the staff to be convinced about the goal they want to reach to have all of them be committed to working toward

achieving it. As T8 noted: “(...) building a common vision is like we are moving on one path, not each toward a direction.” Similarly, T5 explained:

If there is a lot of communication, a lot of harmony, that almost everyone is convinced in the goal of the school, because one cannot work alone, if the teachers are convinced with the administrators, this harmony leads to great results. If everyone is working in one direction.

On the other hand, most of the leaders believe that it is the responsibility of the leader to develop the vision when the teachers don't have a direct input in the implementation. During the individual interview, only one coordinator and the principal mentioned that the leader should develop the vision while all the leaders agreed with that during the focus group interview (see table 3). The principal explained that if none of the teachers has a vision, then there is no other choice than to have the leader come up with it and disseminate it.

Vision as set with teachers. Only a minority of the teachers believe that the vision should be the outcome of a discussion between the leaders and the teachers. During the focus group interviews, three teachers agreed with that and only five teachers mentioned, during the individual interviews, that it is crucial to have the teachers participate in the process of developing the vision (see table 3), since they have a lot to add to it because of their direct contact with the students. As T7 asserted, “it would be a discussion with the teachers. As I told you before, sometimes leaders or principals are not in contact with the students and classes, so their vision will sometimes be different than that of the teachers.” According to the teachers, when they do not participate in developing the vision, they will consider it as imposed by the leaders. As T15 explained, “it should be collaborative otherwise you are not coming up with a

vision, you are forcing it on us.” However, those teachers also argued that if the leader does not agree with the vision that the teachers have, he is under no obligation to adopt it. Hence, the final word in setting the vision is for the leader.

All the teachers who agreed with the importance of including the teachers in the process of developing the vision also agreed that developing a shared vision is not an easy task and needs a lot of time and communication. Moreover, two of those teachers added, without any probing, that it is a challenge to develop a common vision for all the school, and that they would rather advocate for building this common vision at the level of each department or by cycle since each department and cycle has its own specificities. As T9 elaborated:

(...) as an early childhood teacher my ideas cannot converge with those of the older students or with the curriculum of the old ones. You are talking about something related to the brain of the kid, his body, his development. The older ones would have already reached it. So I cannot unite in one idea with the older ones.

On the other hand, most of the leaders believe that the vision of the change should be the product of a discussion between the teachers and the leaders when the change is related to the area of expertise of the teachers and when they have an important role to play in its implementation. Two coordinators and the principal asserted during the individual interviews that having the teachers participate in developing the vision would allow them to work passionately (see table 3). As one of those two coordinators (C4) claimed, “when you took the opinion of all and you got to the best option with the majority this would lead the person to give wholeheartedly. It is

different than when it is imposed.” Similarly, the principal argued during the member-checking interview:

If you can have people do what they are doing out of conviction, this is a better basis for all what you are doing, and it is a long run thing that would last. While if you enforce it just because you think it’s the best, the minute you have the force behind it faltering, it will fall into pieces.

However, none of the coordinators or the principal specified that the vision should be developed by cycle or by department, they all spoke of one vision for the whole school.

Vision as informed by the experience of other schools. Most of the participants (leaders and teachers) agreed that the experience of other schools should inform the vision of the change. Although all the participants agreed during the focus group interviews that using other schools’ experience is an important component of building the school’s vision for change, only four out of eleven teachers, the principal and two coordinators who were explicitly asked during the individual interviews about the importance of using external support, postulated that the school could benefit from the experience of other schools when it comes to setting its vision for change (see table 3). They shared that it could do so through asking other schools about the change they passed through, about what worked and what didn’t, and through having teachers attend workshops in other schools to profit from the experience of teachers who implemented the change. As T8 explained, “maybe we can attend a whole day or a whole week with schools who do that.” The principal considered having other schools as external support as beneficial for the whole educational system, as it allows each school to share with

other schools the knowledge gained, which would enhance the cumulative construction of knowledge. She explained:

We as a school work on one side of the story, and another school works on another part. So each of us are leaders in our own way and we are researching one or two objectives and we are improving ourselves through getting to know more. We share this knowledge with others to improve the whole system and the whole country. I genuinely believe that if the spirit is correct we have a lot to learn from each other.

In opposition to this view, one teacher (T7) was not very welcoming of having outsiders' ideas shape the school vision for change, and contended: "I don't know if asking other teachers to come to our school is a good idea or having workshops together." She believes that this is not possible because of the competitive dynamics present between different schools. The principal also argued that the competitive system is a challenge to having such an exchange between schools. She explained:

We do live in a very competitive system especially in Lebanon because in our system we have something that we all have to pass through, the baccalaureate, how many pass, etc. So I don't know how well it will work in our very competitive system and I don't know whether the community is ready to understand that we can collaborate without having to fight.

Piloting the Change Initiative

After probing, eleven out of fourteen teachers, four coordinators and the principal agreed during the individual interviews that piloting the change is a key characteristic of an ideal change process (see table 3). Nevertheless, the perception of the respondents regarding what piloting consists of was not unanimous: some defined it

as implementing the change on a small scale, while others defined it as slow implementation on a whole school level. However, some of the respondents who mentioned piloting demonstrated an understanding of having piloting as the first step of planning for a change, and expressed the necessity of having a plan that is not rigid, but they did not seem to understand what needs to be done to ensure the flexibility of this plan throughout the implementation process. They showed no awareness about the process of monitoring and about its necessity in the process of developing an evolving and flexible plan.

In fact, most teachers as well as all the leaders agreed with the importance of trying the change at a small scale before implementation. During the individual interviews, nine teachers, the principal and three coordinators agreed that it is necessary to try the change on a small scale rather than directly starting it at a whole school level, in order to ensure impact and to alter the aspects of the change initiative that proved to be unsuccessful. As T11 explained, when probed about launching the change initiative in the whole school:

... you need to try the first time if it worked or if it failed, if it failed why it failed. So we would improve the things that lead us to failure.

In addition, the respondents agreed that the aim of piloting is to discover the benefits and shortcomings of the change are. Two teachers (T2 and T3) added that having the teachers experience the impact of the change on the group on which it was tried, allows them to become convinced about its added value and would give them the time to slowly gain familiarity with the new practices that this change introduced to the school. Hence, as T3 argued during the focus group interviews, this would decrease resistance. She stated, “since the opinions were taken and it was done on a small scale

and teachers are okay with it, then there will be no problem and teachers cannot give excuses as to why they are not implementing it.” As for the principal, she suggested that a change should be tried at a small scale especially when the project is not urgent to implement, when there is a high probability for it to fail and when the way to implement it is not very clear.

Another understanding of piloting that few participants shared, and that the coordinators and many teachers disagreed with during the focus group interviews, is having voluntary implementation at the beginning of the implementation process. Two teachers (T12 and T15) as well as the principal considered piloting as the stage where the change is introduced in all the school while asking teachers for voluntary rather than mandatory participation during early stages of the implementation. According to these respondents, this approach to piloting aims at showing the stakeholders how serious the school is regarding implementing the change, while allowing them to join at their own pace. As T12 stated, “(...) let them experiment it for a year before they are obliged to use it.” The principal added that directly implementing the change on a whole scale is done when starting the change at a small scale is not possible and that it should be clear from the first moment that the school administration’s intent is to institutionalize this change.

As for how the innovation should be piloted, two teachers (T15 and T16) emphasized that it should not abruptly interrupt the existing instructional activities, but should rather be gradually incorporated in these practices, thus allowing the students to smoothly transition into accepting the new practices. T15 explained:

I will keep the old and I will start inserting the new. I don't like sweeping everything up the table. It doesn't work that way with kids. You know it's like changing everything and they become restless and anxious.

Another benefit of gradual incorporation of the new practices that those two respondents mentioned is that it would diminish the risk of having bad repercussions on students, in case the change proved to have negative effects. As T16 explained: "(...) if you can combine it then it would be much better, slowly, slowly. Like that (...) the students wouldn't loose on anything."

Ensuring Flexible Planning

Most of the study participants believe that it is imperative for the plan to be flexible. After probing during the individual interviews, three out of ten teachers, two coordinators and the principal asserted that developing a flexible plan is an important component of an ideal change process and of effectively building the school's capacity for sustainable improvement, while all the leaders and the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interviews (see table 3). A teacher (T15) explained that the plan needs to be flexible for the first three years. This is so because the implementation process is subject to many unanticipated challenges that might emerge and that necessitate decisions and actions that can alter the sequence, scope or nature of actions taken. She stated, "yes we should put a road map. But along the way we know that changes are going to happen because we are dealing with human beings." Likewise, according to the principal, it is necessary to have a flexible plan that can be altered through the implementation process. She claimed that the planning "should not be so rigid where you cannot change anything, it is an ongoing process, so it should allow flexibility."

Setting a Formal Evaluation Process

Respondents do not seem to consider setting a formal evaluation process as a key component of an ideal change process. The researcher had to probe repeatedly during the interviews to bring this step to their attention. Moreover, when asked specifically about monitoring and evaluating the change, the respondents did not seem to clearly differentiate between those two concepts, as most of them used the two terms interchangeably. After probing, fifteen out of eighteen teachers, three coordinators and the principal agreed during the individual interviews about the importance of having a formal evaluation process (see table 3). Some of them specified having continuous evaluation as an important characteristic of an effective evaluation process, while others mentioned having written evaluation and/or having preset criteria.

Teachers and coordinators unanimously claimed that the evaluation should be continuous. Despite having only seven out of eighteen teachers, the principal and one coordinator agree during the individual interviews about the importance of continuous evaluation, most of the participants concurred with that during the focus group interviews (see table 3). However, two of those teachers (T9 and T10) and one coordinator (C1) suggested that even when there is continuous evaluation during the implementation process, its frequency should decrease with time, based on how much the innovation has become part of the routine. For them, evaluation is a temporary measure rather than an integral function of the system. C1 explained:

It needs some time of monitoring until whoever is implementing it or oversees implementing it is sure that it has become part of the habit, the habit of your staff or your students. Because people tend to regress if it hasn't become part of how we do things.

Likewise, the principal explained:

If you are doing a good evaluation, ideally you come to a point where the outcome of your evaluation has got to a percentage rate of convincing you, where you would say okay I would let it be with this vigor at this point of time and I'll keep an eye on it but I don't have to keep evaluating with the same frequency and rigor as before.

Added to that, three teachers (T10, T11 and T14) who agreed that having constant evaluation is important, expressed during the individual interviews concerns about its feasibility and pointed to the quality of teachers' feedback when it is solicited early in the process. According to these respondents, teachers' feedback might not be accurate in the early stages due to their lack of familiarity with the new practices, and their fearful reaction from its novelty. Contrary to the views shared above, one coordinator (C3) argued that there is no need to have an evaluation at all when it is clear that all the teachers are content with the change, and when this change addresses a need that they spoke up about. He added that we do not have the luxury to spend time on doing an extensive evaluation, but we rather need a quick answer that would guide us to the next action that should be taken. When probed on whether having continuous evaluation is needed, he responded, "No there is no need to go into details because I want a quick answer. I don't need to start analyzing data and try to find reasons. I want to have a quick answer (...)"

Another component that most of the participants (leaders and teachers) considered to be an important characteristic of an effective evaluation is the necessity of having preset criteria for evaluation. Although all the teachers and the leaders agreed with that during the focus group interviews, during the individual interviews only seven

out of eighteen teachers, the principal and three out of four coordinators mentioned after being probed about setting an evaluation plan, the need to have preset criteria that emerge from the goals of the change. C1 explained:

I think that once you decide to change you should have some objectives right, I want to get A, B, C. So, you can develop some kind of criteria to see how the objectives have been met as you are doing the change.

Those criteria, according to T14, should be inclusive of the criteria set by each coordinator (IT coordinator, science coordinator etc.) to have all the aspects of the change evaluated.

Additionally, another characteristic that most respondents (leaders and teachers) considered as being a key aspect of an effective evaluation is to have it written. While all the focus group interview participants (teachers and leaders) agreed with that, only nine out of eighteen teachers, the principal and one coordinator mentioned, during the individual interviews, having a written evaluation as essential. They shared that it should be so to be able to keep a reference of what was said, and to work on improving the shortcomings. T7 elaborated, “everything should be recorded or written down to have a reference to go to, in which point we didn’t like this, what are its negatives, positives”. On the other hand, only one coordinator (C4) out of the four coordinators perceived having a written evaluation as necessary when the scope of the change encompasses many people. She argued:

(...) if for a certain decision there is a group involved and maybe some do not agree maybe we should have it written to have a reference. But for small things no but big ones yes, to have it written and to have a record of it is important.

While most of the teachers and the leaders agreed that there should be a formal evaluation process, their conception of what it should encompass was mostly incomplete. Only three teachers mentioned having preset criteria, having continuous evaluation, and having written evaluation as necessary components of an evaluation process, while only two mentioned two of those aspects and ten mentioned only one of them. As for the leaders, only the principal mentioned the three components while two coordinators mentioned two of them and one mentioned one of them.

Challenges Faced During Implementation

When asked about the challenges faced during the implementation process of a change initiative, and specifically the challenges that impede building the school capacity for improvement, inadequate training, lack of time, resistance to change, teachers not valuing collaboration, and finally lack of sufficient funding were brought up by the respondents.

Inadequate Training

Most of the teachers considered during both the individual interviews and the focus group interviews having an ineffective training as a challenge that they faced (see table 3) and that threatens the effectiveness of the change initiative and hinders building capacity for school improvement. Teachers believe that the lack of adequate training resulted in them developing a negative attitude toward the change initiative and impeded their capacity to adjust to the introduction of the smart board as an initiative in their school. According to them, the training was very fast, short, condensed and not ongoing, which psychologically distressed them.

Twelve out of eighteen teachers claimed that the training they got regarding introducing technology into the classroom was unhelpful. Teachers pointed at the

shortcomings of the fast pace training which led to having very condensed training sessions, while three teachers argued that more sessions should have been done. According to them, this added to the fear of the teachers and to their psychological distress. As T5 claimed, “so basically we needed more time and more psychological support and more support from the technical supply team.” In addition to the pace of the sessions, the teachers mentioned the lack of ongoing training as another negative aspect of the training. As T15 asserted, “you know with tech you need follow up sessions, which we lack honestly. I know how to use what is here but what about the updates?”

Lack of Time

Most respondents (teachers and leaders) believe that the lack of time is a challenge that faces building the school’s capacity for improvement. Thirteen teachers, the four coordinators as well as the principal argued during the individual interviews that one challenge that was faced during the process of change was the lack of time (see table 3). Some respondents mentioned that they did not have enough time to collaborate, while others reported that there was not enough time to be innovative and finally another group of respondents reported that there was not enough time given to them to assimilate the learning acquired before implementing the change.

No time to collaborate. Most of the teachers stressed that the lack of time to collaborate was one of the challenges faced. While all the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interviews, out of the thirteen teachers who mentioned during the individual interviews that the lack of time is a challenge they faced, five asserted that one of the challenges they came across was the lack of time to meet and work together (see table 3). One teacher (T1) explained that the presence of many part time teachers on the staff makes it very hard to find time to meet as a team and hence to

collaborate. Part timers, per contract are typically not required to be in the school beyond the classroom time. Added to that, two teachers (T13 and T5) claimed that the teachers are overburdened, they move from class to class and barely have time to see each other- if they do- during the breaks and the very few free times. There is no time set aside in their schedule to meet and collaborate. The absence of collaboration led to a lack of communication, which was mentioned by several teachers during the focus group interviews as an impediment to building the school's capacity. According to those respondents, new teachers are not notified about the way things are done and old teachers are often not told about new rules and changes that have been set.

Likewise, most of the leaders believe that the lack of time to collaborate is a challenge. Three coordinators asserted during the individual interviews that there is not enough time for teachers to team up and for teachers and leaders to meet to discuss things (see table 3). As C1 stated, "sometimes even teachers wouldn't have the time to discuss with you when you need them to."

No time to be innovative. All the teachers and the leaders agreed that the lack of time hinders teachers from being innovative, which is a challenge that faces building the school's capacity for change. Despite this widespread agreement reflected in the responses of the participants during the focus group interviews, only the principal along with one teacher mentioned it during the individual interviews (see table 3). According to the principal, there is no time for leaders to challenge teachers to think creatively and to bring forth new ideas. She noted:

You cannot have teachers teach full time and tell them go at night and after having finished everything tell us what best we can do for the school. This is

ridiculous. We work in a pressured system, like it or not. In our school most of the teachers are full timers.

This idea was also reflected in the response of one of the teachers (T7) who claimed that teachers need to be given time to be creative. According to her, they cannot enjoy their teaching and come up with innovations if they are pressured and are constantly overloaded with deadlines and duties. She remarked when asked about the conditions that are conducive to building the capacity of the school to be in constant improvement:

Give them time to elicit what they have, in each teacher there is something. Not to be under pressure all the time, we have deadlines, duties. When you come to the class you want to enjoy it but you can't because you are overloaded with things. This doesn't let you be creative with what you want or be relaxed in your class and enjoy your profession.

Rushed implementation. All the teachers considered during the focus group interviews that one major challenge to building school capacity for improvement is the fact that change is often abruptly introduced (see table 3). When asked to narrate how the smart boards were introduced, it became clear from the sequence of events that the time lapse between generating the idea and the implementation was very short. The official announcement about introducing the change initiative was perceived as “last minute” by many teachers. As one teacher (T17) said when describing the process:

It was not gradual, but it was sudden and abrupt. There were some teachers who got tutors. I was abroad, and they started sending me messages. This change was a load, the way with which it was done. It would have been good to be prepared for it, to know when, even the workshop it would have been

good if we were prepared for it, if they told us beforehand when we will have the workshop.

A coordinator (C1) agreed with that (see table 3). He asserted that the decision to have the boards and the decision to have a training was not taken ahead of time but was rather rushed. According to one of the teachers (T4), teachers were under a lot of pressure because of the sudden decision that led them to having to work hard on figuring out how to use the boards and to, at the same time, go about their teaching and develop lesson plans compatible with the boards.

Resistance to Change

Most teachers agreed that resistance to change is a challenge that faces building the school's capacity for change. While all the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interviews, four teachers, two coordinators and the principal shared, when asked during the individual interviews about one change initiative that the school implemented, that the presence of a dominant attitude whereby teachers are reluctant to explore innovative ideas is an obstacle faced (see table 3). Innovative ideas are considered to be unnecessary and a poorly planned burden that they tend to dismiss. As a result, a general atmosphere of "resistance" to change seems often to prevail in the school. One teacher (T10) explained that most teachers did not buy early on into the 'smart board' change implemented at school, "at the beginning there was a lot of resistance and I was the first one to resist and I started crying and I felt it is Chinese." One coordinator (C1) even shared that he was not fully convinced of its benefit and was suspicious about how it will be implemented. He stated:

I read about it and I knew but I didn't have experience to say okay I am convinced. I know that the benefits depended on how we used it and I wasn't

sure how we were going to use it (...) I was exploring with them as well, so this was the first stage where I wasn't fully convinced.

Teachers explained that they did not buy into the change because of different reasons. Some did not buy into its benefit for the school, while others considered it to be a step forward toward improving the school but didn't perceive it as having any potential to positively influence their own teaching. However, as the teachers shared, what was common between all those who resisted the change was that they felt threatened by it, as they were apprehensive of not being able to cope with its demands. Even the teachers who were cognitively convinced about the need of introducing such a change were emotionally dreading it. The only teachers for whom the change did not induce any anxiety were the ones who were previously exposed to it. One teacher (T3) shared that this resistance could have been decreased if teachers were aware of the vision of the change and if it were clear to them how what is being done converges with that vision.

The principal was aware of this resistance. According to her, "some members of the staff thought that it was a useless endeavor. What for? Like anything that is new. It is frowned upon by people who don't like to change. Teachers felt threatened. Specially the older generation."

Teachers who do not Value Collaboration

All the teachers and the leaders believe that having teachers who do not value collaboration is an obstacle facing the development of the school's capacity. Although all agreed about that during the focus group interviews, only three out of eighteen teachers, mentioned it during the individual interviews (see table 3). The respondents attributed this resistance toward collaboration to the personality of the teachers and

claimed that the leader cannot alter that fact. One of the teachers (T13) affirmed, “the principal can say you can help each other but at the end I believe it is related to the character. Some people don’t accept that, some people are jealous and selfish.”

Lack of Sufficient Funding

Both leaders and teachers concurred that not having sufficient funding impedes building the school’s capacity for improvement. Despite this general agreement during the focus group interviews, only two out of thirteen teachers mentioned that during the individual interviews (see table 3). According to them, the lack of funding is detrimental since it discourages teachers from generating suggestions for improvement. As one of the teachers (T2) remarked, “I had a proposal for change and several times I said it but at the end there is a certain budget that we cannot exceed.” Also, another teacher (T15) added that the shortage in funding would lead to a lack of ongoing support and of continuous training.

As for the leaders, two coordinators and the principal mentioned, during the individual interviews, the lack of sufficient funding as a key challenge (see table 3). One of them (C3) mentioned that a lack of resources can limit the school administration from supporting its teachers and thus from helping them improve their capacity. Added to that, the principal shared that not being able to afford hiring additional staff to decrease the workload of teachers is a major challenge. According to her, this is the only way she can allocate the needed time for teachers to collaborate, which is a key condition to building the school capacity for sustainable improvement.

Leadership Qualities and Actions

Both leaders and teachers agreed that there are certain qualities that the leader should have and certain actions that he/she should do that would facilitate the process of building the school's capacity for sustainable school improvement.

Leadership Qualities

The respondents mentioned having good communication skills, being assertive yet friendly and being an encourager as leadership qualities that are conducive to an effective change process, and associated them as critical to building capacity for school improvement.

Has good communication skills. The most emphasized quality was having good communication skills. Most teachers and leaders argued that it is crucial for the leaders to have good communication skills and specially listening skills. During the individual interviews, thirteen out of eighteen teachers noted that (see table 3). They contended that the leader must be ready to communicate with the staff and to listen to their opinion even if he/she doesn't agree with it. Moreover, the respondents added that if the leader wants to address a remark or reprimand a teacher, he/she needs to do it in a respectful way. One teacher (T8) perceived good listening as not only consisting of being ready to listen to what the teachers have to say, but that it also entails having him/her follow up on the matters that were shared with him/her, be it personal or professional ones. She explained, "a good listener is someone who cares, someone who asks about what you talked about before, so what happened regarding this or that." Furthermore, another teacher (T14) emphasized the importance of writing what the teachers said rather than just passively listening to them. She noted, "The basis is to listen to the teacher not hear the teacher. If they don't write, they will forget. So, they

write, and each point will be studied.” All the teachers in the focus group interviews agreed that this is an important quality that the leader should have.

As for the leaders, two coordinators and the principal mentioned during the individual interviews that having good communication skills is an important quality the leader must have to facilitate the process of change (see table 3). They argued that it is crucial for the leader to give time to listen to the teachers’ concerns and ideas. The principal added that even when the teachers’ ideas do not converge with the leader’s idea, he/she is under obligation to listen till the end and to let the teachers know that their input is appreciated. She explained, “you should listen to them whatever they say. If you don’t think it is of value do not highlight that fact but thank them for their effort rather than make an issue of the value of what they said.”

Is assertive. Most teachers and leaders believe that the leader should be assertive. Despite this agreement during the focus group interview, only four out of eighteen teachers emphasized that during the individual interviews (see table 3). They claimed during the individual interview that an assertive leader will ensure that the teachers both know the limit to how much they can argue with him/her and are aware that at the end he/she has the last word. One of the teachers (T8) shared, “the leader should have the authority and the respect that we can’t breach.” Also, teachers believe that the leader should know how to disapprove of the teachers’ opinions, and should be able to end the discussion and set clear boundaries when there is no room for negotiation on a certain matter. One of the teachers (T10) explained, “the leader should know how to say no and he should know how to cut it because this is a characteristic of a leader.” Two teachers explained that a leader should be assertive on the basis that he/she has skills and knowledge that he/she acquired from his/her experience that

surpasses that of the teachers. One of the teachers (T9) explained her stance through saying, “maybe there is something that is not for the benefit of the school and they can’t see it. As an admin I should have experience before becoming an administrator.”

Is friendly and approachable. There was an agreement among teachers that the leader needs to be friendly and approachable. During the individual interviews, five teachers, including all four teachers who claimed that the leader should be assertive, emphasized that he/she should also be friendly with the staff if they are to contribute positively to building the school capacity for improvement, while all the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interviews (see table 3). They maintained that leaders should be ‘close to their teachers’. According to one teacher (T11), this happens when the leader asks the teachers about their issues, about their professional progress etc. She explained while assuming she were the leader:

I try to be close to them, I try to ask them about their problems, about their problems in the school, how they started in the school. You from the beginning of your presence in the school, what did you do? Did you improve or on the contrary? What do you need from the school? What do you think we should remove? What do think we should add?

Added to doing that, according to one teacher (T6), the leader should socialize with the teachers and participate in the activities they organize. As she suggested:

Be sure that when the leader is down to earth, relating with the teachers and being with the teachers on the ground, then be sure that all the teachers will be able to talk to him in a very honest way.

However, during the focus group interviews, several teachers argued that the leader should be friendly to a certain extent or else he/she would lose his authority. As

one teacher explained, “for us to still feel that he is a leader there shouldn’t be so much friendliness.” In response to that statement, one teacher explained that “friendly means that if someone has a problem he feels he can still approach the principal about it.”

As for the leaders, the majority agreed that the leader should be friendly and approachable (see table 3). Two coordinators emphasized the significance of having the leader be friendly, however when they mentioned it, they were referring to the importance of having the coordinators have this quality not the principal. One of those two coordinators (C2) claimed that the coordinator should not be threatening to the teachers and should get involved in their personal issues that are related to and influence their school life. She elaborated:

I think (...) that they should be involved in their personal lives in anything in their personal lives that is related to the school life. If the teacher chooses to do so. Let’s say a teacher comes and says I had a migraine for the past day and I wish I could be freed for one period, If you come and say no its none of my business, this way I would be blocking this confidence.

The other coordinator (C3) contended that the relationship between the coordinator and the teachers should not have the same dynamics as that between the principal and the teachers. He suggested that “there shouldn’t be an administrative relationship between the teacher and the coordinator”. As for the principal, she argued during the member-checking interview that it is important for the principal to be friendly when the situation requires him/her to be so, without that disabling him/her from being assertive. She argued, “ if the leader is friendly all the time, bad enough not to be assertive when needed, this is a poor use of friendship.”

Is an encourager. There was a unanimous consensus among leaders and teachers that the leader needs to be an encourager. Despite this wide spread agreement during the focus group interviews, only one coordinator (C2) and two out of eighteen teachers insisted during the individual interviews on the importance of this characteristic (see table 3). They noted that encouragement is key to boost the self-confidence of the teachers, that it would incite them to give their best and would keep them motivated. According to one of the two teachers (T6), the leader should encourage teachers whenever they provide their input. She explained, “to encourage them whenever a teacher comes to give you an idea about something. Encouragement is good. They will be encouraged that yes I can give my opinion.” The other teacher (T11), proposed that whenever a staff member does something positive, the leader should praise him/her or else the latter would feel discouraged and wouldn’t feel appreciated.

Leadership Actions

Several respondents agreed that having the leader maintain open and inclusive communication throughout the change process and reward creativity and good work would support the process of building the school’s capacity.

Maintain open and inclusive communication. Most teachers and leaders believe that it is important for the leader to maintain open and inclusive communication that conveys to teachers a sense of community throughout the change process. During the individual interviews, fourteen out of eighteen teachers insisted on the importance of having the leader ask the teachers for their opinion throughout the change process (see table 3), as this would let them feel that they are not inferior to their leader, which in turn would enable them to give their honest opinion. One of the teachers (T2) noted:

Now if someone is talking to you from above and is giving you orders you won't be comfortable, and you won't give him your honest opinion, and you will feel weak, and you will feel that whether you said what you think or not nobody will listen to you (...)

Likewise, during the individual interviews, two coordinators and the principal advocated for having the leader ask for the opinion of the teachers all along the change process (see table 3). When asked about the right conditions that are conducive to having the teachers participate throughout the whole change process, the principal noted that it is crucial for the leader to constantly ask the teachers to come up with suggestions.

Furthermore, five out of eighteen teachers and one leader emphasized during the individual interviews that it is important for the leader to inform the staff of the plan that will be followed during the implementation process. They considered that as part of maintaining open and inclusive communication with the teachers. They agreed that the leader should inform the teachers ahead of time about the next steps that will happen be it workshops, integration of innovations etc. and he/she should ask for their opinion. As T17 stated:

(...) for us to feel as if we belong to a family, it is nice for the teacher to know about the plan but without the details. For them to know that there is a plan and I would be very happy if the principal gathers us and tells us about the plan and we would tell him what to consider and we would tell him about our opinion.

Finally, according to three teachers and the principal, if the leader plans on maintaining open and inclusive communication, it is essential for him/her to explicitly state his/her rationale behind the adoption of this approach. As T7 argued, if the leader

wants to be consultative he/she needs to put extra effort with the teachers to convince them that he/she plans to be consultative and that his/her goal is for them to be convinced and excited.

Reward creativity and good work. Teachers and leaders agreed that the leader needs to reward creativity and good work (see table 3). Despite this agreement, there was a disagreement on whether this reward should include material remuneration or should only be in the form of praise and appreciation. Three out of eighteen teachers, two coordinators and the principal asserted during the individual interviews that for leaders to positively contribute to school capacity building for change, it is necessary for them to reward those who are creative, those who add positive input and those whose work is of high quality (see table 3). According to one teacher (T10), when both lazy teachers and well performing teachers get rewarded in the same manner, this demotivates the hard-working teacher who is producing good results. She added:

for example, to have one staff who works a lot and the other doesn't do a thing, he is very lazy, and both are rewarded the same. You feel so why should I do that. And if you make a lot of effort to work on something and you don't receive any thank you but on the other hand if you do a small mistake you would be reprimanded and blamed, you lose interest.

Likewise, the principal emphasized the importance of having those who get new ideas or add positive input feel that their actions are noticed, and feel that they are appreciated for their efforts and contribution. She suggested that teachers can receive praise and appreciation and/or could be offered monetary remuneration. She explained, "you can financially, socially, psychologically but compensate their ideas and positive

input Let whoever thought of something new and have convinced you feel that he is different than his colleagues to be an incentive for his colleagues to think like that.”

Organizational Conditions for Building School

Capacity for Improvement

When asked about the organizational conditions that need to be present to enhance capacity building for continuous improvement, most of the respondents shared the following: targeting sustainability while still aiming at renewal, responsive continuous training, shared decision-making, well-established trust, facilitated teamwork and collaboration, data-driven decision-making, reflective practice, and availability of the necessary resources needed for implementation.

Targeting Sustainability while still Aiming at Renewal

There was a unanimous agreement that whenever a school initiative is being implemented, the school should focus on sustaining it. During the individual interviews, none of the respondents directly mentioned that however, when probed about the way a change can be sustained, all eighteen teachers, four coordinators and the principal agreed that it is an important consideration while envisioning any change (see table 3). There were different suggestions as to what the school should do to secure sustainability of the change. One recommendation that seven teachers proposed is to have constant monitoring and evaluation of the change. Another suggestion that was mentioned by two teachers (T7 and T8) emphasized equipping the teachers with the skills and knowledge required to implement the change, as well as keeping them informed regarding its updates, as this would motivate them to continue using it. As T7 said, “once we know how to use them this will let us be motivated to use them more. And more up to date things regarding this change, workshops, probably this will help.”

Even though the participants shared that sustainability is important, they also agreed during the focus group interviews that aiming for sustainability should not entail that the change will not change with time. Three teachers, and two coordinators shed light during the individual interviews on the need to focus on constant renewal, and thus on the value of having constant change and improvement. C1 argued:

We don't want to make it a change and then not be able to make a change after it. So, you don't want to have the change sustainable in this sense. You don't want to freeze it in time. So, you need something to be built in the change that would help you keep changing.

Similarly, the principal explained during the member checking interview, "by definition sustainability lends itself to renewal because if you don't renew, what you have has not been sustained, it has become obsolete."

Responsive Continuous Training

When probed about the conditions that would be conducive to building the capacity of the school to implement a successful change, most of the respondents mentioned the following: having continuous training, having a training that is responsive to the needs of the teachers regarding the innovation to be introduced, and having the training include attention to the affective aspect of change.

Most teachers and leaders agreed that for professional development to yield positive results, it should be continuous. All the participants in the focus group interviews emphasized that, while nine out of eighteen teachers, the four coordinators as well as the principal mentioned during the individual interviews that effective professional development should accompany them during the whole implementation process, as it would allow teachers to be knowledgeable about the updates related to the

change. As T7 explained, “(...) at the launching we need it but always after it there should be follow up and trainings.” According to the respondents, teachers should be constantly exposed to new ideas, which would allow them to evolve professionally. As T9 said, “this keeps the teacher up to date and to always be in improvement, not to be outdated.”

Another characteristic of the training that most teachers and leaders agreed on is having the training be done in small groups depending on the specialty area and/or on the grade level teachers teach. During the focus group interviews, all the teachers concurred that it is imperative for the training to be responsive to the needs of the teachers regarding the innovation to be introduced, while during the individual interviews, seven out of eighteen teachers noted that. According to them, being trained in small groups that are divided based on cycle and/or subject matter would allow the trainer to focus on what those specific teachers need to know about the change. Thus, the information given would target the specific needs of those teachers and consequently of their students. As T1 shared, “I believe that for example sessions should only be done for mathematics, social, different groups (...) More specific to my subject. More specific to the tools I use with my secondary students.” Another example with the same thought is T15’s claim that “it would have been better if the workshop was done on a small scale, not all the teachers together. Like English alone, Math alone because each department demands special skills.” Added to the importance of grouping teachers by interest and areas of specialty, a teacher (T17) asserted that being sensitive to the level of expertise of teachers is an important characteristic to take into consideration when customizing the training to teachers’ needs, because teachers who already mastered a certain skill should not be obliged to sit and be lectured again about

this skill. As for the principal, she agreed during the member checking that a general training could be done for all the teachers, and in case the implementation differs from one cycle to another or one subject to another the hand on practice could be done in small groups.

Finally, the necessity of providing emotional support during the training was mentioned, yet not agreed on by most of the participants. While most of the leaders emphasized that emotional support should be offered to the teachers, only few teachers brought up this factor. During the individual interviews, only three out of eighteen teachers asserted upon probing that providing emotional support during the training is an essential component that supports building the school's capacity. Such support is provided through first acknowledging the fears and anxieties that teachers might encounter throughout the whole change process, and then through addressing those fears. As for the leaders, two coordinators and the principal agreed during the individual interviews that emotional support should be provided. The principal asserted, "if you are proactive and you verbalize their fears beforehand you win them over. You become more human, you take a human scale in the eyes of whom you are training. This is always a plus." However, she cautioned that there should neither be an overemphasis on the difficulties they will face nor a display of too much empathy and worry because this would lead to them falling into self-pity. According to one of the coordinators (C2), emotional support is provided through showing the teachers the value of the change.

Conversely, several teachers shared that the mere presence of a smooth and effective training is sufficient by itself to alleviate the psychological distress that teachers might be facing and thus, eliminates the need for further emotional support. As T16 explained, when the teacher feels adequate to implement the change, he/she

wouldn't be in psychological distress and thus, there will be no need to offer additional emotional support. Added to that, one teacher suggested, during the individual interview, that having the leaders share with the teachers what they expect them to do during the implementation process would alleviate their fears and is by itself a means for giving emotional support.

Shared Decision-making

When asked about the conditions that build the school capacity for improvement, many respondents noted the importance of shared decision-making as an integral condition for a successful school improvement process. However, all the teachers, the coordinators and the principal converged in saying that if the change is administrative, teachers' opinions are not to be taken into consideration while most of the teachers, all the coordinators and the principal stressed that effective capacity building for change happens when the teachers have a voice in it. Yet, this voice is perceived in any case as strictly consultative, whereas it does not play a determining factor in the final decision. One coordinator (C4) even considered the parents and the students as important stakeholders that should be consulted regarding instructional decisions. On the other hand, only a minority of the teachers argued for having collaborative decision-making regarding instructional decisions.

Consultative decision-making. When it comes to school-wide instructional decisions, fifteen out of eighteen teachers asserted during the individual interviews that leaders need to consult with their teachers and collect their views throughout the improvement process, from initialization to institutionalization (see table 3). Leaders must ask for the input of the teachers before taking any decision, either to solicit new ideas for consideration or to check how the stakeholders perceive an idea that the leader

has in mind. Many argued that teachers' input should be taken into consideration because as T5 asserted, when teachers play an active role in the decision-making process, they will develop a sense of ownership that would consequently motivate him/her to implement the change wholeheartedly, which in turn will build the school capacity for further improvement. He explained, "there is a difference between obliging the teacher to do something or letting her feel that she is part of the school not a stranger from it."

However, most teachers agreed that when it comes to the final decision, it is the principal who should decide what is best for the school. As T9 argued when she was explaining how she would act if she were to be the leader, "I am not obliged to do as they told me, but I am obliged to take their opinion." She further explained, "I am saying in general if it were me, if this got negative feedback from the teachers I would impose it because it has benefits for the school." According to T8, the opinions of all the teachers cannot be used as the decisive factor for the final decision. She justified her stance stating that there will always be opposing perspective, some people will be for and others against the change initiative/vision, which will make it impossible to reach consensus. Thus, respondents agreed that teachers need to be consulted but they are not to be given voting powers when it comes to decisions related to introducing, implementing, and sustaining improvement initiatives; only principals/school leadership should have the power when it comes to the final decision.

Moreover, teachers who highlighted the importance of consulting teachers varied in their views about the necessity and importance of this consultation before a decision related to a prospective instructional improvement initiative is taken. These variations were based on how much the change touches their scope of work and whether

this change is school wide or not. It was clear that teachers believe that if the change is not directly linked to their department or to the cycle they teach in, they do not demand as adamantly to have their opinion asked. They think that it is not their role to give their input about matters that are beyond the scope of the classes and the subjects they teach. Also, if it is a whole school change, they seemed to be less enthusiastic about having their opinion asked and be taken into consideration because as T12 asserted, for big decisions that cost a lot, the administration should take the decision regardless of what teachers think. Thus, teachers emphasized the importance of having their opinions taken regarding changes that are directly related to their role and responsibilities at the school and were only adamant to have this consultation when the improvement initiative affects directly their own classroom.

As for the coordinators and the principal, all argued that decisions regarding instructional matters should be taken consultatively with their teachers (see table 1). Similarly, to the teachers, they claimed that the leader should not always abide by the opinion of the majority, but it is imperative for him/her to listen to the teachers' opinion. As one of the coordinators (C1) explained:

You wouldn't want to force change on most of your staff when you are not sitting eye to eye with them. I don't think this is helpful, but this doesn't mean that you won't do the change. You will make the change, but you don't force it until you listen well.

In addition, to explain why she believes that consultative decision-making is the ideal way to take decisions regarding instructional matters, another coordinator (C4) contended that if the leader asks the teacher to implement a change they do not buy into, the teacher won't give his/her full potential, which would lead to having a less

successful teaching/learning process. She also suggested that parents and students should also contribute to the decision. She stated:

We cannot just see things from one perspective, from the perspective of the principal. We should see the perspective of the students; the teachers and we might even let the parents participate in some things because also parents have a role to play.

Collaborative decision-making. A minority of teachers believes in collaborative decision-making. Only three out of eighteen teachers argued during the individual interviews that the decision-making should be collaborative (see table 1) because teachers' direct contact with the students makes his/her input essential and equal to the input of the leaders. As one of the teachers (T7) explained:

I think here most of it has to do with the teachers because they are the ones dealing with the students and they practically know what is going on. So of course, with the participation of the coordinator and the principal. But the teachers should make the biggest part of the decision.

Well-established Trust

The one condition that was consistently present in all the teachers' and the leaders' responses was the importance that the respondents accorded to the theme of trust. All the teachers stressed during the focus group interviews that trust is a key component that needs to be present for building the school's capacity, while fifteen out of the fifteen teachers who were probed during the individual interviews mentioned that (see table 3). However, most of those teachers emphasized more the necessity of having trust between the leaders and the teachers rather than trust among the teachers, while only two teachers disagreed with that saying that trust between the teachers is also

important as it reflects on the students. Teachers claimed that teachers and leaders need to trust each other's decisions and should be confident that each party wants the best for the school and is working toward its betterment. As T7 explained:

trust is very important because I wouldn't like to work in a place where people can't trust me and my decisions and where I can't trust them and their decisions (...) That wouldn't help me and wouldn't give me support, that wouldn't give me the feeling that it is my zone and that I belong here.

She added that it is important that the leaders trust that the teachers always have the well-being of the school as their priority. According to one teacher (T17), one of the positive outcomes of having a relationship of trust between the leader and the teacher is that the teacher would trust the decisions taken by the leader even if the latter didn't share all the data that he/she has that led him to take this decision rather than another one. As T17 explained:

(...)maybe there are things that he cannot share with the teachers, there are things that are not obligatory to be exposed to others. But at the end if we see that the leader wants the best for the students and he is honest and faithful then there should be a trust built and then we can say okay if you see that this is appropriate to be done.

In addition, teachers added that a lack of trust is detrimental. As T2 suggested, it would lead both teachers and leaders to do things furtively rather than to be comfortable to act openly. She explained, "trust is crucial because if we don't trust them and they don't trust us all will be done undercover." Furthermore, according to T8, the absence of trust would disable having collaboration and teamwork since as she claimed, "trust is a prerequisite for teamwork."

When asked whether trust can be developed, several teachers argued that it is easier to develop trust between the teachers and their leaders rather than among teachers. Four teachers out of the fifteen who were probed insisted that trust between colleagues cannot be developed because of the competition that is present. As T11 said, “it is a dream that can hardly be achieved.” As for how trust could be built between teachers and leaders, respondents shared that it can be done through having the leader listen to the teachers’ opinion, through having the staff witness honesty and faithfulness from the leader and through having the leader show that he/she trusts the teachers. As T10 elaborated:

trust comes with time (...). I am a teacher who has been teaching at your school for [several] years and during those years you never saw anything wrong from me (...) When I come and give you an opinion, or when I do something trust me on it. Give me the trust to take initiative, to take a decision. This gives me a lot of motivation (...) Don’t question me, meaning okay question me but don’t let me feel that what I did is not enough. Wait and see what my point of view is, trust me on it, trust that I will be able to do this.

Similar to the teachers, the leaders perceived trust as a crucial condition for building the school’s capacity for change. The principal as well as the four coordinators, including three who mentioned it without probing during the individual interviews, underlined the importance of having trust (see table 3). The principal proposed that having trust is crucial for sustaining the whole educational process, while one coordinator (C1) suggested that having the teachers trust the administration is a catalyst to preserving consistency and developing a comfortable environment. As he explained:

no matter how ‘perfectly’ you’ve been doing things and changing things, there will always be shortcomings and the level of trust is very important. It helps to keep coherence, a good and safe environment, a good environment of respect. The higher the level of trust the better.

He added, along with another coordinator (C2), that when there is a level of trust between the teachers and the leaders, the staff wouldn’t resist as much even if they were not convinced, as they would trust that the leader has the best of the school in mind, a condition that will facilitate the process of initiating change. Another mentioned benefit of having trust is that it allows people to put extra effort and work passionately in order to succeed in the task at hand. As the principal explained, “it is not a one man show, so the more you have these people who are working in the process of education feel that they are trustworthy and that more is in their hands, the more they are challenged, and you get more out of them.” Similarly, C4 stated, “trust is important because it allows the person to give his full potential.” However, she contended that the administration should not easily trust its teachers, but the latter should rather earn it. As for how this trust can be built, C2 claimed that the leader should show the teachers that he/she loves and cares for them, while the principal suggested that the leader should verbalize to teachers that he/she wants to trust them, and he/she should be willing to give over responsibility to them even at the expense of having some mistakes happening.

On the other hand, in opposition to the view of most teachers that emphasized building trust between the leaders and the teachers while deemphasizing the importance of developing it among teachers, one coordinator (C4) and the principal argued during the individual interviews that it is equally important to develop trust among teachers.

According to C4, one way the administration could develop such trust is through giving equal chances to all the teachers. This would disable the development of envy that might engender a decrease in trust. She added that another way trust could be developed is through having the administration emphasize the strengths of each teacher and support him/her in developing professionally. She explained, “to give equal chances to all, not to let jealousy be there. Give this teacher an equal chance And the admin should try to see what are the strengths of each person and should help him develop himself.” As for the principal, she suggested that the leader can develop trust among teachers through teaching them morals and ethics, teaching them the value of relationships, sharing information that would enhance this trust, and emphasizing the importance of privacy. She explained, “it could be developed through nurturing the idea of privacy which unfortunately we lack in our society. Privacy means being able to keep whatever subject with the person concerned full stop.”

While most of the teachers and the leaders were mentioning the importance of building trust between the teachers and the leaders in general, a coordinator (C3) emphasized the importance of having trust between the teachers and their respective coordinator. He believes that such trust is crucial for building capacity as it maintains continuity and allows teachers to comfortably share their mistakes and weaknesses with their respective coordinator. He added that such trust is built through experience, when both parties see how each reacts and behaves. On the other hand, he believes that there is no need to build trust between teachers who are not in direct contact. According to him, the only time when such trust is needed is between same grade level teachers and it can be built when the coordinator actively engages in developing a sense of community

among his teachers by giving equal opportunities to all and assuring them that he/she perceives all of them as competent.

Facilitated Teamwork and Collaboration

Both teachers and leaders perceived collaboration as an essential component for building the school's capacity. During the individual interviews, seventeen out of eighteen teachers, all the coordinators as well as the principal postulated that collaboration is a very important component of a successful change process (see table 3). According to them, it is necessary as it allows those who are more advanced to help those who are struggling, it provides indirect psychological support, it allows ideas to be shared, and finally it secures having everybody work toward the same goal. Moreover, most of the respondents agreed with the necessity of setting the conditions that facilitate continuous collaboration, and called for allocating time in teachers' schedule to collaborate.

The respondents mentioned that one positive outcome of collaboration is that ideas can be exchanged among the teachers. As T3 and T8 explained, when teachers collaborate, they will be able to know how others are implementing the change in their classrooms and can thus benefit from the experience of others. As T8 stated when she was explaining how collaboration would have helped during the change initiatives implemented, "we would have learnt from each other, we would have taken ideas from each other. What I lacked I could have found it with others. We could have helped each other in teamwork." Another advantage of collaboration that was mentioned by the respondents is that it allows those who are struggling to be helped by their colleagues. As T12 asserted: "(...) maybe I understood that point, but I didn't understand the other. So, we complement each other." Furthermore, according to three teachers, collaboration

provides emotional support to the teachers since it provides a venue for them to discuss their fears with each other. As T18 remarked when elaborating about how her emotional distress was alleviated:

Because each would give his opinion and he would help. For example, I called my colleague abroad and she told me take it easy and so on. So why do I need to do that my colleague from abroad. Why not do it here with my colleagues here.

Finally, two teachers (T8 and T15) claimed that through teamwork, the vision, and the aim that the teachers are working to achieve would be revisited, which would secure having all of them working toward the same goal. As T15 contended:

What you are working on works because everybody is working on it and we are all on the same page. (...) If you don't all work toward the same aim we won't go anywhere. We would be digging our own grave.

Also, there was an agreement that collaboration should be continuous and frequent. While all the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interviews, only seven teachers out of seventeen, one coordinator and the principal emphasized its importance during the individual interviews. They explained that it should be so because ideas should always be exchanged during the implementation process of a change initiative. In contrast, three teachers and one coordinator claimed that it should only happen when needed, and not that often, because at many instances there is nothing to discuss and thus, meeting would be a waste of time. As C3 argued: "if we can do it once every month and have a positive result it would be better than doing it once every week and not get any result."

As for how collaboration should be facilitated, most teachers and leaders believe that it should be instituted to happen by cycle or department. While all the leaders and the teachers agreed with that during the focus group interviews, only four out of eighteen teachers and one coordinator asserted that during the individual interviews. They explained that it should be so since teachers of different cycles deal in a different manner with their students and each subject has its own specificities. They claimed that teachers who do not have subjects or grade levels in common wouldn't have anything common to discuss and thus, teaming them up together would be useless. One of the teachers (T10) confidently asserted that if the subjects are not linked, teamwork wouldn't lead anywhere. One coordinator (C1) explained that collaboration should mostly happen between teachers of the same cycle or department unless the objective of this collaboration is to have an exchange of ideas between different cycles and departments.

On the other hand, teachers and leaders widely agreed that collaboration cannot take place unless teachers are given free time. During the individual interviews, out of the seventeen teachers who argued for collaboration, six assumed upon probing that the leaders should free the teachers from some of their duties in order for them to be able to collaborate. They contended that the leaders cannot ask the teachers to be involved in teamwork beyond all their other duties, as this would exhaust them even more and would lead them to have a negative attitude toward this collaboration. As T10 said:

Teamwork can give you a result if you include it during the school day, you can't give extra to the teacher and tell her come after school for a meeting.

Everything that you give extra to the teacher, it doesn't give any result because

she would come with an attitude that I don't want to work, this is extra work, it is not paid.

Likewise, the views of all the coordinators and of the principal aligned where they agreed that teachers should be given time to team up and work together in order for that collaboration to yield positive results. According to C2, "the teachers have to do less to be able to meet (...) You need to free them, and they cannot do as much duties as they do because this is tiring them off."

Data-driven Decision-making

Leaders and teachers considered data-driven decision-making as a crucial aspect for building the school's capacity for improvement. After probing, seventeen out of eighteen teachers, the four coordinators as well as the principal asserted during the individual interviews that data driven decision-making is a central condition to building the school's capacity for change (see table 3). They contended that deciding to implement a change cannot be done based on general opinions that are not studied, but should rather be based on data that pinpoint the weaknesses that need to be addressed. Thus, such data would guide the decision-makers regarding the right decisions to make. As one of the teachers (T3) elaborated:

(...)statistics are very important because you know from where to start. You cannot if someone tells you an opinion it's an important opinion but when it is dealing with many teachers and many students giving the same opinion this is an important thing that we have to search for and think about.

Another example with the same thought is teacher T14's statement:

The teacher will talk generalities but for something to be changed in school, which the admin takes responsibility for, there should be an extensive research not to take a decision and implement it and then say we wish we didn't do it.

Reflective Practice

Both teachers and leaders considered reflective practice as an important factor that enables building the school's capacity. Despite this agreement among the participants during the focus group interviews, only seven teachers, two coordinators and the principal mentioned it upon probing during the individual interviews (see table 3). According to them, such practice allows the teachers to pin point their weaknesses and gives them the opportunity to improve them. Teachers agreed that the impact of this practice would be more widespread if the school leaders encouraged teachers to engage in it. One teacher (T8) claimed that having the leaders encourage reflective practice not only contributes to having the teacher improve, but also sends the message that this is a highly valued practice and that the leaders are ready to help in the process. For teachers, this provides them with a sense of ease that if he/she needs help to ameliorate his/her teaching practices; this help will be provided to him/her. As one teacher (T18) elaborated, "that would help me improve, it would help me feel more comfortable because if I need anything they would help me."

Availability of Necessary Resources Before and During the Implementation

Teachers and leaders concurred that it is necessary to provide the teachers with the necessary resources before and during the implementation. When asked about the conditions that enhance the school's capacity for change, eleven teachers, the four coordinators and the principal mentioned during the individual interviews that it is very important for the leaders to provide the needed resources for the effective

implementation of any change initiative (see table 3). Those resources can range from providing technical support to providing material resources and enough time for teachers to come up with new ideas.

According to six teachers and the principal, it is very important for the school to assign a person who would support the teachers technically. They noted during the individual interviews that this is crucial because when it is not provided, teachers will get distressed and ultimately demotivated. Speaking of adjusting to the use of the smart board in her class, teacher (T7) explained, “(...) sometimes you get frustrated to the point that I do not want to use that anymore.”

On the other hand, ten out of eighteen teachers and two coordinators argued during the individual interviews that it is necessary for the school to provide the teachers early on with the time and the material resources that would aid them during the implementation process. As T15 stated, “I would give each teacher two, three periods a month where he/she can use the school resources. I would provide them with resources, magazines, e magazines, apps paid for.”

Moreover, two teachers, three coordinators and the principal asserted during the individual interviews that it is imperative for the teachers to be given time to think about innovations, because when they are overburdened they won't be able to be creative and to think about new ways to improve. One of the teachers (T5) observed, “you should create time for him. You can't tell him with everything you are teaching and working, think about new things.” Similarly, the principal underlined the importance of giving the teachers time to come up with new ideas. She remarked, “they have to teach less, they have to be given time for constructive thinking (...) you have to give them time to think and plan.”

Summary of the Results

During the individual interviews, the participants were struggling to talk about certain things and the researcher had to probe them repeatedly to get more answers. However, during the focus group interviews, the researcher was communicating to them what she concluded from their answers during the individual interviews, and hence they had more language to use which led them to be much more expressive. This explains why there was such an increase in the number of respondents that agreed with several components that they did not talk about during the individual interviews. A summary of the results is presented in this section.

Building School Capacity for Sustainable Improvement: Leaders' Perception

The principal as well as most of the coordinators agreed that capacity is built through trainings, collaboration, providing social and emotional support, providing expert support, and finally through aligning the specialty area with task distribution.

When asked about the ideal process of change, the majority of the leaders agreed that leaders, teachers, students and parents can trigger change and that a team can be designated to come up with new ideas, to initiate and to plan for the change. Also, the leaders mostly agreed that the vision should be informed by the experience of other schools, and that it should be developed and disseminated by the leader when the teachers do not have a direct input in the implementation of the change, while it should be the outcome of a discussion with the teachers when it is related to their area of expertise and whenever they have a direct role to play in implementing it. Another step that most of the leaders considered as being part of an ideal change process is to pilot the change. They perceived piloting as trying the change at a small scale to ensure impact and to inform the flexible plan. As for the evaluation, most of the leaders agreed,

after repeated probing, that having a formal evaluation process is a key aspect that enables building the school's capacity.

When they were asked about the challenges faced during the implementation of the change that the school underwent, all the leaders agreed that the lack of time was a major challenge faced. The majority mentioned having no time to collaborate and no time to be innovative as major obstacles that face building the school's capacity to be in improvement. Other challenges that the majority of the leaders agreed on are having some teachers resist change, having teachers who do not value collaboration, as well as not having sufficient funding.

As for the leadership qualities and actions that are conducive to building the school's capacity to be in constant improvement, most of the leaders agreed that the leader must have good communication skills and mainly good listening skills, he/she should be assertive at some instances but also should be friendly with the staff, and finally he/she should be an encourager. They also concurred that it is important for the leader to maintain open and inclusive communication, and to reward creativity and good work.

When asked about the organizational conditions that promote building the school's capacity, most of the leaders agreed that it is important for the school to target sustainability of the change while also aiming at renewal, and to have the leaders encourage reflective practice. Moreover, all the leaders concurred that it is imperative to provide the teachers with responsive continuous training, to develop trust, to facilitate teamwork and collaboration, to have data driven decision-making and to make available the resources needed before and during the implementation. Finally, all the leaders

agreed that decision-making should be shared. They perceived shared decision-making as consulting the teachers regarding instructional matters only.

Building School Capacity for Sustainable Improvement: Teachers' Perception

When asked about their definition of capacity building for sustainable school improvement, most of the teachers concurred that capacity is the outcome of training the staff, of having collaboration, of providing social and emotional support, of providing expert support and of distributing the tasks according to the staff's specialty areas.

Most teachers agreed that in an ideal process of change leaders, teachers, parents and students can trigger the change. Also, they mostly believe in the importance of having a shared vision that they think should be developed by the leaders who then convince the staff about it. Moreover, most of the teachers concurred that the change should not directly be implemented on a whole school level, but should rather be piloted through trying it on a small scale to make sure that it yields positive results and to alter whatever needs to be changed. Also, they agreed that piloting the change is a first step toward refining the flexible plan of the change. Finally, the teachers agreed that there should be a formal evaluation process set.

As for the challenges faced when building the school's capacity, most of the teachers shared that an inadequate training, the lack of time to collaborate, the lack of time to be innovative as well as rushed implementation are major obstacles that impede building the school's capacity. Furthermore, they concurred that the presence of teachers who resist change and who do not value collaboration, as well as the lack of sufficient funding are other challenges faced.

Most teachers believe that there are special qualities that the leader should have, as well as specific actions that he/she should undertake that facilitate building the school's capacity for change. The qualities that the majority agreed on are having good communication skills, being assertive, being friendly and approachable, and being an encourager. Also, most of the teachers agreed that the leader should maintain open and inclusive communication and he/she should reward creativity and good work.

When asked about the organizational conditions that enable building the school's capacity, all the teachers agreed that it is important for the school to target sustainability of the change while still aiming at renewal, as well as for the leaders to practice shared decision-making. Most of the teachers considered shared decision-making as consulting teachers when it comes to instructional matters. Additionally, most of the teachers concurred that having a responsive continuous training, well-established trust, facilitated teamwork and collaboration, data driven decision-making, reflective practice, as well as having the necessary resources be made available before and during the implementation are essential aspects that should be present in the organization.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

This study employed a qualitative research design and methods to collect and analyze data for understanding the perspectives of leaders and teachers about the process of building school capacity for sustainable improvement. Throughout the study, a change initiative was defined as an initiative that involves multiple actions and decisions, and that signals a new strategic direction that the school will go into. The study has a three-fold purpose: (1) to identify the perspectives of teachers and leaders regarding building school capacity for improvement, (2) to analyze the perceptions of the leaders and teachers through comparing their perspectives with what literature recommends regarding building school capacity, (3) to come up with an action plan that would support the school in better building its capacity for sustainable improvement. This chapter encompasses the discussion of the results of the research questions of the study, the conclusion, the recommendations for practice in the form of an action plan, and finally the recommendations for further research.

Discussion of the Results

Participants in the study were asked to define capacity building, to share what they think the ideal process of change includes, to expose the challenges faced when building school capacity, to expose the leadership actions and qualities that they believe enable building the school's capacity, and finally to suggest the organizational conditions that they think enable building the school's capacity.

The definition of capacity building was given by the respondents without any probing however, most of the aspects related to the ideal change process, to the

challenges faced, to the leadership qualities and actions, and finally to the organizational conditions enabling building the school's capacity were mentioned by the participants after a lot of probing. This indicates that the participants' awareness and familiarity with the conceptions related to school capacity for improvement was fairly limited at the start of the study. However, the continuous probing throughout the data collection has allowed the researcher to engage participants in a reflective dialogue where they were encouraged to construct their understanding based on a lived experience of a change initiative implemented in the school. The results obtained received the approval of the majority of the participants during the focus group interview. This demonstrates that the constructed emic understanding that the researcher captured reflects the breadth and depth of their current conceptions of school capacity for sustainable improvement.

In this section, the perspectives of Lebanese principals and teachers on building school capacity are compared against the recommendations of literature regarding the effective processes and conditions of building school capacity for sustainable improvement.

Capacity Building: from the Perspectives of Teachers and Leaders

The results of the study indicate that the participants have a partial understanding of the activities that encompass building the school's capacity for sustainable improvement, as they failed to mention some key aspects that were found to enable it.

When asked to mention the activities that facilitate developing the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement, the respondents mentioned without any probing that it can be built through trainings, collaboration, providing social and

emotional support, providing expert support and aligning specialty area with task distribution.

The activities that the participants shared align with findings from the international literature regarding practices identified as important for building the school's capacity. According to Mitchell and Sackney (2011) and to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), training teachers and providing a climate of cooperation and teamwork are central aspects for developing the school's capacity to be in constant improvement. Also, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) suggest that an effective leader contributes to developing his school's capacity by providing the teachers with individualized support, and modifying the structure of the organization to make the most of the capacities of the employees through, among other ways, altering the manner tasks are distributed.

On the other hand, the participants missed mentioning other characteristics that are found in the literature to be key to enabling building the school's capacity to be in constant improvement. Namely, participants failed to mention having shared goals and developing a shared vision, enabling collective learning, encouraging continuous reflection on practice and experimentation, making decisions based on data, promoting trust and finally building leadership capacity (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011).

Ideal Process of Change

The participants' perception of the ideal process of change is incomplete as it lacks several aspects that the literature points out to as key for building the school's capacity. The respondents viewed the ideal process of change as first encompassing having teachers, students, leaders, and parents trigger change. They widely concurred with the importance of having leaders give the opportunity to teachers, parents, and students to trigger change however, teachers confined the input of students and parents

to sharing ideas and disagreed with allowing them to lead an initiative to introduce an innovation into the school. Conversely, they welcomed the idea of having change be inspired by ideas and experiences of other schools. The second component that the participants considered as part of an ideal change process is developing a shared vision. According to most teachers, this vision should solely be developed by the leaders, while according to the leaders, it should sometimes be developed by them and at other times it ought to be the outcome of a discussion between the leaders and the teachers. The third element of an ideal process of change that the participants agreed with is piloting the change initiative, which includes developing a flexible plan. Finally, the fourth component mentioned by the participants is having a formal evaluation plan in which evaluation is planned, continuous and based on preset criteria. However, it is worthy to note that the participants failed to differentiate between monitoring and evaluation.

The leaders' view, when it comes to the manner in which the vision should be developed, allows for teacher participation when they have a role to play in the change. This emphasis on having a shared vision that is the outcome of a discussion between the leaders and the teachers converges with what literature recommends. According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), one of the characteristics of an effective leader is to set the direction that the school aims to follow, and part of it is done through developing a common vision, disseminating it and inviting others to give feedback. Likewise, Mitchell and Sackney (2011) propose that one of the characteristics that should be present in a school aiming at developing its capacity for learning is having a clear and shared vision, and thus having all the stakeholders (teachers, parents and students) have a voice in shaping it. This would make it more likely that the teaching and learning

goals of everyone are aligned with the vision set, and that the actions of all the stakeholders regardless of their position and role will bring the vision to life.

Limiting the role of parents and students, when it comes to triggering change, to mere communicators of ideas rather than allowing them to push for changes they believe should be introduced to the school is in opposition to the recommendations of literature. According to Lambert (2003), for capacity to be built, teachers, students and parents should participate competently in leadership through being in the loop, informed of what is happening and involved in the decision-making, and thus should be perceived as partners. Hence, in opposition to the teachers' view, they must have a major role to play in triggering change rather than a peripheral and superficial one.

Another discrepancy between the responses of the participants and the literature is the agreement that the majority of teachers had regarding the necessity of having the leader develop the vision alone and then having him/her convince the teachers about it. There was no indication in their responses that teachers should play an active role in the development of this shared vision. Teachers' responses show that they understand the process of developing a shared vision as them agreeing about one that is preset, and seem to be unaware of what the literature indicates as being a shared vision that triggers ownership and ultimately helps them sustain this change. According to Lambert (2007), a shared vision is one that is the outcome of a discussion, in contrast with a vision that is developed by the leader and that is later on bought into by the staff. Developing such a vision provides more of a guarantee that teachers' energy and passions will be directed toward fulfilling it. The belief that developing the vision is the sole responsibility of the leader reflects a conviction that the leader knows best how to weave the vision, and that teachers should not have a role in developing it since they are

not as well informed and as skillful as he/she is. This finding is very much expected in a paternalistic society as the Lebanese society, and is very much in line with the findings of Karami-Akkary's (2013) and Harb's (2014) studies that reveal a view of leadership that still revolves around the 'know it all' 'superhero'. Despite having the teachers' belief about developing a shared vision contradict what literature recommends, the emphasis that teachers give to having them buy into the vision shows some progress in an autocratic society in which leaders are used to take decisions and just tell those who are in a lower position in the hierarchy what they are supposed to do (Karami-Akkary, 2013), rather than spend time and energy to convince them about the added value of the innovation.

As for the leaders' view about developing a shared vision, despite it being convergent in some aspects with literature however, if compared to the literature, also reflects a partial understanding of the manner in which it should be done. The leaders shared that the teachers shouldn't have a say in weaving the vision when the change does not have an impact on them, interesting position when examined through the lens of the school as a social system. Within a social system that is very interconnected, any change that is introduced has a direct or indirect impact on the teaching/learning function and thus, ultimately affects directly or indirectly the teaching/learning process. As such, singling out change initiatives as not impacting teachers might be a reflection of the unease still experienced by autocratic leaders toward involving the teachers in a participative process of decision-making. Despite having both leaders and teachers have a partial understanding of what a shared vision is, however, the teachers' view is more clearly opposing to the recommendations of literature than that of the leaders. Hence, talking as a collective, the professional belief about the importance of always having the

teachers participate in developing the vision for a change at the school is still far from being part of its adopted norm of practice.

Despite having the participants agree that the vision should be informed by the experience of other schools however, a more in-depth analysis of their responses reveal that their understanding does not overlap with the recommendations of literature that call for deprivatizing practice (Smylie & Hart, 1999), for developing ties with the environment for the sake of developing efficient inter-organizational relations, shared meanings and cumulating support (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), and with the call for developing PLCS in which there is an openness to share information about one's practice, and in which peers play an essential role in the learning of the individual (Hord, 2009). The participants' responses do not reflect that they have such a clear conception about the benefits of having the vision be informed by other schools and about the ways in which this could be done.

Another component that the participants agreed with is the importance of piloting and having a flexible plan. While the literature clearly recommends developing a flexible plan that develops and changes depending on the organizational realities and in response to arising conditions during the implementation of the change (Wilson & Daviss, 1994) however, having the participants agree that the plan should be flexible does not necessarily reflect flexible thinking and a willingness to modify the plan based on what emerges through monitoring, practice not very much in place in the Arab culture, but could rather reflect an avoidance to do the extra work of planning ahead and setting clear objectives.

The participants agreed after extensive probing from the researcher with the importance of having written and continuous evaluation based on preset criteria.

Additionally, the respondents failed to differentiate between monitoring and evaluation. This is an indication that they do not have a clear and well-grounded view of how evaluation should take place. When asked to recount how the evaluation of the change that the school underwent was done, it was clear that it did not follow a systematic process, that the needs of the stakeholders were not assessed, that the implementation was not connected to the teachers' needs and priorities, that practice was not reassessed and finally that the effect of the intervention was only examined informally. Hence, critical evaluation of the design and strategies endorsed and the feedback mechanisms to monitor the progress and challenges faced during the implementation is virtually non-existent. Thus, all the insights and challenges faced during implementation were undocumented and the perceived effect of the innovation is not based on data but rather on subjective opinions. This resonates with Karami-Akkary and Rizk's (2011) claim that there is a lack of effective evaluation practices and a disregard for all the information that could be generated prior to the change (needs assessment), during the change (monitoring), and after the change (evaluation of the impact) to guide planning and implementation. Such formative evaluation is not a common practice in the Arab context because educators dread having their practices be scrutinized, judged and criticized, which would consequently oblige them to change them (Karami-Akkary, 2013).

Challenges Faced during Implementation

The participants all agreed that challenges were faced while implementing the change at the school, and more precisely during the process of building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement. According to the teachers, one of the challenges they faced was the inadequate training they underwent. Other challenges that

both teachers and leaders agreed were encountered are the lack of time to collaborate, to be innovative and to smoothly go into the implementation process, as well as having teachers resist change, having teachers who do not value collaboration, and finally the lack of sufficient funding.

Innovative ideas are the product of reflective practice (Lambert, 2003), which is, along with collaboration (Smylie & Hart, 1999), an essential characteristic that should be present in a school that is building its capacity to be in constant improvement. Hence, not having time to collaborate and engage in reflection are major challenges that hinder the successful implementation of a change and disable the development of the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement.

Also, the participants shared that the lack of sufficient funding is an obstacle that faced the process of building the school's capacity to be in constant improvement. This lack was also perceived to be a challenge facing building the capacity of Egyptian schools to be in continuous improvement (Al-Mahdi, 2012). Since one aspect of the school's capacity is the presence of technical resources (Newmann et al., 2000), the absence of sufficient funding that would allow the school to have such technical resources is for sure a challenge that faces building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement.

Furthermore, the respondents considered having teachers resist change as another impediment to building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement. This was also found to be a challenge faced in Egyptian schools (Al-Mahdi, 2012). Since improvements might create concerns in teachers, resistance is very likely to arise when teachers know that a change will be implemented and will still be present during the implementation stage (Chaar, 2013; Sarafidou & Nikolaidis, 2009). Hence, such

resistance would hinder the successful implementation of a change.

Also, having the participants mention having some teachers not value collaboration as an obstacle that was faced is very predictable since we are in a context that is mostly bureaucratic and that does not foster collaboration (Akkary, 2014). Having such an attitude toward collaboration is definitely a major challenge since collaboration is a necessary aspect that needs to be present when building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement (Smylie & Hart, 1999).

Besides, the teachers mentioned having ineffective training as a challenge they faced. This challenge is present in the Arab context where professional development is mostly not linked to teachers' needs and does not converge with their priorities (Karami-Akkary, 2014). Having a lack of effective training stands in the way of building human capital and thus of building professional expertise, which is key for building the capacity of the school (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Smylie & Hart, 1999). Having only teachers mention inadequate training as a challenge faced either shows that they did not voice out to the leaders that the training was ineffective, or that the leader were not convinced that this was the case. This lack of alignment in teachers' and leaders' perception definitely provides ground for problems.

Leadership Qualities and Actions

The perception of the participants regarding the leadership actions and qualities that support building the school's capacity converges in some aspects with the recommendations of literature while it diverges in others. Moreover, it lacks very important components that the literature considers as being key to building the school's capacity. The participants suggested that the leader should have good communication skills, should be assertive, and should be friendly. Also, they proposed that he/she

should maintain open and inclusive communication and should reward creativity and good work.

Both leaders and teachers agreed that the leader should be friendly with good listening skills, characteristics also suggested by the literature. Those two qualities were also mentioned in a study that Slater (2008) conducted with parents, principals and teachers who considered having good listening skills as well as being approachable as key qualities the leader should have, as they enable him/her to develop positive relationships with the stakeholders. As such, these are necessary characteristics that support collaboration and the process of building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement.

Also, teachers and leaders believe that the leader needs to maintain open and inclusive communication, which encompasses having him/her inform the staff about their improvement plans. This is in line with Bridges and Mitchell's (2000) suggestion that leaders should focus on conveying to the teachers the plan that will be followed, as this would alleviate their concerns, which in turn would lessen resistance.

Being assertive is a characteristic that the participants mentioned as being key for building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement. This perception is dominant in our Arab culture where leadership is defined as authoritarian control rather than inspirational mutual influence (Karami-Akkary, 2013). Contrary to the Western democratic view of leadership, a top-down view of leadership entails that if the leader is not assertive, he/she would, as many teachers argued, lose his effectiveness as a leader.

Another divergence of the results in comparison with the conceptions associated with effective leadership that is conducive to building the school's capacity, is that the participants of the study failed to mention that the leader should take into

consideration the sociocultural context of the school. According to Ylimaki et al. (2012), taking the sociocultural context of the school into consideration is a characteristic of an effective leader and is done through having the leader build the capacity of the school in a manner that converges with the characteristics of the context, and through making sure that the practices adopted are culturally responsive.

Organizational Conditions for Promoting Capacity Building for Change

The findings of the study reveal that the participants have a partial understanding of the conditions that need to be present in the organization and that promote building capacity for change. They suggested that it is essential to provide teachers with the necessary resources for implementation, which they claimed could be in the form of technical resources and of providing enough time for teachers to come up with ideas. This proposition is in alignment with the suggestion of Hord (2009) that teachers should be provided with the necessary time to be part of PLCs, which allow for learning and hence are a medium for coming up with new ideas, and with Lambert's (2003) call for providing teachers with time to reflect, which enables teachers to come up with new ideas. Also, it is in line with Newman et al.'s (2000) definition of capacity as including the presence of technical resources.

Additionally, all the participants agreed that decision-making should be based on data, which converges with Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) suggestion that the school that is building its capacity should base its decisions on data. However, both leaders and teachers failed to recognize that in order for such data to be generated, teachers should be involved in inquiry.

Likewise, after a lot of probing, the participants agreed with the importance of constant reflection. This resonates with the recommendations of Mitchell and Sackney

(2011) that for a school to build its capacity, it has to ensure that professionals are working on developing convergent relationships between their actions, their beliefs and their knowledge, which is done through continuous introspection about practice. Despite having the respondents agree with the importance of reflective practice, they do not seem to perceive it happening as continuously as Lambert (2003) recommends.

Furthermore, all the participants agreed that sustainability and renewal are an essential component of an effective change. This is in line with the call of literature for ensuring that a change is sustained (Louis & Hargreaves, 1999). However, their answers do not reveal an understanding about the way this renewal can be achieved. They do not seem to realize that it is necessary to have the stakeholders be critical and reflect on the impact of the change and always look for ideas that would lead to improvement. According to Senge (1990), this could be done in the context of PLCs that open the room to have the practices of the school revisited and redeveloped, hence ensuring sustainability but also enabling renewal through supporting the personal growth of the individuals.

Moreover, the perception of the participants regarding the characteristics of effective professional development is incomplete, as it lacks several aspects that literature considers as key. While teachers and leaders agreed that having continuous training is a vital organizational condition that enables development of the school's capacity for improvement, further analysis of their answers reveals that their understanding of what it entails does not really converge with the recommendation of literature. According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), an effective leader develops the people around him/her through providing them with individualized support as well as with ongoing intellectual stimulation and opportunities for growth. Despite having the

participants mention continuous training, their responses do not reflect a firm belief that professional development should happen very often, but rather show that they think that its frequency should increase only when an innovation is being introduced.

Another essential aspect that ought to be present in a school that is developing its capacity for learning is to have the members of the organization engaged in collective learning in order for them to develop shared understandings (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). This aspect was totally neglected in the participants' answers that failed to link the effectiveness of the training to having it be done.

Other aspects related to professional development that the participants failed to mention is the importance of having it be related to practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009), be job-embedded and be offered by their peers (Lai, 2015). Most of them view training as a lecture done by an outsider.

The failure of the participants to recognize the importance of the aspects mentioned above is a clear indication of their unawareness of the aspects of effective professional development and of the importance of developing PLCs as a way to provide collaborative, continuous, job-embedded professional development that supports the development of the school's capacity (Hord, 2009).

Another apparent discrepancy with the literature is that teachers and leaders argued in favor of having the training be responsive to their immediate needs related to implementing the intervention. However, they completely ignored the importance of having differentiated and developmental professional development. Glickman and Gordon (1987) explain that developmental supervision, proposes that different teachers operate at a different level of readiness and expertise, hence the need to provide each

teacher or group of teachers with supportive supervision that meets them at their level and that would lead them grow professionally.

Furthermore, the participants did not agree about the importance of providing psychological support directly to the teachers when a change is being introduced. They kept their focus on the cognitive readiness to understand and manage the change as many of them considered it sufficient to sooth the anxieties of the teachers and give them confidence about their skills. However, according to literature, providing affective support is imperative since even when teachers are convinced cognitively about the benefit of the change, change still creates concerns that are not solely related to how skillful they are to implement it. Such support could be provided through tackling those concerns throughout the change process, and through ensuring that the level of concern the teachers are at converges with the level of use of the innovation (Hall et al., 1973).

The perceptions of the leaders and the teachers about how school wide-decisions are made mostly diverge from the recommendations of the literature for a more participatory and democratic process. It becomes clear that the teachers are torn between how they are socialized to view leadership as making authoritarian, top-down decisions, and their belief that their opinion needs to be solicited to inform the decision-making process. Interestingly, many of them seem to accept to give the leader the right to take the final decision without feeling outraged when their input is not asked for, or without critically thinking whether the decision in itself was right. When they were asked to recount the story of a change that the school implemented, they directly jumped to talking about the way the change was implemented, while completely ignoring to talk about the decision-making process that led to this change and their role in it, and whether they approved of that decision. Hence, teachers accept new ideas as

‘de facto’, and have no faith that they can influence school wide changes, and go along with mandated decisions while trying to get the best of what is being offered. This dynamic creates tensions and increases the disconnect between teachers and their administration.

Another factor that could have led to this passive stance emanates from a dependency on leaders and from a very wide spread conviction in the Arab culture that leaders are all-knowing (Harb, 2014). Indeed, the answers of the teachers in this study show that they overemphasize the expertise of the leaders and do not seem to realize that they too have knowledge that is crucial, not only for classroom instructional changes, but also for school wide changes.

In addition, despite having the participants express their belief in shared-decision-making, they mainly advocate for consultative rather than participative decision-making. They asserted that the leader needs to ask for the opinion of the teachers before taking a decision, but he/she is not obliged to make the decision according to what the majority said. Advocating for consultative decision-making when it comes to instructional matters is not in line with the recommendations of literature that call for participative decision-making that increases the staff’s commitment to implement the innovations introduced (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). When teachers feel that they contributed to the decision of introducing an innovation, they feel that they have a responsibility and they commit to implementing the change even if they have concerns (Leithwood & Duke, 1999).

Having teachers and leaders advocate for consultative decision-making rather than participative decision-making for school-wide instructional decisions is not only due to the perception they hold about leaders but also to their belief about teachers and

the scope of their role. Many participants shared that the decision-making should not be participative, since some teachers might fail to adopt a systemic stance and maintain their focus on protecting their narrow personal interests.

However, despite this divergence with the recommendations of literature regarding the effective way to make decisions, having teachers advocate for consultative decision-making is still a major step forward in a paternalistic-culture with high power concentration (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005), which is typical of Lebanese societies in which people grant full authority to those in leadership positions (Harb, 2014).

On the other hand, the participants shared that trust is key for building the school's capacity. This is in line with Mitchell and Sackney (2011) assertion that trust is a key aspect that enables the development of a learning community. Despite having the participants mention trust, most of them shared that it is impossible to develop it among teachers. Contrary to this view, literature emphasizes developing trust among colleagues and argues that it significantly impacts collaboration (Tschannen-Moran, 2001), that it is associated with teacher professionalism (Tschannen-Moran, 2009) and that its presence is crucial specially in times of reform (Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Moreover, another organizational condition that the participants considered as being key for building the school's capacity is having constant collaboration and teamwork. This is in line with Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) suggestion that in order to build the school's capacity for learning, individuals in the organization should work collaboratively and the culture of the school should encourage collaboration and teamwork. However, a more in-depth analysis of the results reveals nuanced differences in the meaning they accorded to continuous collaboration. Both the leaders' and

teachers' perception of frequent collaboration does not entail having it happen weekly or even biweekly. This is not in agreement with the recommendations of literature that call for the development of PLCs in which cooperation between same cycle or same subject teachers should take place weekly, while cooperation between the whole staff ought to happen monthly (Hord, 2009).

In addition, when teachers and leaders were asked about how they think collaboration should take place, the majority were very adamant that it is useless to have collaboration happen between teachers of different cycles or departments, as they believe that it will not be of any benefit and that teachers should not give their input about something that is not related to their class. This shows that the participants do not have a system view where teachers are capable to contribute beyond their classrooms. It also shows that they do not believe in collective responsibility for student learning, a key characteristic of high leadership capacity schools (Lambert, 2003).

Also, their view about having students and parents not have a major say in school matters does not reflect an understanding of what building leadership capacity consists of since, according to Lambert (2003), parents and students are perceived as partners in high leadership capacity schools. Besides, further analysis of teachers' responses reveal that many of them do not trust their colleagues and the intentions underlying the opinion they give. Since trust is key for building leadership capacity, this perception about teachers is an obstacle facing building leadership capacity.

Conclusion

This study examined the perception of leaders and teachers about building school capacity for sustainable improvement. As an action research study, its main purpose is to develop an action plan that would help the school better build its capacity

for improvement based on the identified challenges, and on the comparative analysis with best practices identified in literature about building school capacity for sustainable improvement.

The perception of the leaders and the teachers regarding building the school's capacity for sustainable improvement converges in some respects with the recommendations of literature while in others it does not. However, even though there is some alignment with what literature proposes as effective ways to build the school's capacity for improvement, participants do not seem to have a coherent framework from which they are operating, as people's actions and ideas seem mostly reactionary and on prompt rather than strategically thought off. Their discussion with the researcher brought into the surface a lack of awareness of their own conceptions and the rationale underlying their actions. A lot of probing was needed to get the participants to share their views about several aspects that the literature considers as key to building the school's capacity for sustainable improvement.

When the participants were asked about the activities that they think enable building the school's capacity to be in improvement, they missed mentioning developing a shared vision, enabling collective learning, encouraging continuous reflection on practice and experimentation, having data-driven decision-making, promoting trust, and finally building leadership capacity. Even after having them mention some of those aspects after a lot of probing, they still didn't seem to draw any connection with building school capacity for improvement.

The participants also failed to mention many aspects of an effective process of change, though they agreed that it encompasses triggering the change, building a shared vision, piloting the change initiative, and finally setting a formal evaluation process. In

fact, teachers are still widely unaware about the importance of building partnerships with students and parents throughout the change process (Lambert, 2003). They argued that parents and students should not have a major role in initiating the change.

In addition, the participants do not seem to be aware of the importance of developing a formal evaluation plan since the researcher had to probe them repeatedly for them to mention it. Despite having the participants agree that the evaluation should be written, should be based on preset criteria emerging from the goals of the change, and should be continuous, their understanding of what effective evaluation consists of remains incomplete. Moreover, they seem to not recognize the difference between evaluation and monitoring. Consequently, while both teachers and leaders agreed with the importance of piloting the change on a small scale and of developing a flexible plan, their views undermine the real purpose of starting the implementation on a small scale. Participants, especially leaders, view the piloting stage as an opportunity for the leader to gain time to enforce his/her vision for change around the school, rather than a period of authentic exploration during which the improvement initiative is implemented, closely monitored and evaluated, and modified accordingly.

On the other hand, the results reveal that the participants are aware of some of the organizational conditions that are considered essential to building the school's capacity. In line with the recommendations in international literature (Hord, 2009; Lambert, 2003), the participants agreed about the importance of providing the teachers with the resources necessary (time, technical support and material resources) to implement the change, of targeting sustainability while aiming at renewal, of providing responsive continuous training, of having shared decision-making, of having well-established trust, of facilitating teamwork and collaboration, of having data-driven

decision-making, and finally of having reflective practice. However, they often failed to mention the strategies needed to enact these conditions.

While the participants seem to realize the importance of sustaining a change and aiming at renewal, it is clear that they are not aware that PLCs are promising structures that would enable the school to attain that renewal (Senge, 1990).

Similarly, with respect to providing teachers with the necessary training, it is very clear that the participants do not seem to realize that there is a need for a comprehensive, job-embedded, collaborative and developmental design of the training to accompany the implementation and build capacity for its sustainability. The participants' responses reveal that they believe that the training should be responsive to their needs related to the innovation, and hence it should be done in small groups that are divided according to the cycle or to the department that each teacher pertains to. However, they completely miss the importance of providing the teachers with differentiated job-embedded professional development that Glickman (1981) argues for (Glickman and Gordon, 1987). Besides, there was no agreement between the participants whether the training should encompass psychological support or not. Teachers should be provided with psychological support when a change is being introduced because concerns arise and need to be met, or else the implementation of the change is in danger of failure (Hall et al., 1973).

Another facilitating condition that is missing in the responses of the participants is related to having continuous training and collaboration. Further analysis of their responses shows clearly that they do not perceive collaboration as offering opportunities for professional development as the literature asserts (Hord, 2009).

Additionally, leaders' and teachers' conviction regarding shared decision-

making risks to hinder building the school's capacity since they suggested that decision-making regarding instructional matters should be consultative rather than participative. Without participative decision-making, it becomes hard to have all stakeholders commit to implementing the change (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Having the respondents advocate for consultative decision-making reflects a lack of trust in teachers' opinion, factor that can prove detrimental to an effective implementation process.

Another aspect that the participants are not aware of is that in order to have data-driven decision-making, teachers should be part of the process of collecting the data through inquiry (Lambert, 2003), and hence they need to be actively engaged in all stages of the implementation process. They also seem to miss that reflection is not an occasional practice, but that it rather needs to be a habitual practice if it is to become a contributor to building school capacity for change (Lambert, 2003).

Moreover, participants seem to be reserved when it comes to the importance of deprivatization of practice and openly discussing their innovative intent with colleagues from other schools. Their views seem to mirror the dominant competitive mindset in the privatized educational context in Lebanon. This competitive mindset in Lebanon constitutes in itself an impediment to building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement as it fails to help the cumulative construction of knowledge that takes place when schools share whatever knowledge they have (Hord, 2009; Smylie & Hart, 1999).

The understanding that the participants have about the leadership actions and qualities that the leader should have lacks several key aspects necessary for building the school's capacity. All the participants agreed that the leader needs to have special qualities and should undertake specific actions that enable building the school's

capacity. However, respondents missed a major component of building school capacity for improvement namely, establishing a climate of collaboration and trust that is found to emanate from practicing participative leadership. Instead, they kept emphasizing the need for the leader to be assertive which shows the influence of the authoritarian view of leadership that is prevalent in the Arab culture (Karami-Akkary, 2013), as the participants believe that a leader's assertiveness and authority are what makes him a leader.

Moreover, the participants seem to believe that teachers have limited agency throughout the change process at their school. Teachers believe that the vision should not be the product of a discussion between the leaders and the teachers because the leader knows best how to develop it, and teachers are expected to have limited input as executors of this change rather than partners in thinking strategically about its initiation, design, and scope of implementation. While the leaders seem to give more room for the teachers to participate in developing the vision however, both the teachers' and the leaders' view hinder building the school's capacity.

As for the perception of the participants regarding the challenges faced during the implementation of the change, they agreed on the following: (1) lack of time to collaborate, to come up with innovations, and to smoothly get acquainted with the change; (2) lack of sufficient; (3) having teachers who are resistant to change and who do not value collaboration; (4) inadequate training. All those challenges faced are definitely an impediment to building the school's capacity since collaboration (Smylie & Hart, 1999) and reflection that would lead to coming up with new ideas (Lambert, 2003) are key aspects that enable building the school's capacity. Similarly, having technical resources, which can only be made available when there is enough funding, is

one of the components of the school’s capacity (Newmann et al., 2000). Moreover, having teachers resist change disables building the school’s capacity since it could decrease the success of the innovation, as it can still be present throughout the implementation of the change (Sarafidou & Nikolaidis, 2009). Finally, not providing teachers with effective training is a major obstacle that faces building the school’s capacity because building human capital is an essential component of building the school’s capacity (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011; Smylie & Hart, 1999).

Action Plan: Increase the School’s Capacity to be in Sustainable Improvement

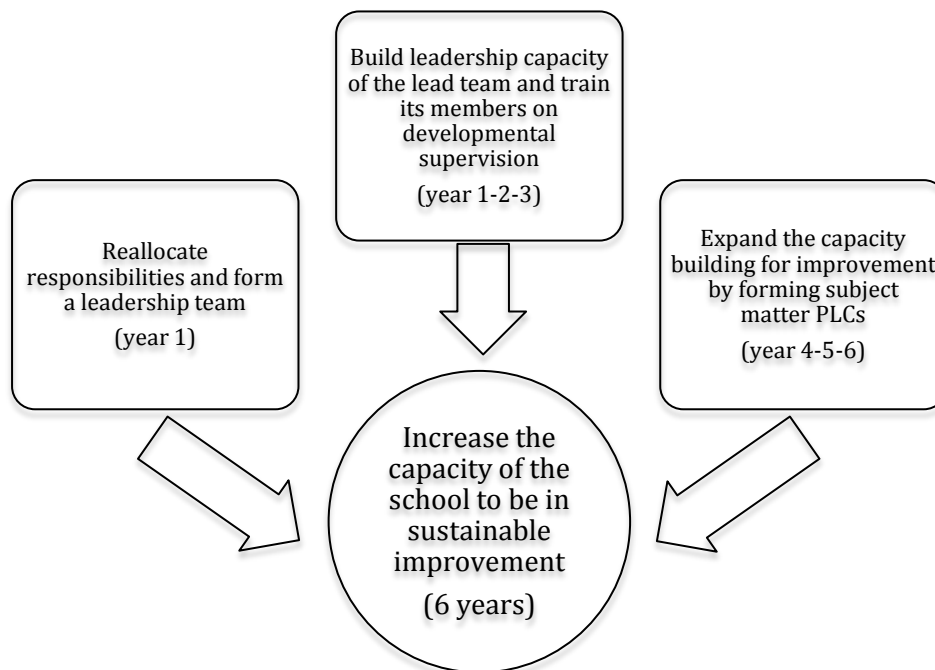


Figure 1. Main improvement goal and operational goals of the action plan.

This figure illustrates the main improvement goal and the operational goals of the action plan.

The main improvement goal of this action plan is to increase the capacity of the school to be in sustainable improvement. This action plan intends to give a strategic

direction for the school to transform its culture into a self-renewing professional community. The participants' views of an ideal scenario, the identification of the challenges they faced, as well as of the conditions needed to build school capacity informed the design of the action plan in term of setting the outcome of the improvement initiative, and determining its operational objectives and related activities. It also informed proposing the conditions that need to be set to support rather than hinder the implementation. Since the researcher believes that it is crucial for the stakeholders to have a say in how things are done in school, this action plan will be presented to the school leaders and teachers as a proposal with broad guidelines. Their feedback will be solicited to develop the operational goals of this plan and determine how to reach them in the context and existing conditions of the specific school studied. In the remaining part of this section, an action plan will be presented.

The results of the study show clearly that the participants have a limited conception that misses viewing participative leadership as an effective approach to sustaining improvement, that there is a major lack in their understanding and practices related to planning, monitoring, and evaluating school improvement, and that effective job-embedded professional development that targets the individual needs of the teachers is non-existent. All those constitute impediments to building the school's capacity for improvement. Accordingly, addressing these impediments would build the social capital of the school which encompasses the following objectives: building a climate of trust, developing systematic documentation of practice, designing job-embedded experiential professional development, adopting participative leadership, and establishing partnerships to leverage external support. To build individual capacity, the following competencies need to be developed among all the school personnel: inquiry skills, data-

driven decision-making, reflective dialogue and practice, evolving design planning, professional collaboration, and de-privatization of practice.

To reach the targeted outcomes and fulfill the improvement goal of building capacity for school improvement, the following three operational objectives are suggested (see figure 1):

1. Reallocate responsibilities and form a leadership team
2. Build leadership capacity of the lead team and train its members on developmental supervision
3. Expand the capacity building for improvement by forming subject matter PLCs

This action plan is designed for a period of six years. The most pressing objective to work on is to create time for leaders and teachers to work on the operational objectives to be reached. After allocating more time in the school calendar to support the improvement initiative, the two operational objectives to be worked on simultaneously during the first three years are to reallocate responsibilities and form a leadership team (made up of the four coordinators and of lead teachers), and to build the leadership capacity of the team as well as to train the team members on implementing developmental supervision. After having the leadership team complete their training, they will in turn coach other teams and develop in them leadership competencies. The acquired developmental supervision skills will allow members of this team to be responsible for supervising the teachers using the developmental supervision approach. Hence, during the fourth, fifth and sixth year of the implementation of the action plan, the rest of the teachers (who were not part of the initial leadership team) will in turn develop their leadership competencies, and will experience job-embedded professional development that is facilitated by a supervisor who applies the developmental

supervision approach which focuses on identifying teachers' needs, and on providing them with the support that is relevant to their needs and level of readiness. The key aim of this supervisory approach will be to help teachers develop into independent self-reflective educators, which is an essential individual capacity for leading school-based improvement. Hence, during the fourth, fifth and sixth year, all the school (leaders and teachers) would be in the process of building the school's social and human capital, which in turn will set the school in the strategic direction to build its capacity for school-based improvement. Following is a more detailed account of what each operational goal encompasses.

Reallocate Responsibilities and Form a Leadership Team

To build capacity for sustainable school improvement and meet the set outcome objectives, it is necessary to restructure the school as a professional bureaucracy (Hoy & Miskel, 2008) that functions with teachers grouped in professional learning communities (Hord, 2009). To achieve that, teachers' workload must include time for professional collaboration to be practiced among a team of teachers formed within specialty areas and/or around a specific emerging need. Moreover, teachers' and coordinators' schedule must allow time for regular meetings for members of the different PLCs as well as among PLCs. For that to happen, the school could dismiss the students two hours earlier once a week. In addition, the teaching load of subject coordinators should be reduced to a minimum to free their time to perform the functions of developmental supervision, through which they will provide the teachers with the coaching and mentoring support they need to continuously engage and learn from effective job-embedded professional development (Glickman & Gordon, 1987).

To implement the action plan, an initial team (PLC) will be formed in the first year around a specific need for improvement in the school that is deemed to be a priority by the school community. The leadership team will consist of all the subject matter coordinators with two or three lead teachers that have experience at the school, and have leadership potential. Since the school in this study is a small size school with one section per grade level, the PLC will provide the forum for coordinators and teachers from different cycles to collaborate on solving problems of practice that impact their teaching. The time accorded for PLCs to meet will be solely used to tackle challenges that impede the students' learning experiences that are not confined to one subject or one grade level but rather cut across disciplines and grade levels. As members of the PLC, to find solutions to identified needs teachers and leaders will be collaborating across grade levels to solve learning problems.

Other than giving time for teachers and leaders who are involved in the initial PLC, some responsibilities of the coordinators should be reallocated. Since the four coordinators in the school will need to allocate time for the implementation of the action plan, they will not be able to supervise all the teachers. Thus experienced teachers who have leadership qualities will take, along with the coordinators, the role of supervisors. The teachers who are supervising other teachers need to have their teaching load decreased for them to be able to provide the mentoring and peer coaching.

Starting the fourth year of implementation of the action plan, all participating teachers, those in the initial PLC and those who will become members of the new PLCs, should have time in their workload allocated to their participation in the improvement initiative they will be leading as a PLC

Build Leadership Capacity of the Lead Team and Train its Members on Developmental Supervision

During the first three years, the leadership team will go through a program for job-embedded professional development that is based on the TAMAM school improvement journey (Karami-Akkary et al., 2012). This cycle comprises the following steps:

1. Pin pointing a school improvement need that is deemed a priority by the school community.
2. Developing the objectives for improvement.
3. Planning for the change. The plan will encompass developing the design of the change initiative, developing an action plan for implementation, as well as a plan for continuous monitoring.
4. Implementing the plan.
5. Evaluating the plan.
6. Reviewing the plan if needed and making decisions about next steps, especially in term of embedding the initiative in the school functioning.

The leadership team will be coached by consultants from the university. These consultants will help the team go through the steps mentioned above and throughout the process, the team will develop the following skills and competencies: participative leadership, inquiry, evidence based decisions, data-driven decision-making, reflective dialogue and practice, evolving design planning, professional collaboration, de-privatization of practice, job embedded experiential learning, mentoring and systematic documented practice. This leadership team will be like an engine in the school ready to expand the leadership capacity to others.

During the first three years, the focus will be on building capacity of a team to lead school improvement. To achieve that goal, the team will be coached by a team of university experts on setting goals for improvement, and on planning and implementing school based improvement. The lead team members will also be coached to acquire effective supervisory skills in order to be effective mentors through practicing developmental supervision (Glickman & Gordon, 1987), need that the results of the study reveal. Hence, during the first three years, providing the teachers with effective professional development will be the improvement project of the leadership team. Having this as their project would allow the team to, at the same time, acquire leadership skills as well as skills on how to do developmental clinical supervision.

Form PLCs to Expand Building School Capacity for Improvement

After the completion of the first three years of the action plan, where members of the lead team were trained on how to supervise teachers according to the developmental supervision model (Glickman & Gordon, 1987), each member will be ready to supervise/ coach a team of three or more teachers in their specialty area. Thus, subject area PLCs with teachers' members will be formed. Through applying the developmental supervisory approach (Glickman & Gordon, 1987), the teachers will be coached to identify their needs as they relate to improving student learning and achieving school vision, and will be provided with professional development that is job-embedded and related to practice. Members of the leadership team will also be ready to coach members of the formed PLCs to build their leadership capacity through undergoing a similar cycle whereas they initiate, plan, and implement, and evaluate a school based improvement intervention. After the six years of the action plan, the school will have a lead team of school coordinators skilled in developmental

supervision, and PLCs centered on subject areas, each engaged in identifying needs in the subject area and bringing about initiatives for improvement.

In conclusion, after undergoing this sixth year of the plan, the school would have increased its capacity for improvement, since it would have developed leadership capacity in the school (Lambert, 1998, 2003), would have provided continuous professional development (Newmann et al., 2000), and would have developed PLCs (Hord, 2009; King & Newmann, 2001), key components that enable building the school's capacity to be in sustainable improvement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Since there is a lack of studies about school reform in the Arab world (El Amine, 2005), this study is a step forward toward filling this gap. However, larger scale studies are needed to study the process of building school capacity in Lebanon. Those studies can focus on schools with different population characteristics (Lebanese teachers/leaders, foreign teachers/leaders), since the perception of teachers and leaders can differ based on the sociocultural context of the school. Those studies can have as a purpose to compare between the perception prevalent and actions done in those schools when it comes to building school capacity.

Also, other studies can focus more on studying the difference between the perception of the leaders and that of the teachers regarding the process of building school capacity.

Moreover, schools in Lebanon that effectively built their capacity to be in sustainable improvement can be studied to explore what practices enable building the school's capacity specifically in the context of Lebanese schools, and how convergent those practices are with the recommendations of western literature, in order to find out

how much of the western recommendations are effective in the context of Lebanese schools.

Finally, studies aiming at examining the perception of parents, students, school governors and ministry directors regarding the way to build school capacity can be of added value, since they would add knowledge about the perception of stakeholders other than teachers and leaders regarding building school capacity.

APPENDIX A

INITIAL INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

One individual interview was conducted with each of the participants in my study: the principal of the school, the coordinators and the teachers who have been teaching in the school for a year or more. At the beginning of this interview, I presented myself as well as the purpose of my topic to the participants. The duration of this interview was around 60-70 minutes. The following list of questions guided the interview:

1. From your perspective, what does building school capacity for sustainable improvement mean?

Possible probes:

- a. Can you give me a definition? Examples?
 - b. What are its objectives?
 - c. What activities does it consist of?
2. Describe to me a change initiative that your school underwent.
 - a. What was the vision of this change and how did it relate to the school's vision? What were its goals?
 - b. What strategies were used to initiate it, plan for it, implement it, monitor it and evaluate it?
 - c. What were the roles and responsibilities of the staff during this change?
 - d. What forces from inside/outside interfered?

Keeping the change experiences that your school underwent in mind, please answer the following questions:

3. Describe to me the measures that were taken to build capacity for this initiative:
 - a. From your perspective did you feel prepared for it? Did you get the professional development needed?
4. From your perspective, what were the challenges faced during the implementation process of the change? What were the specific challenges that relate to building the capacity for this improvement initiative?
5. From your perspective, what were the measures that were taken to facilitate the implementation of this improvement initiative in your school?
 - a. How was collaboration during the implementation process encouraged? Was special time dedicated for teamwork?
 - b. What was the role of the leaders (principal and coordinators) during this change? Did they act like a teacher? Like a coach? Like a colleague?
 - c. What was the role of the staff in the decision-making process?
 - d. How was external support used to help the school plan and implement this initiative? How was it used to support the school in the implementation process?
 - e. Was there a monitoring system with clear standards to assess the progress of the school with regards to this improvement? How often was monitoring done? Who was involved in this monitoring process?
6. From your perspective, what are the actions that your school could undertake to better build its capacity for sustainable school improvement?

- a. What are the actions that your school could undertake to better build its capacity for sustainable school improvement?
- b. What would leaders do in the context of the school to better build its capacity for sustainable school improvement?

APPENDIX B

REVISED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

One individual interview was conducted with each of the participants in my study: the principal of the school, the coordinators and the teachers who have been teaching in the school for a year or more. At the beginning of this interview, I presented myself as well as the purpose of my topic to the participants. The duration of this interview was around 60-70 minutes. The following list of questions guided the interview:

1. What do you think an ideal process of change encompasses?
2. Describe to me a change initiative that your school underwent.
 - a. What was the vision of this change and how did it relate to the school's vision? What were its goals?
 - b. What strategies were used to initiate it, plan for it, implement it, monitor it and evaluate it?
 - c. What were the roles and responsibilities of the staff during this change?
 - d. What forces from inside/outside interfered?

Keeping the change experiences that your school underwent in mind, please answer the following questions:

3. Describe to me the measures that were taken to build capacity for this initiative:
 - e. From your perspective did you feel prepared for it? Did you get the professional development needed?

4. From your perspective, what were the challenges faced during the implementation process of the change? What were the specific challenges that relate to building the capacity for this improvement initiative?
5. From your perspective, what were the measures that were taken to facilitate the implementation of this improvement initiative in your school?
 - a. How was collaboration during the implementation process encouraged? Was special time dedicated for teamwork?
 - b. What was the role of the leaders (principal and coordinators) during this change? Did they act like a teacher? Like a coach? Like a colleague?
 - c. What was the role of the staff in the decision-making process?
 - d. How was external support used to help the school plan and implement this initiative? How was it used to support the school in the implementation process?
 - e. Was there a monitoring system with clear standards to assess the progress of the school with regards to this improvement? How often was monitoring done? Who was involved in this monitoring process?
6. From your perspective,
 - a. What are the actions that your school could undertake to better build its capacity for sustainable school improvement?
 - b. What would leaders do in the context of the school to better build its capacity for sustainable school improvement?
7. From your perspective, what does building school capacity for sustainable improvement mean?

Possible probes:

- a. Can you give me a definition? Examples?
- b. What are its objectives?
- c. What activities does it consist of?
- d. Read the definition of school capacity and comment on it.

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The aim of this interview is to obtain the participants' feedback about the conclusions I drew following the analysis of the data I gathered from all the participants. I presented the participants with the answers to the individual interview questions one by one and asked them whether my inferences represent their view and whether they have anything to add. This interview took around 60 to 75 minutes. I asked the participants not to refer to names.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF CATEGORIZING DATA UNDER THEMES

<u>Code</u>	<u>Participants' responses</u>
Well-established trust	<p>TSC1: Very important</p> <p>TM2: Trust very important. Can't work without it.</p> <p>TB1: Very important. Developed when principal listens to teachers' opinion. Teacher won't be afraid to give it.</p> <p>TE2: Very important. Helps change because leaders would know that teacher cares <i>Quote: very important because I wouldn't like to work in a place where people can't trust me and my decisions and where I can't trust them and their decisions.</i></p> <p>TE3: Trust is very important to have teamwork. Without it no teamwork can happen.</p> <p>TA1: Very important but not present in schools. Can trust admin but not colleagues.</p> <p>TF1: Trust is very important. When the teachers feel that the leader trusts them they will trust him. TF1: Trust comes with time. When the leader sees that the teacher is trustworthy he let her/him take initiative, he trusts him/her to take decisions regarding her class. This motivates the teacher. Trust is not build when leader always lets the teacher feel that what he/she is doing is not enough. Leader should wait to see what the point of view of the teacher is and should trust that the teacher will be able to do it. TF1: It saddens the teacher to be blamed for something she is not responsible for and it makes the teacher feel that he/she is not close to the leader.</p> <p>TA2: trust is a dream. Very hard to be developed.</p> <p>TE4: Trust very important but not present. <i>Quote: It is crucial because if we don't trust them and they don't trust us all will be done undercover.</i></p> <p>TC1: Trust is very important between the admin and the teachers and among the teachers.</p>

TE5: the most important. Teacher should trust that there won't be gossiping or backstabbing or stealing of her idea. Easier to develop with leader because no jealousy like with colleagues.

TE6: Very important. If no trust between teacher and admin its depressing. Can be built if admin does not build a view of all teachers as being dishonest

TE6: Trust with colleagues impossible to be built because don't know all of them.

TB2: When teachers see that the leader is honest and faithful , trust will be built. This trust allows teachers to trust the leaders' decisions even if he sometimes doesn't share all the reasons why this decision was taken.

TB2: Teachers should trust the leader in whole school change decisions and he should trust them in class decisions they take.

TB2: Having trust between the teacher and the administration is very important. Developed when admin appreciates effort of teachers. Trust developed when teamwork is encouraged.

TF2: Very important but not present.

TF2: Can't be developed. Gets back to the character of each person. Can be built with admin but not with colleagues.

REFERENCES

- المهدي ، ي. (2012). بناء القدرة المدرسية على التحسين المستمر دراسة حالة لاربع مدارس ابتدائية في مصر. *المجلة الدولية للابحاث التربوية التربوية*، (31) ، 407-362
- Bain A., Walker A., & Chan A. (2011). Self-organisation and capacity building: sustaining the change. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(6), 701 – 719.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09578231111174839>
- Bashshur, M. (2005). Dualities and entries in educational reform issues. In A. El Amine (Ed.), *Reform of general education in the Arab world* (pp. 277–298). Beirut: UNESCO Publications.
- Bridges, W., & Mitchell, S. (2000). Leading transition: A new model for change. *Leader to leader*, 16(3), 30-36. Retrieved from http://www.ctrtraining.co.uk/documents/WilliamBridgesTransitionandChangeModel_000.pdf
- Chaar, N. T. (2013). *Teachers' concerns towards change in Lebanese private schools and its relationship to gender, experience and type of change* (Unpublished master's thesis). American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2780243>
- Connolly, M., Connolly, U., & James, C. (2000). Leadership in educational change. *British Journal of Management*, 11(1), 61-70. doi: 10.1111/1467-8551.00151.
- Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

- Cosner, S. (2009). Building organizational capacity through trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 248-291. doi: 10.1177/0013161X08330502
- Darling-Hammond, L., Chung Wei, R., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the United States and abroad*. California: National Staff Development Council.
- Dinham, S., & Crowther, F. (2011). Sustainable school capacity building-one step back, two steps forward? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 49(6), 616-623. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/10.1108/09578231111186926>
- DuFour, R. (2011). Professional learning communities: A bandwagon, an idea worth considering or our best hope for high levels of learning? *Counterpoints*, 408, 159-164. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981276>
- El Amine, A. (2005). Executive summary. In A. El Amine (Ed.), *Reform of general education in the Arab world* (pp. 321–368). Beirut: UNESCO.
- Fullan, M. (1993). The complexity of the change process. In *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform* (pp. 19-41). Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED373391.pdf>
- Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2010). *Applying educational research: How to read, do, and use research to solve problems of practice* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Glickman, C. D., & Gordon, S. P. (1987). Clarifying developmental supervision. *Educational Leadership*, 44(8), 64-68. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.com/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198705_glickman.pdf
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*,

- 78 (6),1360-1380. Retrieved from
https://sociology.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/the_strength_of_weak_ties_and_exch_w-gans.pdf
- Greenwood D. J. & Levin M. (2005). Reform of the social sciences and of universities through action research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 43-64). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- Hall, G. E., Wallace, R. & Dossett, W. F. (1973). *A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institutions*. Research and Development Center for Teacher Education. Texas University, Austin. Retrieved from
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED095126.pdf>
- Hall, G.E. & Hord, S. M. (2001). *Implementing change: patterns, principles and potholes* (2nd ed.). Allyn and Bacon, Boston. Hallinger, P. (1995). Culture and leadership: Developing an international perspective on educational administration. *The University Council for Educational Administration*, 36 (2), 1-16.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (2010). Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership and Management*, 30(2), 95-110. doi:10.1080/13632431003663214
- Harb, J. S.(2014). *Identification and alignment of Lebanese teachers' and principals' perspectives of effective school leadership*. Master Thesis. American University of Beirut. Faculty of Arts and Sciences.
- Hargreaves, A. (2007). The long and short of educational change. *Education Canada*, 47(3), 16-23. Retrieved from <http://www.cea-ace.ca/sites/cea-ace.ca/files/EdCanada2007-v47-n3-Hargreaves.pdf>

- Hargreaves, D. (2001). A capital theory of school effectiveness and improvement. *British Educational Research Journal*, 27(4), 487-503. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1502031>
- Harris, A. (2000). Successful school improvement in the United Kingdom and Canada. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 15(1), 1-5. Retrieved from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/articles/harris.html>
- Harris, A. (2001). Building the capacity for school improvement. *School Leadership & Management*, 21(3), 261-270. doi: 10.1080/13632430120074419
- Haslam, S., & Pennington, R. (2010). Reducing resistance to change and conflict: A key to successful leadership. *Resource International*, 1, 3-11. Retrieved from <http://www.resource-i.com>
- Herr, K. & Anderson, G. L. (2005). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Ltd. Retrieved from <http://methods.sagepub.com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/book/the-action-research-dissertation>
- Ho, D., & Chen, S. (2013). Behind the starting line: School capacity building in early childhood education. *School Leadership & Management*, 33 (5), 501-514. doi:10.1080/13632434.2013.800476
- Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, G.J. (2005). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. (2nd ed.). NY: McGraw Hill.
- Hopkins, D., & Reynolds, D. (2001). The past, present and future of school improvement: Towards the third age. *British educational research journal*, 27(4), 459-475. doi:10.1080/01411920123913

- Hord, S. & Hall, G. (1984). *Principals use research-based techniques for facilitating school effectiveness*. Paper presented at The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED258338.pdf>
- Hord, S. M. (2009). Professional learning communities. *Journal of Staff Development*, 30(1), 40-43. Retrieved from <http://www.earlychildhoodleadership.com.au/downloads/rsc/professional%20communities%20Hord2009.pdf>
- Hoy, W.K. and Miskel, C.G. (2008), *Educational Administration: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Boston, MA: McGraw Hill Higher Education.
- Karami- Akkary, R. K. (2014). Facing the challenges of educational reform in the Arab world. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(2), 179-202. doi: 10.1007/s10833-013-9225-6
- Karami-Akkary, R. K. (2013). The role and role context of the Lebanese school principal: Toward a culturally grounded understanding of the principalship. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(5), 718-742. doi:10.1177/1741143213510503
- Karami-Akkary, R., ElSaheli R., Sarrieddine D., & Katerji R. (2013). *Developing the TAMAM's monitoring model: An experience of evolving design planning*. Retrieved from <http://tamamproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/TAMAM-Technical-Report-5.pdf>
- Karami-Akkary, R., Saad M., & Katerji R. (2012). *Building leadership capacity for school-based reform*. Retrieved from <http://tamamproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/TAMAM-Technical-Report-4.pdf>

- Karami-Akkary, R., & Rizk, N. (2011). A profile of school reform in the Arab world: Characteristics and challenges (technical report 2). Retrieved from <http://www.tamamproject.org/documentation/publications>
- Kemmis S. & McTaggart R. (2005). Participatory action research. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 559-603). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- King, M. B., & Newmann, F. M. (2001). Building school capacity through professional development: Conceptual and empirical considerations. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 15(2), 86-94.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513540110383818>
- Lai, E. (2015). Enacting principal leadership: Exploiting situated possibilities to build school capacity for change. *Research Papers in Education*, 30(1), 70-94.
doi:10.1080/02671522.2014.880939
- Lambert, L. (1998). What is leadership capacity. *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/198058.aspx>
- Lambert, L. (2003). *Leadership capacity for lasting school improvement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Lambert, L. (2006). Lasting leadership: A study of high leadership capacity schools. *The Educational Forum*, 70(3), 238-254.
doi:10.1080/00131720608984900
- Lambert, L. G. (2007). Lasting leadership: Toward sustainable school improvement. *Journal of Educational Change*, 8(4), 311-322. doi:10.1007/s10833-007-9046-6
- Leithwood, K., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for student success, Temple University. Retrieved

from

http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/data/ck/file/What_we_know_about_SchoolLeadership.pdf

- Leithwood, K. & Duke, D. (1999). A century's quest to understanding school leadership. In Murphy, J. & Seashore Louis, K. (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational administration*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass
- Louis, K. , Toole, J., & Hargreaves, A. (1999). Rethinking school improvement. In J. Murphy & K. Louis (Eds.), *Handbook of research on educational administration* (pp. 251- 276). *San Francisco: Jossey-Bass*.
- McNiff, J. (2002). *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new action researchers (3rd ed.)*. UK: September Books.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (3)*. Somerset, US: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>
- Mitchell, C., & Sackney, L. (2011). *Profound improvement: Building capacity for a learning community (2nd ed.)*. New York :Taylor and Francis
- Newmann, F., King, M., & Youngs, P. (2000). Professional development that addresses school capacity: Lessons from urban elementary schools. *American Journal of Education*, 108(4), 259-299. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1085442>

- Pogodzinski, B. (2014). Collegial support and novice teachers' perceptions of working conditions. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(4), 467-489. doi:10.1007/s10833-013-9221-x
- Sarafidou, J.O. & Nikolaidis, D. (2009). School leadership and teachers' attitudes towards school change: The case of high schools in Greece. *The International school of Learning*, 16(8), 431-440.
- Slater, L. (2008). Pathways to building leadership capacity. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 36(1), 55-69. doi: 10.1177/1741143207084060
- Smylie, M.A., & Hart, A. W. (1999). School leadership for teacher learning and change: A human and social capital development perspective. In J. Murphy & K. Seashore Louis (Eds.), *Handbook of educational administration*, (pp. 421 - 441). New York: Longman.
- Spencer, E. J. (2016). Professional Learning Communities: Keeping the Focus on Instructional Practice. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 52(2), 83-85. doi: 10.1080/00228958.2016.1156544
- Stoll, L. (2009). Capacity building for school improvement or creating capacity for learning? A changing landscape. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10(2-3), 115-127. doi: 10.1007/s10833-009-9104-3
- Stringer, P. M. (2009). Capacity building for school improvement: A case study of a New Zealand primary school. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 8(3), 153-179. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10671-009-9073-6
- Troudi, S., & Alwan, F. (2010). Teachers' feelings during curriculum change in the United Arab Emirates: Opening Pandora's box. *Teacher Development*, 14(1), 107. doi:10.1080/13664531003696659

- Tschannen-Moran, M (2001). Collaboration and the need for trust. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 39(4), 308–331. doi:10.1108/EUM0000000005493
- Tschannen-Moran, M (2009). Fostering teacher professionalism in schools: The role of leadership orientation and trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 217–247. doi:10.1177/0013161X08330501
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(6), 944-956. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.05.003
- Tyler, M. H. C., Bretherton, D., Halafoff, A., & Nietschke, Y. (2008). Developing a peace education curriculum for Vietnamese primary schools: A case study of participatory action research in cross-cultural design. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 7(3), 346-368. doi:10.1177/1475240908096487
- Vetter, A. (2012). Teachers as architects of transformation: The change process of an elementary-school teacher in a practitioner research group. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 39(1), 27-49. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/docview/1021174825?accountid=8555>
- Weingand, D. E. (1993). Grounded theory and qualitative methodology. *IFLA journal*, 19(1). doi: 10.1177/034003529301900108
- Wilson, K., & Daviss, B. (1994). Redesigning education. Teachers College Press.
- Ylimaki, R., Bennett, J., Fan, J., & Villaseñor, E. (2012). Notions of ‘success’ in Southern Arizona schools: Principal leadership in changing demographic and border contexts. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 11(2), 168–193. doi:10.1080/15700763.2011.585539