EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Change Leadership: A System Level Case Study
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Change Leadership: A System Level Case Study

Christopher Day,
Professor of Educational Leadership,
The University of Sydney

Christine Grice,
Lecturer Educational Leadership,
The University of Sydney

Independent research commissioned by the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta
"Our world has changed and continues to change. If schools are not changing with it, our young people will be left behind."

Executive Director,
Catholic Education Diocese, Parramatta,
Western Sydney
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 The Research</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Aims</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Methods: data collection and analysis</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Documentation</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Stakeholder perspectives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Theoretical framing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Change Contexts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Faith and formation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Demographic changes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 National events</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Educational provision</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 Restoration and reconciliation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 A Chronology of System Change</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 The change ‘mission’</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 System–wide change in practice: stages and phases</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Mutually Supportive Cross Phase Change Strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Contexts of Faith</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Formation</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Inclusivity</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0 New Understandings of System Change Leadership: Messages from the Field</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Transformative system change leadership</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 New learning and teaching</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Variations in use and impact</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Learning support architectures</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Stakeholder collective engagement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Layering leadership</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 Thought leadership: an innovative strategy for change</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8 Professional learning and development: change as a shared journey</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9 Cross phase change strategies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.10 The limits of rationality</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

How do you take a large complex school system and guide it to success without being vague or overly prescriptive? This is the story of the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) covering more than a decade (2006-2018). Day and Grice take the complex phenomenon of system change and unpack it with great clarity and insight.

Their analytic framework allows them to dissect the system over time and over function in a way that renders the complexity accessible. They have four main organizers. First are the eight temporal phases ranging from ‘imagining a different future’ to ‘embedding inquiry-led learning: integrating the innovations’. Second, consists of six ‘supportive cross phase change strategies.’ Then come the two contexts of Catholic faith (‘formation’ and ‘inclusivity’). The final organizer involves ‘10 new understandings of system change leadership’ ranging from ‘transformative system change leadership’, to ‘the limits of rationality’.

In so doing the authors render a very complex phenomenon into an account that is interesting to read, comprehensive, and insightful. There are six insights in the report that stood out for me. First, was the way that the report draws attention to the ways the leadership approached the question of how to maintain focus while experiencing constant churn of new policies, demographic composition, and continuous turnover of personnel. They did this through establishing from the outset a firm but flexible mission consisting of: formation, inclusivity, and inquiry led learning. They reinforced this through three interconnected constructs: project-based learning, personalized learning, and data-driven assessment.

Second, the report reminds the reader that the leadership of the system maintained a firm grip on the mission of the system—a steadfast moral compass—coupled with flexibility of how to fulfill it. Within this framework there was a deliberate and continuing attempt to foster innovation—to try things out and learn from them by retaining ideas that worked.

Third, and a big lesson for large systems, it was clear from the report that Parramatta did not start with goals and structure. Within their foundational parameters they worked toward system alignment. In other words, coherence was jointly developed with system members at all levels through their experiences and judicious collective assessment about what was working.

Fourth, the Executive Director made judicious use of external researchers and practitioners (I know, I was one of them). This presented the danger of de-stabilising, confusing, and potentially alienating stakeholders across the system. However, this did not occur. This was perhaps because the underlying strategy was based on the following: the various external providers were by and large compatible with the core mission of the Diocese; the idea was for system leaders and members to sort out the convergences through experience and debate. This represented a kind of tight-loose evolution that gradually fostered integration and coherence that arose from shared experiences—a kind of confusion-consolidation evolution.
Fifth, the map of change presented in the report illustrates the building of a comprehensive, built, responsive and proactive ‘support architecture’ (as Day and Grice call it). In the midst of the journey (2008-2009) leaders at the central level (and with agreement at other levels) realized that there were many great ideas afoot, but there was a lack of coherence and focus, so they began the task of consolidation. This happened quickly because: a) there was a great deal of mutual trust that had been established; and b) there was experiential evidence about what had been working, what needed clarification, and what could be integrated. It was at this stage that the system could link its strategies to student performance data. Another strong feature of what I would call the ‘support and pressure’ system was that the data had become much more precise about what was working and where, and which school and levels were succeeding or not. As the report concludes, Parramatta has done a superb job of aligning system and local leadership with a common focus and the habits of learning together.

Sixth, and finally, accountability was achieved without getting mired in what I have called ‘wrong drivers’ i.e. the use of punitive accountability, or its opposite – vague or little accountability. Instead, the system fostered a delicate combination of trust, transparency and specificity of data to act on failures and successes, what I call ‘culture-based accountability’ (Fullan, 2019). The ways in which the system integrated these reflects many of our own ideas from Coherence (Fullan & Quinn, 2016) to Nuance (Fullan, 2019)—the latter being based in how leaders learn to read ‘context’ by immersing themselves in both the small and big pictures of the systems in which they work.

All in all, the Diocese of Parramatta may be said to be an exemplar of internal development, and external consumption of ideas and innovations that have been developing over the past decade and a half. In other words, Parramatta could not be in a better position to aggressively move forward into the innovative future that is in the offing.

Michael Fullan
OISE/University of Toronto
September 2019
1.0 The Research

1.1 Aims

The aim of this research, carried out from March, 2018 to May, 2019, was to investigate the purposes, strategies and effects of school system-wide reforms in Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta (CEDP) between 2006 and 2018. The reforms were carried out in the contexts of external demographic, social and policy changes, under the innovative and dynamic leadership of the Executive Director. With his team he developed and persistently pursued his educational mission to improve the life and work opportunities of young people across all parts of the education system through the adoption and enactment of research-informed, values-driven strategies.

1.2 Methods: data collection and analysis

Mixed methods research represents a research design that involves collecting, analysing and interpreting data that is both qualitative and quantitative. The purpose is to gain breadth and depth of understanding by drawing upon data from multiple sources.

1.2.1 Documentation

The researchers collected documentation produced by Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta over the period of intensive reform. A range of 143 documents relating to change during the Executive Director’s period in office were analysed. These included 53 strategic intent plans and statements, 5 implementation plans, 12 annual reports, 3 technical reports, 57 media articles, a ‘canon’ of literature, system planning, monitoring and evaluation documentation, budget material, demographic data, changes in patterns of enrolment, student behaviour, teacher turnover, and academic results.

1.2.2 Stakeholder perspectives

Data were collected from schools by means of 40 semi-structured individual and 27 focus group interviews with a total of 156 school leader, teacher, and student interviews, and 4 Central Office participants.

Principals, teachers, students and parents from six schools were selected from a larger sample size provided by CEDP. Criteria for their selection included: i) an equal number of primary and secondary schools; ii) a range of small and large schools; iii) a range of ICSEA value or socioeconomic status from low to high; iv) schools that were purpose built for inquiry-led learning; v) schools with original buildings; vi) schools with principals who had been at the school for more than three years, with low teacher turnover.
1.3 Theoretical framing

The research was informed by Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) ecological systems’ theory.

Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems’ theory

The research draws upon complexity theory, acknowledging that uncertainty about the uptake of new ideas, and the importance of building relationships be examined over time and at critical points during the change process are key in understanding systems change, and whether, and if so how, success is generated and sustained (Levy, 1994; Lorenz, 1963; Marion, 2008). To date, there is relatively little research on system change which focuses, as this research does, on the behaviours of individual agents and the relationships between these within a multi-level ecosystem (Jacobson et al., 2019).
2.0 Change Contexts

Three external factors informed and influenced the direction and implementation of educational reforms in the Parramatta Diocese: faith and formation, changing demographics, and on-going national improvement agendas.

2.1 Faith and formation

CEDP has historically served a vibrant and diverse migrant community. As the Australian population grew in the 1950s and 60s following World War II, the Catholic population further diversified as post-war immigrants came from Europe, many of them settling in the Diocese of Parramatta. During that growth period, schools were built by migrants, and staffed without government assistance.

The Diocese was also central to the formation of Catholic schooling in Australia. The first Catholic Mass was read in Government House, Parramatta, in 1803 by Fr. Dixon, a convict, who wrote to the Vatican seeking permission to minister in the colony. He was appointed Prefect Apostolic in 1804. He sought peace during the Castle Hill rebellion of the same year. The first Catholic school in Australia was established in Parramatta in 1820. Following the Church Act of 1836, many others were established. When the Public Schools Act of 1866 followed, Catholic schooling remained.

Historically most primary schools and a small number of secondary schools in Parramatta were built on the site of their parish, working directly with their communities. The work of the parishes and CEDP schools continues to be influenced significantly by the serving Bishop.

Formation continues to be integral to the work of CEDP today.
2.2 Demographic changes

Parramatta is a demographically diverse Diocese. Families come from a range of multicultural and religious backgrounds. Some have been moving into new areas and new housing developments. Others are new migrants settling in Australia for the first time. The number of Indigenous families in CEDP schools has also increased over time.

In addition, there are pockets and areas of long established settlements of Australian families.

Over this period, there has been a significant increase of families from India and Pakistan, and a decrease of families from Lebanon, New Zealand and the UK. Other populations have remained constant. There have been changes to the languages spoken at home and the English proficiency of families in CEDP schools. The increase in Mandarin and Hindi and a diversity of other languages remains consistent. There has been a decrease in the number of families who speak only English at home.

The religious affiliations of CEDP families have also changed over time. Although the number of Catholic families has remained consistent, there has been a reduction of Protestant families, and an increase in families from Hindu, Islam, and Sikh religions. These demographic changes have resulted in an increase in religious and multicultural diversity in schools.

2.3 National events

2.3.1 Educational provision

Australia has experienced continuing reform in curriculum, assessment, accountability and transparency over the time period. In 2007, it was listed as ‘high’ in the United Nation’s Education Index (http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index), demonstrating the strength of its educational provision from a global perspective. Within this positive educational climate, the Melbourne Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians (2008) was aspirational in promoting a commitment in Australian education for: action, for equity and excellence; successful learners and citizens; quality teaching, curriculum and assessment; school leadership; early childhood education; youth transitions; and improved educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from low socio-economic backgrounds; while strengthening accountability and transparency.

2.3.2 Restoration and reconciliation

The Catholic Church has responded to a number of issues during the period of intense educational reform that have challenged its integrity.

In 2008 the Prime Minister delivered a formal apology to Australian Indigenous peoples for the first time in Australia’s history. Aboriginal education increased in prominence following the apology.
3.0 A chronology of system change

“I don’t have a vision, it’s all about learning, evangelizing, mission... The first time I ever spoke to the principals I said, ‘I suppose you’d like to hear my vision’. ‘Oh, I’d love to.’ I said, ‘Well I don’t have one...’ So, why don’t we talk about what we know about what we want to do, and we’ll let that vision look after itself. Part of the evangelizing mission of the church, that’s our mission.”
(Executive Director).

3.1 The change mission

The Executive Director’s mission was a learning, performance and enterprise partnership with schools, in which formation, inclusivity, literacy and numeracy, inquiry-led learning and teaching were integral. Inquiry-led learning and teaching involved three interconnected constructs: project-based learning, personalised learning and data-driven assessment in large, open spaces of a size which allow for different teaching and learning configurations.

His stated intention was to create a new narrative across all schools through which principals, Central Office colleagues, and teachers could connect their beliefs and practices. The intended outcome was for each student to play a more active role in shaping their academic learning and formation.

3.2 System-wide change in practice: Stages and Phases

Over the period of the current Executive Director’s leadership, a raft of inter-connected, system-wide change strategies, protocols and procedures were introduced, developed and implemented, within a faith context of formation and inclusivity, and in the face of ongoing external influences. Four overarching stages of change were developed: Foundational, Developmental, Accelerated, and Embedded. The Phases within these denote particular emphases within particular periods of time. Whilst progress towards achieving his mission continued to be made throughout the period of intensive reform, external discontinuities and disruptions were a regular feature. These influenced the timing, number, and combinations of change strategies as CEDP responded to unanticipated policy and social demands from inside and outside the Diocese.

The Executive Director’s mission was a learning, performance and enterprise partnership with schools, in which formation, inclusivity, literacy and numeracy, inquiry-led learning and teaching were integral.
4.0 Mutually Supportive Cross Phase Change Strategies

“We have had the same intent for ten years, with slight modifications” (Deputy Executive Director).

Between 2006 and 2018 there were six key, mutually supportive ‘layered’ system change strategies. Although these were consistently implemented, the relative emphasis given over the period varied. The strategies, and the variations in emphasis between them at different times, are illustrated by the thickness of the horizontal lines in Figure 2 below. Taken together, they illustrate the complexity of system change in practice.

Figure 2: Mutually supportive cross phase change strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>STAGE 1: FOUNDATIONAL</th>
<th>STAGE 2: DEVELOPMENTAL</th>
<th>STAGE 3: ACCELERATION</th>
<th>STAGE 4: EMBEDDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>Phase 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Thought leadership (internal and external)
- Learning support architectures
- New teaching and learning
- Professional learning and development
- Sustained input by international scholars
- Central Office realignment with schools

Inquiry-led teaching, learning and student achievement
5.0 Contexts of Faith

5.1 Formation (Phases 1–8)

“The Catholic school is not a stand-alone enterprise. It is intimately connected to the pastoral mission of the Church, and, because of that, connected with the local parish and parish clergy. It has an ecclesiastical context” (Bishop Manning, 2007).

Over this period, formation moved from encouraging strength and depth of faith within individuals and communities and Catholic parishes, so that school parishes reached out to their broader community, shifting the focus from individuals with Catholic faith, to open faith communities.

Each of the six principals spoke of the involvement of the Parish priest in their schools, where formation was central to purpose. For some principals the expression of formation changed considerably over the time period, while others remained traditional in their approaches.

5.2 Inclusivity (Phases 1–8)

The emphasis on inclusivity which had developed over this period of intensive educational reform became, in the later Phases (2016–18) ‘radical inclusivity’. CEDP reconceptualised its social justice identity under the influence of its recently appointed Bishop, with initiatives such as Marist Learning Zone, Aboriginal initiatives, and Special Education in Phases 7 and 8:

“... My challenge to everyone who is part of Catholic education in the Diocese is to consider these questions: How can we respond to the challenge of being a Church at the margins today? Where are the new ‘peripheries’ and new ‘horizons’ in Catholic schooling that we are called to be and to offer nearnesss and proximity? How can we be the merciful face of God to our school communities and families?” (Bishop Vincent Long, 2016).
Leaders are the architects of individual and organisational improvements...
The certain challenge of educational organisations is to create an environment in which the leaders are empowered to create complementary teams"
6.0 New understandings of system change leadership: messages from the field

6.1 Transformative system change leadership: combining academic and humane orientations

The leadership of change in the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta should be seen in the context of global reform environments which have been characterised internationally as having two basic orientations: (a) a human rights and capacity perspective... for a more inclusive and humane society... that support the development of persons both as individuals and social actors (Sen, 2009); and (b) a neo-liberal socio-economic perspective that links education policy formation to competitive, free market institutional contexts (Friedman and Friedman, 1980). System change in Parramatta had a reform purpose which transcended these. Its leaders addressed both academic improvement and social change. In doing so, they exercised transformative leadership, a critical approach that focusses upon social transformation, equity and justice (Hewitt, Davis and Lashley, 2014).

6.2 New learning and teaching

From the beginning of the intensive reform period, the leadership ambition was to move all schools in the Parramatta Diocese to inquiry-led learning and teaching which would ensure that their students would develop ‘twenty first century’ skills, and ownership of their learning in order for them to be better equipped for work and life. That this ambition remained throughout was evidenced by the changes to the physical spaces for learning in schools and the parallel professional learning and development provided by internally and by international and other external scholar practitioners.

Message 2

Where leaders seek system change which promotes radically new learning and teaching, they are likely to achieve success in changing school leaders’ and classroom teachers’ habits of mind and practices when they engage directly with schools, support them through targeted professional learning and development, and combine changes in the teaching and learning environments with the provision of change champions at senior levels who are themselves committed to such changes.

Message 1

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they are clear, consistent and persistent in their transformative leadership of educational beliefs, values and practices which reflect academic improvement and human flourishing needs, and when these are mirrored through their strategies and actions.
6.3 Variations in use and impact

System-wide efforts to effect radical changes in ways of thinking and acting by principals and teachers in all schools in the Parramatta Diocese over more than ten years led to the widespread adoption, use and embedding of inquiry-led learning. However, the evidence showed that schools had adopted different patterns of engagement, ranging from full time to part-time use. Some schools incorporated literacy and numeracy into inquiry-led learning whilst others used project-based learning to further develop other key curriculum areas. Primary schools adopted project-based learning more comprehensively than secondary schools.

Message 3

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they are persistent in supporting change over time, acknowledge that there are likely to be variations in its adoption and use, and continue to exercise pressure with engagement differentially.
6.4 Learning support architectures

Over the period of intensive reform, system leaders, in line with their ambitions to promote inquiry-led learning and teaching in all schools, invested heavily in changes to the physical working environments in which students learnt and teachers taught. The changes over the period ranged from adaptation of existing spaces to the building of new schools. They did so in the belief that these changes were integral to supporting successful change at classroom level. The removal of classroom walls was shown to enable personalized learning and enhanced student well-being through new affordances that facilitated flexible groupings, task dependent space diversification and opportunities for increased interactions, team-teaching, collaboration and closer relationships between students.

6.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Emphasis on neo-liberal reform agendas has been claimed to lead to definitions of (good) teaching as a ‘craft’ managed by ‘technicians,’ rather than ‘professionals’ (Furlong 2013, Zeichner, 2014), for whom teaching requires craft, artistry, discretionary decision making, a key component of autonomy, and strong moral purpose. A characteristic of the leadership of system change in Parramatta over the period of intensive reform was its emphasis on promoting schools’ capacities for discretionary decision-making, within a collectively agreed, system-wide understanding of educational purposes. One expression of this was the drawing together of previous, separately functioning parts of the system by redefining, restructuring, reculturing, and retasking them, so that they became more closely aligned. ‘Thought leadership’ texts and ensuing professional learning and development activities were shared between Central Office staff and school principals; the activities of the former were decentralised and redistributed, so that they were better able to be responsive to the expressed needs of schools.

Message 4

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they support their ambition for radical change in classroom learning and teaching with appropriate and timely changes in the physical environments in which these are intended to take place.

Message 5

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they step into the change processes that they expect others to make, and engage in sustained interactivity with the key stakeholders, rather than distancing themselves by taking monitoring, evaluation and accountability roles once the policies are created and launched.
6.6 Layering leadership

Supported by Central Office, layers of leadership were developed across a number of carefully orchestrated Stages and Phases, joint projects and collaboration with external partners (Hodges, 2016). The creation of inquiry-oriented principals as ‘champions’ of change, and their re-deployment to the leadership of other schools that had not embraced this was a key change strategy by system leaders. The identity of Central Office staff also changed as new roles with a school-based and team-based focus were created and accountability was increased.

Message 6

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success in ensuring changes in learning and teaching when they ensure that policy-centred staff and schools are aligned and led by those who champion the desired changes.

6.7 Thought leadership: an innovative strategy for change

The Executive Director used ‘thought leadership’ texts written by international scholar-practitioners to build a values-driven metanarrative with leaders across CEDP through the annual introduction and dissemination to all schools of selected educational and spiritual literature. This enabled their leaders to develop broader, research-informed understandings of the purposes and practices of education, and, ultimately, form working partnerships between the key policy enactment stakeholders – principals, teachers, and staff in Central Office and international scholars. Each theme in the texts was augmented by focused professional learning and development opportunities throughout each year of the intensive reform period. The use of this literature to inform and influence was a distinct feature of the system leadership of the Executive Director.

Message 7

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they challenge the existing thinking of other leaders across the system through the planned, consistent provision, sustained consideration, and application to practice of selected, fit-for-purpose texts written by international scholar-practitioners.
6.8 Professional learning and development: change as a shared journey

In leading the reforms, the Executive Director recognised that to overcome the challenges of aligning schools and Central Office, values and visions in strengthening school performance (Honig, 2004), close-up, sustained, interactive relationships between the key stakeholders in the change processes needed to be built, created, and reinforced. This was achieved through shared, lateral, rather than hierarchical, capacity building (Fullan, 2008).

Message 8

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they invest in regular high-quality sustained opportunities for key stakeholders to engage collaboratively in reform-related lateral capacity building through professional learning and development.

6.9 Cross phase change strategies

The evidence from this research is that system change occurs at multiple levels, in multiple contexts, and over different time periods. Some change strategies adopted by the Executive Director were emphasised in specific Stages and Phases, and in response to particular predicted and unpredicted needs (e.g. literacy and numeracy concerns). However, six mutually supportive change strategies were pursued throughout the intensive reform period: thought leadership; new inquiry-led teaching and learning approaches; sustained input by international scholar-practitioners; professional learning and development for school leaders; changes in the physical architectures of teaching and learning; and Central Office reculturing, restructuring, retasking. Whilst the intensity of effort assigned to each of these varied across the period, all were central to the application and development of the Executive Director’s reform strategy, and, when combined, contributed significantly to the success of his mission.

Message 9

Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they combine, accumulate, and sustain inter-connected, mutually supportive strategies which take forward the reform narrative, whilst demonstrating respect for the needs of those leaders in the system who are expected to enact them.
6.10 The limits of rationality

System change texts rarely highlight the personal and professional qualities of the change leaders. Yet it is clear that the radical, system-wide changes in the Parramatta Diocese education system were the creation and constant determination of the Executive Director. That the structural, cultural and role identity changes met with a large measure of success was in part due not only due to his and his team’s capabilities in managing these, the clarity of thought, articulation and communication of his values, but also his interpersonal skills, energy and human endeavour, resilience, persistence, and abiding belief that the reforms were ‘right’. He understood that, ‘the whole of a complex system is more than the sum of its parts’ (Jacobson et al., 2019, p.113).

In conceptualising change as dynamic, complex, unpredictable, and not only a rational process, the Executive Director recognised that successful change ‘involves developing relationships from a shared sense of purpose, exchanging and creating information, learning constantly, paying attention to the results of our efforts, co-adapting, co-evolving, developing wisdom as we learn, staying clear about our purpose, being alert to changes from all directions’ (Wheatley, 2005, p.27). It is clear from the evidence of the six core, mutually supportive change strategies that the nature and quality of the interactions between different actors in and between parts of the system, together with the active presence of formation and inclusivity as belief drivers, were key to the success of his change ambitions.

Message 10

Leaders of system change are likely to be successful when they build powerful positional, personal, and authentic interpersonal, productive relationships within and between all parts of the policy and enactment systems through their active and interactive leadership engagement throughout the change process journey.
References


Leaders of system change are likely to achieve success when they combine, accumulate, and sustain inter-connected, mutually supportive strategies which take forward the reform narrative, whilst demonstrating respect for the needs of those leaders in the system who are expected to enact them.