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Educational Leadership in Haiti: A Case Study of Innovative and Exemplary Leadership in a Fragile State

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EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN HAITI: A CASE STUDY OF INNOVATIVE AND EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP IN A FRAGILE STATE

In this study, we consider three school leaders in Haiti who provide examples of innovative and exemplary leadership practices in the midst of challenging circumstances. Using a framework of innovative (Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleeper, 2010; Rogers, 2003) and exemplary leadership practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2006), we examine three themes that emerged from interviews with the three participants, observations of their work in the field, and interviews with other educational stakeholders in their communities. We raise considerations for leadership practices that include: The importance of social and professional networks, barriers and opportunities to innovative practice, and collaborations involving community, regional, national, and international partners. The paper provides suggestions for further exploration in examining educational leadership in fragile states such as Haiti.

Living in the poorest country in the western hemisphere (World Bank, 2012), Haitian school administrators have long-endured challenging circumstances. The world's attention focused on Haiti following the massive January 12, 2010 earthquake; however, the country's educational system was dysfunctional long before the earthquake due to political turmoil, economic instability, and limited government leadership and support (Luzincourt & Gulbrandson, 2010). Prior to the earthquake, the Haitian Ministry of National Education and Professional Training (MENFP) had limited effectiveness in overseeing the fractured school situation (MENFP, 2010). Its ineffectiveness was exacerbated by the earthquake.

The dysfunctional school system, and policies such as *Education for All* (universal primary education) that were enacted with limited funding and oversight, highlight the challenges of education in Haiti (Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014). Governmental and various non-governmental organizations have made efforts to build schools and train teachers, particularly following the 2010 earthquake. However, there has been limited focus on educational leadership capacity-building within Haiti and most school administrators have inadequate training and experience in educational leadership (Sider, 2009). Yet within this bleak educational landscape, innovative and exemplary leadership practices are on-going and provide an opportunity to contemplate possibilities for a renewed educational system.

This study considers the educational context of Haiti and highlights innovative and exemplary leadership practices that exist in the country. We examine the experiences of three educators to consider lessons in

school leadership that are particularly relevant to support a sustainable future for Haiti. Three key themes emerge from the examination of the three cases: Innovative school practices, exemplary leadership practices in responding to localized needs, and the influence of social and professional networks to support innovative leadership practices. The innovative practices of these three educators, in the midst of challenging circumstances, has implications for the examination of school leadership capacity-building in other fragile states.

Although there has been some international research on school leadership (Brown & Conrad, 2007; Bush & Jackson, 2002; Commonwealth Secretariat, 1996) there has generally been limited attention to school leadership in the comparative education literature (Brooks & Normore, 2010; Dimmock & Walker, 2000). As well, much of the comparative leadership literature focuses on the developed world (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013). We see this gap as an opportunity for scholars and practitioners to develop conceptual models, case studies, and comparative practices to enhance educational leadership understanding and learning both in the developed and developing world (see Jean-Marie, Sider, & Desir, in press).

Educational Context of Haiti

At first glance, a statistical snapshot of Haiti's current educational situation presents a startling image. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere with a Gross Domestic Product per person of \$670 (World Bank, 2012). More than 75% of the population lives on less than \$2/day (World Bank, 2011). Unemployment hovers at 60% but is higher in certain populations such as amongst young men (Heine & Thompson, 2011). These statistics are aggregates for the country and a closer examination of rural communities demonstrates that there is a significant urban-rural divide in Haiti. The Gini Coefficient, that measures the economic disparity between the rich and poor, is one of the highest ever recorded in the world (Lundahl, 2011). Haiti ranks 161st, near the worst in the world, on the Human Development Index (United Nations Development Programme, 2013).

It is hard to imagine an educational system that would be anything but representative of this challenging economic context. The average number of years of schooling for Haitians is 4.9 (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). Reflective of this limited amount of schooling is the adult literacy rate of just under 50% and a youth literacy rate of 72% (UNICEF, 2013). Approximately 85% of Haitian children attend private schools, the highest percentage of children in the world who do so (World Bank, 2011). Only approximately 60% of children attend primary schools (UNICEF Haiti, 2013) despite the efforts of the Haitian government to support universal primary education by 2015. The educational challenges of Haiti were highlighted following January 12, 2010 when a

7.0 magnitude earthquake struck near Port au Prince, the capital of Haiti. The earthquake destroyed 5,000 schools and killed nearly 40,000 students and teachers (Leeder, 2010).

Significant efforts have been made to rebuild the educational sector after the 2010 earthquake. However, after initial commitments and early rebuilding efforts, much of the world's attention has been diverted from Haiti. On-going efforts by the World Bank and the various agencies of the United Nations, as well as many governmental agencies such as USAID and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and non-government organizations such as Save the Children, have focused largely on school rebuilding, tuition support, and teacher training. There has been almost no attention given to school leadership training (Sider, 2009; Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014) and we see this as a significant barrier to the efforts of Haitians and others to build the social and economic structure of the country.

Conceptual Framework

Leadership and Innovative Practices

Leading through innovation can gain and sustain momentum in schools and communities that struggle with viability and deficiency in resources (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011; Copland, 2003; Rogers, 2003). In the business sector, innovation represents change in the status quo, discovery of new things, and the commercialization of such discoveries (Oke, Munshi, & Walumbwa, 2009). Similarly, in schools, innovation can disrupt the status quo, provide opportunities for new ideas and, instead of commercializing, diffuse creative practices (Rogers, 2003).

Rogers (2003) in his research on innovation emphasizes that diffusion starts slow as individuals make sense of planned change, how it works, and how it fits the needs of the organization. Oke et al. (2009) assert that implementation is essential to innovation in that it can occur incrementally through an understanding of the organizational challenges. The more practices align with innovation the more likely intended outcomes will occur (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011).

Paramount to innovation is effective leadership to drive the innovation process efficiently and uniquely. Leadership can propel innovation to new heights unseen (e.g., discovery of better ideas, taken more educated risks, etc.). The most challenging aspect for contemporary leaders is leading innovation (Oke et al., 2009). Moolenaar, Daly, and Slegers (2010) contend that there is a close relationship between principals' social network and their school's innovative climate. Principals who develop their social and professional networks can leverage these relationships to support change and innovation in the school (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Winton & Pollock, 2013). Thus, networks can both help foster innovative mindsets and diffuse innovative practices (Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Further, in the management literature (Miles, 2007; Oke et al., 2009), in order for leaders to spur innovation within organizations such as schools, trust is a necessary condition. Synthesizing the literature on trust, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) assert that it is a critical element in all human learning, in school effectiveness, in emerging organizational cultures, and in leadership (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). Leaders who develop and maintain a trust climate often generate high rates of innovation by “regularly recognizing and acknowledging contributions and encouraging efforts to find new knowledge sources both within and across unit and organizational lines” (Miles, 2007, p. 199). In schools, the principal works at building a trusting climate with teachers and other stakeholders to encourage and facilitate involvement in the innovation. The innovation by the school leader is about changing the conditions of teaching and learning for students and teachers that lead to better schools and educational systems.

Exemplary Leadership Practices

Although the importance of leadership in organizations has been often highlighted (i.e., Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Miles, 2007), the specific means through which leaders influence innovation are still-underdeveloped (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011; Jansen, Vera & Crossan, 2009). While the knowledge base about leadership is well established and has evolved to broader conceptualizations of leadership, what is certain is that leadership matters (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Providing direction and exercising influence are two functions of leadership (Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). The function of leadership is grounded in firm personal and professional values (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Wasserberg (1999) asserts that “the primary role of any leader is the unification of people around key values” (p. 155). Further, Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) claim that the leadership begins with the character of leaders, expressed in terms of personal values, self-awareness, and emotional and moral capability.

The core values adopted by many leaders can be illustrated by Kouzes and Posner’s (2006) study of more than 1,300 middle- and senior-level managers in private and public sector organizations. The researchers conducted interviews asking leaders to describe their “personal best” experience as leaders and performed a content analysis of these descriptions. From this, Kouzes and Posner (2006) constructed a model of five practices of exemplary leadership. These five dimensions are: model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart (p. 73).

The first, model the way places emphasis on a leader exemplifying the behaviors he or she expects of others to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards. Kouzes and Posner (2006) claim that “exemplary leaders go first...they go first by setting the example through their daily ac-

tions that demonstrate they are deeply committed to their beliefs” (p. 74). Inspire a shared vision, the second exemplary practice, draws attention to a leader’s “desire to make something happen, to change the way things are, [and] to create something that no one else has ever created before” (p. 75). A leader enlists people in a vision by developing relationships with them and speaking their language. The interaction a leader facilitates and nurtures with people in the organization enables the leader to have “intimate knowledge of people’s dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions and values” (p. 76). Together, they are able to forge a common or unifying vision of what they can accomplish. Next, a leader challenges the process by seeking and accepting obstacles on the journey to greatness. In their study, Kouzes and Posner (2006) found each leader encountered challenges that:

...might have been an innovative new product, a cutting-edge service, a groundbreaking piece of legislation.... Whatever the challenge, all the cases involved a change from the status quo.... Leaders are pioneers—people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve. (p. 77)

The willingness to challenge the process involves risk, experimentation, and failure (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Consequently, a leader approaches change through incremental steps by being attentive to the organization’s capacity to embrace change.

The last two exemplary practices, enable others to act and encourage the heart, focus on mobilizing people and deepening their commitment to the organization through the leader’s practices. Enabling others to act involves fostering collaboration and building trust. According to Kouzes and Posner (2006), “They [leaders] engage all those who must make the project work—and in some way, all who must live with the results... exemplary leaders strengthen everyone’s capacity to deliver on the promises they make” (p. 79). As for the last exemplary practice, “leaders encourage the heart of their constituents to carry on... genuine acts of caring uplift the spirits and draw people forward” (p. 80). In sum, exemplary leaders engage in these practices demonstrating their core values and fostering the relational nature essential to leadership. These practices accentuate that leadership can emerge from anyone and everywhere (Kouzes & Posner, 2006).

Methods

The key question that informed this study was: What are the innovative and exemplary practices of educational leaders in Haiti? We chose a case study methodology to provide a descriptive and insightful examination of leadership issues. Yin (2003) defines case study research as that which:

...investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon

and context are not clearly evident [and] copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence. (pp. 13–14)

The participants were selected purposefully using a chain sampling method (Isaac & Michael, 1997), also known as snow-ball sampling, where we inquired of educational leaders to help us identify key informants who were viewed as exemplary educational leaders within geographically diverse areas of Haiti. As we asked school principals to identify educational leaders whom they respected for their innovative practices, we were directed to multiple principals from across the country. In research conducted between 2011–2013, we interviewed the leaders who had been identified, observed them in their school and community contexts, and interviewed those with whom they worked.

As we worked with the identified individuals, we wanted to acquire deep insight into “the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). A case study method (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995) allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be an innovative and exemplary school leader in Haiti. This aligns with Van Manen’s (1997) statement that qualitative research such as this provides an opportunity “to ‘borrow’ other people’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences in order to better be able to come to an understanding of the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience” (p. 62). Further, in considering efforts to help improve the education system in Haiti, it was important to include local actors to build their capacity to effect change (Smith, 2012).

Data Collection and Analysis

The study is part of a larger study involving approximately 500 Haitian school principals, undertaken from 2011–2013. The larger study examined leadership capacity-building in Haiti (Jean-Marie, Sider & Desir, in press). The three key informants who are part of this study were also involved with our larger study and were identified as key leaders by the principals who participated in that study. We were drawn to them for this study due to the number of principals who identified them as innovative leaders in Haiti. Three sources of information served the basis of our case analysis: in-depth, multiple interviews with participants, observations of the participants within their work and social spheres, and, interviews with other people involved with education in the local community. Field notes were taken during observations, interviews, and reflection periods to add details about the setting and context of topics explored (Glesne, 2011). The interviews with the key participants and others in the community focused on questions related to the types of innovative practices that had been enacted, the rationale for these practices, and the impact that

these practices had on students, teachers, parents, and community members. Observations of the key actors in their schools and in the community served as an opportunity to collect further insight into their innovative practices. The first author, lead researcher for the project, has travelled to Haiti to collect data two or three times a year. The second author, who is of Haitian descent, joined the project during data analysis and writing stages of the research project.

Our analysis of the data occurred on an ongoing basis to guide further data collection to probe deeper experiences participants emphasized about their innovative leadership practices. Using constant-comparative procedures (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994), transcriptions from the observations and interviews were examined several times to build a starter list of themes related to our research question (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The transcriptions and other documents from each data collection point were analyzed to find recurring patterns about innovative practices, exemplary leadership, and the contextual factors that affect school leadership practices in Haiti. Data were triangulated with entries from the field notes, observations, and interviews.

Overview of Participants

In this study, we report on three school administrators who were identified as innovative and exemplary school leaders in Haiti. These school leaders represent significantly diverse geographies, backgrounds, and leadership experiences. One is the founder of a private school in the north region of Haiti, another is an administrator for a private school system with nearly 300 schools, and the third is a director for the Ministry of National Education (MENFP) and oversees a region of schools in Haiti. The names of the three have been changed due to the sensitivity of some of the information and their positions. The following is a brief narrative overview of their backgrounds and school leadership experiences:

Joseph. Joseph is a school leader widely known in Haiti. He established a school in a small community in the north region of Haiti in the early 1990s which has become known as one of the top schools in the country. The school currently has 1,100 students. He also built a second school in a neighboring community where another 500 students attend. It is the largest school in the region employing well over 100 teachers and staff.

Darline. Darline has been a school leader in a large, church-affiliated school organization in Haiti for ten years. She has held a number of key responsibilities and currently oversees the financial management for the school system. In this role, she provides direction to nearly 300 schools representing approximately 70,000 students. It is the largest system of private schools in Haiti.

Marcus. A commitment to changing education, at the school, regional, and national level in Haiti, is a hallmark of Marcus. Marcus has been a teacher, school principal, inspector with the Ministry of National Education, and is currently the director of education for one of the ten departments in Haiti. This trajectory was born nearly 30 years ago when Marcus recognized the discrepancy in his educational experience compared to some of his peers. Marcus was able to complete secondary school and a university degree while many of his peers were not able to due to family and work obligations. Marcus returned to teaching to support other young people who experienced similar barriers. He soon became the principal of a school and quickly rose through the educational ranks of the Ministry of National Education. In 2012, Marcus was appointed to return to the community of his birth to give leadership to the education office.

Findings

Three themes emerged from this study: innovative school practices, exemplary school leadership, and the influence of social and professional networks to support innovative leadership practices. In this next section we turn our attention to these three themes before highlighting further areas of consideration in the discussion section.

Innovative School Practices

Important to the systemic reform efforts that each of the participants engaged in was the need for innovation as a focus and to shape the nature of their school practices. As our data indicate, the success of already struggling schools in Haiti depends on innovation. Traditionally in Haiti, elementary schools admit students at every grade level despite academic gaps or deficiencies that students may have. Soon after the establishment of his school in 1993, Joseph recognized that if he accepted students into his school at every grade level he would have significant variances between student ability due to the various schools they would be coming from. Joseph stated, “There is so much variation in students’ school experiences in Haiti that children can be at very different levels of academic ability even if at the same grade level.” As a result, his school only accepts students at two points, Kindergarten and Grade 7, so as to maintain a consistency of program and standards for the students.

In conjunction with this admission practice, Joseph recognized that if he wanted to have a top-tier secondary school, he needed an elementary school program that would adequately prepare students for the secondary school. Joseph commented that:

My original goal was to develop a secondary school in [name of community] since there was no secondary school here when I was a child. However, I soon realized that the quality of the elementary

schools was so diverse that it would be really difficult to have a quality secondary school due to the differences in student ability and knowledge when they started secondary school.

As a result, he began an elementary school, thus providing a consistent student experience for transitioning from elementary to secondary school.

Hiring qualified teachers is challenging in urban areas of Haiti. It is even more difficult in rural communities where university-educated teachers may be reluctant to move to due to the distance from their family and due to lower compensation. When confronted with the reality of having limited access to well-qualified, competent teachers in the immediate area, Joseph purchased motorcycles which were then used to transport teachers from surrounding regions. Joseph stated, “No other school was doing this. I was able to get well-qualified teachers to and from my school. This made a significant difference in how quickly we were able to develop an excellent program.” These motorcycles cover a range of 15 kilometers, a significant distance when the road conditions by car often take over an hour to cover. Joseph’s innovative solution brought top quality teachers to the school, many of whom now serve in leadership positions in the various departments of the school. This “made in Haiti” type of innovative solution is what makes Joseph stand out from many other school leaders in Haiti.

An example of innovative practice that Darline engages in is the use of evidence to support best practices for school leaders. Darline completed a Master of Education degree through an American university and then used her graduate research experience to develop workshops for principals. She has provided workshops to school leaders from across Haiti to support effective practices in the area of financial management.

Darline has freely provided the research-informed material to those within and exterior to her own school system. Haitian school leaders, particularly in private schools, have historically been reluctant to share information with others. Darline stated:

This has been a problem in Haiti for generations. School leaders do not want to share resources with each other. There is a deep suspicion of the motives of others. We need to break this cycle because it is only by sharing best practices that we will improve our schools.

Darline’s commitment to sharing resources has provided opportunities for those in private and public schools to more openly dialogue and discuss leadership practices.

Similar to Darline and Joseph, Marcus has been part of numerous innovative practices as director of the Ministry of National Education (MENFP) office in the region. Early in his career, in the mid-1990s, he helped establish a public university in the community that now enrolls over 1,000 students in multiple degree programs. Marcus stated, “Outside of Port au Prince there were no public, state-funded universities in Haiti.

We now have five of them in various centers of Haiti including [name of a city in his region]. I am the primary reason the one exists here.” He has supported the university as it has forged international partnerships and has engaged colleagues from North America and France who are supplementing its business and education programs.

Marcus also has a weekly radio broadcast. During these broadcasts, he speaks of his vision for education in the region. Marcus implores parents to send their children to schools and he encourages children to “do your very best in school because education is the way out of poverty.” During one visit with Marcus, the lead author observed multiple people stopping Marcus on the street to engage him in conversations about education and to encourage him to keep striving for positive change in the public school system. Many of these conversations were related to the radio broadcast that people had heard earlier in the week. Marcus was effectively utilizing a locally-accepted median of communication, the radio broadcast, as an innovative way to widely communicate the educational changes he was implementing.

Marcus’s involvement in establishing a local, public university has enabled the community to benefit from students who can complete degree programs within their own community instead of having to travel to Port au Prince. As one local principal stated, “Without Marcus, the university would not exist. He had a vision that students from this region would not have to leave to go to Port au Prince.” A local businessman commented, “Marcus has single-handedly helped transform this region. The university is well-respected and more and more students are graduating from it. We have professors visit from Canada, France, and the United States and we are seeing the benefits of these partnerships in the local community.” The university is supporting the development of the tourism industry in the region. Again, Marcus has given leadership in this as he has brought North American partners to the region to provide training in areas such as English as a Foreign Language and in supporting the technological infrastructure of the university.

Marcus has also recognized the challenges of the limited public school system in his region. More than 85% of children in the region who attend school go to private schools. Many children do not even go to school because their families do not have the capacity to pay the tuition required of these schools. Marcus has demonstrated innovative leadership in addressing these challenges. First, he has worked diligently to support teachers and principals in private schools. As one private school principal stated, “Marcus invites us to participate in workshops when he can. There are not many because there is so little money but he does not discriminate against us.” Although Marcus oversees the public school system, he recognizes the reality that the majority of students in the region attend private schools. As a result, he wants to do what he can to ensure that those schools are providing the best education possible. Second, Marcus has been working to build con-

fidence in public schools. Haitian families often see public schools as inferior to private schools but Marcus has been working diligently to decrease class size in the public schools and to adequately compensate the teachers. Although it is difficult to know whether there has been a measurable impact in the public confidence of public schools, the anecdotal evidence is compelling: Members of the public in the region generally seem to feel that public schools are improving under the leadership of Marcus.

Exemplary School Leadership

In considering the exemplary leadership of these school leaders, what emerged from the data is the visionary leadership of three individuals who are persistent in solving complex problems, inventing solutions to systemic problems, and taking risks to disrupt the status quo. What drives these school leaders emanates from their vision of quality education for every Haitian child. Joseph's vision to establish a top school in Haiti started when he was a student in secondary school. At that time, there was no high school in his community so he had to travel to the nearest city and live with relatives while he attended secondary school. He eventually completed a university undergraduate degree in Haiti. He was a top-performing student and went on to complete graduate work in the United States.

When Joseph returned to the community, he recognized a similar dilemma that many students encountered when they completed secondary school: the limited potential of engaging in further education or in finding employment. Joseph developed a strategy to help students receive university education and then return to the community to support the school and the general economic state of the region. Joseph explained that, "The school helps finance our graduates who attend university and they agree to return to the region and use their training for a minimum of five years." If the student chooses not to return to the community, the student has to repay the university scholarship to the school. An example of the success of this initiative has been the graduation of seven of his former students from medical studies in Haiti and in Cuba. Upon completion of their medical training, they returned to the region to provide medical care to patients in local hospitals. The hospital in the town where Joseph's school exists is considered the best in the region largely due to the number of graduates of his school who have returned to practice in the community. As a result of Joseph's leadership, students are expected to contribute to the social and economic viability of the community.

Another example of Joseph's exemplary leadership is his diligent effort to consider best practices in other contexts and to transfer this knowledge to his own school. In 2013, he implemented collaborative planning teams with his Kindergarten and Grade 1 and 2 teachers. He provides time during the week for these teachers to meet, share strategies and resources, and to plan. His goal is that students will transition through these

primary grades with a seamless continuation of curriculum and teaching practice. Joseph stated:

The evidence from North America seems clear that when teachers plan together, they support each other's professional ability. Again, this may seem common sense to you but you have to understand our context. It is costly to provide planning time for teachers. It is not something normally done in Haiti. I see the value in it and so we see this as an investment.

Joseph has made concerted efforts to stay abreast of current research in education. He supports his key staff to do the same. In fact, he regularly provides opportunities for his teachers, and those from other schools, to attend professional development workshops held either in his community or in other parts of Haiti.

Darline is committed to providing exemplary leadership in the school system because she sees the potential that education has to support the literacy development and life transformation of children in Haiti. As a result, she has engaged in professional development to support her own leadership abilities. This has included completing an undergraduate business degree as well as a Master of Education degree. In her Master of Education degree, Darline finished a research-based thesis that provided a comparative examination of business practices of private schools in North America and Haiti.

One of the exemplary leadership practices that Darline has engaged in is the development of basic school budgeting and financial plan templates. Prior to the development of these templates, many school leaders in private schools in Haiti did not have a method by which to account for funds or to consider budgeting. Darline stated, "I know this may sound surprising but many school leaders don't have any training in financial management. They often just take in tuition fees and then try to pay their bills without a good accounting system. Often teachers don't even get paid because the director [school principal] has not managed the funds well."

Darline has provided workshops and training on the budgeting templates. She has recently transitioned the templates into electronic form so that school principals can use a computer to develop budgets and reports for their schools. Darline also provides resources to school principals on how to use surpluses for reinvesting effectively in the school's operations. As she stated:

Historically, directors [principals] would simply pocket excess funds at the end of the year. After all, many directors have started a school as a way to supplement their income. However, I am working to change this mentality. We need directors to understand that by investing in the infrastructure of their schools, they will actually build the long-term sustainability of the school.

This commitment to integrity in the recording and reporting of finances, as well as developing budgeting plans, is a significant development for

schools in Haiti. These evidence-based workshops have modelled transparency and integrity in school leadership. One participant stated:

We understand that most principals in North America don't have to worry about all of the financial management aspects of running a school. But in Haiti this is a reality for most principals. We don't have business administrators here or district offices so we have to develop an understanding of what to do when we don't receive tuition payments from families or when we have to build an addition to the school. It's hard to get loans from banks, and when we do, we have to show a business plan. This workshop [led by Darline] has given me the tools to present these plans.

Darline's effort to build the capacity of her colleagues demonstrates that she is modeling the way and enabling others to act, characteristics of exemplary leaders.

Marcus inspires a shared vision of transforming the educational landscape of the region. He regularly visits the dozens of public schools in the region, greeting many principals and teachers with hugs and encouraging words. One student commented, "Our classrooms used to have up to 200 students in them. Now we have 100. That may seem like a lot but I used to have to write my notes on the back of another student [because there was not enough space at the desks]. Marcus is seen as a hero here." Marcus has worked diligently to eliminate practices involving the poor management of finances and corruption in schools. He is challenging the status quo and offering new approaches to support student learning. As a result, he has received multiple threats from those who were previously profiting from the lack of oversight; he now regularly travels with two armed guards. On a six day visit in which the lead author accompanied Marcus throughout the region, there were dozens of signs which stated "Viv [live] Marcus" testifying to his populist following in the region. His outreach and presence in the community allows him to listen to and communicate with his constituents.

As part of his vision to provide an educational context where the needs of all children are met in schools, he has facilitated the deployment of World Food Programme resources to support meals for children. Marcus stated, "This is a real problem in our region. We simply have many, many families who cannot provide food to their children. The food program which gives every child a meal at lunch is sometimes the only meal they will receive that day." School leaders, teachers, and students in the region credit Marcus with making significant in-roads in improving educational practices in the region.

Influence of Social and Professional Networks to Support Innovative Leadership Practices

One of the benefits of using participant observation as a form of inquiry is the opportunity to interact with the school leaders in their professional and social environments. We were highly impressed with the degree of respect each of the leaders received in interactions we observed during data collection. In interviews with community leaders, they would discuss the high support that each participant received in that particular community. As an example, one key community leader stated about Marcus:

Marcus understands this community. He was born here and returned here and that made an impression on people. He could have stayed in Port au Prince but he chose to return here. Of course, there are people who are upset with some of the changes he is making but those are the people who used to abuse the system. The general population understands that the changes he is making are for their good and they deeply admire that.

Marcus himself recognized the importance of nurturing his social and professional network. He stated, "In Haiti, relationships are everything. If I want to see large-scale change occur in [name of the region] I have to work not only with the Ministry [of National Education] but, even more important, I have to build bridges with people in this region."

Similarly, Darline used her professional network of school administrators to engage others in financial management training. Darline noted that in one six month period, she provided eight workshops in different parts of Haiti. These were facilitated as a result of the contacts she had developed with school leaders. A participant from one workshop commented that, "I have known Darline for more than 10 years. I took this workshop because I have known her to be trust-worthy and a person of integrity and she has managed school finances effectively."

Like Marcus and Darline, Joseph maximizes the social and professional relationships he has developed and nurtured throughout his region in Haiti and internationally. Joseph once saw an advertisement for a generator being auctioned in Florida. He bid one dollar and wrote a note to the company conducting the auction that he would use the generator to help provide electricity to his community in Haiti. He won the auction and then found out that the person who had owned the generator was one of the wealthiest men in the United States. Joseph leveraged the network that developed from that purchase to bring teams of electricians to his community to provide the physical set-up to deliver electricity to different parts of the town.

It was our observation that Joseph, Darline, and Marcus worked diligently to establish social and professional networks both within and outside of their school (or school system). For example, Darline was proactive in inviting school leaders from not only her school system but from other schools to participate in the budgeting training she provided. Jo-

seph eagerly invited teachers from the region to professional development events at his schools. He stated that he “recognized that the entire community benefited from enhanced teaching so I do not view these events as a way to gain a ‘competitive edge’ but as a way to build the social capital of the entire community.” As one example from our interactions with Marcus, in one particular three hour block in which he was shadowed while on his job, he had more than 40 voicemail messages waiting for him. Teachers and principals felt that they could contact him directly if they had a concern or an idea. It was insightful to follow Marcus from school to school, as he would receive hugs and handshakes from principals and teachers alike. Marcus was highly respected and he availed himself not only to the top leaders in the region but to all principals and teachers.

It was clear that social and professional networks were a key contributor to the innovative and exemplary leadership practices of the three participants in this study. They each nurtured the relationships in these networks and recognized the importance of building local and extended linkages. A distinguishing aspect of this study is how the social and professional network of each of the leaders contributed to their capacity to enact change.

Discussion

It would be easy to read the themes that are reported in the findings section and develop an idealized picture of innovative and exemplary educational leadership in Haiti. We are certainly encouraged by the leadership styles and practices of Joseph, Darline, and Marcus whom we have highlighted here. In this next section, we consider these leadership practices in relation to social and professional networks, challenges and opportunities in innovative practice in the Haitian context, and aspects related to supporting innovative and exemplary leadership practices through partnerships.

Social and Professional Networks Supporting Innovative Leadership Practices

The ability of leaders to engage other stakeholders in collaborative discussion is a key attribute of effective leaders (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Developing a vision of change, and helping other people to share that vision, is critical for leaders (Wasserberg, 1999). In a sense, Marcus, Joseph, and Darline were demonstrating the characteristics of exemplary leaders that Kouzes and Posner (2006) identified: inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. As such, the development of professional and social networks was a key distinguishing feature of Marcus, Joseph, and Darline. What differentiates this study from previous work on social and professional networks is that Marcus, Joseph, and Darline formed these networks largely through their own strong sense of

values and vision (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) and with limited access to resources. The fact that they were doing this in a challenging and fragile political and economic context makes it particularly noteworthy.

Moorosi and Bush (2011) indicate that innovative leadership development is informed by specific contextual experiences. We see this in the leadership development of Marcus, Joseph, and Darline. They honed their leadership skills as they considered the obstacles, challenges, and opportunities that were presented in their immediate contexts. Joseph has remained focused on his immediate town while Darline and Joseph have expanded the “boundaries” of their community to be regional and national. These three leaders were able to develop innovative solutions to the problems of the community precisely because they had a long-term understanding of the community. This supports the work of Moolenaar et al. (2010) who concluded that a principal’s social network was related to innovative climate within the school: “The more principals were sought for professional and personal advice, and the more closely connected they were to their teachers, the more willing teachers were to invest in change and the creation of new knowledge and practices” (p. 624).

With Joseph, Darline, and Marcus, we frequently saw evidence of the relationship between social and professional networking and the innovative leadership practices they were involved in. Moolenaar et al. (2010) found that these social networks were critical to mediate the relationship between leadership and innovative climate. The same holds true with the participants of this study: A strong professional and social network supported the innovative practices of the three leaders.

Barriers and Opportunities in Innovation in the Haitian Context

Barriers to Innovation. Despite the economic, geo-political, and social challenges of Haiti, innovative school leadership practices do exist. One of the biggest challenges to these innovative practices are social structures that could limit innovative practice (Rogers, 2003). For example, it is unusual for Haitian educational leaders to share best practices or unique programs with each other due to a lack of trust (Sider, 2009). Trust is a key ingredient for innovative leadership practice (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Oke et al., 2009). A school leader can develop an innovative project but his/her reluctance to share this with others may limit the potential for maximum effectiveness in supporting broader educational leadership capacity (Miles, 2007). Thus, social barriers such as a reluctance to share innovative ideas and programs with other principals, is hampering innovative leadership practices in Haiti.

Further, there are institutional barriers to innovative practice in Haiti. For example, there are few professional leadership networks in Haiti. This limits the opportunity for collaboration that naturally occurs when school leaders are involved in professional networks (Wasserberg, 1999). As

well, based on Kouzes and Posner's (2006) work, we can see that the lack of professional leadership networks in Haiti can limit the ability to inspire a shared vision or enable others to act, two of the five exemplary practices they note. One of the most significant innovations that could occur in Haiti would be the establishment of a national professional body that would support the professionalization of school principals. The establishment of such a body, which would include principals in both private and public schools, could also lead to the development of professional resources such as a website, educational journals, and leadership modules.

This leads us to a further consideration of potential barriers to innovation. Currently, the Ministry of National Education (MENFP) has very loose oversight of education in Haiti. In some ways, this lack of oversight allows innovations and divergent practices to develop since the status quo is more easily challenged (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). However, the danger in this lack of oversight is that innovative practices are not captured and replicated in multiple school jurisdictions. Essentially, the diffusion of innovative practices does not occur (Rogers, 2003). System oversight from MENFP would provide an opportunity to engage and harness the creative ideas of a new generation of school leaders. Again, we see that a professional organization, in which MENFP would be a fully participating member, would support the replication and multiplication of effective school leadership practices.

Organic Innovation. In the three cases shared in this study a raw level of innovation exists. As Rogers (2003) points out, innovation disrupts the status quo and the three participants in this study have represented this disruption. Darline and Joseph have intentionally provided resources to principals who are not part of their school systems because they recognize that resource-sharing builds the leadership capacity in the broader educational realm. This allocation of resources is modelling for other principals a diffusion of resources, another mark of innovative practice (Rogers, 2003). Further, Marcus has made efforts to eliminate the corruption that has been present in the educational system in his region, thus disrupting the status quo.

The vision of the three cases to see positive educational change occur in their communities is what drives them to continue to pursue new ideas despite setbacks they have experienced. This organic type of school leadership can lead to mistakes, miscalculations, and errors. Implementation of change is a key factor in leadership (Oke et al., 2009). Joseph, Darline, and Marcus have learned, largely through trial and error, how to implement change. Early attempts at large-scale change by the three, for example, Joseph's goal of developing an exemplary secondary school, have been replaced by more incremental steps with clearly defined goals and outcomes. An example of this, again from Joseph's school, is the development of collaborative planning amongst the primary grade teachers so as to see increased academic results at the higher levels of the elementary and second-

ary school. This alignment of incremental practice with conceptualization is more likely to lead to intended outcomes (Adams & Jean-Marie, 2011).

There is a significant need in Haiti for school leadership development. This should come from MENFP as well as a national professional body for school principals. It also needs to take shape in the form of some structural directives regarding qualifications for school principals. Joseph, Darline, and Marcus have all pursued educational certifications, training, and graduate degrees because of their own innate desire to become better leaders. However, the majority of school principals in Haiti do not engage in this on-going professional learning (Sider, 2009). Many school principals, particularly in private schools, do not even have basic teacher qualifications (Sider, 2009). A concerted effort needs to be made to provide training for school principals throughout the county so that the organic leadership which exists may be enhanced through a focused leadership training framework.

Partnerships with a Purpose

Each of the participants recognized the value of building partnerships both with other Haitian leaders and with leaders in the broader international community. For Darline this has included developing resources in collaboration with educators from the United States and Canada. The budgeting templates and workshops she has developed have been informed by best practices from the United States and Canada. Darline has worked with Haitian school leaders to provide training and resources on these practices. Receiving feedback and input from community schools, as well as those in international contexts, has provided her with the opportunity to develop resources that are informed by evidence-based practices but that suit the local need (Normore & Jean-Marie, 2010).

Marcus engaged the international community, including multiple universities from North America, in a collaborative effort to host an educational leadership conference. He has also participated in a leadership mentoring project which partners Haitian and North American school leaders using digital technologies (Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014). Marcus has worked hard to build local and international partnerships as demonstrated through his efforts to build a highly respected public university in the region. In a sense, Marcus demonstrates the conclusion of Moorosi and Bush (2011) that "...the impact of leadership learning influenced by local experiences remains a challenge for further research as it is strongly believed that cross-cultural learning becomes more meaningful when it is informed by local experiences" (p. 72). Marcus seems to be able to forge effective local and international collaborations because of his responsiveness to localized needs.

Joseph has supported educators, from his school and beyond, to achieve degrees and training outside of the community. His efforts have been recognized by the Haitian government which recently provided land to Joseph so that he could build an international university. Joseph has de-

veloped an international advisory board for the university, which includes scholars from North America as well as educational leaders from Haiti. As well, Joseph has actively solicited support from the Haitian diaspora and international community for academic scholarships for students from his community. In building these partnerships, he has enabled others to act and encouraged the heart, two of Kouzes and Posner's (2006) practices of exemplary leaders.

Participants in the study recognized that accessing community resources such as church leaders and other educators is key to sustainable practice (Moorosi & Bush, 2011). Church leaders often play a significant role, particularly in rural communities in Haiti (Sider, 2009). Thus, their involvement in, and support of, improved educational practices is important. Although school principals in Haiti may see the Ministry of National Education as somewhat of a dysfunctional institution, they also recognize that sustainable and large-scale educational improvement can only be achieved if the MENFP is involved (Sider, 2009). Participants spoke of the need to create opportunities for critical conversations where various educational and social stakeholders are present (Luzincourt & Gulbrandson, 2010). These spaces need to involve all educational leaders, whether from private or public schools, religious or non-religious, as well as representatives from MENFP, so as to strive toward a long-term and national improvement in educational practices and outcomes.

Conclusion

Educational leaders such as those who are highlighted in this study present an opportunity to consider the rebuilding of the educational sector in Haiti from the lens of ability and not just from the perspective of being disadvantaged. Innovative school leaders in the study identified the importance, going forward, of creating and accessing locally developed leadership resources. For example, efforts are being made in Haiti to develop curriculum that is organic and reflective of the local, regional, and national context. These efforts also recognize the legitimate place of Creole, along with French, as a language of instruction in schools. However, the development of curricular materials needs to be done in consideration of broader understandings of development, pedagogy, and leadership. As a result, the three participants in this study anticipate that partnerships with others, both in-country and externally, will continue to be fostered to develop leadership and educational curricula and supports. One of the promising practices to support this is the use of new technologies, such as smartphones, to facilitate the development of these resources and partnerships (Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014).

In our previous work, we have argued that the lack of extant literature makes it difficult to ascertain the current state of educational leadership in Haiti (Sider, 2009; Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014). There has been

some attention given to scholarly research on education-related areas such as early reading development and teacher training in Haiti (Lunde, 2008; Luzincourt & Gulbrandson, 2010). The work we have done examining educational leadership in Haiti has emphasized the importance of developing and supporting school leaders at the local level (Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014). We also recognize that there is a critical need for systemic support so that the Ministry of National Education can be better equipped to support effective school leadership practices in Haiti (Sider & Jean-Marie, 2014). Wide-spread effort must be made to equip MENFP so it can strategically build the public school system.

The lack of government attention to supporting school leadership in Haiti is not so different from the experiences of other developing and fragile states. In Mundy and Dryden-Peterson's (2011) overview of education in conflict zones, they point out that the focus in fragile states is on basic needs such as the provision of shelter, security, and food. Schooling is desired (UNICEF Haiti, 2013) but is not always possible due to security or financial obstacles. Added to this are complicating factors such as how education can be complicit in supporting particular ideological stances (Novelli, 2011) and issues of gender (Kirk, 2011). The United Nations Millennium Development Goals were developed in an effort to demonstrate a commitment to education, amongst other areas of human development. One of the key goals is to ensure universal primary education by 2015 (United Nations, 2013). In fragile states such as Haiti, a focus on school leadership capacity-building can have a trickle-down effect on school participation rates and school effectiveness.

Despite the trajectory of history that leads us to the current educational situation, there are beacons of innovation and good practice in educational leadership in Haiti. These points of educational creativity and effectiveness demonstrate that even within troubled states such as Haiti there are opportunities for sustainable educational leadership practices that contribute to the social and economic development of the country. By considering not just the deficits but the points of strength, we raise considerations for how Haiti may develop a sustainable future through an educated population.

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