Chapter 1

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

In all spheres of life people the world over are exposed to the onslaught of relentless processes of change that have become undeniable and inevitable. That change is demanded in the education sector and is therefore not surprising at all. Even though modifications are phased in to modernise and improve education systems, it is vital to understand the necessity for change and to appreciate whether the change aims for social justice and is good for everyone. The research literature illustrates that successful implementation of any change is closely related to sound leadership practices and leadership is now increasingly being recognised as an essential ingredient of improved and effective operation and functioning of an educational institution (Day, Sammons et al., 2010; Leithwood & Levin, 2005). Further, for the effective implementation of any substantial change, such as a shift to educational inclusion, the quality of the leadership both at the school level and at all other levels of the education system is crucial (Bowers, 1990). Sound leadership does indeed matter; it makes a positive difference in all facets of an educational organisation and contributes significantly to the creation of a more just world for all.

This opening chapter first provides some background information about the two modes of education, exclusive and inclusive educational perspectives. In doing so, it reviews pertinent international literature covering both types, to give readers more insight into them. For the promotion of inclusive education, this chapter draws attention to the possibilities of an approach through transformational leadership as a central strategy for achieving better learning quality for all children in the mainstream schools regardless of any disabilities, difficulties or disadvantages. Finally, the chapter highlights implications the

implementation of inclusive education may have for leadership education and training in the small island developing states of the Pacific.

Rationale

Literature demonstrates that the success or failure of any educational reform initiative is attributed generally to effective leadership practices of educational leaders. The leadership practice of the leaders such as in terms of decision-making and problem-solving ability and other strengths can focus efforts in favour of the organisation institutionalising any educational reform agenda. Since school leaders serve as instructional leaders, they are also well placed to provide quality teaching and learning and enable all to contribute positively and actively towards achieving organisational goals. In light of this, the current chapter emphasises the significance of leadership in achieving any massive change agenda in education such as inclusive education.

Exclusive Educational Perspective

Hitherto, dual educational provision was available in most contexts. In particular, separate educational provision was made especially for those children with certain disabilities such as hearing and visual impairments. This segregated arrangement was supported by the medical discourse for many decades because it was considered as the appropriate and effective alternative way in meeting the learning needs of children with varying forms of disabilities (Pijl & Meijer, 1994). Nor were disabilities the only bases for segregation in education; children were effectively excluded from mainstream classes for other, less-defensible reasons, such as age, race, class and gender (Riley & Rustique-Forrester, 2002). At times, students were even excluded on the grounds of poverty (Munck, 2005). Such glaring examples of social injustice – all forms of barriers and inequalities – persisted, marginalising learners from taking advantage of the opportunities available in education (Lugg, 2003; Ryan, 2006; Stein, 2002). Exclusion not only from school but also from the learning process, on axes such as mental ability, age and gender, placed limits on who could be learners and how they could be educated (Riley & Rustique-Forrester, 2002). Although this approach went unchallenged for many decades, the pendulum is swinging and this segregated educational provision now

receives much less support. It has come under scrutiny for various compelling reasons; not least among them that the system itself is responsible for attaching (and upholding) stigma to disability but also denying any voice to issues of equality of access and educational opportunities. Governments and other agencies have come to realise that offering education to children in non–mainstream ccontexts in some sense violates children's rights (Walker & Walker, 1997). Furthermore, there is no empirical evidence to support the view that any kind of special setting actually enhances children's learning (Ainscow et al., 2006; Norwich, 2002). A word of caution against mainstream settings as they may violate children's right to receive the education they deserve based on their special needs. For example, if the majority of children in the class can see and hear well, catering to them well is likely to marginalise the challenged few at least to some extent. Also, when the children with severe disabilities are getting special attention, the other children may be neglected to some extent. However, segregated education is not the way forward in the contemporary age. As aptly pointed out by Precey and Mazurkiewicz (2013), "Today the reality is that in many very real senses we can never be exclusive. No country, no school, no person is an island" (p.108). This to some extent sums up what is 'wrong' with exclusion and what underlies the contemporary drive towards inclusive rather than exclusive education.

Apart from scholars, educators, researchers and advocacy groups, various international organisations such as UNESCO and other United Nations agencies as well as governments are coming round to considering it necessary to overturn various forms of injustice by including all school age learners under one common roof in the educational provision made for them rather than segregating them (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Villa & Thousand, 1992). The segregated system is challenged by all those most closely concerned and the emphasis is now on educational provision for all learners in the mainstream schools; that is, current practice favours deconstruction of exclusive education schools and promotion of inclusion in regular schools (Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

Inclusive Education: *What is it?*

Given the shift to the opinion that inclusive education is a more equitable and just practice, the Salamanca Statement together with UNESCO's Framework for Action (1994) provides a clear statement of that organisation's position on inclusive education:

> Reaffirming the right to education of every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and renewing the pledge made by the world community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All to ensure that right for all, regardless of individual differences . . . (UNESCO, 1994, p.vii)

Implicit in this preamble is the understanding that all forms of injustice impeding children's enjoyment of their right to education must be minimized and/or removed.

Due to the fact that inclusive education is a complex construct, a wide variety of definitions, none of them yet enjoying universal acceptance, abounds in the literature (Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013; Slee, 2000). Generally speaking, perspectives and interpretations on inclusive education continue to multiply and contest. According to UNESCO, inclusive education entails:

> A process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 2005, p.13)

The diversity of children's needs in this case refers not only to the differently-abled children but also encompasses various other forms of diversity that are apparent; such as age, ethnicity and gender. With the passage of time, the diversity of student population is certain to become more visible and at the same time could widen the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged. As the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in the United Kingdom states,

inclusion is "about engendering a sense of community and belonging and encouraging mainstream and special schools and others to come together to support each other and pupils with special educational needs" (DfES, 2001, p.3). Similarly, Gibson (2009) stresses that the emphasis on inclusive education is about all learners being given the opportunity to be educated together. Furthermore, Booth and Ainscow (2002) advanced the following definition, "The processes of increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools" (p.3). Generally, the definitions emphasise breaking down all forms of barriers and enabling all children to learn together in the regular classrooms, as well as encouraging all children to participate fully in all community and school activities rather than preventing them from taking advantage of what schools and communities have to offer.

Challenges of Inclusive Education

In light of the documentation that inclusive education is not easy, governments in all jurisdictions need to be careful about how they address issues relating to inclusion. Researchers pointing this out have cautioned that inclusion involves making suitable systemic changes, rather than twiddling with minor adjustments, which may not lead to meaningful integration in mainstream classes (Munck, 2005; Ryan, 2006). In this regard, schools are expected to cater for all forms of diversity and differences in order to help learners to enjoy the learning experience, as a basis for succeeding in school work. Nobody should imagine that responding effectively to diversity of all forms and types in learning and teaching will be an easy undertaking for teachers (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). At least some of the research has shown that teachers lack relevant knowledge and skills to cope with inclusion (Lamb-Zodrow, 1987), which may reflect inadequate education and training on varying issues relating to inclusive education. As a result, teachers may display resentment and a negative attitude towards inclusion, objecting to it on the grounds that it will increase their workload. Thus, the quality of teaching staff could pose a major constraining factor to integration in mainstream schools. Should this happen, as seems likely, the range and quality of services offered to learners will be greatly affected.

In order to meet the diverse learning needs of all learners, schools will require not only pedagogical transformation but all other forms of transformation across the entire school organisation to align better with the varied needs of all learners. Through these changes meaningful and enriching learning experiences are likely to be promoted for all children, despite their abilities and disabilities. This is a demanding responsibility for educational leaders and teachers as they are going to be required to respond more effectively to a diverse range of needs. Failing this, many children may not reach their full potential or develop appropriate competencies and qualifications to meet the demands of the ever-changing world in which we all live.

Another major challenge looming surrounds the question of leadership. Since leadership has been recognised as a prominent factor in achieving any school improvement and effectiveness, it deserves considerable attention in planning for inclusive education contexts. Certainly, to promote inclusion will require a different style of leadership practice at all levels of education. Conventional approaches to leadership, such as those based on hierarchical structures and relationships, are unlikely to yield the best possible results. Ryan (2006) notes, "More traditional concepts and practices of leadership are generally not consistent with inclusion" (p.7). In times of rapid changes in all areas of education, educational leaders who have the courage and skills to reorganise the organisation and provide good service despite the slender resources at their disposal are needed to lead and manage schools (Warrick, 2011). Educational leaders in the education ministries and in schools will have to make suitable changes in their organisational cultures to cater for the education of all learners irrespective of their capabilities and disabilities. For this to happen successfully, they will need to reflect out aloud on their leadership practices so that they are constructively aligned to the notion and promotion of inclusive education at all levels of the school system. Even though inclusive education is a mammoth and demanding task, this global agenda is achievable provided leadership style and practices at all levels of education and more so at the school level are compatible with the notion of inclusive education (Mayrowetz & Weinstein, 1999; Ruaric, Ottesen & Precey, 2013).

Leadership for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education requires a paradigm shift and the role of an educational leader plays a powerful and an important shift in which an educational leader plays a central role, shaping, guiding and promoting the change and winning its acceptance. Also, in influencing as well as accepting and promoting this huge undertaking of inclusive education. This requires extraordinary efforts in providing quality education to all learners are called for, because the wide range of diversity in the children means that the determination of suitable ways of responding to individual educational needs is not an easy task (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). In the same vein, Sergiovanni (1992) also points to the challenge of student diversity in mainstream schools and argues that current approaches to school leadership may not be appropriate to promote inclusive education practices.

Despite these challenges, research literature suggests that effective leadership practices seem to be the single most important factor that can make a positive difference in all that happens in schools and especially in inclusive schools. Since inclusion is a major educational change, its effective implementation in schools demands a suitable leadership approach lest an inappropriate model jeopardise such a major educational reform. Careful thought, then, must be given to the selection of a leadership style that appears most likely to have the potential to introduce school-wide change in order to promote effective implementation and win acceptance of inclusive education provision. Generally, changes should be generated from within to transform the school organisation to ensure meaningful integration (Munck, 2005).

The growing volume of literature on school leadership demonstrates the suitability of transformational leadership practices when schools are faced with significant challenges for reform such as the case of inclusive education (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999; OECD, 2006). As Fullan (2002) reminds for complex 'school change journey(s)' and especially in the case of inclusive education, a transformational leadership model is most desirable. Transformational leadership has been described in different ways; its desirability as a model is consistent with the views of Hallinger (2003) who recommends that to lead any major

educational change, transformational leadership is the way forward. Likewise, Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) also support the idea of transformational leadership practice, especially when large-scale educational reforms such as inclusive education are phased in. This resonated with statements Bass and Avolio (1990) made as early as the 1990s that other leadership styles can be effective but transformational leadership is more so, especially in the process of major reforms in education. Other scholars such as Shields (2009) point out that since transformational leaders are more likely to be inclusive than others adopting other approaches, this leadership approach could contribute more usefully towards all that inclusive schools are expected to attain.

The concept of transformational leadership, first coined by Burns (1978), is a type of leadership that brings about improvements and positive changes in different areas of the organisation by using suitable skills such as motivation, vision and inspiration (Avolia, Waldman & Yammarino, 1991; Burns, 1978; Warrick, 2011). Yukl (1989) further defines transformational leadership as "the process of influencing major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and building commitment for the organization's mission, objectives and strategies" (p. 24). Through such concerted actions leadership helps to take the organisation to another level, at the same time setting the organisation on a new course of action (Warrick, 2011). This is an extremely important feature as introducing inclusive education is not an ordinary change. Bass (2001) identified some key dimensions of transformational leadership, and its relevance to the idea of inclusive education is quite apparent:

> i) Idealised influence which refers to providing clear vision, and mission, instilling pride in what needs to be accomplished, and gaining respect and trust from leading with high moral and ethical standards;
>
> ii) Inspiration such as communicating high expectations, adding meaning to goals and undertakings and expressing important purposes in simple ways;
>
> iii) Intellectual stimulation this means the leader encourages and

promotes new and better ways of doing things, fostering creativity, re-examining assumptions, promoting intelligence, rationality and problem-solving; and

iv) Individual consideration means the leader is concerned with and shows interest in staff and their development.

These attributes of a leader are needed in order to enhance relevant changes in different areas of the organisation such as in adopting a flexible curriculum, involving parents, setting up of appropriate and suitable physical features, employing suitable teaching strategies and creating a conducive climate for student interactions. These imperatives and other changes are likely to contribute to the success of the inclusive education agenda. In the same vein, Fullan (2001) describes five key factors necessary for effective leadership in times of major changes such as with regard to inclusive education: moral purpose, understanding the change process, relationship building, knowledge generation and sharing, and building coherence amongst all stakeholders. Teachers, parents, communities and other stakeholders, perceiving that they have a strong and supportive leadership for inclusive education, will also be motivated to strive for inclusion. Teachers in turn are likely to put extra work into helping children in their school work, provided the leadership approach is satisfying and inspiring them.

Transformational leaders are likely to create, for the whole school organisation, a suitable educational climate so necessary for fostering inclusiveness and helping achieve better learning outcomes for all students including those with special needs. In fact, evidence suggests the suitability of transformational leadership practices in creating a pleasant school ethos to facilitate inclusiveness in regular schools. School ethos refers to an amalgamation of social, moral and academic values (Smith, 2002). This is important because without a positive atmosphere, all aspects of the school are likely to be adversely affected, including children's lives and learning experiences. Many researchers contend that with a positive school ethos, teachers and all students (whatever their abilities or disabilities) can combine well and work well together in school work (Rutter et al., 1994; Smith, 2002). Thus the school ethos has a substantial influence on how things are going to operate and

function at the school level, including inclusiveness, and a transformational leader can make a positive difference to this potentially exciting but at the same time a very challenging journey.

Even though school-wide effort is necessary, the school leader of the institution plays an important role. The leader can model the attitudes and behaviour that s/he would like the staff and students to exhibit. Since schools are going to be faced with significant challenges emanating from various other changes in school, transformational leaders have the potential to motivate all stakeholders – teachers, parents, and students – by raising their consciousness about the importance of organisational goals and by "inspiring them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p.375). This chimes with the comments made by Ryan (2006) that "leadership in schools needs to be about deeper moral purposes like justice because . . . schools must do their part in contributing to a world that is fair for everyone" (pp.3-4). Transformational leaders can help achieve this long-term goal.

Thus, transformational leaders are the ones who could create favourable conditions, such as where collaboration and greater interest could be shown by all stakeholders towards inclusive education. Research indicates that suitable organisational conditions are vital to foster inclusiveness of all types (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Thus, a transformational leader conceives leadership not in terms of individuals but as a collective process of all stakeholders contributing in different ways to encourage meaningful inclusion (Smylie, Conley & Marks, 2002).

Without any change in the current leadership practices in schools, the global agenda of having all children attending mainstream school is unlikely to be achieved. In the words of UNESCO:

> This view implies that progress is more likely if we recognise that difficulties experienced by pupils result from the ways in which schools are currently organised and from rigid teaching methods. It has been argued that schools need to be reformed and pedagogy needs to be improved in ways that will lead them to respond positively to pupil

diversity—seeing individual differences not as a problem to be fixed, but as opportunities for enriching learning. (UNESCO, 2005, p.9)

All that UNESCO mentions can be achieved by suitable leadership that is congruent with inclusive education; that is, a transformational leadership style. What Tichy (1997) stated as early as the 1990s still holds water today; "The scarcest resource in the world today is leadership talent capable of continually transforming organizations to win in tomorrow's world" (p.8). Since inclusive education involves a major reform in all areas of the educational organisation, the achievement of proper inclusive education will, without a suitable leadership style, remain a distant dream. It has been argued here that a transformational leadership style is needed to nurture inclusive education in all schools. Without suitable leadership practices, inclusive education is less likely to achieve its objectives in all jurisdictions.

Implications for the Pacific

We have noted that leadership is widely seen as a critical factor in the process of achieving school success. However, in contemporary times, leadership traits and qualities alone may not be adequate in meeting the changing demands of the complex educational environments, which are frequently bombarded with numerous reforms on both large and small scales. Professional preparation of educational leaders is clearly vital, to enable them to cope with all types of educational reforms, such as education for inclusiveness and even other successive changes that will follow in tumultuous times ahead. Since inclusive education is high on the agenda for most European countries, the idea is bound to spread to the rest of the world, including the Pacific region, and a precursor for its successful implementation is through an effective strategy of leadership development. This does not mean a learning programme focused only on the transmission of new knowledge and skills to school leaders; though important, that will not be enough. Critical will be leadership development programmes that are consistent with inclusion ideologies and for the purpose of achieving better outcomes in all areas of school work. Commitment toward this end is thus warranted.

With the changing circumstances in mind, leadership and management training

programmes are vital for developing and sustaining effective leadership practices to cope with emerging changes in education in the Pacific region. The development and grooming of school heads through suitable design and content of leadership and management training programmes will equip them to carry out their leadership and management roles more confidently and effectively within the special circumstances of their inclusive schools. The present lack of consensus on what kind of preparation is necessary or best for developing appropriate leadership behaviours (Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, 2011) must not blind the policy makers and planners at all levels to how essential the development of leaders is. Generally, the literature suggests a learning programme that supports leaders to engage in transformational learning is to be encouraged as this will help bring improvement to inclusive education provision (Burbules & Berk, 1999; Ellsworth, 1989; Mezirow, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2003).

Greenan and Dieckmann (2004) indicate that there are four components to transformational learning: ability to think outside the conventional box and to analyse across disciplines; maintenance of the essential tension of controversy; an interactive collaborative construction of meaning; and fallibilism. These components can help leaders to reflect critically on their past practices, beliefs, and experiences, leading them to think of having positive impacts on all people such as staff, learners and the organisation. As suggested by Precey and Jackson (2009), "Transformation involves people changing in order to succeed within shifting environments but in the process remaining true to their core beliefs and values" (p.47). On the basis of the four components of transformational learning, Precey and Jackson (2008) advocate a leadership development framework that entails a process of transformational learning from planning to preparation through facilitation to evaluation and returns to planning. This gives a clear indication that transformational learning is never-ending. The framework has been used in a number of contexts, such as in England, and had a positive impact on leadership practices (Precey, Entrena & Jackson, 2013). A leadership learning programme designed on such a basis is integral in the process of developing transformational leaders. Such learning programmes will better prepare school leaders to lead and manage inclusive education schools.

In the Pacific region, regular schools are faced with daunting challenges due to manifold reforms in education at a time when most of the school leaders who are managing schools do not have adequate education and training for the school leadership positions that have been placed on them (Lingam & Lingam, 2013). Even though the leaders are experiencing daunting challenges stemming from dramatic changes in the work expected of them, many jurisdictions in the Pacific region still do not require their incumbents to go through any mandatory training programme for leadership positions. The authors' personal and professional work experience in most of the Pacific Island countries indicates that specific training does not appear to be a requisite for the school leadership job in this part of the world. Consequently, the value and nature of leadership varies considerably from country to country in the region. Most of the school leaders lack suitable skills to change the way schools are led and managed; to obtain more positive outcomes of any educational reform that is implemented is thus highly problematic. The question to consider is; "What would happen if such school leaders are to look after schools with inclusive education?" Certainly, it will be a nightmare for such leaders.

On a positive note, some countries are now beginning to show interest in and commitment to leadership development. More recently, some countries, notably Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga have embarked on education and training for school leaders (Lingam, 2013) but these programmes do not yet prepare participants for inclusive education. On the basis of the study findings from two countries in the Pacific region, Fiji and Tonga, Cardno and Howse (2005) proposed that change management and problem-solving skills should be regarded as an essential element of any management development programme. Also, they suggested the need to "develop higher order cognitive skills of critical reflection that relate to both individual learning and organisational learning" (p. 43). In the Fiji study, school leaders identified several areas they regard as problems needing urgent attention, among them prioritising vision, interpersonal skills, empowering others and effective management (Cardno & Howse, 2005). These skills are essential, especially for the intention of working towards and enhancing inclusive education. Lack of such skills will impose severe limitations on the work of school leaders

to engage more effectively with all stakeholders in dealing with inclusive education issues.

Since inclusive education is a major philosophical as well as practical change, the necessary capacity building of leaders will play a pivotal role in achieving success in all dimensions of school work. As it is, there is an urgent need to improve educational leaders' knowledge and skills so that they can better carry out their responsibilities relating to inclusive education (Garrison-Wade, Sobel, & Fulmer, 2007), and serve as a good basis for developing and promoting good practices in inclusive oriented schools (Batanero & Fernandez, 2013). Strengthened leaders will better be able to improve both teacher morale and the learning environment for all children, to enhance learning and teaching, as well as being responsive to the needs of the educational community. Schools shifting to a more inclusive mode should provide a learning environment that is conducive to all students regardless of their particular needs (Crippen, 2005). Better prepared leaders will be better able to create a positive school climate for the inclusion of all children with varying needs; and to lead a team of teachers with a widened range of capabilities to enrich the educational experience of this more complex student body. To cope with these new demands and emerging challenges, school leaders require relevant knowledge, skills and competencies to enable them to grapple successfully with the particular circumstances of inclusive schools and also offer better service to all learners, teachers and communities they lead and manage.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the manifold reforms occurring in the field of education in contemporary times, the phasing in of inclusive education must rank as among the most far-reaching. This innovation makes leadership development more deserving of considerable attention than ever before. In contexts where leaders have undergone no professional preparation for their role, beyond years of classroom teaching experience, a myriad of contemporary problems will face these leaders when they are asked to lead and manage inclusive education schools, particularly in the Pacific Island Countries. On this account it is prudent to consider what Taylor and his colleagues (2002) highlight; "global

challenges now occurring, demand approaches to leadership education that are profoundly different from those that have served well in the past" (p.353). Such pressuring demands require highly skilled and well-prepared school leaders with the necessary leadership and management tools to lead schools successfully. This chapter has tried to illustrate that leadership can make a significant positive impact and in this regard a transformational leadership approach is seen as best suited for challenging changes that will surely arise in the case of educational inclusion in the Pacific region.

Reflective Questions

1. Why do you think leadership plays a key role in the success or failure of any educational initiative?

2. With reference to your educational context, assess the calibre of serving school leaders.

3. What support do you think school leaders will need for the sustainability of the inclusive education initiative?

4. What challenges school leaders are likely to face in striving towards inclusive education?

5. What attributes of transformational leadership are essential in achieving success in challenging times?

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