

REF: IfE 49/2017 - Professional Development Opportunity for Heads of Schools**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN COMMUNICATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING COMPETENCES THROUGH AN ACTION RESEARCH APPROACH TO THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

Educational leadership can be one of the most rewarding yet stressful jobs, if one does not acquire the necessary competencies to induce and manage the various changes necessary in the complex school system. As Kotter (1989) sustains guiding change may be the ultimate test of a leader—no organisation survives over the long term if it can't reinvent itself.

General Objective

This professional development is a training-inquiry experience with a major objective of bringing Educational leaders to acquire and employ an action-research approach to their everyday work. By the end of the course participants will have acquired, practised and have come to skilfully implement an effective inquiry-operative tool to handle more effectively the array of educational difficulties and changes encountered in their school context. This learning by doing training will help participants become agents of change since it will help them improve their problem solving and communication skills which, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2009) are the most fundamental competencies for School leadership.

Course Modules & Outline

Module 1: The Educational Leader as Action Researcher

Module 2: Problem Solving & Action Planning

Module 3: Effective Communication for School Success

Module 4: Coaching and leading others towards change

Module 5: Learning Communities and the use of virtual platforms

The Training will have 4 parallel learning modalities:

1. Training by an expert: the trainer will hand over basic operative knowledge on Action Research, Problem Solving, Communication, Coaching, Community Learning and other topics chosen by the group. Ten (10) training sessions each three (3) hours-long will be held in the one-year period.

2. Practitioner inquiry: (Self-reflection and informed action carried out on the field). Participants will be able to apply the given instruments to reflect and evaluate their practice and actions. By applying an action research approach to their work, they will be able to look at what they do and learn from the actions, so as to try to improve. Each individual will be requested to keep track of his observations, reflections, actions and results. A minimum of 10 hours per month.
3. Partnership Coaching is a reciprocal learning relationship between two Heads of Schools who work together as professionals, equally committed to facilitate each other's learning and professional development. These structured reflective coaching meetings are managed by the partners but a minimum of 4 hours per month are requested.
4. Learning Community serve to connect and network Heads of Schools to learn from their and others practice through structured dialogue following an inquiry-oriented approach. They collaborate and engage in face-to-face and on-line dialogues (social network, blogs, skype, etc.) with other Heads of Schools from the Maltese and Italian groups to widen their reflections and inquires, while share knowledge and experiences. A blog will be created so that participants could share the action research project and progress, as well as learn from reading others' blogs on action research, problem solving, communication and more. This entails a monthly meeting and regular on-line interactions with a contact frequency of a minimum of 4 hours per month.

Target group

Primary and Secondary Schools Educational Leaders (Heads of Schools), committed to professional development and school improvement.

Registration & Participation:

Interested candidates are invited to apply online via <https://goo.gl/VtZfiC> and send in their Curriculum Vitae to the Institute for Education at ife@ilearn.edu.mt. Applications should be submitted by not later than **noon (Central European Time) of Tuesday, 31st of October 2017**. A maximum of ten (10) candidates will be chosen. An interview will be carried out, if considered necessary.

Assessment:

Participants will be requested to keep an-ongoing reflective-assessment method of their practice, which will be presented (final presentation) and assessed by the learning community group at the end of the training. Since this training is also a pilot study for

professional development and school improvement, participants will be interviewed at the beginning, during and at the end of the course so as to carry out a Research Process of the training.

At the completion of the training, participation will be awarded an MQF Level 6 Award accredited by the NCFHE.