

L2C: NATIONAL POLICY MEETING GUIDELINES

Aim of the document:

To assist partners in the planning, preparation and follow up of the national policy meetings that will take place in November/December 2019 (first round) and in the fall of 2020 (second round). In order to assure high level participation of all schools, it is also possible to hold this meeting on the following day of the leadership workshop. As an annex to this document you may find an example agenda (Annex 1).

National Policy meetings general information:

a. What are the National Policy meetings (1st and 2nd year)?

The National Policy meetings will be a one-day workshop which takes place at the country level. The person or team who leads the National Policy meetings at national level should have a thorough knowledge of the L2C project and the idea of implementing and promoting Shared Leadership strategies in schools. Planning, implementing and reporting on the policy dialogue can also involve school representatives and policy makers that are committed to the idea of the project.

Active engagement of all who attend the meeting remains paramount. As a 'workshop', ensuring opportunities for maximum collaboration, knowledge sharing and discussion between school practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders, remains the main design criterion. Facilitated activities should enable all participants to engage *actively* in exchange of views and ideas, discussion and joint thinking as the main approach throughout the workshop. The National Policy meetings should create a sense of community, energy and ownership of any new thinking which emerges from discussions and in turn contribute to the development of a sense of purpose, sustained interest and shared responsibility.

It is important to note that National Policy meetings are not meetings with presentations led only from the front or from a top table of leaders or speakers. Developing an environment that encourages openness is challenging, particularly when co-construction is a new way of working for people. However, these meetings are opportunities for people to come together to share views and expertise through dialogue around tables to co-create new possibilities for mainstreaming shared leadership strategies and practices in schools.

b. Rationale of the National Policy meetings:

In the second and third year of L2C project, policy and school dialogue meetings supporting collaboration and discussion on leadership practice in schools in national and regional level. The purpose of having a series of two National Policy meetings is so that each opportunity for dialogue builds on the previous dialogue and the activities completed within the year between the meetings. Hence, there is a connection, a sense of development in thinking across the last two years of the project.

c. Aim of the National Policy meetings:

- To involve a wide community of stakeholders in the process of developing integrating and designing a wider implementation of shared leadership strategies in schools' reality;
- To harness all stakeholders' expertise through the facilitation of knowledge sharing and cooperation between partners involved in School leadership: formal and non-formal leaders in schools, policy makers who focus on the topic and experts;

- To enable all partners to have an opportunity to have their voice heard and gather a range of different perspectives to inform and improve the development, implementation and sustainability of shared leadership practices in schools;
- To contribute to the generation of evidence-based advice for policymakers and others involved in school leadership;
- To develop networks of stakeholders who can sustain knowledge sharing in the field of school leadership focusing on shared leadership and encourage the dissemination and use of a shared leadership approach.

d. Profile of participants in the National Policy meetings:

A wide range of stakeholders is expected to attend the National Policy meetings: leadership groups of the project participating schools, regional or/and national policy makers, experts on the topic of leadership and school management, experts on the topics of which schools indicated they are focusing on in their action plans (use of ICT, STEM, eSafety or any other topic indicated by the schools), community stakeholders that are involved in the schools' leadership such as parents board and student board.

To enable sufficient continuity of dialogue and exchange and the development of deep level trusting relationships between participants it is important that the same participants are invited to attend the first and next years' National Policy meetings. Inevitably, there is likely to be slight change in those who attend. It is hoped with a few exceptions those attending the first National Policy meeting will be also attending the second round.

e. Venue

As learned from similar dialogue meetings in previous EUN projects, the choice of venue can contribute substantially to the success or failure of the meetings. It is important to find a space that is conducive to enabling dialogue around the tables and enough space to move around the room easily when changing tables between activities. The room should also be large enough to enable facilitators to move easily between the 4 or 5 or in some cases 6 tables of 6 people. There should also be space for the participants to move around during breaks to enable them to interact with different people.

f. Expectations of the National Policy meetings:

Information distributed before the events

Information about what to expect at the National Policy meetings should be distributed to the participants prior to attending the meeting. For example, the aims set for the meeting (see objectives for the first National Policy meetings) should be sent to the participants and a reminder of the aims and rationale of L2C Project and the activities that have been already conducted by schools throughout the project together with prospective activities and expected outcomes. This information should not be overwhelming but sufficient to provide some prior knowledge about the topics of discussion. It will enable participants to have greater confidence about their contribution to the discussions and consequently increase the likelihood of interaction and meaningful dialogue. The presentations and outcomes of the previous leadership meetings including explanations of key concepts (Shared leadership, School vision, data gathering tools, Theory of Change etc.) should also be shared with meeting participants in advance. In the case that the National Policy meetings take place on the following day of the leadership workshops, the information and background concepts can be already discussed during these meetings.

Creating a context for a dialogue

Research tells us that how we talk, listen and interact is deeply influenced by personal and cultural experiences. Creating a participative culture/community where everyone feels able to contribute and engage in open and meaningful discussion requires the development of trusting relationships. Working in collaboration and engaging in co-construction is not a way of working that is familiar to everyone. This means the facilitators of the National Policy meetings have a key role in supporting people to feel comfortable in interaction, collaboration and co-construction. They should be aware of encouraging people sensitively who are not at ease with sharing their views. In other words, where someone at a table group has been silent throughout a discussion the facilitator should choose the moment carefully to invite that person's thoughts about the point that is under discussion. Also, the structure of the day should give participants different opportunities to interact with one another in structured conversations in 2s, 3s and table groups of 6 people, as well as in informal unstructured conversations during breaks. Some people will feel more comfortable discussing an issue in pairs while others will feel more comfortable in a discussion with 6 people.

The National Policy meetings should involve a range of different experiences so that people have an opportunity to engage in discussion with different people in different ways. The structured conversations should be guided by reflective questions and supported by facilitators when the expectation is that the whole table group will interact. The facilitators should pay particular attention to ensuring that participants who are attending for the 1st time to L2C meetings are included in the dialogue.

A reminder - the role of the facilitators is not to direct conversation but to guide the dialogue. For example, the facilitator at each table should:

- remind the participants of the focus of the dialogue, if they move off to another topic or issue
- pose reflective questions to stimulate and structure dialogue
- ensure everyone at the table has an opportunity to speak by encouraging people who have not spoken to share their thoughts
- remind people of the norms agreed (e.g. mobile phones on silent, active participation, all voices and experiences are important)
- invite participants to say more about the point they are making (this could involve asking for an example to make the point more concrete)
- take notes but ensure that the table group agrees with the notes. This indicates that they are the notes from the table and not from the facilitator.

To ensure that as many opportunities are given to share ideas and thoughts during the National Policy meetings, a Flip Chart paper can be put on the wall for **Additional thoughts, ideas and questions**. People can add thoughts by writing them on a post-it pad and sticking it on the Flip Chart paper. This is particularly useful for someone who may feel nervous about sharing a thought at a table group but may feel comfortable sharing it anonymously on the Flip Chart paper.

It is important to send the message of **active participation** from the start of the Dialogue Meeting. This means it is important not to start the day with a long period of the participants sitting listening to a presentation with an opportunity for dialogue between them. The presentation of past activities and future outcomes from the project should be kept short.

The welcome by a meeting organiser should be brief (no more than 5 minutes). Participants from the same organisation (School or ministry) should be placed in different tables. The table group should have the opportunity to introduce themselves to a partner at the table first (to settle and feel

comfortable talking). This introduction should take no more than 4 minutes (approximately 2 minutes for each person to introduce themselves). This should be followed by 5 minutes when the participants introduce themselves to the other participants at their table. A simple structure for this activity should indicate on a PowerPoint slide:

- Pair up with the person sitting next to you (3 x pairs at each table) and introduce yourself to each other – name, organisation, interest in teacher education - 4 minutes)
- Take turns around the table group to introduce yourself to everyone (name, organisation, expectations of the National Policy meetings – 5 minutes).

It is necessary to keep the time short at the start so there is an immediate sense of energy and pace. If the introduction goes on for too long then the conversations slowly fade and energy dissipates. The organiser (Project partner) has responsibility for time management and for starting and stopping the group discussions. It is helpful to have each activity set out on a PowerPoint slide so people can listen to the instructions given for the structured discussions and read what they have to do if they have not fully understood the instructions given orally.

g. Evaluation of the National Policy meetings

The specific aims of the first National Policy meetings (and same for the second one) should be revisited at the end of the meeting to find out if the participants think they have been achieved (see section 2.1). The evaluation process should provide answers to the following questions:

- Have the aims of the policy dialogue been achieved?
- What needs to be maintained or improved in the next round of National Policy meetings (next year)?
- What specific actions need to be taken during the upcoming year to sustain dialogue between the different participants in order to mainstream shared leadership approach in participating schools and beyond?

Evidence of participant evaluation can be collected via a short evaluation form to be completed by all participants at the end of the meeting, from notes taken at the feedback sessions throughout the day, from facilitator notes from the Table groups and/or individual comments made by the participants.

Actions to be taken to prepare for the next years' National Policy meetings should be specifically allocated to individuals to ensure they are planned and implemented.

h. Reporting on the National Policy meetings

Different approaches were taken to the reporting process. The main point is that essential information is provided as required by the reporting template guide as well as information about the achievement of the aims of the meeting and about how successful the dialogic approach was, as it differs than the traditional workshop or learning sessions participants usually take part in.

For your convenience, you can use the National Policy meetings Reporting Template. The total number of people attending the meeting should also be recorded. The key points from each of the themes to be covered at the Dialogue Meeting should be recorded along with any comments on

the dialogic process or any other relevant aspects on the development and sustainability of Shared Leadership practices in schools

i. Continuity and collaboration:

All country partners should work towards ensuring that the National Policy meetings continue independently beyond the lifetime of the L2C Project in order to continue discussion between stakeholders. This will be a key topic in the second National Policy meetings but if any suggestions arise in the first meeting regarding sustaining the way of working collaborative they should be included in your report.

ANNEX 1: FIRST NATIONAL POLICY MEETINGS PROPOSED STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Objectives of the 1st National Policy meetings:

- Spread the word about L2C project and the Shared Leadership activities used by the schools throughout the project;
- Establish solid communication and exchange channels between practitioners, policymakers, experts and other relevant stakeholders on the ways shared leadership practice in schools can be supported, sustained and disseminated;
- Offer a platform for dialogue about the continuum of the adaptation and dissemination of shared leadership practices in other schools;
- Create an initial basis for the development of national shared leadership strategies that will feed the final project recommendation guidelines. The latter will be a live document that will be updated and adapted throughout the project and in the course of the second National Policy meetings.

Suggested activities:

- **Welcome to the National Policy meetings** - participants should be reminded of the importance of their participation and contribution to the creation of a recommendation and “know how” guide for implementing Shared Leadership practices in schools and the type of support and measures required from policymakers and stakeholders in order to successfully implement such strategies at a national level. A particular welcome to anyone attending for the first time an L2C related activity should be made. It should be explained that the tables and activities have been arranged to enable as much cross-agency/institution dialogue as possible. The participants should also be reminded at the welcome stage that people will be asked to move around different tables so that people get to know and hear about the work and ideas for teacher education from as many people as possible.
- **Participant Introduction** – participants are invited to introduce themselves to each other around the table. They should present their name, their organisation and share what they thought was the most useful learning point for them from the start of L2C project.
- **Introduction to the National Policy meetings** – presentation of the completed activities in L2C projects and the implemented action plans in the schools, presentation of the aims of the National Policy meetings and the expected outcome.
- **Theme session 1**

Round table discussion in groups on the points raised below

This can be done in 2 groups of 3 participants at a table first to enable people to immediately engage in dialogue in a smaller group of 3, after 5 minutes they can be invited to discuss the outcomes as a table group for a further 5 minutes supported by a facilitator who records the key points of the dialogue on Flip Chart Paper. The focus of the discussion should be on **the supporting measures to introduction and development of shared leadership practices in schools**. All members of the table group should cooperate and take responsibility for agreeing what is recorded even though one person is writing up the record. One person should be selected to provide the feedback from the table. It is better if it is someone other

than the facilitator. Each time feedback is presented throughout the day a different person should be encouraged to give the feedback on behalf of the table group.

This discussion will depend on the national context; however, you might find useful some guiding reflective questions:

1. What are the necessary actions to be taken on a policy level in your country in order to support schools in learning what shared leadership is?
2. How shared leadership practices can be integrated in the school practice? What kind of support is needed on a school level?
3. How shared leadership practices can be integrated in the school practice? What kind of support is needed on a national/regional level?
4. What are the experiences implementing shared leadership practices?
5. What are the assets? What is already practiced in our national system and is seen as successful?
6. What are the challenges schools face when implementing shared leadership or trying to introduce it in the school?
7. What are the best ways to prepare teachers in leadership teams?
8. What are the best ways to incentivize schools to adopt shared leadership models?

A facilitator for each table should conclude this session by recording the main priority points arising from each table in relation to the each of the reflective questions.

- **Feedback session 1**

Feedback (2 main points only agreed by the table group) to be taken from the tables by one of the group members and raised in a plenary.

(10 – 12 minutes) – the organizer should invite one person from each group to put their group's flip chart poster on a stand or the wall and present the main feedback points. One person from each table should be asked in turn to present the main feedback points and put their poster up on the wall. Each table only has 2 minutes to feedback.

In order to create more synergies between participants, can ask 3 people from each table to move to the next table when they return from break. Three people stay at the same table and 3 people move to the next.

Coffee break

- **Theme session 2**

According to each national context an expert/ policy maker can be invited to provide a workshop and lead a discussion on relevant topics such as: curricula implementation, leadership strategies, developments in ICT, eSafety and STEM etc.

- **Feedback theme 2** same principles as feedback session 1

Lunch break

- **Theme session 3**

Round table discussion on the specific constrains and enablers on a national level that may contribute to successful **sustainability and dissemination of shared leadership practice** in participating schools and beyond **on the long term**.

Guiding reflective questions:

1. How shared leadership practices can be integrated in the school practice in a long term?
What kind of ongoing support is needed on a school level?
2. How shared leadership practices can be integrated in the school practice in the long term?
What kind of ongoing support is needed on a national/regional level?
3. What structures/ mechanisms are currently in place in order to help schools adapt shared leadership practices?
4. Can leadership CPD and trainings focus also on shared leadership? How can we introduce to these trainings to new teachers and school leaders?
5. What are the existing trainings on other topics and how are they used in order to increase shared leadership practices?
6. How can teachers and school leaders continue and develop their leadership skills over time?
7. How can we create and maintain this learning community and continue and develop and disseminate good leadership practices?

A facilitator for each table should conclude this session by recording the main priority points arising from each table in relation to the each of the reflective questions.

- **Feedback theme 3** same principles as feedback session 1

Afternoon break

- **Evaluation and reporting**

Revisit the aims of the meeting (put PowerPoint slide back up on the screen) to check progress in achieving them. Invite participants to provide evaluation of National Policy meetings. Explain the reporting process for each meeting and how the report and the produced content will be used.

- **Next steps**

- Summarize and decide upon sustainability measures: how to continue the discussion throughout the year and the project so it could feed the next National Policy meetings next year.
- Explanation of next steps and activities in L2C project

- **Thank you**

Thank all presenters and participants for their contribution to the dialogue and remind them of their participation in the next meeting.

ANNEX 2: STANDARD REPORT TEMPLATE

Name(s) of the organiser (s)
Total number of participants engaging in the National Policy meetings
Break-down of positions of those attending: (list those present in box opposite and the number attending e.g. 2 Teachers from participating schools, 2 school leaders, 1 ICT coordinator, 3 policy officials etc)
Main points from discussion and feedback of Theme 1 - supporting measures to introduction and development of shared leadership practices in schools
Main points from discussion and feedback of Theme 2
Main points from discussion and feedback of Theme 3- sustainability and dissemination of shared leadership practice in participating schools and beyond on the long term

Comments about the National Policy meetings process

Main comments from the Participant Evaluation of the National Policy meetings

Any other comments you wish to add