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Supporting Women's Leadership in Education: Understanding Culture and Context

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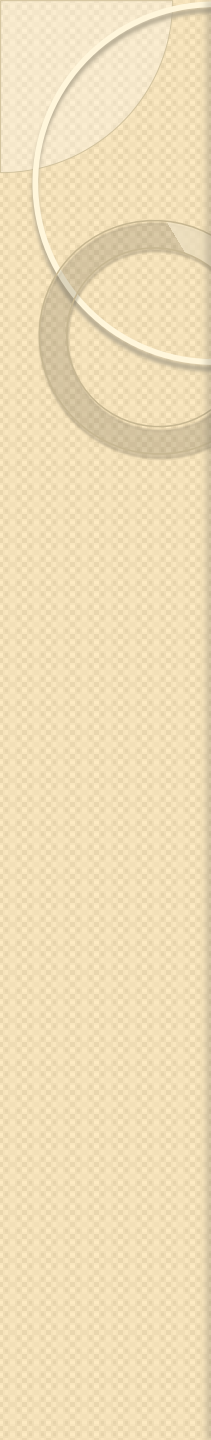
The under-representation of women in educational leadership has different causes in different cultures: Context Matters



Methods used to achieve our present understanding

- Case Studies of lived experiences of women in leadership
- Gender audits
- Surveys
- Use of many theoretical frameworks to examine the problem of under-representation





Barriers and Enablers to women
accessing educational leadership can be
located at different levels of their lives

International and National

Organizational

(schools and school districts)

Personal

(family, group cultures, personal
preferences)

International and National Levels

- International Agreements about gender equity and equality, human rights, wage structures
- Pressure from international agencies for national governments to meet gender equality standards to qualify for assistance
- National provision of equal access to education and training, procedures for access and promotion to government positions,
- National economic situation and competition for employment and valuing of education
- Nationally promoted values and understandings about women

Organizational Factors

- Availability of leadership training, mentoring and role models for women
- School boards accepting of women as school leaders
- Recognition of differences in career paths for men and women due to personal factors
- Respect and understanding of women's career aspirations

Personal Factors

- Childhood socialization to gender defined roles and attitudes to leadership
- Family financial resources committed to girls for education and training
- Career aspirations
- Domestic support for working women
- Mobility
- Preferences around marriage, childrearing and home making

Development of a system model

- To give the overview
- Allow identification of where and what levels interventions can most effectively be made
- Help predict the possible outcomes of any reforms or development of the education system on women in, and aspiring to leadership

What we can do?

We need

- To see the numbers – how many women in leadership roles, where are they missing?
- To see the positions – how powerful are the roles they are in?
- To know what makes women-friendly workplaces, and societies
- To review the requirements for accessing leadership positions and consider alternative paths to leadership and interpretations of it

- What can we do?

We need to consider how proposed changes at different levels in the education system will impact women's aspirations and access to, and retention in educational leadership

