CHANGING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS THROUGH A WCD LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME[1]
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION DOMAINS
POSITION PAPER

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**CHANGING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS THROUGH A WCD
LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME (WCDL)**
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION DOMAINS
CORE DOCUMENT
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INTRODUCTION[2]

Through education, children and young people, especially those facing extreme adversities, are best placed to develop their full potential, with the aim of promoting the common good.

In 2018, Porticus Iberia commissioned two of its partners with experience in the field of education, the *European Foundation for Society and Education* (EFSE) in Spain, and the *Centro de Estudos dos Povos e Culturas de Expressão Portuguesa* (CEPCEP) at the Portuguese Catholic University, to design and pilot a leadership programme for integrated education in a group of 13 to 15 Portuguese and Spanish public schools, with students in situations of adversity. This model of leadership aims to assist in establishing educational methods for achieving whole child development (WCD) of students which, through its management function, creates a culture of change driven by principals, leadership teams and motivated management staff, and involves all stakeholders in the school community, namely, teachers, parents and pupils.

For Porticus, "whole child development (WCD) is essential for children and young people to reach their full potential as individuals and to favour society as a whole". This approach focuses on learning, teaching and commitment to the community, in order to ensure that children are healthy, safe, committed, supported and equipped to deal with the challenges that they face. WCD is designed to support and develop all dimensions of an individual, notably core values and skills that will serve to guide them through their lives. In particular, for children and young people in extremely adverse situations, the opportunities for developing holistically (for example, emotional self-regulation, capacity for recovery, resilience, personal fulfilment etc.) can be determining factors that will have a profound impact on their lives, both within the family context and in their community. When these factors are absent, the cost to society can be significant, resulting in physical and mental health problems, increased unemployment, crime and violence, which all become more prevalent, and ultimately lead to worsening these situations for generations to come, leading to a "cycle of adversity" and at times "multiple adversities" which are handed down from parents to their children.

Voices from many sectors (international bodies, academic experts, school principals etc.) coincide in highlighting the quality of teaching staff and principals as the most decisive factor for improving education. Since its inception, the European Foundation for Society and Education has advocated the significant role that school leadership should play in improving education, and the importance of ensuring that teaching staff feel committed to educational projects that contemplate holistic development of the individual child: this vision for educational leadership is vital when developing real humanitarian and inclusive communities, especially in schools.

This paper aims to standardise the principles of leadership for WCD in disadvantaged social contexts, based on research and using as a reference the following sources: a) contributions

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[2] This document has endeavoured to use inclusive language and avoid ambivalence its wording in line with the guidelines of Spanish Royal Academy in this regard.

from scientific literature on educational leadership models, in particular those aimed at addressing the needs of those at-risk or disadvantaged; b) original contributions from the team of experts in Spain and Portugal to the foundations of the programme and to the specifics of their domains or areas of activity; c) the approach to a WCD concept at the foundation of the programme and a holistic vision of all aspects and dimensions of the individual who will be the focus of and benefit from the educational activity; and d) preliminary studies commissioned by Porticus[3] on the opportunities of bringing about social change through education in areas where there is a risk of social exclusion; these preliminary studies included a mapping in order to describe the "state of the art" in terms of school leadership training in Spain and Portugal, looking at the anthropological significance of the concept of WCD, and a holistic vision of the actual teaching-learning process in which schools are seen as communities that are open to the presence and participation of all stakeholders.

This paper is organised into two main sections, preceded by this introduction, with the first part describing the foundation of the leadership programme based on a vision of the individual (considered from a basic anthropological perspective) education, and the school. The authors then turn to Greek mythology to illustrate their thesis with the tale of Ulysses and how he endeavours to rescue Achilles from the gynaecium or women's quarters, where he had been hidden, in order to confront him with a decision that will mark his transition to adult life. Inspired by this myth, the first section concludes with a description and the features of the educational leadership model that the research team propose as a tool for managing situations where students are particularly vulnerable. The second part of the document describes the four action domains in which this leadership for WCD will be implemented, namely, vision and values of leadership and how these can be included in the school organisation, the curriculum, and also incorporated in the professional development and support of teachers and non-teaching staff and families who, together with the students, form the school community.

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3. In seeking to create an educational model aimed specifically at a population which is at risk and excluded and which will encourage students' WCD, in 2016 Porticus commissioned the American Institute for Research (AIR from hereon) to analyse progress of the WCD concept in 10 different countries, and the particularities and specifics noted in each one. In the work, AIR concludes that *Whole Child Development refers to building the multiple facets of human life—social, emotional, physical, intellectual, creative, and spiritual. Whole child development is necessary for raising young people who are competent socially, emotionally, and academically and are well prepared for life in the areas of workforce integration, independent living, contribution to a democratic and peaceful society, and establishment of satisfying and supportive interpersonal relationships. Experts have suggested many different human qualities that enable young people to succeed in life. Perhaps the most defining quality of whole child development is the interconnectedness of these qualities.*

PART ONE

1. Whole child development, foundation of the leadership programme in disadvantaged contexts

1.1. OUR VISION OF WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

*The researchers based their work on several criteria arising from the notion of the school as an institution that makes its mark on the growth and maturity of an individual, and to which they lend special importance as an complement to the irreplaceable function played by the family in a child's life. This educational space lays the groundwork to prepare for adult life and provides the ideal setting to assist with deployment of all facets of the human life. As Kant said, t*he *"human beings can only become human through education" or in the words of Socrates, when a person is educated they "question themselves."*

What is a human being? Before entering into any other considerations, an attempt should be made to address this complex issue. Education requires, at least initially, some reflection on its aims and purposes and also available resources. It is impossible to begin any consideration of education, particularly when speaking of integrated or whole child education, without first addressing exactly "what" we hope to achieve, whether this is feasible, and if so, whether it is desirable. Then we will need to ask if that "what" conditions in some way the means available for achieving that goal.

We begin with two phrases which summarise, if only in broad brush strokes, the response to the basic anthropological question. The first of these is from Aristotle. For the Stagirite, man is a "political animal" and an animal with language. His ζῷον λόγον ἔχον has often been translated as a rational animal, but that may not be the ideal way of translating it. This term and its translation have been the subject of interesting debate in the history of philosophy, from the classic translation of rational animal to Heidegger's suggestion: "animal whose being resides in dialogue and speech" (Hatab, 2000:100). In Heidegger we see the relation between political, social animal and rational animal with language.

The second phrase that supports the current concept of man is more recent and was coined by anthropologist Clifford Geertz. The author states the following in an interesting article entitled "the Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man" "the realization that man is, in physical terms, an incomplete, an unfinished, animal; that what sets him off most graphically from non-men is less his sheer ability to learn (great as that is) than how much and what particular sorts of things he has to learn before he is able to function at all" (Geertz, 1989:53).

What is interesting in both Geertz's observation and Heidegger's version of Aristotle's definition, is that nature of the human being – of a being for learning -, that is, the fact that education is not an add-on, but something essential. All human beings are educated and modelled through learning, even in the case of the most basic instincts.

What is the outcome of this anthropological reality? In the first place, the fact that human beings address the world and their personal challenges through their cultural learning.

What we see, what we do and essentially what we are, we see and do through language, understanding language in its broadest sense, that is, as signs, symbols, meanings and, therefore, learned. For example, the relation with our bodies and how we care for them or what we wear and adorn them with, how we feel or feed ourselves, where, and with whom etc. are all activities resulting from the complex interaction of habits, discourse, customs, and stories that shape our personality. They are in fact actions that are always in some way related to learning in general, which is often informal, or it may be through education, but which have resulted from more or less intentional activities.

Secondly, and as a result of the above, what is essential in human life is, in this sense, spiritual life, life that can be educated. All learning, even that which refers to more material variables, is cultural because again, in line with Geertz, what characterises man is less the capacity to learn, than the need to learn in order to function as a human being.

> "For man, what are innately given are extremely general response capacities, which, although they make possible far greater plasticity, complexity, and, on the scattered occasions when everything works as it should, effectiveness of behaviour, leave it much less precisely regulated. This, then, is the second face of our argument: Undirected by culture patterns—organized systems of significant symbols—man's behaviour would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and exploding emotions, his experience virtually shapeless. Culture, the accumulated totality of such patterns, is not just an ornament of human existence but—the principal basis of its specificity—an essential condition for it.." (Geertz, 1989:52).

In line with Geertz, aspiring to WCD is not just a question of organizing chaos or being content with acquiring specific skills, mastering routines and using tools or internalising skills, or developing them in the service of their profession or their life. He goes further: educating every individual is not just about enhancing a person's existence, but is designed to help them fulfil themselves as human beings, that is, learning to be a man, to be a woman; this means encouraging habits, creating and communicating values, in particular intellectual and moral values, because these are what help us to grow and which distinguish us as human beings, enabling us to reflect and to act, developing our conscience and enabling our freedom; that is, individuals whose actions are governed by reason and whose ethical and moral choices give purpose and meaning to everything they do.

It is precisely in this aspect of man as a rational being, free and ethical, capable of making decisions, that his special dignity lies. Human dignity does not depend on what we do, but on what we are, and this is the foundation of human rights. In this way, human rights are not just an add-on to the nature of an individual's being, but an essential component of their radical dignity. As a result, strengthening the importance inherent in every individual *per se* - and also the importance that we attribute to them - is the ongoing task of educators. Education, which is concerned with transmitting culture, will always provide the opportunity to defend and protect human dignity.

In practice, a whole child education project systematically addresses education in its entirety, the curriculum, the methodologies, and the success achieved, all of which are the result of group action that involves, albeit each in their own way, the entire educational community, students, teachers and families.

1.2. A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CONCEPT FROM THE HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE HUMAN BEING

Our vision for whole child development is not the sum of different, carefully detailed and independent dimensions of a person; each person is a unique and singular indivisible whole.

Before providing a brief outline of the various dimensions that form a human being, which are made and shaped through educational activities, it is important to underline the fact that one component running thorough this entire analysis is the holistic nature of human beings.

A human being is not just the sum of several different, carefully detailed and independent dimensions. On the contrary, in practice, these parts make up an indivisible interrelated whole. For example, when a young man gets a tattoo before a sporting competition, which dimension of his personality is active in that action? Could it have to do with his sociability, or perhaps he is seeking recognition, assuming a certain persona with respect to his peers? Or is it merely an action that concerns his physical appearance? Possibly it is an emotional act, a complicated attempt to display himself as aggressive or attractive, or brave, even? What is the role that more or less structured learning plays in terms of what we have read, what we have listened to, when selecting a phrase or a drawing for that tattoo? Are these cognitive aspects something completely different from what shapes the sensitivity and awareness that underpin the different decisions to be taken?

Training "in and about" the six dimensions identified is complex, and rarely are these independent of each other. These human dimensions are formed in history, through action and not just through discourse. The customs and the discourse that underlie those habits are equally significant. Furthermore, they are not formed in isolation but are interconnected, which is very important. Despite attempts to define and differentiate these aspects, they should also continue to be seen as an interrelated whole, as this is how they actually develop and work. Therefore, the different dimensions of a person are examined independently here for the purposes of this section of the paper, but it is essential to consider that they are absolutely fully integrated in the person as an indivisible whole.

One of the things that can be learned from mythology and traditional tales, as will be seen in section 2 of this paper, is precisely that historic facet of human life, the importance of time and customs, knowledge of specific ways of seeing life, or contemplation of the lessons that can be learned from reality, albeit fictitious or imagined. To achieve fulfilment, a human being requires a lifetime of good habits and repeated actions. However, education generally tends to consider only concrete educational activities and this has consequences that are then incorrectly assessed: the reality is that in terms of the most profound dimensions of a human being, specific or particular interventions cannot have any real or lasting effect.

The six dimensions of a person that have been identified, and which are addressed in a whole child educational activity, also involve the preliminary considerations of any WCD educational project as described below.

The physical dimension of a person, the centre of an integral ecology. (WCD aspect 1 of human growth, care, health, safety)

A human being is a corporal being with a biological life that needs to be nurtured and developed. Care for that dimension is inextricably linked to care for the environment that we live in. This "culture of care" also includes mankind, based on the idea of an integral ecology, and considers the Book of Nature as a single indivisible entity. The school is an ideal place not just for encouraging healthy and safe lifestyles, but also as a liveable space that respects the environment and is imbued with meaning, which is able to implement, given its experience of caring for nature and self-care, the four dimensions that describe so-called "environmental awareness": cognitive, conative, emotional and both individual and collective active (Chuliá, 1994).

It is a dimension which educators need to consider and they should encourage similar reflection in their students, as it is frequently included for example, in the programming of specific disciplines such as physical education, and even in activities as simple as how students sit, or ensuring proper diets and nutritional habits in school dining rooms.

However, it can also be a source of problems in our society, and this will need to be addressed. The fact that the human being has a body, and a corporal dimension is clear and it is not problematic, as indicated, when it is a question of care and developing a healthy lifestyle. Nevertheless, there is also a need for education to address issues such as body image and acceptance, sexuality or dietary choices (veganism, ethical eating etc.).

Cognitive dimension (WCD, aspects 7 and 8 of human growth, academic learning, learning life skills, and occupational aspects of the 21st century).

The human being is, moreover and to use the classic terminology, a rational animal. Thought should be formed and shaped to attain its purpose, namely an adequate knowledge of real life. The formation of habits such as discipline in studying, caring for a work well done or actively listening to the best arguments undoubtedly contribute to thought formation.

Committed teachers who value knowledge as a means of personal and social improvement will consider students' particular nature and characteristics in their horizon of possibility for integrating cultural content. Through their professional commitment they manage to instil high expectations in every one of their students, tailoring academic development to their individual needs and offering learning opportunities of the highest standard.

In this formation, cultural content is crucial, not just because the school is based around those precepts, but also because this content has essential components required to understand the world. Comprehension is not a skill that can be acquired without access to particular cultural content. Clearly, simply memorising content will not ensure the comprehension or development of critical thinking, however it is impossible to surrender

cultural content for two reasons. Firstly, because it encapsulates human endeavour to take on the world throughout history. In short, albeit through more scientific disciplines. or through the humanities or social subjects, it is possible to learn the achievements and errors in the historic pathway to knowledge of real life. Secondly, because through learning these contents it is possible to develop and use the requisite skills (communication, creativity, critical thinking, personal autonomy) needed in our future career and personal life and to become an active member of society.

This programme will advocate a skills-based approach to the teaching-learning process, although not in the purely formal sense of the term; that is, it is not a question of promoting skills over content, but rather a pedagogical process that will enable students to understand the world, and better understand themselves so that they acquire the wherewithal to act in that world.

The focus on acquiring skills wills not only help to imbue content learned with meaning, but it will also reinforce the integral nature of human education. In fact, the skills acquired will enable students to consider how the content learned will help them in life rather than just to pass an examination. For example, teaching history is not simply a matter of teaching in order to pass a test, but it should provide the student with lessons on how to live and understand the city that they live in and enjoy, because more satisfaction can be gained from something that is understood, especially from the perspective of becoming involved in the politics of how it is run and developed.

Emotional dimension (WCD, aspects 2 and 5 of human growth, resilience and development of virtues that will assist in coping with difficulties and developing positive self-concept).

Human beings also have a dimension that is recognised as volitional and is related to desire. Why do we want what we want? Is it legitimate, good or valuable to feel what we feel? Reality gives rise to different emotions: unfamiliar darkness brings fear, a festive welcome engenders joy and so on. The entire field of emotions is simply a way of reacting to the world, and like the cognitive dimension, it is also the aim of education. Just as it is possible to teach how to think properly, how to feel can also be taught. It is possible to educate so that emotional feelings can be experienced and adjusted to the reality that gave rise to them. Firstly, because it may not be reasonable to feel frightened or happy when confronted with a situation that is not supposed to evoke those emotions. Secondly, because it is necessary to educate the reaction resulting from a specific emotional experience.

Can that dimension be taught through education? One of the first problems encountered in the emotional dimension is the different control that is exercised, compared to the cognitive one. If a mathematical problem is explained to me I can swiftly adapt my reasoning to the explanation, but that is not the case with emotions. In the case of a romantic disappointment, it is not easy to alter my feelings towards the other person, and this is because as Aristotle said, there are different types of self-control, according to the ability in question (Aristotle: Politics, I, 5, 1254 b 6). It is easy, for example, to lift one's arm at will. It is not so easy to quell anger over an injustice or an important conflict. Gaining control over human emotions is the work of a lifetime.

Unquestionably, education in cognitive terms has traditionally been the province of the school, although this cognitive dimension cannot be considered separately from the sensitive and emotional component. These areas are more connected than it would at first appear. In this regard the philosophical works of Martha Nussbaum are particularly interesting in that she takes issue with a line of argument that began with Plato, namely, mistrusting emotions as an adjunct to knowledge. According to this idea, considered classic and typical of modern education, emotions are a hindrance to knowledge, as they "beguile" reason (Nussbuam 2016) According to this current of thought, which views affection and emotion with mistrust, we can only attempt to control or repress such feelings. Nussbaum, who tends to agree with Aristotle, takes a far more complex view. There is no denying that sentiments can, as mentioned, beguile reason, but it is equally true that it is not possible to think properly without a correct education in sensitivity or emotion.

> "Intellect will often want to consult these feelings to get information about the true nature of the situation. (…) If I help a friend unfeelingly I am less praiseworthy than if I do so with appropriate love and sympathy; indeed my choice may not really virtuous at all; for an action to be virtuous, it must not only have the same content as the virtuously disposed person's action, it must be done "in the same manner" as the manner in which a person whose passions love the good would do it, without feeling a part of correct perception is missing." (Nussbaum, 2016).

The ideal is not that someone does good because rationally they discover that it is good, but that someone in addition is pleased to do so and pursues that goal despite difficulties. This capacity of fulfilment is proper to "resilient" people who, while remaining sensitive to problems, manage to develop the skills needed to face adversity in a positive manner. As Martha Nussbaum also comments, sensitivity, rather than being merely a crutch, is a constituent component of knowledge. Teachers are well aware of the relation between pleasure, interest and learning. Clearly, our society is decidedly emotional, and educating correctly to achieve the required balance and to exercise due judgement on emotion is unquestionably also essential to ensure that desire does not become the ultimate criterion when making a judgement.

Aesthetic-artistic dimension (WCD aspect 3 of human growth, artistic expression)

English writer Herbert Read states that aesthetics are fundamental to the integrated education of human beings, contributing to the way they channel feelings and emotions, as well as forming their ethical sensibility. (*Education through Art*, 1948). Our perception of what is real is not built only on what is true or desirable, but also on what we recognise as beautiful or harmonious. Being open to beauty, acknowledging the aesthetic dimension of education, and the instructive potential of sensitivity are all aspects of this human dimension. A carefully maintained aesthetic of the *educational habitat* is not simply a useless add-on, since in one way or another the acknowledgement of others is also expressed through aesthetics, care, order and respect. Similarly, nor does it consist of educating the senses so that they will be capable of amazement in the face of beauty. The ability to appreciate beauty is taught, it is the result of constant exposure to a specific type of stimulus which is related to experiencing activities and educational practices relating to dance, music, theatre and the plastic arts in general. The effect of cultivating an aesthetic sensibility goes beyond artistic appreciation and has benefits for every aspect of learning, thus contributing to the holistic formation of a human being.

Social and civic dimension (WCD aspects 5 and 6 of human growth, training for participation in community life, commitment and connection).

It has been mentioned, in respect of Aristotle, that man was a "political animal". Human beings are hard wired to relate to others. Interpersonal communications are not a mere add-on to individuality. It is not a case of initially developing as individuals and then beginning to relate to others, but rather we are who we are depending on the strength our inbuilt relational dimension. Sociability is structured in a number of dimensions. Some of these are to do with how people treat each other and the need to develop empathetic virtues. Others relate to how we interact as members of a state of law. This second dimension is known as citizenship and it is related to the first, namely, the ability to relate to others, sociability, which is basic. Without developing those empathetic virtues that MacIntyre calls virtues of dependency, truth or trust, it is impossible to create a civic community. The school is in a privileged position to provide education for a first contact with a wider environment, that is, a window on the world of adults, because it is the first public space where others are not only connected to an individual through emotional family ties. Therefore, growing and maturing through that natural experience of sociability that is inherent in a human being, and receiving training as a citizen in order to experience life in a community, are aspects that contribute to the integrated development of students.

Ethical-moral/spiritual dimension (WCD aspect 4 of human growth , openness to questioning feelings and what should be)

Ethics for the Greeks was the art of leading a good life, the art of discovering the mechanisms required to live their lives with dignity, as free beings. The way an individual behaves is not instinctively determined, it is a question of choice and therefore involves thought. All human beings need to learn and grow in respect of reflecting on themselves and the nature and effects of their decisions which have been freely and responsibly made. It is precisely from this dimension of every human being, known as moral life, that everything else is decided; it is a personal and non-transferable dimension but it also needs to be reasonable (Cortina, 2012). Ethics affects all dimensions of a person, both related with their own personal care and physical training, and with other dimensions of their personality such as interpersonal relations, and intellectual and emotional aspects.

It is in this context of self-examination that the spiritual dimension enters the school as an element of the question on feelings. In an essay by Chesterton "The Religious Aim of Education" (Chesterton, 1997:17-21) the author holds that: "The deepest of all desires for knowledge is the desire to know what the world is for, and what we are for. Those who believe they can answer that question must at least be allowed to answer it as the first question, and not as the last" (Chesterton 1997:18).

In short, openness to the last question is a specifically human trait, as is that question which sooner or later everybody will ask themselves at some stage: is there any point in my life? These questions can arise at any stage in life. The responses given may vary considerably, and will certainly arise in the schooling years because as Meirieu rightly says, the school demands truth and also reason, but reason that is aware of its shortcomings and its different perspectives, a reason which does indulge in self-harm but which instead addresses the most important knowledge, namely that the fact of acquiring it can require various cultural,

artistic, literary, or even purely religious perspectives. Once these last questions have been assimilated in the school and in public education, respect must be accorded to the possible, free and varied responses.

In short, the education of each student throughout their schooling should be founded on a desire to include all dimensions of their personality in the teaching-learning process; and also to instil high expectations in all, irrespective of the conditions or challenges arising from social or cultural origin, race, gender or religion.

1.3. *ULYSSES IN THE SCHOOL*: CONSIDERING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP WITH THE MYTH OF ACHILLES IN MIND

This myth is the point of departure for rethinking "leadership" and "educational action",
the pillars of a programme of activity that aims to understand education
in disadvantaged contexts in an integrated manner.

Ulysses in the school, considering educational leadership in the light of the Achilles myth

Prior to going into the vision and characteristics for WCD leadership of disadvantaged contexts, it is worth reviewing the lessons learned from the classical myth that recounts the relation between Ulysses and Achilles: the latter, during his time in the gynaecium that represents the formative period prior to reaching adulthood, and Ulysses as the catalyst for abandoning the aesthetic stage of life in order to enter the sphere of ethics and undertake the combat of adult life (Gomá, 2007).

Javier Gomá's analysis of this myth would be an appropriate point of departure to illustrate this phenomenon. He focuses in particular on the subjective development of Achilles as the exemplification of a path that every human being must take, and also provides a reflection on Ulysses' role in reaching adulthood, a process that gradually takes place throughout the school years; that is, a transformation where Ulysses represents the archetype of educational leadership. However, if the myth is of interest to our purposes here, aside from the fact that it can and should be read in the context of the life path taken by every human being, it is also because it looks specifically at students in disadvantaged contexts, which require educators and the whole educational institution to overcome particular difficulties.

The value of the myth in anthropology

Firstly, it will be necessary to justify why mythology is used as a basis for discovering what type of knowledge will be obtained and how it can be used. Mythology and philosophy have been linked since ancient times. Plato begins one of his books by introducing political philosophy using not theoretical language but narrating a situation and a meeting. The Republic, like Plato's other works, refers constantly to stories and myths. The arguments are at the core of these stories. In this context, Pieper questions whether the continual recourse to stories is a didactic resource that Plato uses to transmit abstract ideas, or if it is something more (Pieper, 1984:13), and which will be asked rhetorically in future: could it not be, moreover, that for man to truly perceive a reality this should not have the structure

of objective content, but rather that of the event itself? Thus, as a result, it cannot be adequately contained in a thesis, but rather in a *praxeus mimesis*, the imitation of an action, to use Aristotle's language, or, in other words, in a story (see Pieper, J. 1984:14-15).

In fact, stories or archetypes describe human events, transmitting them through hearsay or fictional accounts, or as part of the heritage of a people, and they usually express truths through actions and are imbued with meaning; therefore they can continue to be interpreted in the light of current culture, as they reflect something essential which it would be hard to express in any other way. As will be seen below, when Javier Gomá uses the myth of Achilles in the gynaecium to describe some of the young hero's essential characteristics, it is operating not on the basis of the philosopher's pure imagination, but rather through his reflection, having captured a universal anthropological content in the mythical tale. The reader can discover this truth because he can equate it with his own life story, despite the fact that he is alive thousands of years later. In this regard, this characteristic of a story that is communicated through hearsay, not created as something new, is relevant.

Myths are not just like any other story; they are more than a purely creative exercise. Their value resides in the fact that they have endured over time. They have withstood the passage of centuries, which is testimony to the truths that they convey. If in today's world it is possible to essentially "hear" the same things that Plato heard, it is because myths denote important questions that are generally in the context of the ultimate meaning of human life, issues which cannot be resolved in any other form. They do not convey a material truth, but they are able to transmit other kinds of truths that cannot be adequately conveyed outside the narrative mode.

Literary fiction is also sometimes used by organisations to convey knowledge (Navarro and Romero, 2012). In this regard, the story used in this example to illustrate educational relations and leadership may serve to organise a coherent model which considers the dimensions of a leadership that views education in holistic terms. The fiction functions here as an archetype that enables knowledge to be actively presented, thus defining real life relations and conflicts that arise between the different dimensions of the model.

Thetis and Achilles, the gynaecium and Troy: a brief note on the family-school relationship.

Achilles is taken by his mother Thetis to the island of Skyros to keep him out of Ulysses' sight. In the gynaecium, the women's quarters, he is disguised as a woman, living far from the raging Trojan war that will prove to be his destiny. Troy embodies the greatness of the ancient Greek era and illustrates the model of duty towards one's community. The myth is seen by Gomá (2007) as a key model of human development, as the phase when an individual moves from infancy and adolescence, that is, from the aesthetic state that prioritises the self and is free from obligations, with open vistas of opportunities which are as yet undefined, to the ethical phase that characterises adult life. This myth resounds particularly in respect to education, in that it requires thinking about the purpose of life - which includes education - as well as the path taken to fulfil those aims in life, a path which cannot be travelled without the essential leadership of Ulysses, the educator.

The first figure that merits attention in the myth is Thetis, Achilles' mother. She is presented as an interesting archetype of parent-child relationship that is marked by love and by the

prominent role of both parents in their child's education. This is a crucial matter, because attitudes towards the school will depend on the parents' expectations and behaviours in this respect, on how they perceive the school and the role that they play in its organisation, it will also depend on the actual family structure and the type of pressure that it is under, particularly in disadvantaged contexts. Just as Achilles was aware of the protective role of his mother Thetis, the school today should also be aware of all the particular "Thetises" and, as a result, it should act to reinterpret the meaning of the almost universally accepted prominent role of parents in educating their children in the current social, cultural and family context.

In any case, regardless of current and heterogeneous family contexts which need to be studied, the relation between Thetis and Achilles continues to be a valid example of structural limitations of the family relationship in education, and the necessary role of the school as a different means of supporting human development. The family undeniably plays an important role in education (Fontana, Gil Cantero, Reyero: 2013), which has its own specific consequences for students' development, including the particular way in which it affects the emotional bond between parents and children, particularly when it is a question of their children's suffering. In effect, Thetis is aware of the oracle's prediction and seeks at all costs to avoid Achilles' death in battle at the Trojan war as fulfilled by the prophecy. Achilles mother is logically concerned for her child and attempts to evade the inevitable episode in her son's life by concealing him in the gynaecium and disguising him as a woman so that Ulysses will not find him. Thetis' attitude exemplifies two issues. Firstly, the realization of mortality, which means that the discovery of suffering, pain and frustration is often a lesson learned behind the family's back and it is not easy for parents to follow that path without support[4]. Secondly, that Ulysses, who embodies citizenship, will be the teacher responsible for taking Achilles away from the family environment and introducing him to the demands of life in the *polis.*

A failure to acknowledge the complexity of the emotional and affective bonds of a child's origins makes it difficult for schools to frame a proper relation, and to claim their own space, which parents should be aware of and respect. Both parties and both spaces are necessary in Achilles' life and both are, in turn, insufficient. Any discourse that fails to take this into account will be unable to provide the appropriate response to the real life difficulties encountered in family and school relations. There is no question that current pedagogical discourse emphasises the need for family involvement in school life (Bolivar, 2006; Epstein, 2001; Egido and Bertrán, 2017). However, it is also a common complaint of schools that parents tend to find it difficult to articulate that involvement. "In recent times teachers rightly complain that there are some conflictive situations where the parents' attitude is most commonly that of supporting their children instead of collaborating" (Bolivar, 2006:133).

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4 This should not be read as a blanket statement. Evidently the conduct of some parents shows an almost heroic attitude in supporting their children in the face of adversity but the practical relation between emotional bonds and fear of suffering cannot be denied, especially in the case of loved ones.

The transformation of parents into clients and consumers has exacerbated critical relations between both these worlds and has engendered a growing mistrust between parents and teachers (Calvo, Verdugo, Amor, 2016). This wariness cannot be dispelled by undermining the aims and purposes of the school or those of the family, but rather by explaining differences that are, in fact, complementary. No single entity can in itself provide whole child development, and both parts should respect their essential differences, spaces and times. However, the risk of a leadership deriving from a holistic concept of education lies in a failure to recognise the limitations and opportunities inherent in their particular position. To continue with the metaphor, Ulysses is not Thetis, and his goals and the role he plays differ from hers. Any attempt at whole child development must recognise that students develop in school, but also in many other areas of their life.

Considering the Thetis-Ulysses relation in this way, it is possible to view Achilles' leadership in terms of a creative tension with "those at home," leading the way to citizenship and the public arena. In this respect the school is not considered to be another family.

The leadership model proposed cannot be separated from the particular difficulties faced by families in disadvantaged contexts. This is not to say that knowledge of such difficulties is not necessary or useful. Nor that families should be outside school life. There are numerous studies on the benefits of learning communities, or other ways of including families in the school. In such environments the school can and should be instrumental in performing the important task of rebuilding a certain family structure; however, it is important to recall, as philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre states, "what those who perform the function of a good parent achieve is to bring the child to the point at which it is educable, not only by them but by a variety of other different kinds of teacher" (MacIntyre, 2001:110). He appears to suggest that it would be sufficient for them to be family, and to act as such. That is, their task would be one of encouraging and talking with their children about their school activities, maintaining high expectations and encouraging good reading habits (Castro, et al, 2015). It does not appear necessary to be at school all day to be able to do this and to do it well.

The transition from family environment to life in the community through school, or what is actually the transition from childhood to adulthood, is also exemplified in the myth analysed by Gomá. He describes the evolution in relation to the city, public life and what everyone has to experience. The child and the adolescent, preoccupied with the self, will need to venture on the path to maturity which will take them a long time, albeit helped along the way by adults as they pass through the various stages along that path. How leadership will be deployed in each of these phases requires thought. It should be recalled that in the mythical tale, young Achilles is first instructed by the centaur Chiron who teaches him the arts and about war, prior to the arrival of Ulysses who urges him to make the final step and commit to his community.

A human being goes through different stages along this path: "In childhood the child lives in harmony with the cosmos and feels secure and protected as a natural part of its environment" (Gomá, 2007:83). An adolescent begins to discern what adult life will entail, and is at first reluctant to accept this because they have no wish to die, and to some extent adult life extent consists of learning that death is inevitable. Thus, life prior to adulthood, the era of the absolute self, is far removed from the demands of the city, although there is also an element of conflict in that an individual is born in and owes their life to the *polis,* and

it is there that they will have to make their living, while ultimately losing it. This is precisely where the secret of community life lies in contrast to individualism. Taking the lead along that human pathway is a difficult task in a world of individualism. A correct education, which manages to juggle the role of individual freedom with the role that commitment to others also plays in our lives is essential, and the school provides the ideal framework for leading the development of those two dimensions.

Ulysses has a purpose and makes decisions

For the Greeks, Ulysses is a hero, someone who is the ideal exponent of the virtues valued by the community. He is someone who, when placed at a particular crossroads in life, is able through his decisions and actions to overcome the difficulties he faces in his quest for justice and equity. He is the archetypal person whom we all aspire to be.

Using a figure like Ulysses in terms of educational leadership is the recognition of a certain hierarchy which is indeed necessary when performing educational roles. It also implies the need to adopt a reflexive stance regarding authority in education (*auctoritas* of the Romans, as social recognition and influence in the group, in contrast to *potestas,* as the political power imposed by force or coercion) or in respect of the limits of some extensively and widely accepted concepts contained in the abundant literature on leadership.

The main focus underlying this debate is that, in contrast to bureaucratic leadership that limits itself to issuing orders to resolve day to day requirements, there is another style which has as its main function to provide guidance and win over support to ensure people's commitment to the common task, while at the same time distributing responsibilities. None of this has anything to do with a "liquid" or "horizontal" interpretation of leadership which does not bear the consequences of its decisions, or which dilutes them in a climate of anonymous or indeterminate responsibility.

In 2015, the newspaper El Pais published an interesting case that is pertinent to the issue at hand[5]. The newspaper picked up an item from a blog by Brandon Stanton. Vidal Chastanet, a 13-year-old boy living in Brownsville, a deprived neighbourhood in Brooklyn, was asked who had influenced him most in his life. The boy replied: "My school principal, Nadia Lopez." When asked why, he answered: "When we get in trouble, she doesn't suspend us. She calls us to her office and explains to us how society was built down around us. And she tells us that each time somebody fails out of school, a new jail cell gets built. And one time she made every student stand up, one at a time, and she told each one of us that we matter". Stanton went to visit her and found her raising funds to take her students to Harvard, so they would be able to envision it as a possible goal (Marcos, 2015).

While knowing little about her style as a school principal, albeit horizontal or distributed, it is evident that she set up a school in a difficult neighbourhood, and that she had a clear goal, determination and strategy. She is like Ulysses entering the gynaecium in Skyros.

In Achilles' story, Ulysses plays an essential role. Achilles will not become the best of the Achaeans without the call from Ulysses who represents the prototype of educational leadership. **The first thing that marks Ulysses out as a leader is that he has a goal.** Ulysses receives an order from the community. He has to get Achilles involved in the war.

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[5]https://verne.elpais.com/verne/2015/01/30/articulo/1422631409_298225.html

He knows what he wants and he organises his action based on that objective. Ulysses wants to take Achilles to war with him; not just to any war, but the Trojan War, an episode that was a foundational episode for the Greeks; he wants to bring him out of his comfortable adolescence in the gynaecium where he is entertained, among maidens, with childish games.

We have seen him many times. Aspiring to greater things is an indispensable driver for education. In the film "Pay it Forward" the teacher makes a surprising proposal: "think of something that will change the world and do it" Certainly not all students in his small class will take on the challenge, but whoever does will never be the same again. The pedagogy of need that George Steiner and Cécile Ladjali mention is crucial. Refusing to renounce the best does not necessarily mean beginning with the most difficult but it does raise important objectives.

When Anne Sullivan met Helen Keller she did not see what everyone else saw, a blind, deaf and mute girl capable of inspiring only pity; she rejected a sentimental view and saw possibilities that others could not even imagine or suspect, including her parents, although they clearly loved her,

The truth underpinning great goals as those proposed by Ulysses, Sullivan, Cecile Ladjali, Steiner or the imaginary teacher Eugene Simonet is that what they brought into play was the whole person. In the Trojan War, Achilles will have to bring out the very best of himself. His intellectual capacities, his skill in combat, his physical prowess and his ability to deal with problems. Any new leadership project requires an element of wishing to specialise or differentiate, a degree of enthusiasm and sufficient determination to structure the school on the basis of clear development goals.

Ulysses designs a strategy

Dragging Achilles to Troy is not an easy task, because as well as his obvious immaturity, his environment was also working against Ulysses' plans. Hidden, and dressed as a woman, he was unrecognisable. King Lycomedes was no help either. He denied that the youth was there, while giving the Achaeans permission to seek him without success. It was then that Ulysses designed a strategy and travelled to Skyros disguised as a merchant.

All the great educational reformers have designed strategies, but rather than basing them round the management and principalship, they have concentrated on practical education; from Pestalozzi to Montessori, from Lancaster to Dewey, all have considered or adapted some educational model. Educational problems are not easily resolved. They require models and study, and they need strategy. Can an educational leadership course be designed without considering the purposes of education? Or the real challenges encountered? Can that step in the process be skipped if the desire is to do something really useful? Should we not include areas for reflecting on what we want and how we want to achieve it?

The shield and the trumpet

How is it possible to recognise one among many? How can we attract their attention so that they will realise it? Or although they may realise it, how to convince them? It is important to recall that Ulysses goes to Skyros in disguise and arrives at the gynaecium with gifts for the women. He has placed a shield and a spear among these gifts. He then orders that trumpet sounds and Achilles, believing that the enemy is at hand and on seeing the weapons,

makes his presence known. This interesting episode invites consideration of some of the resources available for educational leadership.

Firstly, it requires a mechanism of approach that is not necessarily given, and it needs instruments to facilitate that approach. In the case of schools, these weapons are the subjects taught. Teachers educate through various subjects. This is what the work of teaching in schools is all about. Educational leadership that fails to focus on its goal or bases everything on academic terms, will have a distorted perspective on schools and high schools. The main function of the school is the transfer of culture and this is not merely about cognitive learning, but also the emotional dimension in several forms; for example, results improve self-concept along with family relations (Giofrè, Borella and Mammarella, 2017).

Leadership for whole child development should include improving teachers' performance by linking it to the school objectives and recognizing their role, rather than overloading them with additional tasks which, while seemingly important, are in fact superfluous. Teachers' weapons are their subject and their ability to engage with students.

There is however much more to this question. Any reflection on the content of educational leadership needs to address some current challenges, also those of schools in vulnerable contexts who will be beneficiaries of our programme. One initial aspect concerns the link between content and competences. This includes, for instance, assessments and methodologies. It has been widely debated and addressed in many places. On one hand, it will be necessary to address proposals that advocate for a classic return to content. In what sense they have done so, and how the discourse on competences has made a positive contribution. On the other hand, care should be taken not to place too much emphasis on methodological innovation, particularly as some studies are now putting this approach into question (Stockard, Wood, Coughlin and Rasplica 2018). As for the beneficiaries, it will be necessary to argue against those who level accusations of trying to teach before rebuilding challenging lives, dismissing the restorative nature of well-guided study.

The Trojan war: a destination for Ulysses

There is no adventure in education nor need to bring students out of anyplace, unless the point is to take them elsewhere. Considering education from the perspective of this myth is to consider the purposes of a school and, above all else, its public commitments.

Educational leadership in schools is aimed at developing the self, in order to ultimately participate in the public arena. The school is considered as a place of training for citizenship. A quote from Meirieu in this respect. "The school is an institution in which interpersonal relationships, all the daily management and the whole material environment conspire together. From an etymological perspective they "breathe as one," in order to create a particular form of human activity, based on specific values: recognition of otherness, the need for precision, rigour and truth, the joint learning for the construction of the common good and the ability to think for oneself." (Meirieu, 2006:95). Achieving all this depends on the concept of the individual considered as the basis and how no dimension of a person is left out of what is considered a whole education.

2. WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP (WCDL)

2.1. Background

The theoretical framework of the WCDL programme has been designed following an extensive review of diverse literature in the field. This includes the most relevant theoretical and empirical scientific literature on school leadership in disadvantaged contexts, as well as guidelines from several international bodies in this regard. A full review was also carried out on skills and training programmes in school management in different countries, and several projects designed to promote effective school management in adverse contexts, which can be considered as models of reference for this programme.

Among the theoretical approaches and research more specifically concerned with this training programme, particular attention has been given to leadership for social justice. This current of thought has been well established internationally (Ayers, Quin y Stovall, 2009; Blackmore, 2009; Blankstein and Houston, 2011; Bogotch and Shields, 2014; Ishimaru and Galloway, 2015; Jean-Marie, 2008; Marshall and Oliva, 2006; Theoharis, 2007, 2009, 2010); in the Spanish context, it has been addressed in depth by the Leadership and Educational Improvement Research Network, (RILME). The works of authors such as Bolívar, López and Murillo (2013); Gómez-Hurtado (2014, 2018); González-González (2014); Martínez-Valdivia, García-Martínez and Higueras are particularly relevant in this regard. (2018); Murillo and Hernández-Castilla (2014); Ritacco (2011); Silva *et al.*, (2017); and Tintoré (2018), among others. Values endorsed by this approach, which encompass several different models and styles of leadership, are particularly pertinent for a programme like this one, as they address the work of school leaders for the common good, inclusive education, respect for others and the goal of a fairer society.

In relation to the above, work addressing **school leadership in the framework of inclusive education and equity** has also been analysed in detail by internationally renowned authors such as Ainscow, Day and Leithwood. In fact, in a recent review of the literature, Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2019) state that equity is with all probability the most important outcome of good leadership practices. In this regard, some Spanish studies have also been reviewed, like Azorín (2018); Civis and Longas (2015); Fernández-Batanero and Hernández- Fernández (2013); Iranzo, Tierno, and Barrios (2014); León (2012); León and Moreno (2018); Llorent, Cobano and Navarro (2019); Moliner, Sales and Escobedo (2016); and Sales, Moliner, Omiama and Lozano (2018).

To define the foundations of this programme, relevant research has also been included on **school leadership in disadvantaged contexts** using different methodological perspectives (quantitative, qualitative and mixed). Some that were particularly useful were carried out in the context of the ISSPP (*International Successful School Principalship Project*), focusing on leadership in low performing schools in underprivileged environments (Day, 2005, 2014; Day and Gurr, 2014; Day y Hong, 2016; Moos, Johansson and Day, 2011), involving 25 countries, including Spain (Morales, Higueras, Martín and Domingo, 2017; Moral, Martín, Martínez and Olmo, 2018). Other useful research reviewed includes studies by Harris and Chapman (2002), Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) and Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2014), among others. In the Spanish context, several studies were of interest as they explore the role of school leaders in centres that have succeeded in maintaining paths

of change and institutional improvement (López-Yáñez and Lavié, 2010; López-Yáñez and Sánchez-Moreno, 2013; Olmo, 2017).

As for key international bodies concerned with education, school leadership has long been a central issue on the agenda of the European Union, OECD, UNESCO and OEI. From the extensive range of proposals and recommendations issued by these bodies, those linking leadership with equity were prioritised.

Regulations and professional standards for school principals in other countries have also been analysed, including Australia, Chile, Scotland, England, Wales, Ontario (Canada) and the USA. Particularly in the USA, the growing importance of this issue is clear; in contrast to other countries, school leaders' standards issued in 2015 specifically consider equity. In Spain, work has been done on regulatory aspects of school leadership and this has been detailed in the Spanish Framework for Good School Management that, while not prescriptive, includes a shared vision from experts such as Antonio Bolivar and major managerial associations[7].

In addition to the above, some leadership models were been analysed and have served as a model for the programme design. Several projects were reviewed including Central5[8], Ashoka and its *Changemaker schools*[9] and the Leadership for Learning Foundation funded by La Caixa[10]. Two particular projects were studied in depth, as they specifically address leadership for equity and inclusion.

The first of these is **Distributed Leadership for equity and learning (DLE)**, published by the *European Policy Network on* School *Leadership, EPNoSL*. Using an approach that includes values of holistic democracy, holistic learning and social justice, this project offers a theoretical base for a leadership model (Woods, 2015) that has been used to design a set of tools for reflection, best practices and resources organised around several dimensions, or key levers, for change[11].

The second project, **UNESCO: leading inclusive school development** was developed by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), based on the idea that learning for all and the creation of inclusive schools are fundamental to the UNESCO 2030 Framework for Action, aimed at complying with Sustainable Development Objectives (SDO). Based on Ainscow's inclusive educational approach (2016) a "resources package"[12] has been compiled and designed to facilitate educational change, including a set of tools to support leadership in

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6 Sancho Gargallo, M.A. (2014), "Autonomía y Liderazgo en la LOMCE", en El Cronista del Estado Social y Democrático de Derecho, núm. 46, pp. 56-63.

7 FEDADi – FEDAIP – FEAE (2017). A Spanish framework for good school management http://www.fedadi.org/?p=1958

8 Schratz, M. *et al.* (2013). *The art and science of leading a school. Central5: A Central European view on competencies for school leaders.* Budapest: Tempus Public Foundation.

9 https://spain.ashoka.org/educacion-changemaker/escuelas-changemaker/

10https://obrasociallacaixa.org/es/educacion-becas/educaixa/programa-de-liderazgo-para-el-aprendizaje 11 Available at http://www.schoolleadership.eu/

inclusive schools. The specific purpose of these tools is to support principals and members of leadership teams in schools in different contexts and locations to transform and develop in a way that ensures that all students feel welcomed and supported in their learning path.

2.2. Definition, goals and nature of the leadership for whole education in disadvantaged contexts

This leadership programme offers whole child development (WCDL) for students from adverse social backgrounds. The WCDL programme's action domains encompass the different dimensions of the person who grows and develops in a school conceived as a community of civic learning and cultural transfer.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

WCD leadership differs from other existing models and is conscious of its own limitations, as well as of the need to seek an adequate balance. On one hand, aspirations should not be so ambitious as to make its result unrealistic or its goals unattainable, detached from reality or the specific context. However, nor should leadership aspirations be kept at too low a level out of reluctance to disrupt the *status quo* or block the exits from the "school labyrinth", preventing leaders from rising above their day to day reality. Based on the myth of Icarus,[13] professor Cabral, in his book *O novo voo de Ícaro* (1999) holds that "Flying in order to see the world that we live in is our true vocation as educators", because we learn to see not only "our house but the neighbourhood, the streets in the city and the countryside and the people we know and who we may one day meet and an endless horizon"[14].

In this sense, we attempt to explain an element that is key in transformation processes of organisational culture: WCD leadership entails a paradigm shift for schools and teachers. It requires time and effort. Educational leaders need to accept the role of "destabilising" the organisation, asking its members to continuously question what they do and why, how they do it and for whom[15]. From the researcher's perspective "if we fly too low, there is a risk of flying without running the bottleneck of fundamentalisms, and if it is too high, we can get lost in the irrelevance of pieces in the unsuccessful attempt at that reality"[16].

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12 IBE-UNESCO (2016). *Reaching Out to All Learners. A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education*. Geneva: International Bureau of Education.

13 In Greek mythology Icarus is the son of the architect Daedelus, who built the minotaur's labyrinth on the island of Crete. Father and son, prisoners of King Minos of Crete, decided to escape from the island by fabricating a pair of wings, weaving feathers together and attaching the central ones with string and the lateral feathers with wax. Daedelus warns Icarus that he should keep at a reasonable height because if he goes too close to the sun, the wax joining the wings would melt. However, Icarus in his enthusiasm, and borne aloft by the wings, flew higher and higher, ignoring his father's advice. The wax on the wings melted and he plunged into the sea.

14 Cabral, R. F. (1999). *O novo voo de Ícaro. Discursos sobre educação*. Lisbon: Escola Superior de Educação João de Deus (page 79).

15 Ibidem, page. 94.

Daedelus, Icarus' father, discovered that the sky was the road to freedom, towards a creative experience that would take them to a new place. Daedelus' creative freedom is also a challenge for school principal leadership. Although there are limitations, barriers, difficulties, laws and rigid and linear regulations, educational leadership has ample space for freedom, creation and to search for new possibilities of educational organisation. For Cabral, "the greatest vocation of education is to make the most of the freedom inherent in the quest for challenging experiences, stimulating visions, truly transformational paths", in which freedom is presented as a process of development, as a pathway to an education with values "an education that transforms not only the students and the teachers but also the parents, the community and ultimately the world"[17].

Whole child development cannot leave anyone behind. Finding forms of freedom for the child's whole education will moreover contribute to a freer, fairer and more democratic world; in short, a better world, based on a community facet, in order to be with others and to be together with them.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Much of the literature on leadership focuses on achieving the best academic results for students, based mainly on results and standardised performance tests. WCDL has two differentiating elements that have "spread" into many other aspects of its activity.

Firstly, and as its ultimate motivation, it emphasises the student's whole education, as described above. This is not an attempt to define what education "should be", nor is it a question of enumerating the students' cognitive and non-cognitive values. Yet this approach does emphasise the fact that a student's value is not based on examination results (that is, someone who will ultimately become a good candidate for a prestigious university), but rather all school activities envision the student as a whole, considering all different dimensions (cognitive, emotional, physical, creative, spiritual...) of the person. The purpose of this type of leadership is to train students who are able to recognise their inalienable rights as persons, inculcating in them high expectations of their current and future possibilities, and enabling them to transform the particularly difficult environments from which they come.

Secondly, the WCDL programme is designed specifically for schools working in very disadvantaged contexts. Its aim is to address the most severely deprived settings, where education needs a greater transformational power to ensure fairness and equity and to improve the conditions of the student's immediate environment (the family, emotional welfare, safety, intellect and wellbeing). WCDL takes an optimistic view for students' present and for their future. Teachers trust in the talents of the students and in their potential for growth and development.

Nº 16, 1978, pp. 63-64.
[17] Ibidem, page. 155.

In addition, and precisely because of its particularly difficult context, a leadership of this style is characterised by an aim to open up and relate to the environment, and as a result become a point of reference for the students' transformation and improvement.

Based on these premises and given the present climate in which the concept of "authority" has acquired somewhat negative connotations, the WCDL programme intends to recover the Roman idea of *auctoritas,* as illustrated above in describing Ulysses; that is, while aware of the need for a person or a team to exercise leadership of an organisation, *auctoritas* does not impose its decisions on the rest, but instead encourages membership of the organisation by setting an example and through the leaders' own convictions, with the underlying idea being that those closest to the leader will improve, and change from within, bringing out the best in themselves; always with a **widely distributed leadership** in mind, in which the role of the organisation's *natural leaders* is valued and integrated in the new project. The leaders' ethical commitment is a necessary requisite in this type of school, along with a commitment to ensure equity, inclusion and expectations for improvement of both students and their environment. This is undoubtedly no easy feat but it can be achieved through enthusiasm, to the point of changing an organisation and its environment, based on the following actions and specific strategies.

The first link in the chain of transformation for the school is to **establish a vision** for the organisation. Where do we want our school to be in the coming years? What are our dreams for the school and what do we hope to achieve? With this in mind, efforts should be aimed at defining feasible objectives that engage the entire organisation (culture of participation). Having defined a vision for the school and its specific goals - which will stress the importance of the WCD concept and personal dimensions of the beneficiaries of the educational activity - the leaders will perform their task with determination, confidence and enthusiasm.

In the type of disadvantaged contexts for which this programme has been designed, an **adaptive leadership** is required; that is, leadership which is necessarily flexible and adapted to the contexts, providing guidance and lending importance to supporting teachers, students and families. In a way, the aim is to practise widely distributed leadership at the schools, not by organizing assembly-like consultations on all decisions, but rather making good use of participation channels created to disseminate the vision.
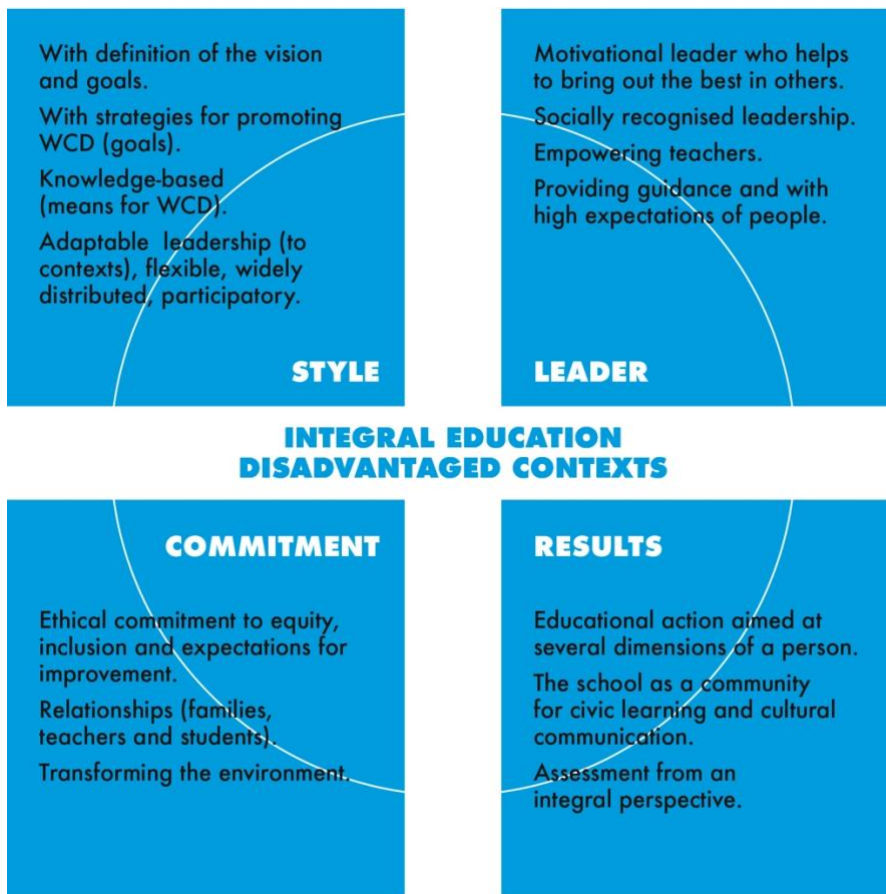
Another key factor of WCDL is clearly the relational system, the **school climate.** This leadership creates specific relations with each member of the educational community: families (respecting areas and justifying who does what, while also permeating spaces to a certain extent); teachers (who are set goals for learning, reassessing their professional competence and their role in conveying culture and knowledge, as a tool for promoting integrated education); and students (whose educational development is viewed as a multi-dimensional whole). As a result, this leadership considers the school as a community, as a space for civic learning (a vision that resembles the service to the *polis*).

This programme aims to provide the tools that will enable leaders to improve their own schools and help them to discover and define their own needs. The main objective of the programme has been defined but its means and some specific goals need to be tailored

to each particular school and defined by them. **From a shared vision, each school should create its own particular mission and vision.**

In short, the characteristics of leadership for whole child development (WCDL) are based on balancing and articulating a set of practical skills and knowledge from the perspective of a conceptual, multidimensional educational framework, which is expressed in a set of leadership practices or action domains; as shown below, they are closely linked to the vision and values, climate, teacher professional development and the teaching-learning process.

STYLE

With definition of the vision and goals.

With strategies for promoting WCD (goals).

Knowledge-based (means for WCD).

Adaptable leadership (to contexts), flexible, widely distributed, participatory.

LEADER

Motivational leader who helps to bring out the best in others.

Socially recognised leadership.

Empowering teachers.

Providing guidance and with high expectations of people.

INTEGRAL EDUCATION DISADVANTAGED CONTEXTS

COMMITMENT

Ethical commitment to equity, inclusion and expectations for improvement.

Relationships (families, teachers and students).

Transforming the environment.

RESULTS

Educational action aimed at several dimensions of a person.

The school as a community for civic learning and cultural communication.

Assessment from an integral perspective.

PART TWO: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

Action domains of WCD leadership in disadvantaged contexts.

The school is a genuine instrument for building a whole human being, since students (child, adolescent, youth and adult) spend a considerable part of their lives in that institution. The school does not just provide preparation for life, the school is life itself, an experience in relations and education that extends over a period of over 20 years. Leadership strategies can help to encourage a school culture where horizons of hope are not excluded. The school can be a place for experiencing freedom, developing intelligence and seeking the truth, opening up to horizons of hope, solidarity and ethical action.

The main approach of WCDL is based on the belief that all students have an extraordinary value as complex human beings, with many more dimensions than just the cognitive one. Students can be educated by taking into account this **integral concept of the person,** focusing on their varied potential talents and using then as a lever to engage them in learning, ranging from physical care, to enquiring about the meaning of things. This consideration of the person from the anthropological perspective, as an inalienable integrated unit, is especially decisive in challenging and disadvantaged social, economi, and cultural environments and contexts.

Goleman (2018) condenses five components of emotional intelligence in action: self-knowledge, self-control, motivation, empathy and social competence. Some characteristics linked to these components play a significant role in the success of the school, such as self-confidence, realistic self-assessment, reliability and integrity, openness to change, a strong drive to achieve goals, optimism even in the face of failure, competence for developing talent, intercultural sensitivity, provision of services to clients and beneficiaries, effectiveness in bringing about change, persuasion, and competence to create and lead teams.

WCD leadership in disadvantaged contexts is a journey of reinvention, which presents itself as an educational project that aims to transform all members of the educational community, determined to anticipate hope for the future.

The school leader should be the catalyst for pedagogical change. For Cabral "these leaders combine clear management with the creation of areas in which others can take initiatives they are direct, incisive, but with the effective ability to listen"[18].

In the specific case of this leadership programme, emphasis is placed on four action domains, which are considered essential in the literature on educational leadership. Namely: a specific vision of the school that is shared with members of the educational community, a new organisational approach, an interpretation of the curriculum, and an ongoing process of development, monitoring and support in the relations with teachers, families and students[19].

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[18] Ibidem, page 77.

A vision for the school with WCD leadership

One of the challenges faced by any leadership style is to create a model for action based on a vision that imagines paths for the future, takes decisions and accepts risks and adversities, creates a school culture and bases its curriculum on a philosophy and pedagogy of learning.

In his work on leadership and schools, Professor Silva (2010) relates the pillars of this vision with the mission and the attainment of goals using the resources and forces available: "A leader without a clear vision of what they want for the future (vision) and what they want in the present (mission), can never be a good leader ".

From a similar perspective, Bennis and Nanus (2001) refer to the vision as a mental image of the possible and desirable future state of the school organisation: "This image, which we call vision, may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or a mission statement. The critical point is that a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organisation, a condition that is better n some important ways that what now exists."

Many authors coincide in the view that when institutions consolidate their vision this usually takes form in a project, often known as a strategic plan, which when disseminated to the educational community allows joint action by all members of the organisation, and serves at the same time as a beacon, both in the school and beyond. In order to share the vision, managerial teams and intermediate leaders play a fundamental role in promoting communications settings, ensuring a clear vision for the school and an ongoing exchange of information, promoting reflection and analysis through formal and informal meetings, and providing support for teachers, with the capacity to listen and provide feedback.

In **disadvantaged environments**, WCD leadership perceives the school as a safe place, entrusted with both improving the students as people and citizens, as well as the school environment (relations with families and the surrounding social context). The **central role of the school** should be to upturn student's low expectations, not just in terms of academic results, but also in relation to their potential value in contributing to society through their behaviour, their future careers, and their contribution to improving their environment. WCDL aims to make time spent at school – a period extending over at least 10 years of compulsory schooling, which is an important part of a student's life - not just a preparation for life, but also a period of possibilities for building the human being. The vision for the school and the leadership strategies need to instil a culture that regards the school as a

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19 Bolívar (2015) summarised the main dimensions of successful leadership in eight steps (i) define the vision, the values and the management and create trust; (ii) improve teaching and learning conditions; (iii) restructuring the organisation; (iv) improve teaching and learning; (v) redesign and enhance the curriculum; (vi) improve the quality of teaching staff; (vii) build relations within the school community (viii) build relations outside the school community.

horizon of hope for the educational community and its context, making it a place for ethical living, freedom, truth seeking, openness and solidarity. In this way, the school becomes a cultural and civil learning community. To achieve this, the vision and goals of the school need to be made explicit. They include an **explicit commitment to equity, inclusive participation and integrated development and wellbeing of students**, which should be shared by the entire institution.

Equity means that personal or social circumstances, along with ethnic origin, gender, culture, religion or family background, should not be an obstacle to individuals developing their full potential; thus it is linked to the values of **justice and inclusion**. Despite awareness that the roots of inequality are largely linked to factors beyond the school environment, achieving equity entails ensuring that the WCDL programme encourages the entire educational community to challenge customary assumptions regarding students' ability and possibilities for success. In practice, WCDL proposes a vision that will generate **inclusive participation,** which means that all voices should be listened to, and in particular, the views of those who normally have a lesser chance of being heard. It also has an explicit commitment to **growth and wellbeing for all**, basing leadership on a profound and holistic knowledge of human development (considering the six dimensions that foster WCD) that provides the framework for learning.

As WCDL is based on the existence of **high expectations** for students, it aims to create a community that focuses on the personal, professional, social, academic and emotional achievement of all its members. In order to create this type of community, it is often necessary to challenge and change the established culture of the school, confronting the traditional attitude to teaching as a basically individual task. In contrast, WCDL encourages **collective responsibility** for learning and integrated education of students. This strong sense of joint responsibility is not reached through bureaucratic norms and regulations, but through professional and personal commitment to a common goal, which everyone believes in, and is reinforced and supported by the school leadership.

In the WCDL programme, both the current practice of leadership and the vision for the schools' goals and objectives will be reviewed and assessed continuously, taking a critical look at the achievements and obstacles encountered and examining the outcome of decisions made. To this end, leaders will use quantitative evidence (such as students' attendance, behaviour and academic results) although not exclusively, as frequently these indicators fail to focus on key aspects that underpin the work of the school. Qualitative evidence is also essential, particularly the views of members of the school community (students, families and staff). In any case, the WCD model assumes progress towards an ideal, so there is always room for learning and **continuous improvement.**

As a result, **communicating the vision** for the school as a role of the principal and the overall educational community is an essential component of the programme. Creating the time and space to effectively communicate this vision through what we have termed a "widely distributed leadership" will be the first action of a programme of this type. Sharing a passion for these transformational goals could provide the initial impetus for improvement. This collective vision will be based on excellent educational quality, integrated development of students and equity ("ensuring that every student receives what they need to develop their full potential").

WCDL is based on a deep conviction of the importance of equal opportunities and the value of each individual, which stimulate a passion for integrated learning and optimism for students' achievements, based on the varied talents of each one. Leaders have a **sense of ethics** which safeguards and promotes the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, sense of community, and care and respect for diversity. In this regard the emotional competence of leaders and their teams in respect of effective leadership is an important aspect in the exercise of direction, particularly in times of change. WCDL leaders are well prepared for handling and managing these emotions.

WCDL and organisational approach

One of the challenges of school organisation is the ability to mobilise the participants, transmitting messages that will "entice" teachers and create positive energy for implementing the educational project and any related pedagogical projects.

In order to develop WCD in disadvantaged contexts, the school faces the fundamental challenge of identifying an organisational response based on its own dynamic, specific models of equity and inclusive participation, making good use of time and resources, creating educational teams who will work together, exchange experiences and monitor activities; and which, by ethical imperative, seeks to ensure the well-being of all.

The school faces the challenge of improving how it perceives itself as an "intelligent" organisation that considers its relational dimension to be essential, which it demonstrates through communication; that not only teaches, but interacts with students; that functions through top and intermediate leadership; that offers motivation for action, participation and commitment to encourage WCD of the student.[20]

Institutional structure, school time and resource organization, culture of participation and team work should be put at the service of the WCDL vision and goals. To achieve this, institutional structures should facilitate and support participation of the entire community from the aforementioned concept of widely distributed leadership. Nonetheless, WCDL is not a closed or regulatory programme but rather it aims to promote areas of freedom, by encouraging and supporting personal or group initiatives. In this way, acceptance of diversity is encouraged, along with respect for different sensitivities. Through all this, WCDL places the **student at the centre** of school organisation.

The culture of participation and **teamwork** requires leaving behind more traditional attitudes, based on control and command, and avoiding workplaces that are bureaucratic and acritical. To encourage participation, structures are developed in the form of working

20 Almeida, J. M. (2016). Um projeto de supervisão pedagógica como aprendizagem organizacional num agrupamento de escolas TEIP. In Palmeirão, C., & Alves, J. M. (Coor.). Promoção do sucesso Educativo - Estratégias de Inclusão, Inovação e Melhoria. Porto: Universidade Católica Editora. Coleção e-book. ISBN: 978-989-8835-13-0.

teams by academic year, course and stage, detailing the actions needed to address the goal of WCD. It should be considered that opportunities for leadership go beyond formally established roles, and need to allow for different perspectives and sources of experience to influence the work, development and innovative change in the organisation. Leaders can facilitate the creation of **flexible and collaborative working relationships,** overcoming barriers and traditional hierarchies and encouraging cooperation, so that the entire school team progresses in the same direction. To achieve this, leaders need to inspire, motivate and encourage school staff and students, and promote a positive approach to shifting circumstances and challenges that arise. In a programme such as WCDL, it is essential to find a way to implement innovative organisational skills, discover ways of working efficiently, create teams with strong intercommunication, make use of strategic and operational networking, along with personal networks that aspire to influence the relational environment. This type of network is designed to implement priorities and future challenges and to garner the support of teachers, students and parents, thereby establishing and strengthening bonds between the school and the outside world.

The principal, as the recognized education authority, is chiefly responsible for forming a **leadership team** with this common goal, involved in disseminating and enthusing the entire school organisation with a **commitment to the vision**. The concept of widely distributed leadership entails including all those who identify most with the project, as well as the team of intermediate leaders, within a systemic perspective: tutors and department heads (language, mathematics, natural sciences, etc.) in secondary education and tutors of each educational cycle at primary level, who will play a prominent role in the WCDL programme. Only a distributed leadership that is able to engage the teaching staff will be able to generate visible change in the overall educational community and its neighbouring community.

The combined and coordinated action of management teams, tutors and teachers in a given course and stage, along with counsellors, departments and non-teaching staff are essential to achieve these goals. They each play a role in discovering and identifying talent in their students. For instance, the musical talent of a pupil may provide the incentive to strengthen their self-esteem and to translate that interest to other subjects, as part of a combined, coordinated action.

The role of **tutors** is vital in the WCDL model, both inside and outside the classroom, both in terms of the actions of the tutor who is formally assigned to a student but also those of other teachers, as tutoring is also a shared responsibility and a combined effort. Leaders should endeavour to ensure that tutors and teaching staff do not focus solely on curricular learning, but also address the students' diverse needs, encouraging them to act autonomously, exercise self-discipline and acquire their own knowledge. Both the tutor and, as the case may be, the counsellor who is fully aware of the situation of each student and the reasons for their vulnerability, along with the teachers who are closer to the student, should provide **individualised support** tailored to their needs, ensuring that all dimensions of their development are enabled. The aim is to provide *support* along the path towards WCD of each student, which in the case of leadership programme, leaves no one behind[21].

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[21] Although it has not been mentioned in detail, the extension and participation in the WCDL vision of the school community applies in a singular manner to all the administrative and service personnel, giving them complementary functions for understanding some of the causes that explain situations, behaviours and conducts of the students during the school year.

In accordance with the school's commitment to **inclusion and equity**, **opportunities for active learning on democratic citizenship** are encouraged. WCDL leaders will work to ensure that practical collaboration, participation, discussion and learning based on different points of view, become part of daily life in the school, for both teachers and students. All voices are respected, considered and valued, especially those with fewer opportunities of being heard in the social sphere. Students need to **experience** democratic citizenship in practice. Through that practice they can learn what it means to respect values such as justice, tolerance, mutual understanding and a concern for the wellbeing of others.

Time management is fundamental to the success of organisations. Effective management ensures that teachers and school staff can reflect on the priority or urgency of the issues to be addressed with the management teams. Delegation of tasks and competences, the ability to listen, redefining the purpose of meetings and managing them efficiently, using technologies, informal contact, and the "open door" policy, among others, are resources that can contribute to efficient and effective training in time management at the school; also considering what happens outside it (time for oneself, time spent with family, time during the weekend, enjoyed with friends, etc).

Time organisation and management should allow and encourage periods set aside for reflection, dialogue and training. Material means that will facilitate educational activity should be set up in order to create **a safe environment** that is healthy, organized and welcoming, and which creates positive conditions for learning. Regarding the goal of transforming the surrounding environment, leaders should work to create a school that is **open and accessible to all in the neighbouring community,** in collaboration with neighbour associations, local bodies, school parent associations, entities, NGOs etc. the school could become an open space after class hours in which families are encouraged to participate in supporting students, and in leisure, sporting and cultural activities etc. serving as a reference that encourages integrated development of the educational community.

As an organisational structure, the school requires information to be effectively conveyed, otherwise the fragility and heterogeneity of the participants will lead to their dispersion. Communication makes it easier to formulate plans and programmes and employs participatory mechanisms as a means of building relationships, both in the school and outside it. As José Almeida[22] comments, rather than merely transmitting and receiving. or being a mechanical exchange, communication is able to listen, share, innovate and anticipate.

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[22] Almeida, J. M. (2010). "A dinâmica dos actores e a problemática comunicacional na construção e implementação do projecto educativo comum do agrupamento de escolas. Um estudo de caso múltiplo". Universidade de Coimbra. Pp. 164-165.

WCDL and curricular approach

One of the fundamental challenges of WCDL is to ensure that the school will be effective in ensuring the **student's WCD learning** process. This learning is a deeper concept and goes beyond the mere acquisition of content, as it is designed to promote the development of the person in all their dimensions (in particular, the six that are defined in our proposed concept of WCD: physical, cognitive, emotional, aesthetic-artistic, social and civic, and ethical-moral-spiritual). As a result, this should be the aim in planning, developing and assessing the curriculum.

In practice, the curriculum is the key instrument for implementing principles such as inclusion, and in doing so it includes the values, skills and knowledge that students will need to acquire. The ultimate purpose is to provide quality **holistic training** for each and every student, offering educational opportunities that will suit their needs and are designed to overcome any problems encountered in the particular context that they live in. It should also be based on a systemic and global way of thinking that is able to overcome the traditional curricular organisation, with disciplines that encourage segmented knowledge, compartmentalisation or bureaucracy. Furthermore, it is important "to give students a voice." In this journey towards creating a WCD programme for students, a way must be found to enable them to participate in the planning of educational activities and in creating areas for considering the efficacy of developing all aspects and components of the curriculum, making this an active instrument of learning and not a mere "recipe for teaching". Educators need to listen to students, give them a voice, and ask them what they think, request suggestions and encourage a proactive, entrepreneurial and reflexive attitude.

To this end, a school inspired by WCDL will have an **innovative and enriched curricular project** that is motivational for both students and teachers. Although this programme will be adapted to and abide by any regulations in force, it cannot be predefined by an external agent, but instead should be flexible, adaptable to the specific context of the school. However, the WCDL programme underlines some differentiating aspects that affect schools with particular difficulties and which are more in line with the concept of whole education. Each management team is able to take the most appropriate measures based on the specific setting of their school. In any case, it will be necessary to deal with different styles of learning, respecting differences and prioritising knowledge and skills that are relevant for the students.

Teachers, through their curricular subjects, will use knowledge as a vehicle, instrument or "weapon" - invoking the myth of Achilles- in order to convey to students high expectations and attend dimensions that are not purely cognitive and to which the WCDL programme aims to respond (curiosity, autonomy, critical thinking, responsibility etc.).

Additionally, the curriculum should be structured by taking into account different **entry levels** of students, ensuring that the progress of each one can be assessed in terms of success (compared to the entry level, added value) and recognising and reinforcing their achievements. Similarly, student **evaluation** should consider all dimensions of the model and be aimed at learning (formative assessment). It is therefore a question of **integral, integrated and integrating assessment**.

The formal curriculum will **focus** on **learning**, that is, thinking first of integrated education and later, of teaching methods to facilitate this; a process that is more A-E than traditional E-A. In accordance with the school's vision, students are encouraged to participate in **active learning** in their classes. Flexible groupings will be facilitated and learning opportunities provided outside school hours and premises.

While **teaching methods** used in each school may vary, approaches like cooperative learning, project-based learning or service-learning are of interest. In particular, this last model that is designed to respond to the needs of the community where the school is located, and to optimise the students' learning experience, may be an effective mechanism for achieving a whole education, as students put into practice the knowledge from the curriculum in a real environment and in service to the community, helping to improve their academic performance as well as their civic engagement.

It is a generally accepted idea that knowledge goes beyond curricular areas, although special emphasis is placed on the requisite mastery of instrumental subjects (mathematics and language). In addition to adapting the curriculum to the personal and contextual circumstances of each student, in this type of school population it is particularly important to pay maximum attention to providing conditions for good learning: a safe and organized environment, high expectations and collective responsibility for results obtained, active quality teaching, enriching the curriculum adapted to the context and focused on WCD, encouraging student participation, and prioritising opportunities provided by technologies that stimulate practical learning and motivation for this type of pupil.

In the Portuguese context, these challenges are particularly true and relevant, because national educational policies are based on a paradigm shift that is looking at relations between the curriculum and school autonomy.[23] This new focus on autonomy and flexibility in the curriculum has arisen alongside other educational policy measures. In this context, there is a new legitimacy and a field of action which has been reinforced by legislation. It is no longer a case of (only) promoting a change of "culture" in school organisation, but (also) creating a specific pedagogical and curricular structure which manifests this culture and transforms it into a new educational action.

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[23] On 5 June 2017 Decree 5908/2017 was published authorising execution of "Curricular autonomy and flexibility of primary and secondary teaching." This project, as indicated in the preamble, recognises that "traditionally, instruments of autonomy in schools do not include the main area of school activity, that is, autonomy in curricular development" and therefore it creates a wide margin of curricular autonomy for the schools wishing to adopt the project. In contrast to previous experiences, such as the project for flexible curriculum management in 1999 (provision 4848/97 of the State Secretariat for Education and Innovation) in the 2017 project, a new form of relation between schools and educational administration was noted that "monitors" and "supports" schools, but is authorised to define the project for each school.

WCDL and personal development: motivation, support and assessment

Basic factors underpinning WCDL are the development of all those who are part of the school community and the creation of relations. As mentioned in the section above on vision, WCDL aims to create schools as spaces of freedom and respect that encourage and promote collaboration among teachers, families and community. It is thus a question of considering the needs of teaching and non-teaching staff in each school and finding ways to involve families and to co-operate with the surrounding environment. In addition, WCDL considers it particularly important to **support individuals in their efforts to comply with the programme goals** and to record their progress and achievements, so that there will be **continuous feedback** on how the programme is working, highlighting any problems and noting how to resolve them. The WCDL programme includes the design of some tools and processes for monitoring and obtaining data, and evidence of specific actions carried out using the WCDL approach. As a result, assessment is part of the route map of this leadership programme, with substantive elements that include definition of goals, strategies, expected changes, drawing up criteria and indicators, monitoring processes, compilation of information, reflection, proposed measures and plans for improving the school.

In relation to **teaching staff**, school leaders can have an influence on their motivation, commitment and working conditions at the school and, above all, take on responsibility for **identifying and retaining those with talent for working in this type of context.** It is not just a question of developing the knowledge and skills needed by teachers and other school staff to work with students in **disadvantaged contexts**, but also the attitudes (commitment, capacity and resilience) that help them strive to attain the organisational goals. To ensure this, the leader should provide individualised support and consideration to each person, encouraging intellectual stimulation and acting by example, modelling appropriate values and behaviours. In this regard, it is important to consider that leadership is a social and emotional practice, and not just an intellectual pursuit. In WCDL schools, at the start of the course, workshops and activities will be organised in order to share the vision, establish standards for learning, set goals, distribute tasks and, above all, to ensure that educational practices will provide students with a comprehensive education based on the professional performance of their teachers.

WCDL encourages **professional development of teaching staff** both within the school and outside it, participating as learners in training activities which ought to focus on improving practices in accordance with the goals pursued. Training offered (in terms of methodology, emotional dimension, and context) will help to work with students in disadvantaged contexts. The leadership team should participate in this professional development using structured situations like meetings and training workshops, as well as informal ones, for example, corridor conversations about specific teaching problems. The debate needs to shift from justifications based on students' social and cultural baggage - proper to a culture of deficit – to a focus on pedagogical practices. Exchanging ideas and experiences about what is taught and what is learned will become a normal part of school life. Communicating the results of this experience can be reinforced through actions such as mentoring by senior teachers of recently arrived staff, which can help to mitigate the effects of excessive turnover of teachers in this type of school.

The work relating to **family** needs to overcome the classic approach to participation of parents as a collective. In disadvantaged contexts, priority is given to effective collaboration between families and the school with the common goal of contributing to the academic and personal development of each student, in an atmosphere of dialogue and mutual trust; that is, ensuring parental engagement in order to achieve effective collaboration between families and the school.

In disadvantaged contexts, it is fundamental to **transcend** the often **destructive vision** of the link between the socioeconomic level of parents and their child's school performance. Conversely, the school should be seen as strategic in combating social exclusion, in that it can intervene in creating family-school relations which will help to improve student learning. Furthermore, the beneficial effects of a suitable collaboration between parents and school are not strictly limited to the students, but can also extend to families and the school itself. In this respect, WCDL has a two-pronged approach. On one hand, realistic and flexible action plans should be drawn up in collaboration with the teaching staff, designed to promote relations between the school and the families, and which will endure over time. Furthermore, it will be necessary to fight those factors that hinder parental involvement in the school. Even in disadvantaged contexts, it is important to understand that families are not a homogenous group, but that there are barriers deriving from specific personal and family situations that can have a particular effect on some of these parents. Cooperation programmes should take into account the additional needs of these families, and plan actions to facilitate their participation.

Opening up to the surrounding community and maintaining a positive image of the school are also fundamental. Any gaps in the requirements or needs of a school may be partially resolved by making the most of available resources in the community. Everything around and in the vicinity of the school can be an opportunity for learning. Efforts should be made to forge links and engage with people, groups or organisations in the area to help students in their integrated development.

In short, we are on the verge of an alternative model that instead of being bureaucratic, executive and with a linear vision based on planning, and at times on sterile and static reports and control mechanisms, is based on organizing learning with a shared vision, works in teams to create specific dynamics where members interact, allows professional mobility and, above all, where leadership is based on the transformational design of an educational reality which is seen as a process of ongoing assessment and improvement[24]

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24 Ibidem, Almeida page 2016.

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