Teachers as agents of change: a case study of action research for school improvement in Egypt

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TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF ACTION
RESEARCH FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN EGYPT

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Graduate Thesis Report

Submitted to
Dr. Nagwa Megahed, Thesis Advisor
Abstract

This research focuses on conducting action research in collaboration with teachers in a private, international school in Egypt. It aims at empowering teachers as agents of changes through a process of developing school improvement plan. The research seeks mobilizing teachers and embarks on a case study of participatory action research for school improvement in Egypt, thus not only it contributes to literature in these areas but also represents a pioneering study in the Egyptian context. The researcher works in this school and is also a graduate of it. Thus her relationship with the school community extends over a period of 15 years. This has helped in building rapport between the researcher and the school practitioners. Similar to the researcher, 50% of the school teachers and administrators have been working in the school for over 10 years or are alumni of it. This in turn enabled the school to reserve its culture for decades. Aiming at supporting the school improvement, participatory action research is employed. The purpose of this action research is not only to gain knowledge but also to undertake actions, particularly by involving teachers in the reform process where their ownership of change evolves. The research followed qualitative approach and included emergent design of which regular meetings and focus group discussions were conducted with eleven teachers and surveys with open-ended questions were administrated to 68 teachers in order to assess the school performance and develop its improvement plan. In addition, the researcher used observation and kept a record of field notes. The research reveals the main areas of strength and improvement for the school. It also brought to life many of the

M. Kostandy | 2
concepts pertaining to the literature review such as democracy, reflection, positionality, trust, internal transformation, collaboration and resistance to change. These concepts have further been demonstrated in this research by mobilizing teachers as agents of change and sharing leadership responsibilities for the school improvement.

Key words: Teacher-leader, Action Research, School Improvement
Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... 2

Acknowledgments......................................................................................................... 10

The Heroine’s Journey .................................................................................................. 11

I. Introduction ............................................................................................................... 12

   Research Context ....................................................................................................... 12

      Brief History ........................................................................................................... 13

   Research Background ............................................................................................... 13

      Transformational leadership. .................................................................................. 13

      The ARAS Blended Course and Training Program. .............................................. 14

   Research Purpose ..................................................................................................... 15

   Problem Statement .................................................................................................... 16

   Research Questions ................................................................................................... 17

II. Literature Review .................................................................................................... 18

   Analyzing the literature ............................................................................................ 18

   Teachers as Agents of Change .................................................................................. 18

      Main concepts and definitions. .............................................................................. 19

      Benefits. .................................................................................................................. 19

      Challenges .............................................................................................................. 21

   Action Research ...................................................................................................... 24

      Definition. ............................................................................................................... 24
School Improvement ........................................................................................................ 29
Change. .............................................................................................................................. 29
Change towards what goal? .............................................................................................. 29
Organizational development. .......................................................................................... 30
Accreditation Standards. .................................................................................................. 30
Process of school development. ...................................................................................... 30
School Improvement teams. ............................................................................................. 33
School improvement team life cycle .................................................................................. 34
A successful example from international literature. ......................................................... 34

III. Research Method ........................................................................................................ 35

Data Source and Tools ...................................................................................................... 35

Research Participants ....................................................................................................... 36

The Story of Change Unfolding: Action Research Process ............................................ 37

Seeking the Support of the School Administration............................................................ 37
Mobilizing Teachers as Agents of Change........................................................................ 37
The Launch of the Teachers’ Committee .......................................................................... 37
Teachers Engaging in the School Improvement Survey and the Teachers’ Committee ...... 38
Elections and Measures taken for Objectivity in Choosing Participants ......................... 39
Preparations for the first Teachers’ Committee Meeting ............................................... 40
Upgrading the library, a prototype of change .................................................................. 40

The Journey of Change Continues: Teachers’ Committee Meetings ......................... 41

1. Introductory Meeting ................................................................................................. 41
2. Coming up with Themes ............................................................................................ 42
3. Defining the Problem ................................................................................................. 43
TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

4. Inquiry Based Process to Find Solutions ................................................................. 43
5. Evaluation & Plan of Actions .................................................................................. 44

IV. Findings of the School Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan ...................... 45

Data analysis & Triangulation of data ........................................................................ 45

Themes of Strength ........................................................................................................ 46
Theme 1: Family-Oriented Environment ...................................................................... 46
Theme 2: Political Will is commended ......................................................................... 46

Themes of Improvement ................................................................................................. 47
Theme 1: Discipline ........................................................................................................ 47
Theme 2: Collaboration and Involvement of all stakeholders ...................................... 48
Theme 3: Library and Learning technologies ............................................................... 50
Theme 4: Professional Development ............................................................................ 51
Theme 5: Trips and Activities ....................................................................................... 52

V. Evaluation of the Change Process ............................................................................ 54

A. Teachers’ Reflections after the First Meeting ....................................................... 54
B. Teachers’ Reflections after Sixth Meeting ............................................................... 54
Has change begun? Has the committee been effective in introducing it? ................. 54
What is my role in change? ......................................................................................... 55

C. Researcher’s Reflection ............................................................................................. 55
Challenges .................................................................................................................... 55
Did change truly happen? ......................................................................................... 56
Change in the change agent ....................................................................................... 56

VI. Discussion ................................................................................................................ 58
Emergent Design ........................................................................................................ 58
Shared purpose and organizational development ..................................................... 58
Action Takers ............................................................................................................. 59
Transformation begins in change agents ............................................................... 59
Delegation of Power ................................................................................................. 60
Mobilize teachers’ participation in the change process ........................................... 60
Planner versus searcher mentality ......................................................................... 60
Reflection .................................................................................................................. 61
Generalizability ......................................................................................................... 61
Ethical Commitment ................................................................................................. 61

VII. Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 63

Cycle A ..................................................................................................................... 63
Cycle B ..................................................................................................................... 64
Cycle C ..................................................................................................................... 64
Cycle D ..................................................................................................................... 65

References .............................................................................................................. 66

Appendix I – Applications and Elections Form ....................................................... 71

Application to Join Teachers’ Committee (English Version) .................................... 71
Application to Join Teachers’ Committee (Arabic version) ....................................... 75
Elections Form ......................................................................................................... 78

Appendix II- Agendas ............................................................................................. 79

1-Detailed Agenda for Meeting One ........................................................................ 79
2-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Two ......................................................................... 80
3- Detailed Agenda for Meeting Three ................................................................. 82
4- Detailed Agenda for Meeting Four ................................................................. 83
5- Detailed Agenda for Meeting Five ................................................................. 84
6- Detailed Agenda for Meeting Six ................................................................. 85
7- Detailed Agenda for Meeting Seven ............................................................. 86
8- General Outline for Meetings ......................................................................... 87

Appendix III—Reflection Questions .................................................................. 88
  1- Reflection Questions after First Meeting ..................................................... 88
  2- Reflection Questions after Six Meetings ....................................................... 90

Appendix IV—Emerging Themes from the School Improvement Survey ............ 91

Appendix V—Snapshot of the Action Plan .......................................................... 92
  Goal: Involving all stakeholders ....................................................................... 92
Table of Figures

Figure 1 AdvancED School Improvement Cycle (Source: AdvancED, n.d.) .................. 33

Figure 2 Election Calculation Points............................................................................. 39

Figure 3 Action Research Cycle .................................................................................. 63
Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Nagwa Megahed, the time she has dedicated in helping me with writing and reviewing this thesis is so precious. She continually raises the bar higher for me, and inspires me to go the extra mile. I would also like to thank my readers Dr. Ted Purinton and Dr. Peggy Norman, for their encouraging push, especially at the start. I want to thank my peers in the ARAS course and project for their help in refining my proposal. I want to applaud and thank the Teachers’ Committee members for their time and effort; they are the true heroes of this research. I would have loved to thank each one by name but I do not want to compromise the anonymity of the school. I would also like to thank the school administration for their collaboration. Their enthusiasm was unprecedented. My thanks also go to the head of the Arabic department in our school for helping me with the Arabic translation of surveys of this research. I am indebted to the school librarian for help with proofreading my work and documenting the process. I want to thank my family, friends and colleagues for their endless support. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who is taking the time and interest in reading this piece of research about school reform in Egypt. I know that the narrative presented herein does not resemble the traditional research writing but I think that school improvement is a story, thus it is better to be recounted in this way. I hope you find it of interest and beneficial.
The Heroine’s Journey

Dedicated to the Teachers’ Committee and to Every Teacher Who Dreams of Change

When I was young
In the school bus I would ride
Introspective I was
Just sitting by the window
And living in a dream world…

In my dreams
I imagined myself like power rangers
Though such cartoons were forbidden for me to watch,
Yet I imagined I had magic powers of my own,
Yes a talking watch,
A speaking card,
And a mission
Out to save the world.
On and on
I would live in this imaginary world of mine…

Now years later,
And as the days pass by,
Yet the same bus,
The same school,
The same people,
The same grounds,
And the same dream
With some differences
I dream I am the anointed one,
The heroine,
Out to save the school,
And deliver it to a dreamland
Where magical powers are connotated with technology…

Mary Victor, November 2012

I thought I was the heroine,
but the heroine turned out to be,
everyone in the journey,
who embarked on the,
road to school change.

Mary Victor, May 2013
I. Introduction

School reform involves a process of inquiry-based practice that would enable teachers, administrators and other practitioners to work collaboratively toward improving the quality of teaching and learning and enhancing school performance against defined standards (Megahed, 2008a). This research focuses on teachers as agents of change and examines their involvement in developing school improvement plan by employing action research. It is a case study of an international, private school that represents the context, community and site of the research. The school practitioners including the researcher will embark on participatory action research for developing school improvement plan. The research begins with a description of the research context and a brief history of the school. This is followed by the research background, purpose, problem, and questions. Then, a review of relevant literature is provided, focusing on three themes: teachers as agents of change, action research, and school improvement. The research methodology, data analysis and stages of implementation are then presented and followed by the research findings, discussion of findings and conclusion.

Research Context

This research is conducted at an international, private school, located in an urban area in Cairo, Egypt. The school has a community of 86 teachers, and approximately 600 students. As an alumnus of and currently a teacher at this school, the researcher has therefore been in this school for fifteen years. This has enhanced her understanding of the school community and culture; it has also motivated her to contribute, in collaboration
TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

with her colleagues, to the school improvement, where they belong. Similarly, most of the school teachers and administrators are either alumni of the school (20%) or have been working in it for ten years or more (30%).

Brief History

The school enjoys a long history; it is almost 30 years old. In the 1980s when it started, the school was very distinguished, especially in terms of its location, space and beautiful campus. During the last decade, the school had three systems and at one point its enrollment reached several thousands of students. At present, the school runs one system and is terminating the other which perhaps contributed to a decrease in the enrollment to reach a several hundred students. As a result, the specious school campus is mostly empty. Students, teachers and administrators occupy around one fifth of the school capacity. The school has a lot of potential, especially in terms of human and physical resources that can serve a larger number of students.

Research Background

Transformational leadership. In the summer of 2012, the researcher took a course entitled transformational leadership. During this course, she reflected on her workplace and evaluated where the school is and where she would like it to be. She did this preliminary research as an observer (researcher) and participant (teacher) in the school. She listed from her perspective the needs of the school and areas of improvements, and suggested ways to meet those needs. Yet, she was missing on one important thing; namely multi-perspectives. She works in one department, teaches only
TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

two grades, and is yet a novice teacher. Thus, she cannot speak for all teachers from
different departments with various professional and teaching experiences. Moreover, she
was in no position to make changes.

Time passed, and she shared her ideas for the school improvement with a new
leadership at my school. Surprisingly, the school leaders were ready, open and actually
receptive to those ideas; they furthermore were encouraging of the views of young
professionals. She expressed her interest in pursuing her masters focusing on the school
and its improvement to the school leaders. Their reaction was encouraging, which
motivated her to move forward with the research.

The ARAS Blended Course and Training Program. At the same time in Fall 2012, she
was attending a course entitled Supervised Fieldwork, which prepared her for her
masters’ thesis. The course had many readings and discussions about action research and
school improvement. This further articulated the idea she had and whose conception
happened during this course. Part of the coursework included preparing for and attending
a video conference and a seven-day training program, related to a project entitled Action
Research for Accredited Schools (ARAS). This experience was a first of its kind,
representing a pioneering initiative in Egypt, organized by the Middle East Institute of
Higher Education (MEIHE) at the Graduate School of Education, The American
University in Cairo. It included many partners such as four faculties of education from
different provinces in Egypt. The goal of the course, conference and training program
(also one of the main goals of MEIHE), was to bridge the gap between theory and

M. Kostandy | 14
practice by inviting faculties of education graduate students to pursue their masters’ theses in schools. During this experience, they learned about action research, school improvement and accreditation. The training program also included staff from quality assurance units at the Ministry of Education. One of the main goals of MEIHE is to initiate reform in schools in Egypt by empowering teachers and training them to become agents of change. Changes need not to be mandated at the top level but to be initiated from within, from the true nature and context of the institution, and to be managed with available resources. In this training program, she presented the initial ideas of her proposal which was yet forming; group work with her colleagues from AUC and their feedback, helped to further refine these ideas. She feels she is really lucky to be a part of all this and it is of benefit to the school.

**Research Purpose**

This research intends to incorporate different perspectives, needs, and ideas of teachers for improving their school. In doing so teachers including the researcher would arrive together (by evaluating where they are now, where they want to be and how they can reach it) at a comprehensive school improvement plan that fits and meets the identified needs that is suitable for the school culture and context. In other words, the research employs a participatory action approach to develop a school improvement plan that reflects more accurately what needs to be done; it would thus be rigorously created in order to make it thoroughly applicable and beneficial.
TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

This research also builds upon a previous study conducted by Sayad Abdel Wahed, about the same school. His study presents a baseline for this initiative, since the study findings uncover problems in the school such as the lack of communication channels (Abdel Wahed, 2012). This research, thus, departs from these problems aiming at creating an improvement plan that incorporates the school community’s needs, visions, and strategic actions which in turn would enable the school to tackle these problems and improve its performance.

Problem Statement

The research focuses on mobilizing teachers to actively engage in a school reform process. Usually, school reform or change is initiated by the school leadership, more accurately the school principal, a top down process and a one-person show. Among the main objectives of this research are to involve teachers in school improvement and increase their sense of belongingness as well as their ownership of reform. Typically when a problem arises at workplace, individuals escalate the matter to higher authority and depend on hierarchy to solve it while with action research professionals learn to tackle the problem, reflect and make changes when possible.

Solving a problem per say is not the sole objective as much as learning the tools and recognizing the capacities that teacher professionals have to solve the problems, seek change in a positive, optimistic manner, and believe that the solutions are not out of reach but lie within them. When teachers choose to tackle a problem (or set of problems) the bigger gain would be empowering the teachers and tapping on their rich treasure of
human resources. In the context of this research, the researcher and teachers will be working collaboratively, putting the pieces of the puzzle together, drawing on each others’ professional experience and eventually building a professional community that chooses to confront problems and seek improvement. Thus, four main questions are addressed in this research:

**Research Questions**

a) What are the steps undertaken to mobilize teachers and their active participation in conducting school self-assessment?

b) What is the proposed plan for school improvement?

c) How do teachers perceive the change undertaken and their role as change agents in the school? And how do they perceive the impact of this experience on the school?

d) What are the common trends between this Egyptian case and the literature of action research, school improvement and teachers as agent of change?
II. Literature Review

This research seeks mobilizing teachers as agents of change and embarking on a case study of participatory action research for school improvement in Egypt, thus not only it contributes to literature in these areas but also represents a pioneering study in the Egyptian context.

Analyzing the literature

To analyze the literature, firstly literature for action research in education was reviewed. Recommended readings by the ARAS training program and readings from supervised fieldwork course were main repositories. Relevant articles were selected, then the main items relevant to the topic were highlighted. Those highlights were then exported into a word document and were categorized into main themes. A concept map was then drawn on the online tool “webinspiration pro” which aided visualization of the data. This online tool helped in organizing and structuring the literature. The concept map was then exported to outline format. This outline formed the basis for the following literature review. The Literature review focuses on three main themes: (a) Teachers as Agents of Change; (b) Action Research; (c) School improvement and accreditation standards.

Teachers as Agents of Change

Change is not "the sole responsibility of the principal or the administration team but all stakeholders should be involved (AdvancED, n.d.). They are called agents of change for they partake in the responsibility for managing change (Ismaiel, 2008).
Main concepts and definitions. Teacher leaders are defined as those who lead within a classroom and beyond (Muijs & Harris, 2007). The teacher can lead formally or informally. Formal leadership roles include management responsibilities, such as heads of departments, units or grade levels. Informal leadership roles are such as leading a team or an action research group (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Teacher leadership is close to “distributive leadership” though it is narrower as it focuses on teaching staff assuming leadership roles. Distributed leadership on the other hand can encompass many formal roles although the underlying theoretical concepts are the same, which stress collaboration and shared responsibilities (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Other relevant concepts include “shared leadership” (Bell, Thacker, & Schargel, 2011).

Teacher leaders can meet for a variety of reasons such as serving on the advisory board council where they share information with the community by issuing newsletters. They could help in decision-making or they could collaborate for instructional and academic purposes and for professional development (Du, 2007). There are also different kind of tasks that they could be doing such as problem solving, discussion and accomplishing tasks (Du, 2007).

Benefits. There are many approaches for leadership among which are top-down and bottom-up approaches. With the top-down approach, changes are mandated from above, teachers tend to become critical and distance themselves from the process (Eilks & Markic, 2011). They may try to implement external mandates but they are discouraged to take initiatives based on the felt needs for reform (Crosswell & Elliott, 2003). This in
turn is reflected on the teacher’s commitment, which is crucial for the success of any reform agenda (Crosswell & Elliott, 2003). It further affects teacher’s willingness to actively engage in the reform (Dick, 1993). To increase teachers’ commitment and hence their action, they need to be included in the decision making process (Dick, 1993). Kurt Lewin believed that democracy in the workplace increases motivation as workers take ownership of ideas, which in turn increases productivity (Hendricks, 2009). When teachers are given equal rights, share in decision-making power, and are encouraged to pursue their own initiatives and innovations, they are more determined to change their teaching practices and their school (Eilks & Markic, 2011; Megahed, 2008b). These may also decrease their resistance to mandates that they had at one point declined (Anderson, 2000). Democracy and participation also has an effect on reducing alienation and isolation of teachers from the reform process (Du, 2009).

Democracy results in building the support of staff. It can take the form of inclusion in the research and development phase of reform (“Public Schools”, 2009). It also results in building shared vision, shared goals and shared responsibilities when teachers are consulted and involved in a variety of issues (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Such collaboration and involvement, especially towards the task of school improvement planning, produces multi-perspectives in problem solving (Du, 2009), thus it is recommended as best practice by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (“Public Schools”, 2009).
The idea of distributed leadership implies many aspects. First, it is a flattening and blurring of what once was a hierarchical structure. Second, it is a division of labor as more tasks are delegated to the school personnel. Third, it opens path for teachers to becomes leaders at different times (Muijs & Harris, 2007), which in turn also affects their professional development. With distributed leadership, teachers learn many skills such as leading, collaborating, teaching adults, action researching (Muijs & Harris, 2007). It also promotes their habits of self reflection habits and their abilities to make decision (Eilks & Markic, 2011). On the individual level, it would increase the teacher’s confidence in one’s self and in his/her ability to solve problems (Ismaiel, 2008). It also gives rise to their self image, especially as agents of change (Price & Valli, 2005).

**Challenges.** There are many challenges that confront the underlying concepts of teachers as agents of change. The most obvious is the tension between resistance and support of change (Whitaker, 2010). Support can be enhanced by developing a common ground and understanding among teachers and the school leaders about the purpose and benefits of a proposed change; in doing so teachers tend to be more supportive (Burgess, 2006). There is also the question of trust. Trust between school leaders and teachers is crucial in the change process. Trust is earned and without it teachers tend to do the minimal efforts required from them. They are lacking the motivation to get involved in school improvement efforts or initiatives (Williams, Brien, Sprague, & Sullivan, 2008).

On the other hand, teacher leadership grows in a collaborative culture (Muijs & Harris, 2007). This requires administrative support to be put in place (Du, 2009) although some leaders find it hard to nourish such a culture as they tend to fear losing control.
(Datnow & Castellano, 2001). Teacher’s ability to influence people and develop relations with school management is one factor that can speed the change process (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Another important issue that supports action research is “positionality.” Positionality can be explained by questioning: Who is the researcher, what is his/her role in school, and what is his/her relationship to the institution. This is exemplified in a study on pre-service teachers as agents of change (Burgess, 2006). The study presented two contradictory cases of Toni and Vanessa who both conducted research in the school where they work though Toni had received support but Vanessa lacked it. Toni was a member of the school improvement team for sometime, a leader in the parent association and thus established his credibility and acquired the full support of the principal and the team. On the other hand, Vanessa was a new teacher. The principal viewed her as a threat to her own position as she could criticize school practice, thus the school was not supportive to her measure to take students from classes for intervention. No matter what expertise or passion she had positionality and context counts (Burgess, 2006). In other words, she was not in a ‘legitimate’ position to be a change agent. Wide-base support and approval of the critical mass is one of the core factors for change (Burgess, 2006). This is especially the case because school change is a collaborative initiative that needs to work with others to have a school wide influence. Partnership between an outside researcher and practitioners can take months or even years to form in order to establish trust (Howes, 2001).
For novice teachers it might be harder than senior ones to become agents of change and build trust. This is not only because novice teachers may struggle with establishing partnership and initiating dialog but also because they themselves might lack the confidence needed to pursue such leadership role. They do not think of themselves as agents of change (Burgess, 2006).

One of the most common factors is devoting the needed time or lacking it (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Finding adequate time for teachers to work extra hours is hard to afford, especially if their contribution is on voluntary basis (Calhoun, 2002). This is usually perceived by teachers as an extra burden (Du, 2009).

Power relations are also instrumental in shaping the change agency (Burgess, 2006). Interestingly, a case study in Australia demonstrated how distributed leadership can be undertaken by a new head teacher (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Though the notion of singular leadership is now greatly questioned it is still dominant in literature of leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Trust, support, power relations, and positionality are not the only factors affecting the success of change agency. However, how these aspects evolved is very important. A carefully planned and designed process of change is deemed to bring success (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Moreover, group dynamics play an important role in the process of change (Sankaran, Hase, Dick, & Davies, 2007). Aspects such as achievement, good communication, harmony, in the group are vital for its success (Du, 2009). A group identity takes time to form and each person in the group adds to the culture which in turn

M. Kostandy | 23
TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

affects performance (Du, 2007). Finally, the group leader significantly affects the group dynamics, especially in terms of socio-emotional intelligence more than instructional qualifications (Du, 2007).

Action Research

**Definition.** Action research, a term coined by Kurt Lewin, means linking theory to practice and problem solving in a cyclic manner. It is characterized by being participatory, democratic and practical (Burgess, 2006). Action research is more common in the field of education than many other fields. It depends on authentic participation and worthy action (Dick, 1993).

Action research is about sharing power with those who are less privileged (which in this case study are teachers) and giving voice to their decisions making (Zaalouk, 2012). It is about giving power and capability to professionals, involving them in transformation and enabling them to make change. Unlike the convention of raising problems up and the hierarchy of which leaders solve the problems, action research is an inquiry-based process for taking positive actions in order to tackle problems and make change. As Paulo Ferrari believed, professionals should study their own problems and they are not powerless but rather powered to make change (Zaalouk, 2012). Moreover, Dewey thought that practitioners should themselves be researchers (Hendricks, 2009). In that Action research is about “union of researchers and action takers”; its ultimate goal is having everyone involved in the improvement cycle with the intent of maximizing performance (Hendricks, 2009). Stenhouse believed that teachers and academics need to
work hand in hand to produce meaningful research (Hendricks, 2009). In his article, entitled *You want to do an action research thesis?*, Bob Dick considers action research to be a "partnership" between the researcher and practitioners (Dick, 1993). There is a gap between theory and practice; action research helps to bridge that gap (Diana, 2011). Thus, there is a need for bringing back educational research to the realm of practitioner's world (Stenhouse, cited in Hendricks, 2009).

Action research is based on the notion that people have the answers of their problems, they only need to inquire about these problems. It respects the professional community’s contribution to knowledge and the expertise of practitioners and their abilities to produce relevant knowledge (Zaalouk, 2012). Action research can be described as a positive dialog or an open discussion with the goal or intent of solving a certain problem and arriving at the best win-win solution to the issue under discussion (Zaalouk, 2012). Yet, it is not only an external dialog with others but an internal dialogue with oneself, which may occur naturally. As stated by Sankaran, Hase, Dick, and Davies (2007), "action research seems … to approximate what we do as humans most days of our lives from cradle to grave. We experiment with the world, we gather information and experiment some more. We even pass our findings on to others and, if the receivers of this wisdom have any sense, they check it against their own reality” (Sankaran, Hase, Dick, & Davies, 2007, p. 296). Many have reported after they learned more about action research that they already do that as part of their daily life or routine (Dick, 1993). For example, a reflective teacher can have an ongoing internal dialog by which he/she would learn from his/her mistakes and reflect upon his/her teaching practices. It may not
be systematic, evidence-based or collaborative but reflection forms the basis of action research (Zaalouk, 2012). Kurt Lewin illustrated action research as a spiral process with the practitioners continually looking back, inquiring and reflecting upon their practice (Hendricks, 2009). Lawrence Stenhouse also believed in the importance of teacher reflection, he inspired the “successful teacher-as-researcher movement” in the UK in the 70's and 80’s (Hendricks, 2009).

Since action research is a mechanism for fostering reflective practice (Price & Valli, 2005) and is concerned with practitioners’ problems, consequently the research topic arises from within the workplace setting and is directed towards it. The identification of the research topic itself is not based on the researcher’s interest but on its relevancy and importance to practitioners. Therefore, action research has the potentials not only to enrich the repertoire of educational research but more importantly to benefit educational practitioners and improve their institutions (Ismaiel, 2008).

Seeing that action research is all about practitioners, thus with them it evolves. An action researcher does not enter with a clear agenda or a set of goals but the topic and nature of the study continually evolves. The researcher and practitioners work together and identify and select the issue of interest; then together they define it and study the problem with its various aspects and complexities. Thus, a searcher mentality versus a planner mentality is needed. A planner has his own agendas and maybe even a reform program ready to deliver and wants to implement it. S/He believes to have all the right answers for a previously identified problem. On the contrary, the searcher listens,
understands, takes the desires and needs of the practitioners into consideration; together they select and identify a problem and thus the approach is more tailored to the place (Razfar, 2011; Zaalouk, 2012). Hence, the collectively defined research problem drives the methodology not the other way around (Sankaran, Hase, Dick, & Davies, 2007).

Arriving at a very clear research plan and question is a process of iteration and constant refinement (Dick, 1993). One researcher even claims to have arrived at the research question at the end of her research after she had answered it (Mohr & MacLean, 1987). Unlike other type of research which starts with a very definitive research problem and tries to address this problem with precision, action research looks hazy in the beginning because action researcher need to consider the needs of research participants. Yet, the deeper one searches, the greater vision and clarity s/he would achieve (Dick, 1993).

The emergent nature of the research plan in action research does not contradict ensuring that it is pragmatic and evidence based. It is pragmatic as it involves a continuous cycle of examination and evaluation (Sankaran, Hase, Dick, & Davies, 2007). It is evidence based because it depends on qualitative (and sometimes quantitative) research methods in data collection such as documents, surveys, interviews, or observations. Validity of data is tested such as triangulation of data from various sources and data analysis methods (Megahed, 2012).

Action research requires that the researcher to be creative, responsible and flexible. With action research, the demands are contextualized, thus the researcher needs
to be responsive to the changing demands and flexible enough to adapt plans as needed to fit the changing context. This requires creativity and originality (Dick, 1993).

Due to how contextualized action research could be, it would in many cases be hard to generalize its findings. This is considered as one of the drawbacks attributed to action research. However, because action research is an inquiry-based and systemic process it may benefit others in similar contexts, at least learning from the experience, its lessons and implications (Dick, 1993).

Action research is a process of continuing learning by doing (Sankaran, Hase, Dick, & Davies, 2007). Among its ethical commitments, with action research the researcher need to be committed to continue the research cycle until the evaluation phase has been conducted (Zaalouk, 2012). Not only are action researchers committed to continue the process cycle till the evaluation phase, but action researchers genuinely share the responsibility for the resulted change and output (Ismaiel, 2008). As Bob Dick puts it “you take responsibilities for change as well as for the research!”(Dick, 1993).

There is an element of risk in solving problems (Ismaiel, 2008). Action researchers don't stand and observe problems but they actively get involved in solving these problems, sometimes at their own risks. Action is what this type of research is about. There is maybe fear of change, but with action change evolves and with change learning occurs (Ismaiel, 2008).
School Improvement

**Change.** Change is described as a constant and improvement is seen as a journey (Williamson & Blackburn, 2011). We may do the same thing, over and over again, but we may not get the same results. That’s when we know that our “cheese has gone old,” or “has even depleted,” says Johnson Spencer in his famous book *Who moved my cheese*?. In his book, Spencer tells a fable about two miniature people who live in a maze. In their journey, they have discovered a safe place with a huge amount of cheese (connoted with happiness and success). Yet, this huge amount of cheese by time was depleted by two rats. The characters were not aware of what was happening. They didn’t monitor their success but rather they took it for granted. Spencer recounts the story to say that what does not develop decays because everything else changes. In other words, if we do not keep up with and monitor changes, we will go backwards. If things are not working now then we may need change (Johnson, 1998). Change is a positive, intentional and planned process (Ismaiel, 2008).

**Change towards what goal?** Change can either be mandated from above or arising from within at the bottom. Accreditation standards and criteria are examples for mandated-from-above change while administrators, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders’ efforts are examples for change that arises from within. School improvement does not happen with a quick fix. It is an ongoing process that needs all teachers on board, especially in decision making (Anderson, 2000). It also requires principal support (Williams, Brien, Sprague, & Sullivan, 2008). Shared leadership is
important as it provides opportunities for teachers to lead school improvement (Williams, Brien, Sprague, & Sullivan, 2008).

**Organizational development.** This refers to a long term plan to develop a whole organization with the purpose of or intent to improving performance and renovating its practices. This demands collaboration among various stakeholders in the organization and continuous self-reflection (Ismaiel, 2008). Stages of organizational development include: 1) Evaluating the need for change, 2) Designing a plan for change, 3) Training those involved in change, 4) Helping others in adapting to change, 5) Working with resistors of change (Ismaiel, 2008). There are many factors that are critical for organizational development such as the culture of the school, capacity building and professional development (Williams, Brien, Sprague, & Sullivan, 2008). Professional development however is not a one shot course but a daily commitment to a collaborative community of learners (“Public Schools”, 2009).

**Accreditation Standards.** The site of this research is an international school, thus follows international accreditation standards, namely the AdvancED. The AdvancED offers resources about school improvement, school improvement cycle and standards and template plans, which are accessible via its website. It also has surveys for stakeholders.

**Process of school development.** Action research has its own cycle which consists of four stages: Plan, Act, Observe, and reflect. There are many school improvement processes that model the same cycle of action research with some differences. For
example, there is the 6-Step process mentioned in the Oak Park School Improvement Team Handbook, as follows (Collins, 2009, p. 11):

1. Choose topics to focus on
2. Narrow topics to areas around to board goals
3. Research background and supportive data
4. Develop and refine strategies for implementation
5. Implement Strategies and activities including evaluation measure to achieve strategic plan and board goals
6. Review measuring the effectiveness of strategies and revising them as needed.

The 6-step process starts with the goals, and does extensive research before it acts. In comparison with action research cycle, the planning phase in action research is minimal. While the 6-Step process seems to take as a starting point the district goals, the action research cycle is intended to start with practitioner identification of the problems or issues of their concern.

There is also the model suggested by the Michigan Department of Education which consists of four stages namely (MDE, n.d.):

Gather - Collect Data and Build School Profile
Study - Analyze Data, Set Goals and Objectives
Plan - Develop an Improvement Plan

Do - Implement, Monitor, and Evaluate this Plan

When comparing the MDE model to the 6-step model similarities appear in that the two models include similar steps, except that the MDE model synthesizes steps one and two together and step three and six together.

A third model named PDCA (Plan Do Check Act) is very similar to the action research (AR) cycle, it has the following steps:

Plan-Data Analysis

Do-Implement solution

Study/Check- Understand results and impact

Act - make adjustments

As it can be noted, in AR ‘act’ means implement, in PDCA ‘act’ refers to revise or evaluate and make adjustments. Other than the naming difference, this model is the closest to the AR cycle.

Finally, the AdvancED school improvement cycle which the school of this case study is required to follow, is described in the following figure (AdvancED, n.d.).
Comparison to the AR Cycle and/or previous models. All models are relatively similar. The advancED model is most similar to MDE process. It demonstrates the process in a cycle to emphasize continuous improvement. Clearly, the AdvancEd model fits the action research cycle employed in this case study with slight adaptation.

School Improvement teams. All those plans and processes explained above need teams to be developed and put into action. A school improvement team brainstorms, selects problems, and creates strategies and activities that should be aligned with district goals (Collins, 2009).

A school improvement team should be heterogeneous so that it would represent different perspectives. For example, it should be composed of male and female members who teach different ages and different subjects. Selection of members can be by consensus or elections or whatever favorable method to the school (Collins, 2009). School Improvement teams may include parents, students, staff and community members or representatives to all stakeholders (“Public Schools”, 2009). It is important for school
improvement teams to have a manual by which they abide. This manual would state the rules and procedures of meetings, member selections, rules for meetings etc. (“Public Schools”, 2009).

**School improvement team life cycle.** The calendar of the school improvement teams can begin in the spring semester and follow onto the next fall (Collins, 2009). This works well with the academic calendar, because in the fall, the start of the academic year, the school is busy with so many other things. Once the academic year begins to roll, the faculty would be in a better schedule to get involved in electing members of the school improvement team and develop its agendas. Members’ burdens should be lighted. Schools can release substitute teachers to enable participation in meetings (“Public Schools”, 2009).

**A successful example from international literature.** A Quality of Education for All (IQEA) is a very successful initiative in the United Kingdom about creating school improvement teams, called School Improvement Groups (SIGs). The SIGs collaborate to understand school culture and problems, prioritize problems and select issues to make changes (“Public Schools”, 2009).
III. Research Method

This research follows qualitative research approach and employs triangulation method, including focus group discussion, document analysis, and survey with open-ended questions (Patton, 2002).

Data Source and Tools

Surveys:

1. Teachers school self-assessment and improvement survey (application questions) (75% return rate, 68 out of 86)
2. Teachers’ Committee Reflection survey on First Meeting (100 % return rate, a total of 11 surveys)
3. Teachers’ Committee Reflection survey after Sixth Meeting (70 % return rate, 8 out of 11)

Document analysis:

1. School improvement plans for the years 2005-2006 and 2011-2012
2. Recommendations (required action by the accreditation board)
3. Teacher profiles

Meeting minutes:

Teachers’ Committee Meeting Minutes
Other:

1. Participant Observations
2. Informal Interviews

During the course of conducting this case study, the researcher played the role of school improvement advisor, carrying the voice of teachers to the school administrators. The main mission focused on mobilizing teachers and creating an improvement plan for the school that takes into account the multi-perspectives of teachers and students. To accomplish this mission several stages have been undertaken as presented in the following section.

Research Participants

Teachers participated in this research included a total of eleven. They joined the Teachers’ Committee for school improvement. Those members represented various departments including Physical Education, Arts & Computer, Math, Science, Arabic, Elementary and Middle school English, High school English, Kindergarten, French and Electives, a member from the discipline committee and a meeting minutes person. They also represent various age groups, some have been in the school for over 20 years, and others are novice teachers. This group of teachers was elected by their departments to represent them in the teachers’ committee. The members responded to the school self-assessment survey & two reflection surveys. In addition, there were a total of 68 Teachers who responded to the school self-assessment survey and more than 5 participated in informal interviews.

M. Kostandy | 36
The Story of Change Unfolding: Action Research Process

Though the idea of this research emerged inside a university class and training, the research itself came to life inside the school setting where the process of change has been unfolding. This section presents the process of gaining support of school administrators, mobilizing agents of change, elections and preparations for the meetings.

Seeking the Support of the School Administration

14th October 2012. A meeting was held with the school principal to explain the needs of school improvement plan and propose a bottom-up approach to engaging teachers in developing it. The principal was very encouraging, especially when it came to collaboration between teachers and the administration. Meeting followed with the administration to develop the initiative further and agree upon the details. Then the administration had a meeting with the head of the school departments (on Monday January 28th 2013) to gain their support on the initiative and prepare them for the launch of the teachers’ committee the following week.

Mobilizing Teachers as Agents of Change

The Launch of the Teachers’ Committee

3rd February 2013. The first day in term three was selected to launch the Teachers’ committee. The school owners celebrated the event by inviting the teachers to brunch and giving an introductory forward to declare their support.
Next, the researcher gave a presentation about the Teachers’ Committee, in it the following items were covered:

- Positionality of the researcher to school
- How the idea of the research developed
- What Action Research is
- Benefits of the research
- How the teachers can participate in it

The presentation explained how the researcher embarked on creating a school improvement plan and that it was missing on teachers’ perspective and how this research aims at including teachers’ perspectives through the committee meetings, interviews and teacher surveys. It invited the teachers to participate by electing themselves in the teachers’ committee as representatives of their own departments. It also encouraged everyone to be proactive in voicing out their opinions regarding school improvement.

**Teachers Engaging in the School Improvement Survey and the Teachers’ Committee**

After the presentation mentioned above, school self-assessment and improvement survey were distributed to all teachers. Teachers who are interested to join the teachers’ committee for school improvement were asked to write their names on those surveys. Their responses acted as their agenda in the elections (Appendix I application survey).
25% of teachers applied for joining the committee. Teachers were willing to be involved even if they did not apply for membership. Teachers after the meeting shared with the researcher ideas for change and improvement. The researcher kept a log of most interviews.

**Elections and Measures taken for Objectivity in Choosing Participants**

![Election Calculation Points](image)

*Figure 2 Election Calculation Points*

4\(^{th}\) February 2013. The next day after the presentation elections were held in each department between the candidates. The election process was two folded. The first round was based on the candidates’ responses to the school improvement survey in the application (Appendix I). The survey included questions about their vision for school, their mission, ideas for school improvement and what they like about the school. The responses of the candidates were coded unto the computer and their names were removed to conceal their identity. Their responses were distributed on the departments and each teacher had to rate the responses for each candidate out of five. In the second round of the elections, the teachers were told the names of the candidates and were asked to write the names of three candidates in order of preference. They were also given preferred criteria for the representative (Appendix I). The first preference took five points, the second took
three and the third took one point. The points from the first and second rounds of the elections were added to each candidate. Those extra measures were taken because the representatives of the departments acted as the main sample of this research. Thus the researcher wanted to ensure impartiality on part of the teachers in selecting representatives, that it would not be based solely on personal preference but also on merit. The application questions thus acted as the candidates’ anonymous election agenda. This was also meant to help the teachers make an informed decision about the candidates.

**Preparations for the first Teachers’ Committee Meeting**

4th to 17th February 2013. Prior to the meeting a personalized and typed letter was sent to each candidate to congratulate them and inform them of the time and place of the first meeting. Other preparations for the meeting entailed buying a flip chart, chocolate treats and notebooks from the administration as well as upgrading the library.

**Upgrading the library, a prototype of change**

7th February 2013. The Librarian and the researcher went shopping for books to upgrade the library. More than 180 new books tailored to students’ preference were bought. New curtains, plants, and comfortable chairs were also placed. Upgrading the library was such an important action for the committee because the library is where meeting would be held. Changes in the library represented a proof that change is possible and has already begun. For there was so much doubt and disbelief amongst some teachers that anything will actually change (Informal Interviews).
The Journey of Change Continues: Teachers’ Committee Meetings

The teachers’ committee held eight meetings. The purposes of these meetings were to:

- Gather data from the departments
- Select a problem
- Discuss the issue at hand
- Research possible solutions or alternatives
- Present findings
- Reach a final consensus
- Reflect on initiative

Thus the meetings were held as follows:

1. **Introductory Meeting**

   *17<sup>th</sup> February 2013.* The meeting was attended by representative teachers from each department and the school administration and owners. The principal started the meeting out of supportive intention. The opening remarks by the principal emphasized that the main objective of the committee is to bring together and closer all stakeholders, teachers, and administrators alike as one family. After reviewing the meeting agenda, the researcher provided a short presentation about the phases of school improvement (namely realizing the resources at hand-phase 1; developing the workings of the school-phase 2; excelling and beyond-phase 3). This opened the discussion about the purpose of schooling among the committee members.
The committee then agreed on their tasks before the next meeting, which included two tasks:

- To collect from their respective departments their responses regarding the following questions: 1) what are the resources needed to enable them to fulfill their job? 2) what are the topics that they wish the committee discuss in its next meetings?
- To fill out a reflection form which was distributed in the first meeting (handout can be found in Appendix III). Each committee member took a secret number to conceal their identity in the reflections.

2. **Coming up with Themes**

24th February & 3rd March 2013. The committee started the meeting by sharing what the rules or expectations that should be set for the committee. Teachers agreed that the rules are punctuality, positivity, good listening, doing assigned tasks and objectivity. Then teachers started sharing the responses they received from their departments in relation to their first assigned task. Time was not enough (45 minutes) for all ten teachers to share and discuss their findings, thus two sub meeting were scheduled. Everything discussed was recorded on the flip chart as well as in the meeting minutes. The findings of this process were presented to the school principal and administrators who were eager to hear about it.
3. Defining the Problem

10th March 2013. The school administrators and owners started this meeting with a word about the resources that teachers have asked for. They explained what can be done shortly and what have to be postponed to the summer. The teachers then had votes on which problems the teachers’ committee would like to focus on in the coming meetings. Then the problems were prioritized according to the committee’s votes, followed by a discussion of the first identified problem, its aspects and its causes. The meeting was concluded by the committee’s agreement on undertaking the following tasks prior to the next meeting:

- Think about what can the committee do to tackle this problem? And ask colleagues (each in his/her respective department) about what can be done regarding such problem?
- Search what have been done by other schools (in similar culture and context) to address this problem. Review relevant literature and research that examine such problem.

4. Inquiry Based Process to Find Solutions

17th & 24th March 2013. In this meeting, the committee discussed teachers’ responses to the question regarding what can be done to address the identified problem such discussion extended to the next meeting. The committee continued the discussion of the first problem and decided to design a survey for teachers to fill out in order to reach consensus on the proposed solutions to tackle the problem.
5. Evaluation & Plan of Actions

21st April 2013. The committee agreed to develop a motto united for school improvement. They reflected on the meetings thus far and the plan till end of the year. They also added laws to the constitution that should sustain the committee beyond the scope of the project. Such laws include when should the elections be and membership term for each member. They were asked to elect from among them a vice president who can share in chairing the committee meetings. Yet, they thought this was an early stage and more time is needed to develop leadership capacities within them before a VP leads. The committee also discussed extensively the need for an action plan to turn into action what has been discussed, and the importance of division of roles and responsibilities, adding a timeline and budget.
IV. Findings of the School Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan

For the first time in the history of the school, teachers not only have engaged in conducting the school self-assessment and creating the school improvement plan but also played a part in implementing it. The implementation stage though is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Data analysis & Triangulation of data

Survey about school improvement from 68 teachers was firstly analyzed by grouping answers to each question from all respondents. Those answers were categorized by theme. Then answers to all four questions were combined in a single document under different themes yet the answers were highlighted with a color corresponding to the question number. The outline formed the basis of the main issues to discuss about the school (Appendix IV).

Triangulation of data was made to the survey responses by combining them with meeting minutes along school documents, and other observations or informal interviews. If a theme appeared three times from different data sources it was labeled as a major theme. Hence based on the analysis of the findings, the school self-assessment revealed a total of seven major themes, two for the school strengths and five for its areas for improvement.
Themes of Strength

In their response to the survey of this research, teachers identified two main areas which they admire about the school, these include:

Theme 1: Family-Oriented Environment

The school environment is one of the best aspects about the school; it is the reason that many teachers are dedicated to the school. Out of 68 respondents, 41 (60%) confirmed that what they like about the school is the environment. The most common words that are used by those teachers to describe the school environment are “home” (6 times), “family” (6 times), “friendly” (8 times), “love” (13 times), and “loyal & loyalty” (4 times). Examples of these teachers’ perception include:

“I like that even though I’m no longer a student here; it still feels like home to me” (School Alumni and Teacher). Another teacher who has been in the school for decades asserted: “I love the school with everything in it; its building, its teachers, students, the warm familial atmosphere that embraces the place. I cannot imagine myself leaving it one day”

Theme 2: Political Will is commended

Teachers expressed their excitement to see the administration taking steps towards improving the school. This is ranked as the second best aspect in the survey findings. Out of 68 respondents, 20 (30%) believed that the administration is taking steps towards improvement and commended that. The keywords that best describe these perception are:
“change” (8 times), “improve” (4 times) “challenging” (3 times), “best & better” (4 times), and “seeking & willing” (4 times). Examples include:

“I really like the fact that the school is eager to change and wants the best for its staff and the students.”

“They are willing to change and respect the teacher’s opinions and motivate them to be more creative.”

“Endless desire and appetite to update the challenge and compete.”

“That the administration is participating in solving problems that we face.”

Yet, those responses were captured after the launch of the teachers’ committee where the enthusiasm was at its peak (with some doubts of course not just regarding the teachers’ committee but the whole initiative). Thus, a reflective survey was conducted with the teachers’ committee in order to reveal if those attitudes remained the same or changed by time.

**Themes of Improvement**

As mentioned earlier there are five major themes, which were identified by the triangulation of data.

**Theme 1: Discipline**

This is perceived by the administration as the most important theme. They go on to say, if this is solved, all other strings will be solved. Even though it was not one of the
required actions by the accreditation process of AdvancED, teachers’ committee took it as top priority. They actually put it as number one topic they wish to discuss before even staff benefits or personal. Moreover student council mentioned it!

In the teachers’ surveys the keyword “discipline” comes up at least 13 times, the words “rules” & “regulations” come up 10 times, “firm” & “firmly” 5 times, and the word “behavior” 3 times.

There were at least 33 times that the teachers mentioned the topic “discipline” in the teachers’ surveys. Observations confirm the same.

**Theme 2: Collaboration and Involvement of all stakeholders**

Stakeholders’ involvement is one of the required actions by the accreditation. It was also one of the topics discussed in the teachers’ committee meeting minutes. From the teachers’ perspective, stakeholders include not only parents, teachers, students, admin, but also custodian and supportive staff. The issue of “collaboration” or “involving stakeholders” was mentioned 31 times in the teacher survey. Other words include: “involving” (7 times) “communication & connection” (5 times), “team and teamwork” (6 times), “hear, heard and listen” (5 times).

The following quotes represent examples of this perception:

“The things I dreamt about are actually in progress: students committee as well as teachers’ committee. If developed, that sense of belonging among us will be unbeatable”

M. Kostandy | 48
Another respondent commended the “Unity between administration and teachers to reach better results with students”

**Actions taken**

It is very true that this pre-mentioned atmosphere along with steps from the administration towards improvement already paves the way for working on the area of collaboration, which exists to some extent but was not yet formalized in bodies. Thus the formation of the teachers’ committee and the reformation of student council are two steps in involving the students and teachers.

**Next Steps**

Parents are still missing (in a formal and systemized way) it is hoped by updating the web communication medium that the teachers will be better able to follow up on each other and the parents maybe be more involved electronically.

The web communication medium in itself is one of the required actions for the school accreditation, and was mentioned in the meeting minutes of the teachers’ committee as an essential requirement.

Custodian, supportive staff, guards, the doctor, and technicians constitute the bigger circle of school community and the next step is to include their perspective in the collaborative vision and approach towards school improvement.
Theme 3: Library and Learning technologies

There is work needed in updating the library and learning technologies. This is confirmed by the required action for the school accreditation, the survey findings, observation of students coming to enter the library and not finding enough suitable books to read (especially younger ones). Also there was very little borrowing rate from higher grades.

Actions Taken

At the time of this writing, some progress has already taken place.

- A librarian has been put into place. A wonderful and warm librarian has been chosen for the task of taking care of the library with excellent capacity and organization skills and love for books and readings.
- 180 new books have been purchased.
- Curtains have been bought
- Comfortable chairs have been provided
- Plants have been placed.
- Activities: writing competitions for younger students and puzzles for older ones
  Puzzles include 260 pieces, 500 pieces, 750 pieces and 3d globes

The change was noticeable by many students. For many a student now (especially from high school) find the library now one of the most comfortable places (Informal Interviews). The addition of comfortable chairs instantly attracted many high school students who rarely ever go to the library. One high school student repeatedly comments:

M. Kostandy | 50
“This is now one of my favorite places at school. It is so quiet and cozy!” The borrowing rate increased for most grades significantly, and the puzzles and new books attracted many a high school student.

A technology plan has been created on upgrading media technologies including details on upgrading the computer labs and departments, upgrading wi-fi access in the building, and buying new printers.

Next steps

The next steps for this aspect include, follow-up on the plans concerning the technology plan as well as supply the library with more books (especially teachers’ resources).

Theme 4: Professional Development

This is confirmed by the survey findings (it was mentioned at least ten times), the teachers’ committee meeting minutes and a recommendation for the school put forward by the accreditation board. This is also confirmed by observation of how teachers were eager and willing to participate in conference opportunities that were provided to them, senior and junior teachers alike. They were very thirsty for it.

Keywords include: “demos, workshops & training” (6 times), “education” (4 times), “certified” (2 times), and “courses” (5 times). Examples of teacher quotes include:
“I hope to take courses in how to deal with students, understand them more and what goes inside them to be able to better know how to deal with them in a loving manner and a merry heart.”

“Among the school, demos are not sufficient. Thus, we need more relevant workshops, training courses to the field being dealt with in different subjects, and professional certified teachers as seniors and supervisors who are open to different mentalities and experiences among teachers.”

**Actions taken**

- 15 Teachers attended the STEAM conference—organized by the Graduate School of Education at the American University in Cairo on March 19 & 20 2013. The teachers gave very positive feedback after attending the conference.

- Some teachers participated in the Center for Learning and Teaching symposium at AUC as well as in the AUC- Teacher College Video Conference— both were held on April 18th 2013

- Conducting a survey for what is needed in the summer, which highlighted the needs for training in using technology and classroom management.

**Next steps:** Developing a professional development plan

**Theme 5: Trips and Activities**

The need for more trips and extra curricula activities were confirmed by teachers in the survey findings (mentioned 30 times). This was also mentioned in the teachers’
committee meeting minutes and was prioritized as the third topic to be discussed. Moreover, the student council has addressed this issue many times. Keywords include: “activities” (13 times), “projects” (6 times), “talent” (4 times), “trips” (4 times), “encourage & motivation” (5 times) and “resources” (5 times).

Quotes included: “I would like to share with students in more activities (talent shows, choirs…etc) as my teachers used to do for me years ago.”

“Make teaching more interesting for students through exciting projects and activities.”

“More time for activities not from class duration” (time for class work and time for activities).

**Actions Taken**

- Celebrating the Christmas Day
- The International Day
- The Well Spring Day
- The Food Bank Day.

**Next Steps**

Plan in the summer for integrating extra curricula activities as part of the curriculum and introduce character education in all semesters.
V. Evaluation of the Change Process

A. Teachers’ Reflections after the First Meeting

At first teachers were fearful because they are not used to meeting with the principal and owners and but they soon eased in. Surprisingly, after the first meeting teachers insisted on the presence of the school administrators at each meeting. Teachers were also doubtful of change. For example, one of the teachers stated “At first I thought it would not be serious, and most of the staff told me, don't waste your time, nothing will change but when I attended the first meeting I felt the opposite, I felt that all the representatives are taking it serious and we all want ‘change.’”

Teachers praised the organization and planning of the meeting, they furthermore felt enthusiastic about this meeting as one member says “can't wait for the next meeting”; “This committee means that there is change already” says another member. However, teachers were also fearful and doubtful if change will really come along beyond words. As one teacher says: “I’m satisfied with my contributions… But I don’t want the meeting to be just words repeated…without any achievement, I care for change.”

B. Teachers’ Reflections after Sixth Meeting

Has change begun? Has the committee been effective in introducing it?

Most teachers agree that change is still in progress. There has been change but only on a small scale, the teachers’ committee has succeeded in connecting more positively with each other and with the school. “We now have a medium for self-
expression and collaborating with the school owners and administrators more honestly and positively.” “We are now confronting our problems and suggesting realistic solutions and we are ready to implement them” (this was mentioned 5 times). Teachers also stated that they are still seeking more resources and need motivation and appreciation.

**What is my role in change?**

Teachers in the committee offered different perceptions of their roles to include:

To deliver the teachers’ voice to the administrators; to motivate others and enable them to be positive, supportive and cooperative; to be proactive and implement change and help out when needed; to collaborate with others, involve stakeholders and persevere in change; to work very hard for students’ sake; and to work on one’s self and develop one’s skills.

**C. Researcher’s Reflection**

**Challenges**

Perhaps the first and biggest challenge I encountered but did not anticipate it, was skepticism and lack of faith or trust in change by teachers (or students). This was due to many broken promises and many shattered hopes in the past. I myself though hopeful, was scared to disappoint my colleague teachers. Having worked in the same school for a year before embarking on this research, I have established my credibility, which was the thin rope that teachers were hanging upon. “Will anything happen?” I used to hear this question over and over again. My response has been, “even if nothing does, we need to keep trying and doing our best.”
On the contrary to a general expectation of resistance by the school administrators, the school principal and other administrators were truly supportive, collaborative. They honestly wanted to learn about the school problems and the committee’s progress in addressing these problems.

The third anticipated challenge for me was if teachers would be motivated to join, for there were no extrinsic benefits (excepting benefiting from the actual experience) and it meant extra time and effort. Yet, 25% of teachers applied to join, and many who didn’t join were excited about the project and offered to help. The teachers’ commitment throughout the process baffled me for they truly cared about the school. I also believe that they took it seriously because I was very serious about it. Teachers commented about how this was evident in the planning of the meetings.

**Did change truly happen?**

Bringing the school administrators and teachers on board together on one table *is in itself a change*. To have the opportunity as teachers to voice our opinions, to hear different perspectives, to discuss alternatives and take part in the decision-making process *is change* that happened in the course of undertaking this research.

**Change in the change agent**

Change was not just outward, for me it was inward. At the beginning of this initiative, I was scared of leading a group of teachers (some of which might have taught me at one point); here I am doing it confidently. I believe it is against my natural
disposition to lead, but when one is put in the occasion she/he has to rise up to it. I think that it was an opportunity for me to learn and grow which happened naturally. As the process initiated as part of this research continues, I hope in the coming meetings the teachers will also take more leadership roles and carry the torch of change.
VI. Discussion

This case study of conducting action research in Egypt brought to life many of the concepts discussed in the literature review, pertaining to action research, teachers as agents of change and school improvement in different countries.

**Emergent Design.** Flexible thinking and emergent design, where the plan continually evolves and is not rigid or set in stone, is an attribute of action research (Dick, 1993). In this case study of action research, the plan evolved with teachers, from teachers and by teachers. Flexibility in all stages of this research enabled active participation by different group of teachers. For example, the initial plan was to have about 7 teachers in the Teachers’ committee, representing teachers of academic subjects. However, gradually the plan developed to add more teachers to reach 11 members. In addition to the academic subject teachers, the committee included representatives of teachers from the kindergarten, teachers from physical education, representative from the discipline department and a historian (a person whose main responsibility is to keep record of the time spent on each meeting). The committee conducted several meetings and was responsible for distributing surveys and gathering data, discussing the identified problems and proposed solutions, and assessing school performance to create its improvement plan.

**Shared purpose and organizational development.** The diverse nature of Teachers’ community raises the question: Would there be a common interests and topics among the committee members? And would they be able to reach consensus on one issue to be discussed and examined? Yet, the topic of school improvement attracted the interest
and concern of all the committee members. It provoked different perspectives and ideas which served the change process. Similar to a research done by Spillane and Diamond (“Public Schools”, 2009), they point out that through collaboration among diverse group a “shared purpose and collective reflection” would be achieved. This case study thus represents an example of organizational development where the organization grows together, reflects together, and learns from mistakes (Ismaiel, 2008).

**Action Takers.** In consistency with the theme of the accreditation board which views school improvement as the responsibility of everyone in the school (AdvancED, n.d.), teachers in this case study agreed to oversee and participate in conducting the school self-assessment and developing the school improvement plan.

The researcher of this study has experienced the importance of starting with the strengths (Burgess, 2006). It was important for teachers to engage in the school-self assessment and define the school strengths. This has motivated the teachers to discuss the school problems and tackle them.

**Transformation begins in change agents.** A study by Price and Valli (2005) shows that change agents may struggle with confidence issues and with believing in themselves as change agents. This has occurred with teachers in this study including the researcher. When teachers reflected on their experience after the first meeting they expressed skepticism and lack of confidence of making change. However, after months of engagement they perceived having the opportunity to voice their opinion and participate in the decision making of their school to be an important change.
Delegation of Power. When teachers form a committee, there was a fear that perhaps it would backfire and act against the school. The researcher thus had to share detailed agenda with the principal beforehand to minimize resistance. This has led to a form of power delegation, from the authority to the teacher-leader (the researcher). In addition, the delegation of power was not only from the school administrators but also from the heads of the departments to teachers who represents them in the teachers’ committee.

Mobilize teachers’ participation in the change process. Organize a school wide event to explain the purpose of this research and its benefit to the school and allowing teachers to ask questions and gain better understanding of the proposed initiative for school improvement, helped mobilize teachers and encouraged their involvement. As Price and Valli (2005) stress, it is important to promote a common understanding about the purpose and value of the research. It was noticed in this case study that teachers are more likely to participate when they are convinced.

Planner versus searcher mentality. A researcher mentality approach was followed in this case study and has proven to be a valid approach. The researcher did not presume that she knows all the answers for all questions but rather the knowledge-power of teachers helped in defining the questions and searching for their answers (Razfar, 2011; Zaalouk, 2012). Teachers’ views were taken in what problems to choose and discuss. This has also made the research very democratic, which is how action research should be (Dick, 1993). It also made it relevant to the workplace, since the participants
chose and identified problems that they faced (Burgess, 2006). Participants also were asked to prioritize which issues to be discussed and to search for solutions (“Public Schools”, 2009).

**Reflection.** Throughout the course of conducting this research, reflection was practiced by teachers and the researcher (Hendricks, 2009; Price & Valli, 2005). This has helped in assessing the process and evaluating its outcomes. As said by my colleague teachers,

“We now have a medium for self-expression and collaborating with the school owners and administrators more honestly and positively.” “We are now confronting our problems and suggesting realistic solutions and we are ready to implement them.”

**Generalizability.**

The output of this research, in terms of school improvement plan, may not be generalizable, which is consistent with the literature about action research (Dick, 1993). Yet one could borrow ideas from the methodology, surveys and agendas (which can be found in the appendices) and use it in a different context with some modifications.

**Ethical Commitment.**

Ethically a researcher is committed in an action research to continue the cycle to the end until the evaluation phase has been reached as highlighted by Prof. Zalouk (2012). The researcher also feels an obligation or commitment to the output as well as the research...
(Ismaiel, 2008). The researcher was therefore afraid of the ethical commitment as to whether or not she was meant to wait for the fruits of the change to appear. She shared such a concern with Prof. Zalouk who in turn answered, “That is way we have change agents”, which means that the researcher’s responsibility is to prepare a group of agents who should in turn carry on the responsibility for change (Zalouk, 2012).
VII. Conclusion

The following three cycles summarize the stages of this research and relate them to the action research cycle. The common steps of action research cycle in literature include plan, act, observe, and reflect as presented in Figure 2.

![Action Research Cycle](image)

**Figure 3 Action Research Cycle**

**Cycle A**

The action research cycle in this case study actually began before deciding to embark on it. The first phase, **plan**, emerged when the idea of designing a school improvement plan was introduced in the transformational leadership course. The researcher **acted** by creating a school improvement plan as part of the course requirements. The researcher **observed** that it was missing the perspectives of her colleague teachers. The researcher **reflected** and decided to include these perspectives, yet at that point she did not know how.
Cycle B

The researcher planned to include the teachers’ viewpoints. The researcher acted by taking further courses and training. In the meantime, in collaboration with the school administrators and teachers a teachers’ committee was formed. The committee began its meetings then the teachers observed that a lot of planning took place but yet not much action was taken. The teachers reflected and realized the need to develop action plan that includes assignment of tasks, delegation of responsibilities, deadlines and budget and teachers' involvement in monitoring progress. This was part of their desire to make change by taking action and implementing the plan, not only identifying areas of development, thereby taking ownership of change.

Cycle C

The committee’s efforts modeled the cycle of action research, yet there were some adaptations to fit the AdvancED school improvement cycle and other school improvement cycles in the literature. Thus, the committee started by studying all the issues at hand. Then they zoomed in and focused on strengths and weaknesses (problems). They defined the parameters of the problems. They then searched for solutions in the literature and within their capacities, from the perspective of teachers in the school. They examined the collected data, discussed the proposed solutions and developed a plan to improve the school. Finally they reflected and evaluated the whole initiative and set rules to institutionalize the teachers’ committee. This in turn would help sustaining the collective efforts for improving the school beyond this research.
Cycle D

The last AR cycle is in the future. The teachers’ committee is currently in the first stage, **plan**. Thus the committee has planned to discuss the action plan that has been formed as an output of this research (appendix V) with the administration. The action plan has deadlines, budgets and the delegation of tasks. Members of the committee will be assigned tasks to follow up on (for example one member will be responsible for planning activities for next year, another will monitor the purchasing and installments of new technology units, a third will survey custodian needs, etc). After having assigned tasks, each member can recruit a team of teachers to work together on the assigned task. The committee shall meet weekly to report progress. The teachers’ committee also **plans** to celebrate gains with teachers at the end of the academic year. During this day they shall share the output of this research and the committee meetings. Members of the committee, who are now change agents, will report on progress in their assigned tasks. They shall also celebrate gains for the whole year by sharing highlights, success stories, and dreams for the future. The committee hopes to receive feedback from the community of teachers about their proceedings. Perhaps a later research paper can document the next phase in this journey of change.

Obviously, the journey of this research demonstrated an example of employing participatory action research for school improvement in Egypt. In this case study, mobilizing teachers as agents of change and sharing leadership among school administrators and teachers have enabled recognizing their common purpose and empowered them to make change.

M. Kostandy | 65
References


Megahed, N. (2012, November). In M. Zaalouk (Chair). *Scientific research, qualitative research and related concepts*. Presentation delivered at the Action research for accredited schools, Nasrcity, Cairo, Egypt.


AdvancED. (n.d.). [Figure illustrates the AdvanceEd school improvement life cycle] Retrieved February 2, 2013, from http://www.advanc-ed.org/school-improvement-life-cycle


Zaalouk, M. (2012, November). In M. Zaalouk (Chair). *Action research and related concepts*. Presentation delivered at the Action research for accredited schools, Nasr city, Cairo, Egypt.
Appendix I – Applications and Elections Form

Application to Join Teachers’ Committee (English Version)

Teacher’s Committee~ Agents of Change

Motto: Teacher’s committee, committed to change.

Mission: Represent the department in weekly meetings and report back to them.

Tasks in brief:

- Gather data from the department
- Select a problem (or set of problems)
- Discuss the issue/s at hand
- Research possible solutions or alternatives
- Present findings to the administration
- Reach a final consensus and communicate it back to the departments
- Reflect on initiative and put recommendations for forward ones

Eligibility Criteria: Agents of change are expected to be:

- Positive that things can change and happen
- Willing to work the extra hour
- Motivated to learn
- Flexible with team members
- Punctual and prepared for each meeting
TEACHERS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Please Note: Agents of change can change if they do not fulfill their tasks (such as attending or preparing for a meeting and communicating back to the departments). Second listed candidates may be selected. We hope that the demography will reflect varying departments, years of experience and teaching in school. We do encourage everyone to apply.

Representatives as follows:

1 From Science
1 from Math
1 from Arabic
2 from English
1 from (Computer + Music & Art)
1 from (French + electives + SS)
1 from KG
1 from the discipline department
1 from P.E.
Name:

Department:

Year of Experience in Teaching:

Years of Experience in this School:

Application questions

1. Where do you see the school in ten years? (Your Vision)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What, in your perspective, are things that can be done to reach your vision? (Mission)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
3. What do you like about the school now? (Encouraging statements)


4. If you had a magic wand, what is the first thing that you would like to change about the place to make it better? (ideas, suggestions)


Please note that your answers will be shared as an agenda representing you in the elections.
Application to Join Teachers’ Committee (Arabic version)

لجنة المعلمين وكلاء التغيير

المهمة: تمثل الأقسام في الاجتماعات الأسبوعية وتقديم تقرير إليهم.

المهام في سطور:

• جمع البيانات من كل قسم
• تحديد المشكلة (أو مجموعة من المشاكل)
• مناقشة القضية المطروحة
• البحث عن حلول وطرح بدائل ممكنة
• تقديم النتائج التي تم التوصل إليها للإدارة
• التوصل إلى توافق في الآراء بين الأقسام والإدارة والوصول بالنتائج مع الأقسام
• إعادة تقييم المبادرة السابقة ووضع توصيات مستقبلية

معايير المناضلين: ما نطمث إليه فيمن يمثل القسم

• الإيجابية والرغبة في التغيير
• القدرة على بذل الجهد والوقت
• الرغبة في اكتساب المعرفة
• المرونة مع أعضاء الفريق
• الالتزام بالوقت والإعداد لكل اجتماع

M. Kostandy | 75
نرحب بالدم الجديد مع أصحاب الخبرة و نشجع الجميع على الترشيح

ويتم الترشيح على النحو التالي:

1 من العلوم

1 من الرياضيات

1 من العربية

2 من الإنجليزية

1 من (الكمبيوتر + موسيقى والفن)

(French+ Electives + SS) من 1 KG

1 من مسؤولي النظام

1 من التربية الرياضية
أجندة المرشح

1. أين ترى المدرسة بعد عشر سنوات؟ (رؤيتك)

2. ما هي، في وجهة نظرك، في الأشياء التي يمكن القيام بها للوصول إلى الرؤية الخاصة بك؟ (الهدف)

3. ما الذي يعجبك في المدرسة الآن؟ (ذكر الإيجابيات)

4. إذا كان لديك عصا سحرية، ما هو الشيء الذي ترغب في وجوده في المكان لكي يصبح أفضل؟ (الأفكار والاقتراحات)

يرجى ملاحظة أن إجاباتك بمثابة أجندة لك
Elections Form

Qualities we hope for in the candidate

1. Positivity & Motivation
2. Punctuality
3. Willingness & Readiness to work
4. Flexibility & team work
5. Honesty

Based on those qualities, please rate your three preferred candidates in order of preference?  5 Marks.

1. (5 Marks)
2. (3 Marks)
3. (1 Mark)
### Appendix II- Agendas

#### 1-Detailed Agenda for Meeting One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather in library, create name tags &amp; Introduction</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agenda &amp; Sign form</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set the rules of the game</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro to school improvement (Presentation)</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the purpose of schooling? (Group Discussion)</td>
<td>7 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Educational Paradigms, Sir Ken Robinson animated talk (View movie and reflect on it)</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Task</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the obstacles to achieve this vision? The preparation task for next session is to go to your own department and as a representative find out the following:</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1: What are resources that you need to be able to do your job? Label them as necessary, important and would be good to have</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2: What are challenges, issues, topics that you wish we would discuss in the meeting?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection assignment &amp; distribute secret numbers</td>
<td>3 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# 2-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/المهمة</th>
<th>Time/الوقت</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Round of “Tell It Like It Is”. (A Game)</strong></td>
<td>Before Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opening Notes</strong>&lt;br&gt;General outline for the Meetings which is modeled around AdvancED School Improvement Cycle</td>
<td>7 Mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set the rules of the game</strong></td>
<td>3 Mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics and Resources</strong>&lt;br&gt;Group Sharing-Part 1: Discuss the answers to Preparation task 1</td>
<td>25 Mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation Task:</strong>&lt;br&gt;open maryvictor.com → Teachers</td>
<td>5 Mins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will find two videos:
- The first is a talk by Sir Ken Robinson that has been animated.
- The second is a 20 year successful project in Upper Egypt entitled community Schools.

Please watch the two videos then answer the questions available online in the comments box (click on leave a comment to see it).

Be ready to share those next session.

Please Note: If there is any technical assistance needed, such as no place to watch the video or unsure how to leave a comment, please contact me.
والثاني هو مشروع مدارس المجتمع في صعيد مصر الذي دام 20 عاماً ومازال مستمراً.
يرجى مشاهدة الفيديو ثم الإجابة على الأسئلة في مربع التعليقات (انقر على leave a comment لإرجاعها).
يرجى ملاحظة: إن أردت أي مساعدة تقنية في مشاهدة الفيديو أو كيفية ترك تعليق، يرجى الاتصال بي.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handout Reflection Questions for this meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/المهمة</th>
<th>Time/الوقت</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Discuss comments on Sir Robinson & Community Schools Videos.  
Maryvictor.com | 5 mins.     |
| Topics and Resources  
Group Sharing-Part 2: Discuss the answers to preparation task 1 | 35 Mins.   |
| Preparation Task 3:  
Prioritizing themes | 5 Mins     |
| Reflection Questions  
Handout Reflection Questions for this meeting |             |
4-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/ المهمة</th>
<th>Time/ الوقت</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A word from the administration about resources. كلمة من الإدارة عن الموارد</td>
<td>10 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Definition. تعريف المشكلة وتحديد ابعادها</td>
<td>30 Mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose one or two problems to delve deep into. اختيار واحد أو اثنين من المشاكل لمناقشةهما</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● What are the problem dimensions? ما هي ابعاد المشكلة؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● What are the root causes for the problem؟ ما هي أسباب الجذرية لهذه المشكلة؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Group Sharing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Task: أعمال تحضيرية للمرة القادمة:</td>
<td>5 Mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1- Ask: What, in your opinion, can we do about the problem? What does your department say we can do about it? ما هي، في رأيك، الخطوات التي يمكن أن نتخذها لحل هذه المشكلة؟ ما رأي قسمك؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Research: What do other schools (in our culture and context) do about it? What do experts in education say we can do about it؟ ماذا يمكننا أن نستفاد من خبرات مدارس أخرى تتمتع بنفس ثقافتنا في حالهم لهذه المشكلة؟ ماذا يقول الخبراء في مجال التعليم يمكننا القيام به حالياً ذلك؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Share: كيف ستستفيد من نتائج في المرة القادمة. أيها لا تنسي أن تشارك قسمك بكل جديد في الاجتماع</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 5-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/المهمة</th>
<th>Time/الوقت</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A word about STEM conference.</td>
<td>5 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing proposed solutions regarding the discipline issue</td>
<td>30 Mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(collaboratively setting rules and consequences)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Group Sharing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Task: STEM Conference follow up and sharing</td>
<td>10 Mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for Big Meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place: Library</th>
<th>Time: 11:35-12:20</th>
<th>Date: Sunday 17th of March 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>المكان: المكتبة</td>
<td>الوقت: 11:35-12:20</td>
<td>التاريخ: ١٧ مارس ٢٠١٣</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A word about STEM conference.

Discussing proposed solutions regarding the discipline issue
(collaboratively setting rules and consequences)
(Group Sharing)

Preparation Task:
STEM Conference follow up and sharing
Prepare for Big Meeting

أعمال تحضيرية للمرة القادمة:
STEM متابعة ومشاركة في مؤتمر الاستعداد للاجتماع الكبير
6-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Six

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/ المهمة</th>
<th>Time/ الوقت</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Notes/ ملاحظات عامة</td>
<td>5 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue discussing proposed solutions regarding the discipline issue (collaboratively setting rules and consequences) (Group Sharing)</td>
<td>30 Mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation Task: Discuss conclusions with students, administrators, and seniors</td>
<td>10 Mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>جدول الأعمال للاجتماع السادس</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>المكان: المكتبة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الوقت: 11:35-12:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>التاريخ: ٢٤ مارس ٢٠١٣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المهام: المهام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الملاحظات عامة</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تكملة مناقشة ما قد تم التواصل إليه من حلول ومقترحات فيما يخص مشكلة حفظ النظام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أعمال تحضيرية للمرة القادمة:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مشاركة النتائج مع الطلبة، رؤساء الأقسام والإدارة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7-Detailed Agenda for Meeting Seven

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task/ المهمة</th>
<th>Time/ الوقت</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our Mission (a motto)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vision for rest of the term</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options: discuss discipline or staff (attendance, substitution, benefits &amp; trips)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elections (Vote for Vp.)</strong></td>
<td>10 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting rules for the constitution(attendance, professional development, communication, time of elections, term of membership, durations of meeting, etc.)</strong></td>
<td>10 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share findings Regarding School Improvement and Reflections from Teachers as Agents of Change</strong></td>
<td>15 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A word from our new V.P, who shall decide what we will do next.</strong></td>
<td>5 mins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Photos</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Date: Sunday 21st of April 2013

- **Place:** Library
- **Time:** 11:35-12:20
8-General Outline for Meetings

Meeting One: Introduction

Meeting Two: Come up with Themes

Meeting Three: Problem Definition

Meeting Four: Find Solutions

Meeting Five: Discuss findings (Big Meeting)

Meeting Six: Evaluation (Reflect on Initiative)
Appendix III—Reflection Questions

1 - Reflection Questions after First Meeting

1. What was the highlight of the meeting? Is there something new that you’ve learnt today (personal or professional)? Please specify.

ما أكثر الأشياء التي جذبت انتباهك في الاجتماع؟ هل تعتقد أن هناك إضافة جديدة من هذا الاجتماع (شخصية أو مهنية)؟ برجاء التوضيح

2. Are you satisfied with your contributions in the meeting? Was there something that you wanted to contribute but didn’t? (Why? Fear, shyness, no opportunity, other, please state). Would you like to share it here?

هل أنت راض عن مساهمتك في الاجتماع؟ هل هناك مساهمات أردت ذكرها ولم تتمكن من شيء هذه المساهمات؟ ولماذا لم تذكرها؟ مثال التردد، عدم الإرتفاع، ضيق الوقت، أخرى، برجاء ذكرها

M. Kostandy | 88
3. How do you feel about the possibility of change and improvement? (Optimistic, fearful, doubtful, enthusiastic, frustrated, other) Why? Please elaborate.

ما شعورك حول إمكانية التغيير والتطوير المدرسي؟ مثل: متفائل، قلق، متشكك، متحمس، محبط، أخرى

لرجاء ذكرها مع الشرح لماذا

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

4. Any other general impressions about this meeting? and would you like to share any ideas or suggestions for the next meeting?

هل توجد انطباعات أخرى حول الاجتماع؟ وهل ترغب في مشاركة أي أفكار أو اقتراحات للاجتماع القادم؟

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________
2- Reflection Questions after Six Meetings

Please select your secret number, if you remember it *

الرجاء اختيار الرقم السري الخاص بك، إذا كنت تذكره

1) Do you feel that change has begun (Yes/No)? How? Please elaborate. *

هل تشعر أن التغيير قد بدأ (نعم / لا)؟ كيف؟ برجاء التوضيح.

2) In your opinion, what are the next steps? *

بتقديرك ما هي الخطوات التالية؟

3) What do you think is your role in change? *

في رأيك، ما هو دورك في التغيير؟

4) Do you think the teachers’ committee has been effective thus far (Yes/No)?

Why? Please elaborate. *

هل تعتقد أن لجنة المعلمين كانت فعالة حتى الآن (نعم / لا)؟ لماذا؟ يرجى التوضيح.

Thank you for your participation in the survey

شكراً لمساهمتك في استطلاع الرأي
Appendix IV: Emerging Themes from the School Improvement Survey

Theme 1: School as a whole

Sub theme A: Place of the school

Sub theme B: Environment

Sub theme C: Facilities?

Theme 2: Teacher

Sub theme A: General/benefits

Sub theme B: Professional development

Sub theme C: Teachers’ role

Theme 3: Leadership

Sub theme A: General (political will)/ seeking betterment

Sub theme B: Collaboration & involving all stakeholders

Sub theme C:

Theme 4: Student

Sub theme A: Discipline

Sub theme B: Activities & Resources

Sub theme C: Education

Theme 5: Parents

General impressions
### Appendix V - Snapshot of the Action Plan

**Goal:** Involving all stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION PLAN POINTS</th>
<th>MEASUREMENT INDICTORS</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN DATES</th>
<th>PERSON RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involving students</td>
<td>• Student Council</td>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>• Student Council Advisor</td>
<td>Complete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving Teachers</td>
<td>• Teachers Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers’ Committee head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving owners</td>
<td>• Owners attend meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Principal &amp; owners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving parents</td>
<td>• Parent teacher communication through the web medium</td>
<td>May-July 2013</td>
<td>• IT Manager</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving custodians (guards, maids, assistants, etc.)</td>
<td>• Involving custodians through surveys and meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers’ committee representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>