The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives Vol. 23, No 1, 2024
http://iejcomparative.org

Cracking the egg carton profession: Sensemaking of the teacher leader role on the Thai-Myanmar border

Thomas Carey
Inclusive Education Foundation

Greg Tyrosvoutis
Inclusive Education Foundation

Nwet Nwet Win
Inclusive Education Foundation

Nan Paw Kyan Kyan
Inclusive Education Foundation

Primarily driven by conflict, displacement and economic pull factors over the past three decades, a homegrown system of mother-tongue-based education for migrant children from Myanmar has been developed in Tak Province, Thailand. This network of Migrant Learning Centers depended mainly on external organisations for teacher professional development (TPD), with few Centres having opportunities to develop school-based models. This paper documents learning from creating the 'teacher leader' role to build school-level capacity to sustain TPD by giving new responsibilities to 31 teachers as peer coaches during the pandemic. Mixed-methods analysis used Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, specifically, Power Distance, Individualism – Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-Term Orientation to frame sensemaking and the extent to which teachers' perceptions of the new role were consistent with its implementation. The teacher leader role contributed to a perceived reduction of power distance between teachers and promoted long-term orientation regarding TPD. Its emphasis on collaboration allowed collectivist ideals to be played out practically without disturbing the status quo. The prioritisation of reflective practice and teacher-level collaboration improved coaching self-confidence and teaching competencies. Teacher-led peer-support systems within and across schools assisted in the retention of institutional knowledge.

Keywords:teacher leadership; migrant education; teacher professional development; Thailand; Myanmar

INTRODUCTION

(Un)intended outcomes of imported teacher professional development in Thailand and Myanmar

Over the past two decades, there has been pressure to adopt teaching methods and professional development models popularised by the global North throughout Southeast Asia (Park & Nuntrakune, 2013; Schweisfurth, 2011; Sriprakash, 2010; Westbrook et al., 2013) and, specifically, in Thailand and Myanmar (Lall, 2011; Prabjandee, 2019; Thanh, 2012). These 'travelling policies' have been widely validated by international education non-government organisations (NGOs) and have the potential to undermine rather than improve education systems (Ozga & Jones, 2006, p. 15). When examining Myanmar teachers' willingness to adopt student-centred pedagogical approaches, Tyrosvoutis (2016) found that teachers from Myanmar felt substantial normative pressure to adhere to recall-intensive teaching practices and teacher-student authoritative power-distance: both practices inhibit the adoption of active learning approaches. Rigid, top-down implementation of teacher professional development (TPD) in low-resource public schools in Myanmar caused significant confusion among teachers and school leaders (South & Lall, 2016). In her thesis on Myanmar teachers' sensemaking of the new curriculum policy, Lwin (2019) identified that teachers had an established pattern of closely following directives from above and did not seize opportunities to showcase their creativity or flexibility. Overwhelmingly, Myanmar teachers perceived themselves as life-long learners and strictly adhered to new policies as they attempted to better understand and make sense of them. Findings from a longitudinal choice-based TPD intervention on the Thai-Myanmar border identified key aspects of TPD that should be considered in low-resource contexts: teacher ownership, transparent accountability measures, place-based instruction and coaching, high-quality feedback and modelling, contextually relevant design, and strong professional relationships (Tyrosvoutis et al., 2021).

Literature on TPD in Myanmar facilitated by international organisations, such as the British Council's EfECT project reports pre-post teacher competency improvement scores, but lacks the incorporation of teachers' reactions to and interpretations of the interventions (Borg et al., 2018). Prabjandee (2019) gathered Thai teachers' responses to participation in mandated Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), a new approach for Thai teachers rooted in a TPD approach from the global North. The investigation found that teachers were not passive policy followers but active agents in reconstructing their understandings of policy messages.

This study aims to contribute to the literature on teachers' interpretations of interventions by analysing data from a TPD project that introduced a new 'Teacher Leader' role at Myanmar migrant schools on the Thai border. It had two principal questions for investigation:

1. How do Myanmar migrant teachers make sense of their new role as teacher leaders?
2. Do these teachers' perceptions and interpretations of their new role align with the expectations of a Buddhist-collectivist culture?

Context: COVID-19 and complementary education on the Thai-Myanmar border

Multiple complementary education systems coexist to meet the educational needs of the thousands of migrant children from Myanmar whose families are living on the Thai border. The Thai public school system serves the most migrant children with government support. The next

largest education system consists of a network of Migrant Learning Centers (MLCs), a locally developed collection of over 60 'schools' providing Myanmar-language education along Thailand's border with Myanmar. With few opportunities for formal registration, the legal status of staff and this system's long-term sustainability remain uncertain (UNICEF Thailand, 2023). Teachers at these learning centres, mostly migrants from Myanmar themselves, face a host of obstacles in addition to working in low-resource environments. In a case study of migrant teachers in Ranong Province, Bird (2023) identified the following challenges faced by migrant teachers: lack of professional development opportunities, high stress, low salary, lack of subject content knowledge, poor communication and planning, lack of accreditation opportunities, adherence to traditional rote teaching method' and insufficient support from school management. Taken together, even the Thai public education system and MLCs have not been able to address the most critical reality: most migrant children do not complete their education (Dowding, 2015) and are continuing to be pushed to 'earn rather than learn' (Bird, 2023, p. 8).

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education provision across the globe, with marginalised populations disproportionately impacted (UNESCO, 2021). The pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities for marginalised migrant communities, resulting in increased drop-out rates, school closures and learning losses across the country (Belghith & Arayavechkit, 2021; *After Covid*, 2022). Across the MLC ecosystem, a model of home-based learning was more widely adopted than online learning (Lowe, Chan & Tyrosvoutis, 2022), and teachers received COVID safety training to be able to visit their students in their communities and provide them with learning materials (Figure 2). In this context, TPD centred on methods of supporting students' socio-emotional needs. The transition to home-based learning methods played a crucial role in ensuring continuity of education; however, this transition introduced new obstacles to access. MLC teachers highlighted substantial problems related to transportation, exacerbated by increased expenses and heightened travel restrictions.

The teacher leadership model in Migrant Learning Centers

Teaching has long been described as 'the egg carton profession' (Lortie, 1975; 2020), as teachers predominantly work in classrooms isolated from each other and the outside world. From 2020-2022, a project supporting 31 migrant 'teacher leaders' was established in response to the inability of teacher trainers to access MLCs to support teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 1). The project aimed to enhance home-based and online learning implementation by improving teacher leaders' and teachers' teaching and coaching skills. A new role of 'teacher leader' was established to support the continuous professional development of teachers at MLCs, bolster teaching competencies, reinforce social-emotional support systems, and inspire teachers by implementing evidence-based approaches to professional development. Each teacher leader was responsible for supporting and coaching an average of three less-experienced teachers at their school.

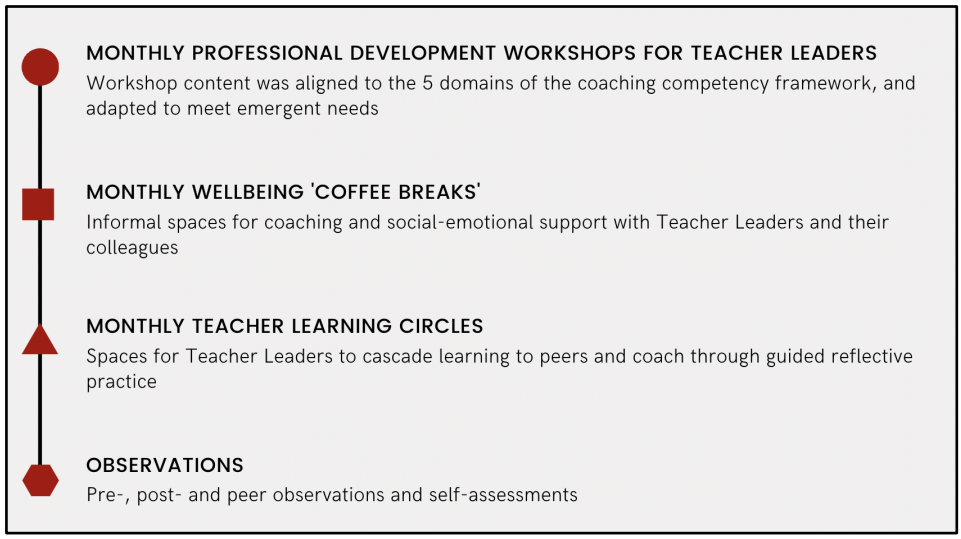

Figure 1: The migrant teacher leadership professional development model, 2020-2022

Teacher leaders attended monthly workshops and 'Teacher Learning Circles' with colleagues at their school and participated in formal teaching observations twice a year conducted by multilingual external trainers who had previously worked as teachers in MLCs. The aim was for teacher leaders to practice and develop coaching competencies, which were assessed using a framework adapted with permission from Clair and Hertz (2013). The coaching competency framework comprised five domains: 1. Adult learning and professional relationships; 2. Classroom observation and feedback; 3. Co-planning, co-teaching and modelling 4. Self-reflection and lifelong learning; and 5. Data analysis and management.

Through this peer-support format, teacher leaders and teachers engaged in co-planning, peer observations and discussions. The Teacher Learning Circle was structured to create a supportive environment where teacher leaders and their peers shared their experiences, ideas and knowledge to enhance their teaching skills, improve student outcomes and strengthen their reflective practice skills. Teacher leaders had regular opportunities to practice their coaching competencies, and teachers received ongoing feedback on their teaching.

Figure 2. An example of community-based teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

Teacher sensemaking

Conventional explanations of educational policy implementation failure have often focused on political, governance and resource issues while paying insufficient attention to policies' primary agents: teachers (Ali, 2006). The discipline of teacher sensemaking acknowledges a complex array of cognitive, affective, social and cultural factors impacting how teachers interpret, understand and, therefore, implement policy (Allen & Penuel, 2015; Huffman et al., 2003; Spillane, 1999). Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) argue that teachers, as individual sense-makers, have schemas and intuitive models of understanding, such as the role of a teacher or how children learn. These differences can create variability in personal interpretations of the same policy. Spillane et al. also note that the situations in which individual sensemaking occurs are not just backdrops but are constitutive elements of the process. The social contexts, such as beliefs about teachers in society, the formal and informal relationships teachers have with their colleagues, students and parents, and organisational arrangements at schools—such as whether collaboration is encouraged or teachers are isolated in 'egg-cartons'—greatly impact individual sensemaking.

Additionally, the external representations of policy, that is, the language policymakers use and the abstract ideas of teaching and learning they represent, have a bearing on how individual teachers interpret and implement policy. Different sense-makers may interpret ideas such as the 'Teacher Leader' role differently. Advocates of the sensemaking approach stress the importance of policymakers affording adequate time and space for the sensemaking process to take place, particularly when policy implementation requires a change in teachers' behaviours.

Literature on teacher sensemaking has come mainly from the global North and traditionally hierarchical cultures where teachers are less able to voice their concerns, such as Thailand and Myanmar (Prabjandee, 2019), remain understudied. Several small qualitative studies provide case studies of sensemaking of imported education policy in developing Southeast Asian contexts, most notably Lwin (2019) in Myanmar, King (2019; 2021) in Cambodia and Grassick (2016) in Vietnam. These studies explore the gap between the Western, value-laden ideas of pedagogical best practice being imported, such as UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools (CFS), and the more traditional notions of teachers in Buddhist societies as knowledge transmitters, arguing that policymakers fail to understand the local context, thereby prohibiting successful policy implementation. The current study contributes to this field by providing insight into teacher sensemaking of a new school-level TPD scheme implemented in the Myanmar migrant education ecosystem in Thailand.

Theoretical framework: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory applied to teachers

Hofstede's body of literature, which examines the dimensions of culture, is the most widely cited in existence (Bond, 2002). Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory provides a useful, if somewhat crude, lens to understand school culture(s). It is important to temper the categorisations by Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) with the dynamic and fluid nature of culture outlined by Nieto (2008), who argues that culture is socially constructed and, therefore, inherently inclined to change based on geographic, economic, sociopolitical and power-based transformations. An education system does not possess a singular monoculture but is composed of multifaceted and embedded subcultures. Hofstede's dimensions have been criticised for their potential to ignore the many indigenous/minority groups and rural/regional subcultures of

societies in diverse settings. Nevertheless, they have proven merit when initially analysing complex cultural behaviours (Osland & Bird, 2000) and as a means for comparability (Jones, 2007). This paper uses four dimensions to study the complexity of subcultures in the diverse MLC ecosystem, itself a system within a system, and to shed light on the process of teacher sensemaking during a two-year project that introduced a new role into MLCs. The dimensions are Power Distance, Individualism (Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance) and Time Orientation.

Power Distance acknowledges that power is unequally distributed within a society and measures how much the wider population accepts this paradigm. High power distance is the chasm between students and teachers within a classroom, and within a school, it is the separation between teachers and administrators. The Myanmar word for 'teacher' ('Sayar' for a male, 'Sayarma' for a female) is also used as the title for doctors or those in influential leadership roles. It is a title of great respect and denotes someone who represents a moral leader and role model within Myanmar society (Kobakhidze, 2020). As articulated in Tyrosvoutis (2016, p.112), a teacher is traditionally viewed as 'the sage on the stage', the fount from which knowledge flows. Traditionally, teachers are rarely challenged by students. In a country where the internet only became widely accessible in 2012, teachers have been perceived as the trusted sources of information (Kennedy, 2002).

Individual-Collectivism examines the degree to which a population refers to themselves as 'I' or 'we'. In a collectivist classroom, harmony is promoted rather than individual critical thought. Collectivism can often take the form of compliance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005),\ and harmony is promoted at the school level over the pursuit of individual TPD.

Uncertainty Avoidance is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertainty or unknown situations (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Memorising and repeating swathes of text persists in classrooms with high uncertainty avoidance, to the extent that students and teachers are afraid to make mistakes publicly (Tyrosvoutis, 2016). 'Annade' in Myanmar and 'Greng Jai' in Thai refer to 'losing face', which occurs when someone explicitly or implicitly causes themselves or others to feel embarrassed or ashamed. This is avoided at all costs (Gilhooly, 2015). Behaviours such as obedience and conformity are promoted and reinforced within educational settings in Myanmar, leading to challenges in implementing student-centred approaches (Richmond, 2007).

Short-term/Long-term Orientation refers to the link between historical events and ongoing/future actions and challenges. A short-term orientation signifies a commitment to preserving and upholding traditions, emphasising steadfastness. Conversely, societies with a long-term orientation prioritise adaptation and pragmatic problem-solving based on circumstances, considering it essential. Traditionally, Southeast Asian cultures have been perceived as having short-term orientation.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a mixed-methods approach with data collected over two years. Volunteer sampling was used to recruit teachers from MLCs for the project. Principals were invited to put forward teachers to participate based on criteria of teaching experience and ability to commit to a year of the project. Thirty-one participants (19 females and 12 males) with at least three years of teaching experience volunteered to participate in the study. Participants taught English, mathematics, Myanmar, science, history and/or geography. All participants were employed

full-time and were not receiving other in-service professional development support. Acknowledging that multiple data sources can help triangulate and create more trustworthy data (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013), this study collected qualitative data from questionnaires, focus group discussions and interviews supported by quantitative data from coaching competency self-assessments and classroom observations.[1]

Data was collected at the base- and end-line of each year via open-ended questionnaires in Myanmar that sought to capture how participants made sense of their new role as teachers. The questions inquired about teacher leaders' experiences of the new role, feelings regarding the responsibilities and commitments this role introduced, the dynamics of relationships with their school headteacher and co-teachers and aspects of the role that were unclear. Additionally, qualitative data was collected through informal observations of teachers during program activities and case study interviews with teachers, teacher leaders, school directors, parents and students conducted at the end of each year to gather data on the wider impact of the new role within school communities. A focus group discussion was held with teacher leaders in August 2023 to gather more detailed information and clarify and consolidate teachers' opinions in light of preliminary findings.

In their study of teacher sensemaking, März and Kelchtermans (2013) note that observation data acts as a ballast for self-reporting data collection methods. Thus, data was also collected during the beginning and end of both academic years using formal classroom observations. Observations occurred either online or in-person at MLCs based on current health regulations. The observation tool assessed 15 teaching competencies adapted from the Myanmar Teaching Competency Standards Framework (TCSF). Each competency was scored using a rubric consisting of four levels. Paper-based mixed methods coaching competency self-assessments were administered at the beginning, middle and end of each school year. The assessments were conducted in Myanmar, and the results were translated into English for data analysis. (1 = no evidence of the competency, 4 = exceptional demonstration of competency). The self-assessments required participants to rate their confidence in the 25 coaching competencies using a 10-point Likert scale, from 'not at all confident' to 'extremely confident'.

Data analysis involved generating descriptive statistics from the observation data to measure the average change in teaching and coaching competencies from base- to endline. The open-ended questionnaire responses were deductively coded based on the four cultural dimensions from Hofstede included in the theoretical framework. Three rounds of coding using Robson and McCartan's (2016) framework for comparative analysis were employed to illustrate changes in participants' sensemaking from base- to endline. The responses were then coded inductively to identify significant patterns emerging from the data not captured in the deductive framework. The final analysis stage involved triangulating how sensemaking of the teacher leader role changed and developed over time, comparing the observed changes with teachers' own interpretations.

[1] The coaching competency self-assessment and classroom observation tool can be downloaded at https://www.inedfoundation.org/resources

FINDINGS

Teacher leaders' confidence as peer coaches

The base- and end-line confidence self-assessments highlight changes in educators' perceptions of their own competencies as teacher leaders as they made sense of and implemented this new role. Figure 3 shows that teacher leaders' self-confidence rose by an average of 8.37% across all coaching competencies, from 76.34% to 84.71%. The improvements in these domains are consistent with the program's benefits stated by teacher leaders in their qualitative responses and with trainers' informal observations throughout the program.

Competency 4.1, which measured teacher leaders' ability to reflect on their own and others' teaching, showed a significant improvement of 9.81%. The teacher leader program aimed to develop reflective practice skills through the systems it helped to implement at schools: co-planning, peer observation and post-lesson discussions. As this peer support was guided by the trainers each month, teacher leaders and teachers could practice their own reflection skills and reflect on other lessons they had observed. These findings suggest that the new peer-support systems facilitated a space for regular open discussions and practical analysis at the school level, which allowed teacher leaders to relate to - and make sense of - the new policies at an incremental pace, with guided practice and specific feedback from trainers and peers. This proved significantly beneficial as health policies and, therefore, educational policies were in constant flux and required teachers to adopt new teaching methods, such as home-based learning. Teachers reported being able to share best practices and learn from each other.

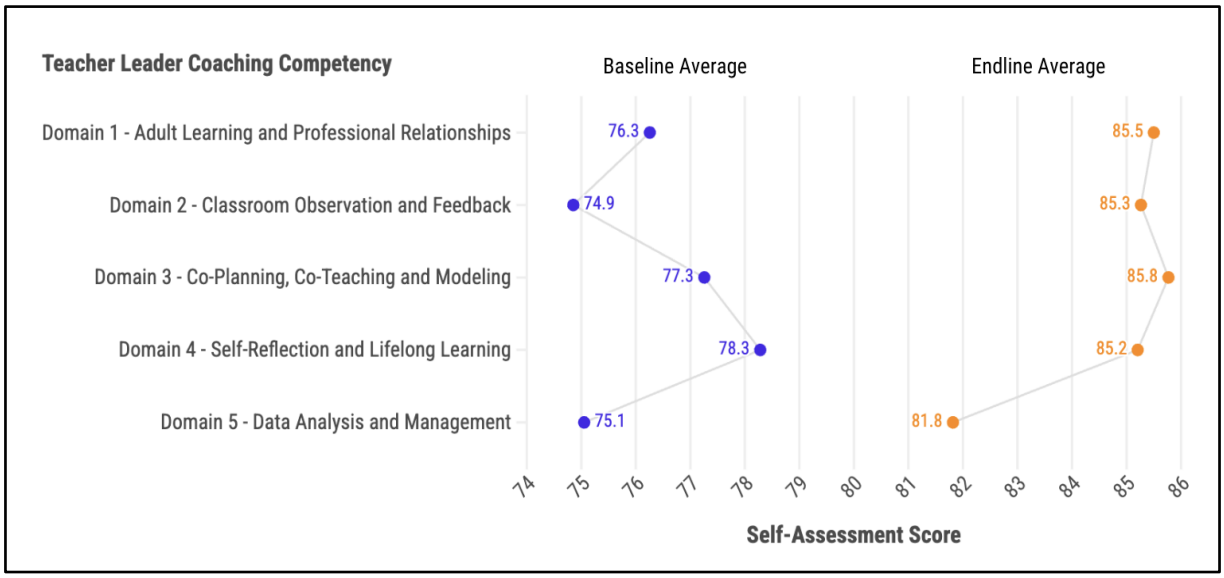

Figure 3. Coaching competency confidence self-assessment results

Sensemaking of the teacher leader role

Reduction of power distance

In the baseline questionnaires, several teacher leaders highlighted a tension between their new role of perceived authority and the authority of the headteacher and/or senior colleagues. This suggests that some MLCs have a high power distance between school management and teachers, as Tyrosvoutis (2016) found. One teacher noted that 'some things can only be done through the headmistress', and another shared that observing and giving feedback to more senior colleagues was initially challenging due to their perceived lower status. One teacher

voiced frustration as she struggled to implement her new responsibilities as a 'leader', explaining that she was required to share learning from the monthly teacher leader workshops with her colleagues back at school but that her colleagues were not initially receptive because of her perceived status as a junior. However, during end-line assessments, most teacher leaders cited improved relationships resulting from their new role. During the focus group, one teacher noted the change in attitudes at her school over the program. Her colleagues were initially resistant to receiving feedback on their teaching practice, but the mentoring skills she gained from the program enabled her to 'find the right words' to give feedback, which her colleagues began to respond to more favourably over time. Feedback techniques included using the sandwich feedback method whereby a suggestion for improvement was prefaced and culminated with positive affirmational commentary.

Collaboration and closer relationships

Within the migrant education ecosystem, the term 'professional development' is often synonymous with training delivered by outside organisations. Most MLCs are understaffed, have a high staff turnover, and lack robust student assessment and teacher appraisal systems. Teachers with more experience are deferred to as *better* teachers, often with limited reference to objective measurements such as teaching standards or student outcomes. Teachers are more often than not left to their own devices, siloed from each other, with few opportunities to observe or discuss teaching or receive formal feedback on their own performance. The Teacher Leader program aimed to disrupt this normative practice by implementing teacher-led professional development through peer observation schemes. In their qualitative responses, teacher leaders frequently referenced improved collaboration with colleagues as a benefit of the program. The emphasis on collaboration suggests that the teacher-to-teacher support systems set up through the program were seen as raising the quality of teaching for everyone, producing a net positive effect on learning at the schools.

> Being a teacher leader led to closer relationships with all the teachers at the school.
>
> There have been more positive effects such as discussion and collaboration between teachers about education than before.

The significance of improved collaboration among teachers can be analysed from several dimensions. First, the 'closeness' of working relationships could suggest that awareness was developing around reducing power distance due to peer support. Teachers who previously would never have thought to ask for help with planning a lesson or ask for feedback on their teaching now felt themselves and their colleagues as more approachable. In a focus group, one teacher shared that 'the relationship with co-teachers got closer and better over time. Every time they needed support with teaching and ICT, they approached me. They saw me as always there to help.'

Second, teachers may be making sense of the new peer-support systems as fulfilling the propagated idea of collectivism in which teachers work together for the 'greater good' of their school and students. In the Myanmar national education culture, collectivism often takes the form of conformity to a valued norm and promotion of agreed hierarchies. Formal teacher-to-teacher collaboration is often absent. The practical collaboration teacher leaders experienced through co-planning, peer observation and discussion may have been made sense of through a collectivist lens.

When asked explicitly about motivations for joining the program, all teacher leaders articulated a collective rather than individual benefit. They saw their participation in the program as a way to develop their own teaching skills so that they could share this learning with colleagues and

contribute to school-wide development. Teacher leaders were making sense of their professional development in collectivist terms, prioritising growth and harmony of the school community over individual attainment.

Long-term versus short-term planning

The focus group discussions expressed a transition to a longer-term mindset regarding teaching. Several teachers cited their attitude towards—and practice of—lesson planning as undergoing change and development throughout the program.

> Before, I just taught normally according to the textbook, but after the teacher leader program, I thought more deeply about what the students are getting from the lesson, what the outcomes are and what they are going to do in the next lesson.

> I stayed because I had a chance to share. But also, I started to think about the long-term. I want to be a teacher for a long time, and I saw this as an opportunity to develop [other teachers'] capacity in the long term.

Teachers and their portrayals of their school management and school culture emphasised an openness to new teaching ideas and a more general commitment to change. Many teacher leaders characterised the migrant education system as in need of development. This belief helped them to make sense of the TPD values embedded in the program. Understanding that context shapes the way cultural values are played out, this may be an instance of an embedded cultural value (i.e., migrant education needs to be developed or changed) superseding, or, to borrow a term from Osland & Bird (2000), *trumping* the cultural norms of uncertainty avoidance extant in the national education culture in Myanmar, where conformity is generally favoured over innovation.

DISCUSSION

To 'crack' the egg carton profession, the traditional walls that have worked to isolate teachers from one another need to be broken down. Teachers need intentional time for co-reflection and peer observation. When teachers were provided with these opportunities, orientations shifted towards the longer term, with teachers more often seeing contemporary challenges as surmountable. Introducing the Teacher Leader model was a low-cost and highly beneficial intervention that gave heavily burdened teachers the space to express their difficulties. Teachers were inspired by one another and became increasingly aware that they had a powerful resource available to them: each other. If specific effort is not made to manage teachers' feelings of uncertainty, ambiguity, and coherence with larger school/state policy, teachers will be less likely to adopt new pedagogical approaches and ignore future change (Lwin, 2019: Spillane, 1999; Spillane et al., 2002).

In line with the recommendations of Prabjandee (2019), more culturally diverse and nuanced research regarding teacher sensemaking is needed in contexts like Thailand and Myanmar. Research in these contexts, where 'traditional' cultural factors such as hierarchy, collectivism, and authoritative power-distance, heavily influence teachers' response to policy change, must be tailored to align with nuanced cultural norms. When rolling out new TPD in the future, policymakers and practitioners in SE Asia should prioritise holistic support, such as creating teacher-led peer-support systems within and across schools and investing in developing coaching competencies.

The teaching profession is highly respected within Thai and Myanmar cultures (Lwin, 2007) and therefore, further research is needed to understand if teachers in these contexts perceive

their professional identities as being reinforced or threatened by new professional development interventions. The remaining questions are whether teachers in Thailand and Myanmar are aware of their potential agency to interpret policy, as found in US contexts (Allen & Penuel, 2015) and to identify the degree to which external factors such as access to resources and payment influence teacher sensemaking. It is recommended that sensemaking research be incorporated when implementing future teacher professional development within SE Asian contexts, as it has the potential to shed needed light on the appropriateness and degree of adoption regarding new teacher policies and the relational dynamics at the heart of peer-based TPD.

5. CONCLUSION

As evidenced by this study, the teacher-leader model offers several advantages for effecting change in attitudes and practices at the school level. TPD for migrant teachers has historically been provided by a patchwork of actors, which has left school-level gaps. Although an outside intervention, the program design was contextualised, and care was taken to ensure teacher leaders were given ownership of their new role and provided with opportunities to share how they were making sense of it. The prioritisation of reflective practice and teacher-level collaboration led to improvements in coaching and teaching competencies. Despite creating a new leadership role at MLCs, which in a few cases caused tension in relationships between school directors, teacher leaders and teachers, the program's horizontal support systems helped foster a sense of optimism and progress during a particularly challenging period in an already under-resourced environment. The teacher-leader model contributed to reducing the power distance between senior and junior teachers and promoted long-term orientation regarding TPD. Its emphasis on collaboration allowed the collectivist ideals prescribed by the dominant system to be played out practically without disturbing the status quo.

Promoting the teacher-leader model could ensure that MLCs retain more institutional capacity, which can help promote systems-level improvement in the future. Teachers need to be at the centre of educational interventions and, therefore, intentionally and continuously supported in their work. TPD programs designed for similar contexts should take into account the dominant values at play in education ecosystems and the varying demands put on teachers as they make sense of policy.

Funding and Authors' Positionality

This research was conducted by the Inclusive Education Foundation's TeacherFOCUS project as part of the Teacher Leader Capacity Building Program under Save the Children Thailand Foundation's REACT (Reaching Education for All Children in Thailand) Phase II project 2020-2022. REACT II was funded by Save the Children Hong Kong to reach 400,000 migrant children from Myanmar residing in the Tak and Ranong Provinces. This study received ethical approval from the Community Ethics Advisory Board (CEAB), operated by the Mae Tao Clinic in Mae Sot, Thailand. Contributors to this article were directly involved in project design, implementation, monitoring, and reporting. The authors would like to express deep gratitude to Ashley Clayton Hertz for her support in developing the coaching competency framework, which was based on findings from her doctoral studies. Her insights were invaluable to the design and implementation of this TPD intervention, which has continued far past the end of the project.

REFERENCES

After COVID-19, Thai workers face a lack of fundamental skills and difficulties. (2022). EFF. https://research.eef.or.th/after-covid-19-thai-workers-face-a-lack-of-fundamental-skills-and-difficulties/

Ali, S. (2006). Why does policy fail? Understanding the problems of policy implementation in Pakistan: A neuro-cognitive perspective. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, *34*(1).

Allen, C. D., & Penuel, W. R. (2015). Studying teachers' sensemaking to investigate teachers' responses to professional development focused on new standards. *Journal of Teacher Education, 66(2)*. 136–149. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487114560646

Asian Research Center for Migration. (2022). *Investing in a global future: A situational analysis of migrant children's education in Thailand*. UNICEF.

Belghith, N., & Arayavechkit, T. (2021) Impact of COVID-19 on Thailand's households: Insights from a rapid phone survey. *World Bank.* https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/impact-covid-19-thailands-households-insights-rapid-phone-survey

Bird, F. (2023). *Earning vs learning: Supporting Myanmar migrant education on the Thailand Myanmar border*. [Thesis, Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington]. https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.23949354

Bond, M. H. (2002). Reclaiming the individual from Hofstede's ecological analysis—A 20-year odyssey: Comment on Oyserman et al. (2002). *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(1). 73–77.

Borg, S., & Clifford, I. & Htut, K. (2018). Having an EfECT: Professional development for teacher educators in Myanmar. *Teaching and Teacher Education. 72*. 75–86. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.02.010.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social science methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Clair, N., & Hertz, A. C. (2013). *Improving schooling in Sierra Leone: Resource manual for Learning Coaches*. International Rescue Committee/DFID Education Consortium.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Routledge.

Cresswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (3rd ed). Sage.

Dowding, L. (2015). *Pathways to a brighter future: A review of education for migrant children in Thailand*. Save the Children International and World Education. https://thailand.worlded.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MESR-Full-Report.pdf

Gilhooly, D. J. (2015). Lessons learned: Insights into one teacher's experience working with Karen refugee students in the United States. *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement*, 10(2). htpps://doi.org/10.7771/2153-8999.1121

Grassick, L. J. (2016). *Complexity, connections and sense-making: Stakeholder experiences of primary English language curriculum change in one province in Vietnam*. [Unpublished PhD thesis]. University of Leeds.

Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (1992). Introduction. In A. Hargreaves & M. Fullan (Eds.), *Understanding teacher development* (pp. 1–19). Teacher College Press.

Hofstede, G. (2003). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviours, institutions, and organisations across nations* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Hofstede, G. & Hofstede, J. (2005). *Cultures and organization-software of the minds* (2nd ed) McGraw-Hill.

Huffman, D., Thomas, K. & Lawrenz, F. (2003). Relationship between professional development, teachers' instructional practices, and the achievement of students in science and mathematics. *School Science and Mathematics*, *103*(8), 378–387.

Jones, M. (2007). Hofstede: Culturally questionable? *Oxford Business & Economics Conference*, 24–26.

Kennedy, P. (2002). Learning cultures and learning styles: Myth-understandings about adult Hong Kong-Chinese learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 21*(5), 430–445.

Kim, C-Y. & Rouse, M. (2011). Reviewing the role of teachers in achieving Education for All in Cambodia. *Prospects, 41*, 415–428.

King, E. (2019). Implications for the child friendly schools policy within Cambodia's cultural and primary school context. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. htpps://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2019.1645811

King, E. (2021). Translating policy into practice: Cambodian primary school teachers' sense-making of the Child Friendly Schools policy. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. htpps://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1866495

Kobakhidze, M. N. (2020). Desacralising teachers: Inside Myanmar's educational capitalism. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, *18*(5), 481–494. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2020.1776098

Lall, M. (2011). Pushing the child centred approach in Myanmar: The role of cross national policy networks and the effects in the classroom. *Critical Studies in Education, 52*(3), 219–233.

Lortie, D. C. (1975, 2020). Schoolteacher: A sociological study. *University of Chicago press*.

Lowe, T., Chan, L. and Tyrosvoutis, G. (2022). *Safety nets: A situational analysis of non-formal educational pathways for migrant children in Tak Province, Thailand*. TeacherFOCUS and Help without Frontiers Thailand Foundation.

Lwin, S., Sungtong, E., & Auksornnit, V. (2022). Implementation of online learning program in migrant community: Teachers' challenges and suggestions. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *23*(1), 43–59.

Lwin, Han Ni. (2019). *Teachers' sensemaking in curriculum policy enactment in Myanmar*. [Thesis: Monash University]. https://doi.org/10.26180/5cc18f5b7182a

Lwin, T. (2007). Education and democracy in Myanmar: Decentralization and classroom-level educational reform. *International Forum for Democratic Studies*. http://www.thinkingclassroom.org/Education%20Papers/8.%20Education%20and %20Democracy%20in%20Myanmar,%202007.pdf.

März, V., & Kelchtermans, G. (2013). Sense-making and structure in teachers' reception of educational reform. A case study on statistics in the mathematics curriculum. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 29*, 13–24.

Mind the gaps: Myanmar migrant education in Tak and Ranong provinces. (2023). Save the Children Thailand.

Nieto, S. (2008). Chapter 9. Culture and Education, *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 107*(1), 127–142.

Nguyen, Phuong-Mai, Terlouw, Cees, & Pilot, Albert (2006) Culturally appropriate pedagogy: The case of group learning in a Confucian Heritage Culture context. *Intercultural Education*, *17*(1), 1–19. htpps://doi.org/10.1080/14675980500502172

Osland, J. S. & Bird, A. (2000). Beyond sophisticated stereotyping: Cultural sensemaking in context. *Academy of Management Perspectives, 14(1)*, 65–76. https://doi.org/10.5465/ame.2000.2909840

Ozga, J. & Jones, R. (2006). Travelling and embedded policy: The case of knowledge transfer. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(1), 1–17.

Park, J. Y., & Nuntrakune, T. (2013). A conceptual framework for the cultural integration of cooperative learning: A Thai primary mathematics education perspective. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics: Science & Technology Education*, 9(3), 247–258.

Patrick, S. K. & Joshi, E. (2019). 'Set in Stone' or 'Willing to Grow'? Teacher sensemaking during a growth mindset initiative. *Teaching and Teacher Education 83*, 156–167.

Prabjandee, D. (2019). Unwelcome truths of the professional learning community policy in Thailand: Teacher's Sensemaking. *Issues in Educational Research*, *29*(1).

Richmond, J. D. (2007). Bringing critical thinking to the education of developing country professionals. *International Education Journal*, *8*(1), 1–29.

Robson, C. & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real world research* (4th ed.). John Wiley and Sons.

Schweisfurth, M. (2011). Learner-centred education in developing countries: From solution to problem? *International Journal of Educational Development*, *31*(5), 425–432.

Spillane, J. P. (1999). External reform initiatives and teachers' efforts to reconstruct their practice: The mediating role of teachers' zones of enactment. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 31*(2), 143–175.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002) Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(3), 387–431. https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003387

South, A., & Lall, M. (2016). *Schooling and conflict: Ethnic education and mother tongue-based teaching in Myanmar*. The Asia Foundation. https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/SchoolingConflictENG.pdf

Sriprakash, A. (2010). Child-centred education and the promise of democratic learning: Pedagogic messages in rural Indian primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *30*(3), 297–304.

Thanh, P. H. (2011). Issues to consider when implementing student-centered learning practices at Asian higher education institutions. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 33*(5*),* 519–528.

Thanh, P. H. (2012). A framework to implement cross-cultural pedagogy: The case of implementing learning reform at Confucian heritage culture colleges. *Higher Education Review*, *44*(3), 27–40.

Tyrosvoutis, G., Sasaki, M., Chan, L., Win, N., Zar, T., Win, N. N., & Paw, N. N. Y. (2021). Deep change in low-resource classrooms: Data-driven teacher professional development for educators from Myanmar using a choice-based approach. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, *20*(3), 15–30.

Tyrosvoutis, G. (2016). Taking the sage off the stage: Identifying obstacles to student-centered instruction on the Thai-Myanmar border. *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives, 15*, 112–132.

UNESCO. (2021, March). Education in a post-COVID world: Nine ideas for public action. International Commission on the Futures of Education. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373717/

UNICEF Thailand. (2023). Make learning count: Migrant learning center registration in Thailand: The policy landscape and ways forward. https://www.unicef.org/thailand/reports/make-learning-count

Walker, A. & Dimmock, C. (2000) One size fits all? Teacher appraisal in a Chinese culture, *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 14*(2), 155–178.

Westbrook, J., Durrani, N., Brown, R., Orr, D., Pryor, J., Boddy, J., & Salvi, F. (2013). *Pedagogy, curriculum, teaching practices and teacher education in developing countries.* London: Institute of Education, EPPI Education Rigorous Literature Review.
