

# TEACHER COLLABORATION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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Rooted in different fields of research, such as school improvement and school effectiveness, teacher collaboration, teacher leadership etc, the thesis that teachers have the crucial role in mounting education quality not only within classroom, but also within school as a whole is increasingly gaining in importance. This is closely related to another thesis stating that school improvement is strongly connected to the quality of the human relations amongst school staff. Collegiality and development of collaborative and professional relations within a school is seen as one of 'doors' to school improvement, and as one of few truly defining ideas of what is called professional learning communities. A research in 51 primary schools in Serbia has been conducted, involving 385 teachers, aiming to identify factors and ways they impact individual preferences for participation in planning and implementing school development plans. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of gathered data show how teachers' characteristics and their perceptions of colleagues and prevalent relations and norms within school as a whole and within specific development teams are modelling their involvement in school development. One of the most influential factors in this respect was the perceived congruency of teacher professional beliefs (valuing of a goal and achievement orientation, valuing of collaboration and collegiality, valuing of an innovation orientation in school, and valuing of a rule orientation). Research has also showed that teacher relations may obstruct improvement projects once they are in progress, or may increase their relevance and prospects for success. On the other hand, school improvement projects have, according to teachers' reports, improved collaboration and team work in schools, with few indications that they may have led to further separation and fragmentation within school staff in some cases.

Key words: teachers, collaboration, school improvement, school culture, professional norms