



BRIDGING RESOURCE AND POLICY GAPS FOR GENDER-EQUITABLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN SRI LANKA

Tiromi Wijayanthi Vilasitha Indigahawala
Nanayakkara Warnakulasuriya Elekuttige Jeewanie Madhuka Desaman Fernando
Heshani Ranasinghe
Dharshana Pradeep Kumara Mapa Wijesinghe

ABOUT NORRAG

NORRAG is the Global Education Centre of the Geneva Graduate Institute and a global network of more than 5,800 members for international policies and cooperation in education and training. NORRAG is an offshoot of the Research, Review, and Advisory Group (RRAG) established in 1977 and at the time funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Swedish International Development Authority (Sida). It was charged with critically reviewing and disseminating education research related to the Global South. Since our move to Switzerland in 1992, NORRAG has been significantly supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, and, for a period, the Open Societies Foundation (OSF).

NORRAG's strength lies in addressing under-researched questions of quality and equity in key issues in education and development and in amplifying under-represented expertise, particularly from the South. NORRAG's core mandate is to co-produce, disseminate and broker critical knowledge and to strengthen capacity for and with the wide range of stakeholders who constitute our network. Our stakeholders from academia, governments, NGOs, international organisations, foundations and the private sector inform and shape education policies and practice at regional, national and international levels. Through our work, NORRAG contributes to creating the conditions for more participatory, evidence-informed decisions that improve equal access to and quality of education and training.

More information about NORRAG, including its scope of work and thematic priorities, is available at www.norrageducation.org.

Join the global NORRAG Network
www.norrageducation.org/norrage-network

Follow NORRAG on social media



ABOUT THE KIX EMAP HUB

The [Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange \(GPE KIX\)](#) is a joint endeavour with the [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#) to connect expertise, innovation, and knowledge to help GPE partner countries build stronger education systems and accelerate progress toward SDG 4. There are globally four KIX Hubs or Regional Learning Partners, overseen by IDRC. The Hub functions as a regional forum within KIX. NORRAG is the Regional Learning Partner for the KIX Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Pacific (EMAP) Hub (previously known as the KIX EAP Hub).

The KIX EMAP Hub facilitates cross-country knowledge and innovation exchange and mobilisation, learning, synthesis, and collaboration among national education stakeholders in 38 GPE partner countries in the EMAP region. The Hub also offers opportunities for peer learning and exchange by means of professional development and inter-country visits.



ABOUT THE KIX EMAP LEARNING CYCLES

The KIX EMAP Learning Cycles are professional development courses offered to national education experts from 38 GPE partner countries in the Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Pacific (EMAP) region. Teams of national experts analyse, contextualise, and produce new knowledge on policy analysis and innovations. These professional development courses allow participants to share experiences, exchange knowledge, and contribute to the strengthening of their national education systems. The Learning Cycles are also an opportunity for national experts to publish their studies and findings internationally, and disseminate them on diverse online platforms, with support from the KIX EMAP Hub.

ABOUT THE LEARNING CYCLE ON INCREASING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

This case study is a result of the KIX EMAP Learning Cycle "Increasing Women's Representation in School Leadership". Facilitated by Dr Fenot Aklog and Dr Cathryn Magno, this Learning Cycle ran from 18 September 2024 to 28 February 2025. The course equipped participants with the conceptual and analytical tools for understanding conditions that promote and serve as barriers to the recruitment, development, and retention of women in school leadership roles. Sixteen national teams took part in this Learning Cycle, including Albania, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Moldova, Nepal, Pakistan (Punjab), Pakistan (Sindh), Philippines, Sri Lanka, Timor Leste, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.



KIX EMAP Learning Cycle Case Study, March 2026

The KIX EMAP Hub is supported by



Photo by
Joe Qian/World Bank

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2016/03/16/sri-lanka-equitable-access-education>

Published under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons licence: Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)



All queries on rights and licenses should be addressed to

KIX EMAP Hub / NORRAG

20, Rue Rothschild
P.O. Box 1672 1211 Geneva 1
Switzerland
norrage.kix@graduateinstitute.ch

This case study is a product of the [KIX EMAP Learning Cycle: Increasing Women's Representation in School Leadership](#) with external contributions. This work was supported by the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX), a joint endeavour with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this work do not necessarily reflect the views of the KIX EMAP Hub, NORRAG, GPE, IDRC, its Board of Governors, or the governments they represent. The KIX EMAP Hub / NORRAG does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON THE AUTHORS

Tiromi Wijayanthi Vilasitha Indigahawala (she/her)

Tiromi Wijayanthi Vilasitha Indigahawala is a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. She holds an MPhil in education as well as a master's in educational management and is currently pursuing a PhD. Tiromi has extensive experience as an educator, researcher and administrator in Sri Lanka's education sector. Her research interests focus on school-based management, educational equity and leadership transformation in small and rural schools. She is the Sri Lankan leader of the Scaling the Impact of a Play-Based Child-to-Child Approach Research Project, which promotes inclusive and play-based transitions in education.

Nanayakkara Warnakulasuriya Elekkuttige Jeewanie Madhuka Desaman Fernando (she/her)

Nanayakkara Warnakulasuriya Elekkuttige Jeewanie Madhuka Desaman Fernando graduated from the University of Peradeniya with a physical science degree, followed by postgraduate diplomas in education at the University of Colombo, applied statistics at the University of Peradeniya and a higher diploma in education management and education leadership from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Sri Lanka. Additionally, Madhuka Fernando received a master's degree in science education from the University of Peradeniya and one in teacher education at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Her research interests include women in education leadership and the role of school administrators in improving socio-emotional learning. She currently serves as the principal of Defence Services College, Colombo.

Heshani Ranasinghe (she/her)

Heshani Ranasinghe graduated from the University of Peradeniya with a Bachelor of Arts (general) degree and holds a postgraduate diploma in development studies and a master's in sociology from the University of Colombo. She also holds a certificate in gender in economics from the University of Peradeniya. Her research interests include gender equality and women's empowerment issues, including psychosocial issues, gender-based violence and the successes and impact of research on women's empowerment.

Dharshana Pradeep Kumara Mapa Wijesinghe (he/him)

Dharshana Pradeep Kumara Mapa Wijesinghe graduated from the University of Colombo with an honours BA degree and earned a postgraduate diploma in education management and leadership from NIE, Sri Lanka. Additionally, he earned a master's degree in education leadership at Monash University, Australia (2022–2024). His research interests include women school leaders and equitable administrative policy, issues faced by women school leaders and equity in Sri Lankan education policy. He currently serves as the Assistant Director of Education at the Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations	5
Acknowledgements	6
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	8
Country Context	8
School Leader Policies and Pathways	10
Pathways to School Leadership Roles	10
Women in School Leadership by the Numbers	11
Women in School Leadership: Barriers and Enablers	12
System-Level Barriers	12
Societal and Individual-Level Barriers	12
Policy Recommendations	13
Adapting Existing Policies	13
Introducing New Policies or Initiatives	13
Potential Impact	14
Areas for Further Investigation	15
Data and Research	15
Outreach and Engagement	15
References	16

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EMAP	Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Pacific
GPE KIX	Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
MoE	Ministry of Education
NIE	National Institute of Education
SLEAS	Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service
SLPS	Sri Lanka Principal Service

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions that have made this academic endeavour possible. Our sincere thanks go to the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX) for providing the opportunity to participate in the high-quality academic programme, the KIX Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Pacific (EMAP) Learning Cycle on Increasing Women's Representation in School Leadership.

We are deeply indebted to Rasha Sharaf, professor of international and comparative education and the KIX EMAP Knowledge Lead for South Asia, Middle East and North Africa, for her invaluable guidance throughout this academic pursuit. Her encouragement and facilitation of our participation

in the course significantly contributed to enhancing our understanding and efforts towards improving educational quality in Sri Lanka.

We extend our profound gratitude to Dr Fenot Aklog and Dr Carolyn Magno, the course instructors, whose exceptional commitment, academic rigor and supportive mentorship were instrumental in guiding us through the learning process. Their dedication and professional insight were crucial to our academic development.

Lastly, we express our appreciation to the Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, for their support in providing the necessary data and information that enriched our academic research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Female representation in school leadership roles in Sri Lanka remains low, with only 29% of school principals being women, even though women comprise the majority (roughly two-thirds) of teachers nationwide. The school leadership gap in rural provinces is even more pronounced, with representation falling to as low as 16% to 18%. These disparities stem from systemic policy gaps, sociocultural barriers and logistical challenges.

Sri Lanka's gender-neutral policies fail to address the structural and systemic disadvantages faced by women, including limited access to professional development and logistical challenges in rural regions. These gaps create policy and structural barriers that hinder women's advancement into school leadership roles.

Geographical disparities further limit women's school leadership representation in rural provinces, as challenging working conditions and safety concerns often make it more difficult for women to serve in rural schools compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, cultural norms such as deep-rooted gender biases, gender stereotypical attitudes and societal expectations discourage women from aspiring to leadership roles. These same norms undermine women's authority in leadership positions, making it more difficult to perform effectively and advance in their careers.

This policy brief examines gender disparities in school leadership in Sri Lanka, highlighting systemic, geographical and cultural barriers that hinder women's advancement. It proposes

targeted policy measures to address these challenges and promote gender-equitable leadership in education.

Key recommendations include introducing gender quotas and tailored training programmes to address systemic barriers as well as implementing equitable policy measures to alleviate the logistical challenges faced by women school leaders, such as improving transportation and sanitation facilities and ensuring safety provisions, particularly for women leaders in rural areas. To support work-life balance, recommended policies include the implementation of flexible working hours, the provision of childcare support and improved resource allocation for rural schools. In addition, expanding leadership training, mentorship programmes and scholarship opportunities will promote clearer pathways for current and aspiring female leaders to receive professional development. Furthermore, community awareness campaigns can be launched to encourage positive perceptions of female leaders and challenge cultural and community stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing school leadership roles.

This policy brief calls for further research to be conducted in Sri Lanka on topics such as cultural norms, programme effectiveness and stakeholder engagement to refine and implement effective solutions. By bridging policy and resource gaps, Sri Lanka can foster gender equity in education leadership, empowering women to drive transformative change.

INTRODUCTION

Gender disparities in Sri Lanka's education system are particularly evident in regard to school leadership positions. According to the School Census (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 2022), women comprise roughly 77% to 79% of the country's teachers, yet they are significantly underrepresented in school leadership positions. In government schools, women hold only 29% of principal positions. The proportion of women in school leadership positions falls dramatically in rural areas, with the Eastern Province and Uva Province reporting female leadership at only 16% and 18.7%, respectively, compared with approximately 49.5% in urban areas such as the Western Province (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 2022).

The low representation of women in educational leadership positions in Sri Lanka results from both resource and policy gaps, which are examined in this policy brief. To promote gender-equitable access to leadership positions in the education sector, this brief also examines the obstacles that women face, especially in rural regions, and offers actionable recommendations for overcoming these gaps.

Country Context

Women in Sri Lanka's education system have increasingly gained access to leadership positions, including school principalships, middle leadership roles and educational administrative leadership positions. While this represents progress in terms of gender equality, women school leaders continue to face unique challenges in the exercise of their duties and school leadership roles (Medagama, 2021). Although they hold many significant positions across the educational hierarchy, their working conditions are often inequitable when compared to those of their male counterparts. This is particularly true when considering the specific social and cultural factors that shape their roles (Shah & Shah, 2012) and the additional responsibilities women shoulder, both at work and at home. Family obligations, especially those related to motherhood (Aiston, 2011), compound the complexities of their professional responsibilities. These challenges are exacerbated by the absence of comprehensive policy measures in Sri Lanka's public education sector (Arachchi & Edrisinghe, 2011) that could mitigate the burdens faced by women leaders. The lack of supportive policies not only leads to operational limitations but also perpetuates a gender imbalance in leadership roles within the education system.

The present paper examines the policy gaps and inappropriate policies that contribute to the disadvantageous working conditions faced by women school leaders in Sri Lanka. Despite a legal framework promoting gender equality, these policy gaps are evident in multiple dimensions, including urban-rural disparities, different school categorisations and staffing policies. The effects of these inequities are particularly profound when examined through the lens of Sri Lanka's diverse geographic and socio-economic landscape, as women leaders face more pronounced barriers in rural areas than in urban settings. Moyo and Perumal (2019, p.99) also point out that "women are affected mainly by social, structural, and cultural contexts, which continue to influence what leaders do and how they do it". Furthermore, the categorisation of schools into different types (such as national schools, provincial schools and others) introduces additional layers of inequality, wherein women leaders often find themselves disproportionately affected by resource constraints, cultural expectations and logistical challenges that are not adequately addressed by existing policies.

Women school leaders in Sri Lanka encounter significant challenges in fulfilling their leadership roles due to prevailing social and cultural barriers. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural schools, where a lack of human and physical resources hinders the establishment of an environment conducive to effective school administration. A distinct disparity exists between rural and urban schools regarding resource allocation, with urban schools, especially national schools, receiving greater support. While the Ministry of Education (MoE) provides funding on a per-student basis, national schools in urban areas frequently benefit from additional funding sources beyond government allocations.

Furthermore, national and leading provincial schools tend to establish a school culture that significantly enhances their performance standards. This culture is characterised by the availability of extracurricular activities, better opportunities for students and staff, professional development and the maintenance of a positive learning environment. These elements contribute to a thriving educational environment that small rural schools struggle to replicate due to limited resources and infrastructure. Consequently, the disparity between urban and rural schools becomes even more pronounced.

Additionally, the inequities between urban and rural schools are reflected in how schools are categorised in Sri Lanka. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), schools are divided into two main categories: national schools, which are directly

administered by the central government, and provincial schools, which fall under the administration of provincial councils. The breakdown of school types is as follows:

Table 1: Types and Number of Schools in Sri Lanka

Type of school	Number of schools
All government schools	10,155
National schools	373
Provincial schools	9,782
Type 1AB: Schools with an advanced-level science stream (most of these are national schools administered by the central government and located in cities with more facilities).	1,000
Type 1C: Schools with advanced-level classes other than science (arts and/or commerce and/or technology streams and/or vocational; administered by the provincial councils and located in rural areas, usually with a lower number of students).	1,932
Type 2: Administered by the provincial councils and located in rural areas, usually with a lower number of students (grades 1–11 or grades 6–11).	3,224
Type 3: Administered by the provincial councils and located in rural areas, usually with a lower number of students (grades 1–5 or grades 1–8).	3,999

Note: Data from Annual School Census of Sri Lanka. Final Report – 2020 (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 2020).

SCHOOL LEADER POLICIES AND PATHWAYS

The policies of the Sri Lankan education system are gender neutral, especially those on the recruitment and promotion of school administrators, as per the 2015 Service minutes of the Sri Lanka Principal Service (SLPS), and the 2015 minutes of the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service (SLEAS), 2015. Nevertheless, these regulations sometimes underestimate the particular disadvantages that women experience in seeking leadership roles. Gender-specific clauses that address structural challenges, including family responsibilities, gender bias, and a lack of professional development opportunities in rural areas, have been dropped from the SLPS minutes, which regulate the selection of school leaders.

Women who face extra obstacles (especially those in remote schools), such as insufficient infrastructure facilities, greater transportation costs and limited access to professional development opportunities are not specifically supported by the recruitment and selection procedures in practice.

Despite being dominant in the teaching profession, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions as a result of these policy inequalities. Policy reform will be needed as the education system changes to accommodate the need for more inclusive leadership pathways and to address regional inequities and the constantly changing reality of gender roles.

Pathways to School Leadership Roles

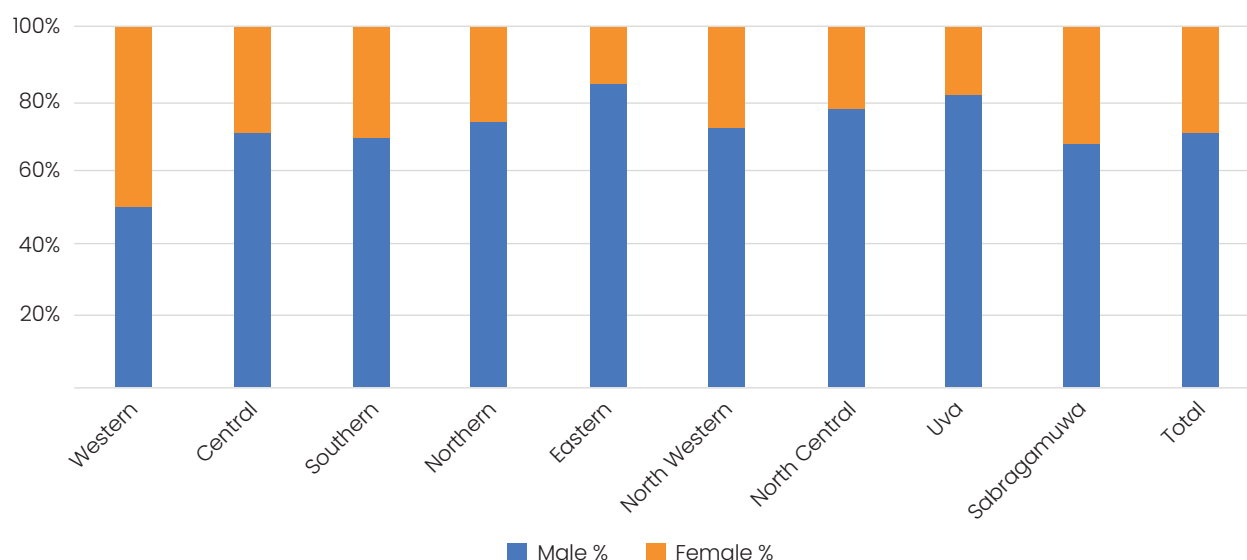
In Sri Lanka, school principals are appointed by a selective examination as per the service minutes of the SLPS. The examination is followed by a practical selection process, including a presentation. Apart from that, school leaders of national schools, which are the dominant schools in the country, are appointed by the administrative officers of the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Service after a thorough and competitive selection process with a written component and an interview process.

WOMEN IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

The majority of schools in Sri Lanka are small and located in rural areas, and many of them are led by women, as indicated in Figure 1. Despite holding these leadership positions, women school leaders frequently encounter gender-based obstacles rooted in cultural stereotypes. Traditional gender roles persist in the Sri Lankan society, discouraging and restricting women

from fully exercising their leadership potential. These limitations are evident in various aspects of school leadership, including the stereotypical dress code imposed on female teachers and their perceived reluctance to engage in logistical tasks, which are integral to school administration in rural areas.

Figure 1: Proportion of Principals by Gender in Government Schools in 2022



Source: Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka (2022).

As displayed in Figure 1, data regarding the representation of women in leadership positions in Sri Lanka's educational institutions highlights significant disparities between urban and rural areas. In urban regions, such as the Western Province, female principals account for approximately 49.5% of leadership roles, but in rural areas, including the Uva and Eastern Provinces, the proportion of female principals is notably lower, standing at 18.7% and 16%, respectively (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 2022). This discrepancy reflects not only geographical factors but also sociocultural barriers that disproportionately affect women in rural areas, where gender roles are more rigid and logistical challenges are heightened.

The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles becomes even more evident when compared to the teaching workforce, in which women make up 77%–79% of all teachers (Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka, 2022). Despite their overwhelming presence in the classroom, women are often passed over for leadership roles, a phenomenon that can be attributed to a combination of systemic, cultural and institutional barriers that hinder their advancement into leadership positions.

WOMEN IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: BARRIERS AND ENABLERS

System-Level Barriers

At the institutional level, Sri Lanka's educational policies lack mechanisms to ensure gender equity in leadership. Existing recruitment and promotion policies do not address the structural barriers women face, such as limited access to leadership training, biases in hiring and the absence of work-life balance policies. For example, current policies overlook the significant challenges faced by women in rural areas, where barriers such as lack of transportation, inadequate infrastructure and cultural expectations regarding family roles restrict women's ability to take on leadership roles.

Furthermore, the institutional frameworks needed to promote gender parity in leadership have been removed from Sri Lanka's educational policy. As a result, structural obstacles that women encounter remain unaddressed. These discrepancies are further exacerbated by the lack of gender-sensitive professional development programmes. Women in rural schools are particularly disadvantaged in career advancement because they often lack access to opportunities for professional growth.

Societal and Individual-Level Barriers

Cultural norms and societal expectations in Sri Lanka significantly restrict women's access to school leadership positions. Deeply ingrained gender roles dictate that women should prioritise family and household responsibilities, often creating conflicts with the demands of leadership positions. This societal pressure discourages many women from aspiring to or continuing in leadership roles.

Research also highlights the pervasive bias that positions leadership as a male domain. Women face implicit biases in hiring and promotion processes, and their leadership potential is often undervalued, contributing to their underrepresentation in top educational positions. These societal and individual-level barriers are further compounded by the lack of targeted policies to address them, leaving women in rural areas with fewer opportunities to progress into leadership roles.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite these challenges, several strategies could bridge the gap and promote gender-equitable leadership in Sri Lanka's education system.

Adapting Existing Policies

1. Enhancing Recruitment and Selection Processes

Sri Lanka's existing recruitment policies for school leadership, governed by the service minutes of the SLPS, are gender neutral in principle and therefore lack mechanisms to address systemic barriers faced by women. Adapting these policies to incorporate gender-specific provisions could help overcome these challenges.

Proposed Modifications

- Introduce a quota system to ensure a minimum percentage of leadership positions for women, particularly in rural areas, where women's involvement in school leadership is low.
- Prioritise women for leadership roles in schools classified as being in "difficult" or "most difficult" regions, with enhanced allowances and incentives to mitigate gender-specific barriers.

2. Professional Development Policies

Preservice and in-service training programmes, while mandatory, do not address the unique challenges faced by women leaders. Adapting these programmes to empower female school leaders in challenging schools is essential to preparing them for the demands of school leadership roles.

Proposed Modifications

- Integrate gender-equity-focused modules into all preservice and in-service training programmes.
- Establish structured mentorship programmes in which experienced female principals support new female leaders, particularly in rural areas.
- Establish scholarship initiatives both domestically and abroad to encourage women in educational leadership. Providing targeted financial support will better help women acquire the skills needed to progress into leadership roles.

Introducing New Policies or Initiatives

1. Work-Life Balance Policies

Women leaders face significant challenges in balancing professional and personal responsibilities, especially in rural areas, where inadequate infrastructure affects their daily commute to school and back home.

Proposed Initiatives

- Introduce flexible working hours and on-site childcare facilities for women in leadership positions.
- Expand maternity leave policies to include full pay and additional support for returning to leadership roles.
- Provide childcare subsidies to ease the financial burden and family responsibilities of women school leaders.

2. Resource Allocation and Support

Rural schools face acute shortages in infrastructure and human resources, which disproportionately affect women leaders. Due to sociocultural norms in Sri Lanka, women experience greater challenges than their male counterparts in under-resourced schools.

Proposed Initiatives

- Provide safe lodging and transportation for women in rural leadership roles.
- Increase financial support for rural schools to hire dedicated administrative staff to assist women leaders with operational responsibilities. Additional staff would better enable women leaders to focus more closely on strategic leadership than on logistical management tasks.
- Create frameworks for legal support by establishing legal assistance programmes that help women successfully negotiate stakeholder and community pressures. These frameworks can offer legal support for organisational requirements as well as protection against discrimination.

3. Incorporating International Best Practices

- Adapt initiatives from India's National Programme for Women in Educational Leadership, which integrates

training, mentorship and community engagement to empower women leaders.

- Implement community-based leadership support structures, similar to Bhutan's rural teacher programmes, to address logistical challenges for women leaders.

Potential Impact

Implementing these recommendations could

- Increase women's representation in school leadership significantly to ensure gender equity within the next decade,
- Enhance the retention and job satisfaction of women in leadership roles, particularly in rural areas, and
- Improve the overall quality of education in underserved regions by fostering diverse leadership perspectives and practices.

AREAS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

Data and Research

Current data on women's representation in school leadership in Sri Lanka lacks specificity and depth. Key gaps include the following:

- **Regional data:** Disaggregated statistics on gender representation at the district and divisional levels are needed to accurately identify specific challenges and develop targeted interventions.
- **Understanding sociocultural influences:** Qualitative studies that explore how cultural norms and societal expectations influence women's career choices and leadership aspirations, particularly in rural areas, will offer a more in-depth understanding of the challenges women face in advancing to school leader roles.
- **Impact assessment:** Robust quantitative research studies are necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of existing leadership development programmes and to identify strategies for enhancing their impact in reducing gender disparities.

Outreach and Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement

- Engage community organisations and women's groups to address sociocultural barriers and establish advocacy networks for gender equality in education.
- Collaborate with educational institutions and policymakers to develop and pilot gender-focused training and mentoring initiatives that support female school leaders.

Public Awareness Campaigns

- Launch targeted campaigns to promote positive images of women leaders, particularly in rural areas, to challenge gender stereotypes.
- Leverage district-level education stakeholder meetings to showcase success stories of female leaders and inspire more women to pursue these roles.

REFERENCES

- Aiston, S. J. (2011). Equality, justice, and gender: Barriers to the ethical university for women. *Ethics and Education*, 6(3), 279–291. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2011.632721>
- Arachchi, C. K., & Edrissinghe, D. (2011). An investigation on the experiences of women leaders of the selected schools in the Gampaha district in Sri Lanka. *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Business Management*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266165136>
- Medagama, T. (2021). *Leading women: Challenges encountered by women in educational leadership with special reference to Rathnapura District, Sri Lanka* (SSRN Scholarly Paper 3941259). Social Science Research Network. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3941259>
- Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. (2020). *Annual School Census of Sri Lanka: Final Report - 2020*. https://www.statistics.gov.lk/Resource/en/Education/School_Census/School_Census_Report_2020.pdf
- Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. (2021a). *School census 2018–2021*.
- Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. (2021b). *School census—2021 final report*.
- Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka. (2022). *Annual School Census of Sri Lanka - Summary Report - 2022*. https://moe.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/School_Census_2022_Summary_Tables.pdf
- Moyo, Z., & Perumal, J. (2019). Disadvantaged school contexts and female school leadership in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies – Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*, 14(1), 83–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2019.1610900>
- Shah, S., & Shah, U. (2012). Women, educational leadership and societal culture. *Education Sciences*, 2(1), 33–44. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educ2010033>

KIX EMAP Learning Cycle Case Study, March 2026



20, Rue Rothschild | P.O. Box 1672
1211 Geneva 1, Switzerland
+41 (0) 22 908 45 47
norrage.kix@graduateinstitute.ch

 @KIXEMAP

 @KIXEMAP

 @KIXEMAP

 @KIXEMAP

 norrageducation.org/kix-emap

 gpekix.org/regional-hub/kix-emap