Message from the Executive Director

Dear Partners,

Following the launch and implementation of a small pilot program in 2008, Dignitas started a program called the Leadership Institute in 2011 to partner with community schools in Mathare Valley. Our aim was to develop the capacity of 80% of the educators in Mathare, and by early 2014, we achieved this goal. After having thoroughly tested the partnership model in Mathare, Dignitas felt ready to apply it in new communities facing similar challenges.

That’s why in 2014 we decided to expand to other communities that had the capacity and desire to work with us to improve education. We initiated programs in Kangemi and Kawangware – two informal settlements in Nairobi – developing new partnerships with a total of 18 schools. Working with these new communities allowed us to study the effectiveness and adaptability of our model, and to develop a stronger understanding of the level of diversity among Kenya’s self-organized community schools.

Through feedback from our coaches and partner communities, as well as newly developed and more robust learning and evaluation systems, we learned a great deal about how to improve our model in 2014. We were able to implement several changes, such as a stronger focus on sustainability through enhanced school leadership.

In 2014, Dignitas’s ever-growing programs reached over **12,700 children** through support to **396 teachers in 34 schools across 5 communities** in Nairobi. We are thrilled with the transformation we witnessed in our school leaders, teachers, and students. Looking to 2015, we are excited to continue to enrich and enhance our existing programs for future partners, including government actors, other education organizations, and more schools.

We know that the opportunity to collaborate with schools to transform education in Kenya would not exist without partners like you. Thank you for your continued commitment to giving hope to some of the world’s most marginalized children. As we continue to partner with educators to build healthy, resilient communities, we look forward to sharing our journey with you.

Tiffany Cheng Nyaggah
Executive Director and Co-Founder
VISION

We imagine a world where schools are a vibrant place for all children to develop the skills and strength of character to thrive and succeed.

MISSION

Dignitas empowers educators by developing leaders who will transform opportunities for the next generation.

Around the world, marginalized communities have self-organized and established schools in the hope of meeting the educational needs of their children. Although the majority of these schools are led by committed community leaders, they lack trained teachers, skilled leadership, and basic resources.

Dignitas partners with these schools, strengthening leadership, improving instructional quality, and providing infra-structural support to help schools create an environment where all children fulfill their potential.
Marginalized communities lack access to public schools. Community members open low cost private schools to educate the tens of thousands of school-age children living in these areas.
Low cost private schools often struggle to provide high-quality education due to a lack of trained teachers, strong leadership, and resources. Dignitas and its partners are committed to ensuring all children receive a high-quality education.
Our Growing Community

2014 marked a period of growth for Dignitas. Dignitas expanded its programs beyond Mathare into additional informal settlements for the first time since its founding in 2008. These new communities in Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, face similar challenges to Mathare but also provide new opportunities to learn about partnership and school transformation.

2014 Partner Communities

2014 in Numbers

- 34 School partners
- 12,700 Students benefitted
- 396 Educators trained

Since Our Founding

- 450+ educators trained
- 43 school partners
- 5 communities reached
- 14,000+ students benefitted
Empowering School Leaders
Equipping administrators with the skills to enact sustainable change

With the right skills and an open mind, educators can enact positive sustainable change in their schools. Dignitas teaches school leaders how to create a collaborative, motivating environment that encourages achievement for all.

In 2014, school leaders from 25 partner schools attended the Leadership Training Institute, an intensive 3-week classroom-based training that introduces ideas and concepts to empower educators to be inspiring leaders and excellent teachers. Dignitas continued to invest in these leaders after the Training Institute through one-on-one coaching and targeted, professional development sessions on governance, management, and leadership.

“When I compare the Leadership Institute to my first trainings as a teacher, Dignitas is so much more advanced. Before I was only being taught about how to manage classes, but at Dignitas I am learning how to manage the whole school.”

—Phanice Mulsehe, Leadership Training Institute Fellow
Benjamin Anyanga, a head teacher, used the management skills he gained to drastically reduce teacher turnover and bring stability to his school and students.

24
School leaders participated in the Leadership Training Institute in 2014

30
School leaders gained management skills through professional development workshops

15
School leaders attended an Instructional Leadership workshop to learn how to guide teacher’s development

25
School teams developed strategic plans to guide school improvements
Developing Great Teachers
Preparing highly effective classroom teachers

High-quality teachers are essential to preparing students for success. Dignitas provides professional development to educators from community schools, so that they stay motivated and committed, improve teaching and learning, and develop as leaders in their schools and communities.

This year, Dignitas worked with teachers from 34 different schools, providing workshops that taught educators proven strategies to increase effectiveness and student engagement. Educators who attended the Leadership Training Institute also received personalized professional development and mentorship from Dignitas Coaches.

“I want to try to better the situations of these kids, so they don’t feel disadvantaged. I want them to know that they are loved, and it is my dream for them to go to secondary school and succeed.”

—Evan Aseneka, Leadership Training Institute Fellow
147 Teachers attended the Leadership Training Institutes in 2014

90 Coaching visits conducted in partner schools

280 Coaching hours completed by Dignitas Instructional Coaches

47 Teachers attended workshops on creating teaching aids

62 Teachers attended a Mathematics Instruction workshop

23 Teachers received a certificate in Early Grade Reading Instruction from University of Nairobi after attending Dignitas trainings

In just one year of partnership, Jackline Akoth, Head Teacher, led her teachers in a school development effort that resulted in the school improving on Dignitas’s school-wide assessment by 92%.
Many students in Dignitas partner schools do not have access to resources that can help them excel. Dignitas therefore acts as a linkage between schools and student support organizations – ensuring that partner schools can offer their students as many advantages as possible. In 2014, Dignitas partnered with Tailored for Education to deliver school uniforms and provided secondary school scholarships to 26 outstanding female students through the Dottie Scholarship. Dignitas also organized its first Reading Festival for 15 partner schools. The Reading Festival combined games and competition to spark students’ interest in reading, and also involved teachers so they could learn how to create their own engaging reading activities.

12,700
Total students at partner schools reached through Dignitas programs in 2014

65
Students attended the Reading Festival to spark a love of reading

26
Promising young women attended secondary school thanks to the Dottie Scholarship

1,300
Students received uniforms to boost confidence and health and safety
Dignitas Instructional Coach Carol Owala explains the rules of a Reading Festival game to eager students, while teachers from Dignitas partner schools observe to learn how to teach and encourage young readers.
Creating Healthy Learning Environments

Schools in informal settlements often do not have the facilities to create a proper learning environment for students or to even begin implementing the skills and concepts learned from Dignitas. Dignitas sees school development as an opportunity to build resource acquisition skills, and so offers partner schools in need the chance to apply for small grants for infrastructure improvements.
4
Schools gained access to clean water/sanitation facilities through Dignitas grants

1,850
Students benefitted from improved water and sanitation at their school

6,820
Storybooks delivered to partners to give young students access to engaging reading
2014 Income

- International Individual Donors: 68%
- Institutional Donors: 9%
- Local Donations: 8%
- Interest Income: 2%
- 2013 Reserves: 13%

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2014 Expenditures

- Program Expenses: 43%
- Learning & Evaluation: 7%
- Organizational Management: 12%
- Operations: 31%
- Equipment & Resources: 5%
- Communications & Stakeholder Engagement: 2%

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Thank You

Dignitas’s continued success is due to amazing supporters like you.
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