Impact Assessment of the Dignitas Leadership Institute

Final Report August 2018
Evaluation conducted by ZiniAfrique Limited
This evaluation exercise has received the extreme support of many individuals and institutions. First, we acknowledge the support received from Dignitas in accessing documents, data and contacts from the various institutions. We recognize the timely responses given by Tiffany Cheng, Deborah Kimathi, Maurine Makena and Leah Anyanwu, and the evaluation team. We acknowledge the cooperation of the directors and headteachers at the 25 schools evaluated. We thank all the teachers, parents and pupils who spared their time to answer our questions and share their experiences and perspectives.

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Without all these contributions, this evaluation would not have been as successful.
Education imparts knowledge, skills and abilities that enable learners to become productive members of society. Poverty, and the marginalization and injustice that so often accompany it, keeps children out of school. In fact, children from the poorest households are four times more likely to be out of school than those from the richest households. Yet, access to quality education is a key exit route from poverty and a fundamental and constitutional right in Kenya.

Less than 10 percent and less than 20 percent of children in Nairobi’s Kibera and Mathare informal settlements respectively, attend government primary schools. The majority attend non-formal, low-fee community schools established by individuals and religious communities. Whilst these community schools are invaluable to families marginalized by poverty and exclusion, the absence of trained teachers, skilled leadership, and basic resources perpetuates inequality.

Between 2011 and 2017, Dignitas implemented the Leadership Training Institute in 26 non-formal schools across seven sites: Mathare, Kawangware, Satellite, Kangemi, Kariobangi, Huruma, and Thika. The purpose of the Dignitas Leadership Institute (DLI) was to empower and equip educators to transform education in their communities. The intervention focused on five principal elements: (i) leadership, (ii) coaching, (iii) professional development, (iv) professional peer collaboration and learning, and (v) infrastructure support.

In October 2017, Dignitas engaged ziziAfrique to assess the impact of this intervention on the schools, teachers and learners. This ex-post evaluation was to provide evidence of Dignitas’ program impact in order to inform and support scaling, adjustment and replication strategies. The recommendations would stimulate continuous dialogue between Dignitas and stakeholders who
have interest in providing high-quality education to children in developing countries through teacher education and school leadership development programs.

Data was gathered from 25 schools in four different locations. The schools belonged to three intervention cohorts spanning 2011 to 2017. The evaluation utilized a mixed methods design, combining aspects of quantitative and qualitative research implemented in January and March 2018. Measurement of impact relied on a single-point of data collection, with limited correlating baseline or midline data.

The evaluation focused on eight major dimensions of impact, drawn from the key components of the intervention:
The assessment concluded that the Dignitas leadership training program did improve school governance and the overall learning climate but had no impact on teacher retention and motivation, which was influenced by the search for better pay. Salary payment is generally acknowledged as a challenge for low-fee private schools. Understandably, increase of teacher salaries was not within the scope of the DLI intervention. The greatest impact was at the individual level - headteachers recalled leadership and governance aspects, teachers recalled classroom management and planning aspects, while parents remembered the infrastructure support provided by the project. Unfortunately, the absence of correlating baseline data means this evaluation can only establish that learning was taking place in the intervention schools but is unable to determine the actual contribution of the DLI intervention.

The evaluation highlights numerous areas for future action. Eight recommendations are given:

1. DLI should explicitly aim to improve learning, while prioritizing what works in improving learning in informal settlements;
2. DLI should consider teacher motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) in any future teacher interventions;
3. DLI should elevate every headteacher to the position of instructional leader and focus on selected instructional practices, including holding teachers accountable for lesson preparation and delivery (by modelling this first, themselves);
4. Rather than addressing various topics, DLI should consider focusing the intervention on select skills that have the greatest potential to improve student learning;
5. While the low-fee private schools are needy, trying the interventions in a few public schools may add value. Combining private and public schools will complicate the equation, but may have benefits in introducing conversations with government, learning from government, and increasing program prospects for scale;
6. Greater parental involvement may create direct connections and new
pathways to improving learning and reveal new frontiers for impact. However, increased accountability may threaten the private owners of schools. Parents could demand quality and support children to learn at home. Any parental engagement model, however, must be cognizant of two realities – privately-owned and poorly-resourced schools, poorly educated parents whose availability is severely challenged by the demands of daily survival.

7. In designing the new program, methods of impact evaluation, and capacity for the same, should be considered from the onset. To tell a complete story, a comprehensive independent baseline and a system of tracking important indicators for the duration of the implementation is necessary. Even then, this program should be monitored for some time, to extend the learning and use the many years of experience to inform the future of Dignitas;

8. The informal learning settlements in Nairobi present an extremely dynamic and noisy environment, driven by a multiplicity of systemic factors in and out of the school. In addition, there are interventions from many other sources. Thus, interventions need to be accompanied by robust evaluation designs that enable close monitoring and documentation to isolate the project’s impact.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Abbreviations and Acronyms

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<tr>
<td>BoM</td>
<td>Board of Management</td>
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<td>DLI</td>
<td>Dignitas Leadership Institute</td>
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<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development and Education</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>G&amp;C</td>
<td>Guidance and Counselling</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
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<td>ID</td>
<td>Identity</td>
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<td>KCPE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Primary Education</td>
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<td>KICD</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development</td>
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<td>Ksh.</td>
<td>Kenya Shillings</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrolment Ratio</td>
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<td>NESP</td>
<td>National Education Sector Plan</td>
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<td>NESSP</td>
<td>National Education Sector Strategic Plan</td>
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<td>PLC</td>
<td>Professional Learning Communities</td>
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<td>PTR</td>
<td>Pupil–Teacher Ratio</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Plan</td>
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<td>SNE</td>
<td>Special Needs Education</td>
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<td>TSC</td>
<td>Teachers Service Commission</td>
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1.1 Background

Today, more than half of the world’s population lives in urban centres – and the numbers continue to increase. Estimates show that by 2050, nearly seven in ten people in the world will be living in urban areas. For Sub-Saharan Africa, the share of urban population will increase from the current 37 percent to more than 60 percent. People migrate to urban areas in search of jobs and business opportunities and in pursuit of a better life. However, governments do not match the provision of services such as health, housing, education, social amenities, and infrastructure to the population growth, consequently pushing urban populations toward negative coping strategies. Kenya’s 2009 population census places about 3 million people in its capital city Nairobi. Half of the 3 million inhabitants live in slums and informal settlements without the requisite infrastructure and services such as health, sanitation, water, recreation, education, and in less than humane conditions.

Children have a right to quality education. Kenya’s Vision 2030 aims at providing a globally competitive quality education, training and research for development to reduce illiteracy, improve the transition rate from primary to secondary schools, and raise the quality and relevance of education. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) has also provided for free and compulsory basic education at primary level. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, focusing on the goals of education, states that children’s education should develop individual personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest. The need for quality education for all children therefore, cannot be over-emphasized.

Education imparts to learners knowledge, skills, and abilities that will enable them to become productive members of society. Education is important for national development and countries with high growth rates have highly educated human capital. Poverty, and the marginalization and injustice that so often accompany it, keeps children out of school. In fact, children from the poorest households are four times more likely to be out of school than those from the richest households\(^2\). Yet access to quality education is one of the key exit routes from poverty.

In Nairobi, nearly 63 percent of children live in urban informal settlements with minimal access to government schools. For instance, less than 10 percent of the children in Kibera and less than 20 percent in Mathare settlements respectively attend government primary schools.

The majority attend non-formal, low-fee schools established by these communities. Whilst these community schools are invaluable to families marginalized by poverty and exclusion, the absence of trained teachers, skilled leadership and basic resources, perpetuates inequality.

For families living in poverty, the promise of education is powerful. Dignitas was founded out of this very promise. When the founders first engaged families and community stakeholders in Nairobi’s informal settlements

\(^2\) Uwezo Assessment in Kenya, 2016.
and enquired about their priorities, the answer was consistently, “Education”! Children and families living in poverty placed their hope in the promise of education every day – they hoped that education would deliver on the promise of a brighter future, the promise of escape from poverty, the promise of employment, and the promise of health and wealth. The work of Dignitas grew out of an aspiration to make this promise a reality. The 2018 World Development Report (Learning to Realize the Promise of Education), calls on all actors to do the same – to build education systems that deliver quality learning and teaching experiences, and in turn, realize the promise of education.

Kenya’s tremendous gains in access to primary education are laudable. Over recent years, the country boasts a steadily increasing Net Enrolment Ratio (NER), currently at 91 percent, with an overall enrolment at 10.3 million across 30,000 primary schools. What’s more, Kenya is on the brink of closing the gender gap in primary enrolment and nearly 8 out of 10 children enrol in Grade 1 and complete Grade 8.

However, “schooling is not enough. What is important, and what generates a real return on investment, is learning and acquiring skills. This is what truly builds human capital...realizing education’s promise means giving them the chance not only to compete in tomorrow’s economy, but also to improve their communities, build stronger countries, and move closer to a world that is finally free of poverty.”

Preparing the youth with a quality 21st century education will be difficult since current school systems throughout the world are struggling to achieve basic learning outcomes. According to UNESCO, four in 10 Grade 4 children across the globe fail to meet minimum learning standards. In line with this, the World Bank recently declared a global learning crisis, reporting that 617 million school-aged children are not reaching minimum proficiency levels in

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3 National Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2018-2022
4 “Learning to Realize Education’s Promise” World Development Report, World Bank, 2018
reading and math.
The delivery of quality education in Kenya faces complex challenges: teacher absenteeism, teacher motivation, relevance of school inputs, teacher training, and changing demands on curriculum. Challenges in governance, management and administration have led to gaps in service delivery, learning outcomes, teacher management, competence and performance levels, hindering the realization of education sector targets.

Other challenges include inadequate strategies for teacher development and inefficient management, inadequate provision of holistic early childhood development and education (ECDE), including nutrition for ECDE and primary education children, inequalities in schooling provision, ineffective and uncoordinated monitoring and evaluation of education outcomes and programs, weak linkage between education and the labour market, low progression from secondary to tertiary education, inadequate integration of ICT into the education system, and lack of adequate guidelines to address cross-cutting issues that affect learning outcomes such as poverty, hunger, conflict and emergencies, integration of national social values, and inadequate access to schooling by children with special needs. In the East African context, this complexity is compounded by poverty, inequality, and marginalization.

However, as per the conclusions drawn in the 2018 World Development Report, there is evidence to support successful interventions that lead to learning gains such as additional years of schooling, higher earnings and lower poverty. Education policy makers, actors, organizations, funders, school leaders, and teachers need to listen and intentionally apply evidence in order to achieve learning goals. Subsequently, the report suggests that effective systems should pay attention to: prepared learners, effective teaching, and school-level interventions that actually affect the teaching and learning process (World Bank, 2018).

In line with the above, Kenya has been on the path of reforming basic education to nurture the learning potential of all children. The new curriculum
framework recognizes the need to focus on every learner’s competency, and ensuring that education yields the knowledge, skills and attitudes demanded by modern living. Beyond the traditional subject areas, the new competency framework includes communication, collaboration, critical thinking skills, learning to learn, and self-efficacy (KICD, 2017).

This new thinking brings hope, but realizing the dream necessitates new ways of doing business in education. First, is the challenge of capacitating school governance and leadership to understand the new system, and adequately align the policies and resources. Second, is the challenge of getting every teacher and parent to understand the objects of the new curriculum, believe in it and work towards its implementation. As the Ministry of Education is working towards this ambition, opportunities are opening up for new collaboration with the civil society and the private sector in nurturing the potential of every learner in Kenya.

1.2 The Dignitas Intervention

The Dream
Founded in 2008, Dignitas seeks the restoration of dignity for all children and communities through education. The inspiration of Dignitas are the hundreds of thousands of children in urban informal settlements who cannot access quality education. A situational analysis in 2007 established that there were only three public primary schools in Mathare Valley (Nairobi’s oldest slum) for over 150,000 children. To address this gap, individuals and communities had founded uncounted low-fee private schools. Despite their struggle, these schools thirsted for inspired and qualified school leaders and educators.

To participate in solution-seeking, the founders of Dignitas imagined a world where schools in informal urban settlements are a vibrant place for all children to develop the skills and strength of character to thrive and succeed. In 2011, Dignitas launched the Leadership Institute – a multi-year partnership program designed to develop dedicated teachers into highly skilled and motivated school leaders and educators.
**Theory of Change**

This project sought an end in which students from underserved communities are prepared to thrive in life\(^5\). To achieve this, the Dignitas Leadership Institute mapped four pathways to the program’s intermediate outcomes that:

1. **School leaders are joyful and inspired in their jobs.**
2. **Teachers are taking on more leadership roles and see themselves as change agents (self-efficacy) in their schools and communities.**
3. **Teachers believe in all students’ ability to achieve, and have the skills/tools to help them do so.**
4. **Schools are spaces of continuous learning and improvement.**

These changes would be achieved through four broad activities that were implemented collaboratively with the school communities:

**Leadership Training Institute:** A series of intensive 3-week, classroom-based training summits introduce ideas and concepts that empower educators to be inspiring leaders and excellent teachers. The aim is to shift beliefs, attitudes \(^5\) Targeting especially the skills of entrepreneurship, problem-solving, self-efficacy and achievement mindsets.
and values so that educators see the potential in their schools and students. The Training Institute lays the foundation for educators to take charge of improving their schools and catalyzes school improvement efforts.

**Coaching:** Professional coaches provide personalized, in-class mentoring to the Leadership Training Institute fellows. Coaching focuses on practical application of skills and concepts learned in training to ensure they are implemented in the classroom. Individualized coaching also ensures that each teacher receives support specific to his or her needs and abilities.

**Professional Development Workshops:** The workshops provide targeted professional development for both school leaders and teachers and build more complex knowledge and skills on top of the foundation created in the leadership training institute. Workshops also specifically address cross-cutting issues that affect all schools as well as topics that are best-suited to group learning.

**Infrastructure Support:** Recognizing that many schools in marginalized communities lack the basic level of infrastructure necessary to begin improving education quality, Dignitas provides small grants to partner schools and uses this process to coach school staff on resource acquisition and maintenance skills.

Over the implementation years, a fifth component was introduced to this intervention, the **Professional Learning Communities (PLC).** The PLC create space for teachers to engage continually in self-improvement, while sustaining a consistent path of lifelong learning and adapting practices for the achievement of school excellence.

**Project Reach**
By December 2017, the Dignitas intervention had directly reached a total of 489 educators in 35 low-fee primary schools. These schools are spread out in seven sites: Mathare, Kawangware, Satellite, Kangemi, Kariobangi, Huruma, and Thika. Over the seven-year period, the project was implemented in three cohorts - 2011 to 2014, 2014 to 2017 and 2011 to 2017.
To identify schools for the intervention, Dignitas facilitated community meetings and mapped schools. Schools were selected based on their sustainability, which was determined by the age of the school, the school fees, the school infrastructure, and the student population. An additional criterion was openness to learning, accountability, and transparency; for example, schools that were without a Board of Management but were keen on establishing one were selected. The schools were introduced to the Dignitas’ intervention model of training and invited to participate in the program.

Similarly, teachers were invited to apply to the program. Consideration was given to teachers who had been in the school for a number of years and to those who, apart from teaching, demonstrated their leadership capacity through additional responsibilities. Dignitas hoped teachers would remain in the school and share the acquired knowledge and skills with teachers who were not directly trained.
2.1 Purpose and Scope

In October 2017, Dignitas engaged ziziAfrique to assess the impact of the Dignitas Leadership Institute on the schools, teachers, and learners. This was an ex-post evaluation intended to provide evidence of Dignitas’ program impact in order to inform and support scaling, adjustment, and replication strategies. In addition, findings from this study seek to provide grounds for continuous dialogue between Dignitas and stakeholders who have interest in providing high-quality education to children in developing countries through teacher education and school leadership development programs. The initial terms of reference for the evaluation included four critical questions:

1. What impact does the Dignitas Leadership Institute have on student academic and self-efficacy outcomes?
2. To what degree did the Dignitas’ training impact instructional delivery in the classroom?
3. To what degree did the Dignitas Leadership Institute Program improve teacher – student interactions and the overall learning environment?
4. What is the impact of the Dignitas’ Leadership Institute Program on teachers’ self-efficacy, mindset, and leadership?

Through consultation between ziziAfrique and Dignitas, the four questions were expanded to a broader inquiry framework derived from the project rubric. New dimensions were included into the framework, drawing a roadmap for:

i. Documenting the intervention – what happened, when and how;
ii. Determining the contribution of the intervention to the various aspects of school governance and management, including the improvement of learning outcomes;
iii. Exploring the dispersal effects of the project on non-project schools; and,
iv. Determining the residual effects on schools where the program had lapsed.

The final evaluation framework agreed upon between the evaluators and Dignitas consisted of five key indicators (a–e) and three subsidiary indicators (f–h):

a. **Improved school governance**: systems and operations, records, financial management, policies/systems for accountability, improved infrastructure, and capacities for resource mobilization, and removal of barriers for SNE;

b. **Improved school culture and climate**: ownership of school goals, professional learning structures, inspired and transformative leadership, development of SIPs, reflective practice, and collective teacher efficacy;

c. **Improved pedagogy and instruction**: Improved teaching skills, development and use of learning materials, reflective teaching, classroom management and alternative discipline practice, special needs/inclusive practice, capacities for learning assessment, and improved learning and self-improvement culture among teachers;

d. **Improved learner support**: inclusion of non-academic activities, skills training in clubs, guidance and counselling programs, referral network for complex cases, refresher training for teachers, use of teaching aids, student collaboration through group work and peer learning, students’ participation in class, and balanced teacher and student talk;

e. **Improved stakeholder engagement**: BOMs, teacher-parent communication, support of parents to learning of their children, and engagement of external partners;

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6. This was a blueprint developed by Dignitas over the time and formed the basis for implementation and assessment.
f. Improved learner attendance and teacher retention: School enrolment, attendance and retention of learners, reduced teacher attrition;
g. Residual practices: continuation of DLI practices after the intervention had ceased in the 2011-2014 school cohort;
h. Dispersal effects: Spread of DLI practices to non-intervention schools, either through DLI teachers’ transfer to new schools, or DLI teachers starting new schools.

The evaluation tools and evaluation questions were aligned to this framework of indicators, and formed a logical sequence of inquiry to arrive at conclusions on the four project outcomes.

It must be understood, however, that measurement of impact relied on one-point of data collection, with limited correlating baseline or midline data. Though Dignitas had a wealth of data from internal monitoring processes, much of it could not be correlated with the evaluation data owing to low matching of indicators. The evaluation could therefore not attain any robust findings on aspects such as effect sizes of the intervention, and thus draws mainly on the qualitative and beneficiary perspectives. This report presents findings of the evaluation and makes recommendations to inform present and future programming.

2.2 Methodology

The evaluation utilized a mixed methods design, combining aspects of quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative survey was conducted in 25 schools that participated in the intervention; one school (the 26th) declined to participate. To collect data, the evaluation used five tools: headteacher’s questionnaire, teacher’s questionnaire, guidance and counselling questionnaire, the school observation checklist, and the lesson observation checklist. It also administered Mathematics and English tests.

This study contained three sub-studies:

a. Interviewed 25 headteachers, 51 class and subject teachers and 23 guidance and counselling teachers;
b. Observed a total of 47 lessons mostly in class 6 English and Mathematics;
c. Tested a total of 479 pupils (243 in class 4 and 236 in class 7), in both English and Mathematics. For each class, five girls and five boys were randomly selected to sit for class 3 and 6 tests respectively. The assessment was conducted at the beginning of the school year, in January.
Quantitative data was recorded using pre-loaded mobile devices, using the KoboCollect platform. The submitted data were received directly from the server, cleaned and analysed using Stata. Mostly descriptive analyses were conducted, while key indicators were used to construct a regression model to test their association with learning outcomes.

Secondly, a qualitative study was conducted in five implementation schools, and two non-implementation schools that had been influenced by the intervention\textsuperscript{7}. The study was conducted about a month after the quantitative study, to deepen insight on a certain range of variables. The schools were selected purposefully to represent schools that had posted both great and poor results on the quantitative study and to represent the different study sites and intervention cohorts. Teams of two visited each of the selected schools. The data collection tools included Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides for headteachers, Dignitas trained teachers, parents, BoM, and boys and girls.

In addition, all teachers in the schools and students who participated in the FGDs completed self-efficacy questionnaires. Parents selected to participate in the study were required to have been parents in the school for at least two years and were representative of the different classes. The FGDs were recorded electronically and in the form of handwritten notes. The electronically recorded data was then transcribed. A total of nine one-on-one interviews were conducted with headteachers and BoM chairpersons, 10 group interviews were conducted with teachers and BoM members, while 15 focus group discussions were conducted with cumulative participation of 100 pupils and 31 parents. This combination helped to reconstruct the context in which the schools operated before and after the interventions and highlight the impact that the Dignitas Leadership Institute had on the schools, teachers and learners.

\textbf{2.3 Process of Evaluation}

Work began in October 2017 with orientation visits and interactive meetings with the Dignitas staff and selected teachers who were part of the intervention. Two meetings were held at Dignitas to help the evaluation team understand in depth the DLI, including one larger meeting that had the attendance of selected teachers and headteachers who had benefited from the

\textsuperscript{7} Both schools were started by teachers who were trained by Dignitas in the Leadership Institute.
intervention. The clarity gained here led to the development of the evaluation framework, which was again validated with the Dignitas team. Evaluation tools were then developed and piloted. This process lasted for nearly three months.

After finalizing the research instruments, the quantitative study began in January 2018. At the onset, ziziAfrique and Dignitas contacted and visited the schools to inform them of the evaluation and to give a step by step brief on the purpose of the study, and what was expected of them. The pre-visits involved meetings with school headteachers and directors to seek their consent, support, and participation in the study.

Elaborate fieldwork training was undertaken in two parts: A two-day training session for quantitative data collectors and a one-day training for the qualitative data collectors. ziziAfrique staff and consultants facilitated the training sessions. Training sessions covered interview techniques, a thorough review of the questionnaires’ content, mock interviews among trainees, training on the use of the KoboCollect data collection tool, and installation of the software to gain practical interviewing experience. The teams then visited two selected schools to pilot the tools.

One team leader and a research assistant visited one school for a full day. The teams conducted one on one interviews with the headteachers, teachers, and guidance and counselling teachers. The interviewer asked questions and as the respondents answered, the interviewer entered the answer on the KoboCollect electronic data collection tool, using an electronic device. In each school, the researchers visited a Mathematics or English lesson and observed the teacher teaching as they completed the questionnaire in the electronic data collection tool. In a few instances when it was not possible to observe Mathematics or English lessons, the researchers observed a different subject being taught. The final observation was the school environment, facilities, and infrastructure. This information was also entered into the electronic data collection tool. All the data collected was sent in real time to a central portal. The process of data collection and analysis lasted for three months.
3.1 Understanding the Study Schools

As stated earlier, this evaluation covered a total of 25 schools in seven different locations. The schools belonged to three intervention cohorts, in the years 2011 to 2017. All the schools can be categorized as low-fee private primary schools in the informal urban settlements of Nairobi and Thika. To understand the contexts of these schools, the schools can be characterized through five contextual perspectives:
1. The intervention schools vary greatly in population size and resourcing levels
The average school size was 230 learners, meaning that the average grade had less than 30 learners. A total of 14 schools had a population of less than 240 pupils, while three schools had more than 400. The school population ranged from 32 to 474. Similarly, the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) averaged at 1:18, but ranged from 1:8 to 1:34. The evaluation established that though ‘low-fee private schools’ have often been defined as a homogenous category, these schools are very heterogeneous. Given this, the evaluation notes that a ‘one-size-fits-all’ intervention may not work.

FIGURE 1: Distribution of schools by population size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Size</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;400</td>
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<tr>
<td>300-399</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>200-299</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;400</td>
<td>3</td>
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2. Most schools are linked to a religious institution
WWThis evaluation confirmed that all the intervention schools were private and serving the low-income urban populations. Many of them belonged explicitly to religious institutions (churches); more than half of the schools had a religious affiliation, were owned by a pastor or bore a name with religious connotations. Only a few schools were owned by individuals without church affiliation. The evaluation appreciates the contribution of religious institutions to the provision of education to low-income populations, noting consistency with the public system in which also a significant majority of schools either are owned or sponsored by religious institutions, or were at least founded through religious effort. For many of the evaluation schools therefore, the themes of religion, faith and charity flow through
their education, as an intended and deliberate intervention. Evaluating the education of these institutions calls for attention to not just academic education, but also other dimensions of religious and social learning that are transmitted through formal, non-formal and informal curricula.

3. There is near gender parity in the teachers, but fewer women are in management

Overall, 55 percent of the teachers were female, while 45 percent were male. However, only 28 per cent of the headteachers were female. This proportion was lower than the 40 per cent established by Combat (2014) in municipal schools in Kenya. This confirms the general finding that while there is parity among the education personnel, few females rise to management (also in Ombati 2010). Remarkably, 83 percent of the guidance and counselling teachers were female. The general distribution in management, teaching and the provision of others services within the school milieu challenges the parity ideal that each school should strive to achieve.

4. Nearly a third of the teachers are untrained, and more than half of them are not registered with the Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC)

Around 29 percent of the teachers had no relevant qualification, while none of them had a university qualification. Majority (59%) held certificate qualifications, and 12 percent were diploma holders. In contrast, only 8 percent of the headteachers were without relevant qualification; 44 percent held a diploma and 16 percent had a university degree. As established under section 3.2.3 (later in this report) however, the young persons growing up in informal urban settlements thrive under precarious circumstances and very few of them access opportunities to enter teacher training (owing to both cost and entry qualifications). Many of them enter teaching after completing secondary school and hope to access training as they work.

The TSC Act of 2012 article 237, requires that all qualified public and private schools’ teachers in Kenya be registered with the Teachers Service Commission and have a TSC number. However, only 45 percent of the teachers and 40 percent of the headteachers

“Even among the schools where the intervention ceased in 2014, the participants had a fair recollection of the intervention by Dignitas”.
had a registration number. While noting the high non-registration, the imbalance is unique. We assume that the incentive to register is higher among teachers than headteachers, and indeed, if we were to subtract the non-eligible 29 percent (untrained), then only a small proportion of eligible teachers (16%) may be unregistered. On the other hand, rising to be a headteacher in the public education system is a lengthy process and joining the teachers force to slowly rise up the rank may not be attractive to headteachers in private schools. Less than half of the qualified headteachers are registered. On the other hand, it is clear that the private schools participating in this study may not require their teachers or headteachers to be registered. Considering all the above, a question arises: with such wide variation in teacher profiles, at what level should the teacher skills intervention be targeted?

5. More than half of the teachers in the study were not trained directly by Dignitas

Of the teachers who participated in the study, more than a half of them were not trained directly by Dignitas. However, nearly all headteachers (92%) were. A cascade model was adopted in training, with classroom-based training and school-level sharing as two pathways to the capacity building of teachers. The proportion of teachers not trained directly by Dignitas compares favourably with the teachers who did not have a copy of the DLI rubric (56.9%) and those that cited difficulties in applying the rubric (58.8%).
TABLE 1: Descriptive indicators of teachers and headteachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Headteacher</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Guidance and Counselling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohorts</td>
<td>2011–2014</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011–2017</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014–2017</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest qualification</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untrained</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSC registration</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained directly by Dignitas</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a copy of the school</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment rubric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident applying the self -</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assessment rubric</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents (N)</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Consumer Recall and Validation of the Dignitas Leadership Institute

There was high awareness among stakeholders
Most of the study participants knew about the intervention, in its various components. The evaluation confirmed that the intervention happened in all the targeted schools. Discussions with the headteachers, Boards of Management (BoM) members, teachers and parents confirmed that they knew about the Dignitas Leadership Institute (DLI) as well as the various interventions, which included teacher training, infrastructural support, the Leadership Institute, and coaching.
The evaluation established that even among the schools where the intervention ceased in 2014, the participants had a fair recollection of the intervention by Dignitas. This applied equally to headteachers, teachers, members of BoM and parents. One teacher recalled:

“Myself, I was trained in 2012-2013 and graduated in 2013. We were trained on certain qualities of a good leader, the teacher as a leader in the classroom, and also on the teaching methodology. There was one on how you can evaluate the learning of the pupils. I also learned on becoming a proficient teacher where you are able to have the control methods, how to come up with ways of punishing the learners without using corporal punishment, and how you can involve the learners and the parents together” (Teacher Group Interview, School B).

While teachers and headteachers recalled in greater detail the aspects of teacher training and school management, the BoM members and parents were quick to recall aspects of infrastructure and financial support, as illustrated below:

“Yes. Dignitas gave our children new school uniform. The pupils were so happy and this motivated them to learn. The sweaters were very good... they had torn uniform and shoes and we thank Dignitas for what they did to our children” (BoM Interview School G).

“They also paid school fees for some learners, sanitary towels for the girls and even the cupboard behind you was brought by Dignitas for storing books. They brought story books and a water tank” (Parents interview, School C).

**Headteachers, teachers and guidance and counselling teachers differed in what they found most useful**

The leadership training institute introduced ideas and concepts that were intended to empower educators to be inspiring leaders and excellent teachers. Headteachers found coaching to be the most beneficial of the five components, teachers favoured the professional development workshops, while the guidance and counselling
(G&C) teachers favoured the leadership institute. Both the teachers and the guidance and counselling teachers found Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to be the least useful. This response may have been because the PLCs were introduced in the 2014 – 2017 cohort and may not have been introduced in some of the schools, which were in earlier cohorts. Table 2 summarizes these findings.

**TABLE 2: To what extent were the following DLI components useful to you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headteacher</th>
<th>Great extent</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Small extent</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Institute</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development workshops</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure support</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning communities</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Institute</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development workshops</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure support</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning communities</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance &amp; Counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Institute</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development workshops</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure support</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional learning communities</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While they were generally appreciative and confident in the outcomes of the DLI, a few teachers critiqued the intervention in both content and approach. Some expressed views that certain skills that the DLI imparted were not relevant to everyone – like training classroom teachers on financial management. Others complained about the methodologies they were trained in, and were critical about the alternative ways of discipline perpetuated by DLI. This confirms the fact that while knowledge and skills may be easier to impart in teacher training, attitude change can be a nagging challenge. The quote below from one of the teachers’ group interview expounds this well.
“We don’t use the skills that we acquired about financial management of the school...because the management does not want us to be involved. Sometimes it is difficult to use the methodology we were trained in due to the level of our learners. When you use some of the methods some learners lose. For example the way we were trained on lesson development, when you follow it you will find some learners have difficulties in understanding within the stipulated time. This is because in the methodology you have to work under certain time limits. This forces us to create time for helping them catch up with the others. So sometimes I ignore some small mistakes and also I can give them extra questions to do for their homework” (Teachers Group Interview, School G).

The intervention dosage was uneven, and high social desirability is detected in responses

Although teachers, parents, and BoM members were aware of Dignitas and the interventions, great variation in the dosage of intervention across the various schools was established. For instance, a quick look at quantitative data reveals that the total duration of coaching sessions varied from 8.5–11 hours in seven schools. This is because teachers identified their preferred area of focus and there was a lot of emphasis on this in addition to the general training content.

The evaluation also noted more emphasis on some intervention aspects than others, which was in the intervention design. For instance, guidance and counselling was alluded to in the intervention design but was never prioritized as a key lever of change in instruction and school leadership. As a result, significant time or resource was not invested in this. It is therefore not surprising that the evaluation noted weak capacities and attitudes to providing effective guidance and counselling services in the schools across the board, yet this may be of importance in their challenging operating environments. In contrast, aspects of school governance and the pedagogical activities seem to gain greater attention, as confirmed by headteachers and teachers. This aligns with the intended outcomes of the intervention.
The evaluation established a big variation in what headteachers and teachers reported on the one hand, and the BoM and parents on the other. For instance, 92 percent of headteachers reported that teachers had in the past year accessed in-service training, organized by the schools and other partners, while only 62 percent of the teachers confirmed this. Whereas 12 percent of headteachers said they had developed their own tests for the end of 2017 examinations, only two percent of the teachers confirmed this. The researchers therefore sensed great extents of social desirability in responses at all levels, save for the pupils.

3.3 Contribution of the Dignitas Leadership Institute

The evaluation assessed impact in seven areas, the contribution of the DLI to: school governance practice, school culture and climate, pedagogy and instruction, learner support, stakeholder engagement, learning outcomes, and teacher/learner attendance and retention. Overall, most informants felt that the DLI interventions had a great deal of impact on them. However, it was observed that the schools in informal settlements had interventions from many corners, making the evaluation environment fairly noisy. The 25 schools had a total of 19 on-going interventions with other partners. This makes it difficult to single out the overall impact of Dignitas on school and learning improvement. The following sections present findings along each of the intervention components.

3.3.1 Improved School Governance

The qualitative study and general observations confirmed that school governance had been covered in the DLI as an issue of priority. Indeed, the connection between school governance and improved learning has been established. The 2018 World Development Report (World Bank, 2018) noted that although school governance does not directly improve learning, it does so through the indirect paths of improving teaching quality and ensuring effective deployment of school resources to focus on learning. Indeed, results from eight countries demonstrated that adoption of selected school management practices was associated with a 0.23–0.43 standard deviation
increase in learning outcomes. Effective school managers were defined as those that were actively involved in helping teachers solve problems, providing instructional advice and setting school goals that prioritized learning.

**Headteachers feel DLI made impact**
Headteachers expressed the opinion that the DLI had contributed to the improvement of school governance practices. One of them noted:

“…before Dignitas, we didn’t have proper financial records, but after the DLI, we have the accountant who has financial records from the school budget” (Headteacher interview, School G)

The headteachers identified four directions of the DLI impact on school governance, citing what they were able to do (and not previously able to, or aware of): 1) instilling in them virtues of good governance and a sense of responsibility; 2) integrating practical ways of doing things; 3) understanding the importance of BoMs, how to constitute them, and their duties and responsibilities; 4) understanding
the importance of, and integrating, teacher evaluation. An example is one school that had by the time of the evaluation digitized all school records and learned how to analyse and share the data. The evaluation went on to assess the extent to which the governance practices were evident, and the key governance tools defined by the intervention available. Table 3 summarizes this finding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Available (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Operational Board of Management</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Student enrolment records</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Admin structure with defined roles</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 2017 KCPE analyses</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Budget for 1st term 2018</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Term 3 Progress Review done</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Staff evaluation conducted in 2017</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Financial reports shared with parents in 2017</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 School Safety Committee</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 School Improvement Plan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 2018 Schemes of Work</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Updated Asset Register</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Updated Donations Register</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Human Resource Policy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 2016 Audited Accounts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Teachers set own exams in 2017</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Fire Drills Conducted in 2017</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, impact is disparate across the various processes and tools. More clearly evidenced in the schools are the processes and tools common to every Kenyan school, including the boards of management, student records and the analysis of examination results. Impact was least evident in processes and tools that may be considered unusual to the Kenyan school management culture, including fire drills, donations registers, asset registers and audited accounts. Noticeably though, more than half of the schools produced their 2018 budget, and had also conducted progress reviews at the end of the year 2017.
Unfortunately, the available baseline performance could not be matched to these impact evaluation findings, and, as a result, interpretation of what these scores mean becomes rather difficult. Effort to obtain evidence from other studies on primary schools in Kenya has also not been fruitful. Seemingly, such evidence is only available in the unpublished, internal records of the quality assurance department at the Ministry. The evaluation, however, establishes that while performance in some areas may seem low, there are indications that the situation may have been much worse before the intervention, as one school manager articulated:

“By then we did not even know how to keep our documents, we could not even keep receipts of the funds that come in. We were not even accurate with our expenditure. Today we have book keeping and that is one of the major things that we learned. We are more accountable. We know we have to get to know the incomes and the expenditure” (Director Interview School C).

Another headteacher alluded to the way he ran his school before and after the intervention:

“I remember we went for training on instructional leadership and it really helped me a lot because after that I was able to know my role as a headteacher that is to influence, and how to help the teachers. Previously we thought that the headteacher’s work was just in the office” (Headteacher Interview School B).

Further, the evaluation established that school governance was not uniform across the schools. Some schools had highly-evolved levels of governance, while others struggled with the basics. In a few schools, BoM members seemed not to be aware of their roles and they sometimes left the running of their schools to the directors, headteachers and chairpersons who would run schools on their own. One school did not have a BoM, as it was still in the transition phase following a change of school ownership. Most of the schools with BoM held regular meetings but there was an observable sharp variation in the levels of composition, engagement and power, ranging from very strong to very weak. In one school for instance, the BoM constituted of only the director and a class 8 parent.
Board members felt that in contexts of privately-owned schools, exercising the accountability role was problematic. The attitudes and capacities of school owners, unlike in government schools, largely limit the extent to which the BoM can impact school governance.

3.2.2 Improved School Culture and Climate

Improvement in school culture and climate was measured against the levels of teacher and learner participation. Teachers were to express high levels of ownership of school goals, accessing solid professional learning structures, displaying transformative leadership, exercising reflective practice and demonstrating collective teacher efficacy. Learners were to be aware of the school transformation efforts and participate actively in school leadership and school clubs.

Generally, headteachers gave a high rating of school ownership, claiming that the intervention received (following DLI) had opened up information to teachers and parents, energizing participation in school clubs with participation of teachers and pupils, and democratizing the institutions through elected student leadership. One headteacher explained:

“...we hold meetings with the teachers and also with the parents. When we attended workshops we would come back and hold meetings with the teachers where we would share what we learnt. Through that, we have seen a lot of improvement. When you give a teacher a chance to share he/she feels that they also own the school. As a leader you do a lot of things but when you give a teacher such a chance he/she will feel proud. We also have clubs where the pupils learn and share with others” (Headteacher Interview, School A).

Another added:

“... Like when coming up with our board we learnt that we should involve all the sectors. We get to involve the children in setting up their leadership structure that we should not select for them but it’s for them to give to us their representatives. So, we are trying to make everybody participate, the children and also the parents...” (Headteacher Interview, School C).
The evaluation asked both the headteachers and teachers whether they participated in key processes that suggest improved school culture and climate as per DLI’s intervention. First, of all the teachers interviewed, 94 percent of them were aware that their school had a motto, and 71 percent of them correctly stated the school motto. Seemingly though, this commendably high level of awareness does not influence practice. For instance, only 18 percent of the teachers had set learning targets and milestones in line with the school’s vision. To understand the improvement in school climate and culture more, the evaluation singled out seven dimensions in the analysis, as presented in table 4 below. This analysis corroborates the responses of headteachers against those of teachers. The questions differentiated between headteachers and teachers (see in brackets).

**TABLE 4: Headteacher and teacher rating of school culture and climate (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Headteachers</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you (does your school) participate in focus group discussions in the school to discuss students learning outcomes?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you (does your school) conduct internal evaluations to review the progress made by the school against set goals and in line with the school’s vision?</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>(Did you) Are there teachers who attended external trainings in 2017 other than by Dignitas?</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Have you set aside scheduled time for teachers to share new ideas?</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you (does your headteacher) have a plan for rewarding achievement and attainment of objectives by staff?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you (does your school) participate in focus group discussions in the school to discuss students learning outcomes?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do you hold (did you participate in) (DLI) sharing meetings?</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, the evaluation notes the natural over-estimation by headteachers. However, save for two of the indicators (attending trainings and holding meetings after DLI), one also sees a general agreement between the two sets of responses. Only in indicator 2 did the teachers rate higher than headteachers,
signifying that this outlier question may not have been properly understood in the way it was intended. From this, the evaluation arrives at high acceptability of the interventions by the teachers, concluding that some effort must have been expended to influence the school culture and climate.

Although headteachers argued that they involved teachers in school ownership, anecdotal evidence shows that most headteachers involved teachers to a low extent. In some instances, the headteachers were also the owners of the schools.

61 percent of the teachers reported that their headteacher evaluated them at the end of 2017 though only 16 percent of them could produce the evaluation report. It is worth noting that, whilst DLI trained the participants in observation, reflection and coaching skills, with the aim of continuous whole-school improvement, documentation of the same was not part of the training. In fact, the general school culture points to sluggish documentation practice, common across the informal education sector.

The evaluation further establishes that even with the noticeably high effort, teacher motivation complicates ownership. Teacher salary payment and motivation sharply varied, even within schools, with the highest teachers being paid an average of Ksh. 15,000 (up to Ksh. 30,000), and lowest cadre earning an average of Ksh. 7,500 (lowest Ksh. 6,000). Headteachers reported that in 2017, 92 percent of the teachers participated in external trainings other than by Dignitas, though this was confirmed by 63 percent of the teachers. The qualitative data also suggested that few teachers may have gone for external trainings.

**3.2.3 Improved Pedagogy and Instruction**

Evidence shows that a good teacher is by far the leading driver of positive learning outcomes (World Bank 2018). In one study of Kenyan teachers, it was concluded that poor quality of students’ learning correlates strongly with poor quality of teachers’ teaching (Bunyi et al 2013). The National Education Sector Policy (NESP, 2013–2018) also emphasized the need to improve teacher quality, if we were to make progress on achieving quality education for all in Kenya. A key objective of the DLI was to improve teachers’ skills in teaching and instruction.
Teacher Classroom Practice
As observed earlier, nearly a third of the teachers in the evaluation schools were untrained, while more than half of them were not registered with the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Despite this, there was evidence of professionalism. Teachers reported that they had improved their pedagogies and instruction as a result of the training from DLI and there were traces to demonstrate this. Figure 2 presents the findings on professional practices as observed in the lessons.

![FIGURE 2: Teacher practices during lessons (%)](image-url)

Most teachers reported that they were able to improve their teaching skills as a result of the DLI training. In the lessons observed, 66 percent of the teachers’ maintained emotional consistency throughout the lessons, while 51 percent issued behavioural consequences that were evaluated as appropriate. Teachers also reported that they learnt how to impart reading skills among pupils. According to them, the aspect of reading helped with the improvement of learning since they learned about ‘reading to lead’. One of the parents affirmed that Dignitas had a positive impact since most of the teachers were able to receive skills that they did not possess earlier on. This is demonstrated in the excerpt below:

“...I would like to say Dignitas really helped because in most of our schools in the slums the teachers are not trained how to teach well. You find that they just complete Form 4 and are waiting to go to colleges or don’t have money for college. The schools within the community absorb them before they go for training. When Dignitas came in, I remember they took teachers who
had not been trained and organized trainings... They trained them on how to handle the children and when they came back to school the way they handled the children changed from what they were doing in the past. You find that complaints before and after the training reduced. This impacted on our children and I can say they have changed” (Parents FGD, School C).

Views from the pupils FGDs and interviews also showed that teacher training and support interventions from DLI were associated with positive changes in the classroom environment. First, when pupils were asked about what they liked about their schools, they mostly mentioned that they liked their teachers and how they taught them in the classroom. On learner support, pupils pointed out that their teachers were supportive and loving, particularly their mathematics and English teachers who encouraged them to work hard and do well in these subjects.

Overall, the headteachers and teachers reported that the project had promoted better teacher-learner interactions in class and improved their pedagogical skills. Teachers pointed out that Dignitas trained them on different techniques for classroom instruction. Headteachers also observed that they had been keen in ensuring that teachers used these skills to promote quality learning. This is demonstrated in the excerpts below:

“...we learned how to start teaching when you enter a class and how to approach the class. How you can set long-term goals. The skills were useful because in a school you need to set long-term and short-term goals” (Teacher Group Interview, School B).

“...When we were going through the training we were told that during our lessons one must let the lesson be catchy and it must be participatory. You make them feel involved in the lesson. We have been doing that to every new teacher that comes in because now we have the skills and we also organize
our own workshops in the school. For classroom management, we always tell the teacher to really manage his class during the lesson, you have to know what is happening and at what time, who is not doing the right thing and how to manage your lesson. Generally, as a teacher we learned how to take control of your lesson in the class, in fact right now you can’t compare us with the public schools, we are beating them because we have what it takes from the trained teachers and great changes. On learner support, we have initiated something like the ‘slow learners approach’ because we learnt that classroom is sometimes a little bit hard for some of them. When we come out of the class we try to initiate some of the activities that can motivate them. We came up with motivational activities like participating in debates and also one on one after-class lessons where we call them and talk. Teachers have been assigned roles so that they can get to know the pupils better. We also involve the parents where we need their support, we usually call them” (Director Interview, School C).

Lesson Preparation
Overall, the evaluation established that 24 percent of the teachers observed had schemes of work for 2018, while 31 percent had lesson plans for all the subjects. Some teachers indicated that they first learnt how to make a lesson plan during the DLI training:

“Dignitas was helpful, because there are things I used not to do but after that I was able to. During Dignitas, for the first time I was shown how to make lesson plans and schemes of work. After that I was able to make them, I also learnt how to group children according to gender, abilities and interests” (Teacher Group Interview, School C).

Looking at the figures though, recalling that only 28.6 percent of the teachers were untrained, the problem may have been elsewhere. There is a general inconsistency in data though. For instance, of the 31 percent of the teachers who had lesson plans, more than half (56%) demonstrated that their records were reviewed by either the headteacher or the head of department, meaning that full practice compliance was around 19 percent. The key question that could not be answered was, how did some teachers without lesson plans pass through the review, and how is it that the review was unable to hold the majority of teachers without records to account?
These results point to low regard (lack of faith in) for, not of the value of these teaching tools in determining learning, coupled with the inability of school systems to hold teachers to account. This said, there is evidence to demonstrate that lack of schemes of work and lesson plans is a nationwide problem and not a preserve of the low-fee private schools in urban informal settlements (Hardman et al 2009, and other studies).

**Classroom Management**

The other aspect of pedagogical competence that the evaluation focused on was classroom management. Teachers confirmed that the DLI gave them practical skills and that eased their classroom control and the capacity to sustain the attention of all learners during the lessons. One of the headteachers indicated:

“...the training on classroom management really helped the teacher to control the pupils in the class and using learning materials leading to high academic levels in the school” (Headteacher Interview, School B).

Another aspect of the Dignitas project was to improve the teachers’ skills in dealing with learners with special needs. Nearly all the teachers (98%) stated that they were able to handle learners with special needs, and 71 percent of them indicated that they had such learners in their classes. Teachers in the qualitative study confirmed that Dignitas had provided skills on how to make classrooms more inclusive for students with special learning needs. For instance, one teacher recalled:

“The skills have helped me, like I came to know about learners in need of special attention. I had one boy who had difficulties in learning but after the training I knew how to handle him...” (Teacher Group Interview, School C).

It is, however, not clear how the training connected to actual classroom practice. For instance, only 8.3 percent of the teachers had individualized learning plans for learners with special needs.

The other pedagogical practice evaluated was the use of alternative discipline methods. Here the evaluation finds a lot of inconsistency. First, headteachers and teachers confirmed that Dignitas trained them well on alternative ways
of disciplining. The methods mentioned included: the use of guidance and counselling, excluding the learners (doing homework out of class), modelling, developing school/class rules with learners, and requesting parents to come to school. In the quantitative study, teachers claimed that corporal punishment was outlawed in their schools, and did not happen. This is how it started:

“...yes it did change, because, what I realized is when teachers are fresh from college they use the wrong methods of discipline but after the training they started doing guidance and counselling...we normally send them home so that they can come with their parents because you cannot cane them... other cases you tell them to do their homework out of the class while the others are in the classroom... when they see that they are the only ones out of class, they will learn a lesson...” (Teacher Group Interview, School B).

Then mixed signals started presenting themselves:

“...we do not necessarily cane them, though sometimes you feel tempted to do it” (same group as above).

Then:

“...It depends on the mistake. We don’t have corporal punishment but we have fatherly punishment. We cane them a little bit...” (same group as above).

Nearly all the interviews with children confirmed prevalence of corporal punishment in the schools, and quantitative data from learners showed that one of the things that they disliked about their schools and teachers was caning and hitting. Learners also detested the verbal abuse mooted against them by some teachers. Indeed, interviewers observed teachers carrying canes around the compound, and witnessed students being caned in the classrooms. The following excerpts from learner FGDs in different schools suggest that corporal punishment may still be very prevalent in the schools:

“Here when you make a mistake, the teachers beat you using ‘Kisiagi’. Here caning is every day, we expect it, they have always been caning us” (Boys FGD School C).
“We are told to lie on the staffroom floor when we are being caned and one gets dirty. I don’t like it” (Boys FGD, School B).

“Pupils who fail “Anatumana mwiko yake” i.e. he sends for his big cane, which resembles a cooking stick” [All laugh in agreement] (Boys FGD School G).

“...mmm! When you don’t perform in maths, she tells you to lie down and canes you with a green pipe thoroughly, so you have to work hard otherwise you will be beaten, also...we are always caned, the teacher beats you with a bell handle on the head or hands when you are found standing in class. He can also use a duster to ‘stamp’ you on the head or your body then he really makes you dirty” (Girls Interview School G).

In this one school, learners even seemed to suggest, that the practice may have ceased at some point (perhaps during training?), but now it seemed to be intensifying:

“‘Yes. Pupils were not caned but now they’re beating us...pupils were corrected politely...There was no thorough caned, now it’s thorough, it is bad...now it’s coming back’ (FGD Girls School G).

Deeper investigation indicated that this may be a systemic problem. For instance, many parents talked in support of corporal punishment over the alternatives to it.

“Eh!! they should cane the pupils to avoid wasting our time to come to school for a petty thing. I prefer punishment by caning. The teachers usually beat the children when they make mistakes. However, some instances you find that a child is affected (from home) psychologically and they need counselling” (Parents Interview, School G).

In another school (E): “I want my child to be caned but not too much...teachers are sufficiently trained and we should leave them to handle our children the way they know best...”

This confirms the findings in the ‘end violence against children report’ (2014), which observed that one complication in eliminating corporal punishment is that while this was outlawed in school, the Children Act (2001) did not abolish
corporal punishment at home. The evaluation concludes that this practice is a national challenge, and deeply rooted in culture, and even engraved in the Islamic and Christian child-rearing cultures. Eliminating it will take time. Of note is the positive movement, rather than the expectation that DLI would eliminate it, as this headteacher gives hope:

“...It really did because some teachers only knew caning... it really changed one of the teachers, because in the past she was very tough and at one time I even gave her a warning letter for beating pupils. She was taken to short vocation training on discipline because she really had a problem with name calling and spanking the learners. She really changed and she confesses that she is a better teacher now” (Headteacher Interview School A).

3.2.4 Improved Learner Support
The DLI popularized two key practices in promoting learner support in the intervention schools. One of these was the use of guidance and counselling to reduce the stress levels and improve learner attendance and retention. The other was participation in co-curricular activities, the strengthening of societies, clubs, arts and sporting activities to make the schools friendlier to children, while promoting holistic and talent development.

Guidance and Counselling
The evaluation established that every school had a designated guidance and counselling teacher, even though less than half of them (39%) were trained on it. In some places, the evaluation sensed convolution between guidance and counselling and talking to learners about their problems, and the evaluation was generally unable to dig deeper to ascertain the levels of professionalism in this practice. The table below summarizes the observations in terms of the five core strengths and weaknesses that were noted.
TABLE 5: Core strengths and weaknesses of the guidance and counselling practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Teachers report they carry out G&amp;C for students</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>G&amp;C teachers evaluated on this component in 2017</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 G&amp;C is included on timetable</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Availability of G&amp;C room</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 G&amp;C teacher is trained on that aspect</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>G&amp;C teachers can demonstrate referral practice</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 G&amp;C teachers have held meetings with parents to discuss the needs of their children</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>G&amp;C teachers could show current G&amp;C work plan</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 G&amp;C teachers keep records securely for confidentiality</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>G&amp;C teachers had set milestones for Term 1/2018</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar to other evaluation components, self-reporting was high while production of records was low. There was apparent diligence among the teachers in charge of G&C in guiding learners and collaborating with parents. This was however not without challenge. Often, the teachers lacked support from the schools in terms of accessing information (and links to referral facilities) and upgrade of skills to handle complex socio-emotional cases among the learners. In one case for instance, the G&C narrated her helplessness in trying to rescue a child who was incessantly under abuse by the caregivers at home.

Overall also, this area was poorly resourced, confirmed by most headteachers. Information obtained from learners seems to confirm that guidance and counselling took a general group approach. Confirming this was the fact that guidance and counselling was on the timetable in most of the schools, an indication that a general approach may have been taken to talk to children in groups, with less individual sessions for those that most needed psychosocial support. There was very little understanding of what guidance and counselling was all about, which makes the evidence gathered insufficient for arriving at any deep conclusion. For instance, this is indicated by evidence obtained from learners in one school:

“...we went to teacher xxx and teacher xxx as class 7 and 8, all of us and they counselled us. They told us that boys should stop harassing girls because some boys had beaten girls...” (Boys FGD School B).
The evaluation established very isolated features of quality, individualized service. Yet, it was clear from the observations conducted, that G&C is a critical component of intervention for learners in low-income areas due to the prevalence of trauma, growing in extreme adversity and violence against children.

**School Clubs and Other Non-Academic Activities**

Non-academic activities are an essential component of learning. The evaluation looked at the extent to which schools had energized clubs and activities for teachers and pupils to participate in, in line with the DLI program rubric. Co-curricular activities such as sports, drama and music are an integral part of a well-rounded education that imparts to individuals appropriate knowledge, competencies, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to producing citizens that contribute positively to society. These activities accord learners an opportunity to identify, nurture and develop their talents and skills, which are useful for their psychomotor development. Indeed, a case has been made, that participation in school clubs promotes both cognitive and affective growth, and that the relationship between participation in co-curricular activities and learning achievement is both positive and linear.

The evaluation established three key contributions of co-curricular activities in the schools: 1) academic and non-academic activities complement each other to develop a well-rounded students; 2) they help in broadening a learner’s knowledge base and gets them engaged in activities, which are of interest to them; and 3) they create opportunity for children to nurture their talents, acquire new skills and learn values such as teamwork, peaceful coexistence, leadership, confidence, self-esteem, and more so to learn from one another. In support of this analysis, one of the headteachers observed:

> “These activities are very important because they motivate pupils, even those who are poor in the class. You find that they are very good in those activities and this makes them motivated to come to school. Also the activities help the pupils physically and mentally.” (Teacher Interview, School F).

As per the guidelines of the Ministry of Education, drama festivals are organized during the first term of the school calendar while music festivals are organized during the second term. Students in pre-school, primary and

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secondary schools as well as colleges competitively showcase their talent in various categories such as traditional and modern dance and music, scripted plays and verses, story-telling, comedy and film at sub-county, county up to national level. Athletics and ball games are held during first and second term for learners in primary, secondary schools and colleges who compete at sub-county, county, national and regional level.

The quantitative data revealed that while some schools had strong cultures of non-academic activities, in others, learners did not have any exposure to these activities. All the headteachers reported that their schools were active in co-curricular activities. However in 2017, only 8 percent of the schools participated in drama festivals, 24 percent in music festivals, 52 percent in ball games and 16 percent in athletics (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: Participation of schools in the festivals and competitions (%)

The evaluation establishes that though all the schools had clubs in their practice, just few of them participated in school festivals and inter-school club competitions. The highest participation was in ball games (half of the schools) and lowest was in drama (2 schools). Presumably, participation in national festivals and competitions may have been restrictive due to the financial requirements. Further, most schools in informal settlements have extremely limited physical space, making any attempt to conduct or host such extra-curricular activities rather difficult.

Besides the games and sports, Kenyan schools also have clubs and movements such as debate, environment, St John’s, Red Cross, Girl Guides and Scouts movements. The clubs engage learners constructively, reinforce academic learning and impart non-cognitive skills. In regard to this, quantitative data
indicated that while 80 percent of teachers argued that they were involved in clubs of their interest, only 37 percent of them could produce records of the club members and a schedule of activities.

Evidence from the qualitative data similarly indicated that some schools had active clubs although not as a result of DLI interventions. Some of the clubs included the debate, health, music, scouts and dreams club, which mentors pupils. Other schools had only one club, thus limiting the choices that pupils have in participating in the clubs. It was revealed that most pupils did not belong to any of the schools clubs. In most cases joining and participation in clubs was optional and thus there was no registration.

“Dignitas did not do much on co-curricular activities. We have clubs not because of Dignitas but because of our passion” (Headteachers Interview, school G).

“There is no registration since the club is optional for both boys and girls” (Boys FGD School E).

Other clubs appeared to have been exclusively singing clubs. One of the pupils had this to say:

“I am a member of Amani music and Health club. In Amani music we are trained how to sing and when we finish we are given snacks mostly a soda and loaf. When professor comes, he is the head of Amani music, we sing for him and if he has gifts he gives them to us. We meet every Thursday. Amani music is my favourite club” (Girls FGD School A).

In other schools, clubs were largely inactive.

“The Debate club has not been active, we are trying to revive it this year. The reason why clubs are not active is because of lack of motivation since we don’t go for competitions like the public schools. They don’t have time to interact with other schools out there so they lack motivation.” (Teacher Group Interview, School B).

Teachers largely blamed the low interest in clubs to lack of support from the school management.

“Lack of motivation from the school management. You request for the materials, they tell you to write a requisition. You write it and you stay for the whole term without getting them” (Teacher Group Interview School B).
They also felt that there was a tendency by schools to focus on academic performance at the expense of clubs, movements and sports. Lack of school amenities such as playgrounds and space made some of the club activities such as the games clubs impossible to have in the schools. Teachers also felt that there was inadequate time for club activities. It was observed thus:

“Another reason is limited time where the time for clubs is taken up by other activities like choir practice. There is a mass every Thursday morning so they have choir practice on Wednesday whereas the timetable has allocated that time for games and sports. This is because the church is more important since the school is a church institution. The teacher in-charge of the mass argues that he needs time to prepare the choir and the liturgical dancers” (Teacher Group Interview, School C).

Pupils who were members of the clubs, indicated that they met at least once in a week, but in other cases they met once in a month or upon the availability of the teachers. It was also noted that most pupils could not articulate the activities they often undertook in the clubs. Neither were they able to explain the skills that they acquired as a result of being members of clubs.

The last aspect of non-academic activities in the intervention were school excursions and trips for external learning. Data from the headteachers, teachers and pupils revealed that most of the schools did not carry out excursions. One reason for this state of affairs was financial limitations. Headteachers noted that the few non-academic activities carried out were not directly supported by Dignitas. The Dignitas secretariat informed us that this component was not fundable within the program’s resources, and that schools were expected to sustain it. On the other hand, schools faced the challenge of raising funds from parents. This notwithstanding, structured exposure of children growing up in the informal settlements could yield great contribution to learning. Where funds are limited, organized trips to industries and other environments, even within walking distance, could yield great value and need to be explored.

3.2.5 Improved Stakeholder Engagement to Support Student Learning

The headteachers were appreciative of the role Dignitas played in sensitizing them on the need to involve stakeholders such as the Board of Management members and parents to support learning. Indeed, there was evidence of
schools making attempts to involve parents and BoMs. In one school, the headteacher confirmed that he always called parents to school on opening days, so as to set goals and requirements for the year. In another school the headteacher reported that they held parents’ meetings to encourage them to participate in supporting learners as demonstrated in the excerpt below:

“Dignitas taught us about full participation, we wanted everybody to make sure that they own the project because you cannot do it alone. For participation of parents, we have to bring them in during parents’ meetings. We tell them our vision, where we are going and we also get their opinion and suggestions. We also have to involve the community at large, the neighbours to be part of us” (Headteacher interview, School C).

The BoM members perceived this structure as the link between parents and the school. There were cases where this link was operational, and where effective communication channels were applied to sustain this link:

“Memos are written to parents, for instance to come and pick report cards for their children. The class representatives, have a WhatsApp group to communicate to other parents. For instance, Pupils were required to submit their birth certificates and their parents’ ID cards, hence we spread the message to other parents. I am a class representative, we tell parents what his happening and what is expected of them from time to time. Where we need their support we tell them but mostly we use the class representatives who were elected by the parents” (BoM Interview School G).

In most of the schools visited, parents confirmed that the schools regularly communicated with them. The communication was mostly about meetings in schools concerning performance, payment of school fees, the opening and closing dates, and on ways in which parents can support their children with education. Evidently, various methods of communication were used including verbal communication, writing in diaries and letters. Whereas
phone calls were mostly used to communicate with parents of lower primary pupils, letters were used to reach out to parents of the older pupils. Overall, letters were seen to be the most common and reliable form of communication according to parents and teachers.

“They print letters calling us for meetings in the school. I like the method of writing letters because they inform us earlier before the meeting and they inform us about the issues of the school during the meetings. They talk to us about the performance of the school and how we can follow up on our children at home like checking on their homework to ensure that they perform well in school” (Parents Group Interview School C).

Some parents also remarked that there was a change in the way schools communicated to them in the recent past.

“In the past they also chased the child home to bring the parent. I was not happy with it because I live on the other side of the road and my kid had to cross the road alone without any help” (Parents Interview School A).

Though 88 percent of the teachers claim that they regularly brief parents on the learning of their children, less than half of them (40%) were able to show any record of it. Parents reported that parental involvement in school activities was still low. They felt that key issues such as the school’s goals and development plans that should be discussed during parents’ meetings were not brought to the fore. Thus they were not able to know the progress of the school. In a few cases they noted that parents’ meetings were non-existent. In most cases opening and closing days were their meeting days. In a few cases where parent meetings were organized, they felt that their coming to school was not a worthy cause. They described instances where they were called to school ‘just to be reminded about their responsibilities’ i.e. what they should do and should bring.

“They don’t involve us so much but they always inform us when they want to do something like I told you they informed us about buying plates, cups and books. They call us for meetings especially during academic clinics for specific classes. They tell us the amount that we should contribute” (Parents
“In this school we usually come during the opening and closing days. They call us to the meeting by giving letters to the kids. When we come they inform us about the performance of the school and our kids. They also inform us about the books that we are supposed to buy and we buy them ...” (Parents Group Interview School C).

“...parents in this school should be more involved. When they call us, I used to come, then I stopped. Because when you come, you are only told what is needed e.g. to change the uniform but you are not asked your opinion. But they don’t ask us. They should ask our views. We are not foolish. A parent cannot give bad ideas. As parents we should be given a forum to share problems and ideas. Now we just keep quiet. Parents should be involved in the development of the school. The school will be better. They should have a committee that involves parents of this school. They should have class representatives. That would make things easier. Parents should be involved in developing these schools. Things will work well. They should have a committee of parents in this school...I would like add... sometimes children are asked to repeat class even twice. Like class 6 twice... that is not good. Because they are growing older. Last year some children transferred for being asked to repeat” (Parents FGD school E).

“Sometimes they tell us. They increase school fees without giving us notice. So you pay school fees but later you are told that you have not paid in full. Because fees are increased and we are not told in advance. But when they changed uniform, they gave us notice. We were told by the headteacher that next year uniform was going to change. We were informed but we are not asked to suggest” (Parents FGD School E).

The parents also added that in most cases it was reliant on their own efforts... their own efforts to come to school and check the progress of their children since the school management did not bother to call them. Further, they felt that their opinion was not sought by the school management and thus their contribution in ideas was not valued. One of the parents noted that:

“...as parents sometime things happen but we don’t know and we don’t get any information. Like when you brought a tank, we were not told. I don’t
know how we go about it so that whatever happens, we get to know as parents”.

Consequently, most of them felt that their participation was a waste of time. They had these observations and remarks:

“...parents should be given projections and plans for the year. What do we want to achieve ‘this’ year, next year we want to get ‘this’. In terms of development, we want to do ‘this’ in the next 5 years. There should be something formal communicated to parents. Because in as much as we pay school fees, we don’t know what is next. We should know where we are going. And we feel good. Projections even if they are there, they are casual, then are not formal maybe they are communicated to the church because this is a church institution and parents have no stake. So if you don’t come to this school you may not know what is happening and you can’t ask too much because you look like you are investigating. I propose that we have meetings” (Parents FGD school E).

The discussions with teachers and pupils also revealed that most of the schools did not have scheduled parents’ days but parents’ meetings are scheduled as need arises.

“We mostly come to school when we are called, they just call us. Like today I was just called and I did not even know what I was coming to do. There were times that we have academic forums to discuss about the performance of our kids. We usually come every term mostly to check on the performance of the kids. Like when they were buying a bus they called us to inform us that they were going to have a harambee and so we made pledges of the money that we would contribute” (Parents Group Interview School B).

In isolated cases, headteachers felt that parents were not cooperative, were irresponsible and were not willing to be engaged by the schools.

“Dignitas taught us how to engage parents so that they can feel that they own school. It is a challenge in Nairobi, engaging parents is difficult, some of the parents feel that as long as they have paid school fees they have done their part. So you find that engagements with them are minimal” (Headteacher Interview School E).
Parental involvement and support to their children’s education is critical. A positive parent–teacher relationship makes the child feel good about school and contributes to their success in school. Discussions with parents, teachers and pupils on parental support revealed that most parents are supportive of their children’s education. Parents reported that they always checked and helped their children with homework, paid school fees on time, attended school meetings and gave them material support like buying books and uniform among others. This is demonstrated in the excerpts below:

“I pay school fees and when I don’t have I ensure that I inform the teacher. I buy him school uniforms and wake him up very early in the morning. I always check and ensure that all the homework is done and marked every day...when he gets home I ensure that there is food for him and I always check and ensure that he does all his homework. I don’t give him work to do, he just does the homework and sleeps early to ensure that he wakes up early” (Parent Interview, School E).

“I ensure that he has the books that are required, uniform and also we read together. We make a timetable together and this helps me to see how he is learning. I wake up very early at 4 am so that we study for 1 hour before he goes to school. We read together because I want to check on his progress and the weaknesses” (Parents Group Interview, School G).

“I pay school fees on time. I am a responsible mother, I check on the health condition of my children to ensure they are OK. I check on the assignments, although I don’t assist them, I do follow up. I tell them to do it and go revise it with the teachers” (Parents Group Interview school E).

“When they are asked for report book I give. When they asked for birth certificate I struggled and looked for it. I check when book is filling up and buy. When they want a long pencil I give. I give the colour of biros they want. I buy text books. Because they don’t want to do homework in somebody else’s house. When they want Targeter text book, I buy. When a child wants I buy. When they want tuition, I talk to the teacher and pay

“I have created a conducive learning in my small house for my children. I ensure that there is electricity. I have created a good rapport with the teachers to check on their performance. I also wake them up early; hence they are not late for school.”
later. I tell the teacher to keep giving tuition” (Parents Group Interview, School E).

Similarly, pupils confirmed that parents supported them by attending parents meetings in school whenever they were called upon. They also bought uniform and textbooks, paid fees, supported them with homework and gave them time to do extra class work at home. This is illustrated below:

“They gift me when I perform. They give me enough time to read and buy me textbooks” (Boys FGD School G).

“They buy me text books and past papers. They deny me access to their phone so that I cannot play games” (Boys FGD School G).

“My parents encourage and give me hope in education through talking to me” (Boys FGD School C).

“My parents skip some meals to afford paying my school fees” (Boys FGD School D).

“They assist me with my homework and also she pays for my school fees and transport to school” (Girls FGD School G).

In isolated cases, headteachers felt that some parents were still not supportive:

“For our case I can say that they are not very supportive apart from bringing them to school and maybe paying their school fees, which even some don’t pay. They even don’t buy the learning materials like now if you went around the school, from class 1-4 there is only one pupil with a ruler. I have even had instances where a child comes to class without a pencil, a pen or even a book. Like for class 1’s they require 6 exercise books but they send them to school with only 2 books” (Headteacher Interview School F).

Some parents expressed concern over the state of the professional training of teachers.

“My request is that they should hire trained teachers, this will give parents hope because trained teachers are professionals.

“The school management should take concerns by parents seriously and implement the solutions raised by parents during meetings”.
The school management should take concerns by parents seriously and implement the solutions raised by parents during meetings. They should also inform us which text books to buy especially with the changing syllabus. The headteacher should cooperate with the parents, teachers to cooperate with the pupils and also the class representatives to cooperate with the pupils” (Parents Group interview School A).

Despite attendance of meetings, there seems to be asymmetry of information access between parents and their schools. Due to scanty records, it becomes difficult to estimate attendance of parents’ meetings.

On the aspect of engagement of external partners, BoMs and headteachers reported that they had been engaging with external partners but not during the time of the assessment. Two schools mentioned that the church has been their key partner.

3.2.6 Improved Learning Outcomes
Though this was not an intended intervention outcome, the evaluation measured the contribution of DLI to learning outcomes in two areas, academic outcomes and self-efficacy outcomes.

3.2.6.1 Academic Outcomes
The evaluation established high outcomes, though the methodology of this evaluation did not allow for quantification of the contribution of the DLI. About 68 percent of the intervention schools were able to demonstrate high learning levels, in which a majority of the learners (80% and above) scored over 75 percent given the previous grades work (class 3 for class 4, and class 6 for class 7). Six out of the 25 schools were in the middle, while two schools are at the bottom. The levels of learning in English and Mathematics are at par at the lower levels, but the outcomes of mathematics are significantly lower than English in the upper grades. For instance, in all schools, all learners in class 7 scored above 60 percent in the class 6 English test, yet 68 percent of them scored below 60 percent in the Mathematics test. Yet, the probability of class 4 learners passing the class 3 test was 20 marks higher in
mathematics than in English. Pupils give a generally high appraisal of their teachers that they are committed and teach well.

“My English performance was good because the teacher would answer all our questions in class, and I also revised. Mathematics performance was also good because Tr. xxx taught us well. I would do revision exercises and I would take them to him for marking” (Boys FGD School A).

“English was average because there are some things that I don’t understand. The English teacher helps me by giving me extra work and compositions. Math was low because we had not been taught some of the questions that were in the exam. When we told the teacher during the exam, he told us to guess the answers and then he would teach us after the exam. When you fail the teachers call you to the staffroom to teach you the things you failed and then they give you exercises to do. They also tell you to work hard and read the Bible” (Girls FGD School B).

“My English performance was very good because we were taught the subject very well. If you told the teacher that you did not understand something, he would repeat to ensure you understand. Mathematics was also very good because the teacher who left was very good and he never shouted at us. When he came to class he used to tell us to ask questions and also he would also give us exercises. He would give us more time to finish the exercises and he always marked the exercises” (Girls FGD School A).

Notably, regression results identify three consistent factors that seem to influence learning outcomes. Joining the intervention school one year later reduces outcomes by 2 marks in Mathematics and 1 mark in English. Repeating one grade reduces outcomes by 2 marks in Mathematics and 4 marks in English. Reducing the pupil–teacher ratio by 1 unit (less teachers) reduces outcomes by 1 mark, while children who worry about what to eat at home or come to school without having taken breakfast score on average 4 marks lower.

We feel that many environmental and systemic challenges are working against gains realized from the intervention, including low teacher motivation (low salary), high teacher attrition, lack of reference text books, low attendance of pupils (many sent home due to non-payment of school
fees and going to school hungry etc.). Overall, the challenge of low household income in informal urban settlements makes education quality improvements really challenging. The impact assessment was unable to isolate the five intervention elements in their contribution to improving learning. Overall, coaching was the aspect most connected to improving learning, by 92 percent of headteachers, 63 percent of class teachers and 74 percent of guidance and counselling teachers. However, 67 percent of the class teachers opined that it was the professional development workshops that contributed most to improving learning, while the largest proportion of guidance and counselling teachers voted for the leadership institute (78%). All respondents united in that infrastructure support contributed least to improving learning. Parents and pupils were generally not aware of the infrastructure support.

While teaching quality improved, there was a general feeling that the interventions on teaching pedagogy greatly improved learning outcomes.

“Yes, Dignitas has made the learning environment for learners more conducive. For instance buying soft murram hence there’s no mud or dust” (Headteacher Interview, School G).

“... because you find that the time takers also understand what you are teaching because I set aside time for them alone” (Teacher interview, School A).

From the FGD with pupils, they indicated that their performance had improved in the recent past. They attributed their improved performance to their teachers’ teaching skills. Most of the pupils noted that their English and mathematics teachers taught them well and they were friendly. They observed thus:
“English was good but challenging. I performed well because the teachers teach us well” (Girls FGD, School C).

“In the last exam English was good because I worked hard and also our teachers are teaching well” (Girls FGD, School C).

“My performance in English was fair because we are taught by friendly teachers, our teachers teach us very well” (Boys FGD, School D).

“In English I scored averagely as well as Mathematics. The Mathematics teacher gives us a lot of pressure. In English I don’t understand the questions. The teacher helps us to form our timetable and to revise” (Boys FGD, School G).

“I perform well in mathematics and revise Mathematics more especially past papers. In Mathematics the teacher gives more examples to help me understand while in English I read story books and do exercises. I also ask the teacher what I don’t understand and she gives me story books” (Boys FGD, School G).

“The English performance was good. The current teacher is better than last year’s English teacher. Last year’s teacher used to take less time to explain things for us and the he would give us a lot of exercises to do. This year’s marks are much better than last year because Teacher Pius is a good teacher. The Math performance was good because the teacher would explain things to us and he did not shout at us. When you failed in an exam, he would explain the hard questions and then he would give us exercises to do. He would cane you if you failed” (Girls FGD, School A).

3.2.6.2 Self-efficacy Outcomes
The construct of self-efficacy belongs to one of the most common psychological measures in recent times. As first described by Bandura (2002), self-efficacy is the belief in one’s ability to influence events that affect one’s life and have control over the way these events are experienced. In simpler terms, Akhtar describes self-efficacy as the optimistic self-belief in our competence or chances of successfully accomplishing a task and producing a favourable outcome. Bandura observed that there were four ways through
which people build self-efficacy. Through mastery (access to build one’s capabilities to yield confidence), social modelling (observing others to gain confidence), social persuasion (being mentored by others), and states of physiology (driven by one’s emotional structure). There is evidence that socio-economic background and parenting styles and environment (less stress) influence self-efficacy (Weihua & Williams 2009; Whitbeck et al 1997), and that self-efficacy correlates positively with academic achievement (Carroll et al 2008).

This evaluation sought to establish the self-efficacy of learners in grades 6 and 7 (assuming that these had interacted most with the intervention) in the intervention schools. A self-efficacy tool with 10 questions was adapted for the exercise, based on a 3-level Likert scale: always, sometimes, not at all. The items covered three aspects of self-efficacy: academic (completing homework), emotional efficacy (feelings about self), and social efficacy (dealing with other people, including peers and teachers). The test was administered on a total of 109 learners in seven schools (5 intervention and 2 dispersal9 schools), all of them within urban informal settlements in Nairobi and in a formal settlement in Thika. The figure below summarizes the self-efficacy scores (analysed as high, fair and low) from the learners in the 5 intervention schools.

FIGURE 4: Self-efficacy scores of learners in 5 intervention schools (%)
Self-efficacy is rated as fair, but we see significant disparity across the schools. School A and C had few children with low self-efficacy, and relatively lower proportions in the high efficacy categories. The opposite is true for schools B, D and E. Boys have marginally higher self-efficacy (.78) than girls (.76). The learners had lower emotional self-efficacy (.70) as compared to social self-efficacy (.78) and academic self-efficacy (.80).

Qualitative discussions with teachers affirmed that learners felt happy at school when teachers showed love and concern to them during lessons. In most cases, the skills they learned from DLI about alternative forms of discipline and how to approach learners helped in making learners feel happy and loved while in school. One of the teachers observed:

“Now, I am able to appreciate all kids in the class even those that don’t get the questions right. This makes the pupils feel happy and that they are in the right place and in turn love the school more. I ensure that when a child is in the wrong I don’t go around beating them or throwing harsh words to them. I approach it with warmth. I am also able to group them into groups where they discuss and share ideas. Through this the pupils are able to learn from each other” (Teacher Interview, School F).

3.2.7 Improved Learner and Teacher Attendance and Retention
The Dignitas Interventions also sought to improve learner and teacher attendance and retention. This was an extremely difficult question to answer, because of scanty attendance records (including inconsistency in the marking of daily registers), and difficulty in obtaining learner class lists and teacher lists of past years. The headcount data is also considered unreliable, because of the many school events that were taking place at the time of data collection, pulling learners and teachers out of school. We rely heavily on qualitative data to evaluate attendance and retention, and use quantitative data from only four schools to additionally evaluate learner and teacher attrition.
Learner Attendance and Retention
Learner attendance was described as good among the intervention schools. Three factors emerged as key on influencing attendance. First, there was greater optimism in attendance expressed in schools with feeding programs, over those that did not provide food at school. Second, the payment of school fees affected attendance, when learners were sent home to bring money. Third is morbidity. School absence in the schools was mostly associated with illness.

Generally, the headteachers, teachers and parents confirmed that learner attendance had improved because of the infrastructural support such as school uniform and shoes from Dignitas.

“The learners were motivated to come to school regularly like when they are given uniform and when they see new books in class. This in turn benefits the pupils. A lot of pupils flock in schools that give uniform so that they can benefit” (Headteacher interview School F).

Pupils also reported that they always came to school unless one was sick, or if the parent asked them to stay at home, but this did not happen often: Sometimes their mother tells them to take care of the small brothers or sisters at home, and just before closing day because there is no learning (Boys FGD School C).

The evaluation established extremely mixed results in both learner and teacher retention, this being a challenge to some schools, and not to others. The table and figure below present gendered results of learner retention in the four schools with complete data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be observed, learner retention ranged from 100 percent to 44 percent in the different schools. Where retention was an issue, attrition was higher among boys than girls. The general situation confirms this result, in that over the three years, there was lower attrition and even more new enrolments from girls than boys, even when boys remained more in the school population.

The evaluation establishes three key drivers of learner attrition. First, is the inability to pay school fees. When the fee debt accumulates in one school, parents move their children to another school, to start all over again. Second, is the movement of parents. The slum environments are characterized by unstable livelihood, and incessant migration. When a parent loses their source of income, or secures a job or a business opportunity in another part of the city, it is common that children move school too. Third, is the services offered at the school. Schools that, for instance, provide funded feeding programs are likely to have higher populations, than those without a feeding program, or those that have a program that is funded by parents.

The fourth is the school environment. In two schools, parents and pupils observed that movement was caused by how children were treated in school, and especially depending on whether caning happens or not. One parent observed thus in regards to caning and school transfer:

“When we came to the meeting we are informed that some kids transferred. When we inquired we were told some parents were angry when the teachers started caning the kids. Another reason is parents who have pile up school
fees debts and eventually they are unable to pay. They therefore prefer to transfer their kids. There are other parents who just want to transfer their kids and others say that the school has few pupils in the classes” (Parents group Interview School A).

Girls confirmed this in another school:

“When pupils are caned, parents come to complain. They come, make noise, and are mad at teachers” (Girls FGD School G).

Lastly, there was observed movement of learners to public schools around grade 7, to increase their chances of transitioning to better public secondary schools:

“... others opt for public schools because they believe that when their children do KCPE in public schools they will go to good secondary schools. Majorly some run away with school fees when they have piled up the fees and they can’t be able to pay. Others transfer due to distance when they relocate to other places. This is mainly in upper classes, from class 4 to 7.”

Teacher Retention
Teacher retention was also noted as a challenge in the intervention schools. Unfortunately, complete data to make meaning on retention could only be obtained in two out of the 26 study schools. Of the two schools, one had 100 percent retention of teachers between 2017 and 2018, while the other school retained 86 percent of its male and 75 percent of its female teachers.

Teacher attrition is driven by factors both internal and external to the schools. First, teacher motivation (salary) was identified as the leading driver. The movement of teachers happens from low to higher salary schools, and from private to public. It was noted that trained teachers especially move to the Teachers Service Commission because of their higher salaries, more predictable payment rhythm and relative permanency of tenure. One headteacher was rather pessimistic on prospects of increasing teacher retention:
“... transfer of teachers may not have reduced because it still continues because they transfer due to the remuneration. They will always tend to transfer to schools where they will be paid more” (Headteacher Interview, School F).

Second, the working environment affected teacher attrition. For instance, there was tension between headteachers and female teachers especially when they required long breaks, like the maternity leave:

“They transfer due to maternity and then they stay for long periods without coming back and so we replace them” (Headteacher Interview School A).

In this particular case, it was not clear whether this teacher had extended leave beyond the entitlement given to mothers under the Employment Act, and whether or not she was on pay while on leave.

Interestingly, research participants thought that the training by Dignitas both had increased and lowered teacher retention. Improving retention happened when teachers enjoyed the environment more, and derived motivation from experiencing better results and improved working environment. To the contrary, some teachers became more marketable after the training, and moved on to other schools where they could earn more.

Both learners and parents felt that frequent transfers of teachers affected learning, citing it as a big challenge in the schools.

“My English performance was not so good because they kept on changing the teachers. Each day a different teacher taught us. This was the same case with Mathematics. This year Tr. xxx teaches very fast and he does not even show us how to do the sums” (Boys FGD School A).

3.2.8 Residual Practices After the Intervention Ceased

To attempt answering this question, the evaluation compared first the learning outcomes of 10 schools in the 2011–2014 cohort (where the intervention had ceased 3 years in advance of the evaluation) and 15 schools in the 2014–2017 cohort (where the treatment was still fresh. Using this analysis, it is difficult to make any conclusion. The average outcomes are higher in the 2014–2017 cohort, with around four percentage points (71% against 67%, in
the proportion of learners who scored at least 75% in the test). Looking at the full rank of schools along learning outcomes, three out of the 10 (2011–14) schools were in the top quintile, 1 each in the 2nd and 3rd quintile, and half of the schools (5) in the bottom quintile. Generally then, from the above results, more schools in the old cohort could be said to have been struggling. Comparison between the self-efficacy of children in the two cohorts did not show any consistent trend.

Further on, we dug deeper into the question – did the practices mediated through the DLI persist beyond the intervention? Again, results vary across the schools, but also across individual teachers even within the same school. Most of the headteachers and teachers in the old cohort schools maintained that the skills they acquire from DLI remained with them even after the exit of the project. They were thus able to put the skills into practice up to date:

“The teaching experience, the methodology and others are still applicable, even after Dignitas training and I was able to continue doing it as they had trained us. It equipped us with skills, we will always have” (Teacher Group Interview School B).

The two poorest performing schools belonged to the 2011–2014 cohort. These two schools also had the lowest enrolments overall, indicating a struggle to exist. Financial instability, high teacher and pupil turnover and disgruntlement among parents and teachers characterize this struggle. Incidentally, the two schools also posted poor baseline results from an internal study by Dignitas in 2014.

Three schools in which the intervention ceased have continued to do well, and have good evaluation of Dignitas. We could not, however, access data on their performance before and during the intervention, and we are unable to attribute their learning levels to any particular circumstances. Notably though, all three schools have a religious connection, two explicitly belonging to the church, and one belonging to a pastor. We suspect, that this stability was consistent before, during and after the intervention. The intervention then, may have added value, but may not have changed the direction of impact in these three stable schools.
3.2.9 Dispersal Effects (where trained teachers transferred to, or other schools came to learn and implemented)

One of the aims of DLI was to impact skills and knowledge on the teachers to make them transformative leaders. They were expected to use these skills wherever they would work. With this in mind, we looked for teachers who were trained by Dignitas but moved to work in other schools. We identified two schools, which we called ‘dispersal schools’, one in Mathare and one in Kawangware. In one of the schools, two teachers left a Dignitas Intervention school in 2016, and started a new school in 2017. One of the teachers became the headteacher of the new school, and the other became a regular teacher. In the other school, one teacher had just left the DLI school in 2017, and started a school as its headteacher, in 2018. The older school had a total population of 91 pupils, 6 in class 7 and only 4 in class 4. The newer school had a total of 110 pupils but only up to class 4. This uppermost class had 9 pupils.

We tested the learners just like in the other schools and conducted interviews with the headteachers. The interviews, however, focused more on what they were able to carry over from the Dignitas schools, and now implementing in their new schools.

Overall, the results are mixed. One headteacher indicated that he was using the skills acquired through the Dignitas training:

“The management skills, I am using them right now because we just started and I am trying to see how I can manage. I am doing management over all that is the financial records and also the class management. In class I am managing the class records and also managing the time. When it comes to the matters of the office, I manage the financial records since we were taught how to manage financial records. I also use learning and reading skills for the children” (Teacher Interview, School B).

This school, however, was only two months old, and they were just settling in. The headteacher claimed that Dignitas’ interventions were useful in the establishment of this new school, citing use of the leadership skills, pedagogical skills, school and financial management skills to run and manage the new school.
In the second school, the headteacher indicated that they had not settled long enough to start utilizing the skills, and there was no indication of applying them. Despite the fact that this school was a year old, no self-assessment had been conducted, indicating that there was no transfer of the skills.

The table below presents the learning outcomes from the two schools.

**TABLE 7: Learning outcomes in 2 dispersal schools (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School population</th>
<th>Total learners assessed</th>
<th>Average Class 4 Math</th>
<th>Average Class 4 English</th>
<th>Average Class 7 Math</th>
<th>Average Class 7 English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, we note a similarity with the intervention schools, in that outcomes of Mathematics are better at lower grades, but are lower than English at grade 7. Second, we recorded a 10-point difference in the grade-level performance of learners in the two schools.

We wish to, however, exercise caution in interpreting these results. The first consideration is that start-ups need time to form, before systems and practices can mature to deliver results. Second, we note that institutional cultures are formed out of leadership, systems and the people in it, and how goals are formed and adopted. The evaluation is therefore unable to conclude on the transferability of skills across schools, given the available data.
This evaluation assessed impact of the Dignitas Leadership Institute sought along nine questions as per the final inquiry framework, revolving around school governance, leadership and management, school culture and climate, pedagogy and classroom practice, learner support, academic and self-efficacy outcomes, stakeholder engagement, attendance and retention, residual effects, and the dispersal of DLI practices to non-intervention schools. The evaluation established that the Dignitas Leadership Institute improved school governance and the overall learning climate, but could not attribute impact upon teacher retention and motivation. This is because teachers transferred for reasons mostly external to the project, especially search for better pay.

“The evaluation established that the Dignitas leadership Institute improved school governance and the overall learning climate, but could not attribute impact upon teacher retention and motivation.”
Dignitas contributed to improved school governance largely in terms of record keeping, financial management, accountability and improved infrastructure. The skills obtained through the intervention enabled headteachers to understand school governance and how to set up boards of management and involve teachers in management. The leadership skills were, however, less effective in nurturing capacities for external resource mobilization, and achieving prolific community engagement. One in four schools had a School Improvement Plan.

Overall, most informants felt that the DLI interventions had a great deal of impact on them. Headteachers recalled mostly the leadership and governance aspects of the training; teachers recalled mostly the aspects of classroom management and planning, while parents recalled the infrastructure support that the project gave. However, again there is variation in the understanding of the intervention among the various respondents, and sharp variation across the schools.

Although all the schools received relatively uniform treatment, there was no uniformity in the effects. Whereas professional development workshops, teacher coaching and infrastructure support were mentioned as part of the projects interventions, professional learning communities were hardly mentioned. This is explained by the fact that PLCs were implemented in the 2014 – 2017 cohort only.

Teachers demonstrated improved teaching skills, development and use of learning materials like lesson plans, classroom management and ability to address learners with special needs. The evaluation confirms that there was positive movement in pedagogical practice - evidenced through change in teaching style, improved relationships with learners, use of lesson plans and checking students’ understanding and promoting student participation. There was, however, less impact on alternative discipline and behaviour control, although this may be rooted in deep cultural perceptions.
Participation in clubs was confirmed, more in some schools than others. Like in any other aspect, record keeping was a challenge. This aspect was constrained by the space for learners to engage in sporting activities, and the funds to travel to the festivals. However, guidance and counselling practice was feeble, despite the priority it ought to have in consideration of the childhood challenges faced in urban slums.

The evaluation is unable to arrive at any conclusion, as to whether the intervention did or did not improve learning outcomes. This is due to problematic matching of indicators in the internal monitoring data available at Dignitas, and the indicators prioritized in this evaluation. The average outcomes across the schools are higher than established by Uwezo across the years (51% learning at grade level in Nairobi), and were significantly higher in the intervention schools than in the dispersal schools. This is despite the sharp variation of learning outcomes across the intervention schools. In short, the evaluation confirms that learning was happening in the intervention schools.

Generally, it was observed that the schools in informal settlements have many interventions from many corners, making the evaluation environment pretty noisy. This, combined with the lack of baseline and midline data, made it difficult to single out the overall impact of Dignitas on school and learning improvement.

Measurement needs to factor in demonstration of competency, or presentation of records, rather than just relying on perceptions. At the same time, evaluation methodologies need to be keen on triangulating the sources of information, to minimize the effect of subjective views, or social desirability, while arriving at conclusions.
1. Explicitly target the improvement of learning outcomes:
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 seeks inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This is what the world has settled to work on, till 2030. In line especially with SDG 4.1, it may help if the Dignitas intervention explicitly targets the improvement of learning. This explicit targeting of learning outcomes can benefit from the available knowledge on what works, and use evidence to prioritize interventions and activities that directly improve learning. During the course of this intervention, the process of re-designing the intervention has begun, laying greater focus on less impact pathways to improved learning outcomes, and expanding the targeting of students from vulnerable learning and living environments. While doing so, the complexity of working in urban informal environments must be considered to improve the program efficiency, effectiveness and impact.
2. Consider teacher motivation:
There is evidence that teacher coaching improves pedagogical practice, but teacher motivation disrupts this effect path. To achieve the desired learning improvement, there is need to build in teacher motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) in any future teacher interventions. While program resources may be limited to sustain especially salary payments, strategic partnerships with other civil society and private sector actors may help.

3. Resolve the leadership crisis and elevate headteachers to instructional leaders:
In many instances, individuals who double up as directors, privately own the low-fee private schools. The headteachers, in such cases, may or may not have the opportunity to lead. We think that one strategic choice would be to elevate every headteacher into the position of an instructional leader. Such elevation would focus on selected instructional practices, including managing the accountability aspect of how teachers prepare for lessons and teach [by being able to demonstrate this first, themselves]. The leadership training will focus on equipping headteachers with the tools and methods for effective instructional leadership;

4. Focus on fewer areas, and execute them extremely well:
The intervention had a wide range of activities, and because of this, we feel it must have been difficult to keep a keen eye on everything, and do everything well. This may now be the moment to sit and reflect on a few things, select one battle to fight, and do it extremely well. Even a systemic intervention could explore fewer areas with greater focus;

5. Include public schools in the intervention:
While the low-fee private schools are needy, trying the interventions in a few public schools may add value. Combining private and public schools will complicate the equation, but may have benefits in introducing conversations with government, learning from government, and increasing program prospects for scale. The movement to this direction has begun, and already in 2018, Dignitas is partnering with the Ministry of Education to pilot the intervention with two cohorts of rural public schools.
6. **Explore greater parental engagement for school improvement:**
Greater parental involvement may create direct connections and new pathways to improving learning. But then, greater accountability may threaten the private owners of schools. This is a black box, which, if opened up and understood, may open up new frontiers for impact. Parents could demand quality, and also contribute directly to supporting children learn at home. The parental engagement model, however, must be adapted to the two realities – privately-owned schools and largely deprived, not-so-educated and busy parents.

7. **Strengthen internal documentation capacities:**
Certainly, there is room for strengthening internal documentation and monitoring capacities. In designing the new program, more thought is needed on how impact will be evaluated, and building this capacity from the onset. A proper, independent baseline will be needed, and a system of tracking few important indicators, to the end, so that the story may be complete. Even then, we feel that this program should be monitored for some time, to extend the learning and use the many years of experience to inform the future of Dignitas.

8. **Build in robust monitoring and evaluation from onset:**
The informal learning settlements in Nairobi present an extremely dynamic and noisy environment, driven by a multiplicity of systemic factors in and out of the school environment. In addition, there are interventions from many other sources. Interventions thus need to be accompanied by robust evaluation designs that would enable close monitoring and documentation to isolate impact that is specific to the project.

“Parents could demand quality, and also contribute directly to supporting children learn at home.”
REFERENCES


