2017 Stakeholder Report: Assessment of Impact
THE MEASURABLE IMPACT OF DIGNITAS

Dignitas seeks to improve student learning in marginalized communities in Nairobi through training and support of teachers. This includes, not only training to improve instruction and content learning, but also training in how to create safe and productive learning environments for students. Teachers supported by Dignitas show demonstrated improvements in their teaching skills and develop greater confidence in the classroom. To develop a deeper understanding of the impact of its programming, Dignitas sought to measure that impact their programs have on the students in these communities.

In June of 2017, a research team of nine American University graduate students conducted a preliminary rapid impact assessment of Dignitas’ programming. The assessment tools measured student impact across a number of different indicators, including student learning, confidence, resilience, and other factors that influence the likelihood that a student will learn. The researchers visited eight partner schools and assessed hundreds of students taught by both Dignitas- and non-Dignitas-trained teachers.

The results are in, and they show that Dignitas has a positive impact on student learning. Students taught by Dignitas-trained teachers show greater ability to learn content in the course of a lesson than those of non-Dignitas-trained teachers. They also show greater confidence in their understanding of that content. This was particularly true of girls.

The results also indicate that Dignitas’ model of whole-school improvement is working. On average, students at long-term partner schools perform better than those at new partner schools. This suggests that the longer Dignitas is in a school, the higher that school’s students perform, regardless if they are taught by a Dignitas-trained teacher or not. The data also show that the longer a teacher stays with Dignitas, the more positive the impact on their students’ learning. Across long-term and new schools, students of teachers who had been with Dignitas for several years showed greater academic growth in the course of a lesson than students taught by teachers who were new to Dignitas.

Further, a survey of students taught by Dignitas-trained teachers showed high levels of happiness, resilience, and teacher support. Student perception of their Dignitas-trained teacher was overwhelmingly positive. Research has shown that these factors have a positive impact on learning; they are also likely to have positive impacts outside the classroom.

These results are preliminary, and a more in-depth assessment later this year will add nuance to this data and potentially reveal other gains and opportunities for growth. These initial results, however, speak to the gains Dignitas is making in improving the education of children in informal communities in Nairobi. Through community partnerships, local support, and the assistance of donors, Dignitas is making measurable strides in improving informal schools in Nairobi so that all Kenyan children receive a quality education.
DIGNITAS TEACHERS MEASURABLY IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

Dignitas-trained teachers receive pedagogical and leadership training that demonstrably improves their performance in the classroom. The result? Measurable improvements in student learning. Across the curriculum, a preliminary study found that students taught by Dignitas-trained teachers exhibit a higher level of content mastery than their peers in non-Dignitas classrooms. When a student is taught by a Dignitas-trained teacher, they learn more.

But it’s not only Dignitas-trained teachers who benefit from Dignitas training. Dignitas facilitates the exchange of ideas, techniques, and best practices at its partner schools, improving instruction for all teachers. As a result, long-term partner schools demonstrate greater improvements in student learning across classrooms. There are compelling indications that partnering with Dignitas may lead to direct, positive impacts on student learning.

Dignitas’ Demonstrated Impact on Student Learning

In a recent rapid impact assessment of Dignitas schools, students taught by Dignitas-trained teachers outscored their peers in non-Dignitas classrooms. A comparison using pre- and post-assessments found that students in Dignitas classrooms showed a 43.5% increase in academic growth during the course of a lesson. Students in non-Dignitas classrooms experienced a 14.8% increase.

**Impact on Student Learning** During the course of a lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dignitas-trained Teachers</th>
<th>43.5%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Dignitas-trained Teachers</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
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Percentage increase in academic growth measured between pre- and post-assessment
An assessment of prior learning across long-term and new Dignitas partner schools found that the longer the partnership, the more Dignitas schools improve. The assessment found that schools which have partnered with Dignitas for three or more years outperformed newer schools by 11.25%.

Additionally, Dignitas-trained teachers improve over the course of their school’s partnership with Dignitas. Dignitas-trained teachers at long-term partner schools outperform those at newer schools by 22.5%. These preliminary results suggest that the longer a school partners with Dignitas, the more its students learn.

In the course of a lesson, students taught by Dignitas-trained teachers showed a greater increase in confidence in their understanding of course content. Students in Dignitas classrooms increase in confidence by 11.47%; the increase among their peers in non-Dignitas classrooms was only 3.09%.

The difference is even more dramatic among girls. In the course of a lesson, girls in Dignitas classrooms increased in confidence by 15.25%, 10.5% more than girls in non-Dignitas classrooms. Research has shown that confidence has a positive influence on student learning. The more confidence a student has, the more they’re likely to learn.
WHAT DO STUDENTS SAY ABOUT DIGNITAS-TRAINED TEACHERS?

“She’s a beautiful teacher... she’s kind to others.”

“She is the only teacher that doesn’t go in a hurry. She explains things step by step.”
WHAT DO STUDENTS SAY ABOUT DIGNITAS-TRAINED TEACHERS?

“He’s a good teacher. He knows a lot, and he teaches us well.”

“My teacher is humble, honest, and kind... If you don’t understand something, he tries to explain it... until you get it.”
STUDENT WELL-BEING MEANS GREATER LEARNING

Dignitas teachers are trained not only in pedagogy and methodology, but also on classroom climate. Dignitas teachers understand how to facilitate a learning environment that encourages student engagement, self-confidence, persistence, resilience, and general well-being. Dignitas-trained teachers foster a sense of caring and support in their classrooms, both of which correlate to improved student learning.

According to social cognitive theory, these attributes directly impact student learning. They influence how much effort students will put into completing a task, how long they will persist when experiencing difficulties, and how resilient they will be in challenging situations.

According to surveys distributed across eight Dignitas schools, students taught by Dignitas-trained teachers report high levels of these learning attributes. These results may help explain why Dignitas teachers are so effective in achieving content learning objectives. Dignitas students in general show high levels of affective and cognitive engagement and self-efficacy, and these constructs have been linked to positive learning outcomes. There is, however, little difference between students at new and long-term partner schools, leaving room for further exploration to more specifically examine the ways in which Dignitas teachers influence these attributes in the long term.
Students reported feeling happy in their classroom. 89%

Students reported feeling like they could achieve a goal if they worked hard for it. 87%

Students reported knowing that their teacher can help them when they do not understand their school work. 92%
Students reported believing that what they learn in their class is important for their future.

Students reported believing that they will graduate from secondary school.

Students reported that their teacher cares about students in class.
FROM ALL OF US AT DIGNITAS, THANK YOU.

PHOTO CREDITS