



Annual Report 2018

Every school a vibrant place for
children to thrive and succeed



DIGNITAS
— dignity through education —

Dignitas is a leading education development organization working with school leaders in Kenya and South Sudan.

We use an innovative training and coaching approach to empower schools and educators to transform students' opportunities. We imagine a world where schools are a vibrant place for all children to develop the skills and strength of character to thrive and succeed.



*"I now know leadership is not position but influence. As long as I am in a position to influence positive change, even without a title, I am a leader. As a teacher I influence and affect my students' learning."
(Stawisha Fellow, 2018)*

In 2018, Dignitas pursued a strategy that was designed for **Growth, Influence, Value and Engagement**. This exciting report shares how this was achieved, and points to some of the success that Dignitas hopes to see in 2019.

The Dignitas team deeply appreciate all who are on this journey to impact with us. Whether as friend, School Leader, educator, funder, partner or fellow dreamer - thank you for adventuring with us!

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that 2018 has come to an end. In many ways, it has been a whirlwind of a year, with many exciting developments along the way. Personally, it has been a year of intense learning and growth which afforded me the privilege of leading our team to view the work and impact of Dignitas through a fresh lens.

As 2018 began, there were a number of challenges on the road ahead. Kenya was in the process of rolling out a new national curriculum focused on the development of 21st century competencies, rather than traditional academic learning outcomes. The Dignitas team had to consider the impact of this on our partner schools so that we can continue to equip them to affect teaching and learning in a way that transforms children's opportunities. I also felt it a priority to ensure that all of our work is focused on student learning, and that we should be able to measure meaningful impact on learners. Finally, as I started my role, the board presented me with the challenge of growth but there was much work to be done to bring clarity and strategy to the goal of impacting **300,000 children by 2022**. These challenges, combined with other organizational priorities, shaped the team's work for 2018, and informed the strategy of **Growth, Influence, Value and Engagement**.



In this report you will read of the team's efforts to pursue and test **growth**. Dignitas partnered with several organizations to test opportunities for scale. These partnerships saw the Dignitas team deliver training and coaching in **30 schools**, and impact on the learning of more than **10,000 students** in marginalized communities. For the first time, we worked with a cohort of School Leaders in South Sudan, which offered valuable insight into how our program applies in a different context.

Aligned with our goal to **influence**, Dignitas sought opportunities to build networks, interact in new forums, and share our impact to help shape the global narrative around learning for all, and the importance of School Leadership. In the pursuit of **value**, it became clear that if Dignitas wanted to grow, the team would have to drive efficiencies for affordability and sustainability across our work, ensuring each dollar is leveraged for maximum possible impact in the lives of the children we exist to serve. As a result, we have managed to reduce the **cost of impact per child to approximately 15% of what it once was, now approximately \$10 per child per year**.



Finally, it was also a priority to ensure that the team was **engaged** in a meaningful way with community stakeholders, our alumni of School Leaders, partners, and government officials. By the end of 2018, I am pleased to share that the team had a number of active partnerships, including an agreement with Kenya's Ministry of Education, authorizing us to partner with their schools.

The team undertook a valuable revision of program and evaluation models in 2018, informed by the aforementioned challenges and an external evaluation of our impact on student learning. We look forward to sharing that with you here!

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the support you have offered Dignitas this year. We appreciate the resources, insight, and expertise shared with us by many! Please do continue to support our work in 2019 and beyond! Working together, we will ensure every child has the opportunity to reach their potential!

Best wishes, Deborah

Every child deserves an excellent education.

Children are not leaving school with the skills and competencies they need to thrive.

At Dignitas, we empower educators to transform their schools through leadership development and instructional coaching so that their schools become vibrant places of learning where all children thrive and succeed.



Dignitas was birthed in the informal settlements of Nairobi, home to 60% of Nairobi's population, where the need is particularly high. Today, Dignitas partners with urban community schools and rural public schools. Partnership activities include:



The Leadership Academy empowers educators and school leaders to take charge of transforming their schools with fresh mindsets, and leadership skills.



Professional Development Workshops equip educators with the practices, tools, and techniques they need to ensure all children thrive.



Coaches provide individualized, classroom based mentoring and support for the growth and development of educators.



Professional Learning Communities help educators to routinize sustainable reflective practice towards whole school improvement.



The Alumni Association enables ongoing learning and growth, and offers graduates the opportunity to support the professional development of other educators, whilst driving systemic change.

Dignitas in 2018:

10,466

Students

115

Educators

30

School Partners

*"I have realized that I am a change maker, not only a teacher. I have a part to play in making our learning institution safe for learning."
(Stawisha Fellow, 2018)*



2018 Highlights

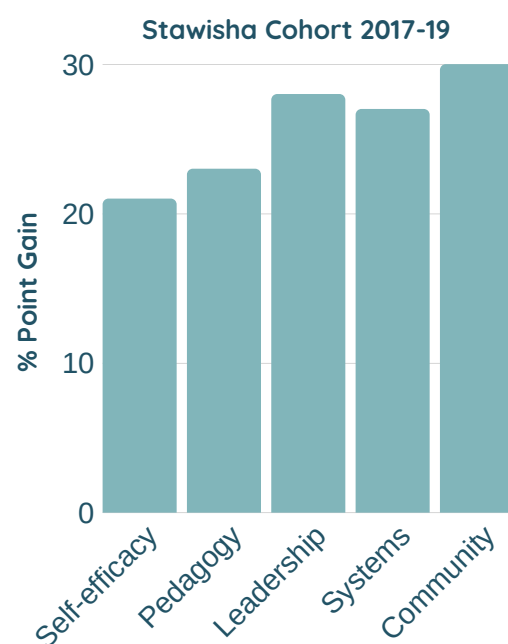
“The moment you give children a good foundation and a joyful environment, they will begin to enjoy school. Our children now have a new perspective on school. They know that is not just about punishments anymore, but a place where they are valued. We are teaching them life skills like how to be responsible citizens, how they can act to make changes in their community and how they can own their learning. Before Dignitas, we did not have good relationships between teachers and students. There was a lot of fear involved. From the techniques we learned from the training, we have changed our teaching methods. I have been teaching for seven years but I have learned a lot from Stawisha. I now focus on engaging my students and I give them space to share their views and make mistakes. This is changing how they are viewing the future. We would like for them to grow up to become successful individuals.” (Selestino Murunga – Maranatha School, Stawisha Fellow, 2018)



Maranatha school leaders are working as a team to transform the learning experience for students. Teachers have moved away from the lecture method of teaching, and have embraced engaging techniques to enable learning. On the last Dignitas school visit, Selestino’s class was learning through song, while another class was outdoors learning about the weather. The school is working to ensure that they create space for learners to thrive and succeed. Since July 2017, Dignitas has seen significant growth in the Stawisha School Leaders, with the group gaining significant % points in their ratings across domains, and **81% achieving proficiency by the end of 2018.**

Meanwhile, Teacher Rahab (Luminous Junior School) teaches Grade 3. She has a student in her class who she previously described as “not interested in learning”. The student did not participate during lessons, did not complete assignments, and her academic performance was very low. During one of the Dignitas coaching conversations, Teacher Rahab said, “I avoid engaging and supporting her during the lesson because it will slow down the entire class.” In a Dignitas Professional Development workshop on ‘Special Needs and Differentiating Instruction’, Teacher Rahab gained understanding on different learning abilities, and how to prepare tasks appropriately. She is now more patient with the same student, and thinks about her while planning for her lessons. The student now participates in class and her self-esteem is improving.

“My teaching skills have changed because I have learned many teaching techniques like positive framing, attention-getters, maintaining high behavioral expectations, and many more. I have improved in how I use lesson planning skills, how to make relationships, and how to challenge my students using my lesson plans.” (Leadership Institute Fellow, 2018)



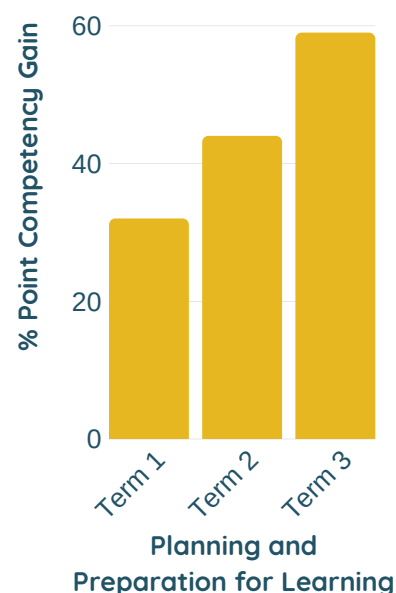
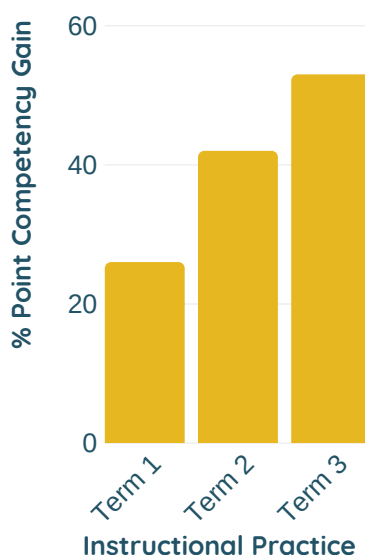
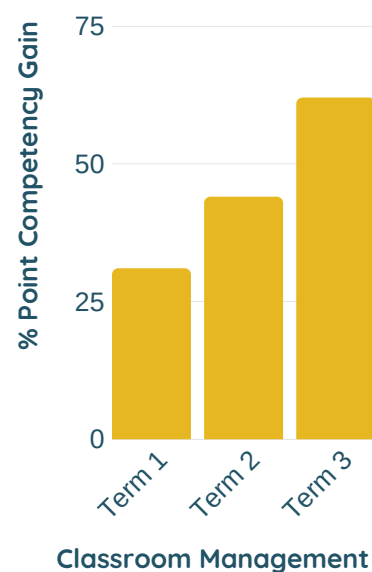
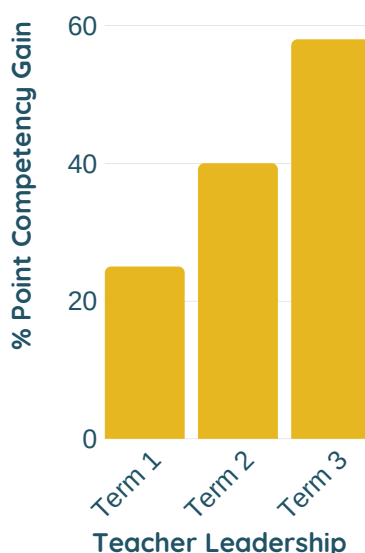
2018 Highlights

“From the start, when we began learning about mindsets, I discovered that I had a challenge in that area...I had fixed my mind and thought that some pupils might not be able to do certain tasks. I discovered that I can move from my fixed mindset to a growth mindset and believe in my students. I had to change some of my methods of teaching and started engaging my students in different ways.”
(Tabitha Njambi, Leadership Institute Fellow, 2018)



Tabitha has adopted other strategies introduced through Dignitas training and coaching. On Dignitas' last school visit, Tabitha was creating a discipline plan. Previously, she had tried different methods that did not achieve results. Now, she focuses on establishing relationships with her students first, then setting rules with a positive tone. This strategy has improved classroom culture, and maximized her instruction time. She spends less time correcting behavior since her students already know what is expected of them.

“I am now able to engage every pupil despite the difference in their ability. I now group them and make sure that every child has learned that particular lesson. I had previously thought that it is impossible to involve all the students in every activity. But after trying it again and again, it has now become part of my teaching style, I have seen it working.” (Tabitha Njambi, Leadership Institute Fellow, 2018)



Impact Evaluation

In October 2017, Dignitas engaged ziziAfrique to assess the impact of the Dignitas Leadership Institute (DLI) on schools, teachers, and learners. This was an ex-post evaluation intended to provide evidence of Dignitas' program impact to inform and support scaling, adjustment, and replication strategies. Findings from this study support ongoing dialogue with stakeholders who are interested in providing high-quality education to children through teacher education, and school leadership development programs. The evaluation sought to answer four key questions:, which are indicated below, followed by a few highlights from the findings..

What impact does Dignitas have on student academic and self-efficacy outcomes?

To what degree does Dignitas impact instructional delivery in the classroom?

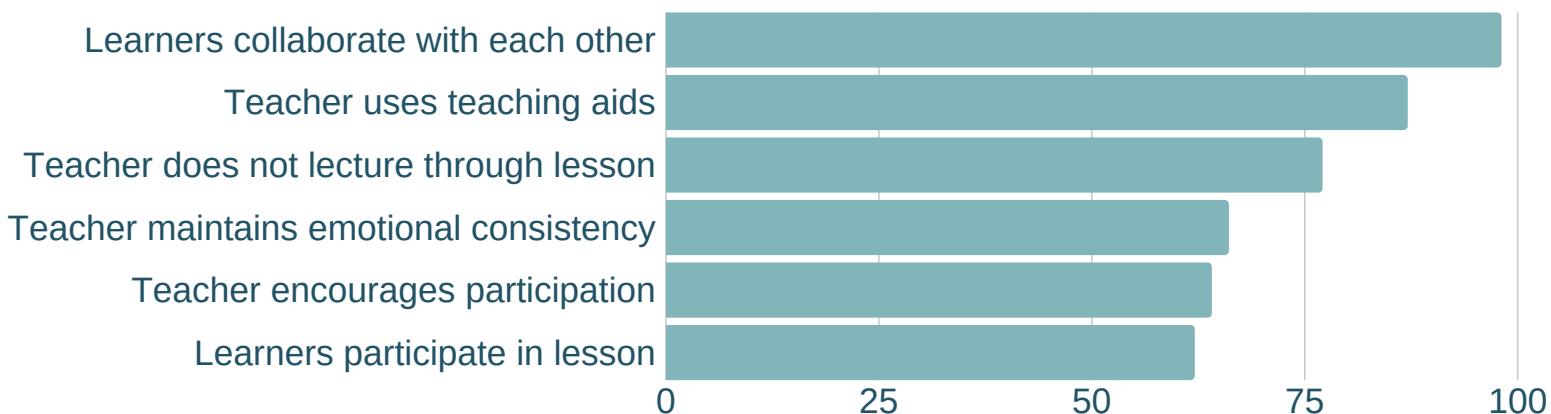
To what degree does Dignitas improve teacher-student interactions and the overall learning environment?

What is the impact of Dignitas on teacher self-efficacy, mindset and leadership?

“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.”
(Head Teacher Interview)



Teacher Practices During Lesson



Head Teachers and teachers reported that Dignitas 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. Head Teachers also observed that Dignitas had been intentional to ensure that teachers incorporated new skills for improved practice to promote quality learning.

Impact Evaluation

It is worth noting that Kenya's Ministry of Education had previously recorded that only 39% of teachers prepare lessons in advance, and less than 30% of teachers have basic pedagogical knowledge. According to the Kenya Education Sector Report (2017) classrooms are characterized by individual seat work and dominated by teacher-centered activities. Moreover, learners are rarely encouraged to participate in lessons, question new material, expand their reasoning, and collaborate with peers, competencies which are central to obtaining the 21st century skills required to thrive. The findings of Dignitas' impact evaluation demonstrate the promise of equipping and empowering educators.



*"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 learned how to group children according to ability, and interest."
(Teacher Interview)*

Impact on 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%** of the intervention schools were able to demonstrate high learning levels, in which a majority of the learners scored over 75% in work of their grade level. **92% of Head Teachers attributed improved learning outcomes to Dignitas coaching.** All respondents agreed that infrastructure support contributed least to improving learning. Where teaching quality and learning outcomes improved, most respondents attributed this to interventions on teaching pedagogy.

Recommendations from the Evaluation

The evaluation highlights a number of recommendations, many of which were addressed in Dignitas' program review. For example:

- Dignitas Leadership Institute should explicitly target to improve learning, prioritizing what works in directly improving learning.
- Dignitas Leadership Institute should consider teacher motivation
- Dignitas Leadership Institute should elevate every head teacher to the position of instructional leader and focus on selected instructional practices, including holding teachers accountable for lesson preparation and delivery
- While the low-fee private schools are needy, trying the interventions in a few public schools may add value by introducing conversations with government, learning from government, and increasing program prospects for scale.



Team Dignitas

The success of 2018 would not have been possible without our amazing team! Here's some of what they had to say as we head into 2019.

"2018 seemed impossible at the start! We had three new partnerships (Hope for Ariang, Flying Kites Academy, and Safari Collection) coming up alongside Stawisha, our core program. 'How will we train and support all these teachers and still support Stawisha fellows?' I thought to myself. But, to my surprise, it turned out to be a year full of learning and growth.

Working with a diverse group of teachers, some with more than 20 years' teaching experience, others with English as their third language, provided a great learning opportunity as we met them where they were, and adjusted coaching and facilitation to be relevant to them.

The partnerships also enabled me to level up my interpersonal skills, and grow my facilitation and coaching skills. Best of all, It was inspiring and rewarding to see positive change in the various schools and classrooms across the partnerships. At Flying Kites Academy, Teacher Damaris, who previously thought she could not teach without a cane, is no longer using it, and is instead focusing on setting a positive classroom culture. At Hope for Ariang, Teacher Bol, who wrote notes for the students on the board as his only method of teaching, is now planning his lessons, and engaging his students throughout."

(Samantha, Dignitas Leadership Coach)



The Dignitas team love to celebrate together!

Left: The team with Dignitas Founder, Tiffany, at the 10th Anniversary Celebrations.

Below: The team gathered to say goodbye to Jinani, an AfID volunteer.



"Looking at the number of schools, teachers, and students reached in 2018, I would say scaling really excites me as this is a great opportunity for Dignitas to reach more schools. This means empowering more teachers and School Leaders to ensure that schools are a vibrant place for children to thrive and succeed. It was also exciting to see our Stawisha program nominated for the WISE Awards this year, and we all look forward to the announcement of the winners in July 2019.

All in all, I am excited by the dedication of the entire Dignitas Team."

(Nancy, Dignitas Learning and Evaluation Officer)

Partnerships

In line with our 2018 strategy, we sought to establish mutually valuable partnerships, share insights, contribute to a broader narrative promoting the importance of School Leadership, and establish paths to growth.

RELI has been a valuable network for Dignitas. RELI convenes approximately 60 organizations from across East Africa, all of whom are focused on improving learning outcomes for the region's most vulnerable children, to create unique learning opportunities.

RELI has opened up a number of conversations with the Kenyan government that are important for Dignitas' work, and have included the opportunity for Dignitas to represent education actors in a variety of forums.

Dignitas has offered thought leadership on critical matters, and ensured School Leadership is on RELI's agenda.



Early in 2018, Dignitas began a conversation with Global School Leaders (GSL); an entity that curates and contextualizes best practices in school leadership globally to meet the distinct demands placed on school systems in the developing world.

Recognizing meaningful synergies across the work of both entities, Dignitas established a formal partnership with GSL to create and implement programming in Kenya in 2019. This creates opportunities for learning and development across teams, as well as an opportunity to bring more partners and funders together around a shared agenda.



Dignitas officially joined Global Schools Forum towards the end of 2018. Global Schools Forum offers Dignitas the opportunity to engage with a community of practitioners and funders seeking to positively impact the education sector. Dignitas also hosted a webinar for members on the subject of 'Reflective Practice for School Leaders' earlier in 2018.



Dignitas has been pleased to benefit from partnership with AfID (Accountants for International Development) who have supported the organization to review and improve financial management procedures and practices, as well as building the capacity of Dignitas financial management staff.

Dignitas has also been privileged to be an active member of WISE: ALLIN (World Innovation Summit for Education: Agile Leadership for Learning), and Kenya's EDPCG (Education Development Partners Consultative Group). Each of these have afforded Dignitas the opportunity to present our work and impact to wide audiences of scholars, practitioners and government stakeholders.

Wezesha Partners

Tailored for Education

In partnership with Tailored for Education, Dignitas has supported **11,247 children** with school uniforms and shoes since 2012. In 2018, uniforms were distributed to **4,168 students from 14 schools** in Kangemi, Kawangware, and Satellite. The new uniforms help to make sure children stay in school, build students' confidence, and ensure they are ready for learning. In 2018, the Dignitas team also had the pleasure of hosting Tailored for Education Co-Founders, Megan Kelly and Jessica Roy, for school visits and uniform distributions.

Alongside the uniform distributions, Dignitas works with schools to create Parent Contribution Projects. The schools are encouraged to identify a need that parents can address by each making a small, manageable contribution. This gives parents an opportunity to contribute to the development of the schools. As a result, in 2018 schools were able to equip libraries and purchase material required for their learners. Schools have improved their learning environment through infrastructure projects such as repairs, new furniture, and water tanks sponsored by their own parent contributions. Dignitas is excited to be able to bring communities together to meet their children's needs in partnership with organizations like Tailored for Education.



Dottie Scholars



Dottie Scholarship Program provides young women from marginalized communities the opportunity to attend a high-quality secondary school, and develop as leaders and role models in their community.

In 2018, **10 new scholars** were selected to join the Dottie Scholars' program. Dignitas has supported 68 scholars in partnership with Women Leaders in Action and other individuals. In 2018, Dignitas was proud to see 9 scholars graduate at the end of the year with excellent performance, including the top performer, Cateline Ouma, who attained B+ in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.



The Theme for the Leadership Development Training in 2018 was 'Success'. Scholars considered its definition, and their role models. The year ended with an engaging camp where, each day, the scholars had an opportunity to listen to and learn from young professionals who have made significant contributions in their area of influence and have been successful in their field. We are pleased to be supporting these girls to pursue their dreams of becoming doctors, artists, social workers, engineers, and change makers. Here is some of what the Dottie Scholars had to say:

"Success is about perseverance and patience, using the little that we have to get the best out of it."

"Success is believing in yourself for all things are possible."

"Success is being able to lift yourself after falling. It's all about trying what you can do, practice then get better at it"."

Decade of Dignitas!

2018 saw our team celebrate a Decade of Dignitas: 2008-2018.
Check out our story so far!



2008: Volunteer researchers, with Dignitas Founders Tiffany and Bobby, ready to conduct community research in Mathare to determine educational needs, and potential solutions.

2009: Mapping of Community Schools, and Teach for Mathare Pilot Program launched with 22 teachers from 5 schools. Strong early results from this pilot allowed Dignitas to build partnerships with USAID and Aga Khan Foundation.



2011: Dignitas opens a new office in Mathare and officially launches the first Leadership Institute.

2011: Alongside the Leadership Institute, Dignitas launches Dottie Scholars to ensure girls from marginalized communities access quality secondary education, and, Wezesha to offer small, infrastructure grants to Community Schools.

Dignitas designed and piloted a new school evaluation rubric to better measure our impact.



2012: 48 educators graduate from the first Leadership Institute. Pictured is Teacher Grace, Naioth Education Centre, Mathare with Dignitas Founder, Tiffany.

2012: Dignitas' Leadership Institute grew in leaps and bounds, working with 2 cohorts in 2012, and over 180 School Leaders in total.



Decade of Dignitas!

2014: Dignitas expanded beyond Mathare into additional communities. Expansion to Huruma, Kangemi, Kawangware, Satellite, and Thika. saw Dignitas impact 34 school partners, 12,700 students, and 396 educators.



2015: Dignitas supported 240 educators through Professional Development Workshops.

2016: Dignitas launched Nawiri School Leadership Institute which focused on School Leaders as the key agents of change within schools. Nawiri included the launch of Professional Learning Communities to allow leaders and their teams to collectively design solutions to improve student achievement.



2017: Dignitas begins to prepare for scale with a growing team and new Executive Director, Deborah Kimathi, after the transition of Founding Executive Director, Tiffany Cheng Nyaggah. Preparation for growth included the commissioning of an external impact evaluation.

2018: Dignitas celebrates ten years with new partnerships with Global School Leaders, Flying Kites, and Hope for Ariang amongst others. The team begin to focus in on designing programming and evaluation at scale, partnership with government, and building impact and influence.



In 2019, the Dignitas team will work with 130 School Partners and 400 School Leaders to positively impact the learning of 30,000 children.

School Leader Awards



A highlight of our 10th Anniversary Celebrations was our first ever Dignitas School Leader Awards. We celebrated Mr. James Ooko (Revival Sanctuary School), Mrs. Florence Oyoo (Brightburn Education Centre), Mr. Nicholas Odhiambo (Riruta Jubilee Academy) and Mrs. Elizabeth Mbatia (Alpha Glory School). Zeal Covenant School also received the Dignitas School of Distinction Award. All of the award winners were recognized for making changes in their schools to ensure all children can thrive and succeed.

Looking Forward: 2019 and Beyond

Taking into consideration the findings of our external impact evaluation, our desire to measure impact at the learner level, and our ambitious growth goals, the Dignitas team worked to develop a new program and evaluation model. This model is informed by ten years of learning and practice, and is aligned with Kenya's new national Competency Based Curriculum.

Dignitas has identified three levers of transformation that catalyze quality teaching and learning:
Instructional Leadership
Learner Engagement
Classroom Culture



Students demonstrate increased curiosity and self-efficacy.

Students collaborate and communicate.

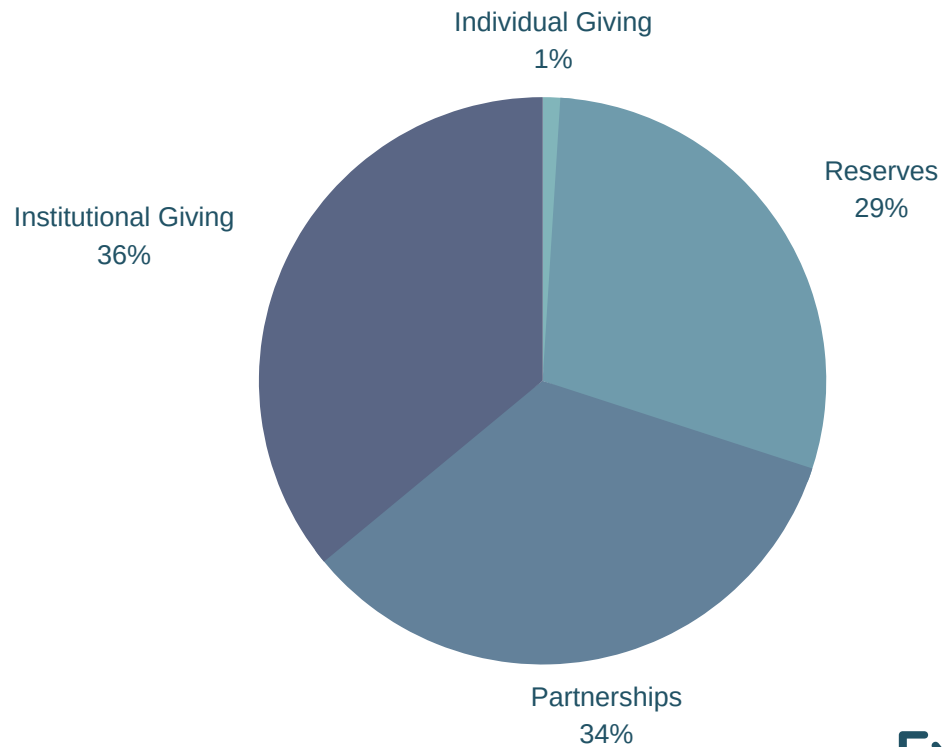
In order to reach 300,000 children by 2022, the Dignitas team believe we have to pursue, and invest in:

Technology that supports program delivery
Government engagement
Partnerships

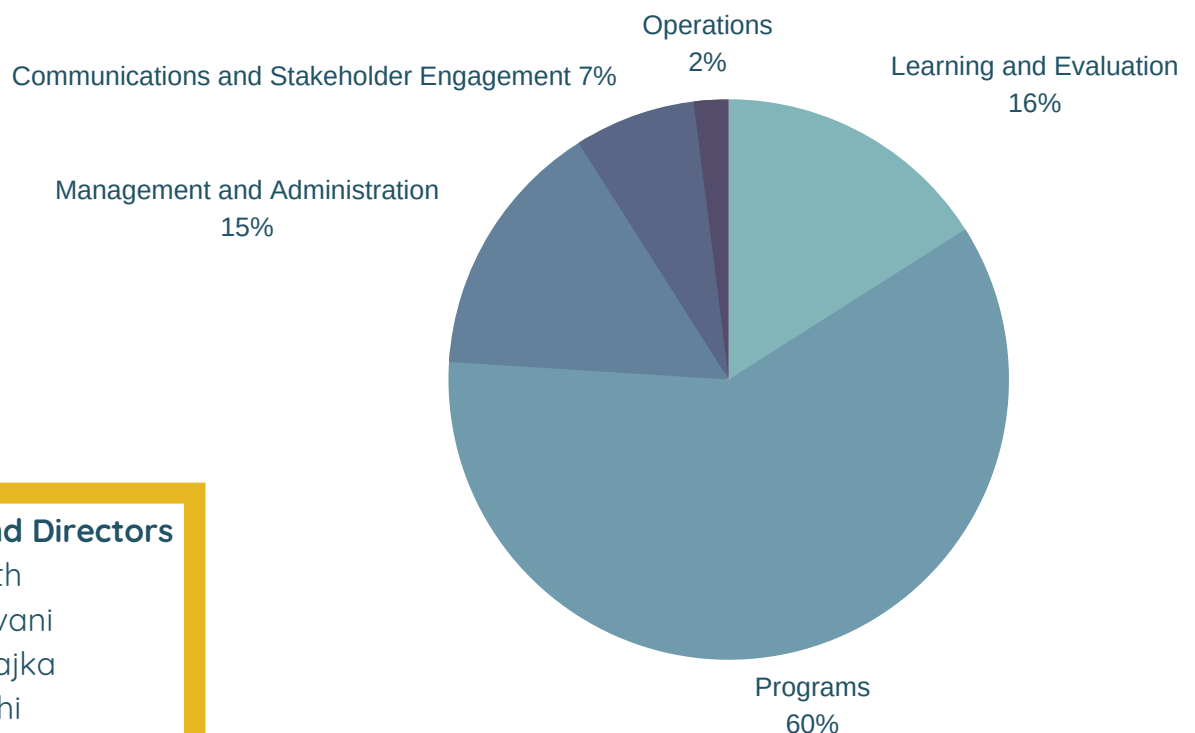
Financial Summary

2018

Income



Expenditure



Board of Trustees and Directors

Dr C. S. Sheth
Dr Paresh Devani
Smita Sanghrajka
Steve Kariithi
Atia Yahya
Tiffany Cheng Nyaggah
Bobby Lee
Min Tak

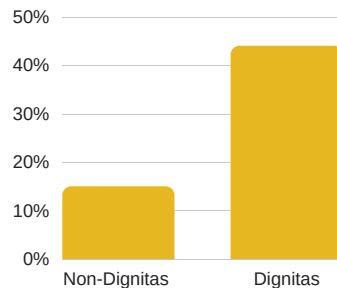


Adopt A School

Would you like to ensure children from marginalized communities get the education they deserve?

Adopt A School and help hundreds of children learn!

Dignitas equips teachers and school leaders for the delivery of quality education to ensure all children gain the skills and strength of character they need to thrive and succeed.



Students in Dignitas classrooms showed 44% increase in academic growth during the course of a lesson, whilst students in non-Dignitas classrooms experienced 15% increase.

For just KSh 300,000 (USD 3,000) you can support a Dignitas partner school for an entire year.

Just KSh 1,000 (USD 10) per student will enable them to learn.
Make a difference today!

Would you like to transform children's lives?

Would you like to make sure that all schools become vibrant places for children to thrive and succeed?

Get in touch to find out more.

- Adopt a School
- Volunteer your time or expertise
- Host a fundraising event
- Connect us with others making a difference in education



2019 Strategy

GROW

Prepare, partner for, and pursue growth. Engage community, government and other stakeholders as an integral part of that growth.

IMPACT

Ensure that all our work is impactful, and therefore meaningful, in ensuring schools are places for children to thrive and succeed.

VALUE

Our impact is only sustainable if it is affordable. Ensure effectiveness and efficiency, apply innovative thinking and design.

EVIDENCE

Build and share a credible body of evidence that speaks to the role of school leaders and teacher leaders, the potential of learners, and their right to thrive. Leverage evidence to drive influence and build a strong organizational profile.

SUSTAIN

Ensure systems are in place for long term organizational health, and sustainable financial health. Be a place for team members to learn, thrive, achieve and grow.



Join us in 2019 to be part of the
transformation! Volunteer, donate, or
partner with us to help every child reach
their potential.
Thank you!



/dignitasproject



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