



**GLOBAL
SCHOOL
LEADERS**



**Africa
Educational
Trust**

*Education for all is the
key to development*

Ustadi School Leadership Institute

***Investing in the Instructional Leadership Capacity of Head
Teachers to Improve Teacher Practice***



**End of Pilot Report: September, 2019
Executive Summary**

Partner Organizations:

Global School Leaders (GSL) incubates, connects, and supports organizations that train school leaders to improve the learning of students from under-served communities around the world. We curate and contextualize best practices in school leadership globally to meet the distinct demands placed on school systems in the developing world.

Dignitas is a leading education development organization. We use an innovative training and coaching approach to empower schools and educators in marginalized communities 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.

Africa Educational Trust (AET) works in collaboration with local communities, Ministry of Education officials and local organizations to provide formal or alternative education and basic skills training.

Global School Leaders, Dignitas and Africa Educational Trust would like to thank the following people for making this pilot possible:

Laikipia North Sub-County Director of Education

APBET Dandora Cluster Lead

RELI (Regional Education Learning Initiative)

Centre for Research and Innovations East Africa

Ministry of Education

Teachers Service Commission

Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

Emma Prall (American University)

Program Rationale



40% of children aged 6-16 years cannot do everyday math (Uwezo 2015), highlighting significant gaps in educational quality, despite impressive

gains in school enrolment (national NER currently 91%). Kenya’s Ministry of Education’s National Education Sector Strategic Plan has highlighted the importance of capacity building for education managers (2018). However, there is still a lack of comprehensive training for head teachers that involves both leadership and management skills, which is detrimental for students’ learning outcomes (Onguko et al 2008). To maximize the impact of School Leaders, GSL, Dignitas and AET created the Ustadi School Leadership Institute (USLI) to pilot a continuous professional development program focused on instructional leadership.

Program Overview

USLI partnered with 27 APBET (Alternative Providers of Basic Education and Training) schools in Dandora, Nairobi and 27 government schools in Laikipia North.

Theory of Change			
Training and on-ground support to School Leaders will improve education practices within the school, therefore increasing teacher performance and student learning outcomes			
Outcomes			
Increase in number of trained School Leaders in the system	Increase in effective leadership practices	Increase in teacher performance	Increase in student learning and development outcomes*

Table 1

Program Content

Program content was a combination of Leadership Academies (LA), Professional Development (PD) Workshops, and In-school Coaching delivered January to July 2018.

The curriculum and coaching content was designed by a team of technical experts from GSL, Dignitas and AET. The design considered three trajectories of developing School Leader capacity that would deliver on the outcomes of the program:

- Leading Self – Personal Leadership trajectory
- Leading Learning – Academic Rigor trajectory
- Leading Others – School Culture trajectory

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

The USLI team were keen to leverage the pilot to learn as much as possible about what works in supporting School Leaders.

Outcome 1: Impact on number of trained School Leaders

USLI saw 99% completion rate across the cohort of 81 School Leaders, and an average attendance rate across all activities of 82%, with higher attendance rates across both Laikipia North and Nairobi (89% and 85% respectively) for LA and PD Workshops, than for coaching (70% and 84% respectively). Feedback from USLI coaches indicated that the Laikipia North coaching schedule was often interrupted by the official responsibilities that government Head Teachers are expected to fulfil. 91% of participating School Leaders rated their overall satisfaction with USLI as eight, nine, or ten out of ten, demonstrating a high level of satisfaction with curriculum, coaching, and methods of delivery. USLI was intended to influence the classroom practice of teachers, without delivery of program direct to the teachers. USLI’s Theory of Change was that the program would build the capacity of School Leaders (Head Teachers and Deputies) as instructional leaders within their schools, as a means of improving classroom practice of teachers. A crucial link in this chain of impact, was

the cascade of training and coaching from School Leaders who were participating directly in USLI, to teachers within the same schools. Figure 1 shows the rate at which School Leaders fulfilled this expectation, which was surprisingly high. Given the initial success observed herein, and the general commitment of School Leaders to cascade learning, future iteration of USLI should provide more guidance and tools on how to cascade training, with a particular focus on cascading practice and setting clear goals for School Leaders and Teachers alike.

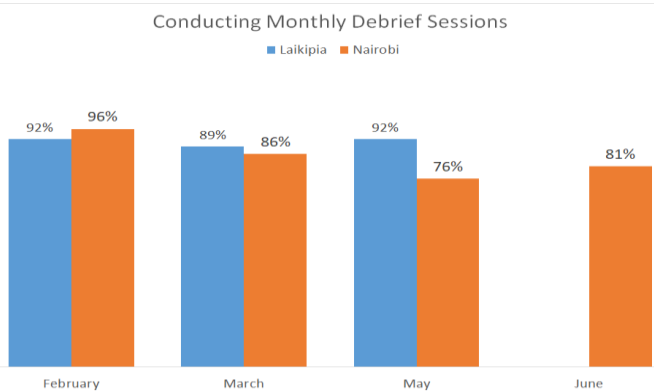


Figure 1

In summary, analysis of the data collected against the first outcome, indicates four key conclusions. First, there was high engagement, satisfaction and therefore retention levels among participating School Leaders. Secondly, including the Deputy Head Teacher, as was the case for all of the Nairobi cohort, increased attendance and continuity. Third, while government Head Teachers are more qualified academically, both cohorts had limited exposure to CPD designed for School Leadership. Finally, there is a general willingness and commitment from School Leaders to cascade training and coaching to teachers.

Outcome 2 - Impact on Effective Leadership Practices

USLI tracked School Leaders’ competencies with a tool designed to rate a detailed list of indicators across eight categories; collecting and recording data, data analysis, relationship building, conducting

meetings, coaching and feedback, facilitation and debrief, planning, and implementation.

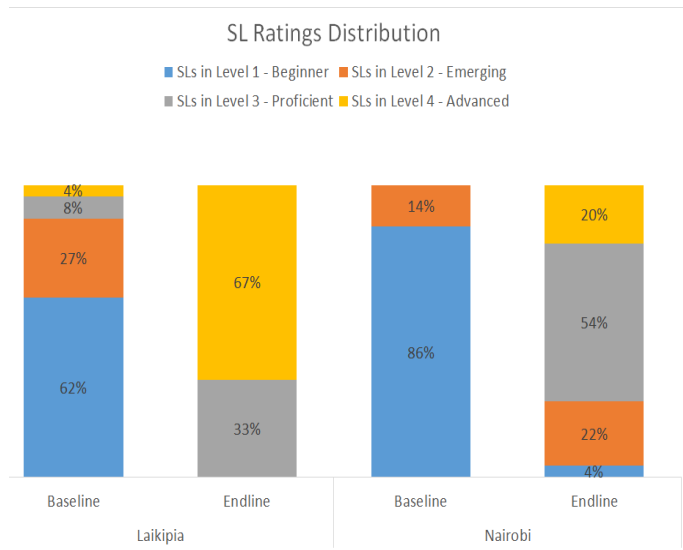


Figure 2

Interestingly, the competency with the highest rate of growth across both Nairobi and Laikipia North cohorts was Relationship Building, which at baseline had 0% and 19% respectively rated at Level 3 or 4, and by endline had 93% and 96% rated at Level 3 or 4. To progress to Level 4, School Leaders had to demonstrate relationships with staff and students that were healthy, constructive, positive, and exhibited mutual respect.

The competency with the lowest rate of growth across both Nairobi and Laikipia North cohorts was Implementation, which at baseline had 0% and 27% respectively rated at Level 3 or 4, and by endline had 38% and 89% rated at Level 3 or 4. To progress to Level 4, School Leaders had to ensure planning went beyond paperwork, and moved to action, and assigned tasks should be adequately followed up in a manner that drives progress, and builds a healthy culture of accountability.

USLI focused in on key leadership practices that are documented to impact on student achievement. One of these is the practice of data-driven instruction. For closer analysis, USLI looked at what kind of data

School Leaders were collecting, how often School Leaders were collecting it, and how often they were reviewing the data with teachers.

Between baseline and endline, with their participation in USLI, School Leaders started collecting data more frequently (on a weekly basis) which was accompanied by teachers collecting data more frequently (after every lesson). However, a closer look at the types of data being collected and utilized show the need for further support to see this practice replicated across planning and implementation of activities affecting learning so that School Leaders are comprehensively reviewing the full spectrum of data regularly.

Two further key leadership practices tracked by USLI were Classroom Observations and School Walkthroughs. The USLI team observed increases in the use of these practices by School Leaders who participated in the program. Teachers also reported a 13% increase in those being observed weekly, with 52% of teachers benefitting from weekly classroom observations by the end of the program.

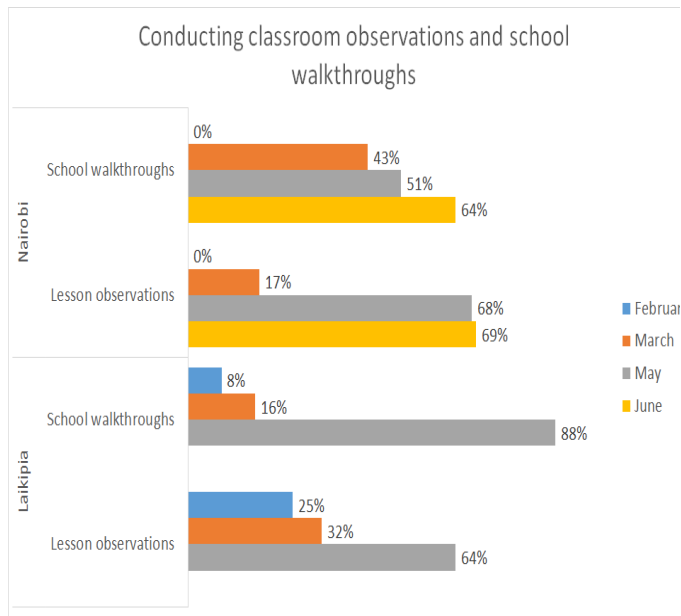


Figure 3

A crucial element of any classroom observation is the offering of feedback that is constructive, and will support improvement in classroom practice. Our data shows that providing feedback after lesson observations was more common earlier in Laikipia than Nairobi, and the uptake increased in both locations with the full delivery of related training and coaching support.

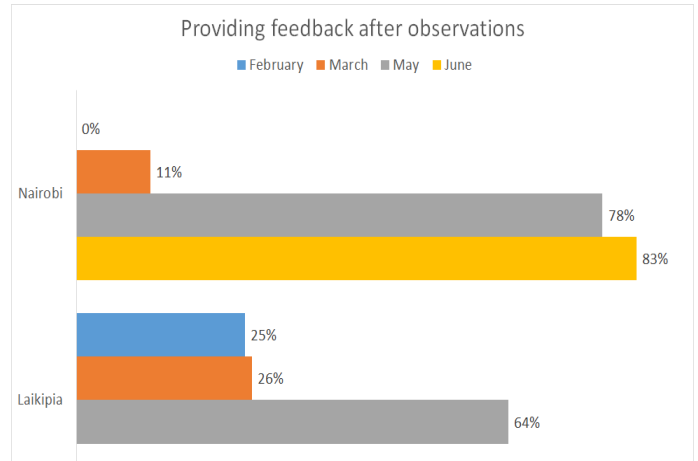


Figure 4

Key to the success of USLI was the ability of the program to shift School Leader mindset. For many School Leaders, their focus is administrative, and not instructional. Their professional training, and even government systems of accountability and supervision do not encourage school management practices that affect teaching and learning.

Figure 5 demonstrates positive shifts in School Leader mindsets between baseline and endline, and shows a marked improvement with respect to their interactions with teachers. The School Leaders, through participation in USLI, reported increased openness to feedback from teachers, and an increasingly constructive approach to addressing weaknesses in teacher practice. School Leaders are still hesitant to establish training plans for teachers consistently, and may feel restrained by capacity or resource to do so. This may be an area for further support in future iterations of USLI.

School Leaders' mindsets and perceptions

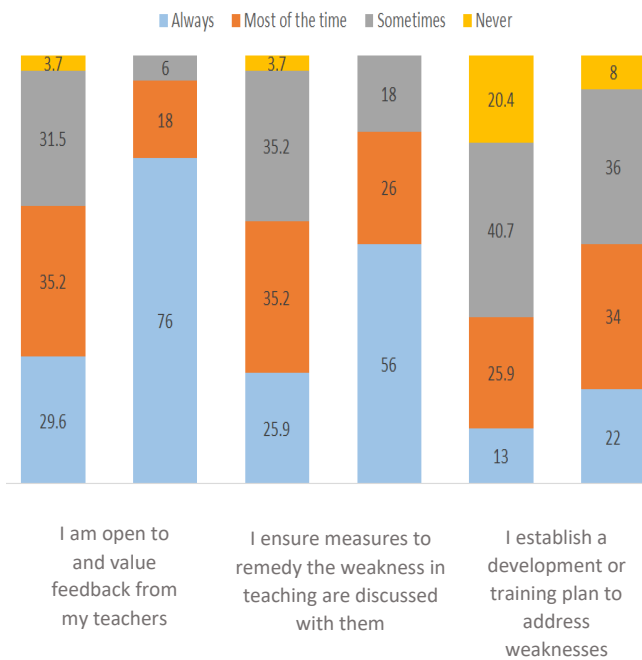


Figure 5

In summary, a number of key findings can be observed in relation to the second outcome. First, the USLI program demonstrated an ability to increase leadership competencies across all indicators. Interestingly, there does not seem to be any direct correlation between professional qualification and competency ratings. Critically, increase in practices such as school walkthroughs, and teacher observations, point to important shifts in the School Leaders' understanding of their management role, with increased appreciation for their role as instructional leaders. This is also reflected in the perception and mindset shifts documented in the School Leader surveys.

Outcome 3 - Impact on Teaching Processes

It was important for USLI to be able to observe demonstrable shifts in teacher practices, whilst acknowledging that with such a short program cycle, our expectations were limited. Reviewing certain elements of lesson planning that were directly supported with USLI training and coaching, USLI

realized gains in the Nairobi partner schools, with more teachers following a lesson planning structure, and integrating rigorous objectives.

Another area of teacher practice that USLI intended to impact was learner engagement, seeking to observe specific techniques teachers were using to engage students. Figure 6 shows gains across the partner schools, and increases in good practices.

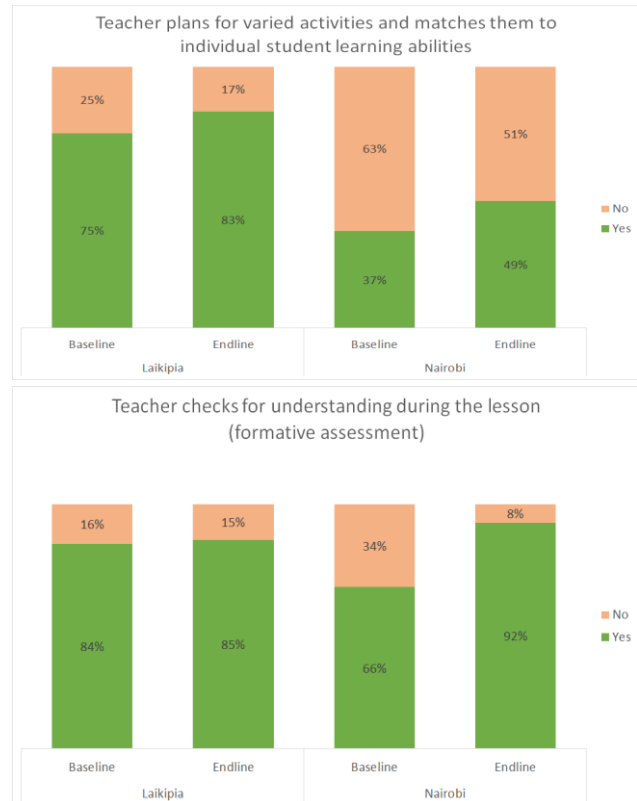


Figure 6

In summary, there are several highlights from the findings on the third outcome. There was a clear shift in classroom practices over the course of the pilot with greater learner engagement and improved behavior management. Since the program did not have direct contact with teachers, the data from classroom observations indicates that School Leaders exercised instructional leadership to shift classroom practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the USLI team observed strong indications that the theory of change holds water. Evidence shows that, in the course of the pilot, training and on-ground support to School did improve education practices within the school, therefore increasing teacher performance. Within the pilot phase, positive shifts in School Leader and teacher practice were observed, as a result of the increased capacity of Head Teachers and their Deputies to fulfil the role of Instructional Leaders within the school.



In the 2018 World Development Report, the World Bank declared a global learning crisis, and highlighted four factors that hinder

student learning, including “School Management that doesn’t affect teaching and learning.” Equipped School Leaders improve the school’s teaching quality by helping teachers solve problems, providing instructional advice, and setting goals that prioritize learning. “Effective headship by head teachers was prerequisite to good performance of schools.” (Chitavi, 2002) Further, Heck, et al (1990) found that the “head teacher’s leadership influenced school governance, instructional organization, and school climate, which in turn directly affected student achievement.”

An external evaluation of Dignitas’ work, conducted by ziziAfrique in 2018 to answer the question of what impacts student achievement, recommended that every head teacher should be elevated to the position of instructional leader, and focus on selected instructional practices, including holding teachers accountable for lesson preparation and delivery. Bambrick-Santayo (2012) recognizes ‘Instructional Levers’ that School Leaders can use as a focus of

teacher support. These are data-driven instruction, teacher observation and feedback, instructional planning, and teacher professional development.

Evidence gathered in the course of the USLI pilot clearly suggests that School Leaders must be equipped and empowered to ensure improved quality of teaching and learning in schools across Kenya.

USLI Phase Two will be committed to sharing these findings with other education sector stakeholders, including the various government agencies, as we seek to understand further how to integrate these learnings, and the broader USLI program into what the government is seeking to achieve through NESSP (National Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018-2022), and of course with the CBC, TSC’s Teacher Professional Development initiatives, and other critical drivers of progress.