



Stawisha Instructional Leadership Institute 2020 Program Report

1. Introduction

Dignitas' mission is to equip and empower educators in marginalized communities to transform learners' opportunities for children to develop the skills and strength of character to thrive and succeed. Through Stawisha Instructional Leadership Institute, Dignitas works to improve student learning through development of School Leader capacity with a focus on three levers of transformation: Instructional Leadership, Classroom Culture, and Learner Engagement.

In 2020, Dignitas partnered with 20 APBET and 20 Public Primary Schools in Nairobi and Homabay Counties respectively, to equip 178 School Leaders with the skills, competencies and mindsets that will allow ever learner to thrive and succeed. Due to Covid, Dignitas was forced to innovate a program design that would enable learners to meaningfully engage in learning whilst at home, hence the launch of the **Leaders of Learning (LoL) Project**. Through remote training and coaching, Dignitas equipped School Leaders with the knowledge, competencies, and strategies to become community champions. The Leaders of Learning project was delivered from June to October 2020, with Dignitas delivering school reopening and recovery content thereafter. On several deliberations with APBET School Leaders, Dignitas developed and delivered content around school reopening and recovery, to ensure schools are well prepared for reopening and learner re-enrollment.

2. Leaders of Learning Program

Theory of Change

Through the Leaders of Learning Project, Dignitas believed that *building the capacity of Leaders of Learning to be community-based champions will improve the well-being and learning for children during the Covid-19 crisis.*

The Leaders of Learning Project had four outcomes:

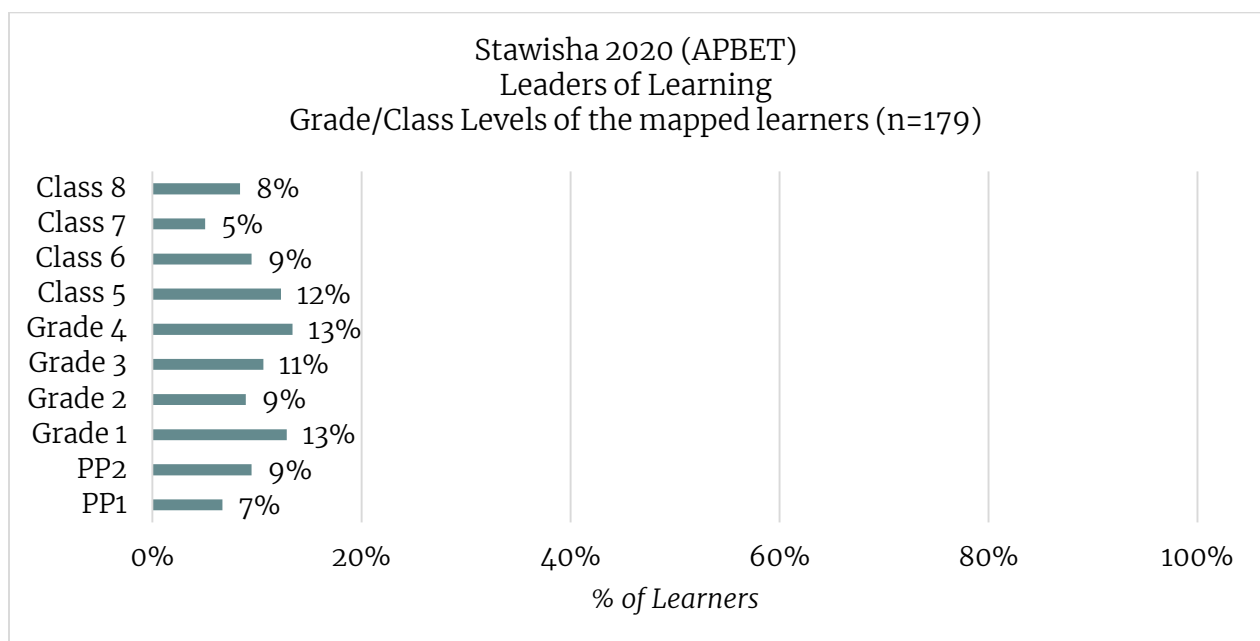
1. Children have access to quality care that ensures child safety and well-being
2. Children stay engaged in learning whilst at home
3. Parents are empowered to support learning at home
4. Community Champions are equipped to support households and ensure the well-being and safety of children



The Leaders of Learning Project was open to all the Nairobi and Homabay School Leaders. However, there was provision to participate in the *Learning Cohort* or *Cascading Cohort*. School Leaders in the Learning Cohort received training and coaching support only, whereas those in the Cascading Cohort supported households in addition to their participation in trainings and coaching.

Dignitas engaged 21 Stawisha APBET School Leaders as Leaders of Learning; 16 of which were part of the initial pilot cohort and 5 in the Stawisha APBET LoL Cohort. All the other School Leaders participated as a Learning Cohort.

In July 2020, 101 households and 179 learners were mapped by the 5 School Leaders in Dandora Community to receive Dignitas support and learning packets. The 179 learners spread across all the different grade/class levels as shown in the figure below.



Leaders of Learning Highlights

- a. **Outcome 1: Community Champions are equipped to support households and ensure the well-being and safety of children**

Training & Coaching

School Leaders were trained on nine different modules, namely:

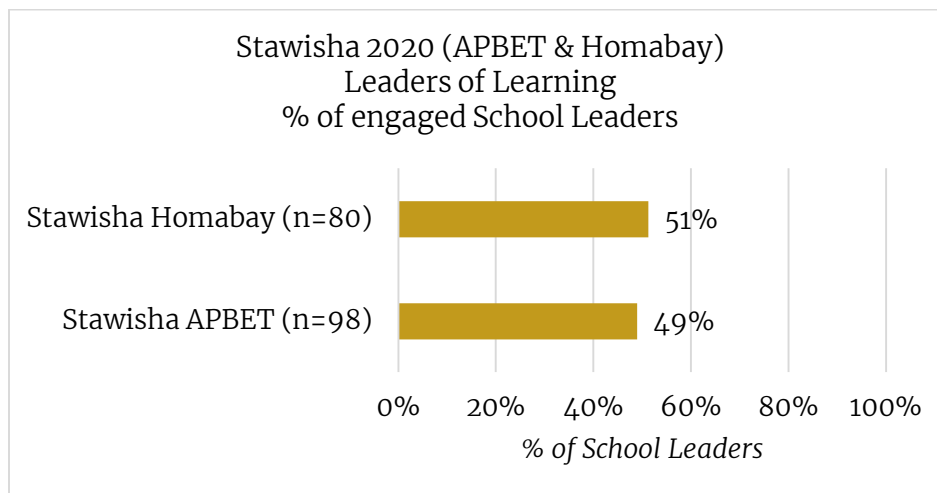
1. Who is a Leader of Learning?
2. Dealing with trauma and anxiety



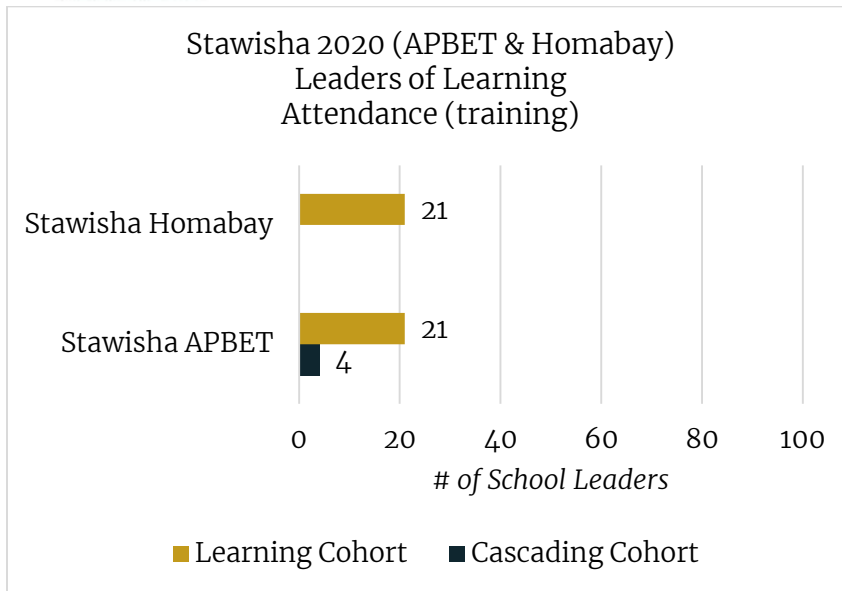
3. Monitoring child wellbeing
4. Parental engagement
5. Leveraging distance learning resources (for teachers)
6. Leveraging distance learning resources (for learners)
7. Growth mindsets during Covid-19
8. Household Support
9. Health Leaders of Learning, healthy Households

In addition to this, School Leaders received two rounds of coaching support over the phone. Content was also available on Messenger Chatbot with regular sharing of modules on WhatsApp.

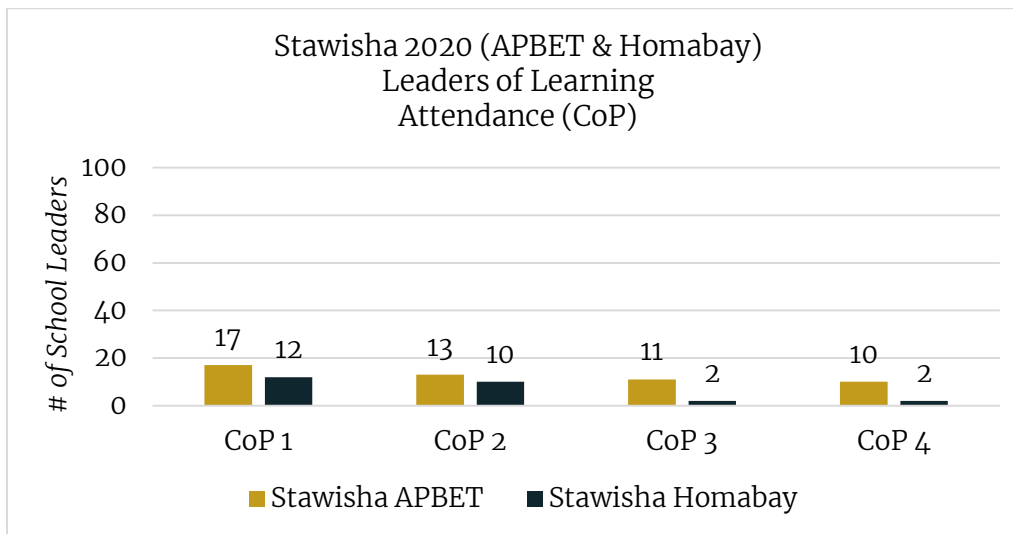
Dignitas trained 89 School Leaders; 48 and 44 School Leaders from Dandora and Homabay, respectively. The chart below shows the proportion of actively engaged School Leaders across both cohorts.



A total of 46 School Leaders attended the July Leaders of Learning Leadership Academy, as shown below.



In Addition to training and coaching, Dignitas Coaches facilitated Communities of Practice through Zoom and WhatsApp platforms, with the following chart showing attendance. The Communities of Practice allowed School Leaders to share their experiences and ideas, particularly in relation to household support.

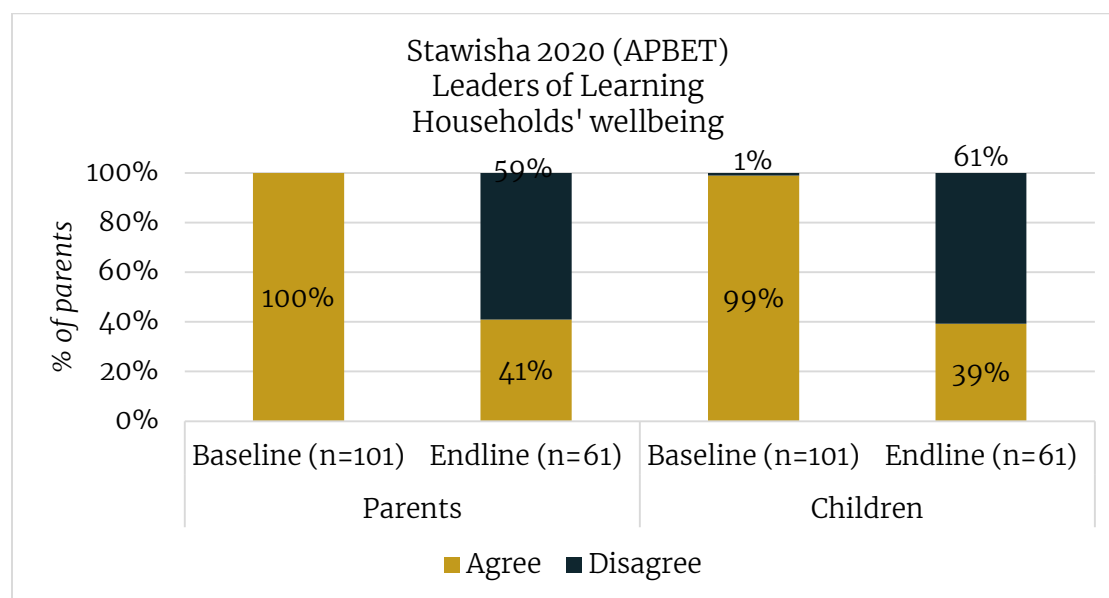




b. Outcome 2: Children have access to quality care that ensures child safety and well-being

Household Wellbeing

There was a decline in the anxiety levels as shown in the chart below. This is attributed to the wellbeing support provided by the Leaders of Learning throughout the program. Households were provided with strategies to deal with trauma and also ways to monitor and support their children's wellbeing.

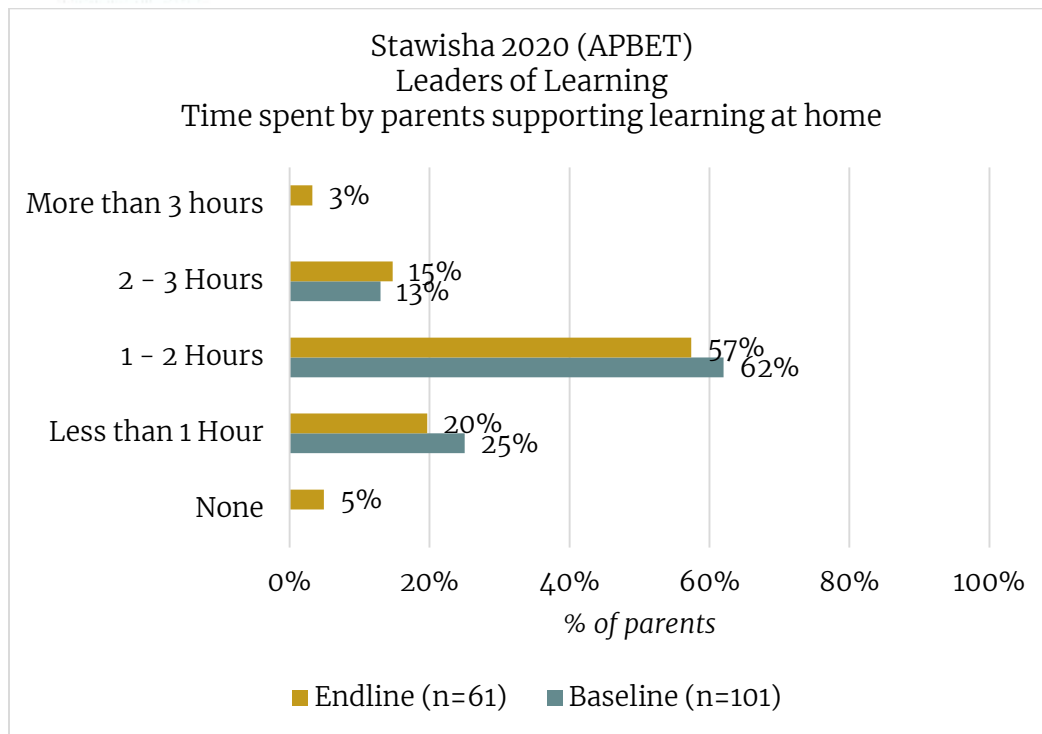


c. Outcome 3: Parents are empowered to support learning at home

The Cascading Cohort cascaded learnings by providing remote learning and wellbeing support to households once every two weeks. School Leaders supported households by linking directly with the parents/guardians through various channels with phone calls being the most preferred method of communication. The Stawisha APBET cascading team provided support to approximately 56 households, reaching at least 50% of the mapped households.

Parental engagement

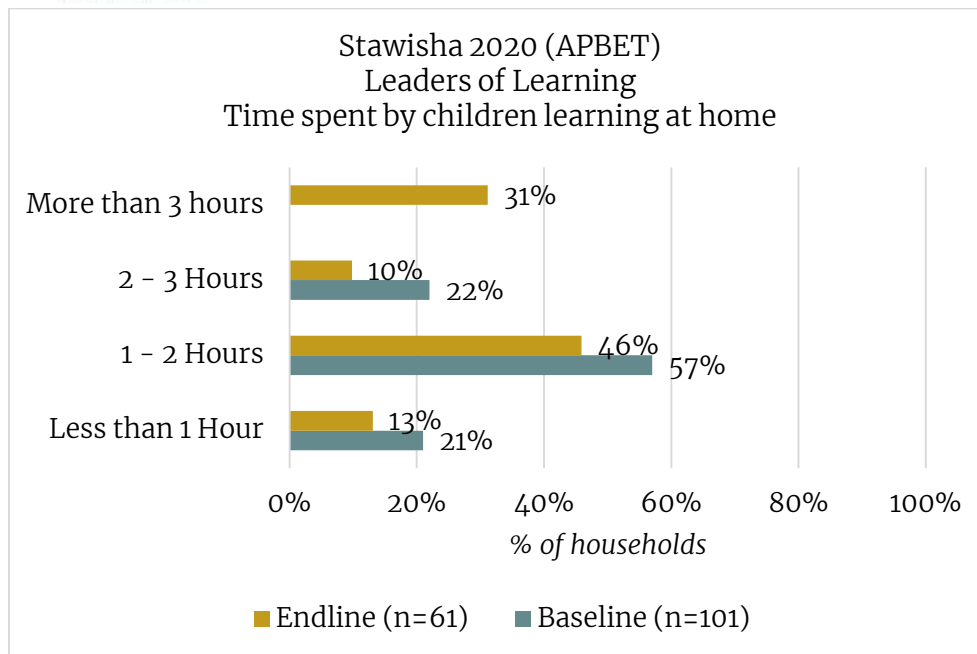
Parents reported dedicating some time each day to support learning at home, with majority spending 1 – 2 hours daily. Additionally, parents supported their children by seeking out additional learning materials/support from the teacher and helping with schoolwork/revision.



d. Outcome 4: Children stay engaged in learning whilst at home

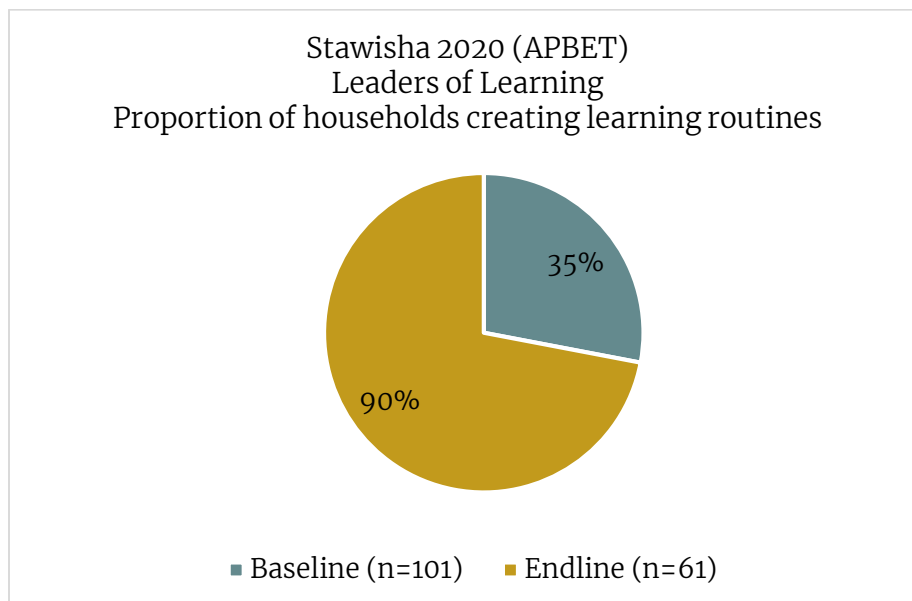
Learning at home

Majority of the learners spent 1 – 2 hours daily on schoolwork. Also, 31% of the households reported spending more than 3 hours with majority of these learners in upper primary (Class 6, 7, and 8).



Learning routines/Daily learning schedules

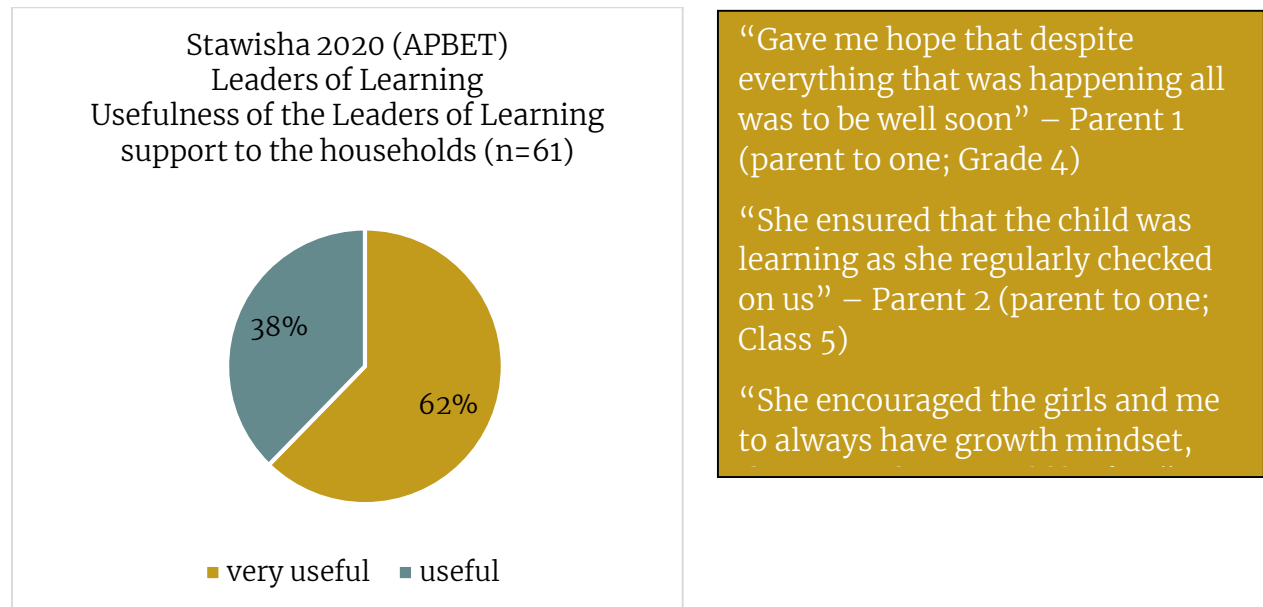
Majority of the parents/guardians created daily learning schedules for their children, with 90% of the surveyed households reporting this; an increase from 35% during baseline. Of the 90%, 91% reported the schedules clearly defined time for learning, housework, and play.



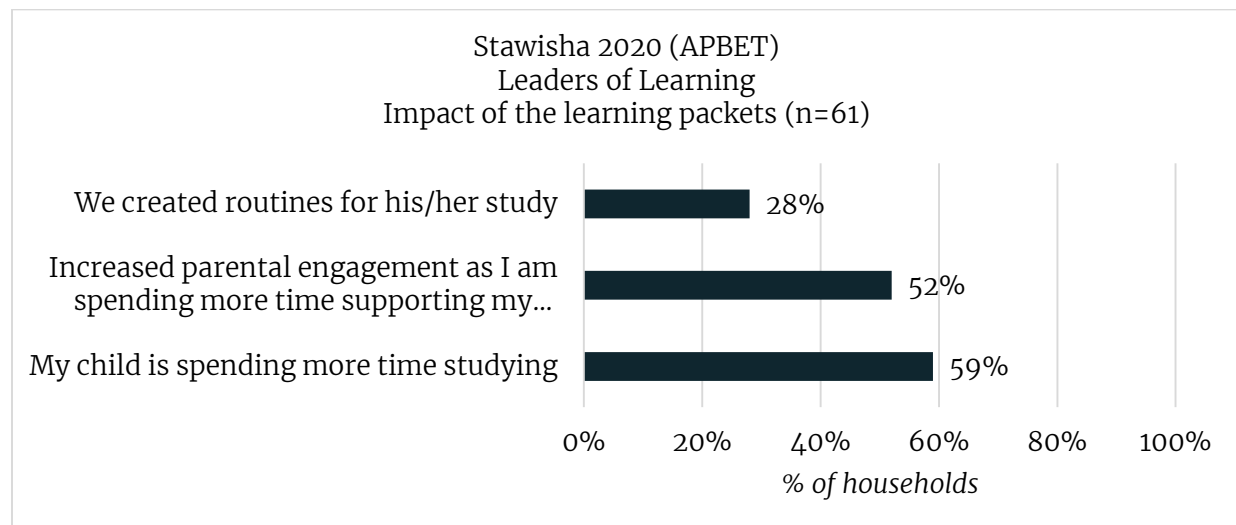


Program Feedback

Overall, all households supported through the Leaders of Learning Program found the support useful.



All households found the learning packets provided useful, with majority reporting increased time spent on learning and parental engagement.



Also, School Leaders reported that the learning packets were very useful as these kept learners busy and engaged.



In addition to strengthening their relationship with the parents, School Leaders also felt that the Leaders of Learning Program helped advance their digital literacy skills.

“Am able to adjust and cope with change, gained more knowledge on digital literacy, and realized communication and engagement is key in learning and teaching” – School Leader 1

“I managed to identify my role as a teacher” – School Leader 2

“It made me interact more with my learners and my parents” – School Leader 3

“Helped me care about parents’ wellbeing and know how that affects the learners” – School Leader 4

3. School Reopening & Recovery

Training

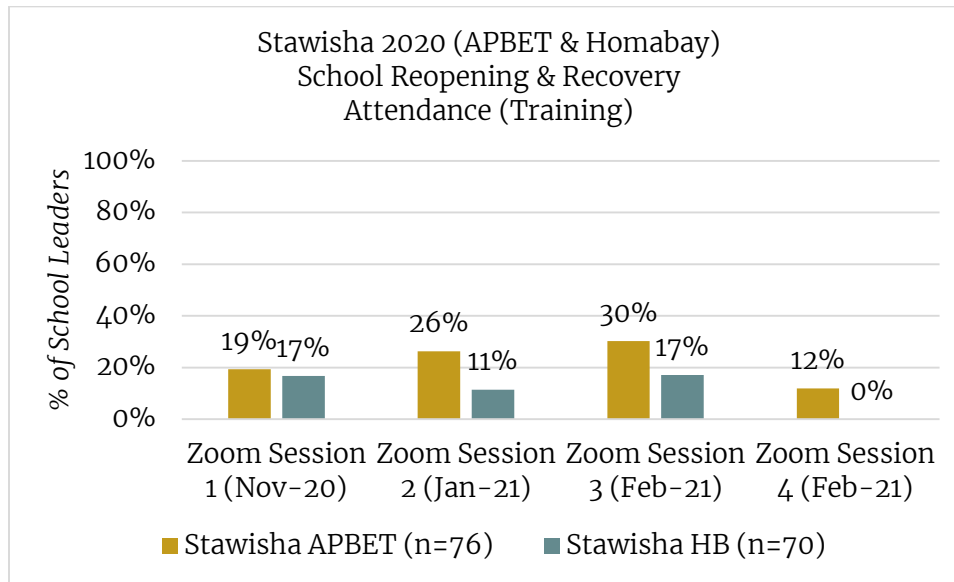
School Reopening and recovery content was delivered between November 2020 and March 2021. Training covered the following eight domains:

1. Instructional Leadership for school reopening
2. Instructional Leadership for learning recovery
3. Leader and educator wellbeing
4. Learner wellbeing and Socio-Emotional Learning
5. Learner Engagement
6. Technology for learning and management
7. Emergency remote and blended learning
8. Parental engagement

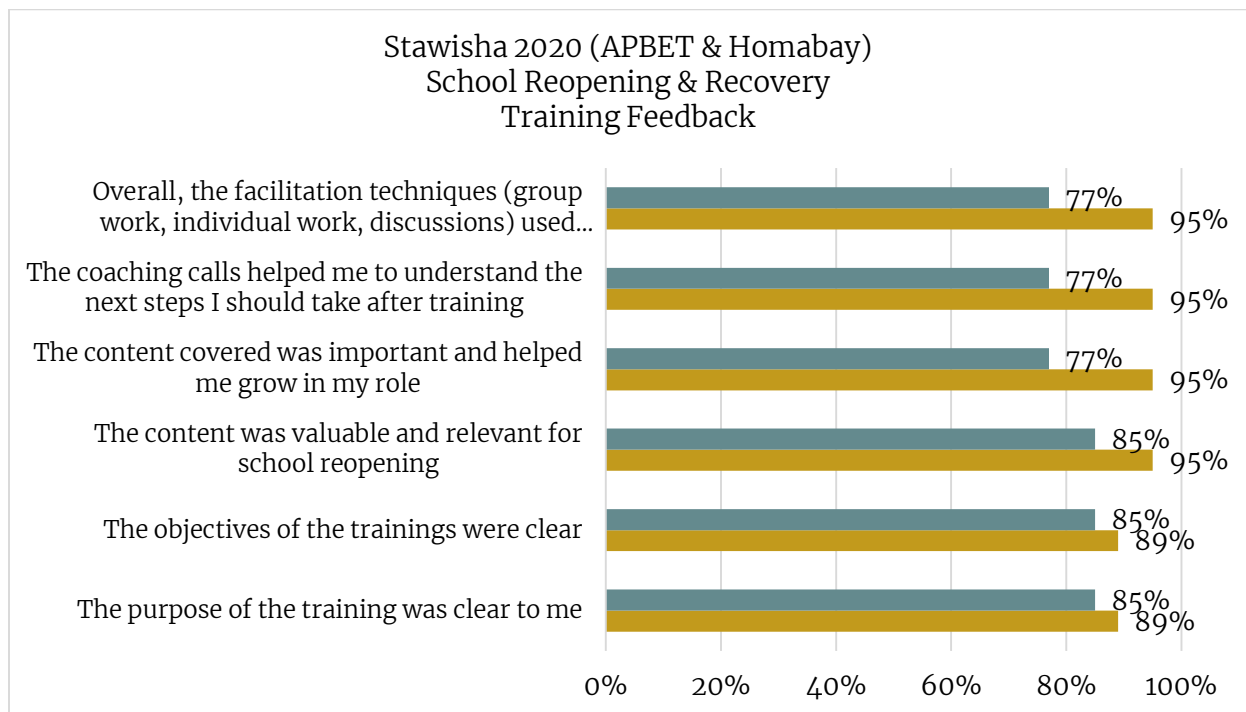
Readings were shared through WhatsApp, and supplemented by biweekly zoom sessions to summarize the content shared. Overall, 76 APBET (35) and Homabay (41) School Leaders participated in the school reopening and recovery trainings.



The figure below shows attendance across the zoom sessions.



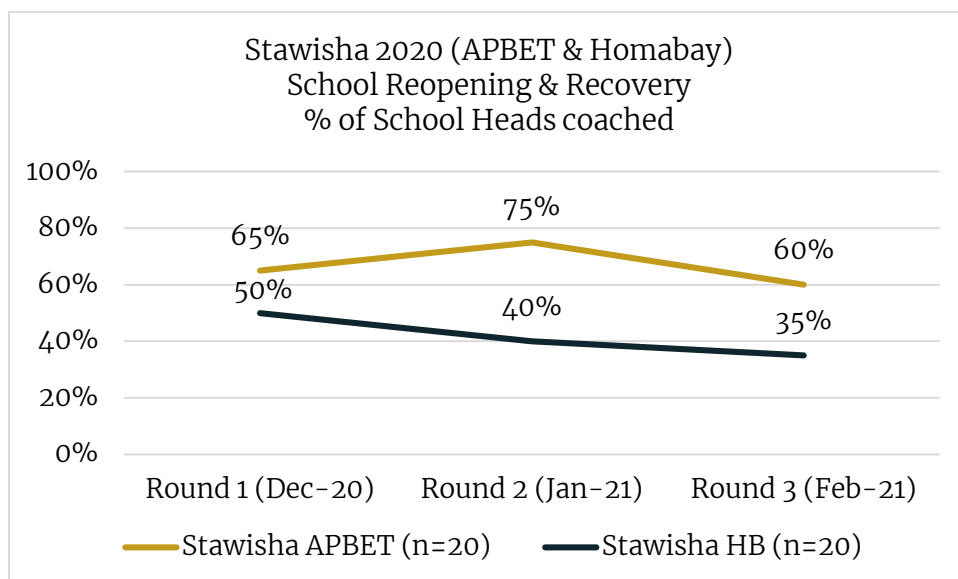
At least 75% of the School Leaders found the school reopening and recovery content useful.





Coaching

School Leaders (Head Teachers only) received monthly coaching support from Dignitas' Leadership Coaches. During the call, Coaches established extent of implementation of the various practices, identified areas of support, and developed next steps for the School Leader. The figure below shows the proportion of School Leaders coached. Stawisha Homabay Cohort recorded the highest proportion of School Leaders coached throughout the three rounds.



Dignitas delivered approximately 4 hours and 8 hours of remote coaching support for Stawisha Homabay and APBET, respectively, with an average coaching call lasting 8 to 12 minutes. During coaching, School Leaders highlighted practices that have been implemented in the school.



The text box below shows some of the reported shifts in practice:

“The School has procured several items including thermo gun, marked water points.” – Margaret Odira, Raven Transform Education Centre

“They school has procured various things like the thermo guns, attendance register. An isolation room has been established, and a contact person in case a child or a teacher is sick while in school.” – Rose Waigwa, Uzima Education Centre

“The school is implementing some of the accelerated learning strategies like having remedial, picking the most important topic that can serve as a reminder to the rest of the topics already taught.” – Hellen Kibicho, Njokim Junior Academy

“Guidance and counselling team has been effective so far. Remedial classes have been going on. Teachers have been trying to group children at least to facilitate peer learning” – Florence Kagwiria, Rehema Education Centre

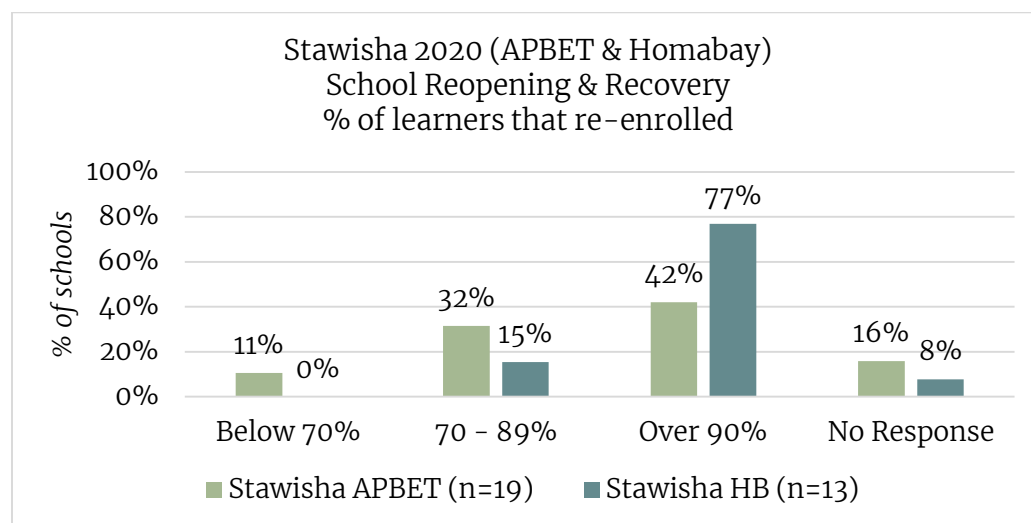
“The school has established a guidance and counseling team and so far there is good improvement in behaviour of children” – Peter Masi, Kanyangwara

“There are hand washing stations in the school. The school also provided washable masks to all students.” – George Nyabwa, Nyasore

School Reopening & Recovery Highlights

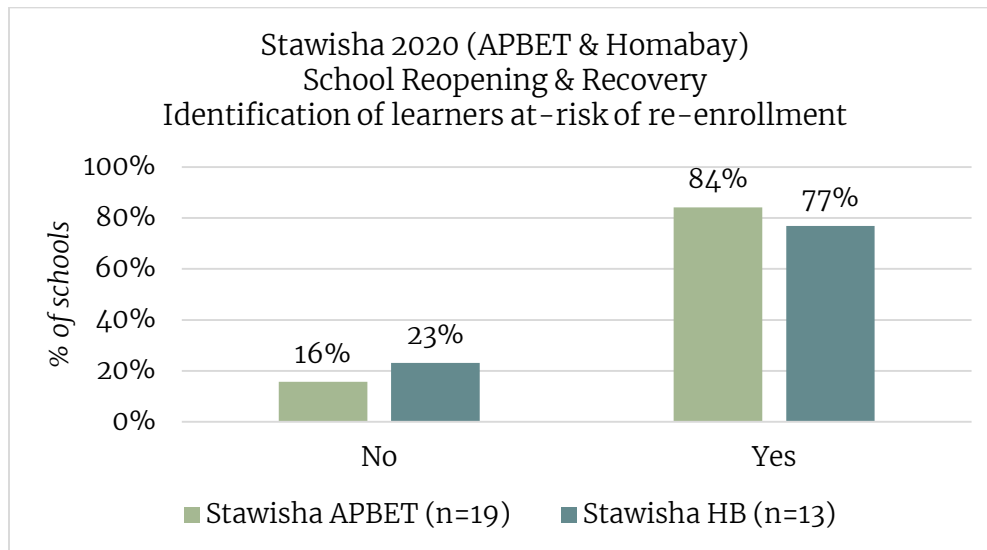
Re-enrollment of learners

Majority of the schools re-enrolled at least 70% of their learners. Notably, 77% of the surveyed Stawisha Homabay schools re-enrolled over 90% of their learners on reopening.





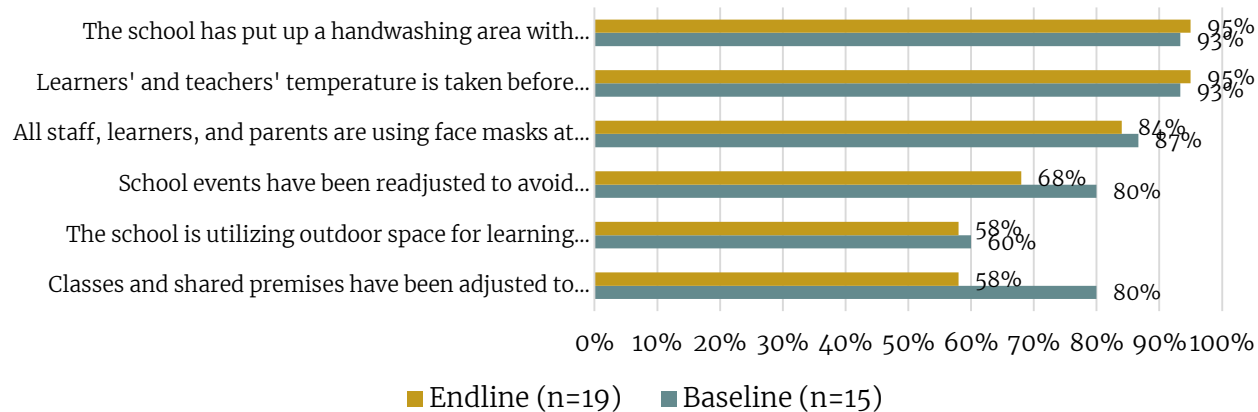
On establishing strategies applied to ensure learners re-enroll, schools reported identifying learners believed to be at-risk of being left behind. A least 75% of the schools identified such learners, with at least 90% of the School Leaders reaching out to the parents to establish if they would be sending the children back to school.



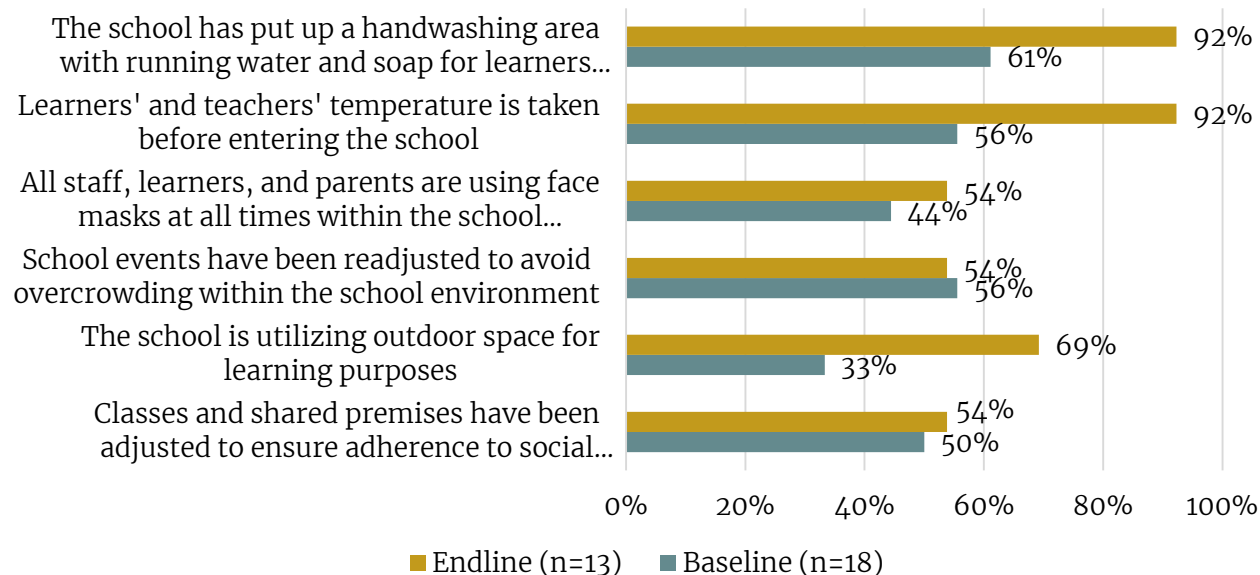
Adherence to Covid-19 regulations

In the first module (Instructional Leadership for school reopening), School Leaders reviewed the Ministry of Education Covid-19 guidelines that outlined safety measures and standards for physical re-opening and safe operations through: prevention, early detection, and control of Covid-19. The charts below show shifts in the implementation of the various covid-19 measures.

Stawisha APBET School Reopening & Recovery Adherence to Covid-19 Regulations

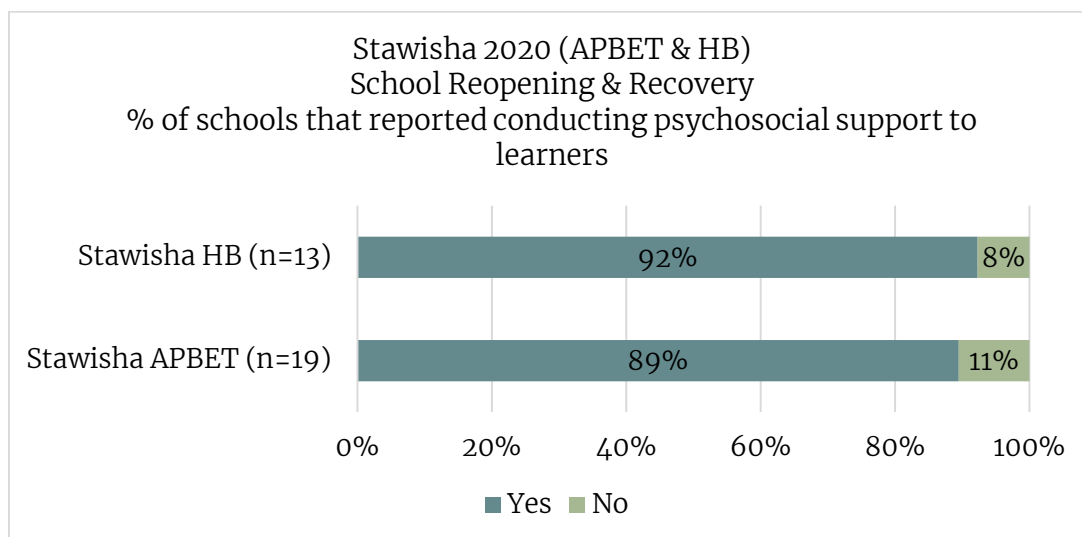


Stawisha Homabay School Reopening & Recovery Adherence to Covid-19 Regulations

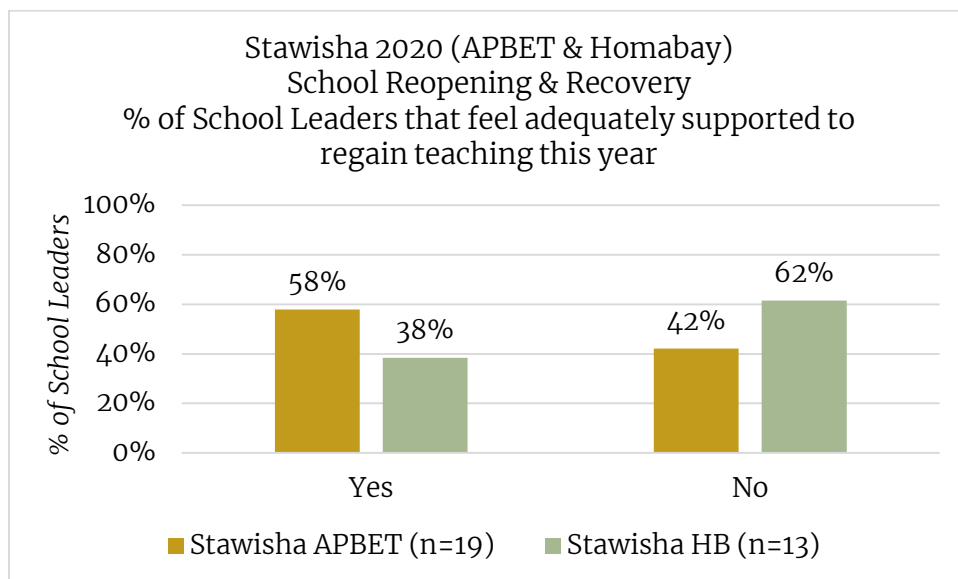


Provision of psychosocial support within the school

At least 80% schools reported providing psychosocial support to learners.

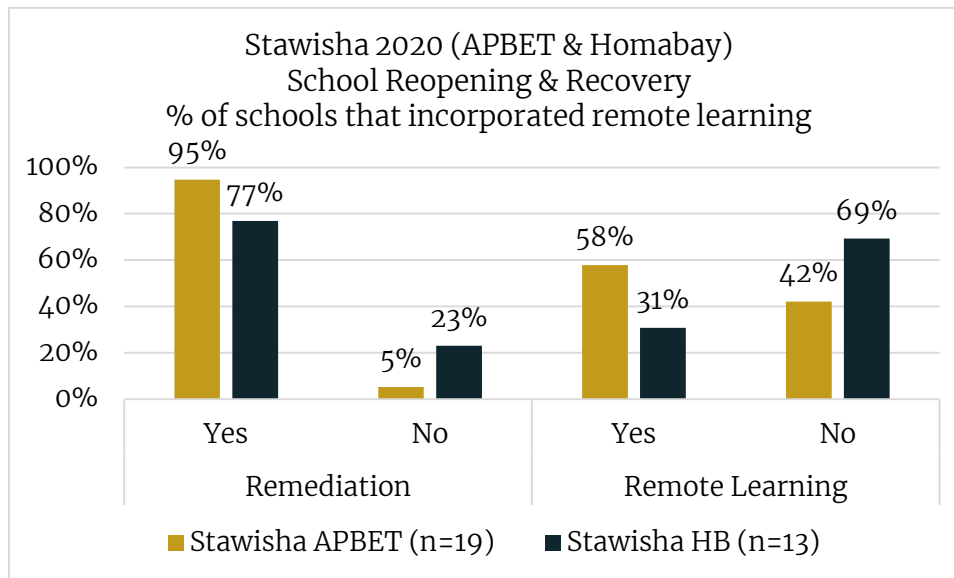


In relation to educator wellbeing, 58% and 38% of the surveyed School Leaders reported feeling adequately supported to regain teaching in 2021. The School Leaders felt that they have gathered a lot of knowledge on ways to support teachers and learners during the pandemic.



Catch-up learning

Majority of the schools conducted remediation on reopening, with at least 75% of the surveyed Head Teachers confirming this. Additionally, some of the schools incorporated blended learning with WhatsApp and SMS being the most used platforms.



4. Conclusion

Through the Leaders of Learning project, Dignitas delivered content on wellbeing and remote learning to ensure that learners receive quality care that ensures child safety and wellbeing as well as learn whilst at home. The School Leaders cascaded learnings to parents/caregivers to ensure they are empowered to lead learning at home as well as monitor their children's wellbeing, with 56 parents/guardians receiving this type of support. With the support of the LoLs and Dignitas learning packets, parents reported decreased anxiety levels as well as increased parental engagement, with majority dedicating 1 – 2 hours to support learning at home. Additionally, majority of the learners spent 1 – 2 hours learning with some of the learners in upper primary spending more than 3 hours a day.

In July 2020, Dignitas held a focus group discussion with a few APBET School Leaders to establish ways schools have been preparing for reopening and their concerns with school reopening. The insights gathered from the discussions informed the creation of content around School Reopening and Recovery. Dignitas delivered SR&R content from November 2020 to ensure schools were well prepared for complete reopening and learner re-enrollment in January 2021.



Overall, 76 School Leaders participated in the School Reopening and Recovery zoom trainings. WhatsApp engagement was generally low, with less than 45% of the School Leaders participating in the discussions. At least 70% of the surveyed APBET and Homabay schools recorded over 70% learner reenrollment. However, 11% of the APBET schools reported less than 70% learner re-enrollment. To recover lost instructional time, schools implemented various accelerated learning strategies with remediation being the most applied strategy, reported by 95% and 77% of the surveyed APBET and Homabay schools, respectively. In relation to educator and learner wellbeing, 89% and 92% of APBET and Homabay schools provided psychosocial support to learners, respectively. Additionally, 58% of APBET and 38% of Homabay the School Leaders (School Heads) feel ready to regain teaching this year.

5. Recommendations and Lesson Learned

In 2021, Dignitas will deliver a blended learning approach and lessons learnt from Dignitas' Covid-19 response will greatly influence 2021 programming.

Some of the lessons learnt include:

1. On **Virtual trainings**, there is need to;
 - a. Communicate training schedule with School Leaders in good time
 - b. Strategically think of ideas to bolster engagement
 - c. Send School Leaders airtime in good time
 - d. Review content - select theory that works digitally and postpone practical for the in-person sessions
 - e. Utilize breakout rooms and Zoom polls to drive engagement
 - f. Be strategic in timing WhatsApp Communities of Practice
 - g. Plan for tech support during the sessions
 - h. Exploit group learning to mitigate device shortage and poor connectivity in some areas
 - i. Continue with team debrief meetings for continuous reflections and team learning
2. On **Coaching**, there is need to;
 - a. Pursue remote coaching tools that would effectively track shifts in practices with blended learning