

Dignitas, Kenya: Strengthening Teacher Practices Through AI-Powered Teacher Coaching

GENERATIVE AI COHORT CASE STUDY

team4tech

AI USE CASE: TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Kenya, schools on the margins are often excluded from equitable resource allocation and meaningful support, leaving over 1.1 million learners with limited access to quality education.¹ These schools play a vital role in reaching vulnerable learners, and Dignitas is working to transform education for schools where learners face multiple barriers to access, such as poverty, displacement, disability, or social exclusion. Reaching over 2,500 schools in 17 Kenyan Counties, Dignitas works alongside school leaders and system actors to strengthen teaching through school-based coaching, leadership development, digital empowerment, and system-level partnerships.

Cohort-Based Learning Supports Dignitas in AI Implementation

Team4Tech is an impact accelerator, building technical and pedagogical capacity for non-governmental organization (NGO) staff and educators so that they can do more to prepare their learners for high-quality employment in the knowledge economy.

As AI rapidly advances, Team4Tech recognizes the pressing need to support local NGOs as they seek to leverage this new technology to improve teaching and learning, as well as their own operational efficiency. Team4Tech has made significant investments to ensure that NGO staff and educators are not left behind in the AI revolution in education and to promote ethical representation of NGO voices and experiences in AI tool development. We are leading various AI accelerator programs for education-focused NGOs, supporting them with expert coaching and technology grants as they develop their AI implementation strategies.

With funding from the Ezra Charitable Trust, Team4Tech is leading a three-year project (2024-2027) to build knowledge of AI tools for education-focused NGOs and support the application of Generative AI tools for more cost-efficient and effective program delivery. This work supports three annual cohorts of 10 Africa-based NGOs with expert AI training, coaching, grant funding, and technology tools. NGOs develop their own AI implementation plans over the course of the cohort. After the cohort, they receive an implementation grant and ongoing coaching from Team4Tech experts in the region.

Dignitas joined our 2025 learning cohort with a basic awareness of AI, but staff expressed interest in gaining more confidence with generative AI tools and leveraging AI to improve the efficiency, operation, and content of their digital learning platform for teachers, LeadNow.



1. Shaheen Nilofer and Mary Joy Pigozzi, "Pathways to Learning: Kenya's Campaign to Bring Children Back to School", UNICEF, September 13, 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/kenya/stories/pathways-learning-kenyas-campaign-bring-children-back-school>.

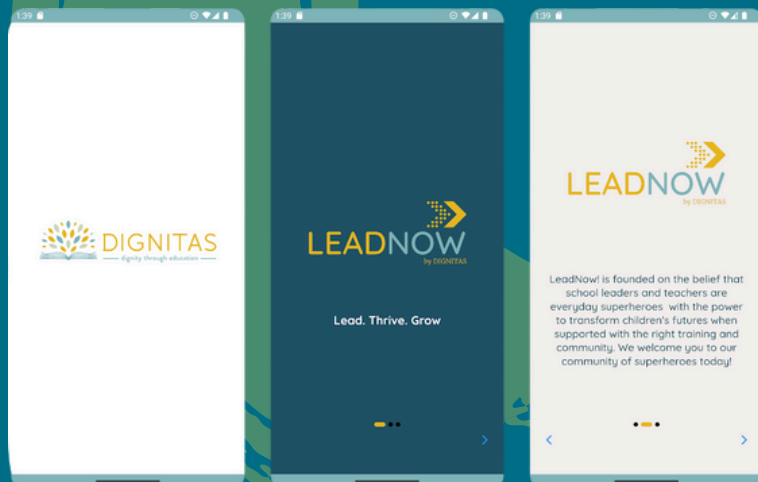
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The AI Innovation

Dignitas's digital learning platform, LeadNow, offers digital training, reflective practice, and coaching through scenario-based learning² to the school leaders Dignitas serves. Through LeadNow, Dignitas seeks to reach over 16,000 school leaders and teachers to impact the learning of 2,000,000 learners from marginalized communities by 2028. Dignitas identified the opportunity to improve feedback given to teachers on their scenario-based learning by integrating AI into the LeadNow Coaching Assistant. When a teacher explains their rationale for decision-making during a real-world teaching dilemma, AI analyzes their reasoning, identifies strengths and gaps, and generates structured, coach-like guidance (affirm what's working, adjust with targeted shifts, and apply through quick next steps or micro-practices³). This means every teacher receives feedback that feels personal, practical, and timely, mirroring the kind of continuous coaching many of them ask for after graduating from Dignitas programming. This AI improvement to LeadNow complements human coaches by acting as an assistant that handles routine analysis, allowing Dignitas staff to observe patterns across teacher data and helping them focus their support where it's most needed. Over time, AI will also offer predictive nudges, recommending relevant scenarios or resources based on a teacher's learning journey.

The LeadNow Coaching Assistant was designed to respond to the realities of Kenyan classrooms, schools, and teachers, particularly in low-cost and underserved contexts. Dignitas further ensures relevance by aligning all outputs with the Kenya Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), while coaches review and localize AI-generated feedback to maintain cultural and contextual fit. In this way, Dignitas is using AI not as a generic tool, but as a contextualized support system that matches the unique challenges of Kenyan schools, teachers, and learners.



2. Scenario-based learning is a teaching method that uses realistic, problem-focused narratives to engage learners and encourage them to apply knowledge and skills in context.

3. Micro-practices refers to the practice of breaking down more complex teaching topics into digestible knowledge and skills that students can quickly and easily absorb.

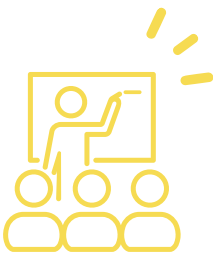
Implementation

Team4Tech’s generative AI cohort guided Dignitas staff through the process of developing an implementation roadmap. The Dignitas team leveraged cohort learning to strategize an effective, ethical, and methodical 6-month pilot for integrating AI into the LeadNow Coaching Assistant.



The major challenges Dignitas encountered in piloting AI-powered coaching fell into the areas of contextual fit, safeguarding, and teacher trust and uptake:

OBSTACLE	HOW DIGNITAS ADDRESSED THE CHALLENGE
Contextual fit: Many AI tools were not aligned to Kenya’s Competency-Based Education (CBE) or the realities of Low Fee Paying Schools (LFPSs). Language barriers also emerged, as the tools worked best in English, making it difficult for facilitators supporting Kiswahili or other local languages. Further, much of the AI-generated content was ill-suited to the lived experiences of learners in informal settlements, limiting its usefulness.	Coaches carefully reviewed all AI-generated content before using it to provide feedback, ensuring that what teachers received was aligned with the CBC curriculum and the realities of their classrooms. This helped adapt generic AI outputs into guidance that felt practical and locally relevant.
Safeguarding: Teachers using open AI platforms often risked exposing sensitive student data, with many LFPSs lacking clear safeguarding measures to protect learner and teacher information.	Since child safeguarding is already part of Dignitas’ training programs, coaches reinforced these principles by guiding teachers on safe AI use, emphasizing what kinds of data should never be entered into tools like ChatGPT. For the longer term, Dignitas is considering AI literacy training to further strengthen awareness around ethical use and data protection.
Trust and Uptake: Some teachers viewed AI as a threat rather than a supportive tool, creating hesitancy in adoption and requiring deliberate mindset-shifting to build trust and confidence in using AI for professional growth	Coaches worked directly with teachers, such as Teacher George (see teacher spotlight below), to demonstrate how AI can be used accurately and effectively. By showing its benefits in lesson planning, differentiation, and inclusion, they helped shift perceptions of AI from being a threat to being a supportive tool. Over the longer term, AI literacy training will also be important to build teacher confidence and trust in these tools.



SPOTLIGHT: TEACHER ATTITUDES + BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Teacher George, a young ICT-trained educator in Kisumu, discovered ChatGPT on his own but gained confidence and direction when he saw his Dignitas coach also using it, validating his efforts and showing him how to apply AI more effectively. With his coach’s support, George now uses AI to simplify lesson planning, generate differentiated assessments, enrich textbook content, and adopt more learner-centered approaches. His story illustrates how AI, paired with human coaching, empowers teachers to transform classrooms and boost learner engagement. “To the...teachers who don’t believe in AI, I say, trust in new technology. ChatGPT won’t punish you. It will guide you,” he says.

Looking Toward the Future

Early results show the LeadNow Coaching Assistant is improving Dignitas's efficiency and impact. Dignitas coaches report that the feedback process is up to three times faster, allowing them to focus on meaningful mentorship and deeper conversations with teachers. The LeadNow Coaching Assistant is empowering teachers to reduce workload and pursue self-directed growth by asking the tool for help between coaching visits.

AI-supported feedback has also led to strong adoption of positive classroom management practices. Prior to the introduction of these methods, teachers did not have uniform positive discipline plans in place. Now, 76% of the teachers have created and are implementing these plans, and 65% of students demonstrated the positive behaviors outlined in the plans. This demonstrates that AI does not replace coaches, but amplifies their ability to guide transformational change in classrooms, especially in marginalized contexts. Importantly, the AI innovation has expanded inclusion by helping teachers adapt lesson plans for students with diverse learning profiles, including those who need extra support, those who are gifted, and those with special educational needs.. The LeadNow Coaching Assistant also supported the local teachers by simplifying feedback into accessible language and micro-practices for immediate classroom use, rather than relying on technical theory.

Dignitas plans to scale AI-powered coaching into more schools and regions, including Isiolo County, while also using the lessons learned from the Coaching Co-Pilot study to guide AI integration into LeadNow.

Dignitas will pursue a combination of funding, partnerships, and strategic support to enable the sustainable expansion of this innovation.

As they scale, Dignitas will prioritize expanding access for teachers in low-cost and marginalized schools and vocalize the need for inclusive, context-sensitive AI in marginalized communities in the wider education system. With these principles guiding their vision, Dignitas will do their part to ensure that AI innovation narrows gaps in equity rather than widening them.

