



OPPORTUNITY
EduFinance

The 2023 EduQuality Awards Report

The 2023 EduQuality Awards Report

The Opportunity International Global EduQuality Awards program aims to recognize schools that are deeply committed to advancing high-quality education. These awards use an inclusive framework, regardless of partner school location, available resources, or school size. They focus on identifying the most proactive, innovative, and dedicated schools that drive positive changes in the quality of education they provide.

The awards program aims to recognize a **center of excellence** within Opportunity EduFinance partner schools. This distinguished center embodies various core qualities, such as:

1

Passion and commitment

to overcoming
barriers to high-
quality education



2

Active, engaged teaching staff

that participate in
creating solutions
to challenges
within the school



3

Leadership that is “switched on”

and actively
engaged in
supporting the
school’s growth



4

Willingness to collaborate

with other
schools in
their cluster,
neighborhood,
and/or region



The EduQuality Program of Opportunity EduFinance

Opportunity EduFinance aims to improve the quality of children's education and cultivate a conducive learning environment by providing a comprehensive three-year school development initiative known as the 'EduQuality Program' to local affordable non-state schools. Guided by our experienced Education Specialists, the EduQuality program offers various sessions to promote school development including:

1

Pathways to Excellence for School Development Planning

equipping each school owner to diagnose the quality of education at their school using measurable indicators and then write a school development plan to improve priority areas of greatest need.

2

School Leadership Professional Development

for senior leaders with a focus on instructional leadership and management best practices necessary to run a sustainable school.

3

Teacher Mentor Professional Development

delivers foundational teacher training, including teaching and learning, classroom management, and literacy, while also equipping mentors with skills to train and coach peer teachers.



The 2023 EduQuality Awards Winners

First Prize (US\$5,000)

Colegio Centro Educativo Santa Marta, Colombia

Education Specialist: Andrea Camacho



Second Prize (US\$2,000)

Success Ahead Education Center, Kenya

Education Specialist: Miriam Maina



Honorable Mention (US\$1,000)

Colegio Centro de Capacitación Integral Superar, Colombia

Education Specialist: Andrea Camacho



Honorable Mention (US\$1,000)

Eagle Spirit Academy, Rwanda

Education Specialist: Georgine Mukarungira



Honorable Mention (US\$1,000)

Emmaus Education Center, Kenya

Education Specialist: Miriam Maina



First prize

Colegio Centro Educativo Santa Marta, Colombia



Colegio Centro Educativo Santa Marta, Colombia

TOTAL LEARNERS: 215

- ▶ 7 pre-primary
- ▶ 102 primary
- ▶ 106 secondary

PRIMARY FOCUS AREA: PARENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Centro Educativo Santa Marta, prompted by the challenge highlighted in the school's 2022 self-assessment—a part of the guidance provided by the EduQuality program—was dedicated to reinvigorating parent and community engagement. During and after the COVID period, a substantial number of parents and community members remained disengaged from school activities.

To address this concern, Centro Educativo Santa Marta implemented a thorough strategy which they outlined in their 2022 School Development Plan. This comprehensive initiative specifically targeted improving the relationship between families and the school, and activities to increase parental involvement.

► **Addressing Socio-Economic**

Challenges: Centro Educativo Santa Marta proactively aided families facing economic challenges during the pandemic. The senior leadership shared groceries with families in need, acknowledging job losses and closures that affected the community. They also ensured the safety of those engaged in street vendor businesses by suggesting virtual classes, prioritizing their health and security.

The school intervened in special cases to help struggling families sell goods to alleviate financial pressure. Additionally, they proposed mechanisms to support demoralized parents post-pandemic, emphasizing emotional well-being alongside academic concerns.

► **Enhancing Parent and Community**

Engagement: School leaders designed initiatives like a family information form and perception surveys to gather information and opinions within the school community, fostering inclusivity and using this information to better engage parents.

The school organized various events such as food festivals, flea markets, bingo events, and recycling events to foster community spirit and environmental responsibility. The “Festival of Life” was a particularly inclusive event, engaging parents, students, teachers, and senior leadership across multiple sessions.



To further engage parents, workshops were conducted on topics like managing children's self-esteem and effective communication. These workshops were well-received, leading to plans for additional themes in 2023.

In addition to bolstering parent and community involvement, the school undertook environmental and social initiatives as well.

- * The school implemented recycling initiatives involving students, teachers, and parents. The proceeds from these initiatives were reinvested in the school, contributing to sustainable development goals.

- * Collaboration with the Fuvadis Foundation allowed the school to support migrant Venezuelan families on a health day, providing medications and strengthening their homes.

Centro Educativo Santa Marta's multifaceted approach, involving surveys, workshops, community events, and environmental initiatives, successfully addressed the issue of low parent and community engagement. This has fostered a stronger and more supportive educational community, showcasing the school's commitment to community welfare amidst socio-economic challenges.



Second Prize

Success Ahead Education Center, Kenya



Success Ahead Education Center, Kenya

TOTAL LEARNERS:
79 / GIRLS 45 (57%)

► 79 upper secondary

PRIMARY FOCUS AREA: LEARNER SAFETY AND A CONDUCIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Success Ahead Educational Centre, nestled in a low-income area in Nairobi, faced an array of challenges including security vulnerabilities, learning disruptions, substance abuse, and sanitation deficiencies due to its semi-permanent structures. Recognizing these obstacles highlighted the need for proactive measures.

Guided by insights gained from the training provided by the EduQuality program and action steps in the Pathways to Excellence guide, the school leader designed a comprehensive strategy in the school development plan. This initiative aimed to enhance the learning environment by prioritizing learner safety and addressing the prevailing challenges.

The initiatives undertaken encompassed several critical aspects:

- ▶ **Enhancing Security and Improving Infrastructure:** To fortify security and ensure learner safety, the school erected a robust perimeter wall and a secure gate. These measures effectively curtailed external threats, fostering a safer environment for the students.

Simultaneously, efforts were directed toward resource mobilization through a fundraising campaign engaging parents and guardians. These funds were strategically allocated to construct essential infrastructure elements - permanent classrooms, a water tank, and a modern toilet block. The construction plan was meticulously devised, with contributions tracked and managed by the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA).

The construction of permanent classrooms played a pivotal role in eliminating disruptions caused by external factors. This transformative change significantly enhanced student focus, leading to improved academic performance.

- ▶ **Addressing Water Scarcity and Sanitation:** – Additionally, installing a water tank proved

instrumental in addressing water scarcity issues, facilitating a cleaner school environment, and effectively reducing the risk of disease outbreaks. The construction of a modern toilet block, inclusive of separate facilities for boys and girls along with urinals alleviated challenges posed by limited sanitation facilities contributing to a healthier learning atmosphere.

The collaborative efforts between the school leader, the school management board, and the PTA committee yielded tangible improvements. The successful fundraising initiatives and strategic utilization of resources have increased the school's sustainability and positively impacted academic outcomes according to school leaders.



Honorable Mention

Colegio Centro de Capacitación Integral Superar, Colombia



Colegio Centro de Capacitación Integral Superar, Colombia

TOTAL LEARNERS: 41

- ▶ 36 pre-primary
- ▶ 5 primary

PRIMARY FOCUS AREA: ENSURING INCLUSIVITY IN EDUCATION

Colegio Centro de Capacitación Integral Superar encountered substantial hurdles while implementing inclusive education, as highlighted in its 2022 School Self-Assessment and Development Plan. These challenges

encompassed a lack of community awareness, insufficient parental support, the absence of an inclusive group of parents, inadequate resources for teachers catering to diverse student needs, and a missing evaluation model, among other crucial factors.

To combat these obstacles, the school executed a comprehensive School Development Plan with a focused objective: fortifying the inclusive education policy, fostering an inclusive group of parents, and providing crucial training on student evaluation.

- ▶ Meetings were convened to establish an inclusive parent group, fostering communication and joint participation in activities for holistic student development.
- ▶ The school used Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to help students with different needs and skills. They also restructured academic plans based on Universal Learning Design (ULD) principles, creating a “neurocurriculum” to meet diverse student needs.
- ▶ Comprehensive training events were facilitated by qualified personnel and supported by the Unicorn Foundation to enhance teachers’ skills and knowledge for inclusive education.
- ▶ The school developed inclusive activities for diverse learning methods, and the active involvement of parents and the community in extracurricular activities emphasized socio-emotional skills and student talents.
- ▶ Dissemination and enforcement of the inclusion policy

across the educational community reinforced the school’s dedication to inclusive education.

- ▶ The Inclusion Day celebration (Superar) brought together students, parents, teachers, and staff to joyously celebrate inclusion’s essence and importance in fostering an inclusive educational environment.

The school’s dedication to inclusive education was further recognized through digital visibility and marketing efforts, showcasing its commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment.



Honorable Mention

Eagle Spirit Academy, Rwanda



Eagle Spirit Academy, Rwanda

TOTAL LEARNERS:
650 / GIRLS 324 (49.8%)

- ▶ 140 pre-primary
- ▶ 510 primary

PRIMARY FOCUS AREA: IMPROVING SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE

Eagle Spirit School encountered numerous challenges affecting student attendance, behavior, and the overall learning atmosphere. Chronic lateness, disciplinary issues, inadequate facilities, and a lack of awareness regarding school expectations were among the pressing concerns.

- ▶ A meeting was convened to establish and communicate a structured routine to students, teachers, and parents, emphasizing time management and behavior modification. A team representing various stakeholders was assembled to craft a School Development Plan. This plan specifically targeted behavior management, marketing, and branding strategies. Another team focused on formulating a behavior management policy, school routine, and other crucial policies. Insights from staff members were gathered during a staff meeting to enrich these policies.
- ▶ Continuous internal Professional Development sessions were organized to equip teachers with improved class management techniques.
- ▶ Securing a loan from the Bank of Kigali facilitated essential upgrades within the school compound, including tarmac surfacing to address cleanliness issues. The same loan was utilized to construct

additional toilets, minimizing queue times for learners. Additionally, tanks were purchased for each classroom block to reduce the distance to washing stations, optimizing time usage.

- ▶ Workshops were conducted to familiarize teachers with the behavior management policy. The policy was presented to the Student Government Association (SGA) to garner their support. Furthermore, parent meetings were held to clarify and engage them in implementing the behavior management policy.

These strategic initiatives orchestrated by Eagle Spirit School yielded significant transformation. Improved student punctuality, enhanced behavior, and an overall positive academic experience emerged. The infrastructure upgrades and policy implementations notably contributed to a cleaner, more organized school, fostering a conducive learning environment for both students and staff.



Honorable Mention

Emmaus Education Center, Kenya



Emmaus Education Center, Kenya

TOTAL LEARNERS:
366 / GIRLS 198 (54%)

- ▶ 63 pre-primary
- ▶ 286 primary

PRIMARY FOCUS AREA: IMPROVING SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Established in 2002 initially as a feeding center, Emmaus Education Centre faced significant upheaval following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Financial constraints led to the school relocating due to unpaid rent, landing them on a new plot of land fraught with challenges, notably a hazardous

dumpsite nearby. This environmental hazard resulted in decreased student enrollment, compounded by issues of inadequate water supply, poor sanitation facilities, and insufficient classrooms.

- ▶ To address these challenges, the school secured a school improvement loan from the Co-operative Bank of Kenya and Comoco Sacco. They constructed additional classrooms and separate washrooms for students and staff. A 24,000-liter water tank was installed to ensure a clean and consistent water supply, alongside child-friendly toilets for improved hygiene.
- ▶ Initiatives were launched to tackle the dumpsite issue. Initially, the school took interim measures by collecting and incinerating garbage. Later, they approached the Nairobi City County Government for assistance, obtaining support from the Sub-County ward administrator. This led to the cessation of dumping and the closure of the site.
- ▶ Collaborating with the County Government from July 2021 to May 2022, the school worked on clearing the garbage and transforming the dumpsite into a park. With contributions from parents and the community, they

purchased red soil and tree seedlings to enhance the park area. Continuous efforts were made to maintain the community park, eventually turning it into an asset for the school.

These initiatives facilitated a remarkable transformation at Emmaus Education Centre, addressing health hazards, water scarcity, and inadequate infrastructure. Collaborative efforts with the Nairobi City County Government and the local community not only eradicated the dumpsite but also culminated in the creation of a community park that now serves as a valuable resource benefiting both the school and the surrounding area.





Visit us at
edufinance.org

© 2024 Opportunity International. Opportunity International's Education Finance program operates with charitable support from Opportunity's global network. Opportunity International United States is a 501(c)(3) non-profit (EIN 54- 0907624); Opportunity International United Kingdom is a registered charity in England and Wales (1107713) and in Scotland (SCO39692); Opportunity International Canada is a registered Canadian charity #877516385RR0001; Opportunity International Australia is a registered charity (ABN 83 003 805 043). Opportunity International serves all people regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or gender.