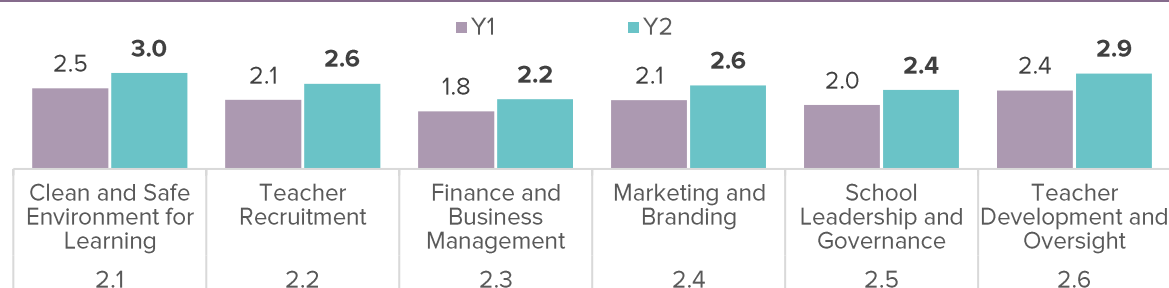# Assessment of School Management

KEY INSIGHT: **Schools are reporting incremental improvements in school management best practices, while opportunities for further improvement are evident**

Analysis of **School Management** data indicates a larger percentage of partner schools in the EduQuality program are now reporting use of best practices, such as improvements in **new teacher recruitment practices**, increased provision of **feedback to learners** and more awareness of **families' price sensitivity**. However, there remain opportunities for more schools to adopt these practices and further integrate additional practices, such as setting salary scales and career progression opportunities for teachers, and consulting teachers and parents in decision making.

Changes in School Self-Assessment Scores – AREA 2. School Management

	Clean and Safe Environment for Learning	Teacher Recruitment	Finance and Business Management	Marketing and Branding	School Leadership and Governance	Teacher Development and Oversight
Y1	2.5	2.1	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.4
Y2	3.0	2.6	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.9
	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6

KEY FINDING 1. **Schools increased their School Management domain scores an average of 0.5 points year-on-year** (4-point scale)

These were similar results to the two other areas of quality. *Teacher Development and Oversight* had the highest point increase in the School Management area (0.52), while *Finance and Business Management* started at the lowest base (1.8) and may take more time to achieve marked improvements, demonstrated by the lower 0.37 point increase on average.

Pathways to Excellence **Annual School Self-Assessments**

The Pathways to Excellence tool groups **18 education quality domains** under **3 Areas**: school culture, school management, and teaching & learning. The diagnostic tool outlines clear criteria under **four (4) levels** of quality for each domain, with Level 4 representing excellence. This enables school leader to review and mark the criteria that best describes their school, and then select the level (score) that is most aligned with their school's quality in each domain.

3 AREAS OF QUALITY:

1. **School Culture**

2. **School Management**

3. **Teaching & Learning**

2.1 Clean & Safe Environment for Learning
2.2 Teacher Recruitment
2.3 Finance & Business Management
2.4 Marketing & Branding
2.5 School Leadership & Governance
2.6 Teacher Development & Oversight

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DOMAIN 2.1 CLEAN AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING

A clean and safe environment protects the welfare of learners and enables teachers and learners to focus on quality. For a Clean and Safe Environment for learning, school buildings should be completed and in compliance with **local safety regulations**. Cleaning and maintenance becomes regular. There are separate washrooms for males and females and classrooms for each age group. New facilities add further benefit if a school can add extracurricular or ICT facilities.
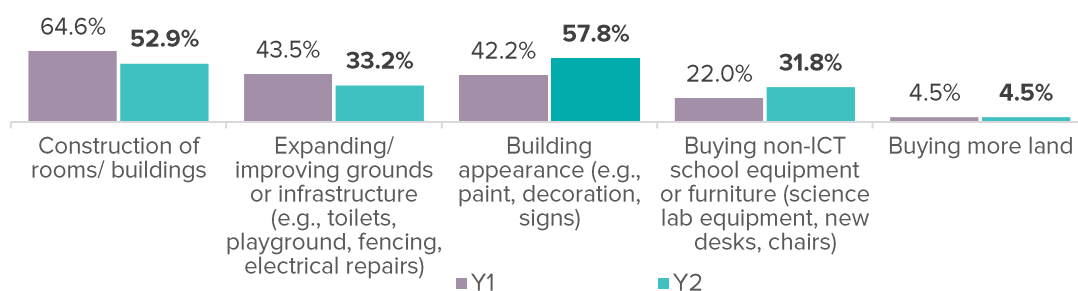
KEY FINDING 2. **School leaders' top priorities for improving school facilities shifted towards building appearance in Year 2,** while still prioritizing construction of new classrooms and buildings.

In Year 2, focus on **building appearance** increased from 42% to **58%**, and priorities for new construction **decreased**, while remaining a priority for every **1 in 2** schools.

SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA.

- **57%** of both **female** and **male** leaders prioritized **building appearance** in Year 2.

- In Year 1, **9%** of **female leaders** reported **no priorities** for facility improvements compared to **3%** of **male leaders**. In Year 2, only **2%** of female leaders reported **no priorities**, compared to the same **3%** of male leaders.

What are the **top priorities** that your school currently has for **improving its physical facilities**? Could you name no more than 3?

	Construction of rooms/ buildings	Expanding/ improving grounds or infrastructure (e.g., toilets, playground, fencing, electrical repairs)	Building appearance (e.g., paint, decoration, signs)	Buying non-ICT school equipment or furniture (science lab equipment, new desks, chairs)	Buying more land
Y1	64.6%	43.5%	42.2%	22.0%	4.5%
Y2	52.9%	33.2%	57.8%	31.8%	4.5%

Understanding the Data

Clean and safe environment was the **3rd** most frequently chosen domain in Year 1 **School Development Plans,** selected 10% of the time. Between Year 1 and Year 2, **48%** of schools improved their self-assessment score, with the average School Self-Assessment score increasing by 0.5 out of 4 points.

Context. Schools had experienced temporary school closures and were focused on standard operating procedures required to safely reopen during the **pandemic** when they completed Year 1 school development plans. EduFinance believes this experience played a key role on schools' work to make improvements for a clean and safe learning environment.

48%
of schools improved
Clean and Safe Environment for Learning

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DOMAIN 2.2 TEACHER RECRUITMENT

Well qualified and able teaching staff make significant impacts on the learning outcomes of pupils. To recruit the best teachers, positions are advertised widely, with clear lists of requirements, incentives and an induction program. Before appointing teachers, **background checks** are recommended, such as references, and criminal record checks.

KEY FINDING 3. **More schools are reporting use of best practices in teacher recruitment,** but 1 in 5 schools still do not conduct any reference or background checks during recruitment.

 67% of schools now contact **references** and/or former employers before hiring new staff, up from 63% in Year 1.

40% of schools now ask for **reference letters**, up from 37%.

66% of schools are **advertising** positions publicly, up from 48%, and **83%** of schools are now using formal **job applications**, up from 77%.

Only **23%** of schools report requiring candidates model a lesson as part of their recruitment process to demonstrate their skills.

SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA.

% Teachers with Certifications
- Female led schools – 87%
- Male led schools – 94%

91% overall; no change between Year 1 and Year 2

Conduct Reference Checks
- Female led schools - 71%
- Male led schools – 63%

Require Reference Letters
- Female led schools – 43%
- Male led schools – 37%

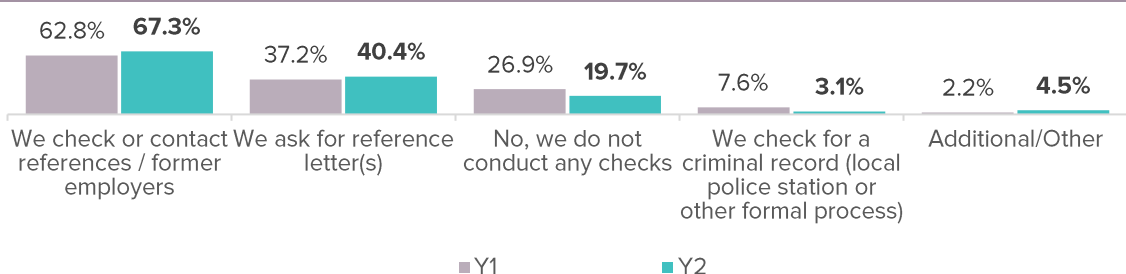Increase in number of schools making use of:

Job Ads	**+18** percentage points	**Job Applications**	**+6** percentage points

Does your school conduct any reference checks, background checks or criminal record checks for teachers and staff? If yes, what does the school check?

	Y1	Y2
We check or contact references / former employers	62.8%	**67.3%**
We ask for reference letter(s)	37.2%	**40.4%**
No, we do not conduct any checks	26.9%	**19.7%**
We check for a criminal record (local police station or other formal process)	7.6%	**3.1%**
Additional/Other	2.2%	**4.5%**

■ Y1   ■ Y2

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DOMAIN 2.2 TEACHER RECRUITMENT (Continued)

Studies have found that **salary incentives** are important to **ensuring teacher retention, effort, and motivation** (Haßler, 2017; Popova and Arancibia, 2016).

Further, when teachers are aware of **standard salary scales** and their opportunities for **career progression**, they devote greater effort to **student learning** and in applying their training (Haßler et al, 2020).

KEY FINDING 4. **Less than half of schools have a standard salary scale and career progression, enabling staff to know the salaries and opportunities for promotion,** indicating further need for improvements in these areas as they are linked to teacher retention and efforts towards student learning.
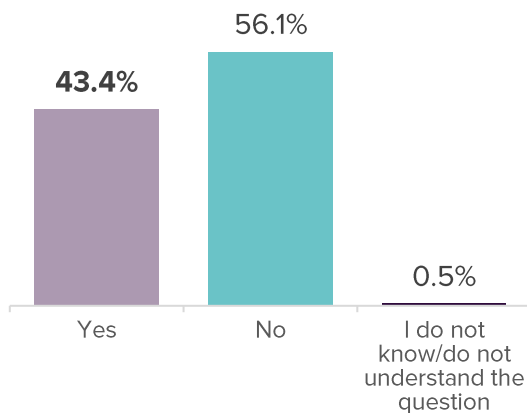
43%
Schools have
standard salary scale

46%
Schools offer
clear career pathways

Does your school have a **standard salary scale or salary levels**, such that staff members know the salary level they will have if they receive a promotion?

56.1%

43.4%

0.5%

| Yes | No | I do not know/do not understand the question |

Do you use a **standard career progression** at your school, such that staff members know what responsibilities or position they will have if they receive a promotion?

52.7%

46.1%

1.2%

| Yes | No | I do not know/do not understand the question |
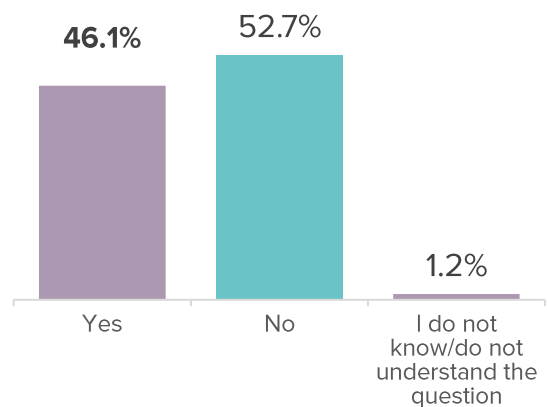
Using the Data

The **Staff Engagement and Retention** professional development workshop for school leaders is offered at the start of Year 2. Recognizing this is an area more than 50% of schools need to improve in, Education Specialists will use opportunities in upcoming cluster meetings and school visits to emphasize the importance of standardized salary scales and promotion opportunities with school leaders, pointing out the evidence link between teacher retention and focus on student learning when teachers have a clear understanding of their advancement potential.
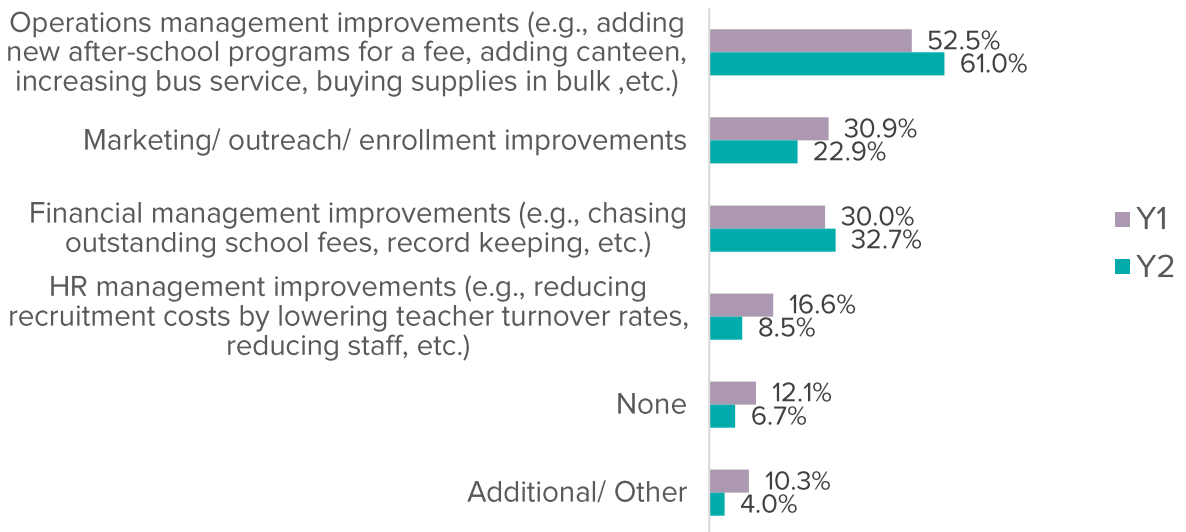
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DOMAIN 2.3 FINANCE AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Good **financial management** is critical for successful schools who are striving to continually improve on quality. Business plans and regular **budgets** help significantly in effective management of school finances – including the accurate maintenance of **financial records**. These records should be reviewed regularly, and Senior Leaders should be involved in sign-off to ensure that **financial controls** are effectively in place.
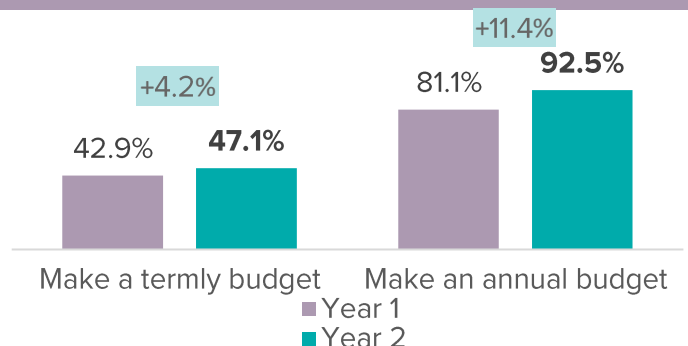
KEY FINDING 5. **More schools shifted focus to operational management and financial management improvements in Year 2,** while decreasing focus on marketing and outreach. **3 out of 5** schools report using **operations management strategies,** including adding after-school programs, canteen, bus services, etc. and nearly **1 in 3** schools are focusing on **financial management improvements**.

What strategies are you taking to **increase profits** and/or **reduce operating costs** at your school, if any?

Operations management improvements (e.g., adding new after-school programs for a fee, adding canteen, increasing bus service, buying supplies in bulk ,etc.)
- 52.5%
- 61.0%

Marketing/ outreach/ enrollment improvements
- 30.9%
- 22.9%

Financial management improvements (e.g., chasing outstanding school fees, record keeping, etc.)
- 30.0%
- 32.7%

HR management improvements (e.g., reducing recruitment costs by lowering teacher turnover rates, reducing staff, etc.)
- 16.6%
- 8.5%

None
- 12.1%
- 6.7%

Additional/ Other
- 10.3%
- 4.0%

■ Y1
■ Y2

KEY FINDING 6. **More than 9 in 10 schools now create Annual Budgets, a recommended best practice for school financial management. 93%** of schools report making an annual school budget, up from **81%** in Year 1.

Increased Focus on **Budgeting**

Make a termly budget
- 42.9%
- **47.1%** (+4.2%)

Make an annual budget
- 81.1%
- **92.5%** (+11.4%)

■ Year 1
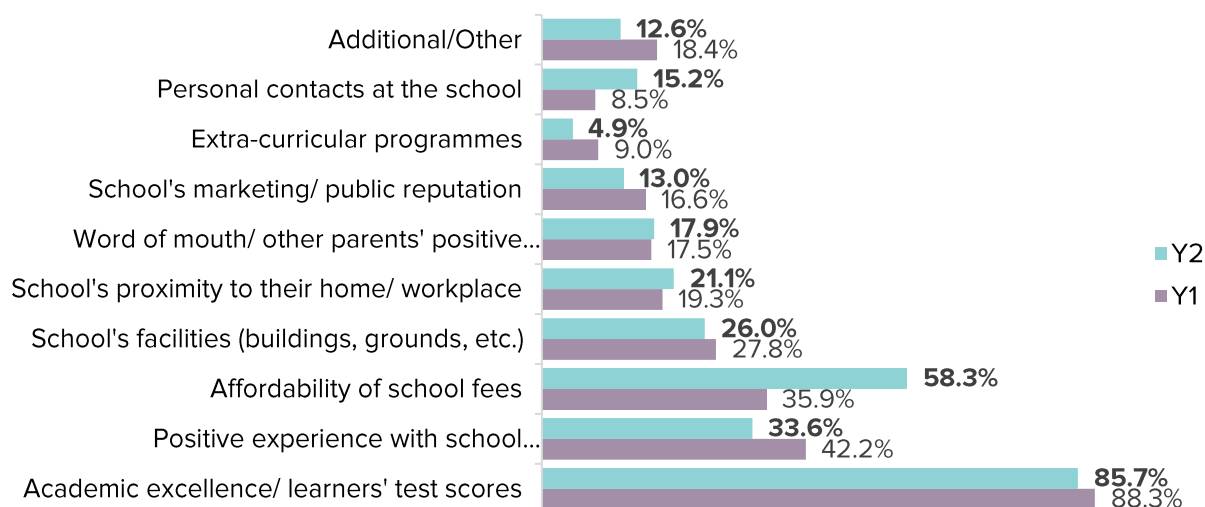■ Year 2

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DOMAIN 2.4 MARKETING AND BRANDING

Successful **marketing** and **branding** is important to ensure that schools attract and maintain new learners. Marketing can improve a school's reputation as well. This is often done by first identifying the school's strengths, how the school is unique, and the creation of a **marketing strategy**. Sharing the school's **mission, vision and values** with the community, their **learner profiles** and **branding** also helps the school to be seen as an integral part of the community.

KEY FINDING 7. **Schools are significantly more price sensitive to the affordability of their school for families in Year 2.** In Year 1, only **36%** of schools ranked the 'affordability of school fees' as a top factor to how parents select a school. In Year 2, **58%** of schools now report this as key to parent decision making, indicating schools are increasingly aware that offering affordable fees plays a significant role in their ability to maintain and grow enrolment.

What attracts **parents** in your area to **choose** or **stay** at a particular school for their child? Please name up to 3 top things.

Category	Y2	Y1
Additional/Other	**12.6%**	18.4%
Personal contacts at the school	**15.2%**	8.5%
Extra-curricular programmes	**4.9%**	9.0%
School's marketing/ public reputation	**13.0%**	16.6%
Word of mouth/ other parents' positive...	**17.9%**	17.5%
School's proximity to their home/ workplace	**21.1%**	19.3%
School's facilities (buildings, grounds, etc.)	**26.0%**	27.8%
Affordability of school fees	**58.3%**	35.9%
Positive experience with school...	**33.6%**	42.2%
Academic excellence/ learners' test scores	**85.7%**	88.3%

KEY FINDING 8. **Schools are increasing their use of channels to communicate with parents, staff and learners.** Most notably, there was a 15-percentage point increase in schools using digital platforms. 86% of schools are arranging meetings with stakeholders, up from 67%. There has also been a small increase in the percentage of schools using newsletters and school events to communicate.

Digital Platforms	**86%**
Meetings	**86%**
Newsletters	**48%**
Assemblies	**41%**

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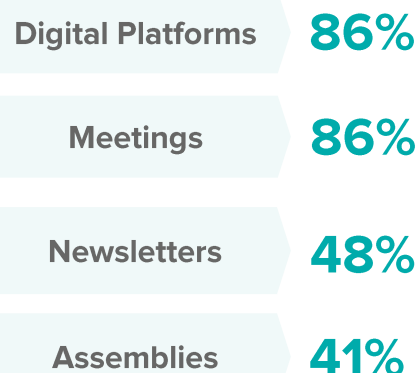
DOMAIN 2.5 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Effective **leadership and governance** are vital for a school to maintain its high standards. School leadership roles should be clearly defined – with a clear senior leadership team, curriculum subject leaders and departments to support school operations. A governing body should be involved in school development planning (SDP) along with other members of the community. SDPs should focus on tangible improvements in particular target areas of the school.

KEY FINDING 9. **56% of schools seek staff/teacher's opinions and 37% seek parent opinions in the development of new processes and operations.** Research finds that involving **teachers** in decisions can have positive impacts on teacher motivation and performance (World Bank, 2011). Other research finds that **parental engagement** in school governance through PTAs can result in **improved learning outcomes** (Barr et al., 2012; Cimini et al., 2020; Read & Atinc, 2016;).

When **development planning**, schools consult...

72%
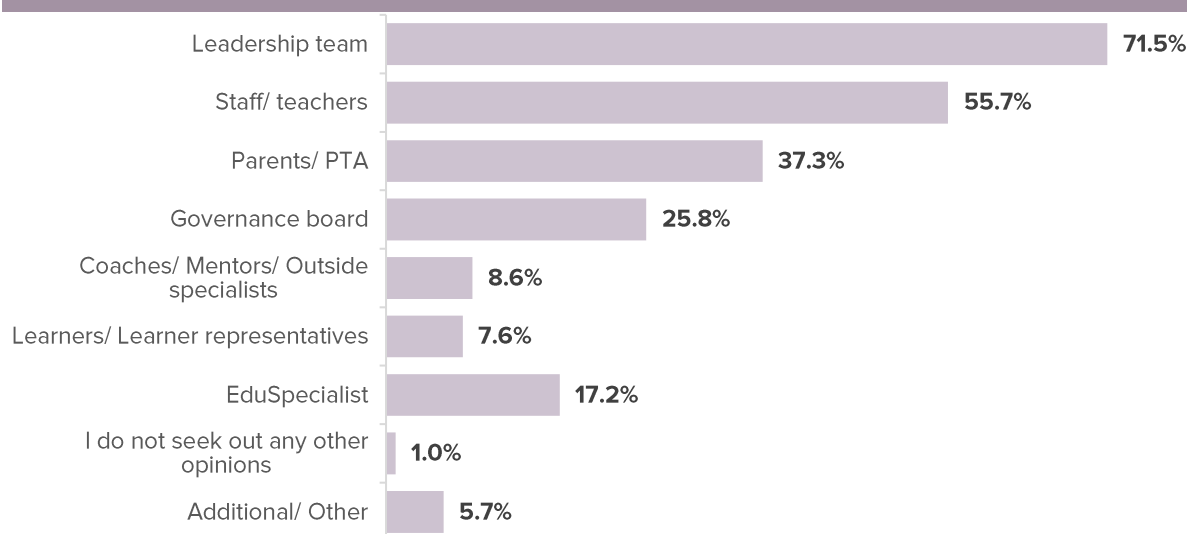Consult
Leadership Team

56%
Consult
Teachers

37%
Consult
Parents

Whose **opinions**, if any, do you seek when you develop **school processes or operations?**

Leadership team	71.5%
Staff/ teachers	55.7%
Parents/ PTA	37.3%
Governance board	25.8%
Coaches/ Mentors/ Outside specialists	8.6%
Learners/ Learner representatives	7.6%
EduSpecialist	17.2%
I do not seek out any other opinions	1.0%
Additional/ Other	5.7%

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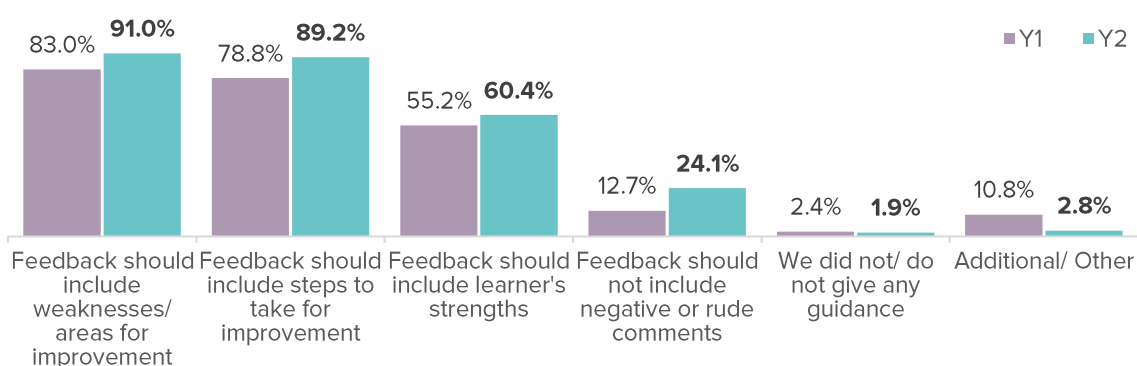## 2.6 TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND OVERSIGHT

Teachers are critical drivers for the success of learners. To better develop and oversee the performance of teachers, schools must monitor teachers' **lesson plans** and hold **regular classroom observations**. Clearly defined teaching standards and the measurement of teachers' performance help teachers improve. An **appraisal system** with targets, discussions on professional development and access to training help teachers to support learners best.

KEY FINDING 10. **More schools are providing feedback to learners.**

- **91%** of schools, up from 83% in Year 1, provide learners with feedback on **areas for improvement**
- **89%** of schools are providing feedback the includes the **steps to take** for improvement, up from 79% in Year 1.
- **Twice as many schools in Year 2 (25%)** are aware not to include negative/rude comments to learners.
- **60%** of schools include learner **strengths** when giving feedback, up from 55% in Year 2.

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of teachers providing **regular, tailored feedback to learners**, and this has been shown to result in **improved learning outcomes** (Angrist et al, 2020; Allier-Gagner et al, 2020).

Have the **teachers** at your school been instructed to give **feedback to learners?**
If so, what instructions about feedback did they receive?

Bar chart comparing Y1 and Y2:
- Feedback should include weaknesses/ areas for improvement: 83.0% / **91.0%**
- Feedback should include steps to take for improvement: 78.8% / **89.2%**
- Feedback should include learner's strengths: 55.2% / **60.4%**
- Feedback should not include negative or rude comments: 12.7% / **24.1%**
- We did not/ do not give any guidance: 2.4% / **1.9%**
- Additional/ Other: 10.8% / **2.8%**

KEY FINDING 11. **School leaders are becoming more responsible in providing teacher development,** increasing provision of in-school teacher trainings and lesson observations & feedback sessions.

SEX-DISAGGREGATED DATA. Year 1 / **Year 2**

Offers In-School Teacher Training
- Female led schools – 39% / **52%**
- Male led schools – 49% / **61%**

Conducts Lesson Observation & Feedback
- Female led schools – 19% / **42%**
- Male led schools – 16% / **30%**

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METHODOLOGY

As part of the EduQuality programme, Opportunity EduFinance supports school leaders in strengthening their **school management** practices. A strong school management team can ensure that children have a **clean and safe environment** for learning. They can develop better **teacher recruitment, development and oversight** strategies. **Leadership and governance** practices help the school maintain high standards and responsible **finance and business management** can allow for the schools to grow and excel. These can be assisted by successful **marketing and branding** to maintain and attract new learners. Over the past two years, EduQuality partner schools have agreed to be sampled for these purposes. This analysis demonstrates some of the improvements that have already been uncovered across the six "School Management" domains of quality.

Why focus on School Management?

School governance and the quality of it affects everyone in the school ecosystem - from the teachers, to the parents and most importantly the learners. Decisions that are made at the top trickle down. Administration's role is particularly important as research shows that the more people's voices are heard, and the more involved and transparent decision-making processes are, the greater the positive impacts on teacher motivation and performance as well as learning outcomes (World Bank, 2011). Numerous studies have found that one of the most important capacities of a school leader is their ability to provide constructive, individualized feedback to teachers (Sampat et al., 2020; World Development Report, 2018; Cimini et al., 2020). This results in improvements to teacher-learner interactions and ultimately **improves student learning outcomes** (Nannyonjo, 2017).

What was the source of data?

The **School Quality and Behaviour survey** (SQB) contains 114 questions in total, of which **37** are categorised as **School Management**. The other assessment tool that was used for this analysis was the **School Leadership Assessment** (SLA), which contains 47 questions – of which **29** were categorised as **School Management.**

While the Monitoring and Evaluation team has collected over 1,000 responses to these surveys, **223 (SQB) and 211 (SLA)** of the responses are from schools that responded in the beginning of Year 1 and at some point, in Year 2. More longitudinal comparisons will be possible in coming months and years.

Why represent sex-disaggregated data?

EduFinance recognizes that sex-disaggregated data can be critical to providing further insights for learning to better adapt our programme and recognize that cultural gender norms and unconscious bias may impact partner experiences and responses. However, EduFinance recognizes that many cross-cutting factors may play a role, including but not limited to a respondent's sex. Representation of sex-disaggregated data is used to show differences, when relevant, but not specifically attribute those differences exclusively to sex.

	Ghana	Kenya	Rwanda	Uganda	Zambia	Total
BOTH YEARS	**4**	**115**	**32**	**153**	**126**	**434**
Y1	68	188	62	221	156	921
Y2	139	170	98	700	275	1,613