



School Leadership and Governance in Africa amidst the COVID-19 Crisis

Introduction

This report covers results of a quick survey conducted in the month of June 2020 by UNESCO-IICBA on school leadership and governance in Africa amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

Specifically, the survey aimed at answering the following SEVEN questions, with a view of identifying how best school leaders in primary and secondary schools in Africa can be supported to run (or to continue running) schools following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic:

- What proportions of school leaders have kept in touch with their learners and teachers on a weekly basis during school closure?
- What methods are being used by school leaders to keep in touch with their learners and teachers during school closure?
- During school closure, how much of a challenge to school leaders are issues such as communicating with parents, conducting teachers' appraisals, supporting teachers to initiate (or implement)

distance learning classes, monitoring distance learning classes, and keeping schools afloat?

- What are the levels of concern among school leaders regarding issues involving learners, teachers, and school finances?
- What kind of supports are school leaders receiving from their governments or any other sources to run schools during the pandemic?
- To what extent are support mechanisms related to training on distance learning methods and use of ICT in distance learning classes perceived by school leaders as helpful to them in monitoring distance learning classes?
- What are school leaders doing in preparation for school reopening?

The last question above (the one about school reopening) pertains to qualitative data and is not handled in the current report.

Method and data

The survey covered in this report was conducted online on a Google form platform from 5th to 19th June 2020 (14 days). On 5th June 2020, email messages were sent to an initial group of school leaders inviting them to participate in the online survey, and encouraging them to share the survey webpage link with their colleagues who they thought might be interested in completing the survey. This initial group consisted of school leaders known to IICBA staff through past interactions.

The data covered in this report involved 392 school leaders from 10 African countries, but the vast majority of them, 257 (65.6%), are from Kenya. As to sex, the data consist of 226 (57.7%) males and 160 (40.8%) females with 6 (1.5%) of the school leaders preferring not to disclose their sex.

About three-quarters (76.5%) of these school leaders are managing government schools, while the rest are managing private schools (23.5%). In terms of school level, 179 (45.7%) of these school leaders are in primary schools while 213 (54.3%) are in secondary schools. The survey did not collect any personal identifier data.

Results

- Only a few (14.8%) of the 392 school leaders involved in this survey, are keeping in touch with around 80% or more of their learners on a weekly basis during the current school closure;
- Above one-quarter (26.5%) of the school leaders are **not** keeping in touch with any of their learners on a weekly basis;
- Levels of keeping in touch with learners and teachers are better among school leaders receiving support to run schools, school leaders managing private schools, and those managing secondary schools;

- The main methods being used to keep in touch with learners and teachers by school leaders include use of social media such as WhatsApp and telephone conversations.
- Very few school leaders (17.1%) have received at least one form of support to run schools from either their governments or any other sources;
- The main challenges being faced by school leaders include keeping schools afloat and monitoring distance learning classes;
- In general, many school leaders are highly concerned about learner learning loss and depletion of school funds.

Limitations

The results presented in this report should be interpreted with some caution since they are based on a convenience sample, which might not reflect accurately what is happening in the countries covered. In addition, a vast majority of the survey respondents are from Kenya (65.6% or nearly

two-thirds), meaning that the overall mean results are heavily influenced by the Kenyan data.

Nevertheless, these results should be of interest to education authorities in most African countries, and other partners who might be interested in identifying mechanisms to support school leaders to run (or to continue running) schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

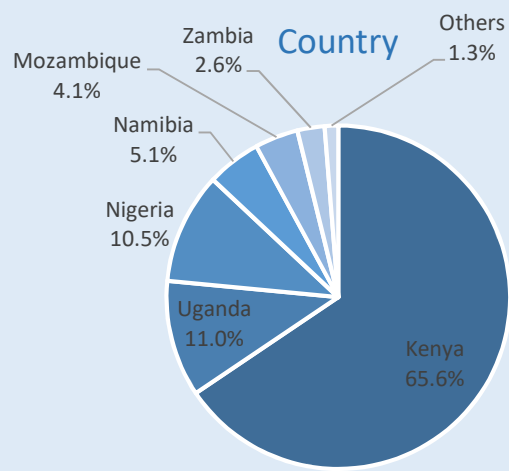
Recommendation

Provide school leaders with **training on monitoring distance learning classes** to improve their capacity to run schools during the school closure; improve their access to **ICT devices**, and to **free internet**. This could also involve **provision of funds** to cover telephone charges, fixed costs such as standing charges for electricity and water bills, as well as maintenance expenses for physical school resources such as buildings, facilities and equipment.

Background information

School leaders	
Kenya	257
Uganda	43
Nigeria	41
Namibia	20
Mozambique	16
Zambia	10
Others*	5
ALL	392

*Botswana, 1; Ethiopia, 1; Gambia, 1; Liberia 2



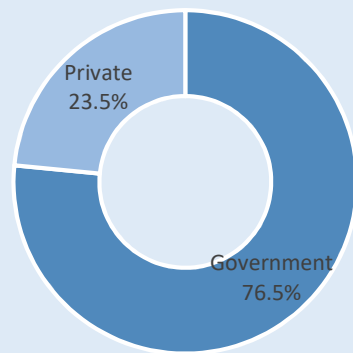
School leadership is recognized as a key component in assuring inclusive and equitable quality education as prescribed in Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the Education 2030 Agenda. Leadership as a concept is vast; it involves the will and capacity for school leadership, management and administration. In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, a strong response by school leaders is urgently needed to mitigate the disruption faced by learners who may be out of school for the foreseeable future.

← About two-thirds (65.6%) of the 392 school leaders involved in this study are from Kenya. Other countries with sufficient numbers of survey respondents in this data to warrant separate analyses are Uganda (11.0%), and Nigeria (10.5%).

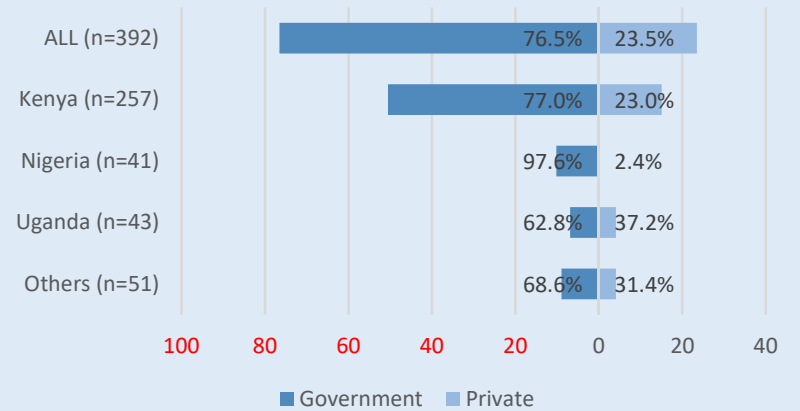
School leaders	
Govt.	300
Private	92
ALL	392

Govt.=Government

School type

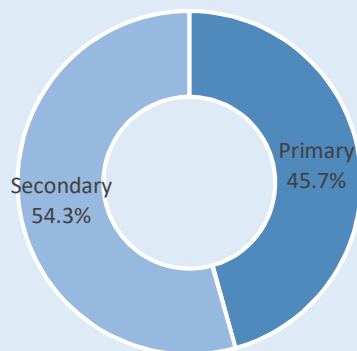


Distribution of schools by type

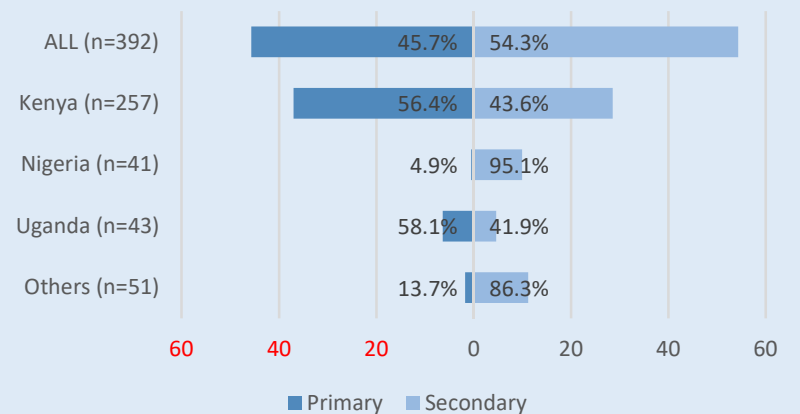


School leaders	
Primary	179
Secondary	213
ALL	392

School level



Distribution of schools by level

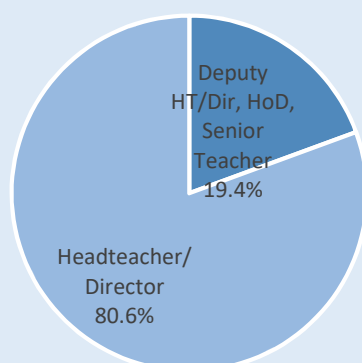


School leaders	
HT/ Director	316
Deputy HT/Director*	76
ALL	392

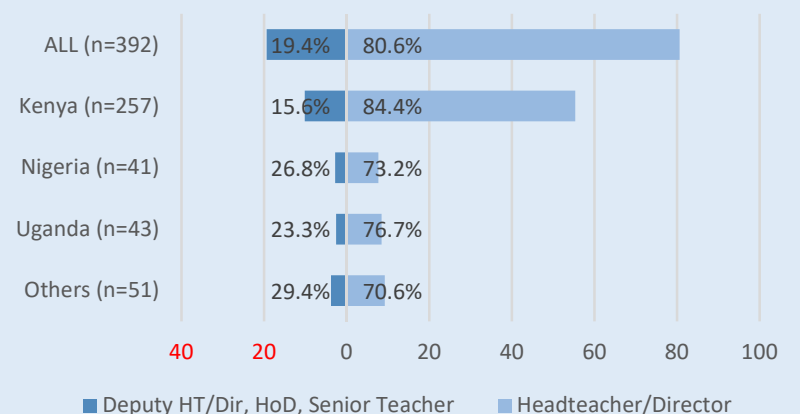
HT=Head teacher

*Also include HoDs & Senior Teachers

What position do you hold in your school?



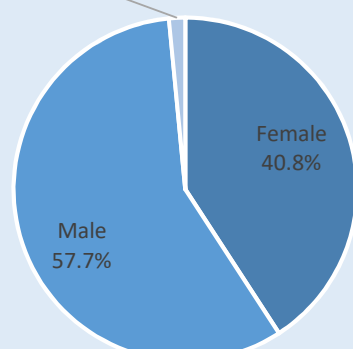
Distribution of school leaders by position



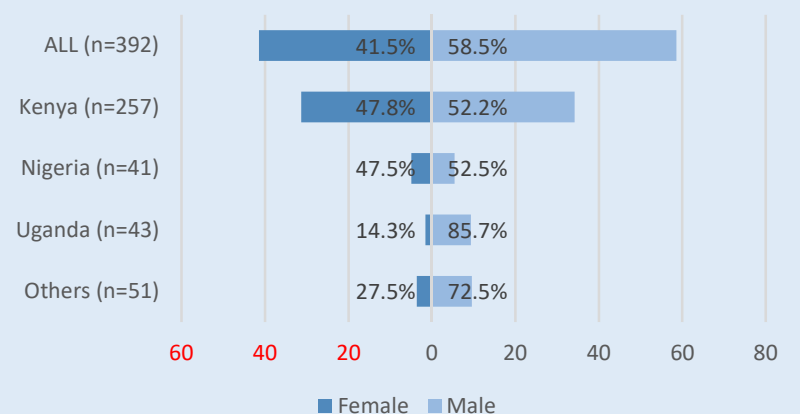
School leaders	
Male	226
Female	160
Prefer not to say	6
ALL	392

Prefer not to say 1.5%

What is your sex?

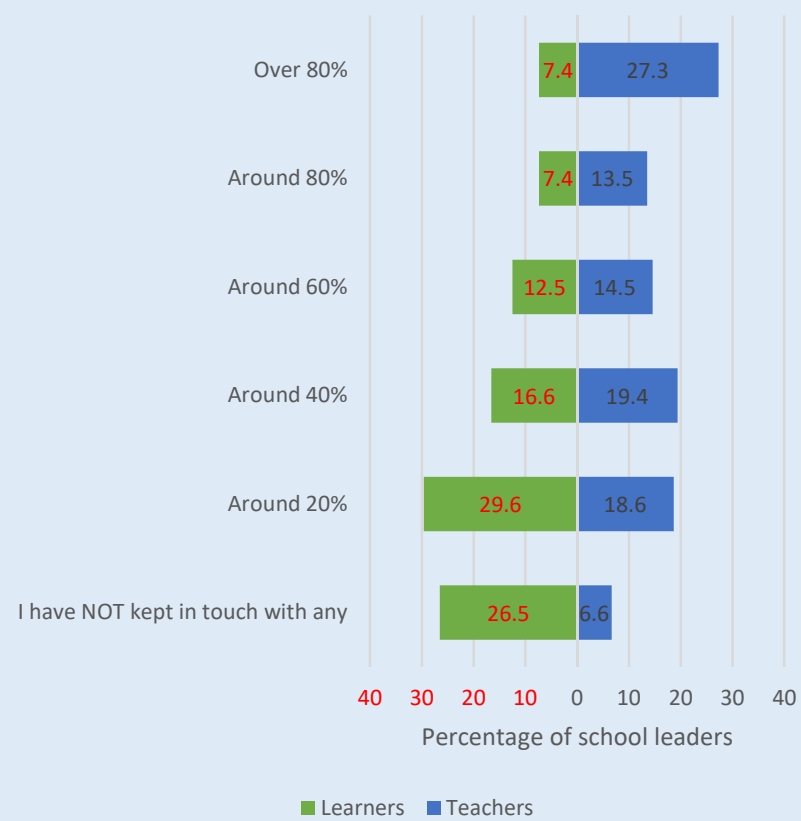


Distribution of school leaders by sex



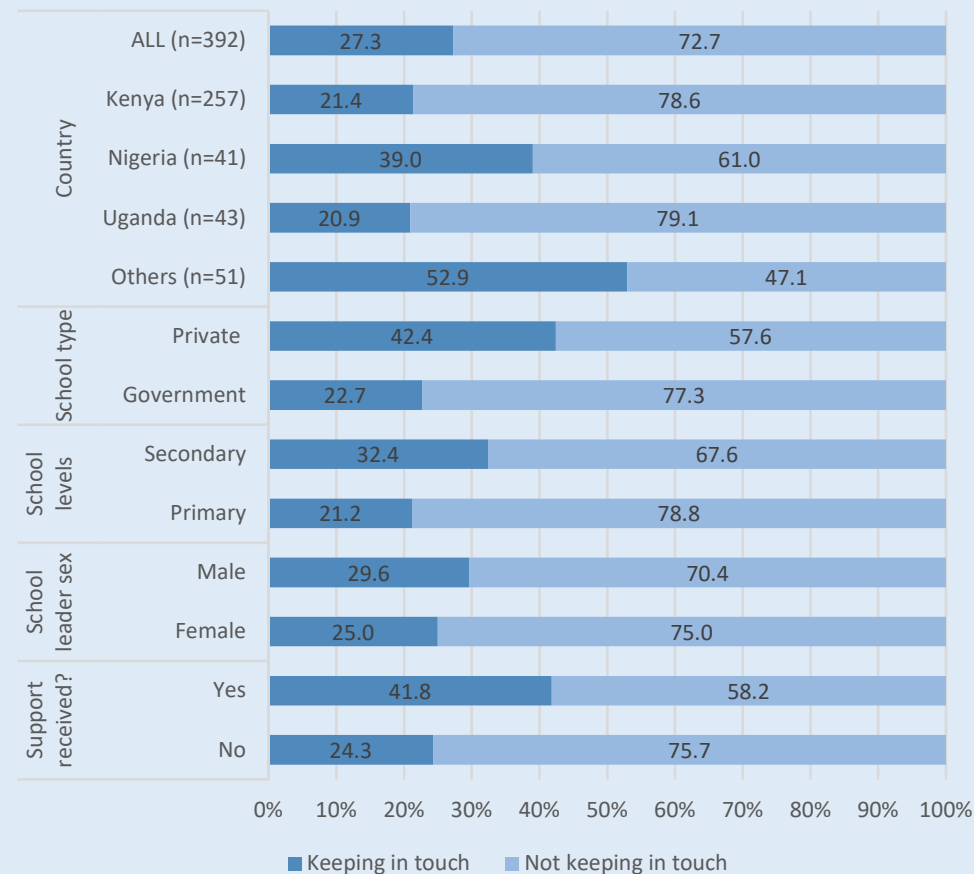
q1 What percentage of your learners and teachers have you kept in touch with on a weekly basis during school closure?

School leaders keeping in touch with various percentages of **learners** and **teachers** on a weekly basis



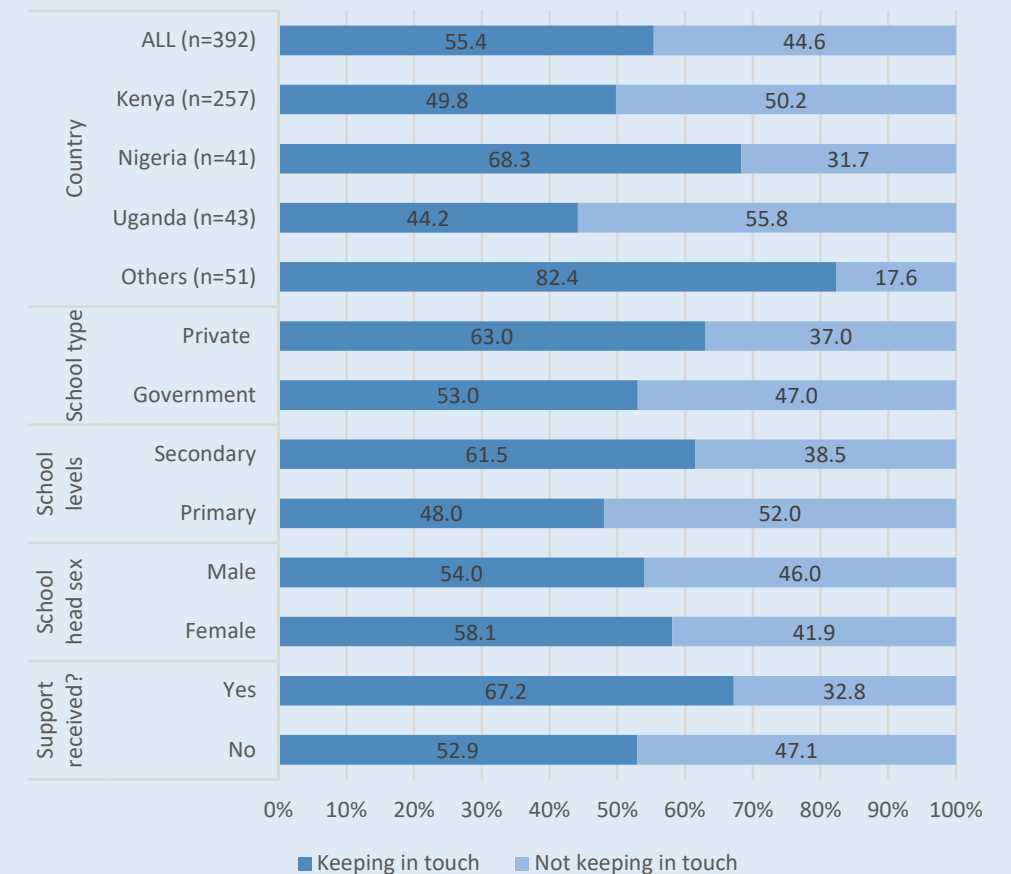
Very few school leaders (<15%) are keeping in touch with around 80% of their learners or more on a weekly basis. About one-quarter of the school leaders are **not** keeping in touch with any of their learners.

School leaders keeping in touch with around 60% of their **learners** or more on a weekly basis



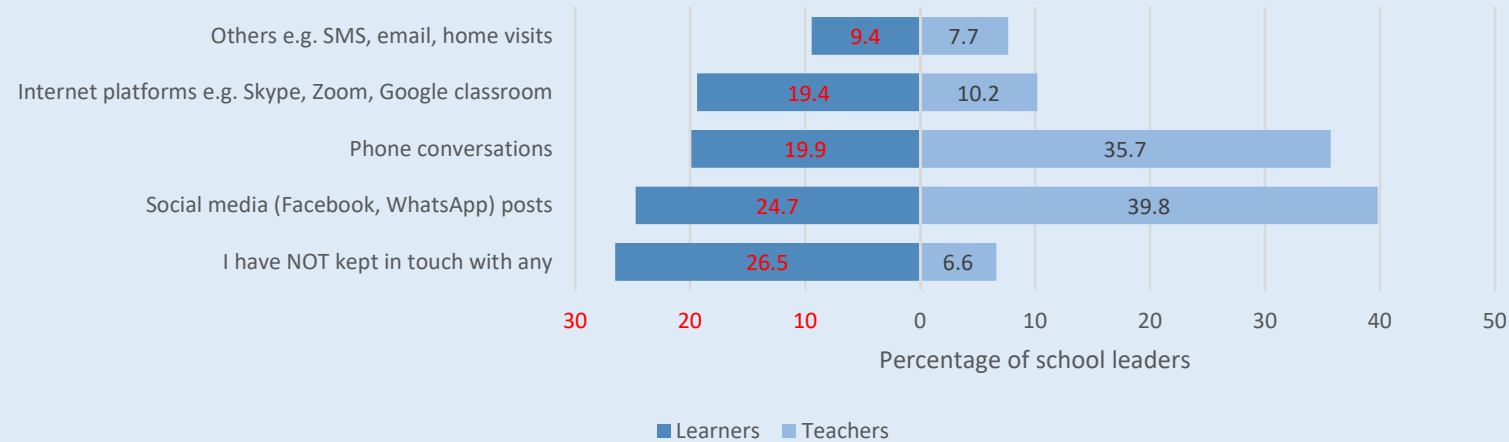
Only about three out of every ten school leaders are keeping in touch with at least 60% of their learners on a weekly basis. The levels are better in **private** schools and among school leaders **receiving** at least one form of **support** to run schools.

School leaders keeping in touch with around 60% of their **teachers** or more on a weekly basis



Slightly over one-half of the school leaders are keeping in touch with 60% or more of their teachers. As expected, the levels of keeping in touch with teachers are higher than the corresponding levels for learners.

q2 What is the MAIN method you are using to keep in touch with your learners and teachers during school closure?

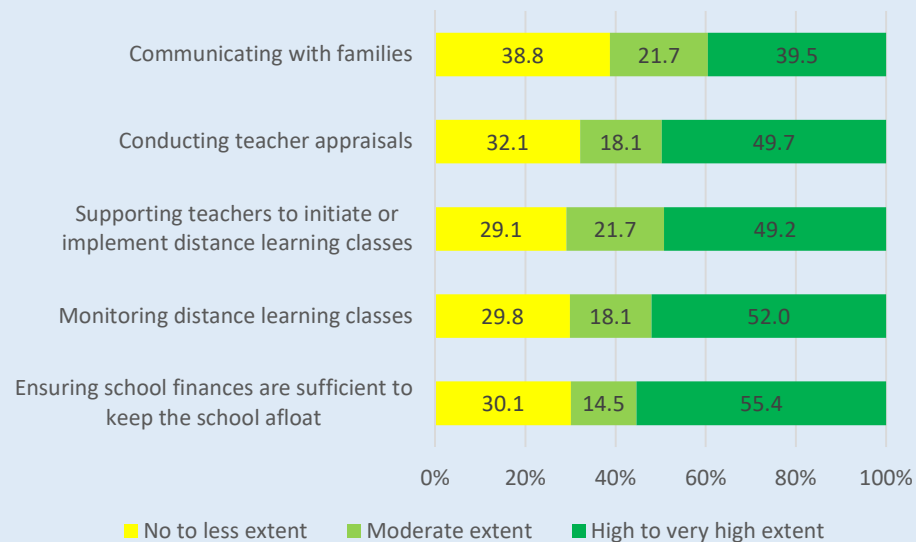


The **main** methods being used to keep in touch with learners and teachers by school leaders includes social media and phone conversations.

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH LEARNERS AND TEACHERS, AND METHODS USED KEEP IN TOUCH

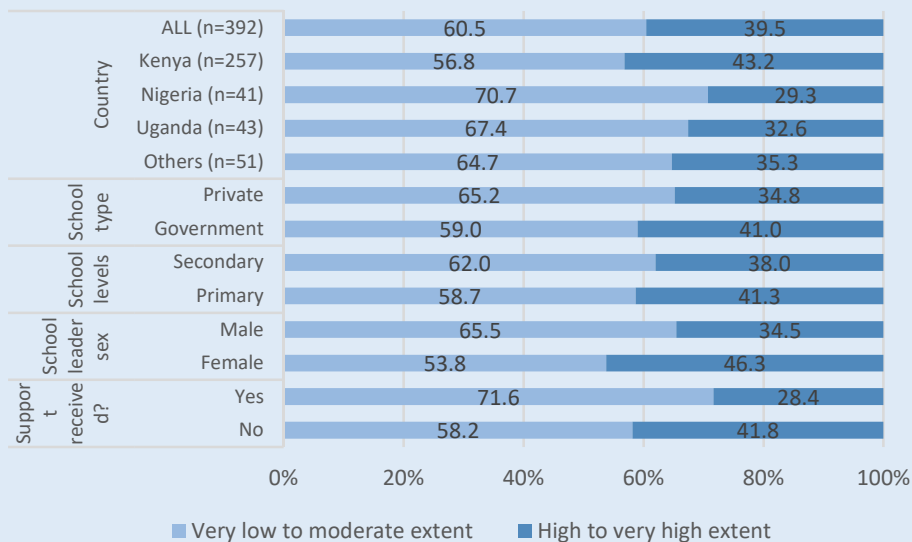
q3 To what extent are the following issues a challenge to you during the current school closure?

Overview of the levels of challenge



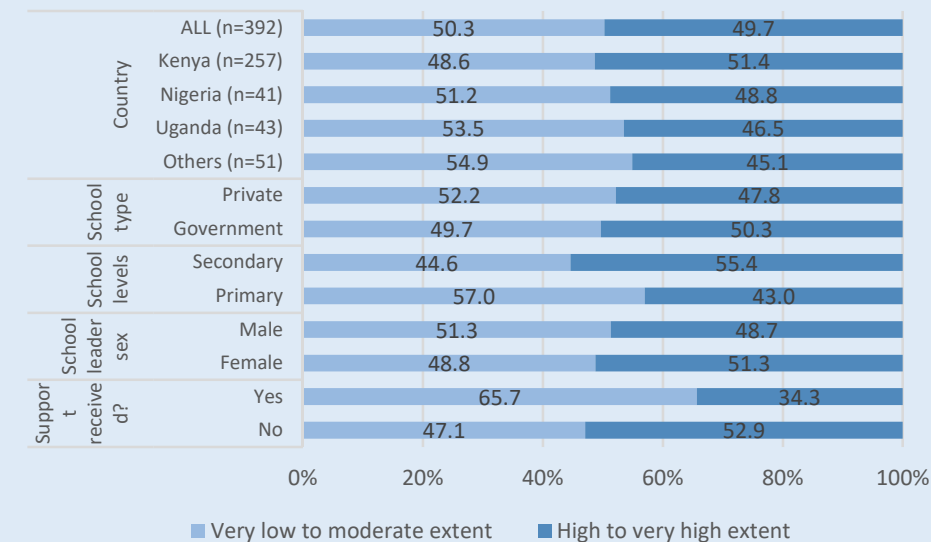
The main challenges being faced by school leaders include **keeping schools afloat** and **monitoring distance learning classes**.

Communicating with families



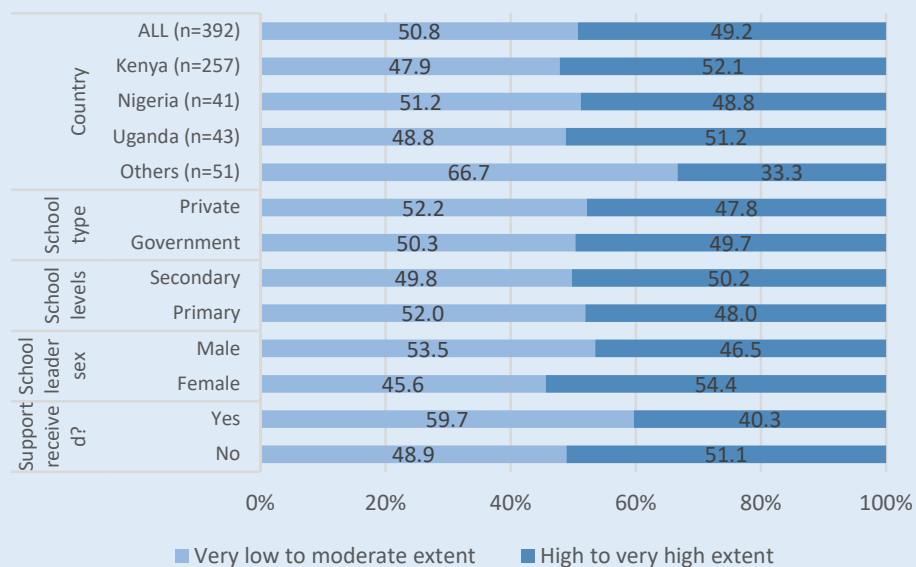
About four in every ten of the school leaders say they are finding **communicating with families** during school closure a challenge to a high or very high extent.

Conducting teacher appraisals



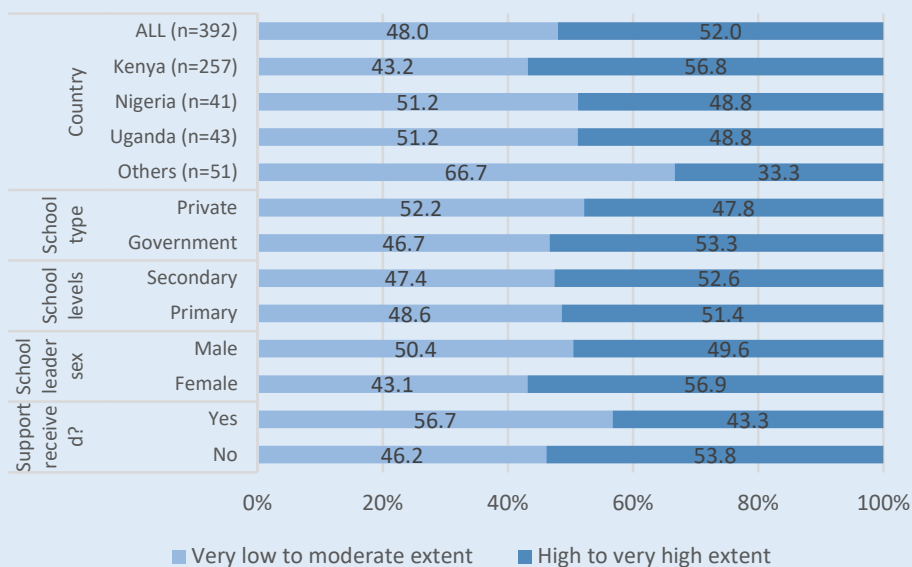
About one-half of the school leaders say **conducting teacher appraisals** during the current school closure is challenging. Level higher among school leaders receiving no support at all.

Supporting teachers to initiate or implement distance learning classes



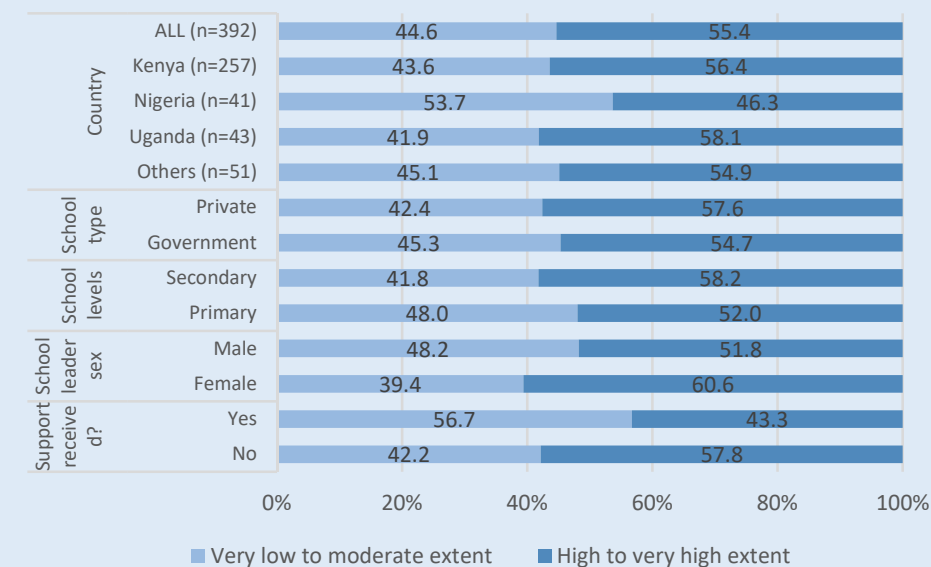
Almost one-half of the school leaders rate **supporting teachers to initiate or implement distance learning classes** as a challenge to a high or very high extent.

Monitoring distance learning classes



Slightly over one-half of the school leaders are finding **monitoring distance learning classes** challenging – especially females, those receiving no support, and in Kenya.

Ensuring school finances are sufficient to keep the school afloat

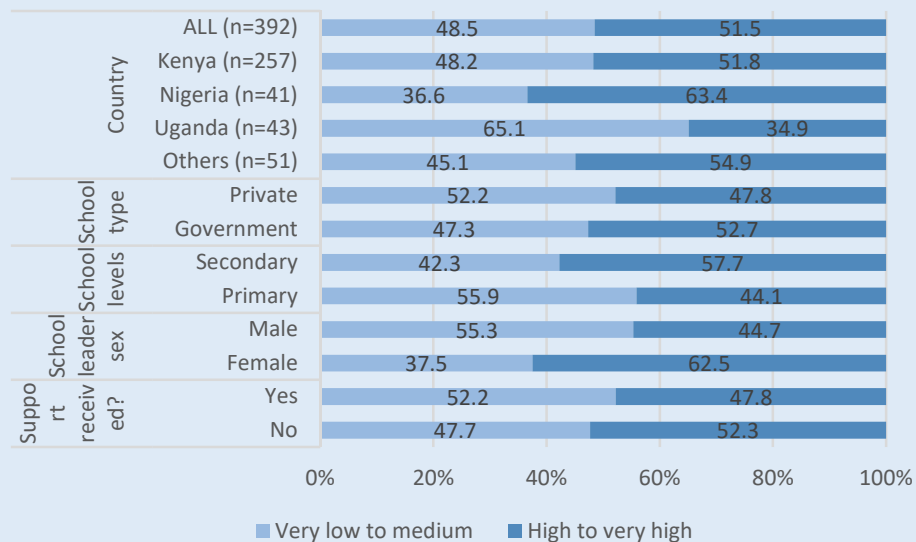


Well over one-half of the school leaders in both **private** and **government** schools are finding **keeping schools afloat** a challenge to a high or very high extent.

SCHOOL LEADER CHALLENGES

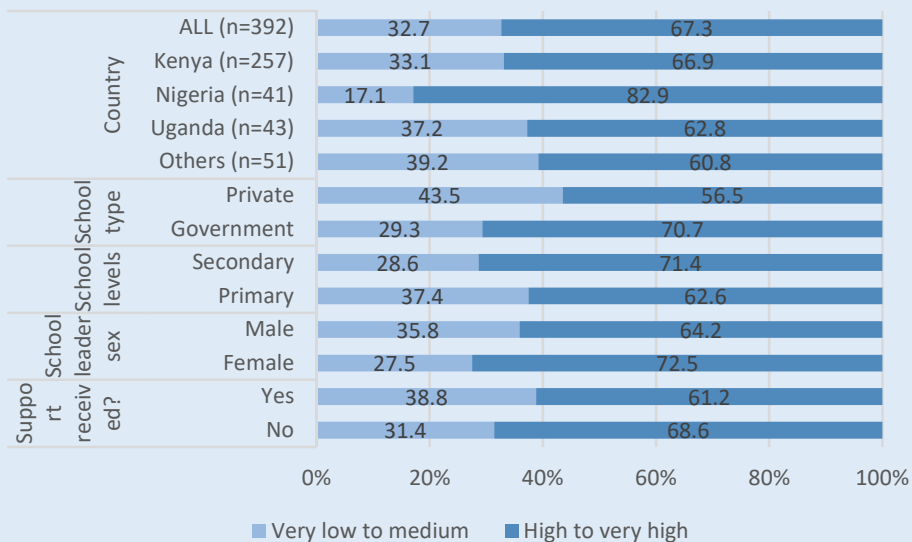
Levels of challenges are consistently higher among school leaders receiving no support to run their schools.

Learner welfare



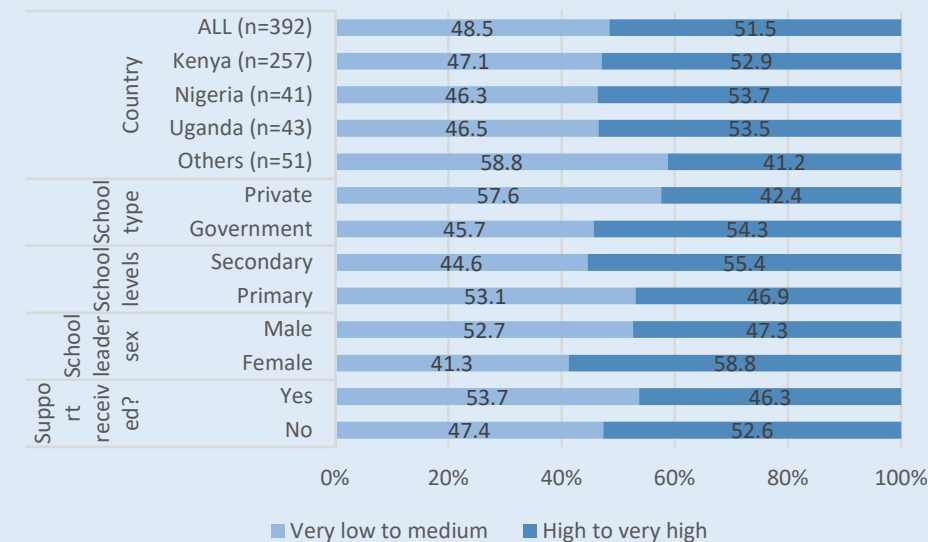
About one-half of the school leaders say that they are highly to very highly concerned about **learner welfare**. The level is higher among female school leaders.

Learner learning loss



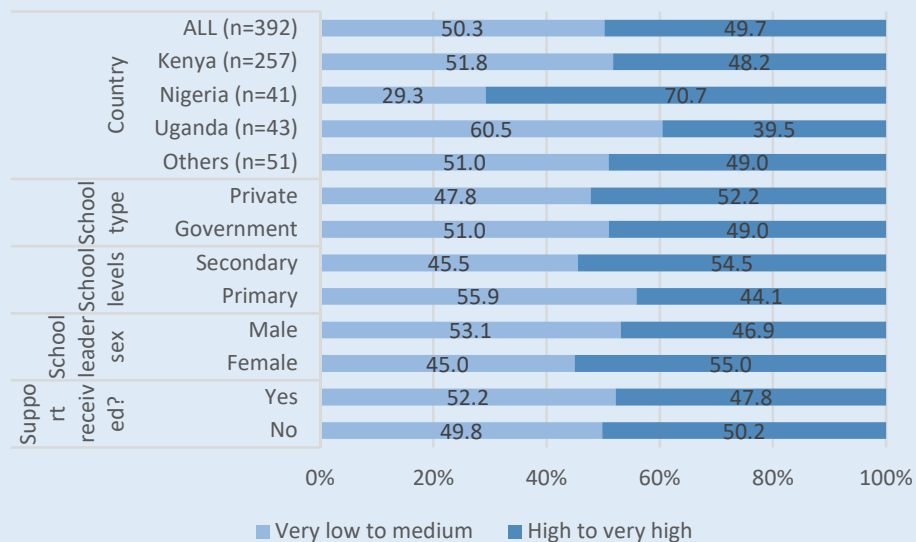
Over two-thirds of the school leaders say that they are highly to very highly concerned about **learner learning loss** – and more so in secondary schools and government schools.

Learner dropout



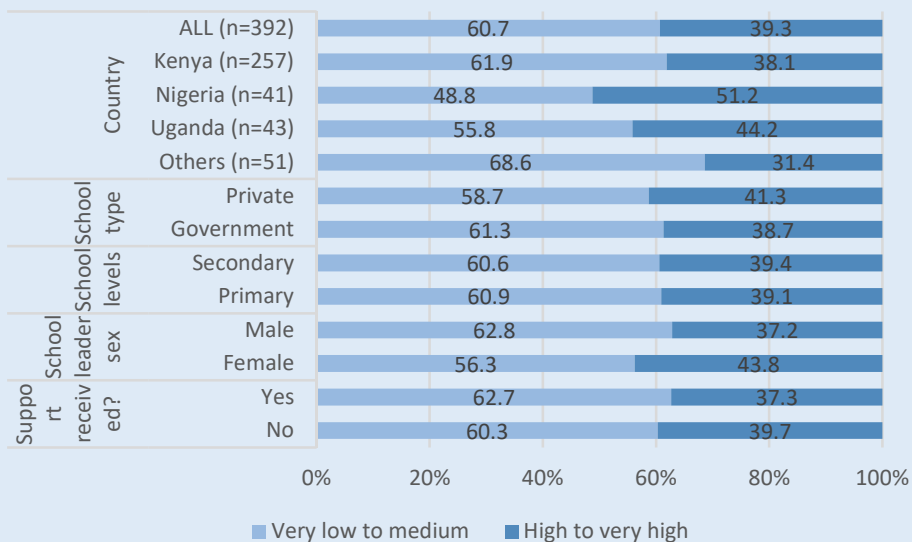
About one-half of the school leaders are at minimum highly concerned about **learner dropout**. Again, levels are higher in government schools and secondary schools than otherwise.

Teacher welfare



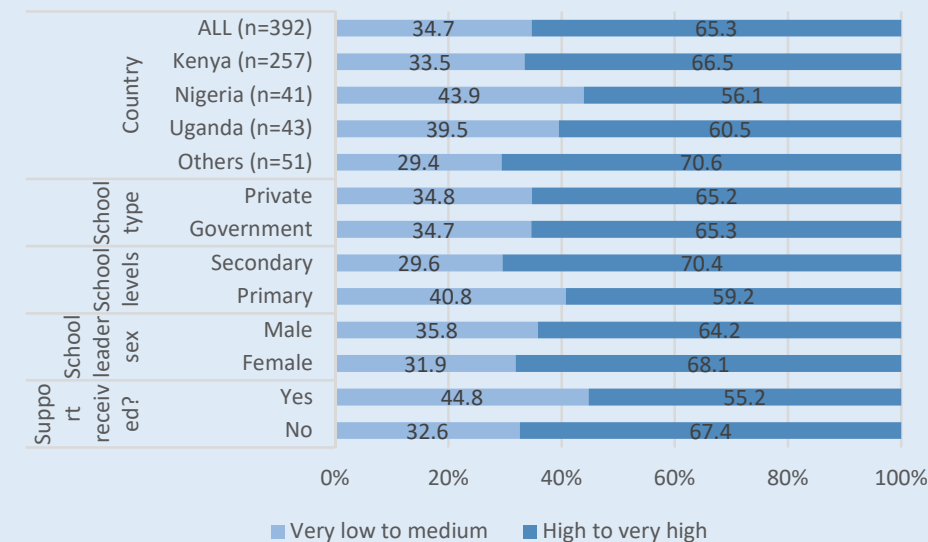
Nearly one-half of the school leaders are at least highly concerned about **teacher welfare**. As is the case with learner welfare, the level here is also higher among females.

Teacher attrition



Only about four in every ten school leaders are highly to very highly concerned about **teacher attrition**. But the level is slightly higher in private schools than in government schools.

Depletion of school funds



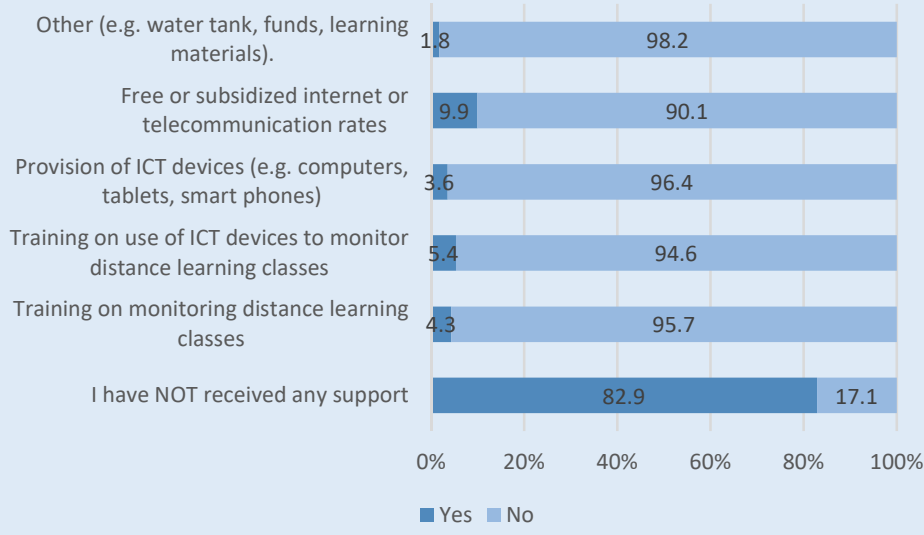
Regardless of school type, about two-thirds of the school leaders are at least highly concerned about **depletion of school funds**. The level is higher in secondary schools.

SCHOOL LEADER CONCERNS

In general, many school leaders are concerned about **learner learning loss** and **depletion of school funds**. The levels of concern are consistently higher among school leaders receiving no support to run schools.

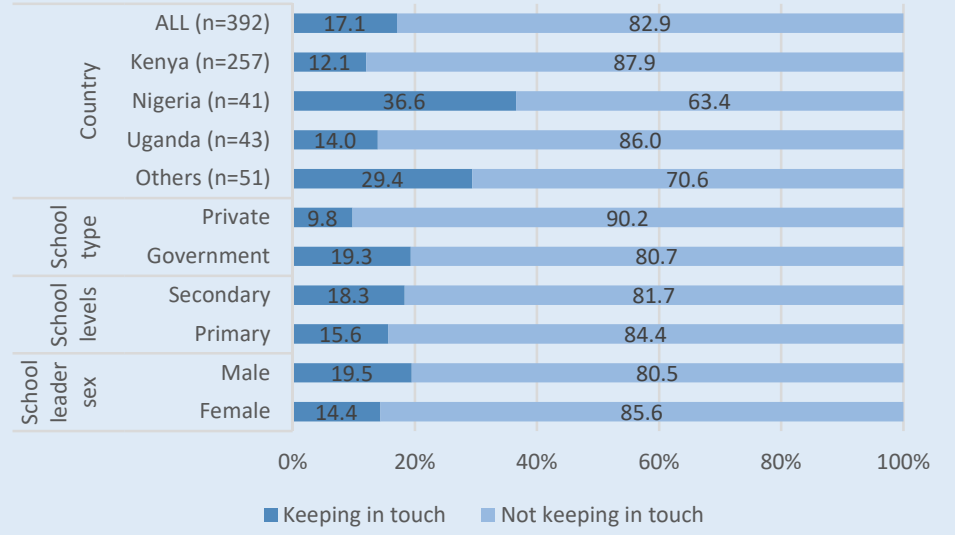
q5 Have you received the following supports from your government, or any other sources to run your school during the pandemic?

School leaders receiving different types of support



Very few school leaders have received any form of support from any source to run schools during the pandemic.

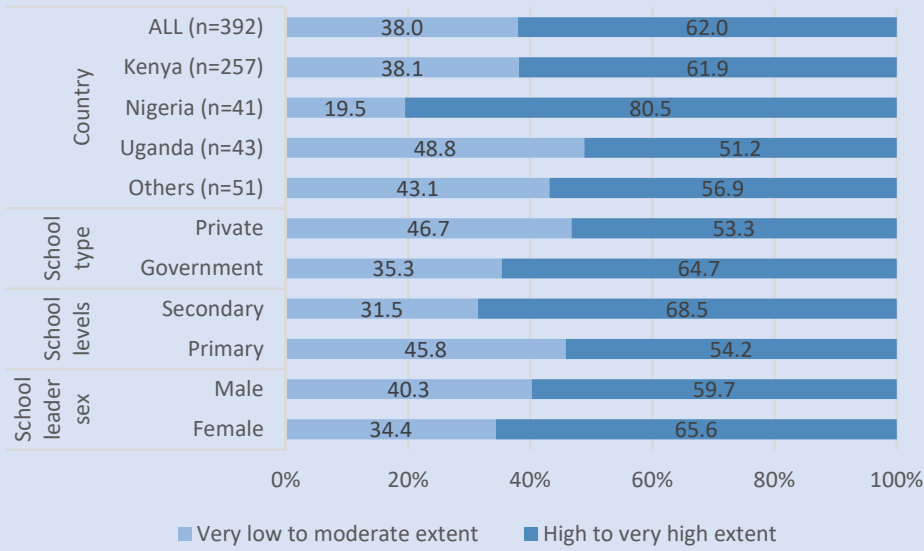
School leaders receiving at least one type of support



Levels of receiving at least one form of support are very low and more so in private schools. But the level seem better in Nigeria.

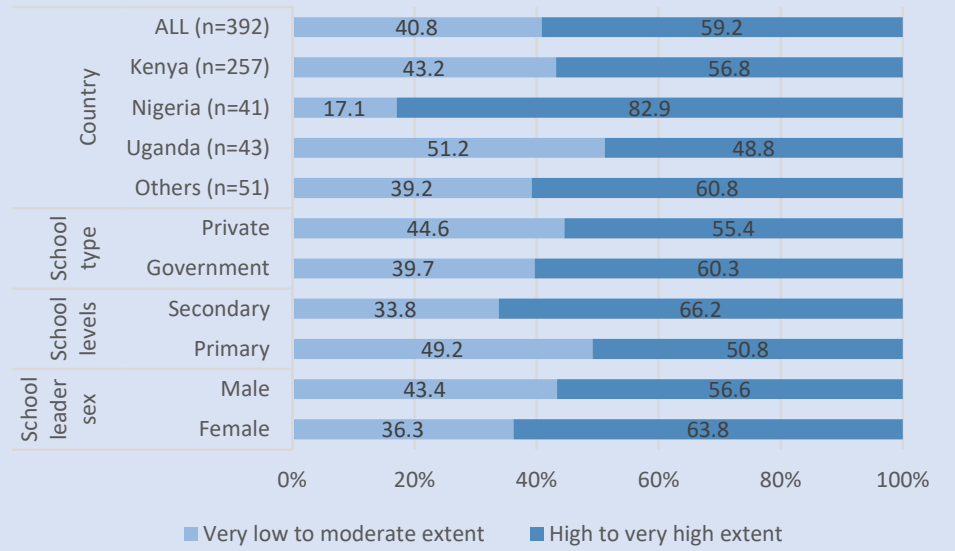
q6 To what extent would the following support mechanisms help you to monitor distance learning classes?

Training on monitoring distance learning classes



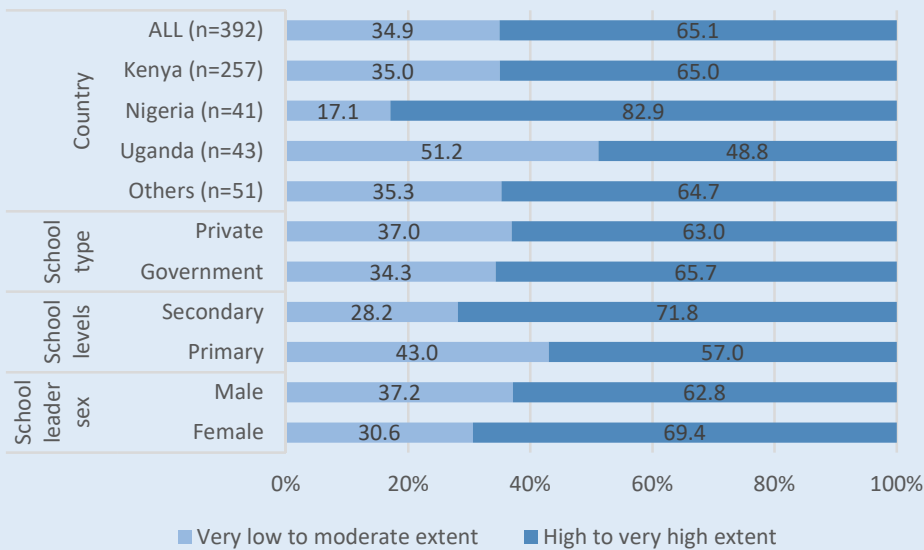
About six out of every ten school leaders think that training on monitoring distance learning classes would help them to monitor such classes to a high or very high extent.

Training on use of ICT devices



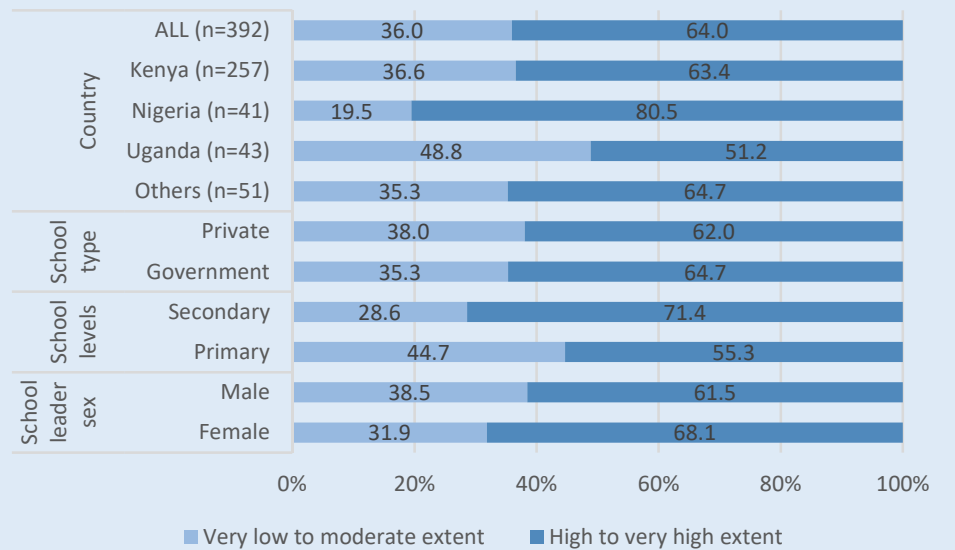
Likewise, nearly six out of every ten school leaders believe that training on use of ICT devices would be helpful in monitoring distance learning classes.

Provision of ICT devices



Nearly two-thirds of the school leaders perceive provision of ICT devices would be helpful in monitoring distance learning classes. The level is much higher in secondary than in primary schools.

Provision of free internet connection for distance classes



Almost two-thirds of the school leaders are of the opinion that provision of free internet would help them to monitor distance learning classes. The level is higher in secondary schools.

SUPPORT RECEIVED BY SCHOOL LEADERS AND THEIR OPINIONS ON SUPPORT TO MONITOR DISTANCE LEARNING CLASSES

Logistic regression: Potential predictors of school leaders keeping in touch with their learners

The data on *keeping in touch with learners* were further analyzed using logistic regression models (results in the table below). In this regard, four models were considered, referred to as Models 1, 2, 3 and 4. These models are based on the question presented to the school leaders (shown in Box 1). For Model 1, during data analyses, school leaders who selected Option 1 (i.e. “I have NOT kept in touch with any”), their data were coded as “0”, while school leaders who selected any of the other options - their data were put together under the alternative category, and coded as “1”. For Model 2, those who selected either Options 1 or 2, their data were coded as “0”, and those who selected any of the other options - their data were coded as “1”. The same procedure was followed to arrive at the keeping in touch categories “0” and “1” in Models 3 and 4.

The important results in the logistic regression models are given in blue font in the table below. Thus, results show that, the **Support received** by the school leaders from their governments or any other sources, influenced *keeping in touch with the learners* significantly at $p < 0.05$ level in Models 1 to 3, and at $p < 0.10$ level in Model 4. Results also show that *keeping in touch with learners* was also influenced by **Type of school** – with school leaders running private schools more likely to keep in touch compared to their counterparts running government schools; and **School level** – with school leaders in secondary schools more likely to keep in touch with their learners. Both School type and School level are perhaps proxy variables for school resources – emphasizing that resources matter. School leader sex was not significant in these models.

Box 1: Keeping in touch with learners

About what percentage of your LEARNERS have you kept in touch with on a WEEKLY basis during school closure following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Option

(1) I have NOT kept in touch with any

(2) Around 20%

(3) Around 40%

(4) Around 60%

(5) Around 80%

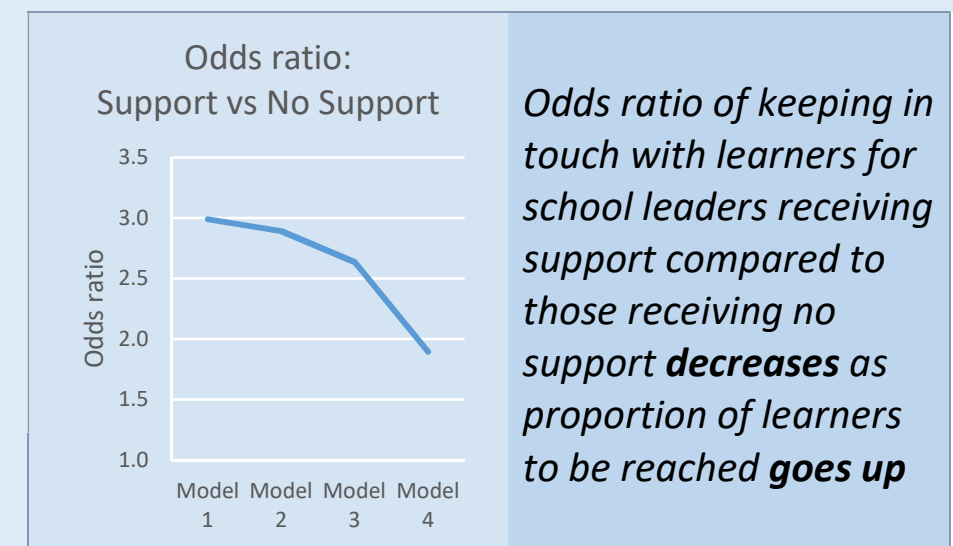
(6) I have kept in touch with NEARLY all

(7) I have kept in touch with ALL

Variables	Model 1 (Keeping with around 20% or more)					Model 2 (Keeping with around 40% or more)					Model 3 (Keeping with around 60% or more)					Model 4 (Keeping with around 80% or more)				
	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp.(B)	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp.(B)	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp.(B)	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp.(B)
Support received (0=No support; 1=Support*)	1.10	0.38	8.26	0.0040	2.99	1.06	0.29	13.30	0.0003	2.89	0.97	0.30	10.60	0.0011	2.64	0.64	0.36	3.15	0.0759	1.89
Type of school (0=Government; 1=Private)	1.68	0.37	20.80	0.0000	5.38	1.50	0.28	29.31	0.0000	4.49	1.32	0.28	21.64	0.0000	3.75	1.31	0.33	15.32	0.0001	3.69
School level (0=Primary; 1=Secondary)	1.17	0.25	21.11	0.0000	3.23	0.71	0.23	9.42	0.0021	2.03	0.87	0.26	11.34	0.0008	2.39	1.12	0.33	11.21	0.0008	3.06
School leader sex (0=Female; 1=Male)	-0.44	0.25	2.97	0.0850	0.65	-0.16	0.22	0.49	0.4848	0.85	0.02	0.25	0.01	0.9238	1.02	0.25	0.31	0.64	0.4227	1.29
<i>Constant</i>	0.22	0.23	0.92	0.3383	1.25	-1.07	0.23	21.84	0.0000	0.34	-2.02	0.28	53.91	0.0000	0.13	-3.09	0.38	66.19	0.0000	0.05

* Received at least one form of support to run school during the pandemic.

Based on the results from Model 1, given same backgrounds, school leaders who are receiving at least one form of support are 2.99 times (or 199%) more likely to keep in touch with around 20% or more of their learners when compared to their counterparts receiving no support at all [shown as Exp.(B) in the table above]. For Model 4, when compared to those getting no support, school leaders receiving at least one form of support are 1.89 times (89%) more likely to keep in touch with around 80% of their learners or more. Interestingly, results show that the relative odds of school leaders keeping in touch with learners decreases as the proportion of learners being sought to be reached goes up, which makes a lot of sense since keeping in touch on a weekly basis with say 20% of the learners is obviously less of a challenge than keeping in touch with say 80% of the learners. This seem to imply that school leaders would generally need higher levels of effort (or support) if they are to keep in touch with all their learners on a weekly basis.



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