

2022  
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**TAJI  
ZURI**

PROGRESS  
REPORT

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# 1. BACKGROUND

The rate of school dropouts and early pregnancy among students in Kenya, particularly in the Nyanza region along the Lake Victoria basin, is a significant concern. The problem is multifaceted, with various factors contributing to it. Numerous studies and reports have highlighted the factors contributing to this issue. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, "Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014", the reports indicate that dropout rates tend to be higher in certain regions, including marginalized areas and informal settlements. Factors such as distance to schools, lack of school fees, and the need to engage in income-generating activities contribute to higher dropout rates in these areas. According to the World Bank, "Kenya: Education Sector Support Project", the reports reveal that poverty, limited access to quality education, and cultural factors such as early marriages and teenage pregnancies contribute to high dropout rates. Additionally, school-related factors like inadequate infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, and limited learning resources can also contribute to students leaving school prematurely. Furthermore, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Kenya's primary school dropout rate stood at 11.9% in 2018. This indicates that many children do not complete their primary education, limiting their future opportunities for personal and economic development (UNESCO, World Inequality Database on Education).

Tajizuri programs aim to address the root causes and consequences of primary school dropout in Kenya, with a focus on the Homa-Bay County region along the Lake Victoria basin. The various projects adopt a holistic and participatory approach that involves students, teachers, parents, community leaders, local authorities, and civil society organizations. The program implements various interventions to improve the enrolment, retention, and learning outcomes of primary school students, such as providing nutritious food programs to schools, training teachers on learner-centred pedagogy and inclusive education, desk distribution and rehabilitating classrooms and sanitation facilities, providing safe water and hygiene education, mobilizing communities to value education and prevent harmful practices such as child marriage and child labor, and supporting alternative ways of reintegrating learners who had dropped out of school and provided them with basic education for transition to high school or tertiary institutions. Throughout the program, the projects monitor and evaluate the impact of these interventions on the student's attendance, performance, well-being and transition to secondary education. The projects use both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data from various sources, such as school records, household surveys, focus group discussions, Key informant interviews, and observations. The individual projects also document and disseminate best practices and lessons learned from the implementation process.

The expected outcomes of this program's interventions are:

1. Increased enrolment and retention rates of primary school students in Homa-bay county
2. Improved learning outcomes and academic achievement of primary school students Homa-bay county
3. Enhanced well-being and protection of primary school students in Homa-bay county
4. Increased transition rates from primary to secondary education in t Homa-bay county
5. Strengthened capacity and collaboration of stakeholders to provide quality and inclusive education for primary school students in Homa-bay county.

# 2. EDUCATION

Homabay County, within the Luo Nyanza region of Kenya, has been well known for academic excellence, however, research has shown an increase in the number of school drop outs and low transition rates of learners from primary to secondary level in Kenya with Homabay being one of the affected counties as a result of multiple reasons. According to the Centre for Poverty Research, there is only a 13% chance of transitioning out of poverty after being impoverished for seven years or more. Education is usually the best way to escape poverty but achieving success through education can seem unattainable for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. With the rising rate of inflation and the high education expectations that many entry-level positions have, students, specifically higher education students, need scholarships now more than ever.

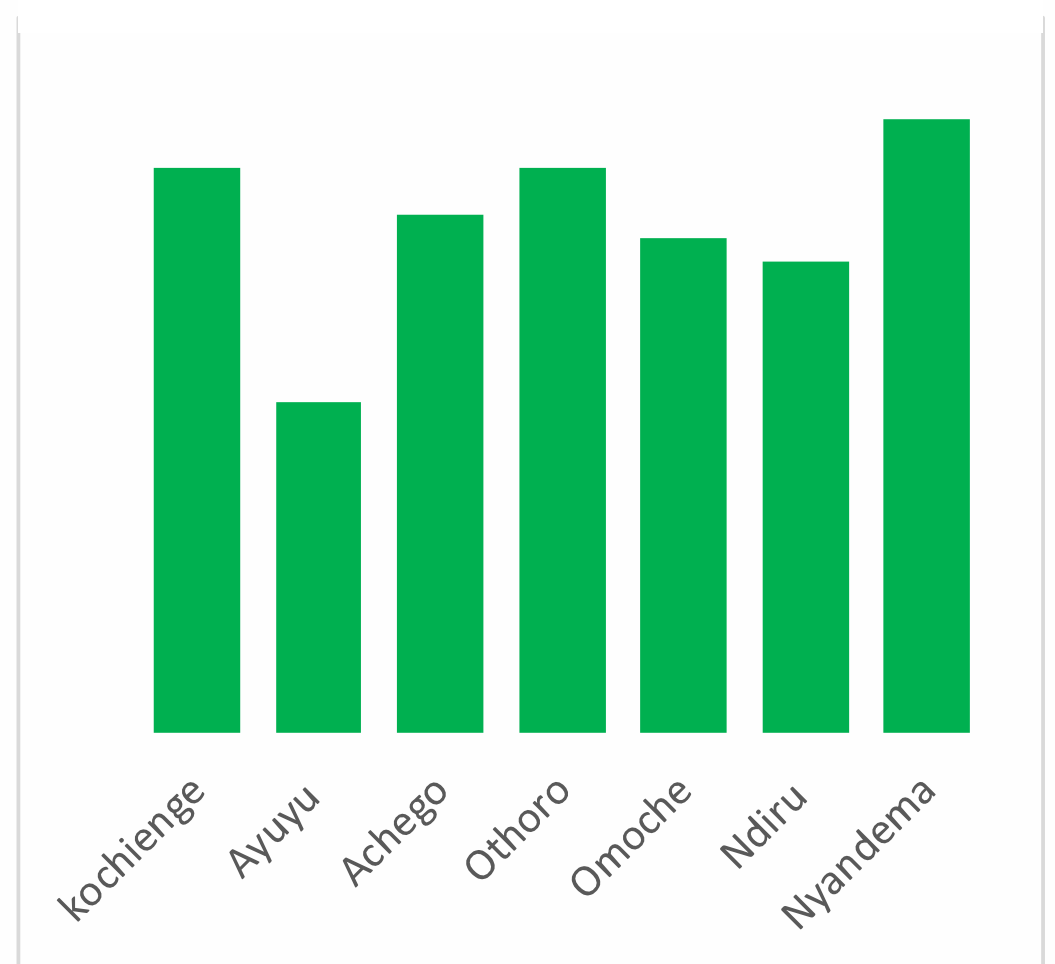
Learners from a family with low socioeconomic status may not have access to quality education. At Tajizuri, we believe that investing in Education, is investing in the future economy of the nation and as such are deliberately to support in class, after-school and community initiatives to amplify the need to support education with all stakeholders understanding and clearly taking up their roles i.e., teachers, learners, and community members.



# 2.1 Rafiki Mentorship

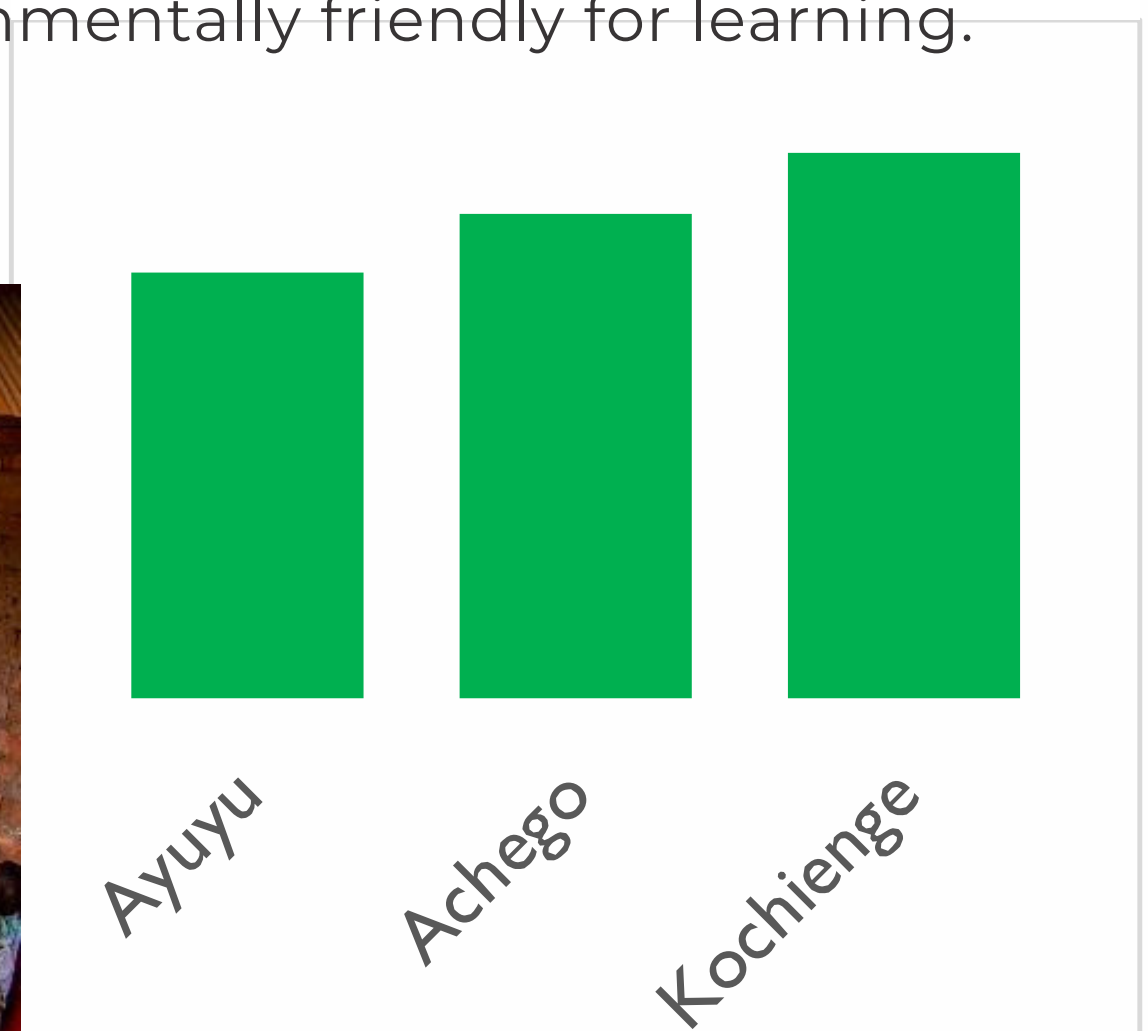
Rafiki mentorship is an 8-part after-school mentorship program that aims to provide life-long learning for school-going children with a focus on life skills. In this program, the organization aims to provide the pupils within the partner primary schools with one-on-one mentorship sessions. The pupils are provided with mentorship with support in terms of advice, they have an opportunity to share their experience with mentors on a one-on-one session steered by 130 Tajizuri team members with support from the 120 teachers. Through this program, pupils gain confidence in approaching life challenges and pave the way for their future career growth. During 70 the year 2022, we were able to reach a total of 755 pupils from seven primary schools compared to the year 2021 in which we were able to reach only 270 pupils in three schools. This represents a 180% increase in the number of pupils reached compared to the year 2021. Nyandema Primary had the highest number of pupils mentored (130 pupils) while Ayuyu Primary had the least number of pupils mentored with only 70 pupils reached. All the schools are within Hoday Bay County in the Rangwe sub-county.

More details are shown in Graph 1 below.



# 2.2 Dawati Darasani

During the fact-finding stage of Tajizuri's inception in Homabay County, we realized that one barrier to classroom participation and learning was the lack of classroom desks. For those with desks, the congestion and squeezing due to crowding made it difficult for learners to concentrate in class. As a result, during dialogue Graph 2: Number of desks provided to learners, we identified the need to invest, and primary schools during the year 2022 support schools with desks as a means to ensure learners are comfortable enough to be present and enjoy the learning journey. In this program, the organization aims to provide desks to primary schools with inadequate desks to improve the classroom and learning experience. The inadequate number of desks means that children either sit on the floor or write on their laps. On average 5-6 children squeeze on a desk that should serve 2 learners. A well-designed classroom can boost pupils' performance by providing a peaceful environment for teaching and learning. During the year 2022, Tajizuri provided a total of 240 desks to 3 primary schools within Homabay County compared to the previous year (2021) in which we provided only 115 desks to 2 primary schools. This represents a 209 % increase in the number of desks provided compared to 2021. More details are as shown in graph 2 below. Most of these pupils were squeezed into the few available desks and some were forced to sit on stones initially which was not environmentally friendly for learning.



### 3. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Good health and Nutrition are the backbone to promote improved learning outcomes, reduce absenteeism, and promote development for children for them to thrive. As Nutrition profoundly influences our lives, education is one of the most important factors determining success in life. By increasing a child's chances of survival and encouraging cognitive growth, healthy nutrition, on the other hand, sets them up for success. According to numerous studies, a balanced and healthy diet is essential for cognitive growth, increased academic achievement, and enhanced mental health. This is the main reason why Tajizuri integrated oral hygiene, mental health and wellness, age-appropriate sexual reproductive health, and school feeding programs into the health and Nutrition interventions supported. All this is because addressing barriers to education is not a linear process rather it is a cycle that needs a multisectoral approach to achieve any gains. In 2022, TajiZuri provided 181 pupils with vitamin A supplements and deworming in 5 primary schools. Blossom Cherries primary had the highest number of pupils reached (64) with vitamin A supplement and deworming as shown in graph 3 below.

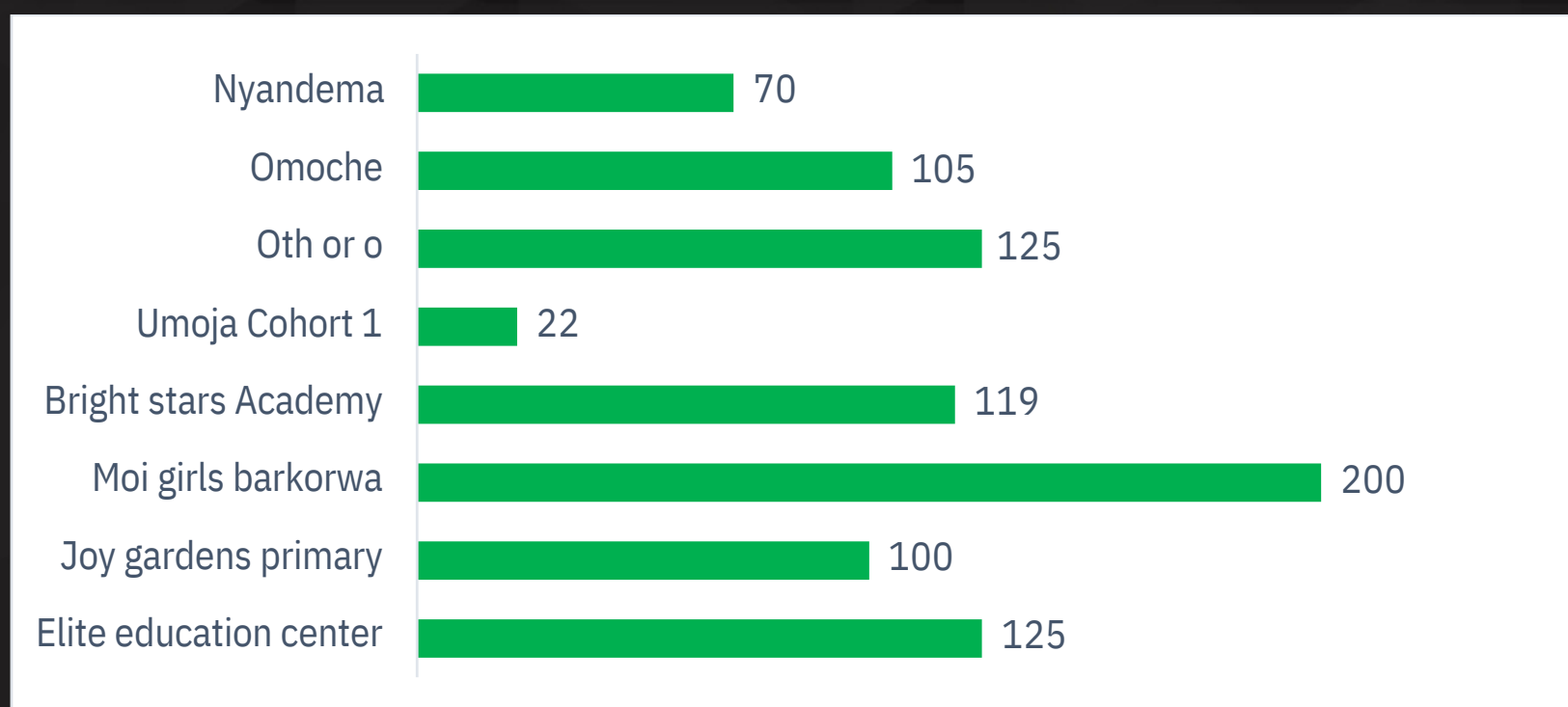
Graph 3: Number of pupils reached through Vitamin A supplement and deworming in primary schools in 2022.



# 3.1 MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health and wellness are a necessity for learning to take place because for a child to concentrate, understand, and thrive, their minds must be settled and their well-being catered for. Adults deal with numerous life issues but are expected to show up at their best and support learning and active engagement within the classroom. Tajizuri provides access to a brave space where the teachers and learners openly discuss barriers to education and the best steps to overcome them at school and community levels. These conversations and sessions are mediated by Tajizuri representatives who help with the problem-tree analysis process and solution-tree analysis so that both teachers and learners jointly suggest the best ways to solve their context-specific challenges. Since the onset of the mental health and wellness program, the teachers have reported decreased disciplinary cases within the schools. In 2022, Tajizuri impacted 866 learners in 8 primary schools as shown in graph 4 below. In 2023, Tajizuri will bring in mental health experts to provide dialogues, steer the conversations, and provide referrals for cases that may be beyond the organization's scope.

Graph 4: Number of pupils supported in Mental health program in 2022.





## 3.2 SRHR -MENSTRUAL HEALTH

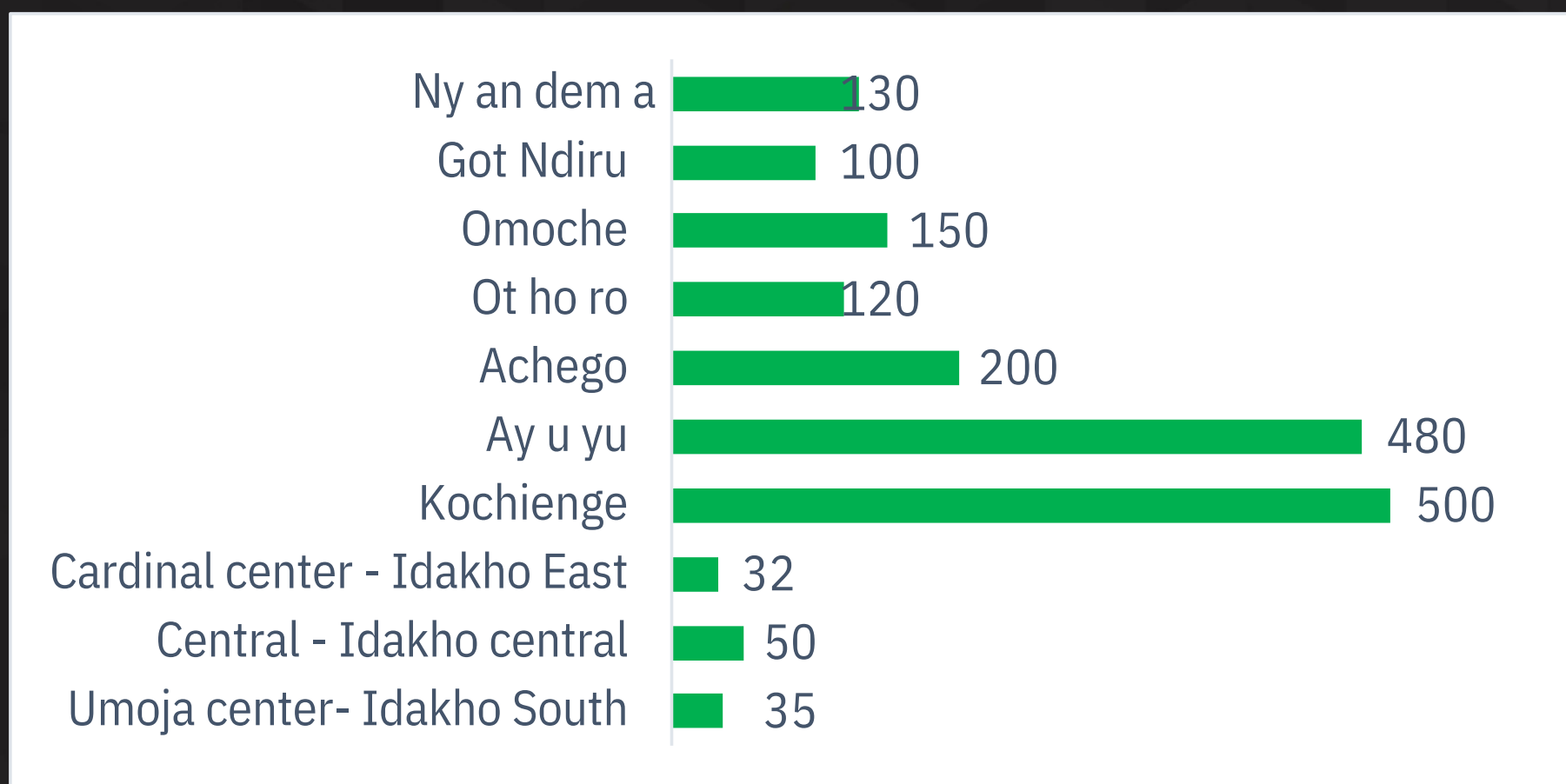
Period poverty is amongst the key reasons why girls miss school days i.e., an average of 4-5 days a month meaning that in an academic term, a girl might miss an average on 12-15 school days. TajiZuri has engaged in educating both boys and girls and providing them with access to age-appropriate information on sexual reproductive health, using the approach where a TajiZuri male and female staff lead conversations, providing demonstration of how to use various period products. This approach has been applied since menstruation has for a long time been a girl's issue and the boys have been left out of the conversation, however, when educated on how to support girls in class and avoid embarrassing them, then learning can take place and girls feel supported and empowered. In addition to this, girls receive both underwear and sanitary towels to ensure their needs during the periods are catered for and therefore lack of menstrual products is no longer a reason to miss school. TajiZuri has been able to support a total of 322 girls in 2022 and the schools have also reported a reduce in rates of absenteeism of girls.



## 3.3 ORAL HYGIENE

Having understood that poor oral hygiene is a barrier to classroom participation and a source of low self-esteem, TajiZuri invested in rolling out an oral hygiene program where learners are educated on basic hygiene, and oral hygiene and provided with an oral hygiene kit. The teachers and learners have since reported an improvement in classroom participation as a result of the numerous interventions introduced by TajiZuri as well as the positive attitude as a result of the support provided by teachers, learners, and parents. TajiZuri was able to train and create awareness of oral hygiene and reached 1797 learners through the piloting and scaling of the annual oral hygiene campaign in 10 primary schools as shown in graph 6 below.

Graph 5: Number of pupils supported through the Oral Hygiene program in 2022.



# 4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is impossible to successfully transform the lives of children without engaging their parents and caregivers. Therefore, a key component of impacting the lives of school-going children and ensuring the learners thrive is engaging the whole community in the education conversation so that everyone understands their roles. At Tajizuri, aside from engaging caregivers and parents in the Education conversation, the key focus is on the engagement of Bodaboda riders (motorbike riders who provide public transport). The reason for this engagement is due to the notion that a high percentage of school dropouts and teenage pregnancies are caused by boda boda riders within the region. Since the engagement with boda boda riders started, we have seen them come up to discuss the value of education even in community dialogues, and school mentorship forums as external facilitators. They have been instrumental in supporting the conversations and efforts to ensure boys do not drop out of school to become motorbike riders which was one of the trends coming up. Through community dialogues, more guardians now understand the value of having children in school without interruptions during planting or harvesting seasons, burials, and weddings. Now more children are attending school consistently with sickness being the reason for any absenteeism incidences. A total of 264 caregivers /guardians were engaged in various community dialogues to propel education during the year 2022. Elite Education Center had the highest number of caregivers (86) while Cardinal Center-Idakho East had the least of 32 caregivers.

Graph 6: Number of parents engaged during the year 2022.

