

The Ruben Improvement Scheme for Education (RISE)

Two issues at the Ruben Centre are holding back the quality of education:

1. The Ruben Centre currently employs 9 teachers hired and paid by the Kenyan government and 25 teachers paid by the Christian Brothers supported by the Edmund Rice Foundation. Government teachers receive an annual salary of \$3,700-4,500 whilst the other teachers receive only \$2,500-3,000 annually. The pay disparity is one of the issues which contributes to a less motivated and tenured workforce. **Go forward to 2015 and 17 teachers employed are gov't teachers. In the new 5 year strategic plan (2016- 2020) I am attempting to get the gov't Teacher's Service Commission to commit to 5 extra teachers each year of this plan. No progress to date partly because I haven't been there.**

Ruben project teachers are getting about \$A 3,500/ annually. We have moved it up a bit and it is at a level that teachers are content with. No teachers has left the centre to join another private institution in 5 years. Motivation is okay especially when some little things can be done and also 2014/5 the new school has made a huge difference towards motivating staff. They feel so much better operating in these fancy facilities

2. Quality of education at Ruben is a problem, as it is throughout Africa. A rush to increase the number of children in school has seen teaching standards drop and class sizes explode- in the tin sheds at Ruben, classes are currently as large as 90 students. In addition, teaching pedagogy is archaic, making effective learning of rigorous content a challenge.

This is still relevant, and Ruben Centre school is now a victim of its own success. The new rooms are there, the new administration offices are there, library etc. but so too are the extra 400 kids. So now there are 2,400 kids. I have encouraged the Head teacher taking in as many as possible, because the money has been spent and it makes sense to have as many beneficiaries as possible. So classes are back to high 70's but rooms are good and enough furniture exists and every kid in the school gets meals and hope.

The proposals to improve learning outcomes:

1. A building program has commenced at Ruben. Class sizes will reduce to 60 per class with more available classrooms. Better classrooms will also lift morale. This program is, so far, well-funded. The Niall Mellon Trust of Ireland has stepped in to entirely fund Phase One of sixteen classrooms. **So much of this has been achieved. The 16 classrooms has grown to 30 classrooms, 2 staff rooms, toilets, TV room extra library. Head teacher, senior teachers and secretary room. A special needs room is now also there. Yes morale has been greatly lifted.**

2. RISE addresses the second most pressing issue at Ruben- teacher morale and training.

Components of the plan are as follows:

- Raise a fund of \$100,000 to underpin a teacher training and incentive program for three years. **I am**

not sure whether this was actually achieved, my spending and getting on with doing things is better than my accounting. However in terms of hard nose facts go....

- An extra 12 teachers have been employed.
 - At least 8 teacher aides are employed each year. Many of the original ones who were qualified are now fully engaged teachers, filling the need as extra classrooms have come on board. So now instead of a 2 -3 stream school at each level, it is now 4 streams and 5 streams in Class 7.
 - Teacher training and inservice has gone on. Three volunteer teachers from Aust/ US have helped shape the RISE philosophy and conducted training. Now in 2015 there is a specialist special education teacher working (2015/16)on the ground with the RISE program. This is hoped to have it doubly effective in terms of actual classroom practice and adherence to the aims and objectives. Funding for three years avoids the problem of training and incentives being removed at short notice and allows forward planning. Ideally the fund would be topped up annually (\$30,000 p.a.) to maintain the ability to forward plan. Founding funders will be called on to contribute in later years at their option- but the fund will also become another vehicle to attract new donors to Ruben.
 - The funding in place has allowed us to plan and implement as the needs have arisen. This year 2015 because of the extra teachers employed it was my felt need to cut back on teacher aides. This comes at a time when there are extra teaching rooms available for group work and ability based programs. Physical education has been a big focus for this activity. We have three teachers involved and the kids in that slum need the activity plus it has a real in building up their self esteem, especially those going off to inter school things and those involved in the Floor show activities. It will be interesting now to hear from Heather (ed. guru) on what she now sees are the priorities in terms of staffing and program activities. She has had 6 weeks on the ground now.
- First component of the spending would be to increase pay levels of the 25 non-government teachers to government levels at a total cost of \$20,000 p.a. The extra pay would be separately termed an education allowance and only paid in return for participation in a comprehensive teacher training program (that is screened and approved by Ruben administration for offering quality and progressive training). This serves the purpose of improving teaching standards and morale whilst avoiding a permanent increase in the cost base of Ruben- payments will not be permanently integrated into the payroll and will be guaranteed one year at a time.
- Allowances have crept in for teachers doing extra duties and taking on extra responsibilities. The wages have increased and there is good morale.
- Teacher trainings will be conducted on Saturdays – an in-service program. Teachers would attend this and be paid a small fee for doing so. Cost of this is estimated at \$5,000 per annum. Trainings will be developed by the program supervisor, and provide opportunities for local and international ‘guest’ teachers to train and share their expertise.

- Some of this has happened and more will now that Heather is on the ground. Several teachers (6-8)are being supported financially with extra training at university levels or appropriate upgrading. For example all the pre school teachers have are now qualified. This sort of training is very cost effective compared with university studies. Up grading to a degree has been very popular and it is a source to improve motivation and work harder.

· In 2013 a single scholarship was offered to Ruben teachers to upgrade their diploma to a teaching degree. It cost \$1,200 and fifteen teachers applied- the RISE Initiative will allow more such scholarships to be offered and these will act as an incentive to excel in the course.

- See above. The human Resources manager looks after this and keeps records of academic progress and money paid out.

· A supervisor to run the program would be hired at a cost of approximately \$5,000 p.a.

- Heather is now on the ground and as a volunteer is being paid \$A 3,000/ year (based on local salary of a teacher)

3. An Education Project grant option will be available for teachers to utilize to improve learning, provide enrichment opportunities, or fund special education endeavors. Projects and grants will be approved and overseen in collaboration with the Director and program supervisor.

- This has happened and with Heather coordinating the program now, I expect more programs will be identified and teachers identified who would best benefit.

Expected outcomes:

Frank O'Shea, Ruben Centre Director, sees this program as syncing with the improvement to the physical assets of Ruben Centre. As he puts it, it will be 'a symbolic and visible statement that education is happening at Ruben'. As the tin sheds go, he would like to see the old teaching methods go with them. The advancement program, piloted and in place in 2012, for the Grade 4 children is already yielding results and will serve as a template for the RISE initiative.

- Much of this has been achieved. See the dvd program on the progress with all this.

Funding:

For immediate use and program implementation:

Australian funders have committed \$30,000, with an additional \$30,000 pending.

US funders have committed \$10,000 for initial development, with future commitments at same or increased amounts. There is currently no existing US based fiscal sponsor. Funds for future years will be pursued and secured via individual donor solicitation and fundraising events.

- Funding I have kept spending as the needs have presented themselves. There has been great expansion of physical assets as well as numbers being reached on. I have never been

bound up by the budget figures. However The Centre and school are entering a new phase now. The emergency is over. A real useful facility and system is on the ground. The new phase and the strategic plan (2016- 2020) will hopefully see a more systematic roll out of a program. It aims to see the school handed over (fully staffed) to the government by 2020. That leaves the Christian Brothers as the sponsors of the school these five years to now consolidate the vision and processes to the point that the progress can not be rolled back.

- In terms of Budget now for this period, I would like to go back to Ruben and plan with the right people and come up with a real program for this strategic plan time. Identify in details the extra staff, training, programs and ways to monitor it annually. Part of this would be to attach a budget to each activity and then present it to Mr. Mark Cubit and his supporters. Already Richard (JB fame) has put down \$25,000 and rather than it be lost to general revenue, it is the grounding for this new phase of 5 years for RISE.

Organization Overview: The Ruben Centre <http://www.rubencentre.org>

The Ruben Centre is administered by the Christian Brothers African Province. The Centre, which includes the Ruben Primary School and the Ruben Medical Clinic, has an annual budget of \$350,000 and is securely funded through various Australian, European, and African foundations and donors. The Centre thrives on, and intentionally fosters, partnership to promote sustainability and local economic and social development.

Vision & Mission

* Vision: To be a faith-based centre striving for an empowered and just Mukuru community.

* Mission :To offer quality education, health, financial and social services to children and families in Mukuru community.

* Core Values: Service provision at Ruben Centre is guided by the following values.

Lift Up Africa, Fiscal Sponsorship Application
5/2013

- 1) Faith in God
- 2) Integrity in honouring the highest of standards in all our practices.
- 3) Commitment to our vocation to serve the sick and needy.
- 4) Upholding Human dignity and the right to life.
- 5) Confidentiality treasured between staff and clients and among staff themselves at all times.
- 6) Equality in all things for both staff and patients.
- 7) Compassion for the poor and sick
- 8) Professionalism
- 9) Teamwork among all at Ruben Centre
- 10) Excellence

Strategic Direction: The Ruben Centre adopts 5 key directions in its programming.

- 1) Strengthening Organisational Capacity
- 2) Providing health services
- 3) Providing education services
- 4) Providing social services
- 5) Economic empowerment of community members

The Ruben Centre Administration is committed to building strong relationships, practices and policies across all departments, which reflects the desire to listen to, engage with, and empower all sections of the community. In order to do this, strategies for a better Ruben Centre include:

- Create structures and systems that promote a sense of Centre Identity leading to strong integrated policies and behaviors by all departments to live their mission.
- Have the agreed on values always underpinning and shaping behaviors and policies.
- Get greater security on the Centre property and from there seek more donors and partners with their programs, in order to help Ruben Centre realize its mission of being 'The Church Of The Poor.'
- Invest in professional development of staff.
- Encourage all programs to implement an annual Performance Plan designed to ensure the steady implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Director: Frank O'Shea rubendirector.oshea@gmail.com, or frank1oshea@gmail.com

Call us at: +254 2053 7928 or +254 7177 88801

Write us at: Ruben Centre, PO Box 20094, City Square 00200, Nairobi, Kenya