



RUBEN CENTRE



OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023
QUARTER 4 REPORT

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Message from the Director



In profound reflection, I pose the question, "Oh MY! What has happened to 2023?" As I contemplate the conclusion of this quarter and the culmination of the year, the significance of December 1st underscores that it has been precisely 10 months since my return to Kenya. My primary mission was to actively engage on the ground and contribute to the preservation of the Ruben Centre. However, it is essential to acknowledge that while the mission's objective was evident, the corresponding strategy or plan outlining how this intricate task could be effectively executed remained elusive.

As the year draws to a close, I am awe-struck by the accomplishments that have materialized, largely attributable to the unity of purpose demonstrated by all staff, beneficiaries, and stakeholders associated with Ruben. This collective intent has proven to be fertile ground for a re-birthing process, rooted in the cherished and deeply esteemed culture of the Ruben Centre.

The recent November monthly Centre meeting, attended by Administration and project leaders, placed a spotlight on this defining culture. In my presentation, I refrained from introducing anything new but instead sought to remind everyone that the Catholic cosmology of fostering right relationships with the divine, self, our community, and the environment forms the bedrock of our culture. This culture manifests itself in tangible expressions of vision, objectives, unwavering principles, and strategic plans.

Aligned with the Ruben Centre's foundational values of PRESENCE, COMPASSION, and LIBERATION, I underscored that the rich cultural tapestry has been encapsulated in three strategic plans since 2010, further solidifying our commitment to a holistic vision.

The culminating moments of the fourth quarter of 2023 were defined by the Center Administration's devoted focus on the Mid-term review of our current 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. A comprehensive engagement involving all staff and stakeholders ensued, culminating in a pivotal response presented at the conclusive 2023 Centre meeting on November 19th.

It is with great delight that Ruben welcomed back Ms. Bev Watkinson, a dedicated volunteer from 2016-19, to spearhead the creation of our response, charting the trajectory for the remaining two years of the ongoing Plan. Bev was entrusted with the task of integrating our two new Leadership team members into this critical process, forming what is now recognized as the 'response team.' Comprising Bev Watkinson (former Development Director), Veronica Mukati (Program Manager), and Albanous Gituru (Operations Manager), the response team has successfully delivered their strategic response. With their guidance, Ruben Centre is unequivocally prepared and positioned for a purposeful journey into 2024.

Recognizing that the linchpin to effective planning and implementation lies in a cohesive, talented, and committed staff, under the guidance of inspirational and competent leaders, I am pleased to report that we are steadily progressing towards this ideal at all organizational levels.

As we navigate the intricate terrain of our mission, I extend my gratitude to our dedicated staff, esteemed stakeholders, and the wider Ruben community. Your support is instrumental in propelling us towards a future marked by positive impact and sustained growth.

Despite the challenges, this quarter has been bustling with activity, and I encourage all stakeholders to delve into the project updates. Notably, our Strategic Education Objective achieved an unprecedented milestone with a school population reaching 3,517 students. This surge, however, has exerted immense pressure on students, teachers, and administration, given that our facilities were initially designed for half this number.

The expansion now encompasses three schools on site, including Early Childhood Development, Primary



Education, and the newly instituted Junior Secondary School. This year alone, the Junior Secondary School commenced with 482 students, contributing to a total primary school population of 2,471 students. Furthermore, 177 students have been studying in a nearby building, set to become a Secondary School in 2024, signifying an influx of Junior Secondary students to Ruben Centre.

Despite the challenging reality, the government remains unaware, and in the upcoming year, Ruben will need to accommodate two years of Junior Secondary, pushing the population to over 1,500 Junior Secondary students—a situation akin to standing on the roof.

Returning to the focus of this quarter, 489 Grade 8 students completed their primary education, progressing to Form 1 elsewhere. Following mid-year examination results, teachers faced challenges with the prospect of concluding the National Grade 8 era on a disappointing note. In response, a tuition program was initiated for the poorest-performing two hundred students, yielding better results than in 2022.

In conclusion, my heartfelt appreciation extends to everyone—workers, administration, donors, and the Mukuru community—for navigating Ruben Centre through this character-defining year. With unwavering resilience, we are now collectively prepared to embrace a blessed future.

Sincerely,

Bro. Frank O'Shea
Director, Ruben Centre



SECTION A: Ruben Centre overview

Who we are

With this quarterly report we are reminded, the Ruben Centre is a faith-based charitable trust that is dedicated to empowering and promoting justice within the Mukuru community. We achieve this goal by providing high-quality education, health, financial, and social services to children and families residing in the Mukuru community.

Because the Ruben Centre is located in Mukuru, one of the largest slums in Nairobi, we strive to provide educational, health, and community development programs to residents of this community. Our efforts are geared towards helping individuals and families living in poverty to improve their quality of life and in this year, we have **strived to renew our commitment** to provide education, healthcare, and community engagement and through our programs create a brighter future for the Mukuru community.

How We Work

Ruben Centre works in collaboration with donors and partners to achieve her vision of ensuring a just and empowered Mukuru community. All programs are either donor funded or administered by a partner through a Memorandum of Understanding and internal funding that is generated and injected back into service delivery.

The community plays a vital role in the establishment of programs and is the reason for the very existence of the Centre. The Centre works hand in hand and in collaboration with the community to deliver tailor made solutions to the needs of the people. This is made possible through continuous assessments, surveys and evaluation of existing programs to ensure they are relevant and beneficial to our community. Ruben Centre employs around 15 Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) who are the eyes and ears of current and future development, and act as link to the services on the ground. They provide first hand fundamental information pertaining to developments, needs and challenges facing the residents of Mukuru slum.

A major focus of 2023 has been to ensure the safeguarding and the interests of the children and vulnerable adults are upheld at all times. A child protection policy and a code of professional conduct is in place to safeguard the interests of the children to protect minors against any professional misconduct concerning staff.

SECTION B: Project progress highlights

The projects undertaken by Ruben Centre revolve around five key strategic objectives, each contributing to the holistic development of the community, these include:

- Health
- Education
- Social-economic empowerment
- Advocacy and networking
- Organizational capacity.

Each of the projects work to their budgetary performance indicators and strive to meet all of the outcomes within their workplans. However, within the projects there have been a number of highlights in this quarter, these are outlined below;



A PRIDEFUL, COMPASSIONATE AND LIBERATING PARTNER

Advocacy Empowering Mukuru: Amani Ni Sisi an Advocacy Journey

In the heart of the Mukuru Community, the Ruben Centre is dedicated to not just serving but empowering,



striving for a more just society in this informal settlement. A pivotal initiative in this mission is the Community Policing Program, where Nyumba Kumi officials diligently oversee community activities. The program aims to reduce criminal activities and provide alternative dispute resolution services, ensuring a safer environment for all.

Participants keenly following the conflict resolution training

However, a cloud of confusion looms over Nyumba Kumi, stemming from a lack of suitable structures and norms, creating uncertainty around membership and responsibilities. Recognizing this challenge, the Ruben Centre's Amani Ni Sisi Project stepped in with a strategic intervention. In a concerted effort to bring clarity and effectiveness to community engagement, the *Amani Ni Sisi* Project sponsored 12

community leaders to attend a transformative 5-day Certified Mediation Training, facilitated by The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Kenya. This intensive training equipped participants with essential mediation skills, with a special focus on conflict resolution within Mukuru and its neighboring areas. The principles of neutrality, voluntariness, and non-imposition became the guiding beacons for these community leaders.

Among the participants was Roselyne Asena, a community paralegal, who expressed heartfelt gratitude for the mediation training. Asena emphasized the profound impact of the principles learned, particularly in maintaining neutrality during conflict resolution processes in Mukuru.

The Ruben Centre's advocacy section extends sincere appreciation to The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Kenya trainers and GIZ for their invaluable support. This underscores the commitment to actively contribute to the realization of a just and empowered community in Mukuru. Through these efforts, the Ruben Centre envisions a community where conflicts are resolved amicably, and its residents are equipped with the necessary skills to navigate challenges confidently. Together, we are scripting a narrative of positive change and empowerment in Mukuru!

Ruben FM – 7th Anniversary

Ruben FM recently celebrated its 7th anniversary with a special radio roadshow in collaboration with Fresh Life and SHOFCO, covering its broadcast radius and engaging with the audience on issues like child safeguarding, sexual reproductive health, Gender-Based Violence, family planning, and sanitation in the Mukuru Community. The radio station received recognition from the Kenya Red Cross as the best media house in Kenya on the same day, acknowledging its commitment to the mandate of service to humanity.



Ruben FM roadshow during the celebration to mark its 7th anniversary



Furthermore, at the Mukuru Festival, Robert Ledira, a Ruben FM presenter, received the Presenter of The Year award for his contributions to empowering the Mukuru Community through the Jahazi la Alamsiki program, focusing on family and financial literacy. The Association of Grassroots Journalists Kenya awarded Ruben FM team members Mercy Alomba, Tabitha Njambi, and Robert Ledira in categories such as Investigative Reporting, Best Journalist in Children Reporting, and The Special Recognition Award, respectively. Ruben FM also achieved notable recognition from the Communications Authority of Kenya, scoring 90% in compliance during a routine inspection and being recognized as the best community radio in Kenya. In total, Ruben FM has won six awards in 2023, showcasing its dedication and excellence in various fields.



Br. Frank pose for a photo together with Ruben FM team during the Association of Grassroots Journalists award show 2023.

SEETE Adult Literacy; Empowering youth with challenges; and a 156 student Graduation have all made headlines in this fundamental program within RUBEN

Adult Literacy

Quincy, originally from Uganda, relocated to Kenya in January 2023 and was enrolled in the Reuben vocational program, specializing in dressmaking, with the assistance of the social work department. After completing the dressmaking course in six months, the department facilitated her enrollment in adult literacy classes. She successfully attended these classes and took the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education



Elias Kubia Mwangi during literacy class



Ms. Quincy during an interview at Ruben centre



(KCPE) exams. Similarly, Mr. Elias Kuhia Mwangi, aided by the social work department, joined adult literacy classes to pursue the KCPE examination. Despite his leadership role and previous education in the old system, he recognized the importance of acquiring relevant skills under the new 8-4-4 system.

The social work department played a crucial role in supporting Quincy and Mr. Mwangi, providing study materials, motivation, and addressing challenges they faced, fostering a positive attitude towards education. The students, grateful for the department's assistance, have successfully completed the KCPE exams and are eager to advance to Form One for further education. However, a key challenge is the lack of awareness in the society about Ruben Centre's adult literacy programs. The students advocate for increased awareness to highlight the department's educational initiatives and encourage more individuals to take advantage of the opportunities provided.

Empowering Youth with Challenges



Rhoda, Mercy and Jane who are hearing impaired

During the periods of June to December 2022 and January to June 2023, Rhoda and Jane, two hearing-impaired students, participated in the Hairdressing and Beauty classes. Despite acquiring skills and being well-prepared for the job market, they encountered difficulty securing attachments in the general market. Consequently, their teacher retained them in the classroom, where they assisted other students with practical activities. To address this challenge, the Hairdressing and Beauty Skills Training Program (HDSTP) aims to transition Rhoda and Jane into a monitored and supervised salon outside the Ruben Centre, strategically located near HDSTP. This intervention is anticipated to enhance their economic status and contribute to community improvement. Home visits unveiled economic challenges faced by their parents in supporting them. Collaborative discussions with the families and the trainer led to the agreement to establish a supervised salon outlet under the guidance of a hairdressing instructor, providing substantial assistance to Rhoda and Jane, the two hearing-impaired students and graduates.

Graduation 2023

On December 18, 2023, a momentous occasion unfolded at our vocational training centre as ninety-five students marked the culmination of their educational journey. Hailing from diverse disciplines such as tailoring & dressmaking, cosmetology, and weaving, the graduating class radiated joy adorned in their ceremonial gowns. The Ruben Centre Hall served as the backdrop for this significant event, graced by the presence of all six dedicated facilitators from our vocational training centre, Business Development Officer Bev Watkinson, RC Director Br. Frank, and other esteemed stakeholders.

What distinguished this graduation ceremony was not just the academic achievements but the profound impact on human development that our courses imparted. The graduates, many of whom are young mothers, were privileged to engage with Grace from Salama Centre. Grace played a pivotal role in nurturing their self-esteem and enhancing their interpersonal skills, contributing to their holistic growth.

A remarkable milestone was reached as 50 of the graduates successfully completed their NITA examinations in the past week. Armed with the skills acquired at Ruben Centre, they are poised to embark on journeys of empowerment and self-sufficiency. In extending our heartfelt gratitude, we wish to acknowledge the unwavering support of the Edmund Rice Foundation Australia, who have been instrumental in empowering these students over the past 12 months. Special thanks are also due to our dedicated facilitators whose commitment has been integral to the success of our vocational training programs.

Clinic and Maternal Health

Maternal health and child nutrition

The health program are pleased to announce the successful installation of a medical incinerator at Ruben H/C on September 28, 2023. It became operational on October 14, 2023, following on-site training for users in hospital waste incineration and daily maintenance. Previously, the facility depended on outsourcing incineration services, incurring an average monthly cost of Ksh. 30,000. The new incinerator, SYSFIRE SFS 7 model, was selected after extensive consultations, proving to be environmentally friendly and meeting national environmental regulations in Kenya. The SYSFIRE SFS 7 incinerator utilizes electricity



The Medical incinerator

and minimal diesel to burn medical wastes at a high temperature of 750 degrees Celsius. It features a waste loading chamber with primary and secondary burning compartments, ensuring thorough combustion. The primary chamber initiates the burning process at 700 degrees Celsius, followed by the secondary chamber, which reaches 750 degrees Celsius to convert any remaining unburnt carbons into a non-toxic, colorless, and odorless gas released safely through a tall chimney. The incinerator has a user-friendly display system, protecting operators from direct contact with high temperatures. The waste is efficiently incinerated, resulting in safe ash remnants deposited in a secure ash pit near the plant. The benefits include hygienic disposal, reduction in waste volume, elimination of waste odor through combustion, and the production of degradable ash suitable for microbial activities. Once certified by NEMA and licensed for commercial use, Ruben H/C plans to extend the service to nearby clinics, generating additional revenue.

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Education

A.E.F Ruben Primary School witnessed a significant improvement in its KCPE (Kenya Certificate of Primary Education) performance in 2023 compared to the previous year. In 2022, a total of 460 pupils sat for the exams, achieving an overall mean grade of 245.68 marks. However, in 2023, the school saw an increase in the number of pupils to 492, with 229 boys and 263 girls taking the examinations. The mean grade improved to 248.55, indicating a notable enhancement of 3.37 points. Notably, boys outperformed girls, with mean scores of 250.87 and 248.55, respectively.



Ruben centre 2023 top students

Twenty-four pupils scored 350 marks and above, while 24 pupils scored 150 marks and below. The highest national mark was 428, and the top pupil at A.E.F Ruben Primary scored 399 marks. English was the most performed subject with a mean score of 54.21, while science had the lowest mean score at 46.02. The school also successfully initiated mentorship programs, facilitated by alumni, which contributed to improved discipline and academic performance. Alumni collaborated with teachers and facilitators to assist struggling learners, leading to stabilized learner retention despite challenges in the feeding program. This resulted in increased attendance, improved daily class registers, and a remarkable 99% enrollment rate.



Organizational Capacity

In early November, Mr. Paul Gallagher, Chair of Edmund Rice Australia (ERFA), and Mr. Bren Arkinstall, CEO of ERFA, honored us with their presence at our Leadership workshop held at St. Joseph's Karen, where we had the privilege of having all key stakeholders in attendance. During this gathering, we celebrated the rich Christian Brothers and Ruben Centre culture, reflecting on a summary of the past two years. The event also served as an induction for new team members, introducing them to the ethos and values of Ruben Centre.

ERFA's visit not only provided an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the Christian Brothers and Ruben Centre culture but also allowed us to discuss and delineate roles and responsibilities for our leadership team. Additionally, it was a moment to reassure Ruben staff of ERFA's unwavering support during this critical time, including the provision of Human Resources through their Nairobi Office. ERFA also outlined additional financial assistance to aid Ruben Centre during its reset phase, expressing optimism for the last two years (2024-2025) of our Strategic Plan.

Registered Trust

The establishment of the Christian Brothers Ruben Centre Trust signifies a significant achievement, with the journey commencing in mid-2021. Despite challenges in the initial two years of the current Strategic Plan, notable progress has been made in both Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. Trustee meetings have already convened, and the collective experience and steadfast commitment of the Trustees ensure the unwavering pursuit of the Centre's vision, mission, and the successful implementation of annual work plans.

Chair of Trust

Ms. Zipporah Njeri Mwangi, former staff member and health center In-Charge, now serving as Chief Officer with the Nairobi County.

Trustees

Br. Simon Peter Odongo (African Province Finance Officer)

Br. John Paul Oluoch, formerly Project Leader at Education for Life Eldoret

Ms. Elizabeth Mwanjiku Mwangi, who dedicated several years to Ruben as a Program Officer

Mr. Justus Mwenda, Operations Officer for WE Charity Foundation in Western Kenya.

Administration

Forming the Leadership Team:

Director: Br. Frank O'Shea

Operations Manager: Mr. Albanous Gituru

Program Manager: Mrs. Veronica Mukati

Completing the Administration

Human Resources: Mr. Chrescent Ebembe

Monitoring and Evaluation: Mr. Tony Okolla

Chief Finance Officer: Mr. Festus Mwendwa

Accountant: Mr. Joseck Onziya

Communications Officer: Mr. Gregory Barake

There are also project leaders comprising of 15 members.

SECTION C: Financial report

1. Income statement (Quarter 4)

Qtr 4 Income Statement	TOTAL
INCOME	
Disposal Income- KAT 641 C	700,000.00
Grants	
Brighton Jones Scholarship funds	611,819.42
Edmund Rice Foundation Australia	24,799,695.74
General Funds	1,073,881.65
Giz Office Nairobi	1,963,604.80
Partners For Equity	8,047,520.41
Uniliver Co Ltd	6,000.00
Total Grants	36,502,522.02
Local / Internal Income	
AVS scholarship funds	30,000.00
Babycare fee	14,150.00
Campaign Income	38,940.00
Clinic Income	1,940,588.50
Conference & Catering	76,120.00
Farm sales	16,165.00
Membership Fees	67,101.00
Production fee	236,956.59
Rental Income	113,400.00
Ruben FM	280,000.00
Ruben primary school	30,000.00
Special needs	5,700.00
Vocational Fees	9,000.00
Total Local / Internal Income	2,858,121.09
Total Income	40,060,643.11