

**LAURA VICUNA PRIMARY SCHOOL – (part of Don Bosco Educational Project)
STRATEGIC PLAN 2020**

1 Overview of our mission

1.1 A brief history / story of your mission

In 1990 Sr. Charmaine de la Chaumette, based in Booyens, travelled to Ennerdale, on a daily basis. She did the secretarial work and was the Parish Sister. She prepared the Catechetical programme for all the teachers, helped with the choir and was responsible for the Youth.

The following year a house in 4th Avenue, Mid-Ennerdale was purchased and Sr. Helen Hartnett and Sr. Charmaine moved there. Sr. Helen travelled to Thokoza each day, where she was running a Nursery School, belonging to All Saints Parish, and where the Sisters were involved in the Catechetics and played an active role where necessary. In 1992, Sr. Mary Hughes, who returned from Ireland at the end of 1991, came to Ennerdale and was appointed the first Superior; so, the new community was formed. Previously, we were under Booyens Community, with sr. Helen Fitzgibbon as Superior.

The Mid-Ennerdale area had a few newer houses, but most of them were poorly built. The people were mostly unemployed and poverty was rife. Consequently, with Brother Giovanni, a lay Franciscan, we were running a food project, and worked closely with the St. Vincent de Paul Society. We did a survey of the area to see who the people were who needed help.

We received funding from the Irish Embassy and were able to transform the double garage into a Computer Room, where lessons were offered to the people in the area. Over the years different humanitarian works took place.

In 1993, our Sisters started the work for Early Learning at Sancta Maria in Fine Town, a squatter camp. (See the Strategic Plan on Sancta Maria).

In 2002, still in Fine Town, using the church hall, the Sisters started Laura Project, teaching children and giving them some skills. In 2011, Laura Project moved to Ennerdale, to 'Don Bosco Educational Project' (DBEP), in Extension 6 of, run by the Salesian Priests (SDB). This big complex consists of the Declan Collins Skills Training Project, run by the SDB (Salesian Priests) and Laura Vicuna Project, consisting of a Primary School run by the Salesian Sisters. Sr. Margaret Sweeney was the main person, overseeing the building of the project of DBEP.

1.2 Current profile and work of the mission

1.2.1 - Institution/s and projects / services offered

In Don Bosco Educational Project, we have Laura Vicuna Primary School, from grade R to Grade 7, enrolling around 300 children, being most of them from the squatter camps and from families struggling to survive. We therefore give them a meal each day and try to offer an environment where they find happiness. About two thirds of the families are migrants, from the neighbouring countries.

1.2.2 - Number of sisters

The FMA Community presently consists of 3 Sisters, who, apart from the work and responsibilities at Laura Vicuna Primary School and Santa Maria Early Learning Centre, are also involved in the Catechetics at the Parish, the Oratory at Fine Town and the Youth at All Saints Parish.

One Sister works as co-ordinator at Sancta Maria Early Learning Centre and two at Laura Vicuna School, one as School Principal and the other as the Administrator.

1.2.3 - Active lay co-workers

Fourteen full time teachers, one doing remedial work, one in the library, one responsible for the computers; three in administration, two in the kitchen. Those shared with the overall project are two for security, a maintenance worker, one in the garden and one for cleaning.

1.2.4 - Partner organisations with which we cooperate

We partake in all the meetings scheduled by the Government for the Educational purposes. We also partake in the Board of Management meeting for DBEP, consisting of the SDB and FMA Provincials, the SDB Provincial Bursar, who is the chairperson, the three FMA, presently in the Ennerdale Community and the

Sisters' Provincial Bursar. Other lay representatives are: a lawyer - Gilbert Swats, a Co-operator, and a few representatives of CIE (Catholic Institute of Education).

1.2.5 - **Key assets** (property, buildings, vehicles and equipment owned, rented or used for free)

The property is in the name of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB). The buildings were built with donations of some Organisations, e.g. Misesan Cara. All furniture and equipment belong to the school. The car we use daily for the service of Laura Primary School, belongs to the Sisters.

1.3 Our operating environment:

1.3.1 - Key features of the area / community or communities in which we operate

Laura Primary School operates independently at financial level, paying all our bills, salaries, maintenance, etc, through the school's bank account. Some expenses are shared with the DBEP, (Electricity, security, gardening, etc) for which we contribute 50% each month.

The Project is in an isolated area of Ennerdale/Finetown, surrounded by bush, being a problem at security level.

1.3.2 - Other local providers of similar or related services

CIE assists with some funding for food and uniforms. A local organisation, JAM, provides soya meals once a week.

1.4 Our strategic planning process:

People involved in this draft: The Board of Management of DBEP, together with the Management Committee of the different Centres and the Staff.

Different workshops from the Educational Departments and the Catholic Institute of Education.

2. Mission SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Due to donations, our buildings are quite good and we do see to regular maintenance.
- We have the necessary equipment for teaching.
- We are grateful for a donation we received for nine computers, which are not enough for a class, but we are hoping and looking at the possibility of tablets.
- We were promised a donation, that we hope to enable us to get a jungle gym, as the children need outdoor equipment to improve their motor development. They are deprived children, and there are no parks in the area for the children to play, so this is essential for them.
- Our staff are in the process of training through correspondence with the University of South Africa (UNISA).
- Weekly meetings with the teachers and the principal to discuss the matters most urgent that need to be approached.
- Quarterly workshops to enlighten the staff on different issues, including our Salesian Spirituality.
- Spirituality: Monthly Mass for children and staff, though very few are Catholic. We have also had and experience of Prayer and Healing, with the help of Fr. Colin Bowes, that everyone found most helpful and that motivated all to improve their spiritual life.

WEAKNESSES

- ✓ The infrastructure is good, though in need of repair works due to termites and the base of the building needs urgent attention, re-enforcement and plastering.
- ✓ The lack of transport for school needs, children and staff. We are using the Community old car, which will not go much further. Due to our school being surrounded by bush, it is unsafe for the children and also the staff to walk from the Squatter Camp station through the bush as there have been attacks. We have looked into the possibility of hiring a bus for the mornings and afternoons, but the cost is too extravagant and the families would not be in any position to contribute anything for the transport.
- ✓ Our learners come from very poor backgrounds and different home languages. Many of them struggle with English and Mathematics.

- ✓ Parents are not motivated to contribute towards the school as they would prefer everything to be given to them.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The staff are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications.
- The parents have been good to attend meetings and share their suggestions in order to improve the situation in the school.
- Parents are given the opportunity to do some piece work for the school, as payment for the fees (R400 per year) which are used for the books that are given to their children.

THREATS AND LIMITATIONS

- As we are surrounded by bush, it is becoming more unsafe for anyone to walk to the school. The children and staff walking from the squatter camps are in risk of being attacked.
- The Department has not granted us a subsidy for this year, which forced the school to financial struggles.

3. VISION FOR OUR MISSION

Our vision is to promote the dignity of the young disadvantaged people by educating them out of their poverty. To create a pleasant, peaceful environment, where the young people can experience joy, peace and hope. To give them opportunities to increase their spiritual experience.

The Salesian Experience of the Preventive System enables them to be in touch with their own limitations and to be more understanding to others.

4. Guiding Image for 2023 + 2026 for your mission

Within the next 3 years, we hope to be totally approved by the Department of Education and to receive the subsidy that will enable the school to be financially stable.

We would also aim to have the necessary outdoor equipment for outdoors, for the benefit of the children. Our six-year vision would be to have good English and Mathematics programmes in place.

5. Our Goals

Goal 1 - Sufficient and qualified staff

Objectives by end 2023

- 1.1 an extra Sister on the staff.
- 1.2 a librarian to encourage the children to read.

Objectives by end 2026

- 1.3 more qualified teaching staff with upgraded levels of training
- 1.4 The teachers will be training through universities, where they attain the knowledge, but the practical skills/art of teaching will also be acquired.

Goal 2 – Sufficient and good quality educational programmes and equipment

Objectives by end 2023

- 2.1 Educational programmes to help improve English and Mathematics
- 2.2 By the end of the first three years, the reading and writing skills of the children will have been acquired
- 2.3 The dignity and self-esteem of each child will be improved and self-motivation developed.

Objectives by end of 2026

- 2.4 the necessary outdoor equipment that will allow the children to be stronger physically
- 2.5 A car for the youth pastoral works we do

Goal 3 – Sufficient and well-maintained buildings and other assets

Objectives

- 3.1 Repair works due to termites at the base of the building, re-enforcement and plastering. (We might need a small project to help with this need)
- 3.2 Suitable transport - for the bulk shopping of food and for the children and staff. We would really need a vannette.

Goal 4 - Sufficient funds

Objectives

- 4.1 Approval by the Department of Education and to receive the subsidy that will enable the school to be financially stable
- 4.2 different fundraising events: Sports day, concert and a fun day.
- 4.2 A fundraising system and strategy
- 4.3 A funding proposal, plus fundraising budget for three years and for the first year

Goal 5 - Safety and Security of children and staff

Objectives

- 5.1 More security for the children on their way to and from school, by providing transport: a bus
- 5.2 This will also help them to get to school in time and leave later in order to fit in the extra hours to improve reading and writing skills (see Objective 2.1)