

# AEF Ruben Primary School – Rise Program Overview

31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

## History of the Rise Program

In 2012 the Rise Program (Ruben Improvement Scheme of Education) was established with class 4 students only. The aim was to improve literacy levels, and the quality of education in an effort to raise the ranking level of the school in the district.

At the close of the year the results were promising with students developing a reading culture, and improved confidence, self esteem and self worth. The library was used regularly and English language was improving.

The program was run with 8 assistant teachers who were equipped to assist learners to improve on their skills.

With such pleasing results it was decided to develop the program further. The obvious strategy was to begin with the early years as a foundation, and to grow through to the higher classes in the school.

## New Beginning – 2014

It was decided to invite a volunteer with the relevant experience to mentor and lead a teacher to become a facilitator of the program. In May 2015, the journey began.

**Aim:** To improve the standard of education in all class levels at Ruben Primary School

## Objectives

- Achieve a higher rate of success in Standard 8 exams.
- Develop child centred methodologies within the classrooms to develop students who are problem solvers and independent thinkers.
- Enrich the education experience through diverse activities and curricula.
- Improved professional standards within the teaching staff.
- Establish a program that will grow from lower to upper grades.
- Inclusivity through supporting Special Needs students in the classroom and other school activities.

## Strategies

- Develop new skills and strategies with teachers through workshops and training.
- Introduce classroom management skills that focus on holistic development of students.
- Establish an Arts program and include other activities to promote diverse learning strategies.
- Assessing teachers through performance standards and indicators.

- Build confidence in teaching staff through “seeing is believing.” Supporting to success.
- Supporting students from the Special Needs Unit in classrooms of teachers who volunteer to accommodate them.

## **To the Future**

**2015/16** has had many challenges in moving the Rise Program forward. High rotation of teachers due to maternity leave, interruptions with training of teachers in Tyari/Tusome programs, high regularity of exams, reduction of Teacher Assistants are just some of the challenges.

**2017** has established a Teacher to lead the Rise Program – Teacher Janet. Strategies and expectations will be established and must be followed.

**The Arts program** (PE/Library/Art) has been successful and will continue.

**An IT program (Pro-Futuro)** will be introduced for classes 1 – 3 with use of tablets that engage diverse learning programs with students.

**Special Needs students** are attending classes with support from SN Teachers.

**The Rise Program** will be developed through diversity in learning with focus being on the learner and through active participation rather than passive chalk and talk.

**Emergent Reader Program** is run by a teacher who takes identified students from all classes to work with them in small groups of up to 15 students to help develop literacy skills.

**Tyari** – a literacy program in ECD promotes active learning and for students to have fun. These concepts and strategies will be promoted through sharing of experiences and successes with teachers in lower primary classes.

**ECD Feeding Program** allows students to remain at school for lunch, then to engage in an afternoon program that promotes fun learning through hands on activities. These students are building firm foundations for learning and developing skills that will promote successes as they progress to primary school. Without this program, these children will go home hungry and often to empty homes where they will wander the streets and be put at risk of harm.

## **The Challenges**

AEF Ruben Primary continues to grow in numbers. The numbers increase but the teaching staff stays the same. With a population of approximately 2500 students and 40 Teaching staff, the class sizes have reached an average of 80 students per class.

Loss of Teacher Assistants puts more pressure on the classroom teachers as they manage these classes alone. Students in the lower primary classes are most at risk in these large classes as they are in the early learning phase where the ideal is to have small class sizes.

Poor nutrition and little or no food continues to challenge many students who face these issues daily, coming to school hungry. Poor nutrition relates to poor performance in school. A school feeding program is in place but is constantly under threat due to lack of access to food or funding.

### **Summing Up**

The Rise program will flourish through teachers with the right heart and with continued financial support. Building resources for diversity in teaching programs and allowing the Library to grow through regular re-newal of books and resources will feed into building enthusiasm and igniting interest in literacy and learning amongst the students.

The most important resource is a curious teaching staff that is ready for new challenges, is enthusiastic and has the students at their heart.

AEF Ruben Primary is a unique school with a unique and special clientele. The students come to school each day with their own often unknown challenges that they have faced in their village. School, for many of these students is a haven from the real life they face daily. In order for these students to flourish and find success in their education, teachers need to have an acute awareness of their needs. Pastoral care and an attitude that fosters respect and dignity for these students is required.

Teachers need to become students and students to become teachers so that they can learn from each other. This will build an environment of respect that is interchangeable, that will develop and grow into an institution where all things are viewed and examined to enable problems to be solved together.

With a solid foundation built on good practice that focuses on developing an holistic student, the Rise Program will gain strength through unity. Children flourish through support from the adult who has the strength of heart and mind that enables.

*"They may forget what you said,*

*But they will not forget how*

*You made them feel."*

Carl W Buechner