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Strategic Business Plan



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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....3

2. Overview of Autism in Seychelles.....4

 2.1.Project Proposal.....4

 2.2.Justification5

3. The Concept6

 3.1.Objectives7

 3.2 Our Vision, Mission & Goals.....7

4. Strategy and Implementation Summary.....8

 4.1.Autism Board.....8

 4.2.Funding of the ALC9

 4.2.1.Private Sponsors.....9

 4.2.2.Government 10

 4.3.Start-Up Cost..... 11

 4.4.Tentative Re-Current Cost..... 11

5. Conclusion 12

1. Introduction

Autism Seychelles is presenting a proposal to Government which entails the development/operation of an Autism Learning Center (ALC) for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The ALC will be a key component to the comprehensive system of care for all our citizens affected by ASD and set the standard for the nation.

Although Autism Seychelles is a newly registered association, "Pearl Seychelles" (autism support group) was informally set up in April 2011 and formally registered as a charitable organization in December 2012. Whilst Pearl Seychelles' main objectives are to provide support and advice to children and young adults with ASD and parents of children with ASD, it does not cater for advancement and educational needs for these children, hence; the formation of Autism Seychelles.

2. Overview of Autism in Seychelles

Seychelles has a total household population of approximately 30,000 and there are roughly 30,000 children under 18 in Seychelles. The number of diagnosed cases of children under 18 with Autism in Seychelles currently stands at over 70. This figure is based on known diagnosed cases but currently worldwide trend shows that approximately 1 out of 100 children are on the Autism Spectrum. (In U.S.A, 1 out of 80 children are actually diagnosed with ASD)

2.1. Project Proposal

Given that people on the autism spectrum often require adaptations to be made to their living, learning and working environments to accommodate for their individual difficulties, Autism Seychelles is proposing the development/operation of a specialist facility for the benefit of our local children and young adults with ASD and their families. This proposed project will include the development of an Autism Learning Center (ALC). This facility will initially cater for children between the ages of 3 to 16 years of age.

Autism Seychelles has already been allocated a venue by government for the ALC, which will be based at North East point.

The ALC will include;

- Two standard classrooms
- 3 therapy rooms (for 1-to -1 intervention programs)
- Socializing/eating area
- Outdoor playground
- Sensory room
- Multi – purpose hall
- Offices (Director, reception area and admin office)

- W/C & shower – separate for boys, girls and adults.

The ALC will be opened during normal working hours and will employ:

- 1 Executive Director
- 1 Admin Officer
- 1 Secretary
- 1 cleaner
- 1 Driver
- 5 specialist teachers
- 5 teaching assistants

2.2. Justification

Assessment of Needs for the Autism Learning Centre - The Isolation factor

This is a common problem facing families with children and young adults with ASD. Due to the nature of the disability and a lack of targeted resources and services for children and young adults with ASD in Seychelles, many families feel isolated in that they are left to deal with the social, financial and emotional impact of supporting a child or young adult on the autism spectrum.

Educational and Support Needs

There are currently no targeted educational/health support services for children and young adults with ASD in Seychelles. While the School for the Exceptional Child provides educational services for children with disabilities, there is no specific provision for children on the autism spectrum.

Discussions regarding the provision of services for children and young adults with ASD have been ongoing for a number of years between parents, National Children's Council, the Seychelles Children's Foundation, Health and Education Ministries. *Council for children*

There is clearly an identified need for the provision of adequate specialist educational and support services for Autism in the Seychelles. We have consulted with our members and specialists/representatives from government (in Health and Education) and have concluded that mainstreaming ALL ASD children with diverse needs will further isolate

them and cause unnecessary distress to them, their families and other students/staff working with them.

The only educational facility which provides targeted assistance to children on the spectrum is the International School of Seychelles (ISS), which unfortunately is beyond the financial means for most Seychellois families. ISS also provides assistance only to children on the spectrum who can be integrated in a mainstream educational environment. It does not cater for those ASD children who cannot cope in such environment. This is far from ideal and hence the need to operate an ALC that will focus solely on this disability and provide a safe space for the children to develop fully in their own time and with the specialist one to one support which is currently lacking.

3. The Concept

ALC shall be a place where children and adults with ASD and their families can come not only for education but, for holiday camp, respite, seminars, therapies, and to spend essential time together as a family. ALC envisions a place where children and adults with autism can enjoy therapeutic activities; arts and crafts, gardening, and other activities not only in the holidays, but also year-round, through school programmes and weekend workshops.

The ALC will focus primarily on providing full time support for those children on the spectrum with different levels of communication, social understanding and sensory needs and who are not able to be integrated in the mainstream setting with the aim to, eventually through an effective intervention programme for each individual child, help them to be able to integrate fully or partially within a mainstream programme.

For those children who can attend normal school, the ALC will provide additional support as is deemed necessary (by parents, educators and specialists in the field). The Centre will work with the educators of the children to measure the progress that they make within such a mainstream environment and address any disadvantage/limitations they may face at different times.

The Center would be a place where parents could meet other parents, share resources, and learn about various therapies and trends in the field. Siblings of individuals with ASD could also meet one another and draw support from their common experience. With the

essential support and accepting spirit of the community, the Center would be a place for collaboration and cooperation.

The Center would provide social, physical, and emotional supports for the local autistic population essentially helping them to integrate in society (i.e. workforce, community programmes etc..).

Children and their parents could be confident that they could stay together and still have high quality and much-needed resources, programmes and support available to them. This will surely improve the quality of life for each individual on the spectrum in Seychelles.

3.1. Objectives

Our main objective is to advance the rights of people with autism and their families and to help them improve their quality of life. Through the ALC we aim to achieve the following objectives:

Area	Objective
Centre Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To develop a specialist learning Centre identified at a site at North East Point
Educational Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide full educational day and respite facility for ASD children initially on Mahe.• To deliver relevant curriculum based activities to the children registered at the Centre• To provide appropriate advice and support to parents of children and adults with Autism.• To provide specialist Teachers and support at the Centre
Specialist Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide specialist educational support to children with Autism• To provide a first ever employment opportunities to "Specialist Teaching Assistants in Autism" in the Seychelles.
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To implement best practice governance Structures throughout the duration of the project.• To implement effective financial management procedures thus ensuring the Centre operates to sustain its development in the longer term.• To be made accountable to a BOARD (to include association members and government reps)

3.2. Our Vision, Mission & Goals

Our **Vision** defines the overall outcome we are working towards to ensure that every child with ASD in Seychelles is provided with quality education and support, and a safe space to live a happy and balance life

Our **Mission** describes our unique contribution as an organization towards that outcome and to empower individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and their families, to fully integrate in their communities.

We know that young people with ASD can be successful learners and we strive to provide the structured and supportive environment which enables them to reach their full potential; hence, we are dedicated to the creation of a model caring center for people within the autism spectrum.

The ALC will provide a positive and caring environment and accommodate, nurture, supervise, protect, maintain and continue to educate each individual for as long as is necessary. ALC will set the standard for excellence in providing this caring model and maintain the standard through ongoing research and development.

Our **Goals** communicate what we are trying to achieve.

ALC strives to:

- Build the capacity and skills of individuals, families, community agencies and professionals to help individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder realize opportunities for successful community inclusion.
- Provide leadership in the development and delivery of services that are marked by excellence and flexibility and are grounded in evidence.
- Raise awareness and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders and promote the rights of all individuals to be treated with dignity and respect.

4. Strategy and Implementation Summary

The Centre's model of service involves a flow of knowledge to and from our clients. Through this process, the Centre ensures that professionals, families and individuals with ASD will have current and comprehensive information about Autism Spectrum Disorder and all forms of intervention while remaining flexible, open and sensitive to their needs and wishes.

4.1. Autism Board

Autism Seychelles clearly understands the need to establish an appropriate governance structure to effectively oversee the successful development, management and longer term sustainability of this ALC. As it stands, the main responsibility for delivery of

services/activities to children and adults with special needs rests with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs.

Autism Seychelles wants to maintain a partnership with the above-mentioned institutions with regards to the running of the Centre; hence, the importance of the representation of all three ministries on the Board that will essentially oversee the running of the Centre.

It is important to note that the ALC will be an independent institution. It will be overseen by the **Autism BOARD** whose members will be appointed by Autism Seychelles and will consist of the following:

- 3 members of the Autism Seychelles Managing Committee
- The Executive Director of the ALC
- 1 representative from Ministry of Education
- 1 representative from Ministry of Health
- 1 representative from Ministry of Social Affairs.

4.2. Funding of the ALC

It is hoped that with a multi departmental approach i.e. the three Ministries identified, the private sector and the NGO grant aid, we will secure adequate funding to equip and operate the Centre.

4.2.1. Private Sponsors

As it stands we currently have the following private sponsors;

- **ALEFPA** – It is a French organization which focuses on the education, and general assistance and care for children and young adults with special needs.
This organization with the assistance of Autism Reunion will provide all the initial training and workshops for educators (which will include specialist training for the teachers who will be working specifically at the ALC). This project is EU funded through ALEFPA
- **MCB** – The Mauritius Commercial Bank has come forward to be a major sponsor to our cause. The bank in principle has agreed to assist financially in covering for the salaries of 5 specialist teachers for the first three years of the ALC's operation.

- **Rotary Club Coco-de-mer** –The rotarians have approached our association to give their support to our cause in assisting in the renovation of the ALC. The parties involved are still in discussion on which fundraising activities and events we will be organizing in the coming months (one such event is the upcoming pianist concert which will take place in April and the proceeds will go towards the ALC).
- We are also in discussion with other private companies and individuals who are very willing to assist Autism Seychelles in getting the ALC started.

To date, we have not sufficiently explored the full roll private/corporate sponsorships may play in covering the ongoing capital and operational costs of the ALC. Suffice it to say, corporations rarely make long-term charitable commitments. Therefore, we need to develop both short and long term plans for the sustainability and success of the ALC.

A short-term plan for fundraising must include raising the funds identified for the short-term capital requirements along with substantial funding to create momentum for meeting long-term capital and operational requirements

The long-term plan will be developed and implemented at the earliest possible time. As the fundraising effort develops it will serve to supplement the budgetary shortfall that will inevitably occur as a result of the difference between the cash flows generated from government and other sources and the actual capital and operating costs. It must also be projected that even with the specialized funding that is contemplated for this project there will inevitably be budgetary shortfalls.

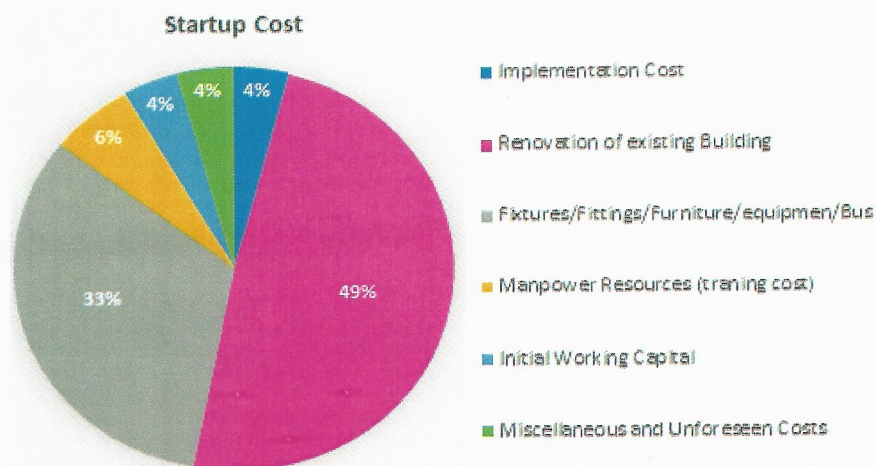
4.2.2. Government

The 2017 annual budget for the Ministry of Health is SCR760 million and for the Ministry of Education is SCR750 million. Given that the needs of children and young adults with ASD are currently not being fully met, Autism Seychelles is proposing that the government makes a provision within its Health and Education and Social Affairs budgets to help part fund the annual operational costs of the ALC. What we seek from Government is an annual budget to partially or in whole cover operational costs incurred in the operation of the Centre in addition to covering the start-up costs in the renovation of the Centre and refitting expenses tabulated overleaf.

4.3. Start-Up Cost

The main start-up cost is the renovation of the existing building and once this is complete, we will also require funds for refitting the center (i.e furniture, fixtures, equipment etc...)

Projected Startup Costs	
Business Start-up Year	2017
Implementation Cost	100,000
Renovation of existing Building	1,200,000
Fixtures/Fittings/Furniture/equipment/Bus	850,000
Manpower Resources (training cost)	150,000
Initial Working Capital	100,000
Miscellaneous and Unforeseen Costs	100,000
Total Start-up Costs	2,500,000



4.4. Tentative Re-Current Cost

Re-Current Cost	Monthly	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Expenses				
General and Administrative	10,000	120,000	126,000	132,300
Cleaning & Maintenance (include outdoor)	8,500	102,000	107,100	112,455
Telephone/Internet	10,000	120,000	126,000	132,300
Insurance Premium (vehicle)	2,500	30,000	31,500	33,075
Insurance (all risk; theft/fire and public liability)	2,500	30,000	31,500	33,075
Beverages	2,000	24,000	25,200	26,460
Professional Services	2,500	30,000	31,500	33,075
Salaries (inclusive of Tax, PF)	148,500	1,782,000	1,871,100	1,964,655
Provision for 13 th month salary	12,375	148,500	155,925	163,721
Transport & Fuel Costs	8,000	96,000	100,800	105,840
Miscellaneous Costs (5% of total cost)	11,294	135,528	142,304	149,420

Autism Learning Centre Project - Business Plan

Utilities (Electricity/Water/Gas)	10,000	120,000	126,000	132,300
Total Operating Costs	228,169	2,738,028	2,874,929	3,018,676

General and administrative cost will include; stationery and educational material. Professional fees entail external specialized support.) Salaries make provision for a teacher/child ratio of 2/5

Salaries of Administrative Staff

- 1 x Executive Director: SCR25,000
- 1 x Administrator: SCR15,000
- 5 x Specialist Teachers: SCR50,000
- 5 x Assistant Teacher: SCR32,500
- 1 x Secretary: SCR7,500
- 1 x Cleaner: SCR6,000
- 1 x Driver: SCR6,500
- 1 x Ground maintenance: SCR6,000

Total Salaries (not inclusive of tax, PF) = SCR148,500 per month.

N.B not accounting for the 13th month salary which will be an additional SCR 148,500 per year.

5. Conclusion

In presenting this comprehensive document about the current situation in Seychelles with regards to children and adults with ASD, it is hoped that we can now generate a lot more interest in our cause.

Autism Seychelles is willing to work with any interested parties, private and/or governmental, in assisting us to realize our mission in making the ALC a reality.