

RISE INTERNATIONAL

Evaluation Report January 2019 to March 2020



Relationships
Inspiring
Social
Enterprise

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1. INTRODUCTION

After 7 years of working in Southern & Eastern Africa and witnessing how under-resourced local entrepreneurs are in rural and semi-rural environments, Daniela Gusman co-founded Relationships Inspiring Social Enterprise (**rise**) International with Oliver Needs, BOND Events' President, in partnership with two architects Pedro Clarke and Luca Astorri who have extensive experience working in low income countries together creating the "**in loco**" program.

rise International is a US registered non-profit established in 2016 piloting in Lesotho, Southern Africa since January 2018, and has since also registered as a non-profit in Lesotho in July 2019.

rise links aspiring entrepreneurs to essential resources they need to thrive particularly for university graduates from the built environment.

The resources provided include business & entrepreneurial training as well as design & build technical coaching, soft skills development, professional networks, access to market and employment opportunities.

rise seeks to improve the poor quality and lack of infrastructure in most African cities and seeks to improve the capacity of local construction entrepreneurs to tackle these challenges, by bringing recent graduates from the built environment with local skilled labourers to work on design and build community projects.

The aim is to alleviate poverty through economic development by training aspiring entrepreneurs in the built environment to set up businesses thus generating employment for themselves and others.

Tradespeople and professionals are recruited to mentor and work together with recent graduates on a live community project, through a program called **in loco** that uses locally sourced talent and materials, striving to create an entrepreneurial mindset.

The **in loco** program is a unique design, build and entrepreneurship fellowship program focused on learning by doing.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report analyzes and evaluates the key activities that **rise** has implemented through 2019.

This includes the second cohort of the **in loco** fellowship and the impact of the fellowship by assessing the progress of the first cohort of **in loco** alumni post the 2018 fellowship.

Learnings from the 2018 fellowship, proved that an improved recruitment strategy was necessary in order to increase the quality of applicants, which **rise** management put into place for the recruitment of the 2019 cohort of fellows, as well as decreasing the number of fellows recruited from 20 down to 13 fellows.

In addition, rather than recruiting an older experienced site manager, **rise** management took the executive decision to hire one of the 2018 alumni to be the site manager for the 2019 cohort which helped ensure continued professional growth for the alumni as well as giving the new cohort of fellows emotional support since they were being managed by a recent **in loco** graduate.

Methodology

Data was collected through surveys throughout the year.

For each activity, **rise** conducted baseline and endline surveys post the intervention. Self assessments as well as one-on-one bi-monthly reviews were conducted with all the fellows.

Continued monitoring will be carried out for 5 years post fellowship and beyond if possible, in order to monitor the fellows' ongoing progress and challenges post the fellowship.

Findings

- It was found that the 2018 alumni who were able to attend the ongoing mentorship provided by **rise**, were in a better position to manage their businesses, as opposed to those who did not take part in the mentorship program.
- Recruiting based on quality, instead of quantity, proved effective in the caliber of fellows recruited and in the management of the program.
- Partnering with community projects with strong management systems in place, is crucial for the successful implementation of the ongoing success and management of the infrastructure and project developed.
- This was a different case, than working with an organisation that needed far more than a building, but also required organisational capacity strengthening which is beyond **rise's** core competencies and therefore not in a position to provide.



Key activities completed in 2019

- Design & Build of Lesotho's first **Intellectual Disability and Autism Centre (IDAL)** which was the 2019 *in loco* fellowship project.
- Pilot rural project for economic and infrastructure development in partnership with a non-profit called **Possible Dreams Foundation** which consisted of the Construction of a footbridge as well as the start of a community sewing project in the rural community of Ha' Sekantsi.
- Design a model day care centre for the children of factory workers in Maputsoe, commissioned by **Catholic Relief Services**, as well as designing low cost improvements to existing day care centres.



Key activities started in 2019 that will continue in 2020

- **African Clean Energy** selected *rise's* alumni to design and construct 19 mobile shops that will enable them to distribute their energy efficient stoves to hard to reach rural communities throughout the country. This project is co-funded by the **EU** and was a challenging tender for the *in loco* alumni to have won under *rise's* guidance.
- A non-profit, **Kick4Life** has hired *rise* to design and manage the build of a football stadium.
- **The Morija Hub** and **Morija Arts Centre** have commissioned *rise* to design an extension for the Hub and a new Community Arts Centre in Morija.
- **Morija Heritage** project has asked *rise* to carry out an architectural survey and compile restoration plans for historic buildings which will be done in partnership with the Masters program from the Politecnico di Milano.
- A non-profit **Action Ireland Trust** is recruiting *rise* as their implementing partner to design and construct ablution blocks as well as water harvesting, food gardens and school kitchens in 5 primary and secondary schools in the District of Maseru identified by the Ministry of Education as top priority schools in need of assistance.
- **Scatec Solar** commissioned *rise* to conduct Financial Literacy training for 36 community members who have sold their individual plots of land to a company who will install solar panels and generate energy into the national grid - a first of its kind in Lesotho.





Key activities started in 2020

- LNFOD (Lesotho National Federation of Organisations with Disabilities) hired rise to design & build their new HQ offices as well as income generating activities so that they can sustain themselves as an organisation. This project will form the 2020 *in loco* fellowship.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, a young group of *in loco* 2019 alumni, formed a company called xyz collaborative who have designed and built hand wash stations for the Ministry of Health and Maseru City Council sponsored by UNDP, UNICEF as well as for other organisations including Sepheo, Action Ireland Trust, Botho University and so on.

"I have learned a lot especially with the business sessions. I am now more confident in my business especially when it comes to negotiating. I would like to thank rise for the opportunity to learn, so many people that I interact with would now like to join the *in loco* program just from hearing about my experience."

- Tshepang Thabane
2018 alumni

Recommendations

The *in loco* fellowship has successfully been running for 2 years now.

Having understood the skills gap that exists with university graduates facing the job market, *rise* is now in a strong position to develop a curriculum that will help to make the program easily replicable and scalable to eventually be rolled out to other countries.

It has become apparent that an Enterprise Incubation Hub is needed to provide *in loco* alumni as well as other start ups with operational and business support, such as accounting, legal and marketing services as well as coworking spaces, ongoing business coaching, mentoring and access to market.

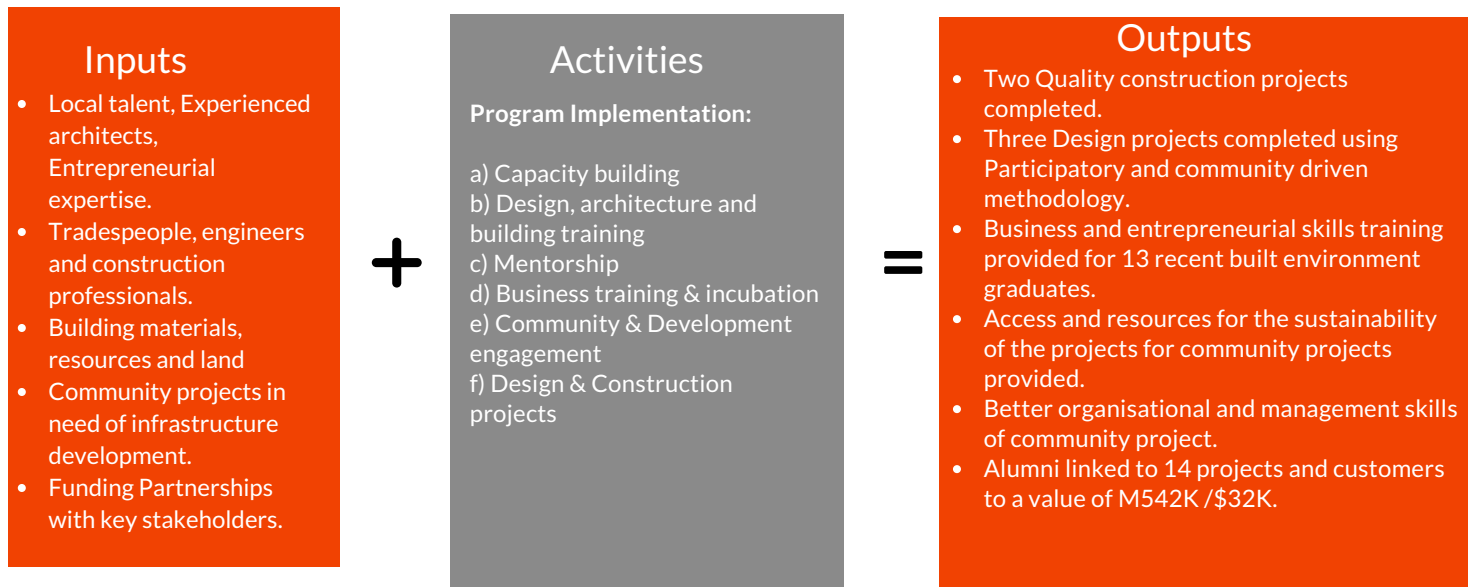
The pilot to test the *in loco* program in a rural setting has shown that adaptations to the program would need to be made for different geographical areas where rural communities' education level is more limited since the majority of them have not completed secondary school and have other skills and development needs than those of university graduates.

3. Inputs, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes

The theory of change that provides the rationale for the **in loco** fellowship project is stated as follows:

Strengthening local talent and building an entrepreneurial mindset to tackle lack of employment opportunities for youth and the need of infrastructure development. The 21st-century adult needs soft / non-cognitive skills; beyond the technical training, they receive at school.

These non-cognitive skills include problem-solving, negotiating skills, customer centricity, and help in running a successful business. Early entrepreneurial exposure is perceived to be a catalyst for business development and job creation amongst youth. For 2019 **in loco** fellowship, the mid-term impact will be seen in the next 3 to 5 years.



4. Activities and Projects

4.1. in loco 2019 Activities

A non-profit parent-led association, **IDAL** (Intellectual Disability & Autism Lesotho) approached **rise** to design & construct a centre they had been dreaming about for over 20 years but could not afford to build. Thanks to a grant from Standard Lesotho Bank for M1,158,500 /\$65,000 IDAL recruited **rise** to take on this ambitious project which formed the 2019 **in loco** fellowship.

This project was an outstanding success since funding came from local donors, while the 2018 fellowship was self funded by **rise** from international donors. This centre for youth with intellectual disabilities and autism is the first of its kind in Lesotho. Since the site is located in an agricultural area, no permanent structures are permitted.

This meant that the 2019 **in loco** fellows learned new construction methodologies of building non-permanent

and mobile buildings using innovative foundation techniques.

The centre is an ecological structure that is completely off the grid, with solar panels for electricity, a bore hole and rainwater harvesting and eco friendly fencing that blends in with the environment. As well as multi-purpose areas for training and other activities, the centre also has a multi-sensory space as well as a diagnostics room for early detection of autism and intellectual disabilities.

rise implemented the lessons learnt from the pilot 2018 fellowship to reinvigorate their offerings for the second cohort of fellows, for which 110 online applications were received. Some of the key improvements and outcomes that were implemented in the 2019 cohort were:

Key Improvements made to 2019 in loco fellowship
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A much more rigorous recruitment strategy was implemented which meant a higher calibre of fellows were recruited.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A smaller cohort of just 13 fellows were recruited, rather than 20 that had been recruited in 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instead of an older experienced site manager who had been hired in 2018, this cohort was managed by an in loco alumni which led to its own set of challenges as well as advantages.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruited an experienced facilitator for facilitation of the business training rather than doing this in-house.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporated business deliverables into the fellows' agreement to emphasise the importance of completion of business training assignments.

Key Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There was a 60% increase in the number of applicants in 2019 compared to 2018 and the quality of applications had also increased.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• rise was able to offer the fellows higher quality management and support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall the motivation and engagement was much higher in the 2019 cohort compared to 2018.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resulting in higher quality program delivery and improvements to the program content.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This resulted in all the business assignments being completed. This was particularly noticeable for the business plans which were all done unlike in 2018 when none of the fellows had completed their business plans.

Key Improvements made to 2019 in loco fellowship

- More emphasis was placed on the importance of fellows taking one day a week to work on their businesses meaning that they had more time to work on developing their business ideas, even if for many weeks this didn't happen due to pressing construction timelines.
- Improved structure with some defined modules to the fellowship e.g. rise produced a few video tutorials with templates on how to compile a BoQ, Schedule of Works, Gantt Charts and so on.
- The 2019 **in loco** fellowship was six months instead of 10 in 2018, with each fellow getting a monthly allowance of M3,125 instead of M2,500 in 2018 since the site was further away and so transport was more expensive .
- Six of the fellows were given the opportunity to work on 3 other social impact projects, some of which will continue to offer them work even after the fellowship has been completed.

Key Outcomes

- The 13 fellows in this cohort were much more engaged and interested in the business training than the 2018 cohort. This meant that they were much more receptive to the business training they received and suggested that this should be taken into consideration when calculating timelines for the construction for future cohorts.
- Improved quality of reports and fellows' awareness of timelines and budget was much more pertinent than the 2018 cohort as they were able to complete a BoQ and monitor expenditure compared to budget.
- Fellows motivation and productivity, though dwindled at times, was overall much better than the 2018 cohort.
- Fellows had exposure to a variety of projects and got to interact with different clients and develop relationships with international NGOs.

4.2. Other Projects

rise International has been approached by the following organisations to partner with them on various social impact projects, many of which are funded and already underway:

- In partnership with Possible Dreams Foundation, **rise** piloted a program with a rural community called Ha' Sekantsi tackling economic and infrastructural needs that the community identified as priorities through the construction of a pedestrian bridge in collaboration with a group of international volunteers from Malta sponsored by an international Developer J Portelli Projects. More info in Section 4.5 of this report.
- Catholic Relief Services commissioned **rise** to advise & design a model day care centre for the children of low income factory workers in Maputsoe, as well as to recommend low cost improvements for existing day care centres to improve the quality of child care. This project was led by 2018 alumni with the assistance of some 2019 alumni.
- African Clean Energy selected **rise** to design and construct 19 mobile shops that will enable them to distribute their energy efficient stoves to hard to reach rural communities throughout the country. This is being done by two 2019 alumni starting as of March 2020 until June 2022.
- A non-profit, Kick4Life has hired **rise** to design and manage the build of a football stadium. The stadium will be a Life - an 11-a-side artificial turf soccer stadium, cultural centre and event space with indigenous landscaping. 2018 & 2019 architecture **in loco** alumni have been working on this project under the leadership of architect Pedro Clarke who is the Design Lead.
- Morija Hub and Morija Arts Centre have asked **rise** to conduct a Participatory Design Workshop to develop a concept design for an extension to the Hub as well as the development of a new Arts Centre. This will be done in 2020 by 2018 & 2019 **in loco** alumni. Morija Heritage project has asked to partner with **rise** to carry out an architectural survey and compile restoration plans for historic buildings and spaces in Makeneng, Morija and surrounding areas. This will be led by a Masters Architecture Student from the Politecnico di Milano who will be training local graduates selected from the Ministry of Finance's Apprenticeship Scheme and is due to start in April 2020. However due to COVID-19 pandemic this has been delayed to July 2020.
- Action Ireland Trust is recruiting **rise** as their implementing partner to design and construct ablution blocks as well as water harvesting, food gardens and school kitchens in 5 Schools in Maseru identified by the Ministry of Education as top priority schools for assistance. **in loco** alumni from 2018 & 2019 will be recruited to assist with this project which is due to commence in September 2020 subject to funding.
- Scatec Solar commissioned **rise** to conduct Financial Literacy training for 36 community members who have sold their individual plots of land to a company who will install solar panels and generate energy into the national grid - a first of its kind in Lesotho. The financial literacy training, on the importance of savings, was completed in December 2019 in the hope that the shareholders will save and make long term decisions when deciding how to invest their earnings. Follow up evaluation will be conducted in June 2020 with the possibility of further trainings.
- LNFOOD (Lesotho National Federation of Organisations with Disabilities) hired **rise** to design & build their new HQ offices as well as income generating activities so that they can sustain themselves as an organisation. This will be the community project that the **in loco** 2020 fellowship cohort will work on.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, a young group of **in loco** 2019 alumni, formed a company called xyz collaborative. The company's first project was to design and build emergency hand-wash stations for an INGO called Sepheo as well as UNDP and UNICEF for the Ministry of Health and Maseru City Council. This helped many members in vulnerable communities who do not have access to running water and are at risk of contracting the virus.



4.3. Progress of the 2018 & 2019 in loco alumni

In 2018 the pilot **in loco** fellowship had 20 fellows. Their project was to design and build a residential and social enterprise centre for God's Love Centre, an orphanage in Sekamaneng, a village about 15kms outside of the capital of Maseru.

As well as 20 fellows, the 2018 fellowship project also benefited over 50 orphaned and vulnerable children living at God's Love Centre.

The success of the first **in loco** fellowship generated a lot of interest from the business sector, national government and the academic community for **rise** International to utilise its **in loco** methodology with other projects. As an integral part of the continuous mentorship and support of the **in loco** alumni cohort, quarterly check-ins and professional development days are held by **rise** International.

The data collected allows **rise** to evaluate the long term impact of the **in loco** fellowship. The primary indicators to measure impact are listed below:

Primary Indicators to Measure Impact



NUMBER OF BUSINESSES CREATED BY 2018 & 2019 IN LOCO ALUMNI

- 21 have started 16 businesses.



NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED BY IN LOCO ALUMNI

- Collectively, **in loco** alumni have created 29 short term jobs for others in construction.



INCREASE IN INCOME OVER TIME

- On average, a monthly income of LSL 7, 670 had been generated in 1 year by the alumni which equates to a 56.7% increase in average income.



NUMBER & VALUE OF PAID PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY FELLOWS 6-12 MONTHS FROM THE FELLOWSHIP

- 14 design and construction projects have been referred by **rise** International to the fellows with a total value of LSL542,000 / \$32,000.



Types of projects in loco alumni carried out:

- Subcontracted by a larger organisation in Leribe for a 3-month contract Road Construction on Polihali Dam.
- Interior design projects with private sector clients.
- Two alumni were commissioned by an international NGO to design the country's first Early Childhood Centre which will be funded by the Government of Lesotho.
- Part of a team, designing 3 residential houses in Leribe.
- Building 4 pit latrines and designed & built a retaining wall.
- **rise** commissioned one **in loco** alumni to build a footbridge in Ha Sekantsi and another to be Site Foreman of the **in loco** 2019 cohort.
- Through **rise**, UNDP commissioned 10 alumni to make 65 hand wash stations for the Ministry of Health and Maseru City Council to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

A significant highlight from the 2018 **in loco** fellowship is that one of the alumni, Kopano Nthebe received a job with **rise** International as a site manager for the 2019 project.

His role was to manage the building of **IDAL** centre and the 2019 **in loco** fellows. This is a great achievement for the **in loco** fellowship and **rise** International, showing the impact of the program to develop young people.

"As a **rise** alumni you are given so many platforms to exceed your potential and become an excelling entrepreneur. It has certainly propelled me to greater networks and business mind that I probably would have taken years to reach if I wasn't a **rise** alumni. If it wasn't for **rise**, I would not have met and come together with my previous fellows, now my partners, to create a company that allows us to harness all our professional skills."

- Nkhole Thakhisi
2019 Alumni

Ongoing support and Evaluation

Ongoing mentorship to **in loco** alumni is provided, through quarterly professional days, which have proved to be of great value to the alumni.

The topics covered are in direct response to alumni requests which have included how to register their businesses, how to market their business and financial management of their businesses.

There does seem to be a direct correlation between the number of professional development sessions and the success of the alumni in being able to generate income. The alumni who did not attend any professional days, do not seem to have moved further to generate an income.

Additionally the alumni have access to **rise** International management and extensive network for ongoing mentorship, technical assistance, referrals as well as the loan of tools, office space and other business support services.



“Being a site manager was a great task and responsibility for me, I had to manage the 2019 **in loco** fellows, and make sure we implement the work within the scheduled time.

Planning and implementing the plan was one of the most important things I learned through being a site manager.”

-Kopano Nthebe
2018 alumni





4.4. Community Strengthening

As part of rise's exit strategy from GLC and in order to ensure that the newly built residential and entrepreneurship centre is properly managed and is able to be sustained by raising some of the necessary funds to run it, rise was able to secure \$ 5000.00 USD from the US Embassy Maseru towards organisational strengthening of GLC's team in the following ways:

Psycho social support for the children at GLC - I AM WHO Training

"I am Who?" is a tool from UNICEF, used for psychosocial support for the adolescents at GLC. The sessions were provided in twelve contact sessions to 11 adolescents. The primary goal of this activity was to empower the adolescents living at GLC center to develop their own sense of self identity.

The guardian of the center mentioned that there has been a marked improvement in the behavior of the adolescents since the training. This was a very successful training, since self esteem, self confidence are key to self actualisation. GLC II's caregiver as well as GLC's preschool teacher were trained in facilitation of "I Am Who?" so that they are able to offer the program to other children residing at GLC.

Training of Trainers: Psycho Social Support (PSS) for GLC caregivers

As well as training in "I am Who", PSS training was also provided to the caregivers and to the Social Worker in particular who requested additional on the job counselling training as well as additional guidance on psycho-social support skills. 12 capacity building sessions based on the REPSSI model were conducted by an experienced social worker, Mme Rosa Molupe to the GLC center social worker as well as to other GLC care givers.

GLC Management training

Vision Research Consultants (VRC) were contracted to conduct an organisational capacity assessment on GLC. The assessment aimed to find ways to improve the capacity of GLC so that it may run a professional childcare centre.

The assessment by VRC identified the need for GLC to improve the human resource recruitment and capacity building for staff. The findings of the assessment also showed that GLC needs a lot more organisational strengthening which VRC have committed to provide.

Key Activities Carried Out

- Child Protection and Case Management Policy Training
- Business Training including a Pig Farm Study Tour
- Financial Management Trainings

4.5. Rural Community Development

rise partnered with an NGO called Possible Dreams Foundation to pilot adapting the *in loco* approach to a rural setting, taking a holistic approach to address the priority areas identified by the community which were:

1. Economic development through a sewing project and eventually eco tourism.
 2. Accessibility - Gaining access to goods and services by constructing a footbridge.
 3. Education through a community learning centre.
- rise was able to secure funding for the first two projects.

Community Sewing Project

Possible Dreams Foundation implemented the sewing project and provided status reports on project activities. The community wants to create income-generating activities for themselves and their families. The inputs required for this project included sewing machines, knitting stationery, tools and sewing skills training which was provided from July to November 2019 as well as in February 2020.

Achievements

- 10 community members have been enrolled since the inception of the project.
- Eight Sewing machines and accessories purchased and taken to the community.
- At least 5 women have been receiving basic sewing training.
- Establishment of preschool influenced by women in the sewing project who will also be making school uniforms for preschool as well.

Ha Sekantsi Bridge

In partnership with J Portelli Projects, a Maltese property development and acquisition firm, rise and Possible Dreams foundation embarked on a mission to build a footbridge in Ha' Sekantsi hand in hand with the community. This footbridge would help the community gain safe access to health care services, the market and also enable the children to get to school without having to go through the river which is dangerous and at times impossible when it rains or snows.

With the help of community members, and with the guidance of the Roads Directorate, rise was able to erect the bridge in just two months.

Thanks to this pilot project in Ha Sekantsi rise has learnt the challenges of working with rural communities and the importance of having a partner organisation who will continue the community development work once the infrastructure has been put in place.





5. LESSONS LEARNED

Key learnings from the past 2 years of the **in loco** fellowship are as follows:

- Importance of defining the selection criteria of communities **rise** partners with and choose those who have strong governance and are well managed organisations as without a strong organisation the sustainability of the infrastructure **rise** builds could be compromised.
- It is better to focus on our key competencies i.e. design, build & entrepreneurship development and NOT organisational strengthening.
- Importance on focusing on improving recruitment strategies of **in loco** fellows as this pays off to having a higher calibre of fellows who apply for the right reasons.
- Increased awareness about the **in loco** program in Lesotho, has also helped raise the quantity and quality of applicants to the program.
- The need for some essential training and key milestones to be in place before starting construction e.g. report writing techniques, computer training especially Excel, a completed Bill of Quantity, a topographic survey, tool usage & maintenance training and detailed construction drawings.
- Adhere to our policy of not recruiting fellows who are still at school, but who have already graduated as the strain of school work plus the fellowship is too much.
- Involvement of some of the key alumni from the last cohort is very effective to help motivate and manage the following cohort fellows. This also helps capacitate the alumni with management skills and emotional intelligence.



6. Recommendations

After two years of running the **in loco** program, it has become evident that young entrepreneurs in Lesotho really need access to some very basic services such as office space with internet, professional services such as an accountant, lawyer, marketing expertise, as well as ongoing business development training and access to market and a pipeline of customers.

Therefore as well as continuing with the **in loco** program, **rise** will be spearheading the development of an Enterprise Incubation Hub in order to fill the gap in Lesotho's entrepreneurship ecosystem. This will help increase the number of entrepreneurs reached and be able to expand beyond the built environment.

With two successfully completed **in loco** fellowships, **rise** is now in a good position to consolidate the **in loco** fellowship curriculum that makes the **in loco** program so as to make it more structured and scalable.

The next key learnings needed from the future cohorts are to look at what adaptations need to be made to take **in loco** to rural settings.

7. Annual Expenditure from Jan 2019 to March 2020

Costs	% of Total costs	LSL	USD
Programs	22	964,592	60,287
Labour	24	1,018,208	63,638
Materials, Tools & Equipment	34	1,469,680	91,855
Travel & Transport	9	406,240	25,390
Fundraising & Marketing	3	148,432	9,277
Admin (Comms, Utilities etc.)	6	264,224	16,514
Other	0	6,928	433
Bank Charges	1	47,808	2,988
Total	100	4,326,112	270,382