UNSB'S PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Background and justification

Prior to Uganda Nursing School Bwindi's (UNSB's) launch, a high-level nursing education program was greatly needed in south western Uganda. Health workers are exceedingly scarce, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa, and the burden of health care delivery typically falls to a cadre of trained nurses. Operating alongside Bwindi Community Hospital, it was envisioned that this nursing school would be the premier nursing school in south western Uganda.

In the 3 years since its first intake of 13 students in November 2013, student numbers have increased to 200. So far, 36 students have graduated with Diplomas in Nursing and Midwifery, with additional competences in ultrasound and family planning.

With the current 200 students, the school is close to breaking even financially, although only by avoiding some areas of cost where this won't be sustainable beyond the short term. Nevertheless, this provides a sound starting point for moving forward.

The school's core program is its diploma level training, but it has always been expected that in time the school would offer a variety of specialist and other nursing courses alongside this. This includes becoming a teaching location for high-flyers who are working towards becoming health service leaders of the future, and so starting up degree courses and achieving university status.

Its original vision was also to be a pioneer in the use of high-level technology, as part of its unique selling point. So far by utilising iPads and Smartboards it has been able to attract some top-quality students from across a large geographic region. However, its use of modern technology is still limited to this small set of assets. To maintain its attractiveness, and to be a true pioneer, it needs to integrate IT and technology much more centrally into its teaching programmes, administration and evaluation, including use of e-learning.

As a result, to properly achieve its original vision of being a pioneer, particularly in the use of modern technology, and also to achieve its further vision of becoming a university for training Uganda's future health service leaders, UNSB now has a fundamental need for significant investment in IT and related assets, and in infrastructure to house a computer laboratory, library, and a larger skills lab.

The estimated cost of the investment required in IT and related assets is approximately 300 million UGX (or around $100,000). This would be for 110 computers for students and staff, plus IT infrastructure to support both on-site and e-learning students (ie adequate servers, cabling, routers, operating systems and application software, etc).

The estimated cost of a new building to house a computer laboratory, library, and a larger skills lab is 250m UGX (or around $80,000).

Once fully in place, there would be additional ongoing running costs, periodic replacement costs and depreciation costs, of around 80 million UGX per year (excluding the costs of additional internet bandwidth). It is estimated that these additional costs could be financed in a sustainable way in the medium

term, if the school's student enrollment increases to over 300, including students on e-learning courses, or by a growth of less than this combined with higher student fees.

Whilst the school has been successful in increasing its numbers to its current level, our current assessment is that to be able to attract this higher number of students, and particularly students at higher-levels, or to be able to charge higher fees, it needs to make the investments described above.

Priority Need A: Computers and improved IT infrastructure

360 million Ugandan shillings, or $120,000 is needed for:-
- 100 computers for students.
- 10 computers for staff.
- The additional equipment required for a well-run and secure computer lab, including air-conditioning, equipment to enable a stable electricity supply, security mechanisms.
- Servers and server capacity to support the above number of computers and other devices accessing systems running on the school's IT network(s), both internally and externally (for e-learning)
- Cabling and wiring to connect rooms, buildings and all network access points within the school.
- Sufficient numbers of good quality routers and Wifi access points to give the necessary level of network access across the school.
- PBX wiring within the school
- Operating systems to run on and manage and control the servers and network(s)
- Development of the student-support and administrative IT systems and databases needed for UNSB to be a pioneer in the use of IT

Priority Need B: Building to house a computer lab, library and a larger skills lab

250 million Ugandan shillings, or $80,000, is needed for a new building to house a computer laboratory, library, and a larger skills lab. It is envisaged that this would be:-

- A 2-storey building
- Constructed adjoined to one of the existing classrooms, and with a ground floor merged into that existing classroom
- Of similar additional floor-space, on each floor, to one of the existing classrooms
- On the ground floor, a library and computer laboratory with capacity for computer workstations
- On the upper floor, a well-stocked spacious skills lab