



THE DOV PASTERNAK HORTICULTURAL TRAINING CENTER BUSINESS PLAN

BACKGROUND

A Brief Introduction to Niger

Niger is one of the poorest countries on earth. It ranked dead last on the 2020 United Nations Human Development Index. It also has the world's second highest population growth rate according to World Bank statistics. Approximately 80% of Niger's landmass lies within the Sahara Desert. The vast majority of its 23 million population lives south of the desert in the **Sahel climate zone**, receiving just enough rainfall to support agriculture. Most Nigerien households rely on farming to survive and almost all rely on natural rainfall to grow their crops. With drought occurring in two years out of five, food security is a chronic problem. Forty percent of Niger's children are malnourished and 65% of the population are illiterate. Unlike many troubled areas in Africa, Niger is a relative unknown receiving little international attention. UNICEF considers Niger the world's most underfunded humanitarian crisis.

Farming in Niger is considered “poor man’s work” and for good reason. Most farmers grow barely enough to feed themselves and their families. But it doesn’t have to be this way. **Farming can be a good source of income if approached as a business.**

Professor Dov Pasternak and His Dream

No one was more passionate about the potential of farming to alleviate poverty than Professor Dov Pasternak. Dov was a world-renowned agricultural scientist who spent the first 30 years of his career at Israel’s Ben Gurion University. His particular expertise was irrigating with brackish water and he played a major role in the miracle of making the Negev bloom. Dov’s reputation and influence quickly spread beyond Israel. He consulted in 24 countries and wrote or co-authored hundreds of research papers. Dov was truly one of a kind. He combined world class agricultural knowledge with a great head for business, a flair for marketing, and a humanitarian heart 5 times regulation size.

Later in life Dov considered where Israel’s technology and experience could make the greatest contribution. His answer was the African Sahel and its millions of subsistence farmers trapped in chronic poverty. He relocated to Niger in 2001 to become the head of Crop and Technology Diversification at ICRISAT, one of the major agricultural research centers on the continent. For the next 17 years until his death in 2018, Dov immersed himself in helping Africa’s rural poor lift themselves out of poverty. He was convinced that farming could be an important source of income if approached as a business and not just a means to feed the family.



Professor Dov Pasternak

Dov’s focus on **income security** was a major departure from conventional wisdom. For decades, agricultural assistance to third world countries focused on food security — ensuring sufficient food to avoid starvation. In times of famine, large quantities of free food would be imported from the developed world. While avoiding mass starvation, this practice undermined local agricultural businesses. More recently the focus has been on developing drought-tolerant varieties of rainfed crops and providing high quality seeds and fertilizer so farmers can grow sufficient quantities for themselves.

Dov felt this work was important but hardly sufficient. If food security remained the end goal, millions would remain impoverished and malnourished. He believed passionately that income security must be the ultimate goal, enabling farmers to earn money for food, clothing, education, and more and thus raise their standard of living.

Approaching Farming as a Business

The technology to earn good profit from small plots of land is well known, even under conditions as challenging as the Sahel. But it requires significant change. Farmers must change the crops they grow, how they grow them, and how they sell them. They must fundamentally change how they think about farming — growing crops that generate the highest returns in the market rather than food for the family table. Change never comes easily. And dramatic change takes real patience and perseverance.



Balleyara landscape **before** irrigation



Balleyara landscape **after** irrigation

In the Sahel, it all starts with irrigation. Irrigation unlocks the economic potential of the land.

An irrigated field can generate up to 20-times the value of rainfed crops.

Traditionally, subsistence farmers grow 1 or 2 field crops during a 4-month rainy season. By comparison, irrigation enables farmers to grow crops 12 months of the year and largely eliminate weather risk. Farmers must shift production from low value grains to high value vegetables and fruits. Truly successful farmers pay close attention to monthly fluctuations in market prices and grow their crops counter-seasonally, or store them safely post-harvest, to sell when supplies are low, and prices are high. All in all, it's a very different approach and a lot to absorb. Adding to the challenge, most subsistence farmers are illiterate. They learn best through experience and repetition. **It takes at least 3 years of intensive training and supervision to provide farmers with sufficient repetition to master these new concepts and techniques.**

Dov's "Farmers of the Future" Model for Rural Economic Development

Dov laid out the path to income security in his book *Agricultural Prosperity in Dry Africa*. It describes how farmers can make a living where they currently live by doing what they know best — farming. At a time when subsistence farmers are leaving home by the tens of thousands in search of better opportunities, it's an idea whose time has come. And after years of making his case, the world is finally listening.

In 2007, Dov began experimenting with an approach he called "Farmers of the Future." The concept was to organize women in local villages into cooperatives, teach them to farm for profit, and enable them to earn up to twice the average income of Niger — approximately \$1,000/year. Women were accustomed to working together in groups and would spend the money on family needs for food, clothing, education, medical care, and more. The entire family and entire community would benefit.

In 2010, three organizations learned of Dov's concept. LIBO, a Nigerien NGO, had been working with Pencils for Kids from Canada to increase educational and economic opportunity in Niger. Eliminate Poverty NOW, a US-based non-profit, had been utilizing agriculture to increase rural incomes in sub-Saharan countries. All were impressed with Dov's vision and saw the potential of Farmers of the Future to transform lives.

Dov and the three organizations formed a partnership (The FOF Partnership) to field test, optimize and expand the concept. Today, thanks to funding from USAID, Rotary and the partner organizations, Farmers of the Future is in a dozen sites. Each is a learning laboratory helping to identify and solve the challenges of transforming rural economies. And as the local implementing partner, LIBO's staff has acquired a wealth of knowledge and practical experience in sustainable development.

Niger's 5-Year Plan for Rural Economic Development

Niger announced its latest 5-Year Plan in 2017 and identified rural economic development as a top national priority. Improving agricultural productivity and farmer income are cornerstones of that development and the World Bank and Millennium Challenge Corporation have pledged \$500MM USD to support the initiative.

This is great news. The financial resources for rural economic development are finally available. Most of the money will be spent on infrastructure: providing access to water and power, installing irrigation systems, constructing storage areas, and more. But infrastructure alone is not enough. Qualified field technicians are needed to train farmers to get the maximum benefit from these new capabilities. Unfortunately, there is limited appreciation for the magnitude of training required and little willingness to fund it at sufficient levels. And even if adequately funded, there is a serious shortage of qualified technicians to do the work.

To be successful, rural economic development requires a significant increase in funding for training and supervision and a significant increase in the number of qualified technicians to do the work. This is the mission of the Dov Pasternak Horticultural Training Center.



THE DOV PASTERNAK HORTICULTURAL TRAINING CENTER

The goal of the FOF Partnership is to create the pre-eminent horticultural training center in Niger. To honor Dov and build on the immense respect and credibility he earned, it will be called “The Dov Center” (or “Centre Privé Pr Dov” in French).

The Center will become a center of excellence for horticultural production and play a vital role in successful agricultural transformation in Niger. More specifically it will:

- educate practitioners on the keys to successful, sustainable agricultural development.
- advocate for significant increases in funding for intensive training and supervision.
- expand the number of horticultural field technicians.

Course Offerings

The Dov Center will offer two types of educational programs. The primary focus will be on training men and women to become field technicians. Students will enroll in a 1-year or 2-year program depending on their prior agricultural training. To be a good field technician students must become technically proficient. They will learn best practices in horticulture from experts in Niger and, via teleconference, from around the world. To be a great field technician, students must also learn strategies to maximize farm income, principles of running effective cooperative organizations, and teaching methods that ensure farmers master and retain new knowledge and techniques. A summary of the curriculum for the technician training program is included in **Exhibit 1**.

Second, the Center will conduct seminars where current practitioners of agricultural development can share their innovative approaches and results. Seminar content and length can be customized to address specific practitioner needs. Additionally, the Center will offer consulting services for organizations seeking help with their development projects.

Teaching Philosophy

Students at the Dov Center will learn to think creatively – to solve problems and capitalize on opportunities in the real world. The Center will emphasize practical learning. Classroom teaching will make use of “case studies” which put students in real world situations to tackle real issues. Outside the classroom students will learn-by-doing in the Center’s training gardens, on field trips to agricultural projects, and in a 3-month’s long apprenticeship assignment. This emphasis on practical learning will give graduates of The Dov Center a real advantage in on-the-job performance.

Training Center Facilities

The Center will have capacity to train 80 men and women per year, operate training gardens year-round, and offer up to 8 seminars annually.

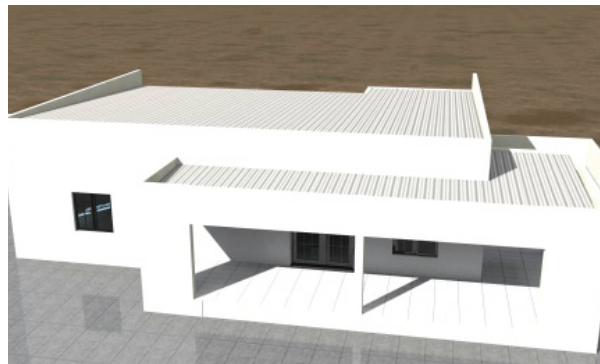
The Main Campus: The Center is located in the Commune Rurale Liboré, 1 km from the NGO LIBO headquarters building and a short drive from the capital city of Niamey. The 4,100 square meter (1 acre) campus includes the main academic/administrative building, dormitory, and cafeteria. **Exhibit 2** provides architectural drawings for each.



The 2-story academic/administrative building includes classrooms, 2 large lecture rooms, 3 laboratories, a library/computer room, staff offices and infirmary



The 2-story dormitory has 24 bedrooms with separate entrances and bathroom facilities for men and women. All rooms open onto a shaded interior courtyard



The cafeteria provides indoor and outdoor seating, a small store selling essentials, and a game room

The Training Gardens: The training gardens are located directly across the street on 6,625 square meters (1.6 acres) of land. Students will grow a variety of vegetables and work with 5 different irrigation systems to ensure broad experience with the crops and irrigation methods they will encounter in the field. The training gardens also include a tree nursery to practice tree grafting techniques, a plot for seed multiplication, and composting pits to supply 100% of garden requirements.



The training gardens are complete and fully operational



Drip is one of 5 irrigation methods featured in the training gardens



The Conference Center: Week-long seminars will be held at conference facilities now available at LIBO's office and training facilities, 1 km from the campus and gardens

The Training Center Staff

The Dov Center will be led by a Director General (DG) with overall responsibility for academic programs, student admissions, graduate placement, and seminars. The DG is the primary face of the Center to key stakeholders: building awareness for the Center, reinforcing the critical role of training in successful agricultural development, and stressing the need for increased funding and increased numbers of qualified technicians. The Center will also benefit from a 3-person Scientific Council of experts who will lend their technical expertise to design of the curriculum and selection of lecturers. Only the president of the Scientific Council is a permanent salaried member of the staff.

The Director of Studies (DS) has specific responsibility for the design and implementation of the technician curriculum and weekly seminars. He/she establishes the overall timing of subjects, schedules specific weekly assignments, coordinates the calendars of in-house teaching staff, and arranges for guest lecturers. Blending classroom and experiential learning is a critical part of the job. Specifically, the DS is responsible for coordinating the 3-month internships for all students. Finally, the DS is responsible for monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of course material and the performance evaluation of all teachers.

The primary focus of the Education Manager (EM) is to ensure the delivery of an outstanding learning experience for all students. The (EM) coordinates the admissions process, manages the enrollment and orientation of all new students, and assists students with food and lodging arrangements. He/she maintains close contact with students throughout the academic year and brings issues and problems to the attention of the management team.

All senior members of the staff are expected to teach topics in their areas of expertise in addition to their management responsibilities. A full-time lecturer will be added as the number of students doubles in Year 2.

Rounding out the staff, the Center will have a supervisor of campus operations, a supervisor of training garden activities, a finance manager, and a security guard.

Long Term Partnerships

The Dov Center will also benefit from partnerships with outstanding organizations to assist the Center with its start-up and together promote successful agricultural development in the Sahel. MOU's have been signed with ICRISAT and the Songhai Center and a third is being finalized with Volcani International Partners.

ICRISAT (International Crop Research in the Semi-Arid Tropics) is the research organization where Dov worked from 2001 to 2011 and remains one of the premier agricultural research centers in Africa. The Songhai Center, based in Benin, is devoted to creating agricultural entrepreneurs. Its founder and Director, Father Godfrey Nzamujo, was a great admirer of Dov and shares his passion for approaching farming as a business. The Songhai Center operates a dozen training centers in Benin and neighboring countries. Volcani International Partners (VIP) is the agricultural science arm for Israel's Ministry of Agriculture. VIP strengthens Israel's standing as a global leader in agricultural innovation by sharing its experience and technology around the world. Partnering with VIP ensures that The Dov Center maintains access to Israel's impressive range of agricultural technologies.

Start-Up Strategy and 5-Year Financials

The success of the first cohort of students is key to the Center's long-term success. We must provide them with an outstanding learning experience and help them land good paying jobs, thus establishing the Center's reputation as a gateway to a profitable career in agriculture. To that end, we plan a "soft launch" for the Center, carefully selecting 25 bright, motivated students in the first year. To attract them, we will offer scholarships covering 50% of tuition to reduce the financial burden while the Center is a relative unknown. With the success of each new cohort the reputation of the Center will grow, enrollment will expand, and the need for scholarships to attract new students will diminish.

Exhibit 3 shows annual revenues and expenses during this start-up phase. Figures are provided in CFA (West African Francs) and US dollars. The Center will generate revenue from 4 primary sources: tuition, seminar fees, consulting fees, and sale of produce from the training gardens. Additional revenue sources can be developed over time. Student tuition is by far the largest source. Annual tuition of 800,000 cfa will be at the high end of fees for advanced education, consistent with our goal of establishing the finest technician training program in the country. Operating costs include staff salaries, classroom and garden operations, field trips and seminars. Cafeteria and dormitory operations will be contracted out to experienced third parties who will charge participating students for use of their services.

Exhibit 3 projects an operating loss of approximately \$83,000 USD in Year 1 which decreases steadily in Years 2 - 4. Cumulative deficits requiring external funding peak in Year 4 at approximately \$225,000 USD. The Center covers all operating costs in Year 5 and begins generating a modest surplus at full capacity in Year 6 and beyond.

CURRENT STATUS

The total cost to construct, equip and start up operations at The Dov Center is \$1.6 MM USD. Entering 2020, a total of \$600,000 had been raised. These funds enabled us to purchase land, install the training gardens and construct conference facilities.

Exhibit 4 provides the budget to build out the remaining campus. This includes the classrooms, library/computer room, laboratories, staff offices, dormitory, and cafeteria for a total of \$758,000. An additional \$225,000 is needed to subsidize annual operating costs until the Center is fully self-supporting. Total additional funds required to complete the facilities and support operations during the start-up phase are \$983,000 USD.

As of January 2021, \$300,000 of this amount has been raised. Combining these funds with low-cost interim financing has enabled us to move ahead with construction of the academic-administrative building and dormitory.



Construction status of the Academic-Administrative Building as 1/31/21



Completing 1st floor of the campus Dormitory as of 1/31/21



WHO WE ARE — THE FOF PARTNERSHIP TEAM

Professor Dov Pasternak: While Dov passed away in 2018 his vision and passion inspire us daily. His reputation continues to open doors and provides invaluable credibility as we create the pre-eminent horticultural training facility in Niger.

Hamani Djibo: Hamani is the founder and president of LIBO, a Nigerien NGO founded in 2008 to improve education and health and develop innovative programs to eradicate poverty and promote self-sufficiency. Its most innovative and sustainable initiative is the Farmers of the Future Program. LIBO's senior staff includes several protégés of Dov who worked together for many years at ICRISAT.

John Craig: John is co-founder and president of Eliminate Poverty NOW, a US-based 501(c)3 enabling Africa's extreme poor to lift themselves out of poverty. Over 15 years, John and EPN have funded agricultural development projects in 8 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Prior to EPN, John spent 26 years in business, including 16 years as president of divisions at Kraft Foods and Warner-Lambert. John has a BA and MBA from Harvard University.

Robin Mednick: Robin is founder and president of Pencils for Kids, a Canadian-based NGO providing educational and vocational opportunities to the extreme poor in Niger. Robin began working in Niger in 2007. In addition to a decade of support for Farmers of the Future, her charity has built schools, kindergartens, a Sewing Centre and sponsored over 500 scholarships for girls in education. Prior to Pencils for Kids, Robin worked for the Canadian Olympic Bid and the Commonwealth Games of Canada. Robin has an MA from Oxford and LLB from Osgoode Law School.

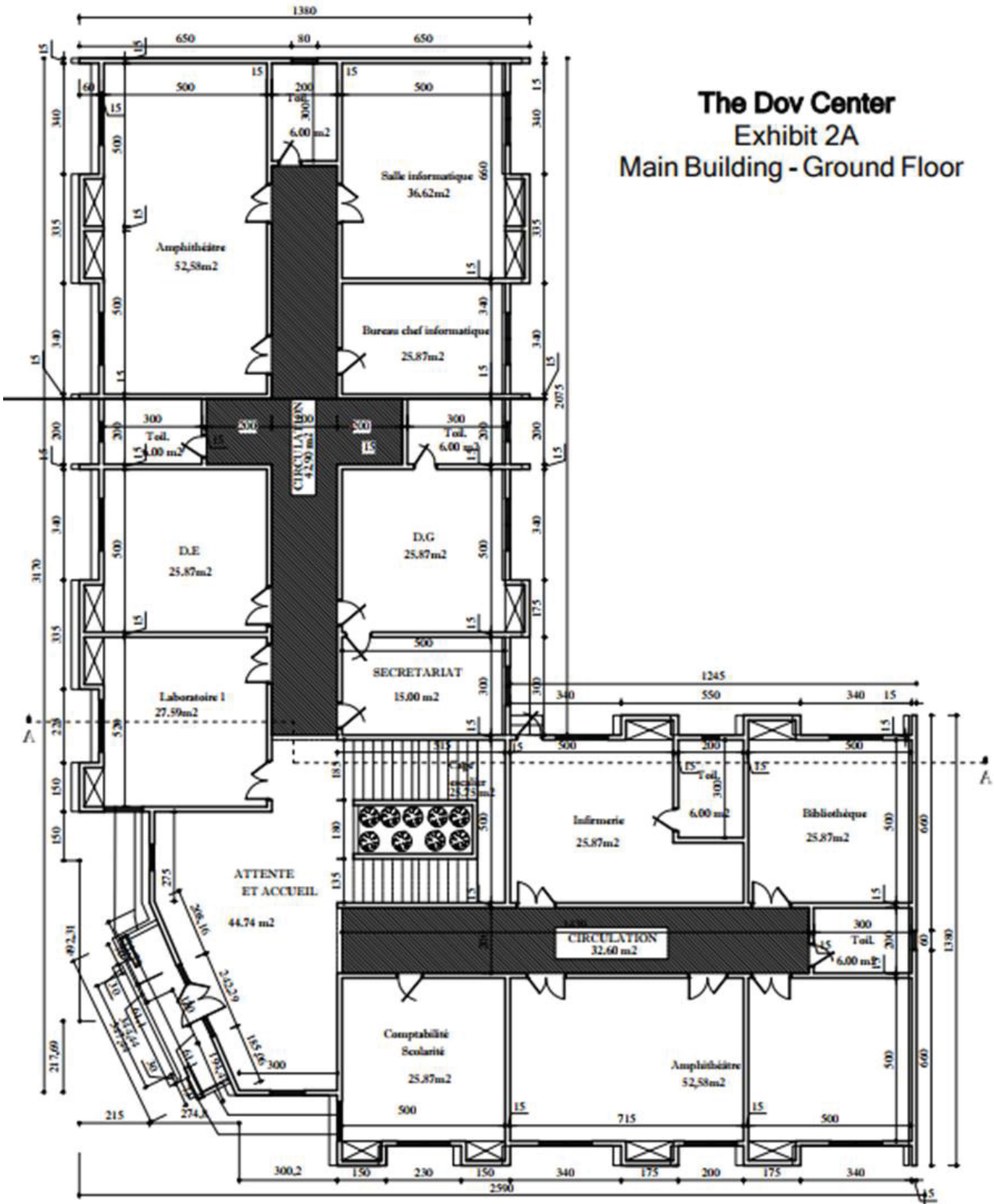
EXHIBIT 1

THE DOV TRAINING CENTER - TWO YR. CURRICULUM

Topics	Ratio	Total Hrs
YEAR 1 (9 months including the mid-term on ground practical training)		
Soil science	3	63
Plant biology	3	63
Plant protection	2	42
Principles and types of irrigation	2	42
Equipment mechanic	3	63
Horticultural crops	2	42
Generalities on climate and climate change	1	21
Sociology	2	42
Psychology	1	21
Environment protection	3	63
Administration & Finance	2	42
English language	2	42
Topography/GIS	1	21
TOTAL ratio and hours Year 1	27	567
YEAR 2 (15 months including final practical training and writing thesis)		
Irrigation techniques and crops water use	5	105
Horticultural crops production	6	126
Integrated pest management	3	63
Tree nursery and Fruit trees propagation	3	63
Seed multiplication and storage	2	42
Enterprises organization and economy	4	84
Associative life and groups organization	4	84
Marketing of agricultural products	3	63
Planning and management of garden activities (IGESPLAM)	2	42
Meteorological observations	1	21
French (communication and reporting)	2	42
Concept of Farmers of the future (FOF)	1	21
Andragogy and social psychology	2	42
Computer science	2	42
TOTAL ratio and hours Year 2	40	840
TOTAL RATIO AND HOURS FOR TWO YEARS	67	1407
Yearly repartition of activities	Courses	Trainings
Year 1 (in months)	7	2
Year 2 (in months)	9	5
Writing thesis (in month)		1
TOTAL	16	8

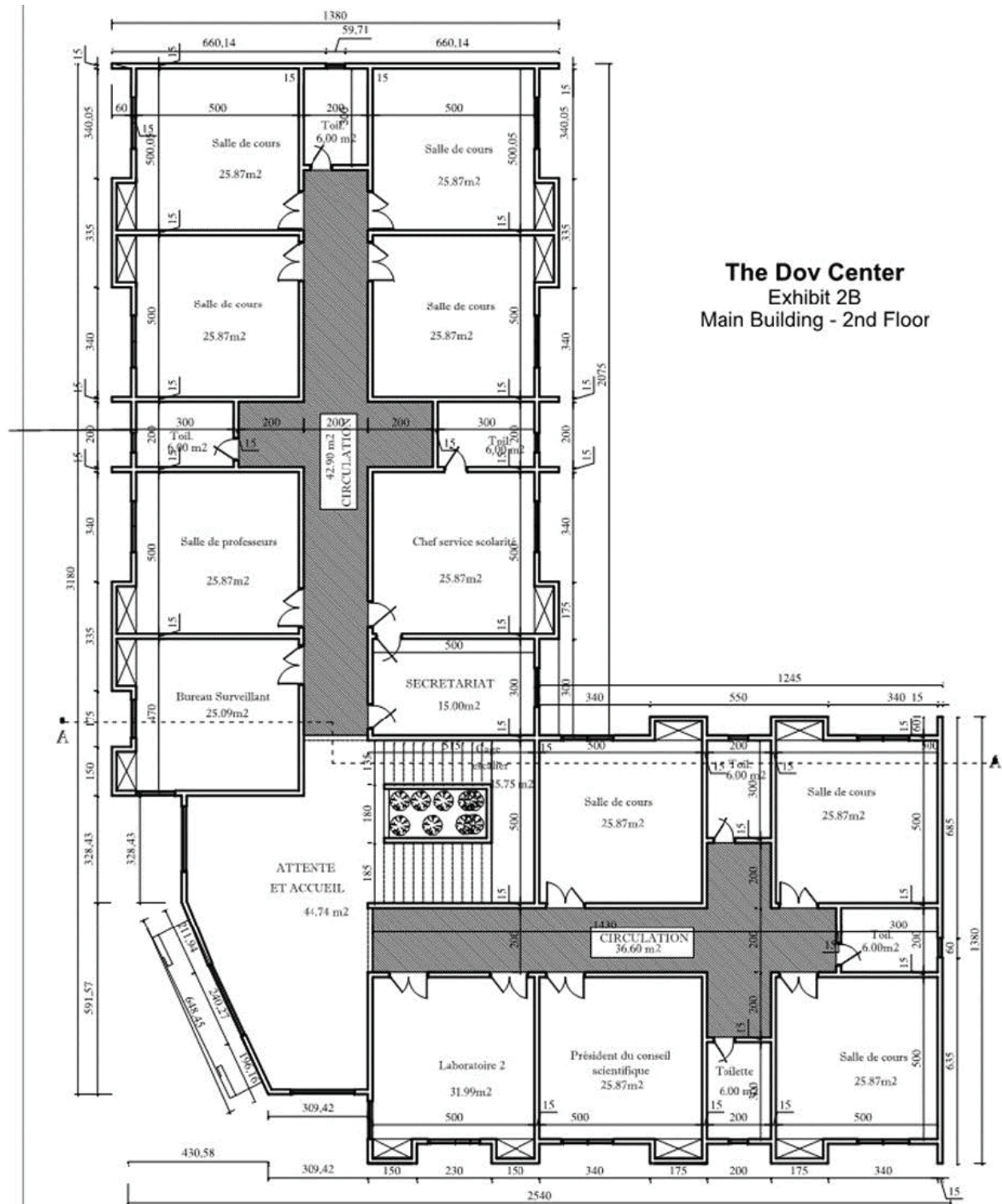
EXHIBIT 2

The Dov Center Exhibit 2A Main Building - Ground Floor



PLAN REZ DE CHAUSSEE

EXHIBIT 2



CENTRE PRIVE Pr DOV ONG LIBO	BATIMENT PRINCIPAL	
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EXHIBIT 2

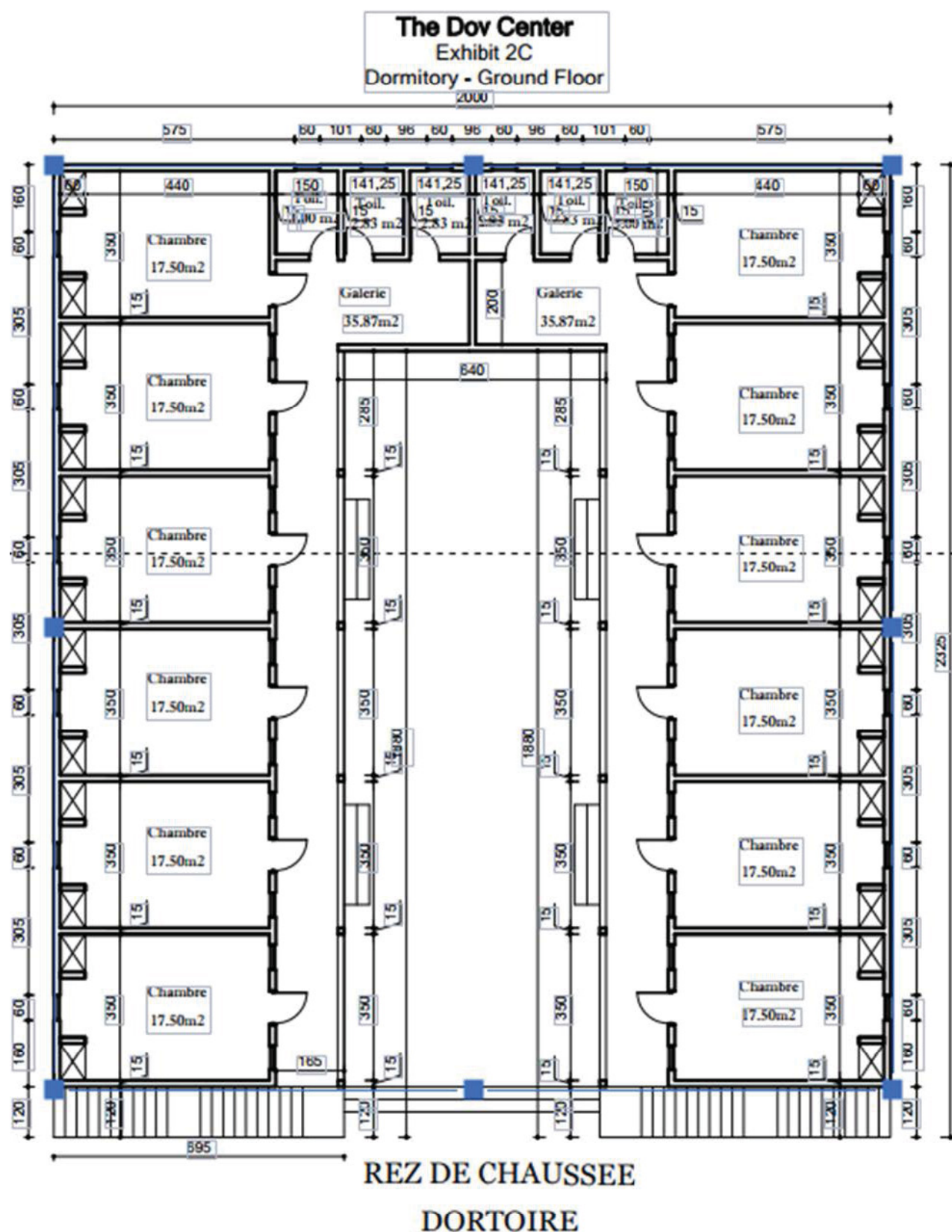


EXHIBIT 2

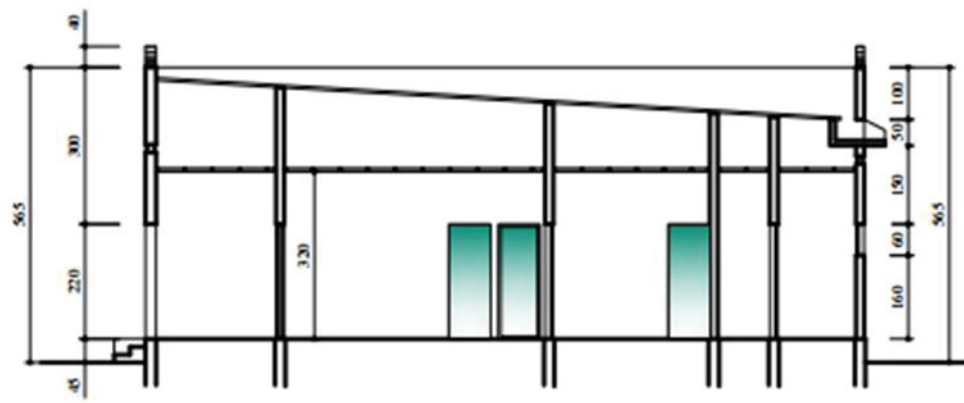
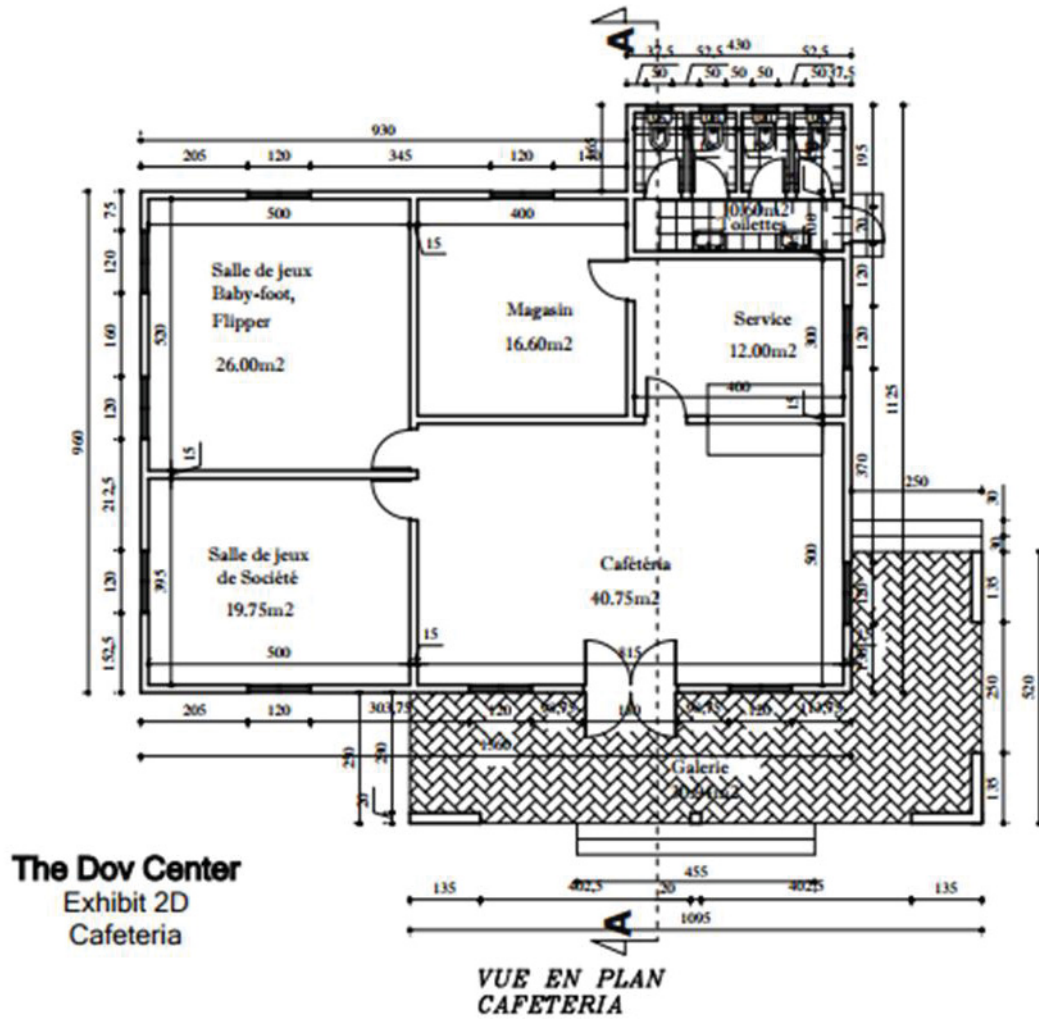


EXHIBIT 3

TRAINING CENTER START-UP CURVE

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	FULL CAPACITY
Assumptions:						
Year 1 Enrollment	25	30	35	40	45	45
Year 1 Scholarship Students (100% Yr1-2; 50% Yr3; 25% Yr4; 0% Yr5)	25	30	18	10	0	0
Year 2 Total Enrollment (90% of Year 1)	0	23	27	32	36	41
Year 2 Scholarship Students (any student receiving a Yr1 scholarship)	0	23	27	16	9	0
Total Student Enrollment	25	53	62	72	81	86
Revenues (in CFA):						
Gross Tuition (0.8 mm Years 1-3; 0.9 mm Years 4-6)	20,000,000	42,400,000	49,600,000	64,800,000	72,900,000	77,400,000
Less Scholarships (50% of annual tuition)	10,000,000	21,200,000	18,000,000	11,700,000	4,050,000	-
Net Tuition Revenue	10,000,000	21,200,000	31,600,000	53,100,000	68,850,000	77,400,000
Garden Revenue	7,728,798	7,728,798	7,728,798	7,728,798	7,728,798	7,728,798
Seminar Revenue	1,500,000	2,250,000	3,000,000	5,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000
Consulting Revenue	-	2,000,000	3,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Total Revenues	19,228,798	33,178,798	45,328,798	70,828,798	87,578,798	96,128,798
Expenses (in CFA):						
Salaries:						
Director Gen'l/lecturer	12,000,000	12,120,000	12,241,200	12,363,612	12,487,248	12,612,121
Director of Studies/lecturer	10,200,000	10,302,000	10,405,020	10,509,070	10,614,161	10,720,303
Scientific Council President	3,600,000	3,636,000	3,672,360	3,709,084	3,746,174	3,783,636
Education Manager/lecturer	4,200,000	4,242,000	4,284,420	4,327,264	4,370,537	4,414,242
Finance Manager/lecturer	4,200,000	4,242,000	4,284,420	4,327,264	4,370,537	4,414,242
Full time lecturer	-	7,000,000	7,070,000	7,140,700	7,212,107	7,284,228
School Administrator	2,400,000	2,424,000	2,448,240	2,472,722	2,497,450	2,522,424
Driver	1,800,000	1,818,000	1,836,180	1,854,542	1,873,087	1,891,818
Security Guard	900,000	909,000	918,090	927,271	936,544	945,909
Building Labor	900,000	909,000	918,090	927,271	936,544	945,909
Training Garden Supervisor	3,000,000	3,030,000	3,060,300	3,090,903	3,121,812	3,153,030
Garden Laborers	1,800,000	1,818,000	1,836,180	1,854,542	1,873,087	1,891,818
Guest Lecturers	2,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Salaries Sub-Total	47,000,000	54,450,000	55,974,500	56,504,245	57,039,287	57,579,680
Operating Expenses:						
Office and classroom supplies	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Field trip extended stays	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Van fuel & maintenance costs	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Building maintenance	-	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Telecommunications/high speed internet	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Training Garden Costs:						
Seeds/fertilizer/sprays	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Tools	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
Equipment maintenance & repair	2,000,000	2,500,000	2,750,000	2,750,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Seminar Costs:						
Printed material	173,000	259,000	345,000	518,000	690,000	690,000
Lunches/refreshments	378,000	567,000	756,000	1,134,000	1,512,000	1,512,000
Public visits/graduation ceremonies	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Advertising	3,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Operating Expenses Sub-Total	16,801,000	17,576,000	19,101,000	22,652,000	24,452,000	24,452,000
Total Expenses	63,801,000	72,026,000	75,075,500	79,156,245	81,491,287	82,031,680
Annual Surplus/Deficit (in CFA)	(44,572,202)	(38,847,202)	(29,746,702)	(8,327,447)	6,087,511	14,097,118
Cumulative Surplus/Deficit in CFA	(44,572,202)	(83,419,404)	(113,166,106)	(121,493,553)	(115,406,042)	(101,308,925)
Cumulative Surplus/Deficit in USD	(82,541)	(154,480)	(209,567)	(224,988)	(213,715)	(187,609)

EXHIBIT 4

REMAINING INVESTMENT TO COMPLETE THE CENTER

	Total CFA's	US\$ (540cfa/\$1)
LAND		
Main Campus (4,100m2)	Purchased	0
Training Gardens (6,625m2)	Purchased	0
Land Sub-Total	0	0
MAIN CAMPUS FACILITIES		
Perimeter Cement Wall and Fencing	31,770,246	58,834
Water Source		
Borehole & Reservoir	16,000,000	29,630
Pump & Solar Panels	6,000,000	11,111
Connection to public water source	Purchased	0
Administration Building	140,001,086	259,261
Dormitory	84,402,056	156,300
Cafeteria	25,510,745	47,242
Toilet Facilities	3,970,345	7,352
Construction Inspection Service	22,121,438	40,966
Furniture and Equipment	60,269,850	111,611
Landscaping	5,000,000	9,259
Main Campus Facilities Sub-Total	395,045,766	731,566
LECTURE HALL (Week Long Seminars)		
Conference Room	Completed	0
Furniture	Completed	0
Audio/Visual Equipment	750,000	1,389
Sanitary Facilities	Completed	0
Lecture Hall Sub-Total	750,000	1,389
TRAINING GARDENS INFRASTRUCTURE		
Perimeter Wall and Gate	Completed	0
Guardhouse/Storage Room	Completed	0
2 Boreholes	Completed	0
Solar Panels	Completed	0
Solar Pumps and Electronics	Completed	0
Drip and Hose Irrigation System	Completed	0
On-site Meeting Room	Completed	0
Tree Nursery	Completed	0
Seed Multiplication Area	Completed	0
Arziki Onion Storage	Completed	0
Compost Pits	Completed	0
Sanitary Facilities	Completed	0
Garden Infrastructure Sub-Total	0	0
VEHICLES		
19 Passenger Mini-Bus (Class field trips)	13,500,000	25,000
Garden Infrastructure Sub-Total	13,500,000	25,000
GRAND TOTAL SET-UP COSTS	409,295,766	757,955