

Editorial for NJM

The last three years – Chairperson’s overview



All praise is due to Allah alone, Lord of all that exists. And may His peace and blessings be upon our noble Prophet, the final Messenger, Sayhidina Muhammad (pbuh), and upon his family and the companions.

Currently Radical Economic Transformation is the buzz word within the South African political framework. Yet three (3) years ago on the 1st of June 2014, the Newclare Muslim community got together to exert their interpretation of radical transformation and empowerment. Three (3) years ago the Newclare Muslim community stood up and said enough is enough. Three (3) years ago the Newclare Muslim community said no to:

- Maladministration
- Moral decay
- Self-aggrandizement
- Fear of change
- Unethical leadership and
- No individualism (lack of collaboration)

Newclare Juma Masjid and Educational Institute is in existence for almost 100 years and the common thread that flowed through its veins has always been the community, in particular the Muslims from the area. This has always been deemed as pivotal to all community activities from a social, economic and spiritual and when need be a political beacon for the community. The Institute has been providing employment opportunities, provided housing for families at a subsidised rental rate, and provided Islamic and secular education for thousands of learners including adults over the years. The NJM as an institute has been positioned as a hub of hope for the impoverished, needy and the aged...truly attempting to follow the prophetic ways in terms of the purpose of a Masjid. As an institute we have become more than just a religious institute. Over the years we have become a place where the community assembles to share hopes, dreams despair, success and even a cup of tea – This is what the current management team wants to re-ignite because over the years this communal Islamic brotherhood spirit has been eroded.

Newclare is a poverty stricken area with high rates of unemployment, drug abuse and other social deficiencies. The Masjid and Educational Institute attends to approximately 200 families. 170 learners attend Madressah, 80% of whom receive financial assistance in the form of Zakaah. The Executive Committee (are all members who have served the community in various roles over a number of years and who give of their time voluntarily taking no salaries or administration costs for any services rendered), hence took an undertaking (ammanah) to embark on this radical transformation journey with the community restoring its dignity, pride and honour. The NJM as an institute will be used as a vehicle to uplift the community of Newclare.

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Welcome Newclare Masjed's New Committee

Newclare Juma Masjid and Educational Institute Concludes a Successful Election Process



On Sunday 1st June 2014 the Newclare Juma Masjid and Educational Institute concluded a successful election of committee members for the Institute. After a lengthy and onerous engagement and interaction with the existing committee the community decided to convene a Triennial Meeting for the sole purpose of these elections. This after the existing committee continuously refused to convene one despite the fact that it was in contravention of the Institute's constitution. The meeting started promptly at 09h30 with a full quorum of 40 members that had increased to more than 67 by the end of the meeting. This displayed the intense level of public interest in this process. There was no chairperson and secretarial report to consider as none was tabled at the meeting, despite a request for such reports to be submitted. The treasurer, Mr. Aziz Wadwalla, presented a summarised financial statement for the period 2008 – 2013. This made for very sombre reading and indicated that the institute was not in a healthy financial situation as alluded to by the previous committee. Eventually the item on the agenda that all present had come for, the election of a new committee, got underway. A total number of 16 nominations were received. The electoral team promptly developed a ballot paper as votes would be cast by secret ballot. After a free and fair election the following 9 members were elected to the committee. Their names are listed in no particular order: Zainudeen Moosa, Cassim Potker, Aziz Wadwalla, Fareed Essack, Yaseen Jardine, Shaued Allie, Kareish Isaacs, Ashiq Osman, Rafiek Charles. We wish the members all the best with their election and make dua that Allah (S.W.T.) guides protects and affords them the health and wisdom to carry on this arduous and blessed task to the best of their ability, Insha-Allah.

Committee elected on 1st June 2014

Current Committee -2017



In order to serve as change agents it was imperative to have a game plan for the community over the next three years. Our key strategic themes focused on:

- Good Governance
- Community Upliftment
- Efficient and Effective Property Management
- Improved Islamic Education and
- On-going Masjid Programmes.

Our guiding principles centred on:

- Remaining community focused (Bring the best out of people)
- Adhering to the principles of the Shariah
- Being pioneers (be innovative and do things differently) and;
- Transparency and Accountability.

Year 1 – The year of transition: During our first year and the first 100 days in particular, we made solid progress on many fronts, including building our strategic, financial, social, educational and governance platforms, while establishing exciting new ones that were solely exposed on other fronts as we had to build from a base that was non-existent – as the previous committee did not do a hand-over, hence the incoming Management Team (Committee) literally started from scratch. In this year we consolidated our mandate to implement governance frameworks for our financial and social portfolios.

Year 2 – The year of consolidation: We moved from being in a period of transition to one of consolidation. The plans that were conceptualised were being implemented. The purpose of the NJM Strategic Plan focused on the maintenance of the Masjid, Madressah and establishing a functional Social Centre that would serve as the nucleus of the Newclare community in terms of its needs. Furthermore to promote an Islam that is spiritually and philosophically linked to our culture. In this year we consolidated on our mandate to implement our governance framework for education.

Year 3 – Radicalisation of the Educational Agenda (The year of the Educational renaissance): It has always been the endeavour of the NJM Leadership to provide a functional, progressive and basic Islamic education for the Newclare community – where all children would be able to attend madressah regardless of their parent's ability or willingness to pay. The reason is simple: when any child fails to acquire the basic Islamic and general skills needed to function as a productive, responsible member of society, society as a whole—not to mention the individual child—loses. The cost of educating children is far outweighed by the cost of not educating them.

Correcting these deficiencies is clearly a priority and is something that cannot be remedied overnight - it will take time. What can be done in the meantime to ensure that our children receive a quality Islamic education?

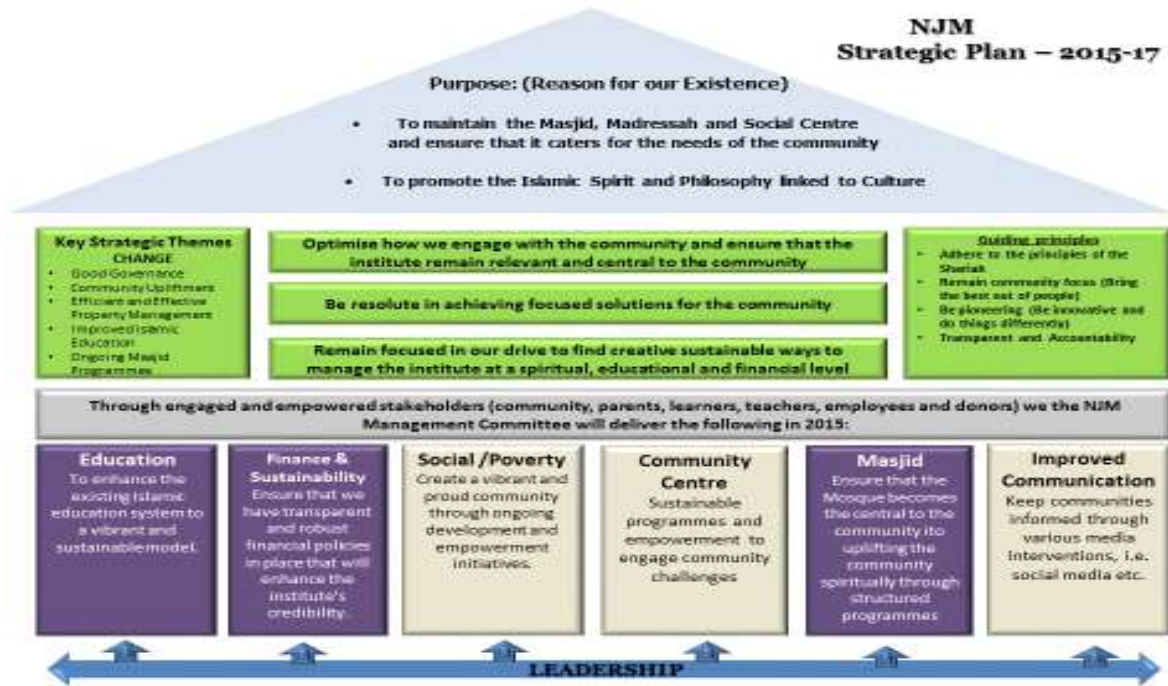
- Education symposium
- Newly appointed Head: Curriculum, Teacher Development and Education
- Review syllabus
- Establish Curriculum Committee
- Establish an Inspectorate
- Introduce a syllabus that takes into account the cultural background of the community.

To rebuild the legacy of the institute it was imperative to ensure sound values and principles were established and enforced ensuring that the leadership team were able to achieve its goals. The leadership team needed to ensure that they set achievable and realistic goals and targets— knowing full-well was the dynamics of the community. The strategic model dictates that the NJM will be broken up into 6 components and managed accordingly. Each component will have its own

strategic trajectory that would be totally aligned with the overall purpose of the institute. The six strategic components were classified as follows:

1. Education
2. Finance and Sustainability
3. Social and Poverty
4. Community Centre
5. Masjid
6. Improved Communication

All six components would be underpinned by Leadership



We identified our Financial portfolio as crucial to the well-being of the institute and sought to develop and institute sound financial practices throughout.

The second pillar in creating sustainability was education. It is our resolve that education will serve as the catalyst to liberate the community, however, it was more daunting than anticipated. It is a known fact that the primary focus of the NJM is to promote Islamic values through education and this did not materialise as anticipated. In fact the education imparted to the learners was ineffective; in the sense that it failed to create productive, critical thinking Islamic learners that would contribute in transforming the Newclare community in particular and society at large. For many years teaching took place with no clear goal of what the outcome should be. The NJM leadership's rationale on education is a simple one that states: 'when any child fails to acquire the basic Islamic and general skills needed to function as a productive, responsible member of society, society as a whole—not to mention the individual child—loses'. The cost of educating children is far outweighed by the cost of not educating them. Correcting these deficiencies is clearly a priority and is something that cannot be remedied overnight - it will take time. In the interim the following was done to address the educational conundrum that we faced:



The Education Symposium facilitated by the NJM Leadership in December 2016

- An Education Symposium was held where all the major educationalists, Islamic scholars and community leaders and members deliberated on the educational state of the NJM.
- Appointed Head: Curriculum, Teacher Development and Education, whose primary tasks are to:
 - Review the syllabus
 - Introduce a syllabus that takes into account the cultural background of the community.
 - Establish a Curriculum Committee
 - Establish an Inspectorate

Thirdly our social pillar was strengthened – Many social initiatives were embarked upon to begin the process where our community break the shackles of entitlement and begin the process of taking ownership and accountability. Workshops were facilitated with the community and teachers. Additional training was given to teachers including life skills; first-aid training was provided to teachers, entrepreneurial classes were conducted to empower members of the community and Life Coaching classes are ongoing. All these initiatives were driven through the utilisation of our fourth pillar, which is the Newclare Community Centre and it is deemed as central to all our social and poverty alleviation initiatives – in fact it is deemed as a vehicle to drive the change.

The fifth pillar is the Masjid. Currently it is deemed as a place of worship and occasionally will accommodate cultural events. There is no dynamism and no critical Islamic thinking coming through the educational symposium highlighted shortcomings from the masjid in that it is failing to uplift the community spiritually through structured programmes. To this end the NJM leadership will host a spiritual symposium to unpack the role of the masjid, its stakeholders and what should be the contribution of the masjid be in terms of transforming the Newclare community.

There is much to be done and great things can be achieved through the will of the Almighty and the involvement of community and strong and decisive leadership. Radical transformation is what the community asked for – That is achievable if we function and operate as a collective in the true prophetic ways of our beloved Rasool Muhammed (pbuh).