

WIRHE Scholarship –
A Case Study of Recruitment,
Support and Retention of a
Rural Workforce in NW

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Outline

- Background and Rationale
- The Pilot Project
- Initial challenges
- A complex system
- Gardening analogy
- A turnaround strategy
 - The role of provincial managers

Wits Initiative for Rural Health Education (WIRHE)



- A scholarship is a result of a co-operative initiative between Swiss and South African government (SSACI*)
- Established in 2002, the scholarship is run under the auspices of the Chair of Rural Health at the University of Witwatersrand
- Aim of the scholarship is to alleviate some of the HR challenges faced by rural hospitals.

*Swiss-South Africa Co-operative Initiative

Rationale

- Evidence based research suggest#:
 - Young people who grow up in a rural area are more likely to return there to live and work.
 - Rural-origin student selection offers long term solutions to rural medical workforce mal-distribution.
 - Initiatives targeting rural communities will have a ripple effect

#Ross AJ, Couper ID. Rural Scholarship Schemes. A solution to human resources crises in rural district hospitals. SA Fam Pract 2004; 46 (1): 5-6

de Vries E, Reid SJ. Do South African rural origin medical students return to rural practice? <http://www.hst.org.za/publications/535>

#Worley P. Managing the major clinical year at Tertiary, Secondary and Community sites: curriculum perspectives from the Flinders University Graduate-Entry Medical Program. CHSE Workshop, Johannesburg April, 2005. URL: [http:// www.ruralhealth.ca](http://www.ruralhealth.ca)

The Pilot Project

- Plan to support 20 students from the greater Bohlabelo & Bophirima districts in Limpopo & North West province respectively.
- Training co-ordinators from the two districts to support the students & liaise with the institution.
- 10 students from each of the two provinces
- 5 of those will be medical students
- The rest will be made up of students from other depts within the faculty
 - Physiotherapy; Nursing, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy



The Launch!

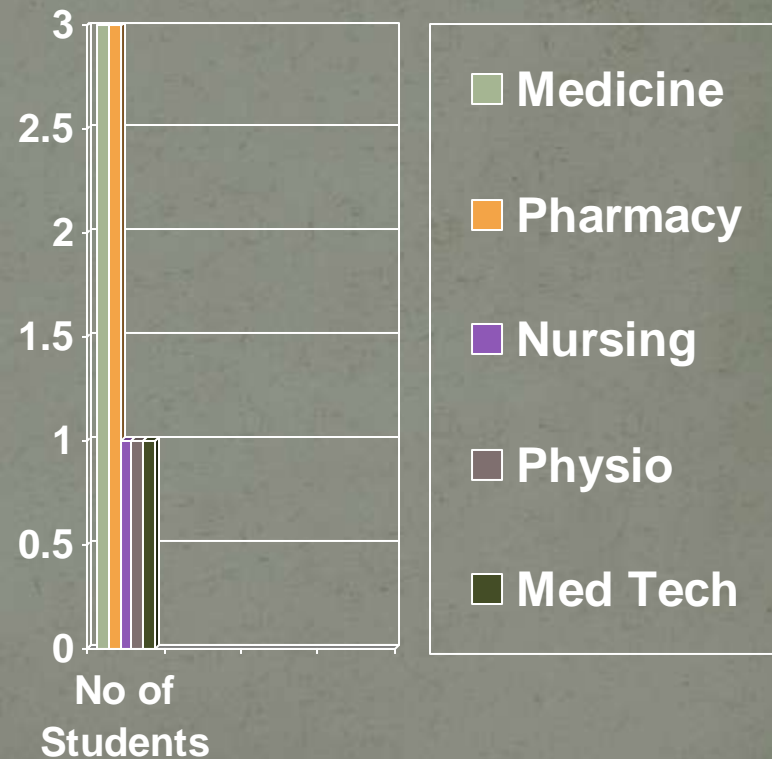
- An article in “The Star” Newspaper
- Guaranteed support from SSACI for 3 years.
- Partnership with MESAB# in a similar fashion to the FOMSS* programme.
- Support from Faculty of Health Sciences at Wits
- Relationship between WIRHE and DOH in the 2 districts
- An academic article published in SA Family Practice

Medical Education for South African Blacks

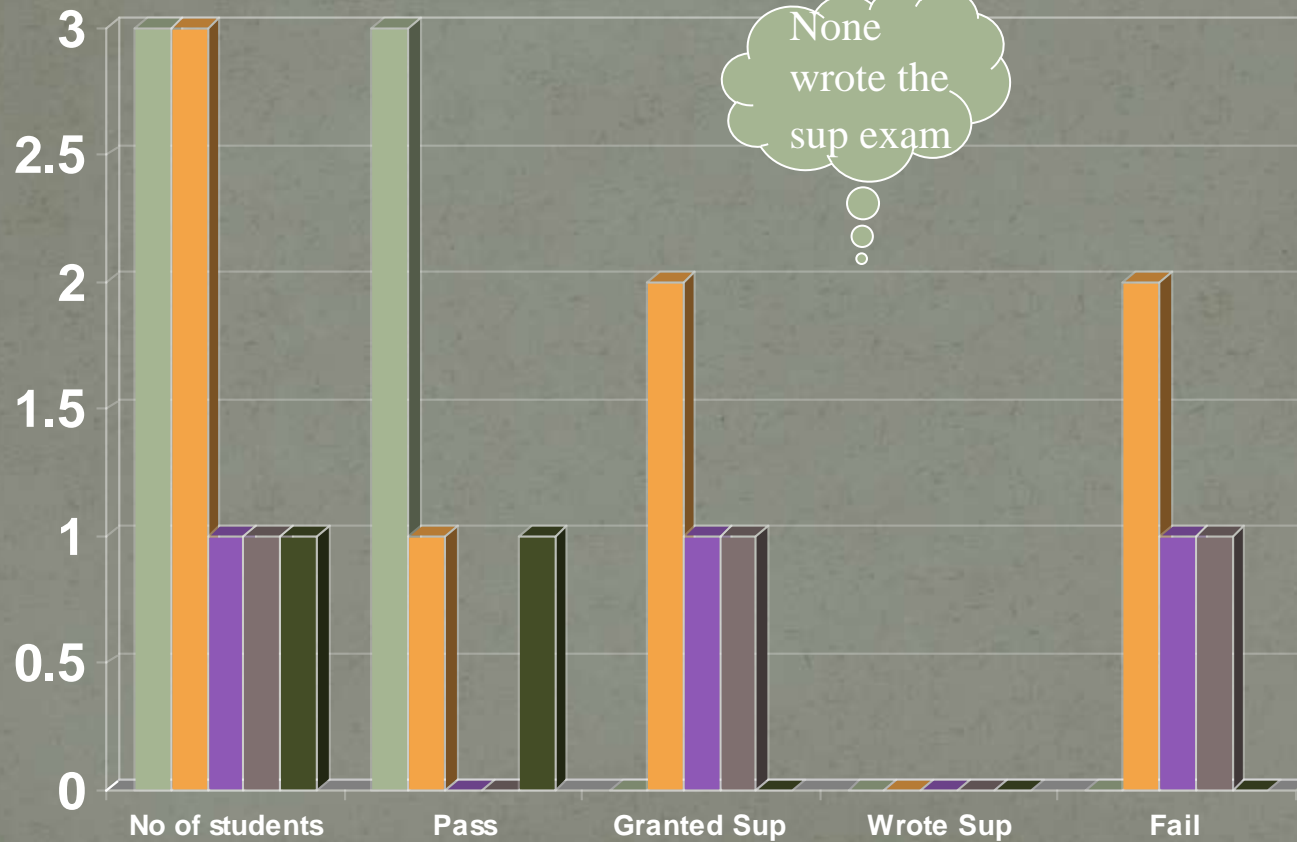
*FOMSS- Friends of Mosvold Scholarship Scheme based in Ingwavuma, Northern KwaZulu Natal now known as Umthombo Foundation

The 2004 WIRHE Intake

- 8 WIRHE students are accepted to study at Wits University
- One student is placed at UJ (ex-Wits Technikon)
- Of the 9 students
 - 3 register for medicine
 - 3 register for pharmacy
 - 1 registers for physio
 - 1 registers for nursing
 - 1 registers for med tech



2004 Results/Discipline



56%
pass

None
wrote the
sup exam

- Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Physio
- Nursing
- Med Tech

The Complex System



Adapted from:
Paul Worley's 4R Model

Strategy Making Pyramid

Corporate Strategy:
Wits University

Business Strategy:
Faculty of Health Sciences

Functional Strategy:
Division of Rural Health

Operating Strategy: Province, Districts & Department of Health
Limpopo, North West DOH [Bophirima & Bohlabela Districts]

Action Plan

- Address student challenges
- Map out strategic plan for future intake
 - Understand systems to meet targets
 - Admin processes
 - Institutional Policies
 - Intervention strategies
 - Strengthen our position to secure future funding

Gardening Analogy- A functional Approach



- Choosing the right seeds
- Nurturing
- Weeding
- Harvesting

Choosing the Rights Seeds

- Joint recruitment
 - Financial need, social profile + academic status
 - Country demographics
 - PDI & CDI
 - Willingness to serve rural & underserved

Choosing the Rights Seeds

- Students sign 2 legal contracts
 - WIRHE once off detailed with a yearly addendum
 - Provincial at district level

Nurturing

Mentorship

Bi-annual meetings

Compulsory attendance

Affirm current and future status

Academic potential

You are a change agent

You have a responsibility



Nurturing The WIRHE Family



Nurturing

Mentorship

WIRHE Recovery Plan

Performance Monitoring Tool

Extended to complement faculty processes

Nurturing

Community Engagement

Accelerate academic development

Opportunity to upskill

Relevance of community in the context
of training

For current & newly admitted students



Nurturing



WIRHE
Wits Initiative for Rural
Health Education
WIRHE'd to Lifelong Learning

Weeding



- 100% Retention not possible

Attrition is expected

Must be controlled

1st year = Induction

Weeding



- Strategic Fit

Assumptions – matric results + intrinsic motivation

Reality – matric results + intrinsic motivation +
commitment + suitability

Weeding



- Exit Interviews Critical

Lessons

Feedback to the district

Harvesting

Impacting HR Services – Jan 2010

- *“... I started work today at Nic Bodenstein Hospital. I arrived here to find that there has not been a physio since 2004! I have to start my own department from scratch, the thought is exciting and scary at the same time. I will do my best and hope it’s good enough. I will keep in touch and let you know how the dept is doing.”*



Harvesting

The Rural Experience

- A follow up email summed up her first few weeks:
- *“...I’m just letting you know that I’m doing very well, my department is up and running and I’m now working on my outreach programme to the 8 clinics in the district. I’m really proud of myself, I painted the walls and helped to clean the space I was given it looks very nice now! I also had to write motivational letters to a lot of people to get the equipment! Its hard work, but I am enjoying every bit of it! ... I will send before and after pictures of my department”*

WIRHE: As a Turnaround Strategy

- Joint recruitment of suitable qualified learners
- Prompt payment of fees
- Supported placement in the community
- Proper placement and support following graduation to strengthen retention at community level

Joint Recruitment

- Shortage of Health Care Workers

Focus has been on shortage of doctors
Managers have access to
organizational strategic documents
Opportunity to plan a future district
health care team

Joint Recruitment

- Challenges of the schooling system

Limited information on career options
RHD facilitates a partnership between
the departments (education & health)

Pilot in the Ngaka Modiri Molema
district March 2010

Dr Kenneth Kaunda district March
2011 (benefits out of school youth)

Career options extended to include
other health care categories

Joint Recruitment



Joint Recruitment



Prompt Payment of Fees

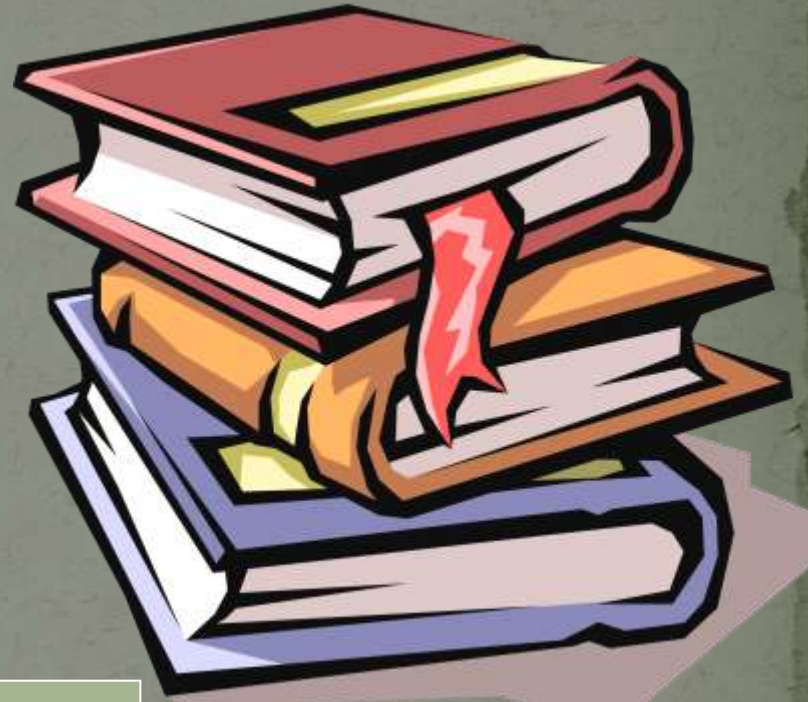
When ?



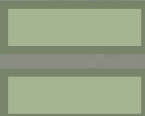
When ?

Academic Success

Prompt Payment of Fees



Academic Success



Supported Placement

- In the Community

During winter and summer vacations
Give back to community
Strengthen partnership with the district
Enforce commitment

Proper Placement and Support

- After graduation to ensure retention

Plan each year around expected graduates

Attend graduation to affirm DoH status

On-site orientation

Feedback within the 1st quarter to monitor placement & progress



WIRHE: A turnaround strategy

● Provincial Managers

- WIRHE functions on the premise that:
- If students are mentored as trainees and supported in the community as future HCWs,
 - they are more likely to stay in their community of origin,
 - provide a much needed service and
 - contribute to positive health outcomes for that particular community both in their professional capacity and as members of society.

● Provincial Managers



Thank you

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