

IDT's school project stalls as costs reach R198m

Learners of Rivoni School for the Blind were promised a new building in 2019.

By [Thembi Siaga](#) 3 Oct 2025



The new campus for Rivoni School of the Blind includes several large buildings. But work to finish the project has been stalled for most of this year. Photos: Thembi Siaga / GroundUp

- A new campus for the Rivoni School for the Blind was supposed to be completed in 2024, but the massive project, now budgeted at R198m, stands unused and incomplete.
- The contractor has been placed in business rescue, stalling the project.
- A new sub-contractor was appointed in May, with an additional R29m allocated to complete construction, but little work has been done since then.
- Yet the Limpopo Department of Education, which is funding the project, and the Independent Development Trust (IDT), which is managing it, insist it will be completed by 10 December.

The budget for the long-delayed construction of a school for about 170 blind learners in Limpopo has increased by R29m, bringing the total budget to nearly R198m.

The project to build a new campus for the Rivoni School for the Blind was initiated after the school's learners protested for better conditions in 2019. The contractor, Clear Choice Builders, was appointed in 2021 with construction scheduled to be complete by June 2024. But the project faced multiple delays, and Clear Choice was placed under business rescue earlier this year, stalling the project.



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The Limpopo Department of Education and Independent Development Trust (IDT) insist that the project will be completed by 10 December 2025. The department says the project is 93% complete, while the IDT says it is 86% complete. The contract with Clear Choice has not been cancelled, and a new subcontractor was appointed in May with an additional R29m allocated to finish the work, which includes a state-of-the-art eye clinic.

Several large buildings have been built, but they have not been handed over to the school and stand empty.

and unused. Many still do not have doors or windows. Two of the school's offices were demolished and rebuilt, but these have not been handed over. Where the eye clinic is supposed to be built, there is only a half-completed foundation with a rusting frame. The site appears to have been abandoned since at least July.



This is where a state-of-the-art eye clinic is meant to have been built. There is only a half-built foundation, despite a new subcontractor having been appointed in May with an additional R29-million to complete the project.

Meanwhile, the school's learners are studying in dilapidated prefabricated classrooms next to the construction site. Rivoni is one of only a few public schools for blind learners in Limpopo and plays a vital role in inclusive education. Despite the difficult conditions, the school has maintained a 100% matric pass rate for several years.

"We've gone 12 months without being paid," said one worker, who asked not to be named. "We were told we'd be paid, but it was just an empty promise. Some of us are breadwinners, and I'm now looking for another job."

Community members on the project steering committee say they doubt the project will be finished.

"The project has been abandoned for months. We recovered stolen materials like zinc from local resident taken by workers trying to compensate themselves. The contractor clearly cannot finish the job, and we are urging the Department of Education to intervene," said committee member Joshua Chavalala.

Clear Choice Builders and the new subcontractor did not respond to requests for comment.



While the large new buildings stand empty, many without doors or windows, the school's 168 learners go to school in prefab buildings.

The project is funded by the Limpopo Department of Education and overseen by the IDT. Limpopo region general manager for the IDT, Manyane Chidi, said that Clear Choice has been paid R157m to date for work done and that the total budget for the project is R198m, including a R29m “variation” to build the eye clinic

“The delays are a result of the contractor’s financial issues — not mismanagement by the IDT. The IDT has fulfilled its obligations, paying all invoices for work completed,” he said. Clear Choice may face penalties for the delays, Chidi said.

Limpopo Department of Education spokesperson Mike Maringa said the school’s status as a special-needs facility justified the high budget.

According to a [presentation](#) by the National Department of Basic Education in Parliament in May, Limpopo faces overcrowding in more than 1,600 schools and will need to spend R5.9-billion to rectify this.

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