

Dendere, 'the Nest', provides drug rehabilitation in Zimbabwe...but funding required deepening work of the centre

A drug and substance abuse rehabilitation centre has been opened in Domboshava, some 30 kilometres north east of the capital Harare, to assist combating the scourge that has become a national problem.

The Dendere Rehabilitation centre which means "nest" in the Shona language is a symbol of home and love, according to authorities.

Fashioned on a residential concept, it draws inspiration from the nest where parent birds put their time, their love and their energy into creating the best nest to protect their eggs in to nurture their young in that same nest before they are ready to go off into the world.

This is what the rehabilitation centre is aiming to do.

"The centre has capacity to house 14 clients at a given time," explained Primrose Phiri (cofounder of the rehabilitation centre.)

"The main focus is on the psychotherapeutic management given to drug addicts.

"It helps the patient to get rid of substance abuse as well as process abuse. The treatment includes mainly counselling by professionals, medication for depression. It also offers different programmes like residential treatment, support groups, extended, recovery houses, and out-patient." Munyaradzi Chonyera added (co founder of rehabilitation centre)

Drug addiction and substance abuse have increased exponentially in recent years, and has been compared to a cancer that is crippling the mental and physical well being of mostly young people, rendering them lifeless, focus less and directionless.

The scourge is also threatening economic and social stability.

Substances that are commonly used in Zimbabwe are glue, Broncleer (a cough syrup), mangemba (local concoction), cane sprits, marijuana, codeine and methamphetamine (crystal meth).

In previous year's drug and substance abuse prevalent among street kids who did this for different reasons, including relieving stressful situations, courage boosting for engaging in criminal activities and as sedating substances to help them sleep.

However, because of unemployment rate which is high now in Zimbabwe, combined with poverty and despair, there have been increasing numbers of youths who are turning also to using drugs as a way of entertainment.

Some well off kids and some young professionals who indulged for recreational reasons and become addicted have also been wasted after they have not received treatment and therapy.

Alarming

There have been an alarming number of admissions at hospitals because of methamphetamine use among youth compared to other conditions. Recent statistics from the Zimbabwe United Nations Association (ZUNA) in their statistics sited that 65 of Zimbabwean youths suffer from substance abuse related mental illnesses. In 2019, Harare hospital psychiatric unit treated 150 substance abuse cases. That number spiked to 850 in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021.

With the problem at hand and driven by the need to help we decided that something has to be done we wanted to address the crisis that the country is having and help a generation (we call it the lost generation).

The huge number of substance abusers is making it very hard to get necessary rehabilitation. There is a massive shortage of substance and drug abuse treatment facilities in the country. The country is also facing challenges with regards to shortage of health professionals, according to the Ministry of Health in their National Mental Health Services Strategy, (2019-2023). Zimbabwe has 17 psychiatrists, 14 clinical psychologists and 917 mental health nurses Out of nearly 16 million people after realising that the generation is being destroyed, the idea of starting a Rehabilitation Centre emerged considering also that we have a shortage of substance and drug abuse facilities in the country.

This urgent need necessitated the setting up of Dendere Rehabilitation centre, but it will require support to get by.

"Currently the centre is self-funding the project and we have made a remarkable progress but we also have a long way to go considering that we are still starting and also the economic situation in our country that we are operating from," Primrose said.

"We could do with all the help we can get be it prayers, advice, mentorship, expertise, financial, equipment (beds, oxygen tanks, defibrillators, solar system, board games, security cctvs, security alarm system, perimeter fencing, blankets, stoves, freezers, towels, bedsheets) and any other help we can get for us to continue with the work," she appealed.