

*Miss Seychelles... another world ...2016*  
*Contestant Number 6 – Rita-Maria Durup*

## **CONTESTANT PROJECT PROPOSAL**

*Heroin Addiction ..... Reaching Out!*

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## INTRODUCTION

Seychelles, an archipelago in the western Indian Ocean is made up of one hundred and fifteen islands and lies between 480km and 1,600km East coast of Africa with a population of about 93000.

Seychelles is no exception as it joins the rest of the world to combat drug and substance diversion, use, abuse and illicit trafficking. Global AIDS report 2012 indicates mobility and the sexual behavior of drug users can lead to wide geographical spread and to many sectors of the community being affected very quickly.

***My project is about Heroin....*** a drug that has impacted our society in such a way that it has become a serious threat to our social and economic development and it is also now linked to a serious public health issue.

In Seychelles studies have been conducted yielding data evidence that heroin is being consumed by many people of which more of its users are young people. Over the past ten years it has become increasingly clear that its common consumption patterns have changed from smoking to injecting.

Data collected shows that to date about two thousand people are injecting heroin in Seychelles. Evidence has indicated a rise in epidemics such as HIV and Hepatitis C which are mainly concentrated among key population namely commercial sex workers, men having sex with men, prison inmates and people who inject drugs.

## INTRODUCTION...continued

Despite the fact that a lot is being done to address the issues relating to injecting heroin and its addiction, many gaps still remain to be bridged in order to sustain and control the situation. Conversations on the subject are currently on the increase although the opinions remain diverged. It has become a public health issue with the rise in the spread of HIV virus and Hepatitis Virus.

Studies conducted indicate that sharing of injecting equipment such as syringes and needles is a common practice among people who inject drugs and is the most common mode of transmission of Hepatitis C and HIV viruses.

At the present time Seychelles have put in place some harm reduction strategies however one of the most effective component is the Needle Exchange Programme is not fully available. So far it has only been introduced in January 2015 for a year in Seychelles under a pilot project led by CDCU of the Ministry of Health. Results from the pilot project showed that such strategy needs to be implemented in the country.

## OBJECTIVES

I believe firmly that each and everyone can make a difference and therefore the primary objective of my project is to reach out to Seychelles community through a comprehensive programme of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation targeting mainly young people, heroin dependants and their families.

Specific objectives of my projects are:-

- To network and partner with relevant stakeholders such as addicts, ex- addicts, nongovernmental organizations, independent activists, Drug and Alcohol Council, detox and rehabilitation centres, education institutions, prison...
- To follow and assess the trend in the prevalence of heroin use among the young people in Seychelles.
- To advocate through the creation of an awareness campaign of risk behaviours associated with heroin addiction by creating and constant updating of relevant IEC materials.
- To develop capacity in order to have an effective and a sustainable peer education amongst drug users.
- To raise funds through various means such as the Miss Seychelles Another World 2016 experience, private sector, local, regional and international donors in order to sustain my project.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected results to be attained from my project are as follows:-

- Partnerships and networking with relevant stakeholders exist.
- More data on heroin use among the young people in Seychelles is collected, monitored, evaluated and disseminated regularly to identify progress.
- Education and sensitization on heroin addiction is ongoing and sustainable.
- Peer education becomes a powerful tool of advocacy.
- Adequate funds are mobilized to address addiction of heroin in Seychelles.



## KEY INFORMANTS AND FINDINGS

In order to put my project together, I have consulted with many stakeholders and also further my research on various existing mechanisms and structures.

- Meeting with Mrs Louise and Mr Confiance from Wellness Detox Centre at Les Canelles gave me a better insight on the facilities and services of the Wellness Centre. At present the centre is an extended structure of the Ministry of Health providing detox programme mainly for heroin addicts. Opium substitution Therapy is the main focus of the centre and Methadone is used as a substitution to heroin. After a few weeks as an inpatient at the centre, the patient then undergoes a maintenance methadone programme for six months to one year at their Wellness clinic at the Seychelles hospital and then re-admits in Les Canelles for a further few weeks to detox methadone.
- Ms Dianne at Mont Royal Centre spoke about the services they provide. The centre is more a rehabilitation centre rather than a detox centre although she admits that they are also providing methadone during the first stage of the rehabilitation. The centre can at one time take up to 24 clients and they can only take male clients as residents. She explained that because of the internal design of the centre it is not possible to take female clients at the moment however they do have a female rehabilitation day care service and also have an office in Victoria. She also informed me that they work closely with families of their patients.

## KEY INFORMANTS AND FINDINGS .... continued

- Mrs Edna Jean, Chairman of an NGO named Parents with Hope met with me to explain the work that they do. They are basically a group of parents who have joined together as a support group because they all have children addicted to heroin. They have found it hard to cope with their children's addiction and sometimes they felt hopeless.
- Meeting with Mr Ronny Arnephy, a well-known activist and a popular face of Civil Society in Seychelles gave me a clearer picture of what is happening in the community. He is often in contact with drug users among other vulnerable groups he advocates for and most of his outreach is on the streets and ghettos. He pointed out that a lot of work is being done in demand reduction and supply suppression however harm reduction is not up to full scale or is not at the same level as the other two components. He explained that in order to have an effective national response the three components need equal attention and investment. He explained that the Seychelles Government has put a lot of emphasis on the issue of heroin through strategies, policies, mechanisms and structures in place but the lack of effort in implementation as well as coordination and communication remain the biggest barrier. He also pointed out that the level of stigma and discrimination still exist and should be addressed as well.

## KEY INFORMANTS AND FINDINGS .... continued

- Meeting with a female addict, an inpatient at Wellness Centre was an exceptional experience. Her story of addiction is really a sad one. She started using drugs mainly Marijuana and Hashish at the age of twelve and since then moved on to Heroin. Peer pressure seemed to be the main cause of her addiction however after listening to her I realized that many other factors including lack of parental guidance might have also contributed to her addiction. She is now an in patient detoxing Methadone and she intends to be sober for her children who have been behind her since she decided to detox.
- Meeting with Mr Robert Ah-Weng from CARE was enlightening as he explained the core objectives of CARE being an NGO that has put in place a very comprehensive prevention programme in primary and secondary schools on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue. Part and parcel of their programme is joint cultural and sport based activities within the community. CARE takes the lead in educating values and virtues of life.
- Seychelles has put in place guidelines, policies, acts, frameworks among other mechanisms to ensure the issue of illicit drugs is addressed. Being part of the international and regional community Seychelles has also signed several treaties and conventions to be part of the global coordinated response. Such mechanisms are reviewed continuously in line with development and evolution of illicit drugs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Many issues relating to heroin addiction were raised during the consultations and visits done in preparation of my project. Some issues need to be addressed while others need to be relooked at.

- The need to increase aftercare and rehabilitation programmes for addicts.
- To facilitate access to detox as a medical centre and relook at some of its services.
- To introduce half way homes and dropping centres.
- Training for employees of rehabilitation and detox centres to be strengthened.
- To have more engagement of other stakeholders in the detox and rehabilitation programmes such as families, media and civil society organizations.
- The need to have more effective prevention programmes that are sustained.
- The need for the media to scale up its sensitization and education on the subject to the population.

## PLAN OF ACTION

The timeframe designed for this project is for at least five years starting in January 2017 and ending in December 2021. An approximate costing and the proposed activities to be conducted have been tabulated below.

Activity	TIME FRAME	Responsible person/s	Estimated Cost
<b>Establishing partnership through visits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASFF</li> <li>• CARE</li> <li>• Wellness Centre</li> <li>• Mont Royal</li> <li>• CAR</li> <li>• DOVE Rehabilitation</li> <li>• SNYC</li> </ul>	2 Months	Contestant No6 and project team	SR7000.00
<b>Outreach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ghettos</li> <li>• Nightclubs and bars</li> <li>• Streets</li> </ul>	Ongoing during the 5 years	Contestant No6 and Project Team	SR25000.00
<b>Capacity building for peers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops for addicts</li> </ul>	Ongoing 1 per month for 5 years	Contestant No6 Project team and relevant contestant	SR600,000.00
<b>Mobilization of funds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• from Businesses through CSR</li> <li>• fund raising such as sale of food etc.. on commemorative days</li> <li>• grants from well know organisations</li> <li>• seek donations via social media</li> </ul>	Ongoing for 5 years	Contestant No6 and  Project team	
<b>Awareness campaign</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop IEC materials</li> <li>• Radio, TV, Newspaper adverts</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Talks and educating sessions</li> </ul>	Ongoing for 5 years	Contestant No6 and  Project team	SR500,000.00

## CONCLUSION

Heroin addiction is disease and is very manipulative. The health, social, psychological, mental and physical state of a person gradually slows down once he or she is addicted to heroin.

During heroin withdrawal, a person suffers low pain and discomfort. The most common withdrawal symptoms are diarrhea, cramps, pains and sweating. It is important to note that such addiction brings down with it the active role of that person as a member of a family and a community.

Without effective prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programme, heroin addiction will not phase out.



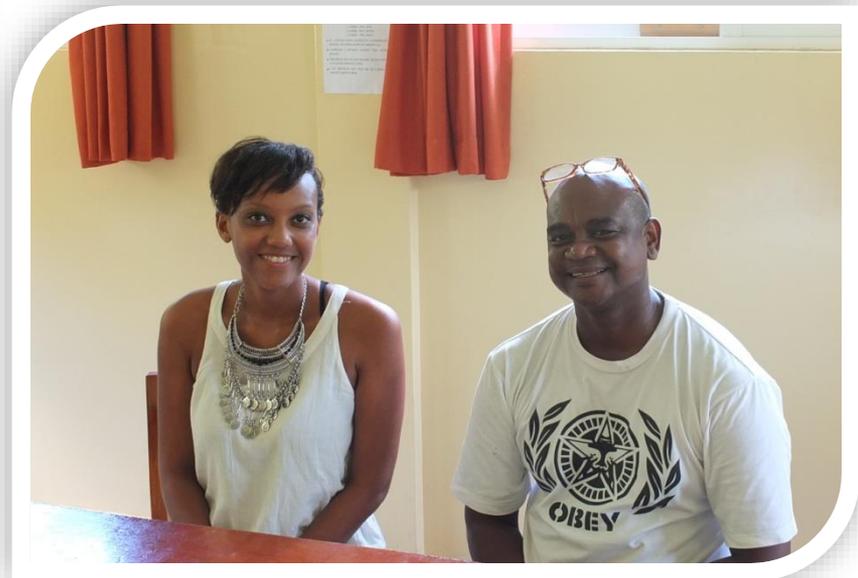
## PHOTO GALLERY



Interview with Mr Ronny Arnephy and Mrs Maria Louis



At the Reception Area at the Wellness Centre



Interview with Mr Jeff Confiance

## VOTE OF THANKS

I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone who have assisted me with my project especially

My parents, partner and siblings

Mr Benjamin Vel

Ms Yvana Theresine

Mrs Maria Louise

Mr Jeff Confiance

Ms Dianne Mussard

Mrs Edna Jean

Mr Ronny Arnephy

Mr Robert Ah-weng

### **Sources**

*Global AIDS report 2012; Seychelles*

*Epidemiological report MOH 2015:*

*Seychelles RDS Survey 2011*