

Drug demon stalks Soweto

Every day about 10 teenagers beg for help to escape addiction's claws

FOR JEHAN YORO-BADAT AND VUYO MKIZE

BOU 10 Soweto teenagers a day are approaching a drug centre in their area to get help for substance abuse.

"Drug abuse has become so prevalent that it is almost a lifestyle among the youth," says Issac Mokoeti from the SA National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.

He adds that Sanca is helping about 10 teenagers a day.

And at least six teenagers are being detained by local police for drug abuse every day.

Chairman of the Meadowlands Community Policing forum, Bernard Msetisa.

"We offer them counselling instead of arresting them," Msetisa says, adding there is also a growing concern about human trafficking because boys are being used for sex by the people who sell them drugs.

The area's growing drug problem was highlighted during a campaign against guns and drug abuse in Soweto yesterday.

Thabo Maelane, 18, knows all to start a new chapter for myself and leave that old chapter behind."

Childline says it dealt with 530 calls in Gauteng between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 for substance abuse.

"More than 100 of these calls were by children who were already abusing drugs. The rest were people looking for information on the matter, and children with parents who had the problem," says Childline director Lynn Cawood.

Statistics for Soweto are not readily available.

Cawood says they mostly receive calls regarding sexual abuse, but are aware that drug experimentation is going on among the youth.

"We are especially concerned about the percentage of children who will, through experimentation with drugs, get completely hooked. They need to understand that

their long-term physical and emotional states will take a knock and their happiness in life will suffer too," she points out.

Educational psychologist Thandi Diale, from the Tshabo Thimba Clinic in Soweto, says they too are dealing with several Soweto residents battling addiction.

"The level of substance abuse determines the course of intervention. For some youth, it may be early by their parents, who send them in here.

Others are driven by emotional abuse in which case we introduce psychotherapeutic therapy.

"It is a big problem in the township, but I am of the firm belief that it has nothing to do with socio-economic factors in so much that it is a social problem. Peer pressure is still very influential among the youth."

Alcoholics Anonymous holds meetings twice a week in the area, for help with drug abuse, contact Childline on 0800 055 555.

HEADSTART: Soweto youth take part in an anti-Aids and gun-free South Africa campaign at a stadium in Meadowlands yesterday.



PICTURE: MATTHEWS BALOY

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"More than 100 of these calls were by children who were already abusing drugs. The rest were from other family members," he says.

"I would reject and keep away from other family members," he says.

My friends. My parents had died so I thought this was another way not to face the problems I had.

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Childline director Lynn Cawood says the level of substance abuse is going on among the youth. "We are especially concerned about the percentage of children who will, through experimentation with drugs, get completely hooked. They need to understand that their long-term physical and emotional states will take a knock and their happiness in life will suffer too," she points out.

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Gun Free SA engages youth on violence

By Thabo Jobe
Gun Free SA in partnership with various law enforcement agencies is spearheading a youth campaign, to address issues relating to crime and violence.

The Gun Free association together with the police, the tourism agencies and Sanea, are inviting the youth to attend their campaign aimed at addressing issues of guns, alcohol and drugs during schools' holidays. According to the officials, the campaign aims to prevent alcohol abuse during the holidays and abuse of alcohol and drugs.

Gun Free SA official, Elisha Mollo, said most youth tend to engage in criminal activities during this time, because they are exposed to these illegal substances. Mollo said they have partnered with these agencies to help address and engage young people on the abuse of substances that subsequently lead to crime.

He said the aim of the campaign is to talk to the youth about the dangers related to guns, alcohol and drugs. "We intend to make young people aware of the effect that these three things come with," Mollo said. "We want to avoid the negative effect that can affect their lives as a result of guns and substance abuse," said Mollo. The campaign was first started in May at Diepsloot, and Mollo said they are now bringing it to Soweto. He said during their campaign, young people are addressed in a manner that will sensitize them. Mollo said they relay the message through activities such as poetry, drama, music and various other forms of art.

"We believe young people need to be targeted in a manner that they will understand," he said. The campaign commenced in Soweto last Thursday at Meadowlands and, Mollo said they will be hosting another one at Dobsonville on June 24 before heading to Orlando on June 25.

He said Gun Free has compiled a document highlighting similar success stories on drugs, alcohol and guns and it will be distributed during their campaigns. The document also offers solutions to this problem, and he encourages youth to avail themselves. "They need to come forward and lead the fight against crime and abuse of substances," said Mollo.

Stakeholders un- to get youth off streets

Source To
HEADLINE
10/04/2004

By Bonolo Sekudu

youth.

The campaigns have been carried out in different areas within the province.

Thabiso Mollo, field-worker at GFSA said the campaigns have been successful and supported by various stakeholders who share a common goal as involved in a series of campaigns for Gauteng

The statistics of

young people involved in crime or substance abuse is alarming heretofore, organisations, especially those working towards making a difference in society should be joining hands to combat problematic issues and try by all means to create awareness, this is according to Mollo.

He said: "During campaigns we conduct talks with young people, we warn them about the dangers of carrying guns and we address issues of drugs and alcohol.

"As organisations, we have the responsibility to foresee that information is disseminated.

"Young people are on a long school break, some might be tempted to indulge in unlawful or illegal activities



GFSA campaign tours

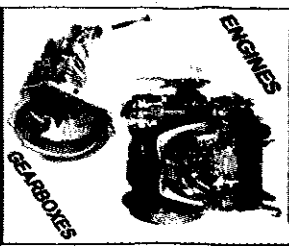
therefore, and initiatives such as this one are needed to prevent them from being statistics of thieving or drug and alcohol abusing."

He said although their messages might not reach all young people, the few of them reached make a difference.

GFSA encourages youth at home, doing

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