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Sent: 16 May 2023 15:47

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Problem identification and analysis

Drug and substance abuse cases in Zimbabwe are rising particularly amongst the young people. In the long run, implementing a drug awareness program as part of our organisational mandate will decrease the drug and substance abuse cases. Research done by the Health Professionals Empowerment Trust in Zimbabwe indicates that more than 50% of the patients admitted at Zimbabwe’s mental health centres are cases associated with drug abuse. The same research indicates that over 80% of these admissions fall in the 16-40 age group and mostly males are affected. Over the years, drug and substance abuse has been a major concern for most businesses, health care service providers and the government alike. This is because drug abuse has been pointed out as a leading cause of children being left vulnerable to circumstances such as HIV and AIDS, poverty, illness, early marriages, child mortality rate due to unwanted pregnancies and child headed families due to death of parents, loss of productivity, absenteeism at work, mental illness and other preventable health issues all of which stall economic development. The project will address most, if not all, of these substance and drug abuse issues and related costs. The purpose of this project is: “To assist in the design and support of appropriate drug prevention strategies, structures and systems required to redeem children from drug and alcohol abuse”. Adolescence can be a time of making irrational, impulsive decisions. It can be a time of living in the now, without consideration for the consequences that may follow. As a result, it is a time in which many teens try drugs and alcohol for the first-time. The average age of substance use initiation is between 13 and 14 years old, in seventh and eighth grade, before one even enters high school. This is a harrowing reality to face. It is difficult to believe that our youth are developing dangerous, addictive habits at such an early age, especially right under our nose. We want to believe it is just a phase. We want to blame experimentation, or the other kids at school for our children’s early drug use. The last thing we want to uncover is that our children are in danger, or that this substance use is something our sons and daughters have brought upon themselves. Sometimes, though, it is. As parents and educators, it is crucial that we uncover the root of drug use in teens and young adults as soon as it starts to grow. In order to prevent deep-seated drug habits later on in our children’s lives, we have to take action now. We have to ask questions. We have to understand the problem at hand. The project will work to reduce the negative health, social and human rights impacts of drug use and drug policy, such as the increased vulnerability to HIV and hepatitis infection among people who inject drugs by promoting evidence-based public health policies and practices, and human rights based

“Active Youth Zimbabwe for Drug prevention and rehabilitation services”. approaches. This will be an influential district source of research, policy/legal analysis and advocacy on drug use, health and human rights issues. The health ministry has reported that

57 % of all admissions to psychiatric institutions are attributed to substance abuse. According to zimstart Bulawayo province has once again emerged as a place with the highest figures with heavy drinkers of alcohol with a consumption of 38.3%. Meanwhile Active Youth Zimbabwe revealed that nearly 48% of Bulawayo’s youth teenagers, aged 15 and 19 years partook in X-rated wild parties popularly known as vuzu parties. Ingutsheni mental health hospital indicated that more than 600 patients affected by drug abuse are admitted monthly due to extremely mental disorder.

Report compiled by Active Youth Zimbabwe <https://www.facebook.com/activeyouthzimbabwetrust/>

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Top of Form