

# KIGEME IWACU



## PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTIVITIES, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL RELATIONS IN KIGEME CAMP

*'We, the youth participate in promoting peace through art'*

Price  
**Free of charge**

Give us feedback on:  
**E-mail:** [kigememagazine2@gmail.com](mailto:kigememagazine2@gmail.com)  
**Tel:** +250788237690

**PUBLICATION  
OF EJO YOUTH ECHO**



# CONTENT



**03** EDITORIAL

**04** EPILEPSY

**05** DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAUMA AND TRAUMA CRISIS

**06** CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA ON REFUGEE LIFE

**07** TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

**08** TESTIMONIES BY TRAINED COMMUNITY PSYCHOSOCIAL WORKERS IN KIGEME CAMP

**10** WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS IN KIGEME CAMP

**11** CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING CULTURE OF PEACE

**12** RETREAT FOR YOUTH FROM KIGEME CAMP

**15** WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS IN PHOTOS



# EDITORIAL

May peace be with you, dear readers of Kigeme Iwacu!

The Youth of Kigeme is back with the fourth edition of your Kigeme Iwacu Magazine. This magazine strengthens good relationships that are being continuously witnessed amongst the youth of Kigeme camp and also the youth from host community. This edition comes as a focus on various activities related to psychosocial aspects in Kigeme camp.

When a person has fled from a country or his/her residence area and goes to live in a camp, he/she has reasons why he/she fled and most often these reasons include wars, natural disasters, persecution and even other reasons. All these reasons have different consequences on the lives of those who survived these incidents; such as visible consequences (for example physical disabilities), various body injuries and also some wounds that are not visible on the body such as trauma, psychological problems, etc.

The youth, your friends, who produce this Kigeme Iwacu Magazine, contacted different psychosocial experts and compiled for you different stories in this magazine so that as you read them attentively, you may be able to know about trauma, mental health, social relationships and also other aspects.

We do not have any doubt that if you have an opportunity to read this magazine, you will learn about basic knowledge that you will need as you continue to assist your neighbours, friends and relatives when they are affected by the problem of trauma and even other related aspects. We also hope that another key result is to continue to act as catalyst for peace and good relationships in your community, at school and also in the area where the camp is located. In fact, healthy life free from trauma and its consequences is one of factors that help people to act as catalysts for peace.

We thank stakeholders and different authorities in Kigeme camp for their cooperation extended to us. These stakeholders include ARCT-Ruhuka (Rwandese Association of Trauma Counsellors), MIDIMAR, refugee representative committee, UNHCR, AHA (African Humanitarian Action), Kigeme Cell and other different partners.

We are particularly thankful towards our journalists for their sacrifice and commitment proven during their research and writing these stories.

**MBONIGABA Jean Damascène**

## **Chief editor:**

MBONIGABA Jean Damascène

## **Sub editors :**

NIYODUSENGA Chantal

MUGENZI Javan

MUTABAZI Yves

## **Reporters:**

UMUHOZA Clémence

MUPENZI Muyoboke

IRIBAGIZA Fasil

NIYOYIZEYE Noah

SHUKURU Alphonse

MUGISHA Willy

NDAYISHIMIYE Enock

NKURUNZIZA Emmanuel Abdoul Karim

NYAMPINGA Marie Grace

MUSABYIMANA Laurien

TWIZERIMANA Innocent

IRADUKUNDA Jeanine

## **Photographers:**

MUGISHA Willy

MUGENZI Javan

# EPILEPSY: A DISEASE OFTEN INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY BY MANY PEOPLE

**S**ome people think that a person who suffers from epilepsy is possessed by devil or witchcraft, others believe that a person may get infected once an epileptic person undergoes a crisis near them. We have sought to know what different residents of Kigeme camp say about this and they told us many things showing that they do not understand well this disease. A psychiatric nurse at a health post operating in Kigeme camp says that epilepsy is a disease like many others and has no connection with what people think about it.



MUKASUGIRA Adeline talking to Kigeme Iwacu Bulletin (photo Yves M)

32 years old, MUKASUGIRA Adeline says that mental health is a situation whereby a person performs things different from those performed by healthy people in ordinary life. Concerning epilepsy disease, she knows that it is when a person collapses and you immediately see that the person has a mental problem.

MUNYAMARIZA Narcisse is a married man living in Kigeme camp; he says that his knowledge about epilepsy is that the disease is caused by too much thinking while there is perhaps no answer to one's thoughts. He further adds that epilepsy may be caused by shortage of water and blood in the brain and not drinking water hence causing shortage of water in the head as this can cause a person to suffer from epilepsy.

NYIRAMUGISHA Honorine is a 24 years old young woman living in Kigeme camp. She says that mental health is a situ-

ation when a person has a mental disease. She says that what she knows about epilepsy is that it is when a person falls down and dribble comes out of their mouth. After our conversation with these residents of Kigeme camp regarding mental health especially epilepsy, we went to see an officer in charge of mental health diseases at a health post located in Kigeme camp to help us understand better some issues related to mental health in general and epilepsy in particular.



NDATIMANA Joel, AHA Psychiatric Nurse in Kigeme camp.

NDATIMANA Joel, a psychiatric nurse in Kigeme camp, who is in charge of treating people with mental diseases including epilepsy says that epilepsy is a mental disease because it affects the brain. He further explains that mental illness especially epilepsy, has nothing to do with devil or madness as some people might think when they tend to keep the person in isolation, because it is a disease like others. This nurse says that even when a person is overwhelmed with this disease, the affected person is given medication to help him/her recover.

## What causes epilepsy?

NDATIMANA Joel explains that usually epilepsy is caused by different things including complicated delivery of a baby which may cause a brain injury at the time of child birth. Having an accident may cause the brain damage and could be

the cause for a person to suffer from epilepsy. He also says that a brain tumour, suffering from a disease such as acute malaria as well as meningitis when this causes some damage to the brain, then a person may also suffer from epilepsy.

### **Is this disease infectious?**

As explained above, epilepsy is a mental disease because it is an illness that affects the brain. This disease, as explained by the nurse, is a non-infectious disease. He said that this is a disease like any other diseases and added that it has nothing to do with what people say that when a person suffering from epilepsy farts, the person next to him/her gets also infected with that disease.

He said that there are people who say that when a person touches another in an epileptic crisis, he/she may also get the disease. However, he says that whatever is said is far from reality; it is rather a means of keeping in isolation people with epilepsy.

In an interview with Kigeme Iwacu Magazine; this nurse said that they encounter different problems related to mind set because some parents used to bring a person suffering from this disease very late because they first start by looking for medicines here and there instead of timely taking the patient to the health post. He said this in these words, 'actually the problem we have is that there are still some people who delay to bring patients because they start by consulting traditional healers and you sometimes find the disease has overwhelmed the patient because of too much delays in homes while looking for other medicines whereas they do not understand well what type of illness is affecting the person'.

To conclude this interview with Kigeme Iwacu Magazine, he appealed to parents to quickly see the nurse in case they see a child who has a problem of collapsing, or has already gone numb, is agitating legs and dribbling as well as whenever they notice abnormal symptoms on the child or any other person. He also requested adult people, who have this disease to control themselves, take care of themselves and follow directives and advices given by mental disease doctors and further asked them to prevent accidents even though it is difficult but they should endeavour to avoid them whenever possible.

Story by MUGENZI Javan

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TRAUMA AND TRAUMA CRISIS?

**A**fter it was noticed that there are people with trauma symptoms in Kigeme camp, Kigeme Iwacu Magazine wanted to know about trauma and if there is any difference between trauma and trauma crisis and we interviewed different people who told us much about what they think is the difference between these two concepts.

We circulated our microphone among the residents of Kigeme camp and interviewed some of the residents of this camp. NDUSHABANDI Rachel, woman, 34 years old living in Kigeme camp revealed that, for her, when people talk of trauma, they mean a situation lived by a person in their own heart (mind) and feels she/he is not physically and mentally fit when she/he might have encountered problems she/he is unable to cope with, thus causing the person to experience repeated emotional trauma crises. For her, she thinks that trauma is caused by problems faced by a person as a result of what they have witnessed or have experienced in life. A person who has trauma crisis in their mind is never calm and is always fearful.

This is not the only person interviewed because we also approached KARIHUNGU James, a 40 years old man living in Kigeme camp, who said that a person whose life is affected by trauma is seen to be characterized by repeated sudden shaking with fear, a person affected by trauma is always anxious and looks unhappy. All this is caused by the complicated living conditions a person has gone through. He added that a person who has been affected by trauma is always thinking about what has troubled their life. He added that for the person affected by trauma, trauma crisis may end if that person is not exposed again to events that caused the trauma.

As explanations given by these residents of Kigeme camp whom we interviewed reveal some lack of accurate information needed for their better understanding of the difference between trauma and trauma crisis, we approached a psychologist who helped us understand the difference between trauma and trauma crisis so that these residents and other people who will read this magazine thoroughly can understand the true difference between the two concepts.

We then approached NDICUNGUYE François, a psychologist of ARCT-Ruhuka in Kigeme camp, who is in charge of psycho-social support and he explained to us deeply the difference between trauma and Trauma crisis



NDICUNGUYE François, a psychologist of ARCT-Ruhuka, in charge of psycho-social support in Kigeme camp.

He told us that trauma is a change in a person's attitudes, behaviour, way of doing and thinking that is caused by sad events a person has gone through, was told, has witnessed, has done or has undergone which, altogether, are beyond natural capacity to solve abnormal problems while trauma crisis is a behaviour shown by a person as a result of a sharp reminder of unusual problems faced and is thus projected back into the events which have affected the person and sees or feels them as if they were happening now. Often, such a person shows attitudes others do not understand well but these are normal attitudes in connection with unusual events that a person has experienced.

He concluded saying that it is advisable that the residents of Kigeme camp get adequate information about trauma enabling them to give assistance to a person who shows trauma consequences or symptoms or may also seek assistance from those responsible, when necessary.

Story by SHUKURU Alphonse and UWITONZE Jeanine

## CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA ON REFUGEE LIFE

Nobody doubts that the consequences of trauma on refugee life may be witnessed because the living conditions of refugees are very different from the circumstances prior to fleeing their homes and may cause a problem in the families they live with and in the country of refuge as a whole. Throughout this story, we will tell you about some of the consequences of trauma in general and later discuss with an employee of ARCT-Ruhuka a psychologist in Kigeme camp, who will tell us about the consequences of trauma in the refugee life.

Psychological experts claim that trauma is any change affecting a person and is likely to have different consequences.

Consequences of trauma are identified in three major categories. These include: consequences affecting a person, consequences affecting a family and consequences affecting a country.

### **Consequences affecting a person:**

Development stops because of poverty, being sick, ignorance, living in fear, feeling unwilling to do anything. Negative attitudes including drug addiction, tendency to do evil and commit suicide, wandering, lazing around, fearlessness, despair and mental sickness.

### **Consequences affecting a family**

Trauma affected person causes trauma to the whole family. Delay in development of families as well as poverty in the family, lack of cohesion among family members, lack of cooperation between husband, wife and children, all this could ultimately lead to family destruction.

### **Consequences on a country:**

When people are suffering from trauma, even the development of a country is at a standstill because people are the working force and strengths of a country. Such a delay in development is seen through the following: poor performance at work, insecurity, lack of unity and reconciliation and the number of patients suffering from trauma related diseases increases.

After knowing some of the consequences generated by trauma in general, we went to see NDICUNGUYE François, ARCT-Ruhuka psychologist in Kigeme camp. He told us about trauma consequences in refugee or camp life.

In his interview with Kigeme Iwacu Magazine, he said that, in reality, refugees are people who usually have travelled a long distance before reaching a country that grants them asylum. In ordinary life, people react differently to circumstances affecting them, sometimes some are found to be strongly affected by the circumstances while others are unaffected. It is within this context that some refugees have problems of trauma. This therefore has a negative effect on them, their families and even their neighbours as well as host community.

NDICUNGUYE François went on to say that a person affected by trauma in refugee conditions is no longer capable of self-development and when no treatment is available, this may result into mental disease hence compromising their own development, that of neighbours as well as the extended family.

Another possibility is drug addiction or getting involved in illegitimate sexual relationships especially among the youth because they often have lost their hope in the future.

Experts indicate that if human rights were respected all over the world, and problems which cause refugee status were eliminated, nothing would prevent trauma and associated consequences to be reduced.

Story by MUTABAZI Yves

## TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

*In the context of refugee life, trauma is some state of mind that is always present in daily life because people are actually living lives which are different from those they were familiar with before fleeing which add to the situations they have experienced at the time they were fleeing especially as, in African countries, refugee problems are mainly caused by war. We approached some of the residents in Kigeme camp and asked them if they knew anything about the symptoms of trauma. We later consulted a manual written by ARCT –RUHUKA trauma and trauma crisis and compiled for you some different symptoms of trauma*

**NGARUYINKA Eric** had this to say, ‘symptoms of a person who has trauma include the fact that sometimes the person yells for assistance whereas nothing has happened to him/her or even starts to run when they remember the life they have gone through’.

**KANYAMAGARE -BIGIRIMANA Abdoul** is the camp executive committee president. He told us: “A person who shows signs of trauma is characterized by silence when the person was usually talking or was known to be a talkative individual and, for the time being, the person speaks less, as a result of what they have gone through in their own life for which they were unable to control themselves”.



KANYAMAGARE BIGIRIMANA Abdoul, President of Camp Executive Committee in Kigeme camp(Javan M)

After listening to some of the ideas of different camp inhabitants, Kigeme Iwacu Magazine wanted to know some information on the symptoms of trauma and we consulted the manual prepared by ARCT-Ruhuka on trauma.

In this manual, they indicate that when a body is affected by trauma, the affected body gets tired and expresses it in different ways.

**These ways are as follows:**

**Emotionally:** This is expressed through anxiety, unusually increased fear and being timorous, angry, showing no feelings whatsoever and self-judgment or guilty mind.

**Psychosocial** :the relationships and attitudes of a person affected by trauma include being often seen as desperate and being very aggressive, wandering, vagrant, and as a roving person, loss of interest in sex or being sex addicted, drug addiction, drunkenness, loneliness and self- concentration, logorrhoea, wild dreams, staying awake, attentive, feeling stinking or good smelling things related to one's previous experience whereas they are absent. Amnesia, lack of self-confidence and losing trust in others, despair and having ideas likely to drive a person to commit suicide, bad relationships with others, poor school performance at school, failure to honour one's obligations, childishness, evading anything that can remind of troubling events or experiences and working without any break.

### How can you assist a person showing trauma symptoms?

The best way of assisting persons affected by trauma is to help them identify and say all the bad things they can remember: what they have seen, their experiences and how they feel

In general, these are some of the ways you can use in order to help those persons:

- To discuss with a person about their experience in the war, in the refugee life and in this current time.
- To show the person that you understand their situation and that what they tell you, does not drive you desperate or scare you.
- You may discuss it both of you in the family or more such as within an association or even within a schoolroom.

Let's remind you that in all these ways mentioned above, you are free to choose the one you think is the easiest way for you. If you discuss with a person about bad things that happened to that person, it is understandable that the person will again feel sad; he/she may even cry/weep. You will also feel overwhelmed with sadness. But you must understand that this is the first way of assisting a person affected by trauma.

This does not mean that this saddening discussion will always happen, but it is really important that when a person wants to share his/her experiences with another, he/she should have one person to listen to him/her. You should let him/her speak freely as he/she wishes instead of silencing him/her or forcing him/her to forget it.

Story by **TWIZERE Innocent** and **NYAMPINGA Marie Grace**

## TESTIMONIES BY TRAINED COMMUNITY PSYCHOSOCIAL WORKERS (CPWS) IN KIGEME CAMP

**A**fter conducting a survey that aimed at showing the state of general condition of mental health and psychosocial aspect in Kigeme camp; a survey that indicated that there are many problems related to trauma and mental health, the Rwandan Association of Trauma Counsellors known as ARCT –Ruhuka, in partnership with GIZ/CPS, from May in 2017, trained some of Kigeme camp inhabitants who are expected to contribute in receiving and assisting those who have problems of trauma in Kigeme camp.

For the time being, those who were trained say that they gained different skills on trauma and they plan to give their contribution in assisting other Kigeme camp inhabitants in matters related to providing them with advice on how to cope with trauma . Journalists of Kigeme Iwacu magazine visited some of the community psychosocial workers and shared with them some of their testimonies.

**UWIMANA Denise** is a young woman who is 27 years old and is one of the residents of Kigeme camp. She said that the training in trauma and Active listening helped her very much because there are many aspects she got to understand in her life which she did not know to the extent that she found herself being affected by those aspects after attending that training. Nonetheless, she said that she happened to get the solution which is nothing else but discussing with a person who is very knowledgeable about trauma and trauma crisis, she could entrust her problems. Later she felt relieved and after the person advises you on how a person can cope with the situation.

She said in her own words, 'I did not know that a person can get sick as a result of trauma following the circumstances a person has gone through, that is the very problems a person has faced, but soon after I was trained, there was an illness which I diagnosed on myself and found it to have been caused by trauma that has affected me. This is the reason why I cannot miss this opportunity to give my testimony'.





Some of the CPWs at the time of closing the training organised by ARCT-Ruhuka. (photo JARCT-Ruhuka)

**MUSABIREMA Pacifique** is a married man living in Kigeme camp. He says that the training on Trauma and Active Listening helped him in various aspects. In his own words, he revealed, ‘This training has been very beneficial to me because, before attending this training, I used to treat a person affected by trauma inappropriately because I thought that the person had a mental disease, but after the training, I found that what I thought was not true because I came to understand that such a person is just like me’. He also adds that the training helped him know better how to assist the others because of the way he felt himself helped.

**HABIYARENJE Jean de Dieu** (name changed) is a married man living in Kigeme camp. He says that the training on Trauma and Active Listening was very important to him because he did not know that a person can have an internal problem to the extent of becoming an illness due to trauma consecutive to what the person has gone through. ‘The training in Trauma and Active Listening has helped me because I did not know the difference between a person who is sick and a person who has trauma or a mental illness and there are some of the consequences that were noticed on myself due to the changing life I was in. But now, I have noticed that I also can do much in this life as a refugee whereas I used to think that it was not possible and this would drive me to desperate. However, after attending the training my thinking has quickly changed’ he said.

**This testimony was compiled by NDAYISHIMIYE Enock**

# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS IN KIGEME CAMP

Tuesday, 10th October 2017, Rwandese Association of Trauma Counselors/ARCT –Ruhuka, in partnership with GIZ, organized a ceremony in Kigeme camp to celebrate the World Mental Health Day. This was a function attended by some of the residents of Kigeme camp and also by some of the stakeholders operating in this camp. This day's theme was **"Promoting mental health wellbeing at workplace"**

Some of those who gave their testimonies said that different trainings extended to them by ARCT –Ruhuka enabled them to know how they can assist those with problems related to mental health and also those who had problems of trauma. Another event that characterized this day and also brought joy to quite many people attending this function is related to a quiz whereby any willing person was asked a question in relation to the topic of trauma, mental health and related questions. Those whose answers were successful were provided with airtime worth 2000 frw. They continued to thank the Association ARCT –Ruhuka for having helped them know much about their day-to-day life in matters of mental health.



Upon entering the premises of Kigeme camp where this day was marked, you immediately noticed the message written on the banner. (photo Javan M.)

Mrs UWAMBAYIKIREZI Rosette, Kigeme Camp manager (photo Javan M.)

The Kigeme camp Manager, Mrs UWAMBAYIKIREZI Rosette thanked ARCT-Ruhuka for having organized this day celebrations saying that the activities conducted by the association are also beneficial to the residents of Kigeme camp as they do not keep in isolation those affected by mental problems and also get to understand that they are also human beings like any other people. She further said that the residents have gradually started to change their mindset regarding those with problems of mental health as they get to understand that they are people just like them.

As declared by a psychiatric nurse from AHA (an organization in charge of treating the residents of Kigeme camp), they receive different cases of persons who have mental illness. He also encouraged parents and other people to regularly see the doctor whenever any person shows any of these illnesses and should avoid abandoning or even keeping them in isolation.

The World Mental Health Day was established by a network of psychiatric doctors in 1992, as of now, this network has members numbering 150 doctors worldwide.

Editorial

# CONTRIBUTION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING CULTURE OF PEACE

Globally, in these years, refugees and other displaced persons are increasing as announced in June 2017 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Refugee life is a life which is often complicated because many refugees find themselves obliged to live in places different from their former residence areas; because of some events that caused them to be displaced from their property. Usually, some of the factors behind refugee life include wars, social uprising, disasters, persecution and many more. All these factors usually claim the lives of many people and damage their property and even the lucky survivors are forced to flee and are also affected by the consequences that are seen as injuries, disabilities and invisible wounds such as trauma, mental disease and other consequences occurring at regular intervals and physically invisible with a human eye.

Later on, survivors of all these incidents find themselves in their life as refugees where they experience lives different from those they were living prior to their fleeing. The example is when you find a person who was employed living a jobless life, the one who had property, being dispossessed of their assets and many other different situations.

A psychosocial need assessment conducted by GIZ in Kigeme camp revealed that this camp has problems linked to trauma and some symptoms of mental diseases. It is against this background that ARCT-Ruhuka, in collaboration with GIZ, has started to carry out activities including training, counseling, capacity building and other activities aimed at social mobilization within Kigeme camp

## What is the link between psychosocial activities and the promotion of culture of peace?

In an interview with Kigeme Iwacu Magazine, the executive secretary of ARCT-Ruhuka, Mrs. ABATONI Jane, said that different activities conducted in Kigeme camp are linked to preserving and promoting culture of peace among the residents



Mrs Abatoni Jane, the executive secretary of ARCT-Ruhuka (photo Archive)

of Kigeme camp and in the host community because when the problems of trauma and mental diseases are not catered for in order to cope with them at an early stage, they may have serious consequences on the society such as insecurity caused by a person, drug addiction, prostitution and other attitudes indicating trauma consequences in general. These attitudes may cause lack of peace, public order and security in that area.

general. These attitudes may cause lack of peace, public order and security in that area.

She further indicated that peace starts from an individual person when that person feels secure, when that person enjoys peace of mind and she emphasized that, as an individual, when you are not secure, you cannot ensure the security of others. In an interview with Kigeme magazine, she said, 'Usually peace starts from an individual person and peace is a se-

ries of stable acts so that if you do not have peace you can hardly allow others to live peacefully'. She said, 'How can a person who has trauma assist in playing a role in that series of stable acts when that very person has internal problems? Therefore, when carrying out these activities, we actually mobilize people how to cope with trauma and assist those affected by trauma : as they gradually recover from those psychological wounds they can also act as catalysts for promoting peace in the camp and host community.

Mrs. ABATONI says that activities they are carrying out in Kigeme camp are showing results and give hope that many people in Kigeme camp will benefit from trauma counseling services. She added that, in collaboration with the health post of Kigeme camp, those who have mental problems will also continue to be catered for and that as ARCT-Ruhuka, they will further collaborate with the concerned stakeholders in Kigeme camp through quarterly meetings held together so that all problems relating to trauma and mental disease can be taken care of, all this in a bid to spread and promote good relationships among residents of Kigeme camp and even those living in its vicinity.

## RETREAT FOR YOUTH FROM KIGEME CAMP

**F**rom 23 to 24 September 2017, ARCT-Ruhuka organized a retreat for the youth older than 18 years old at Gihindamuyaga . This retreat was aimed at having a common and thorough understanding about drugs, identifying the causes as to why people take drugs, identifying the consequences and how to prevent from drugs among the youth.

The youth came together and had sufficient time to discuss about the negative effects of drugs and decided that they were going to help their fellow youth abandon and cease being attracted by taking drugs.



The youth while attending a retreat that was held in Gihindamuyaga in Huye District .(photo ARCT-Ruhuka)

This retreat, which was attended by more than 60 young people was characterized by different discussions aimed at showing them the negative effects of taking drugs and how they can take the lead in fighting against drugs. The youth was taught how good it is to identify the negative effects of drugs so as to be able to further help other youths, both living in the camp and those living in host community to stop or avoid taking drugs.

The youths concluded the retreat saying that they were going to serve as examples in fighting and preventing the use of drugs.

After knowing about this vow by the youth to fight and prevent drug taking wherever they may be, Kigeme Iwacu Magazine wanted to gather some information that can help its readers and also others who may have the capacity to act, to help this

youth in its remarkable struggle especially as this is a struggle that concerns everyone.

## **SOME INFORMATION ELEMENTS THAT CAN HELP YOUR COLLEAGUES ESPECIALLY YOUTH TO STOP AND TO NOT GET INVOLVED INTO DRUG TAKING**

To help you assist and give advice to your colleagues, Kigeme Iwacu Magazine has gathered for you some information that can help you advise your colleagues, peers and relatives how to fight against drug taking in your community, at school and anywhere else, where applicable.

### **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DRUGS**

Ever since humans exist on earth, they have faced many difficulties that have hampered man's development in terms of better relations and also economic development.

The United Nations established its agency (United Nations Office against Drug and Crime, UNODC, 1946) with a mandate to analyze and monitor the status of drugs worldwide with special emphasis on the prevention of their use, assisting those affected by their negative effects and to fight against the spreading and sale of drugs.

In December 1987, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to put in place on 26 June, an annual day dedicated to fighting against the use and proliferation of drugs.

During its 26th celebration, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, requested States, the media and nongovernmental organizations, to make every effort to increase awareness in identifying difficulties caused by drugs and preventing their use among the citizens.

The 2012 world report on fighting drugs indicated that some 230 million people i.e. 5% of adult persons living on this planet have taken drugs at least once.

In Rwanda, statistics published in 2012 by the former Ministry of Youth and ICT, indicated that 52% of youth also tried to use drugs.

### **WHAT IS DRUG?**

In general, drugs are any substances which a person can take, smell, inject, and inhale to change their behavior when such substances reach the brain a person may lose consciousness whenever those substances are still present in the brain.

### **WHY DO PEOPLE USE DRUGS?**

#### **Natural factors**

The birth environment of any person is one of the reasons why some people take drugs for instance when you were born from a family that uses drugs or often when a woman takes drugs during pregnancy, drugs can have negative effects on children who get overwhelmed with drug abuse.

#### **Psychological factors**

Do what other do or what we refer to as false company which is very familiar among the youth. The war and genocide also cause negative psychological consequences causing people to take refuge in drug abuse, family misunderstandings, choice of drug abuse as a means to combat stress or the desire to seek enjoyment, with some adopting these attitudes thinking that the use of drugs can provide them with increased strength or even ability to cope with the problems they have since some people wrongly believe that drugs can help them think soundly.

#### **Social factors**

Some people get involved in drug abuse because of misunderstandings in their families or some may be tempted by their colleagues in a bid to get them involved in drug abuse. A child may use drugs because he sees his father or mother using

them and the child adopts such behaviour as a role model. Movies and other advertisements (especially for alcoholic drinks) may create in the youth the desire for drugs, people who live together in large groups, one may gradually learn bad habits from other colleagues. For instance: soldiers, attendees of solidarity camps, students, masons, etc...

### CONSEQUENCES OF USING DRUGS

Insecurity for people, the society and the country (violence, assault and battery, sexual abuse, murder or suicide...)

As part of good social and economic relationships, persons who use drugs spend a lot of money and thus become quickly poor themselves and their families.

The youth who have started to get involved in drugs will no longer be able to perform academically. Dismissal from job, developing diseases as a result of drug abuse (hepatitis, bronchial pneumonia, headache, eye ache, etc...). Robbery as a result of need for money to buy drugs, loss of compassion, and drug-addiction are some of the consequences of drug abuse.

### RECOVERING FROM DRUG ABUSE

Stopping drugs takes a long time and requires the drug-addicted person to play a big role. More often, helping a person stop taking drugs goes through the following stages:

- Showing to the concerned person the type of problem they have
- Acceptance by the concerned person that they have a problem that needs assistance to be solved
- Taking a decision on the side of the concerned person to start abandoning drugs
- Activities (searching together with the concerned person those activities likely to help them)
- Self-assessment, changing one's course thinking and searching for strengths within the society

### STRATEGIES TO PREVENT DRUG ABUSE AMONG THE YOUTH

- To train the youth on the disadvantages of drugs instead of looking for short-lived enjoyment
- To help the youth search for other methods of coping with problems they have or may have
- To train the youth on how to say no to any person who wants to get them involved in drug abuse
- To provide sufficient information to the youth attending schools
- To train the youth to react on what adult people say when they support drugs
- To fight against messages from social media networks that advertise drugs

In Rwanda, during preparations to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse, Dr. Jean Damascene IYAMUREMYE, an employee in Rwanda Biomedical Centre in the department in charge of mental health told Umuseke.com that in 2004, patients who were admitted in Ndera Psychiatric Hospital were 440 and were suffering from drug related diseases while, in 2016, the number of the same patients suffering from drug abuse referred to Ndera increased six-fold to reach 2804.

In the life of refugees and the people living in the areas surrounding the camp as it is stated in this story, it is better to adopt strategies to fight against drug abuse because, as previously seen in this story, drugs damage a lot of things, fighting against drugs can help people live in a society free from problems and diseases resulting from drug abuse.

**Editorial**

(Photo by Javan M.)



