



Empowering Women of Faith to Combat Drug Abuse in Mombasa

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Abstract

Mombasa is Kenya's second largest city and East Africa's largest port city, quickly evolving into a major international heroin transit hub with upwards of 40 tons of narcotics estimated to flow through it each year. Women and girls are especially affected by the drug scourge both as victims and casualties. Drug abuse is on the rise with little to no attention from both the citizens and authorities, including the religious community. According to the anti-drug agency, the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), more than 60,000 people are addicted to hard drugs at the Coast. With this, the spread of HIV/AIDS infection among drug users is on the rise. The objective of this study is to determine how women of faith could offer a lasting solution to the drug menace. Islamic and Christian norms are an important motivating factor and a practical tool that motivate women of faith to engage in an important fight against drug abuse in Mombasa. Despite the rhetoric from Kenyan political leaders to address this menace, there is a lack of action in the form of high-level prosecutions or interdiction. Arrests of high level drug peddlers rarely lead to convictions. Lack of adequate early awareness on the effects of drug abuse and unemployment mainly contribute to the prevalence. With inadequate political leadership in addressing the matter, the potential role of religious women in combatting drug abuse is crucial. Religious actors such as the Kenya Muslim National Advisory Council, clergy and lay leaders have united to educate and support heroin and cocaine addicts. There are indications that faith interventions are resulting in reduced drug use in Mombasa, but the problem requires a sustained response. Religious women have a vital role in highlighting the moral and spiritual prerequisite for effective social action. Currently, public awareness of the effects of drug abuse remain relatively low. Key recommendations in this project include an interfaith anti-drug addiction guide to empower religious women to encourage and connect drug addicts through their spirituality, walk together to recovery, and stop and prevent the spread of drug abuse.

Keywords: *Christianity, Islam, faith, drug abuse, peace*

Figure 1 Women of Faith Demonstrating Against Drug Abuse in Mombasa - Jill Craig, Destination Magazine



Background and Context

Mombasa is located at the coast of Kenya with a population of 939,370 residents (Government of Kenya, 2010). It is also the second largest city of Kenya. Majority of the population are women who fall within the 20-30 age bracket (Government of Kenya, 2010). 60% of drug users in Mombasa are below 30 years of age (Korir, 2013). With upwards of 40 tons of narcotics estimated to flow through Mombasa each year, women bear the greatest cost of drug abuse in the city (Gridneff, 2016).

Mombasa's role as a hub for heroin transit is linked to global developments far beyond Kenya. Evidence from various studies as well as anecdotal accounts has shown that as regional conflict escalates in Central Asia and enforcement increases in south-eastern Europe, an alternative route – known by some as the Smack Track – has exploded in popularity (Gridneff, 2016). The route runs south from Afghanistan across the Indian Ocean and through the port of Mombasa. After entering Kenya, the drugs are trafficked through Africa and onward to European and American markets. Initially, hard drugs were not easily available, but as large quantities pass through Kenya enroute to Asia, Europe and the United States, a domestic market for hard drugs has emerged in Kenya, with drug use fueled by price factors. This explains why drugs like heroin cost \$1.90 (USD) per gram in Kenya, the cheapest documented price for a gram of heroin globally, as compared to \$200 (USD) per gram of heroin in the United States of America. Similarly, a gram of meth costs \$2.38 (USD) in Kenya, the fourth cheapest price for a gram of heroin globally, as compared to \$184.25 (USD) for a similar quantity in Singapore (Khosla, 2014).

Due to the high influx of drugs as well as the relative low cost of these drugs in Mombasa, women and girls have become both direct and indirect victims of abuse of drugs. Patterns of violence linked to drugs have increased steadily over time. In 1991 for instance, male students in a mixed school invaded the girl's dormitory and raped more than 70 girls. At least 19 girls lost their lives at the age of 15 (Reuters, 1991). In 2006, a mass rape again occurred against school girls. This time, approximately 15 girls were raped. While several reasons have been advanced by different stakeholders as to the root cause, drug abuse featured prominently (BBC News, 2006).

Survey data on an arms management program assembled by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) also reveal that the Kenyan coast faces a new kind of crisis, with the significant number of tourists visiting the area primarily to have sex with children. Investigations reveal that there is a category of tourists who come to Kenya solely to look for virgins and drugs (Jefferson & Angus, 2002). Most of these tourists – between the age of 45 and 65 - are pensioners who are divorced and/or are seeking to rekindle their sexual lives by having sex with teenagers, who are perceived to be without HIV. The same tourists who are regular drug users then introduce young girls to drugs which eventually leads to abuse. A case in point is the number of young girls who are drug users in Mtwapa, Shella, Malindi, Kilifi and Ukunda (Korir, 2013).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that more than 18,000 Kenyans regularly inject heroin, with almost half of them in Kenya's coast. One women's activist - Mwini Abbas, Program Coordinator of Reach out Center Trust, a drug rehabilitation organization that operates centers in and around Mombasa - said she is concerned that the government's crackdown in drugs was "victimizing the users and not pursuing the barons" (Jefferson & Angus,

2002). There has been lack of action in the form of high-level prosecutions or interdiction of drug barons in Kenya (U.S. Department of State, 2014).

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs commented in a recent report that "Only a tiny fraction of the drugs believed to transit in and through Kenya are seized by authorities." According to a 2015 report by the National Crime Research Centre, out of 13 counties in Kenya, Mombasa recorded the highest number of defilement cases at 60.0 per cent, the highest number of wife/husband battery at 97.7 per cent and rape cases at 66.7 per cent (Ogutu, 2016).

Key Problem / Challenge

Drug abuse is escalating at an alarming rate at the Coast, yet it has received very little attention from citizens and from the authorities. That includes religious communities. Every day three people are initiated into drug use. According to the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), more than 60,000 people are addicted to hard drugs at the Coast.

With this, the spread of HIV/AIDS infection among drug users at the Coast is growing at an alarming rate. According to Darat, HIV/AIDS International Agency anecdotal study entitled: *Rapid situation assessment of drug abuse especially injecting drug users (IDU's) in Mombasa* in 2009 showed that a high practice of needle and syringe sharing among IDUs has become a means of spread of HIV. The 2015 National AIDS Control Council (NACC) report reveals that women between 15 and 24 account for 21 per cent of the 100,000 cases of HIV infections in Mombasa.

Most drug users are unemployed and the only means by which they can sustain their habit is through crime. Many families at the Coast are broken because of the drug menace, with women being left with the sole responsibility of raising the family. A common feature among male drug users is *abandoned wives*. Most male drug users no longer perform conjugal rights on their wives and some resort to giving their women freedom to look for other men to satisfy their conjugal needs. Consequently, the women are required to bring them money to buy drugs.

The drug trade has not only affected girls but also the young boys, many of whom are orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. Mombasa, Ukunda, Malindi and Lamu have slowly gained a reputation as an attractive destination for homosexual tourists looking for young boys. A mother asked during a recent protest, 'Who will marry our daughters? All the young men are becoming useless under the influence of drugs.'

Personal and Professional Experience

Ednah Kang'ee's inspiration to recount and act on the grave problem of drugs is closely linked to her own story and her faith journey. Born and raised in Mombasa in a deeply rooted Christian family in the late 70s Ednah Kang'ee recalls how she has lost close family members, friends and neighbors to drugs. Her mother was a daughter of a reverend. Her grandfather had started the Anglican Church in her rural home many years before. It was a tradition for his children, all nine of them, to congregate during Christmas with their families. How she loved

Christmas time! Every evening, her grandfather would share a sermonette, and always had a lesson for the grandchildren children on obedience to God and parents. He was especially keen to counsel the older cousins who were already teenagers as he repeatedly warned them against drug abuse. Ednah recalls that sometimes her teenage cousins would get angry at her grandfather and would try to avoid him during the sermonette. It was only later that she understood why grandpa laid emphasis on the menace.

These lessons from her grandfather influenced Ednah's perspective on the scourge of drugs as she grew older. She was later to discover that some of her teenage cousins had been abusing drugs such as marijuana at a tender age. One aunt told her that she would leave the children, both boys and girls, with money for food items such as milk and vegetables and the next thing she knew the money was lost and no one would take ownership. They had become petty thieves in order to purchase drugs.

She had tried counseling and even calling the police to arrest the children so they would learn that stealing is a criminal offence but still they were uncontrollable, especially during school holidays. This resulted in some girls giving birth out of wedlock, and the boys getting younger girls in the neighborhood pregnant.

Growing up in Mombasa, Ednah recalls her mother and aunties seeking solutions for the children. One of the ideas that was floated was to send the children to boarding schools in the rural areas with the hope that drugs would not be easily accessible. Indeed, some children were sent to boarding schools but some of them were expelled from school. In the company of their friends, they had stolen property belonging to a neighbor of the school while they were under the influence of drugs. The school neighbor was a traditionalist. He believed in witch doctors. He had covered his farm with paraphernalia to protect it from thieves. He had sworn that whoever stole from his farm would suffer irreversible consequences. Indeed, he kept to his word, and one of the boys became mad after the action. To date he is a mad man, he never managed to continue with his education. No treatment has been successful. His father died of depression after seeing his first-born son, born normal, grow into a young man, and later get destroyed by drugs to a point where he became a mad monk. The father had worked hard as a civil servant to ensure that he provided for his family's needs. He died a miserable man.

As an adult, Ednah saw her own sister lose her dear loving husband to drugs. Her sister sang in the church choir and her husband was a congregant, both brought up with Christian values. Her brother-in-law was a reformed drug addict who had not received any counseling. He had been injecting himself with drugs in secret. Three months after her wedding, her sister called her best maid and informed her she had married a drug addict. He could not hide it any more. They attended counseling through the church, family members, professional counselors, and this helped, but only for a short while. Her sister was already expecting their first child.

The couple were even blessed with a second child although at this point he would disappear for days and months with his friends in a hideout. One evening her sister returned from work, to find all her household possessions outside their home. On inquiring on what could have happened, she was surprised when a house agent approached her informing her that the owner of the house had handed over the house to him, claiming that the tenants' rent was in arrears. This was in spite of the fact that together with her husband, they owned the house. As such she had no option but to

seek refuge at a cousin's place with her toddlers despite efforts to convince the house agent that the house was indeed their own. Ednah remembers how painful it was as she helplessly watched her sister struggle to bring up her little ones. Despite numerous efforts to restore their marriage, they ended in a divorce.

Ednah could not sit back and watch as more relatives and friends perished as a result of drugs. Her friend and neighbor was gang-raped by young boys in the neighborhood whilst she returned from purchasing mosquito coils from a nearby retail shop. She had been sent by her mother. That marked the end of girls being sent to the shops in the evening in that estate. The girl had no brother, as they were just the two sisters. Only parents or the male children would go to the shops in the evening. Ednah wondered how long she was to live in fear in that estate?

As if that wasn't enough, Ednah's own brother who only visited Mombasa during school holidays, resorted to drug abuse. He never managed to attend university after his high school. She saw him toil and get odd jobs, which increased his dissatisfaction and distress in life. Her mother and family never stopped praying for him and counselling him. Fortunately, this story has a happy ending that serves as an inspiration. Today, her brother has reformed, is happily married and lives with his family. "Enough is enough," she thought, as a woman of faith, she needed to take action. Having seen it work for her brother, she gained the courage to actively sensitize the public on the effects and spread of drug abuse, starting with the young children she mentors in Sunday school, the youth and the adults. At 21, Ednah started a mission of reaching out to the street children who frequently abused drugs in Mombasa. She would gather her fellow youth from her local church, the Mombasa Memorial cathedral and go to the streets where most of the street children gathered around supermarkets. They would always be smoking *glue* or be high on drugs. Ednah and her friends would speak to the children against drug abuse, and encourage them to join them in church the following Sunday. On occasions, Ednah would organize a retreat with the street children where she would gather some of her clothes and those of some family and friends and they would donate them to the street children. They would then prepare a meal for the children, and hire a van to take the children together with a few friends to the south coast beach of Mombasa, where they would enjoy a picnic while being mentored and counselled against drugs. They would also be encouraged to attend church on Sunday. Her mother and pastor supported this mission. Ednah believes faith without action is dead. She reaches out to the affected and infected in the society to bring about social change and inclusive growth.

Research Findings

There is a lack of adequate data on the extent of drug abuse in Mombasa. It has become difficult to gather information from drug abusers unless you promise to give them money to buy some drugs. An alternative offer for food instead of drugs is not acceptable to them (Masudi, 2011).

In as much as NACADA continues to play an important role in sensitization, its regional reach is limited to only a few areas and it is short of funds and manpower in specialized areas especially social work and research (Korir, 2013).

When convictions occur, they are of lower level couriers and distributors. Public

corruption and graft have helped fuel the drug trade. Rogue police officers in Mombasa have been accused of working with drug peddlers (Standard Digital Newspaper, 2016). Corruption has hampered the fight against drug abuse in the area as the police receive bribes from drug peddlers and drug lords operating in the area. Area residents are willing to give out bribes to have their children, who are arrested in drug related crimes, released from police custody. Promises by Mombasa County Government to set up a drug rehabilitation center have yet to be realized.

Economic factors such as unemployment, poverty and low cost of drugs in Mombasa have contributed to drug abuse in the area. Though many factors contribute to drug abuse in general, a key factor is high unemployment in the region (Kasundu, Mutiso, Chebet, and Mwirigi, 2012).

The prevalence of drug abuse in Mombasa is exacerbated by the lack of awareness of the effects of drug abuse by the residents. According to NACADA, the earliest age of initiation into drug abuse is seven years while the average age for initiation into drug abuse is 19 years. The most abused drug at initiation into drug abuse is bang with 15% of those who start out by using bang transitioning into injecting drugs after two years (NACADA, 2011). Peer pressure is the driving force behind the increase in drug abuse in Mombasa. What starts out as innocent experimentation with abusive substances turns out to be a life of dependency on drugs.

With so little active leadership, the actual and potential roles of religious communities in combatting drug abuse play a vital role. Christian and Muslim women groups are intensifying their campaigns against drug abuse in an effort to transform the hardest hit communities into “ambassadors” against the drugs. The women have been holding interfaith dialogues, providing preventative education, public awareness and life skills training. Some also offer addicts rehabilitation and psychosocial support. The Kenya Muslim National Advisory Council, clergy and lay leaders have united to educate and support heroin and cocaine addicts. There are indications that faith interventions are resulting in some reduced drug use in Mombasa, but the problem requires a sustained response. Educational programs in youth clubs, churches and schools, as well as organized music, poetry and drama classes, established to keep youth vulnerable to drug abuse occupied, have stalled due to lack of funds to sustain them (Nzwili, 2013).

Women activists in Mombasa have worked continuously to defeat this vice, many challenges are encountered notwithstanding. They have held public protests on the streets, for example Miriam Bashir Hussein Ali, aka Mama Kukukali, Coordinator of the Defence Drugs Women, a community-based organization, organizes various support groups for community residents affected by drug use – one group for women who have contracted HIV from their drug injecting husbands, another for women whose children are drug addicts, and one to educate village elders on the subject of drug abuse. She remembers seeing heroin crop up in Mombasa around 1999, and that by 2005 it was a big problem. She believes that the drug problem in Mombasa is particularly bad because it is a port city, and as such the supply comes right off the boat, landing where distributors and suppliers abound (Craig, 2016). On 8th December 2010, hundreds of women in Mombasa walked for a kilometer and a half protesting for hasher punishments for drug suppliers. This was after some Kenyan government officials were issued with a travel ban by the American embassy for suspected drug activity. In April 2011, under the auspices of Kenya Muslim Women Alliance, women in Mombasa took to the street protesting increased cases of youth

indulging in drug abuse and then joining the Al-Shabaab militia. The women demonstrated at the district commissioner's office and presented a memorandum on drug abuse and human trafficking. They too, however, face a lot of victimization and resistance. Anti-drug activists like Farida Rashid and Omar Bagdam have been scalded with acid in the face by known assailants. Such attacks are aimed at instilling fear among anti-drug activists. There have also been no arrests despite victims of such attacks providing names of their assailants to the police (Daily Nation Correspondent, 2011).

Program Response / Design

The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act No.4 of 1994 of Kenya strongly condemns the possession, use and trafficking of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substances (Revised in 2012). Section 3 of the Act makes it an offense for a person to be found in possession of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substances. It further provides retributive measures for such persons. A person found in possession of such drugs or substances shall be liable to imprisonment for ten years and in every other case to imprisonment for twenty years or a fine of not less than one million shillings or three times the market value of the narcotic drug or psychotropic substance or to both such fine and imprisonment (NACADA Act, 2012).

Similarly, persons found trafficking any narcotic drug or psychotropic substances shall be guilty of an offense. Drug traffickers are liable to a fine of one million shillings or three times the market value of the narcotic drug or psychotropic substance, whichever is the greater, and, in addition, to imprisonment for life. However, the constant rise of drug addicts in Mombasa renders the penalties insufficient.

- The National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse ACT CAP 121B Laws of Kenya (2012) provides for the establishment of the National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA). Section 5 of the Act provides the functions of this authority among others to include: Collaboration with other lead agencies to facilitate and promote the monitoring and surveillance of national and international emerging trends and patterns in the production, manufacture, sale, consumption, trafficking and promotion of alcohol and drugs prone to abuse.
- Coordinate and facilitate, in collaboration with other lead agencies and non-State actors, the formulation of national policies, laws and plans of action on control of alcohol and drug abuse and facilitate their implementation, enforcement, continuous review, monitoring and evaluation.

To ensure that the Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1994, is complied with, Section 20 of NACADA Act, 2012 provides that an authorized officer may, at any reasonable time, enter any place or premises which the officer believes on reasonable grounds that any person or persons are using, in possession or trafficking any narcotic drug or psychotropic substances. Regardless of

the enactment of these laws, enforcement has been a major challenge to trace and arrest the main drug barons.

Religion provides comfort and reconciliation to humanity whenever man strays (Clack, 2014). Despite the pain and disappointments brought about by drug addiction, religion mitigates and offers acceptance to the society. Would an interfaith intervention be most likely to make a major impact in preventing and combating the menace in Kenya, a country that is 90% religious? Yes, channeling programs through women of faith in churches, mosques and temples could make a major impact as these women are spiritual, with the belief of a higher power that helps each individual in his or her journey to sobriety. This can be done through the creation of support groups in houses of worship, with progressive sessions of therapy to help those addicted to move towards recovery. According to a study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, a few clergy receive any substance abuse training and many psychiatrists and other health care providers refuse to take advantage of the power of spirituality and religion to prevent and treat this disease. The Vatican stepped up to the plate with a manual setting out the church's responsibility in preventing and treating drug abuse (Califano, 2002). Kenya can borrow this practice by providing relevant training to religious actors to help the affected recover from substance abuse and maintain abstinence.

The project adopts a descriptive survey design, use of questionnaires, key informant interview schedules and review of existing literature as the data collection instruments. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used in analyzing the collected data. These included structured individual interviews and focus groups comprising individuals recovering from addictions. The focus was to examine beliefs about the role of their faith in recovery and its usefulness in formal treatment. Likert scale questionnaires labeled as strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree were used to collect data.

Data collected was scrutinized, coded and analyzed using a Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 17.0. Findings were presented through charts, tables and graphs. □

Recommendation

There is need for additional rehabilitation centres in Mombasa. Other researchers have argued that the government should set up rehabilitation centres, training programs on alcohol and drug abuse, establish Employee Assistant Programmes, wellness centres, control sale of prescription medicine, stiff penalties for drug peddlers and ban of advertisement of alcohol on the media. In addition, there is need for all stakeholders to review the alcohol and Drug Abuse policy to include new and emerging drugs in order to mitigate illnesses and deaths associated with emerging drugs (Kahuthia -Gathu, Okwarah, Gakunju, and Thungu, 2013).

Religion provides social resources for rebuilding one's life and encourages abstinence from drug use (Sanchez & Nappo, 2008). This is because it provides a network of friends, a way of spending one's free time and there is a sense of value placed in the individual's potentials and cohesion within the group. There is unconditional support from religious leaders without judgment.

There are a few studies on faith based programs such as Salvation Army, Teen Challenge,

and rescue missions (Pittman & Taylor, 2002). The project recommends a faith based anti-drug addiction program as a suitable program to be used in response to substance abuse in Mombasa. The program is founded in religious faith, which promotes ties to the groups, by helping them to recover their self-esteem and to be re-integrated in the society through new activities and new social bonds and through offering religious and philosophical answers to questions about life.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interfaith Anti-Drug Addiction Guide

This is a guide designed to assist Women of Faith to:

- Challenge drug addiction through sharing of responsibility to combat the menace.
- Participate in peacebuilding at every level of the society.
- Build networks of drug-free citizens and friendship across religious, social and racial divides.
- Research on the spiritual dimension of alcohol and other drug problems.

Background

Comprehensive drug addiction recovery programs should not only address the biomedical, psychological and socio-cultural factors associated with drug addiction but also the spiritual aspect of individuals affected by drug abuse. Spirituality has been highlighted as an important factor in addiction recovery, although little research has explored the relationship between these two phenomena. Spirituality/religion may be an essential factor in alcohol/drug abuse recovery. Individuals currently suffering from drug abuse tend to be less religious, and spiritual re-engagement appears to be correlated with their recovery (Miller, 1998). The length of their sobriety has been positively associated with their re-engagement with spirituality (Carter, 1998). Commitment to a higher power may lessen the severity of relapse episodes (Morgestern, Frey, McCrady, Labouvie, and Neighbors, 1996).

Aims

This drug addiction recovery program aims at:

- Highlighting the moral and spiritual prerequisite for effective social action.
- Encouraging and connecting drug addicts through their spirituality, to walk together to recovery.
- Engaging women of faith in their role as community leaders in combating drug addiction.

1 Peter 5:8 says: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

(Put a saying of drug addicts).

"O You who believe! Indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful" (Quran: 5:90).

Objectives

This program is designed to encourage participants through spirituality and personal

reflection on awareness of the needs in their lives and communities, and provides steps to take in the recovery process.

Successful completion of this program will connect participants at a deeper level exposing them to the possibility of individual or joint action that they can take to curb the drug abuse menace.

Guiding Principles

- ❖ All our faiths can ignite and enhance the process of recovery.
- ❖ Everyone has a story to share and a need to be heard.
- ❖ Everyone has a part to play and something to contribute for the benefit of the society.

Essentials for Facilitators

- Convene potential participants to explore the whole concept and discuss timing, venue and commitment.
- Facilitators will guide every group to establish their own guidelines. Special emphasis needs to be placed on confidentiality and the quality of listening to each other.
- Facilitators need to ensure that the guiding principles are followed and that the group remains balanced and focused. There should be two facilitators, one can be more focused on time and other logistical elements, while the other can focus on listening and facilitating the process, which is particularly important during the story-sharing session.
- The language and activities will need to be culturally appropriate to the particular group.
- The use of case studies is encouraged throughout, and to illustrate the transformation process is key to every individual.

My Journey My Life Story

A conducive environment should be created where participants feel free to share their life story, emphasizing on noteworthy incidents and experiences that caused them to seek transformation. One or two stories can be shared at the end of each session. A minute of silence should be observed at the end of each story to honor the shared experience. Experience demonstrates that participants generally need about 20-30 minutes to share their stories. However, what's essential is that participants need to feel comfortable.

In any group, there might be a tendency of some participants to naturally feel that what they share may be used against them, or maybe shameful or of less value. Facilitators need to reiterate the ground rules on confidentiality, equal value of each person's story, and contribution.

Venue

It is preferable to meet in a worship sanctuary or a religious environment where participants will find intimate safe space to connect with their spirituality.

It is highly recommended that the venue remains the same throughout the program to enhance familiarity and consistency.

Additional Concepts

A symbolic opening and closing ritual can be effective at the beginning and at the end of the sessions. These may range from prayer sessions, praise and worship, candle lighting, etc.

It can be helpful to connect through scripture reciting, singing, creating art, participating in role plays, poetry, dance, or cooking and sharing a meal depending on the time and the willingness of the group.

Modest working tools such as flip charts, large sheets of paper, markers are important. What is gathered during each session may be recorded and can be used to build upon and refer back to previous sessions. Whatever creative ideas are used, it is important to keep each session lively and stimulating.

Facilitators are encouraged to collect appropriate resources, e.g. stories, DVDs, books, which will be most helpful in their context.

Frequently Asked Questions

Facilitators may be asked many questions. Below are some answers to expected questions.

- **Should facilitators be women only? If so why?**

This Interfaith Anti-Drug Addiction Guide is specifically designed to empower Women of Faith to take the lead in challenging drug addiction among women and girls through sharing responsibility to combat the menace. Women have been most affected by drug abuse with little opportunity to influence the recovery process.

- **Can the guide be used on male participants?**

Absolutely, the guide can be used by groups comprising men only, women only or mixed groups. Participants are free to select groups more appealing to them, in terms of gender, religious norms, age, among other things.

- **Can facilitators be more creative or have to follow everything outlined in the manual?
What are the charges for participating?**

Facilitators are encouraged to use any words whatsoever for as long as the wisdom and the veracity

of the material in the manual are honored. There are no charges for participating. Individual groups may contribute towards refreshments or any particular common venture they may wish to enhance cohesiveness.

- **Is it mandatory for people to attend every session?**

It is very important that participants attend all sessions. Facilitators should ensure the availability of participants for all sessions. There should be flexibility in scheduling time where all participants will be available to attend the sessions. This will help maintain the integrity of the group and building trust amongst each other.

- **Does everyone have to participate in the sharing? What if one feels that their story is irrelevant?**

This is not obligatory; however, facilitators should ensure that everyone is free/comfortable to share. There should be a safe space and ground rules emphasized on to assure the participants of the highest confidentiality.

- **What are the desired outcomes?**

1. Transformation of participants who have chosen to change and stop the menace. They may take steps to reintegrate within the society, family, and religious affiliation.
2. Issues raised during the sessions may form action points which will require further steps to be undertaken either by the group or individuals in the community.
3. Group members or some members may seek to continue to meet regularly to encourage and inspire each other in their new walk in life and collectively tackle issues of concern.
4. Participants may choose to live positively as role models and seek to facilitate other groups.
5. Participants may form partnerships towards a peaceful uprising!

Interfaith Meeting Points

FIRST MEETING

What is Drug Abuse?

The first meeting is to create a safe space for each participant. It is also about the sharing of understanding of what drug abuse really is. In our context, drug abuse not only includes hard drugs but alcohol as well.

INQUIRE

- a) What is your understanding / experience of drugs?
- b) Can we together come up with a definition “Drug abuse is...”

- c) Can we as individuals exercise the power of self-control in order to reject drug addiction?

METHOD

To start with, participants are encouraged to make personal reflections of the lives they led while under the influence of drugs. The facilitator then asks what image first comes to mind when the word drug abuse is mentioned. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences as they all appreciate the range of images created.

Alternatively, another medium such as songs, poetry, writing and art work can be used.

After an appropriate length of time participants can begin sharing in twos or threes or with the whole group. Enough time should be allowed for people to appreciate a deeper understanding of substance abuse.

REFLECT

The emphasis here is to focus on the hope, expectations and visions of transformation that are shared, laying stress on the fact that drug abuse is sinful, unlawful and has damaging effects on individuals. Working together provides an opportunity for people to help each other break away from the bondage. Respect and fear of a higher being can help people deviate from sin and align themselves with God.

Romans 13:1-5 says, “God ordained governing authorities and to resist them is to resist God's ordinance. Those who disobey may be punished by the authorities, and they have also harmed their conscience toward God.”

Islam being the religion of peace and prudence also commands its believer to abstain from all kinds of addiction, not only this, but terms addiction as *Haram* (impermissible / unlawful / illegitimate and its use is likely to commit sin and subject to punishment) and there are clear-cut laws of punishment for the consumer of intoxicant materials and drugs of addiction (Munir et al, 2015).

“O ye who believe! Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (pinnation by) arrows, are an abomination, - of Satan's handwork: eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper” (Al-Quran 7:31).

SECOND MEETING

What causes / leads me to abuse drugs?

Most people often do not understand how they become addicted to drugs. It is commonly perceived that drug abuse and addiction is just but a societal problem and that the abusers should be able to stop the addiction if they change their behavior. Peer pressure, broken homes, shattered dreams, unachievable goals, poverty, stress of life, unemployment among others have all been used as reasons for drug addiction. The convolution of drug addiction is that it is a disease which affects the brain, hence discontinuing drug abuse is not simply a matter of willpower.

Romans 13:12-14 says, “Cast off the works of darkness, walk properly, not in drunkenness. Make no provision to fulfill the lusts of the flesh.”

INQUIRE

- Individual engagement in drug abuse – these could be school, family, work, etc.
- Ascertain particular issues for the community or country. These may be social, structural or justice concerns. How do they personally influence participants?
- What challenges do the participants face in addressing their needs?

METHOD

Encourage participants to develop a tree, with branches detailing the various influences of drug abuse and their particular issues of concern, with an attempt to uncover the root causes of drug abuse.

Participants are also encouraged to highlight areas in which they are struggling with such as dealing with family members/friends/neighbors who introduced them to drugs, among others.

Sharing at this juncture is important so that participants can evaluate what is beyond them and what they can actually act upon. Recording the issues raised will be necessary for ease of reference.

REFLECT

Classify specific needs or issues. Meditate on the values of participants’ faith. What do the holy books say about our difficulties? What do their faiths say about those who lead us astray?

Matthew 6:13 says that we should pray for God to deliver us from evil and temptation. How can we sincerely pray in this way and then knowingly do things that tempt or encourage us to do evil?

“And be ye not like those who forgot Allah, and He made them forget their own souls! Such are the rebellious transgressors!” (Al-Quran 59:19).

THIRD MEETING

How do I disentangle myself from drugs?

Addiction is complex. Many people think it’s beyond us. Others think it’s a curse. This is because the number of drug addicts has skyrocketed in recent times. But let us explore how our religions view the problem, and how their remedies and worldview might be an antidote.

“O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: Eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loveth not the wasters” (Al-Quran 7:31).

INQUIRE

- a) What are my fears, angers, insecurities and injustices in society?
- b) What encouragement do I get from my faith?
- c) What is my purpose in life? Am I willing to surrender to God?
- d) Are there testimonies of those that have turned to God and have been set free from drugs?

METHOD

Explore the group work, lists of fears, angers and injustices in society, discussion. Request the sharing of personal experiences constantly when answering each question. It may be useful to refer back to the issues of concern for this exercise.

REFLECT

Share this testimony and allow for a discussion:

The Girl I Once Knew

By Crystal Ramirez, retrieved from
<http://christianity.about.com/od/drugandalcoholaddiction/fl/The-Girl-I-Once-Knew.htm>

I once knew this girl. She would stand proud and tall as if she feared nothing. Filled with pride in who she was and for what she stood. She lived a hard life. Her father left when she was a child, so she was raised by her mother, grandmother and stepfather. Her stepfather drank a lot and would fight with her mother daily. As she grew older, she grew to hate her mother. She would think to herself, "Why is she so dumb to be treated this way?" She vowed to herself never to be like her mother; to never be mistreated or disrespected by a man or anyone.

She lived in a neighborhood where drugs, gangs, and prostitution were normal. Seeing no other way out, she gave in to the drugs and gangs. They gave her power and control. At 15, she left her house. Dealing on drugs, fighting, and shooting at people was the new daily routine. She began a relationship with a member of her gang. He was just like her; they had holes in their hearts and didn't know how to fill them.

They had three children together, but eventually he was arrested and sent to prison for two years. Feeling desperate and alone with no home, no job, and no money she did what she had always done: sold drugs. This was far from what she wanted for her children.

Long ago, her grandmother had taught her about God and prayer. She remembered that her grandmother would tell her, "God does everything for a reason, Mija, always have faith and pray."

As those words played over in her head, she thought to herself, "I've done too much bad in my life to ever be forgiven." But she looked at those little faces of her children sound asleep and dropped to her knees to pray.

A Better Life

She began to lead a better life for her children. She stopped selling drugs and got a real job, a car and an apartment. After about a month at the job, she met someone who changed her life. Her children saw her new boyfriend as their dad. He treated them as if they were his own, and she loved him dearly for that. He knew about her boyfriend in prison and he was also in a relationship, but they couldn't give each other up. She became pregnant again, so they stayed together. She married him, and they had three more children. The struggle of having seven children began to wear on them. They were working so hard to give them what they never had that they were missing important parts of the children's lives.

No Control

Soon her dad got very sick and couldn't work so they took his family in. She again felt the fear of having no control. Her grandmother's words returned to her, "God does everything for a reason. Have faith and pray." In the hospital chapel with her little brother, she begged God not to take her dad. She went back into her dad's room and told him that she loved him. If he wanted to go it was okay. A tear rolled down his cheek as he squeezed her hand. He died shortly after. She was angry with God for a long time. She and her husband began to drink a lot and go out. They started fighting and turning to others for attention. They were about to lose everything they had built in their nine years together.

Finding Peace

Their children had been going to church and invited them. Soon, they were attending regularly. There she began to have faith again. She believed that God did love her and could make things better. At home, the fighting had simmered down, but the loss of everything was still hovering over them. She swallowed her pride and asked the church if they could help. When she told them what was happening, they prayed with her with no judgment. A weight was lifted, and she felt peace. They still lost the house, but it didn't matter to them as it did before. All that mattered was that they were together and happy.

Testimony of God's Grace

They continued to do church activities and spend more time with their children. They started to see that the life they were living was not what God had intended for them. They began changing without realizing it. One Sunday morning at the end of service the pastor asked if anyone wanted to come up and let God into their hearts. As a song began to play, tears filled her eyes and her body felt as if she was floating. She stood trying to fight back the urge to go up. It's funny how words from a song can tell someone's life; this song described what she went through and how she felt. That day she gave her heart to God. This was my life, this is my testimony. Never fear that life is too unbearable, or that you're all alone. The devil is a liar. God loves you more than you can know. God's grace is for everyone. You just have to open up your heart and let him in (Proverbs 23:17, 20, 21). Specifically, this principle of avoiding temptation should be applied to people who practice intoxication (drunkenness). If we want to avoid their destiny, we should not envy them or mix with them.

FOURTH MEETING

Reform: Whom do I identify with? What do I want to be?

In the last meeting we identified our fears, our purpose in life, encouragement from our faiths and shared a testimony of one who was set free after surrendering her life to God. In this meeting we will focus on the qualities we as individuals aspire for.

Matthew 10:24, 25 says, “A disciple seeks to be like his master.”

Ephesians 4:23 says, “To live differently, we must think differently. We must not seek to be like the world but to use our bodies in God's service.”

INQUIRE

- a) Whom do we look up to?
- b) What is unique about their contribution and character?
- c) Are you ready to reform? What will this mean for your life?

METHOD

Come up with small groups and gather participants who are faced with similar challenges together. Encourage them to have a discussion amongst themselves in turns while talking about their victories and failures in handling these addictions and how they feel they can curb some of these challenges. Let them come up with solutions on how they think their problems of drug addiction can be solved.

At the end of this discussion, bring all the individuals from various groups together to share their collective contribution among other participants.

REFLECT

As a mediator, have a deeper look at all the findings of the participants. Keep in mind the spiritual books that focus on reformation and forgiveness so as to make the participants feel at ease and have a feeling of acceptance after the reformation. Encourage pragmatism around the challenges that might be expected and discuss how to curb them. Emphasize on spiritual guides to clout at the roots of addiction. A holistic view of the human soul is essential. Spirituality provides both a worldview and system that elevate the human being by empowering the soul to fulfill the divine mission. Besides prohibiting behavior that might demean the human soul in any way, spirituality prescribes practical ways of strengthening it.

“Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to thee, and establish regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without a doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that ye do” (Al-Quran 29:45).

FIFTH MEETING

Peace within me

In our day-to-day lives we are often faced with challenges. We cannot be completely immune from the temptations of life. In order to steer clear of these situations, there is need of self-acceptance and forgiveness. We need to accept our mistakes and strive to keep ourselves in the spiritual path. During this session, there is need to point out what inner serenity looks like, how we can find it and how it applies to all areas of our lives.

INQUIRE

- a) What does self-acceptance mean to you?
- b) Why is inner serenity important?
- c) What challenges do you face in search of self-satisfaction?
- d) What restores your sense of self-acceptance and forgiveness?

METHOD

A special moment of silence can be observed to reflect on some of the questions. Participants can then share some of their thoughts with one another. It is important to emphasize on honesty and encourage participants to be open-minded and not in any way to make their fellow participants feel like they don't belong but to encourage each of them as they face these challenges. Participants need to know that there is always a support team ready to offer assistance to them when need be. (During this session allow the applicants to use any means of communication they would feel comfortable with. For instance, through songs or drawings.)

REFLECT

It never takes much to fall off the wagon. A slight back slide in our spiritual belief can take us back to the start. It is important to have self-acceptance and forgiveness in order to be able to stand our ground on the changes we have made in our lives. Participants should always be encouraged to surround themselves with people that influence them positively so as to keep steering on the right path.

“The goal of every spiritual being is to be conscious of the stage of his or her own soul, and to endeavor to reach the stage of serenity and stillness that can only come about through a disciplined life in obedience to God.”

(1 Peter 4:12-14) says, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

SIXTH MEETING

The power of Sharing...Hear and be heard

Genuine, motivated sharing can be life changing. This week's gathering point examines the power of sharing, listening to others and being listened to.

INQUIRE

- a) What is effective sharing, good listening and how do we benefit from it?
- b) What interferes with sharing?
- c) Are we good listeners?

METHOD

You can introduce an exercise:

Retelling the Story

The moderator can use an exercise to show the shortcomings of poor communication and listening skills. She can tell a complicated story about a non-event. Have several people (depending on the amount of time and size of the group, usually about 6) leave the room. Read the story to the first person and the remainder of the participants explaining that this first person must tell the story to the next person to come back in the room. The remainder of the participants observe and track what was left out or was changed in the story. When the first person tells the story to the second, the second then tells it to the third until all the people outside the room hear the story. The last person relays what he/she heard. You can discuss when and how the information was lost or distorted and why.

REFLECT

How did it feel? What was difficult? What was the role of body language? What level of eye contact is appropriate? Listening is important not just because it is kind or considerate but because good listening is transformative for both parties. Identify blocks to good listening. Listening with compassion, without judgment; listening to the feeling behind the words.

James 1:19 says, "Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." Good listening goes hand in hand with the mindset of Christ (Philippians 2:5).

Allah, may He be exalted, has commanded the believers to listen to the Qur'an attentively, in a general command. He says (interpretation of the meaning): "So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy" (Al Quran al-A'raaf 7:204).

SEVENTH MEETING

Quiet Time

Quiet time is the time to fellowship with God and meditate on His word. It helps us shut out all life struggles and tune into a source of wisdom, knowledge, understanding deeper than our

own. The word of God gives us peace of mind, sense of direction, increases our faith and self-confidence.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

INQUIRE

- a) What is your understanding and experience of quiet time?
- b) How often do you set aside a specific time for deep reflection to reconnect with God?
- c) How could you benefit from quiet time?

METHOD

Facilitator can share personal experiences of quiet time. Discuss the values, unconditional love, purity, selflessness and honesty as universal values and guides to discernment.

REFLECT

Observe a moment of silence. Allow participants to reflect on their journey thus far. Let them write their thoughts down and encourage those that are happy to share. Ascertain all hindrances to listening to the inner voice and how to avoid them.

“And put your trust in the Almighty, Most Merciful. Who sees you when you meditate during the night. And your frequent prostrations. He is the Hearer, the Omniscient” (Al-Quran 26:217-220).

EIGHTH MEETING

Moving on... Repentance and Forgiveness

“O you who believe! Turn to Allah with sincere repentance!” (Al Quran, 66:8).

Society has become ensnared by drug abuse and addiction because of disobeying the rules and laws of God. How then can humanity be set free and align with God? It is only through repentance and forgiveness of self and others. This paves way for healing.

2 Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

INQUIRE

- a) Do we acknowledge that drug abuse and addiction is sin?
- b) Are we willing to forgive ourselves and peers/friends/family etc. who influenced us?

c) How do we want to move on?

METHOD

Encourage sharing of the experiences of participants in repenting, accepting or giving an apology. Allow ample time for meditation, for participants to explore any need to forgive self, others or ask for forgiveness. Participants should have the opportunity to express themselves through singing, writing, poetry or in any other way that they may prefer as a symbolic act of reconciliation.

REFLECT

Forgiveness operates through one's faith and belief. When you ask God to forgive you of your sins, your healing is then being applied. It is God's act of love for mankind.

Forgiveness sets us free. It will give any man or woman the ability to live in abstinence. It is the ultimate freedom.

NINTH MEETING

Reformist action

Having extensively shared within the groups, it is now time to delve into the next plan of action. In the previous meeting, members experienced repentance as the only way to returning to God. The understanding here is giving up sin and hating it, regretting falling short in obedience to God, and being determined not to repeat that sin again.

INQUIRE

- a) What actual steps could I/We take in our new walk?
- b) Do I foresee any problem?
- c) How do I walk the talk?
- d) Can I find acceptance in the society?

METHOD

The aim is to distinguish specific concerns and for the groups to work through their own reintegration into the society. A common problem with drug addicts is lack of social skills. Encourage participants to explore behavior therapy. How do they conduct themselves around those that condemn them, or those that influenced them to drugs? How can they strategize to deal with peer pressure?

REFLECTION

Invite role playing with each other on different scenarios meeting with peers, at a social

gathering where people are abusing drugs. Participants have learnt a lot over the past weeks. At this juncture, practical examples on how they are going to cope with the society/environment are necessary. The group could also discuss how members will be each other's keepers. Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

"And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers."

"And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus, does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided" (Surat Ali Imran 3:103).

TENTH MEETING

Self-assessment and Commitment

Participants make a self-assessment of their experience of the recovery process, while trying to mirror on new learnings and to consider further action. Depending on how the group has been inspired, members may reflect on committing to action points raised in the ninth week, joint/individual ventures. Participants are welcome to train as facilitators of the Interfaith Anti-Drug Addiction program. They may wish to use their stories, to assist in the recovery process of other future groups.

INQUIRE

- a) In what way has the faith based program helped you in your journey to recovery?
- b) Have you seen the need for change in any of your attitudes or relationships?
- c) What actual steps will you take to put these insights into practice?
- d) Should there be more faith based programs reaching out to others in the community?

METHOD

Evaluate the entire program, responding to the inquiries above, and providing room for members to share with each other. Perhaps come up with an independent or collective product such as a saying, poem, music or pledge that connotes the group's commitment to recovery from drugs and to being ambassadors in helping others in the community. Recommend a closing ceremony where members can have a chance to acknowledge each other.

REFLECT

In essence of appreciating each other, members can share about their journey throughout the program.

James 2:17 says, "In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

When people feel true remorse for their sins and try to reform themselves, according to the Qur'an, God accepts their repentance and gives them the ability to rectify the wrong done (Al-Anbiya 21:87).

Appendix B: Facilitators Schedule

Below is a model of the facilitators schedule. Each group is unique in its own way. Facilitators can develop their own schedule according to the group's flexibility.

MEETING ONE

- i. Introduction
- ii. What is drug abuse / common definition?
- iii. Facilitators / volunteers sharing

MEETING TWO

- i. What causes / leads me to abuse drugs?
- ii. Participants stories and request for volunteers who will be sharing in the next meeting
- iii. Challenges in addressing own needs

MEETING THREE

- i. How do I disentangle myself from drugs?
- ii. Fears and insecurities
- iii. Purpose in life
- iv. Testimonies and request for volunteers who will be sharing in the next meeting

MEETING FOUR

- i. Reform; whom do I identify with? What do I want to be?
- ii. What is unique about their character traits?
- iii. Ready to reform? What will this mean to your life?
- iv. Sharing and request for volunteers who will be sharing in the next meeting

MEETING FIVE

- i. Peace within me
- ii. Challenges in search of self-satisfaction
- iii. What restores your sense of self-acceptance and forgiveness
- iv. Sharing and selecting volunteers for next time

MEETING SIX

- i. The power of sharing, hear and be heard
- ii. What interferes with our sharing?
- iii. Are we good listeners?

MEETING SEVEN

- i. Quiet time
- ii. How often do you set aside specific time for deep reflection to re-connect with God?
- iii. How often could you benefit from quiet time?

MEETING EIGHT

- i. Repentance and forgiveness
- ii. Drug abuse; sin or no sin?
- iii. Forgiveness for self and others
- iv. Steps to moving

MEETING NINE

- i. Reformist action
- ii. Problems in walking the talk
- iii. Acceptance in society

MEETING TEN

- i. Self-acceptance and commitment
- ii. Journey to recovery
- iii. Lessons learned
- iv. Faith into action

Appendix C: Certificate of Participation

Certificate of Participation

This is to certify that

has successfully completed
an Interfaith Anti-Drug Addiction Program

on _____ day of _____ 2016

At

Facilitator's Signature

Appendix D: Program Budget

People are not paid to participate, nor is there a fee to attend the Faith-Based program. Groups will have tea and a snack between 10:00-10:30 AM and a light lunch. The role of a moderator is voluntary.

Component	Amount in USD
Training Manuals / Publication	6500
Capacity Building of 12 Moderators -Train the Trainers	10000
Venue / Meals / Expert Fees	10000
Awareness raising / Community mobilization	7000
Monitoring, Audit and Evaluation	N.A.
Communications and Visibility	N.A.
Total	33500