

# Ask Afrika supports SAHARA's efforts at preventing substance abuse

Issued by [Ask Afrika](#)

19 Apr 2023

Market research firm Ask Afrika has selected non-profit organisation (NPO) Smoking & Alcohol Harms Alleviation & Rehabilitation Association (SAHARA) as the recipient of its 2023 philanthropic donation which forms part of the company's annual corporate social investment.



SAHARA provides free care and support to people with substance use disorder. Based in the Western Cape town of George, SAHARA helps people to reduce or stop alcohol, tobacco or drug use, provides treatment and medicines and training for service providers in the management of substance use disorder.

The association's extensive on the ground experience with communities affected by substance use disorders has convinced it that effective treatment consists of medication in combination with talking therapies via a community-based outpatient treatment programme.

SAHARA currently operates in most communities in and around George: Pacaltsdorp, Thembaletu, Parkdene, Conville, Rosemore, Wilderness Heights and the CBD. Its treatment programme is evidence-based and follows a bio-psycho-social approach with the aim of re-integrating people back into society in order to achieve a meaningful life.

Dr Hermann Reuter, founder and director at SAHARA, explains, "Although international research as well as our own experience indicates that adding medication to treatment programmes increases the likelihood of positive outcomes, these medicines are not included on the list of essential medicines at public hospitals and clinics which is why we rely on donations to fund them."



Andrea Rademeyer, founder and CEO of Ask Afrika, says, “Substance abuse has become an increasingly bigger problem in South Africa. Alcohol abuse is one of the leading causes of gender-based violence, in addition contributing to mental health problems, poverty and unemployment. Another significant challenge is drug abuse with tik and heroin being widely consumed, particularly in traditional township communities. Substance abuse is credited with adding pressure to an already over-burdened health system.”

Reuter, a medical doctor and activist, is firmly of the opinion that it is more cost-effective to treat substance abuse and addiction in early stage at primary-care facilities, rather than treating the consequences in public hospitals. “A significant amount of SAHARA’s work focuses on youth wellness and prevention of alcohol use,” he explains. “A study conducted amongst grade 8 learners at two George high schools in collaboration with UCT revealed that a high proportion of learners are consuming alcohol by the age of 12, 30% regularly have suicidal thoughts and an alarming 19% of boys have been raped. The study also found that 61% of girls and 37% of boys never do any sport and 60% of girls and 34% of boys never do any outdoor activities but we have a plan to turn this around.”

Ask Afrika provides analytics, insights and solutions for business, marketing, communications, and philanthropic or cause marketing strategy in 54 African countries. The firm has a long history of contributing to worthy philanthropic causes. Previous beneficiaries of its corporate social investments include Khayelitsha Hospital in the Western Cape via the SAME Foundation, CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation and Roundabout Water Solutions which provides rural communities and schools with clean water via Play Pumps. This is the second consecutive year that Ask Afrika has made a donation to SAHARA and will seek to aid in continued support. This year’s donation will be used to strengthen and support SAHARA’s operational resources and increasing activities.

“SAHARA’s systemic solution is a sustainable one that Ask Afrika is proud to support,” says Rademeyer. “We look forward to furthering our relationship with SAHARA in the years to come.”

To support the work of SAHARA contact SAHARA at [saharasouthafrica@gmail.com](mailto:saharasouthafrica@gmail.com) or Dr Hermann Reuter directly at 071 233 1606.

Watch our videos: [SAHARA Treatment](#) and [SAHARA Programme](#).

Learn more about SAHARA at [www.saharasouthafrica](http://www.saharasouthafrica) or [facebook.com/saharasouthafrica](https://facebook.com/saharasouthafrica).

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