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ILLICIT DRUGS:
Local and international realities

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**SOCIAL COMPLEXITY OF DRUG ABUSE, GANGSTERISM AND CRIME IN
CAPE FLATS' SCHOOLS, WESTERN CAPE****Rajendra Chetty¹**

ABSTRACT

Schools often provide a way of building up a secure and productive society resilient to criminality, but South African education is in crisis and has neglected poor Cape Flats schools where help is most needed to fight crime. This article argues that illicit drug use is integrally linked to the social dynamics on the Cape Flats area of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province. It engages specifically with drug abuse and its nexus with gangsterism in schools in disadvantaged communities using a Sociology of Education lens. This article also argues that due to these social dynamics, greater consideration needs to be given to the social conditions of the schools, homes and communities of youth involved in illicit drug use. The article leans on a literature review and textual analyses of relevant research and points toward a strategic and collaborative stakeholder partnership to address drug abuse in Cape flats schools.

Keywords: *Cape Flats, drug abuse, criminality, gangsterism, socially committed educational, community schools*

INTRODUCTION

A contemporary snapshot of a 2011 study conducted by the Unisa Bureau of Market Research on drug use and alcohol consumption among secondary school learners in the Western Cape Province (2012) revealed that over half the learners (53.3%) confirmed that drugs are easily accessible and almost a third (30.7%) of the learners were aware of friends who use drugs, the majority being in Grade 12 (41.7%). Just more than two in ten learners (22.1%) personally use drugs and dagga (cannabis) is the most popular (91.1%) across all grades. Approximately five percent reported that they use 'tik' or methamphetamine. Variations in patterns of drug initiation between countries and cultures suggest that entry into illicit drug use is dependent on social factors and drug availability, as well as characteristics of users and social settings that facilitate or deter use (Degenhardt & Hall, 2012). According to Pluddermann, Flisher, Mcketin, Parry and Lombard (2010: 14), methamphetamine is almost exclusively smoked in Cape Town, particularly among adolescents. The major social and contextual factors that increase the likelihood of use are drug availability, use of tobacco and alcohol at an early age (i.e. early adolescence), and social norms for the toleration of alcohol and other drug use. Socioeconomic background is also an important correlate of use, with people from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to use illicit drugs. Less well-studied structural risk factors include poverty and social and cultural features. Family factors that increase risk during adolescence include poor quality of parent-child relationships, parental conflict, and parental and sibling drug use.

In a study by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Research Unit of the Medical Research Council (MRC) of methamphetamine use as a predictor of high school non-attendance in Cape Town, it was found that the effects of the drug on scholars was disturbing (Pluddermann et al, 2010). Forty-three percent of the students surveyed at baseline level showed that methamphetamine use was significantly associated with school dropout when other non-substance use factors (repeating a year at school and being older than the norm for current grade) were taken into account. Of particular relevance to school-going adolescents, that are required to engage in cognitive tasks and conform to certain scholastic conventions of

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behavior at school, it was also found that methamphetamine users indicate cognitive impairment, including memory loss, concentration problems and irreversible neuronal damage (Pluddermann et al, 2010: 15). Fergusson and Boden (2008) add that the negative impact of substance use on school performance has a carry-over effect into adulthood, impeding opportunities for tertiary education and being associated with lower income, unemployment and lower life satisfaction. A longitudinal survey conducted in Cape Town high schools by Flisher, Townsend, Chikobvu, Lombard and King (2010) reveals a dropout rate of 55 percent from Grade 8 to the final follow-up survey in Grade 12. This finding is of concern not only in the Western Cape, but also nationally, since poverty is endemic and educational achievement could play a significant role in addressing economic disparities.

Pluddermann et al (2010) maintain that the high degree of 'overlap' in substances used creates challenges for understanding the unique contribution of different substances on children at school. Wechsberg, Luseno, Browne and Sawyer-Kurian (2006), found that drugs such as cannabis, mandrax and heroin were used to come down from or temper a methamphetamine induced high. Hence, polystimulant use is common in the Western Cape. Parry, Pluddermann and Myers (2007) add that when methamphetamine is a primary drug of abuse, cocaine is often reported as a secondary drug of abuse. From a racial perspective, Pluddermann, Flisher, Parry and McKetin (2007), note that coloured South Africans were more likely to access treatment for methamphetamine-related problems than patients from other race groups (with the proportion of coloureds ranging from 81% to 92%).¹ It should be noted that previous racial categorisations are still part of the country's lived reality and official statistics still refer to 'coloureds' as opposed to 'whites' or 'blacks' (Standing, 2006: 18). While the Human Sciences Research Council study on substance abuse trends in the Western Cape (Harker et al, 2008) cautions that this does not reflect lower levels of methamphetamine use among black/Africans, it can be safely concluded that the majority of youngsters that abuse drugs reside in the cape flats and the coloured communities have been disproportionately affected by methamphetamine (Pluddermann et al, 2007).

The role of the environment remains an important predictor in the onset of deviant behavior. According to field (2002), adolescents in non-traditional families have a greater tendency to exhibit substance-use-related behaviour earlier than their counterparts from traditional families. Jeftha (2006: 72), found in her study that for boys growing up on the cape flats, gangsterism was a defining feature of their social context, with graphic accounts of the pervasiveness of gang-related violence, which was described as being the result of economic need, peer pressure, boredom, and an escape from bullying and low self-esteem.

an important political perspective to the drug and crime problem in the cape flats is emerging with elements of racial undertones in the debate. the western cape is the only province in the country that is not under the jurisdiction of the african national congress, the ruling party. the democratic alliance western cape leader, Patricia de Lille (2015) asserts that the national government's refusal to establish anti-drug and anti-gang units in the western cape, despite past success, points to a politically motivated abdication of responsibility. de Lille states further that while vulnerable communities face increasing drug abuse and crime, the national government has not provided resources to maintain effective policing in the western cape. some of the decisions taken by the post-apartheid democratic dispensation are difficult to comprehend given the needs of communities like the cape flats, for example, the specialised crime unit tasked with drug abuse and gangs, the South African Narcotics Bureau, was dissolved in 2000 by the then-police commissioner Jackie Selebi. In a similar vein, Cooper (2015: 71) contends that part of the reason for South African children breaking the law by using illicit drugs is the fact that material and economic transformation and redistribution has yet to occur in the post-apartheid period.

Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2007), commented that even in comparison to other developing countries, the South African youth unemployment rate is extremely high.

According to Statistics South Africa (2010), 51 percent of 15-24 year old South Africans are unemployed. Hence, it is argued in this article that the historical conditions of injustice under apartheid, and the current cycle of violence and crime which resulted from those injustices, demand a sociological assessment of illicit drug use by learners at school. The 'crime' of drug abuse or many similar anti-social manifestations at dysfunctional schools, homes and communities on the cape flats are the victims of social engineering under apartheid. In viewing the rise of systemic drug abuse in Cape Flats schools, it is necessary to examine the phenomenon sociologically. Cycles of criminal behaviour cannot be separated from history or home and educational circumstances. Absolute standards of judgment have to take account of historical wrongs and current vulnerabilities.

DRUGS ON THE CAPE FLATS

The drug trade in the Western Cape region is one of the most dangerous and noticeable across the country. Salo (2004), notes that large number of drug addicts and gangs and the continued violence, especially in certain suburbs, have steadily exacerbated the seriousness of the situation, leading to international headlines, violent confrontation and mass civil society protest. The drug trade and the accompanying development of organised crime networks have been a constant problem for the government and citizens living in areas where organised crime has taken hold (Goga, 2014)

However, the drug trade often varies on racial, economic and geographic lines. The South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (SACENDU) has conducted studies on drug use and trends across the country since 1996, including Cape Town. Data is collected through drug and alcohol treatment centres nationally, and the information is then disseminated and analysed. According to the statistics released by SACENDU in June 2015, the profile of users seeking rehabilitation in Cape Town and their drug use can be described as follows:

- The highest number of patients under 20 years are in the Western Cape (3444);
- Methamphetamine (tik) remained the most common primary drug among patients (35%);
- Polysubstance abuse remains high with 44 percent of patients indicating more than one substance of abuse;
- 17 percent of patients have cannabis/mandrax (methaqualone) 'white-pipe' combination as their primary or secondary drug of abuse;
- Cannabis is reported as the primary substance of abuse by the majority of patients who are younger than 20 years;
- Approximately three percent of patients have cocaine as a drug of abuse;
- Mostly, heroin is smoked, but five percent of patients with heroin as their primary drug of abuse report injection use;
- Heroin is used as a secondary substance of abuse by 13 percent of patients; and
- A higher proportion of patients suffering from mental health problems were found in the Western Cape (40%) (SACENDU 2015: 1-2)

The use of different drugs differs between patients having a primary drug of use and using other drugs. In terms of primary drug use, methamphetamines have been the most widely used drug, with 35 per cent of admissions, followed by alcohol at 28 per cent; dagga at 18 per cent, with heroin abuse at 13 per cent and cocaine at two per cent (Goga, 2012). 'Tik' and mandrax are the greatest concern for policymakers, law enforcement and city officials. These two drugs have been the dominant drugs in the criminal economy of the Cape

Flats, in particular the use of 'tik'. *Tik*, a type of methamphetamine, is the largest cause of addiction and has replaced mandrax as the drug of choice for a vast number of users. It is considered to be low cost, at R15-30 per straw (Goga, 2012).

Dos Reis (2007: 16) provides a historical perspective to the current problem of drug abuse and gangsterism in the Cape Flats. She explains how the 40 000 residents of District Six on the slopes of Table Mountain lived in harmony and mutual support until the implementation of the Group Areas Act in the 1960s. The manner of such forced removal was as inhumane: the inhospitable destinations set aside for them were far away from the metropolis they knew and loved. This unilateral destruction of social fabric broke down the complex and long-established social links that sustained the Coloured community and many other intertwined racial groups within District Six. Social dislocation provoked anger and opened the way to reactionary criminal elements that presented the alternative of male fight-back in the face of Afrikaner control. Pinnock (1984: 55) notes that "a social disaster was inevitable. With the forced removals, familiar social landmarks in the closely grained working-class communities of the old city were ripped up. And a whole culture began to disintegrate".

The Group Areas Act separated groups by race; many Coloured people were relocated from centuries-old areas such as District Six to newly constructed housing projects such as Manenberg, Mitchells Plain, Lavender Hill and Hanover Park (Cooper, 2009). Other large townships specifically zoned for black people (such as Khayelitsha and Gugulethu) developed on the Flats as a product of both informal settlement and forced government relocations. Displacement from settled communities produced massive social dislocation. Many of the 'coloured' areas constructed during that period are the most crime- and gang-ridden suburbs in contemporary Cape Town (Salo, 2004). Pinnock (1984) posits that gangs on the Cape Flats are the result of groups of young men attempting to recreate social networks or 'brotherhoods', after the Group Areas Act tore communities apart. Pinnock (1996: 13) argues that a key reason for the youth to identify so easily with street gangs and to experiment with drugs is that the association fulfils the need for a rite of passage from childhood to adolescence and adulthood; "they create structures and rituals that work for them, carve their names into the ghetto walls and the language of popular culture, arm themselves with fearsome weapons and demand at gun-point what they cannot win with individual respect". Dissel (1997: 408), agrees that the gangs provide the youth with a sense of belonging, as well as opportunities for economic improvement and for gaining a sense of power, acceptance and purpose. The main activity of the gangs in the Cape Flats revolves around the supply and trade of drugs. Once the young members become addicted to drugs, they turn to petty crime like burglaries and robbery in their community to sustain their drug habits.

Herrendorfer (2004: 3), like Pinnock (1984), maintains that the forced removals of Coloured people from District Six in 1966 helped disperse gangsterism throughout the Cape Flats. A second landmark change and challenge for Cape Flats residents occurred after liberation in 1994. Dos Reis (2007) highlights this unexpected outcome of universal franchise. She points to four areas of societal disruption arising after 1994. Political instability and in-fighting in the administration of the Western Cape province after 1994 offered the more than 120 gangs on the Cape Flats the opportunity to extend their operations in the communities. African countries, which assisted political refugees from South Africa during the struggle, were allowed visas to South Africa: gangsters and drug lords from large professional organisations trickled into the receptive Cape Flats. Freedom meant that job reservation that had favoured coloured workers before 1994, was scrapped. This caused unemployment, poverty and resentment, which formed a breeding-ground for crime. The Black Economic Empowerment policy unintentionally exacerbated this situation by foregrounding black African people for equity targets in the workplace in the Western Cape.

The brutality of the apartheid government's treatment of the residents of District Six transposed patterns of cruelty expressed in gang warfare and drug abuse. The ruthlessness of male hegemony under apartheid was copied in distorted patterns of masculinity in the form of gangsterism, violence against women and drug abuse. Construction of balanced and mature masculinity was imperilled: the brutality of paternalist Afrikaner Nationalist behaviour was mirrored in male gang brutality. Standing (2005: 10) sets out the emergence of this dysfunctional, unfeminine imagery of male dominance: 'gangsterism is a culture of extreme masculinity and gross disregard for women, which is expressed through celebration of rape and exploitation of women for the sex industry'. Gangsterism, drug abuse and gender violence are interdependent social problems. Reckson and Becker (2005: 114), maintain that social ills flourish in a climate of desperation and suffering. The gangster or drug lord presents an image of glamour for boys to mimic and girls to idolise. Patterns of under-age pregnancy are closely aligned to such models of violent male dominance.

Dos Reis (2007: 60) comments that gangs have a unique way of luring young people to their ranks in poverty-stricken communities like the Cape Flats. The gangs create an image that portrays gangsterism as a glamorous way of life. This social aspiration constructs identity in imbalanced and unproductive ways. Young learners dress and behave according to their gangster heroes. Masculinity is equated with demonstrations of violence and murder. Female identity is reduced to sexual objectivity. The desire to assert female intellectual agency amongst girls or empathy and kindness amongst boys is overwhelmed by the lure of easy money, drugs and sex. Such social asymmetry has grown so that South Africa is identified today as a violent country; with the Western Cape claiming to be one of the most violent, crime-ridden parts of the world.

Drug abuse disrupts the classroom, breaks down the aspiration to achieve, and increases the levels of juvenile delinquency. Such communities deserve to be compensated today; not left to drift ever further behind previously advantaged schools. Even before the demise of apartheid, Pinnock (1984: 54) extended the list of social problems experienced in the Cape Flats to include breakdown of family control and extended family ties, an escalated divorce rate, increase of single parent households, and tension within homes.

Boys from such disrupted households, full of the anger and humiliation they observe in their parents' unjust predicament and poverty, form gangs to demonstrate a degree of manly defiance and pride in their desolate communities. They copy the kind of male brutality that forced their parents out of their centuries-old social habitus. An identity based on anger and cruelty invites many other aspects of criminality. This culture of anger, violence and criminal behaviour among the younger boys has been created by injustices – past and present. Hamlall (2014: 215), investigates masculinity at a violence-ridden Cape Flats high school and concludes that: "Schools can implement a progressive education policy to convert a human rights discourse into emancipated reality. In other words, we need to develop new caring discourses and practices which counter the hegemony of violent discourses".

The task of recuperation has grown larger with time. The number of gangs has multiplied just as activities of drug-peddlers have increased. Such complex situations of systemic racial abuse and its criminal aftermath need to be observed from different angles. One part of the investigation requires a retrospective view of the community: before displacement from District Six. Given the histories of these Cape Flats communities extra grants and support should already have been paid. An important element is the training of teachers specifically for such endangered and dangerous schools where bullets fly and drugs are sold openly in the schoolyard every day. Its syllabus would need to be aligned with critical educational studies (Freire, 1971) and foreground growth of the individual, critical independence and feminised identity construction. Teacher training in the Western Cape has been largely silent on the matter, apart from ivory tower analysis of the drug abuse issue without research uptake in the communities. Abbas (2009: 51) shows that teachers are not

sufficiently trained to deal with social ills: "Teachers felt that the training they received in their pre-service programme did not adequately prepare them to deal with learners' social problems". There is a perceived need amongst student teachers to engage with knowledge about classroom challenges such as drug-abuse and gangsterism earlier in their training.

SCHOOLS, POVERTY AND DRUGS

Despite the fact that the youth in lower socio-economic communities are asking for clean and safe school environments, quality education, and rigorous instruction, the evidence from Fine, Burns, Payne and Torre's (2004) study of American public schools suggest that the more years they spend in these schools, the more shame, anger and mistrust they develop; the more academic engagement declines; and the more our diverse democratic society disintegrates. These schools become fertile grounds for criminal and anti-social behaviour, hence the phenomenon of drug abuse at low-income schools on the Cape Flats should be viewed from a social, political and economic perspective. Drug-abuse and gangsterism is historical in cause and nature, shifting and increasing annually. Because drug abuse is socially and historically endemic and co-dependent on gangsterism, Weis and Fine's (2012: 173) notion of a double lens through which to argue for a sociological understanding of criminality at Cape Flats schools is useful.

A parallel would be drawn from a totally different context, where Fatima Meer (1987) argued for a more incisive comprehension of 18 year old Andrew Zondo's trial for the Amanzimtoti, Durban, bombing in December 1985. Meer (1987) viewed, and obliged legal experts to view, Zondo's so-called crime from the perspective of social circumstance. The extenuating circumstances of social deprivation were unfortunately not taken into consideration by Judge Leon when he sentenced Zondo to death. By the same token, the drug-abuse and criminal behaviour of children in poor communities should be viewed in the light of social challenges aligned with poverty and dysfunctional schooling. Juvenile delinquency and scholastic underperformance in schools in poor communities cannot be viewed one-dimensionally. Those most in need of governmental protection and increased support in South Africa are children in Quintile 1 no-fee schools, which are the most vulnerable. It is ironic to note that the Western Cape Department of Education has decided to close low-income, low-performing schools and is ignoring the social needs of struggling communities in the Cape Flats (Fredericks, 2015). Clashes between poor communities and the State are on the increase in South Africa and are a manifestation of a system at the crossroads. Similar trends are noted in the gang violence among young black and Hispanic males in Los Angeles (Erlanger, 2014).

The South African School's Drug Abuse Policy Framework stipulates that teachers receive suitable training to equip them to deal with social problems as they are presented in the classroom. However, teachers in the Cape Flats do not receive such specialist training. In the United States, there has long been a call for similar training but little has been implemented. Four decades ago Weinberg (1971: 102) stressed the need to train teachers appropriately and suggested that teachers spend time at drug clinics to observe and learn first-hand about difficulties and successful strategies in treating drug addicts. Teachers in training, Weinberg (1971) feels, need to spend time with social workers who can demonstrate techniques suitable for dealing with siblings and parents of addicts. Although parents bear the primary responsibility for learners, teachers are frequently obliged and expected to act in loco parentis in many situations because parents themselves are drug users, criminals or part of gang-life. Rosebrock (1996: 147), views the school as an integral component of the lives of poor and vulnerable children: poor societies often expect the school to deal with substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, gangsterism and violence. However, the hope of the school being a cure-all is usually an illusion. The school should recognise and deal with drug issues or gangster encroachment, but realistically this does not happen because teachers are too few,

rarely trained, afraid or ill-equipped to do so. Quintile 1 schools, in particular, lack basic educational resources and have too little support from government agencies to tackle social issues such as drug abuse.

TOWARD A STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP IN THE CAPE FLATS

Social and individual restitution may be a way forward for many communities where children are hungry for long hours and conditions make them easy prey for the drug-lords who pay children to serve as 'runners' for the sale of drugs. Gangsters recruit poor children as novice gangsters who have to prove themselves by attacking peers or younger boys (Cooper, 2009). A synthesis of the African philosophy of Ubuntu and critical educational studies for oppressed communities as advocated by Freire (1971) could provide a platform for integrated and emancipatory education, which offers positive models of behaviour: empathetic men and socially respected, independent women. Community development needs serious consideration in our efforts to address poverty, drug abuse and social ills. Chetty (2014), in his engagement with race and class, maintains that the capitalist democracy characteristic of the current African nationalist government foregrounds the interests of business, profits and the middle class at the expense of poor communities and this has resulted in the increase in levels of poverty and crime. School and community support programmes need to emphasise normative principles of welfare, wellness, respect, ethics and caring for each other as fundamental steps for the social well-being of poor communities. Such principles point toward holistic schools in the Cape Flats where the community, the schools and the education department are incorporated into a larger scheme of social upliftment and interdependence.

Incorporation of the community in educative processes can sustain discipline and generate collaborative strategies to resolve social problems like drug abuse and crime. Recent research (Potberg, 2015; Cozett, 2014) emphasises the crucial role played by parents in creating a mutually beneficial structure of learning, which reduces crime. Cozett (2014) implemented the Home School Partnership Programme (HSPP) in a low-to-no-income fishing community in Hout Bay in Cape Town. This intervention, though small in scale, proved successful in creating support for learners, understanding between school and families, and confidence amongst parents who were often illiterate and unemployed. Findings showed that parents attending the HSPP gained enough confidence to apply for jobs and were successfully appointed (Cozett, 2014: 77).

Potberg (2015) undertook a study of factors that could be usefully identified as key elements for creating an effective high school in a disadvantaged area of the Western Cape. He isolated five points that assist in determining a way forward for schools to establish constructive patterns of educative engagement: a supportive learning field, cross-collaboration and communication, effective leadership, effective teaching and development, and high expectations. Potberg (2015: 112) found that teachers in disadvantaged communities have a double challenge: conveying information and assessing the socio-political, economic and cultural backgrounds of learners. Community education in this holistic sense suggested by Potberg and Cozett means that school is not just literacy and numeracy but the sum of all social parts involved in its functioning. Education within such collaborative initiatives can reconstitute the social fabric and hope that was systematically eroded by apartheid.

The ethics of resilience, which grew in the District Six community to enable members to endure and overcome exploitation, can be recovered by collaboration between parents and school. Small-scale initiatives have produced positive results in the direction of home-building, parent learning and learner support (Cozett, 2014.). Teachers can become change agents in a community rather than victims of social ills. Teachers in the Cape Flats are traumatised by the violence and drug-related problems in their schools (Abbas, 2009). The number of teachers leaving the profession, especially in low socio-economic areas in the USA, is often blamed on the distressing nature and pressure of the daily work (Zastrow,

2007: 327). As indicated in Potberg's study (2015) greater integration of community can form a schooling community for combating social ills. Indigenous research is developing its own solutions to its own problems by such concepts as community education. Such research can productively be extrapolated and take root to redress social ills like drug-abuse and criminal behaviour.

Separating the school as a body legislated into autonomous responsibility (Drug Abuse Policy Framework, 2002) has not proved successful through lack of sufficient training, members of staff, social workers and infrastructure generally. Reclaiming schools as community schools poses a viable and low-cost means of recovering the sort of community that once existed in places like District Six. Richard Rive urges the youth of the Cape Flats to reclaim their identity that was dislocated with forced removals:

The children must be reminded of the evils that greed and arrogance can cause. We must tell about the District and the thousands of other districts [that] they have broken up because they wanted even more than they already had. We knew that District Six was dirty and rotten. Their newspapers told us so often enough. But what they didn't say was that it was warm and friendly. That it contained humans. That it was never a place – that it was a people. We must tell how they split us apart and scattered us in many directions like the sparks from this fire. They are trying to destroy our present but they will have to deal with our future. We must never forget (Rive, 1996: 198).

Reclaiming the spirit of District Six and community spirit in the drug-infested Cape Flats townships, may be achieved by re-instating the values that kept a group of people alive through oppression, humiliation and inhuman degradation. Regarding school, not as a place but an educative whole, which integrates the talents of parents, learners and educators, is a fitting reconstitution of humanitarian principles and an apposite sign of respect.

The problem of drug abuse in the schools in the Cape Flats has to be addressed with a comprehensive prevention programme. The key role player is the Western Cape Provincial Education Department. It should start with a strategic plan to ensure effective schools in the Cape Flats, especially in Mitchells Plain and Manenberg, by providing basic educational resources, professional development programmes for teachers and leadership seminars for principals on how to tackle drug abuse. The strategic intervention should also provide relief for hungry children, support for scholars with behavioural and learning problems and ways to limit the drug market in the school. The post of School Guidance Counsellor (which was scrapped during the teacher rationalisation process of the post-1994 democratic educational dispensation) should be recreated and filled in every school in the Cape Flats. The counsellor would be the key contact person in the school for the drug abuse programme and he/she should be tasked to implement, monitor and evaluate the substance abuse prevention programme in schools. Programmes should focus on polysubstance use, awareness campaigns across the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities and concerted efforts towards community and parental inclusion in all the events directed at prevention. An important component of the targeted awareness programme by the counsellor should be the linkages between drug abuse and sexual risk behaviours, especially among the female students given the high rate of teenage-pregnancy in the Cape Flats.

The school-community partnership is integral in the prevention campaign given the nature of the social dynamics of the Cape Flats and its unique challenges with regard to drug abuse. The provincial departments responsible for the welfare and health of the schools and community (Education, Social Services and Health) should work together to provide drug abuse treatment programmes in schools in the Cape Flats. The sensitivities around stigma for the drug abusers in the school pale into insignificance when compared to the harm caused by drugs, the abnormal dropout rates, the high levels of crime and increased rates of

incarceration of young offenders. Treatment services at schools should also be capacitated to address the cognitive deficits and mental health problems associated with drug abuse and dependence, hence requiring a deeper engagement with remedial and special education for the affected learners.

It is concerning that in spite of the drug and crime epidemic in the Cape Flats, there has been no urgency by the national education department to develop, implement and evaluate school-based interventions that aim to reduce the prevalence of drug abuse among learners in the Western Cape. At the provincial level, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) claims to be the most successful department in the country. However, its commitment to the Cape Flats schools is inadequate. As the key stakeholder in public education in the province, the WCED should have taken the lead in a strategic and collaborative campaign against drug abuse. Poor communities like the Cape Flats seem to be on the fringe of WCED's agenda given the social bifurcation and increased racialisation in South African society and schools (Motala & Vally, 2010).

An crucial recommendation is a survey dedicated to examining drug abuse, associated problems and treatment needs in Cape Flats schools. This should be the responsibility of the provincial education department. The survey would provide up-to-date data on Cape Flats schools with regard to prevalence rates of substance use disorders, correlates of substance use and levels of service need. This data would aim to identify spatial patterns of drug abuse in the Cape Flats and the schools with the highest level of problems. Regular surveys of this nature would be able to compare changes in patterns of substance use among the learners and help policy makers and service planners evaluate whether the allocation of additional resources to prevention and treatment had impacted on drug abuse in schools. Accurate data would also be generated on school dropout, as well as an evaluation of the intervention programmes to reduce the extent of school dropout among children who abuse drugs. Palen, Smith, Caldwell, Bray and Flisher (2008), concur that children exposed to school-based interventions had lower rates of involvement in use of certain substances compared to those who had not been exposed.

The school-community partnership should also include the Cape Flats police services as it would serve as an ideal platform to heal the breakdown in the relationship between the community and the police in the Cape Flats. Police brutality against young offenders has been on the increase in this community and the situation has been exacerbated with police corruption and police collusion with the drug merchants (Standing, 2006). Policing is a national responsibility and the state should provide specialised policing resources and introduce expert drug units to control gangsterism and drug abuse in the Cape Flats. It would be valuable if the police could play a key role in the drug abuse awareness programmes in the schools, not only to engender a collaborative partnership with the schools, but also as a way for the police to regain credibility among youth. The programme has to shift from a punitive approach to an enabling, caring and supportive methodology to address drug abuse in schools. Society benefits greatly if the police, school and community focused their efforts on prevention instead of tackling the aftermath of addiction among learners.

CONCLUSION

The school-community partnerships work effectively in affluent communities as can be witnessed in the manner that the parent governing boards at ex-Model C schools steer their establishments toward the status of semi-private schools. Unfortunately, in an unequal and racialised society, parental 'ownership' in this sense co-opts elements of neo-liberal education and openly excludes poor children. The request for the national education department and the WCED to provide strategic support in collaboration with the community to curb drug abuse in schools in the Cape Flats is urgent. Education of children and communities in deprived circumstances where the drug problem has spiralled beyond control

is a restorative step given the history of oppression, dispossession and relocation in South Africa. Poverty is increased by a lack of resources, services and education (Biccum, 2005: 1017).

The issue of educational inequality in schools in the Cape Flats is a moral issue, and not only an economic issue. The continued inequality of disadvantaged schooling is the creation of a society that violates its most basic social and political precepts that underlie its democratic claims. The low levels of literacy lead to higher levels of social problems such as drug abuse and higher costs of criminal justice and public assistance. As the state increasingly finances its prisons to house the juvenile drug addicts of the Cape Flats, publishes policy upon policy on 'zero-tolerance' of crime-infested schools in the Western Cape and releases audits on the low literacy levels in Quintile 1 schools, poor working class children witness the public betrayal of their schools and communities. It would be inaccurate to say that youth are learning nothing in Cape Flats schools of concentrated poverty, drugs and crime. These schools are not simply reproducing race and class inequities; they are educating poor and working class youth away from academic mastery, independence and democracy, toward academic ignorance, dependence and civic alienation.

ENDNOTES

1. It should be noted that previous racial categorisations are still part of the country's lived reality and official statistics still refer to 'coloureds' as opposed to 'whites' or 'blacks' (Standing, 2006: 18).

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