YOUTH DEPARTMENT

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I have had two productive meetings with a very enthusiastic team of young people and a married couple. We selected **UN Sustainable Development Goal #3** which states – ***"Good health and wellbeing – ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all ages."***

Our choice was motivated by the fact that tobacco companies around the world are fighting African Developing Countries. They do not want governments to legitimize the policies and laws against the advertisement and sale of tobacco in a bid to reduce tobacco consumption. These companies consider Africa their biggest market hence the fight. Mozambique, for instance, is expected to increase in the number of people smoking cigarettes by 220% by 2020.

Our country, Zimbabwe, is one of the largest producers of tobacco. Some tobacco markets according to reports on the internet tend to bribe governments so that they will not pass policies against tobacco consumption. Refer to the following websites:

http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-06-03-smoking-prevalence-cultural-acceptance-and-the-big-tobbaco

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/12/big-tobacco-dirty-war-africa-market

Along with cigarette smoking, our team is planning to lobby the government against policies that promote the sale of alcohol. We have such slogans as "Don't drink and drive" but we advocate for abstinence.

Here are the suggested activities we want to engage in and share with youth internationally.

Suggested Activities:

1. Go to schools to help students on drug awareness
   - ✳ Competitions - poetry on addictions
   - ✳ Advertise a drug free lifestyle
   - ✳ Catch them in schools, church, and community – This means we will make arrangements with youth leaders in schools to get them to start their own groups to carry on the initiative.
2. Look into alternatives to replace a drug habit.

   We are going to engage in programs such as the 10-Day Program to Stop Smoking.

   We also intend having a fruit and water breakfast program to aid in kicking the habit.
   - ✳ Community self-help projects for the youth - The self-help projects we have in mind include vegetable gardening and raising poultry so that not only will this keep youth busy, but it will also aid as income-generating opportunities. Drama clubs for hire will also be formed to perform in schools and at youth meetings.
   - ✳ Start-up loans for legal business ventures for the youth.
3. Lobby the Government to partner with us
   - ✳ Smoke-free zones.
   - ✳ Reinforce laws such as, "No Public Smoking".
   - ✳ Increase the tax levy on tobacco and alcoholic beverages.
4. Sponsor a walk to encourage an Alcohol and Tobacco-Free Lifestyle.
5. To empower the choice of a Drug-Free Lifestyle we also intend to establish health coaching clinics to help increase youth awareness on foods that promote a drug- free lifestyle.
6. Tobacco-free Tuesday and Thursday.

7. Develop a video on substance abuse within the neighborhood to be used as a tool in school visits.
8. Partner with other stakeholders to ensure success e.g. National traffic and driving.
    - ✴ No to road carnage due to alcohol consumption.
9. Have a celebrity speak against tobacco and alcohol abuse on National Television.
10. Circulate messages weekly on social media encouraging a substance abuse-free lifestyle, engaging local celebrities and youth groups.