

## LATE MR. MURAD A. SAAD BIO DATA:

**Mr. Murad A. Saad** was born and raised in Mombasa, Kenya, East Africa. After studies he immersed himself in business with the responsibilities of managing his companies.

**Mr. Saad** has been very instrumental in the fight against drug abuse at the coastal region and he has so far immensely contributed to the local community's awareness and resolved to eradicate the now glaring pandemic that is drug abuse. His-almost single handed-struggle against this social decay has been second to none.



*Late Mr. Murad Saad – RCT Founder*

His entrance to the field of drug abuse was in 1998 when he started going round the coastal towns and villages educating the masses about the drug abuse menace which by then was almost a taboo topic in the predominantly Muslim concentrated coastal area. Of course, **Mr. Saad** was faced by many challenges ranging from social, religious and financial constraints that threatened to shut his dream of contributing to a drug free society. However, this did not deter him at all.

Early in the year 2001, **Mr. Saad** was approached by a community based organization (CBO) namely Muslim Education and Welfare Association, (MEWA) to assist in formulating programs in the fight against drug abuse. This request was consistent with **Mr. Saad's** visible personal achievements in the arena of drug abuse.

Thus, **Mr. Saad** was co-opted by MEWA as the convenor of the health board. No sooner was he endorsed as the key man behind the fight than he founded the first ever drug addiction Rehabilitation centre in Mombasa, MEWA Rehab Centre in April 2001. This was a crucial leap in

the struggle and it really reengineered the local residents' perception towards the monster that became of drug abuse.

At this juncture, more and more people had gained awareness about drug abuse partly because of the concerted efforts from **Mr. Saad** and the like and also partly because, shockingly, more young people were getting addicted to heroin. This sad reality further thrust **Mr. Saad** to revitalize his strategies to match the growing concern. In the wake of the year 2003, **Mr. Saad** founded another rehabilitation centre called *Reachout Rehabilitation Centre* through funding from UNODC and other donors. The founding of *Reachout* drug treatment centre somehow coincided with a new dilemma in the field of drug abuse: that of intravenous drug users (IDU's) who were very vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection because of sharing needles and syringes.

This new concern saw **Mr. Saad** collaborating with UNODC who funded a study to determine the correlation between IDU's, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. The results indicated a shockingly high percentage of HIV & Hepatitis C positive amongst the IDU's. This outcome of this study led to **Mr. Saad** founding yet another project in the coastal community, the TUONANE project which is an outreach project whose target is to educate and counsel drug users against sharing syringes and needles to minimize their vulnerability to contraction of HIV. Through this project, **Mr. Saad** has managed to take thousands of Heroin drug users for Voluntary Counseling and Testing centres to know their HIV status and to live responsibly.

It is through the Tuonane Project, which is part of the UNODC's KEN108 project that I he worked even more closely with **Mr. Saad**. As a main goal of the project is related to HIV/AIDS treatment and care. **Mr. Saad** has been instrumental in setting up a comprehensive system for his clients within the Coast Provincial General Hospital. Due to his extensive input on drug addicts and their behavior, we have been able to prepare and train our staff to deal effectively and efficiently with these clients. He also serves with me as a member of the Coast Region Site Committee of KEN108. With his contribution and support, we have now trained staff and refurbished an out-patient drug treatment unit at our hospital, hoping to meet the demands of addicts on the Coast. He has made a commitment to help kick-start and support the out-patient drug treatment program and its staff, by his personal presence and that of his counselors on a regular basis.

All this time, **Mr. Saad's** focus has been to educate the masses about social problems such as drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and human trafficking; create intervention and drastically reduce the demand for drugs as well as vulnerability to HIV infection. In that regard he has organized and created awareness through public meetings, lectures, radio programs and also by funding youth plays depicting this social decay. **Mr. Saad** has also organized football and basketball tournaments that emphasize the motto "sports against drugs" which have been very effective in sensitizing the youth. During some of these activities **Mr. Saad** has sought my support & presence especially when addressing the community in general. Together we have participated in numerous events

including radio talk shows, social gatherings of influential community members, large public gatherings, meetings of NGOs and CBOs, and also in print media. As a result of one of these radio talk shows on Pulse FM, the community was moved to the point of physically removing drug peddlers, thus removing the sale of heroin in Mombasa Island for three months. **Mr. Saad** has also personally brought drug addicts who are seriously ill for in-patient treatment, and because of our close working relationship, the hospital has waived the fees for these clients.

**Mr. Murad A Saad** has grown to be a natural reference in the coastal area of Kenya whenever the subjects of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS are discussed.

Among the many achievements that **Mr. Saad** has accomplished are:

- Founding of MEWA rehab centre
- Founding of and running *Reachout* drug treatment centre
- Founding of *Reachout* centre trust
- Founding of and coordinating the *TUONANE* project (Currently Reachout Drop in Centre)
- He was nominated as the chairman of the sub committee on drug abuse of the Community Service Order by the office of the vice president of Kenya.
- He was awarded a certificate of recognition as 1<sup>st</sup> runners up role model of the year in the crusade for a drug free and healthy society by the Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ) and National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) a government body.
- Support and set-up of Coast Provincial General Hospital's (CPGH) out-patient drug treatment centre.
- Starting a prison outreach program which has included medical drugs and staff support from CPGH.
- Coordinated Reachout Centre Trust's Famine Relief Food program to the affected regions at the Coast of which CPGH provided medical drugs and staff.
- The 2006 United Nation Vienna Civil Society Award-For his outstanding achievements and recognition to the global fight against drug abuse, crime and terrorism

**Mr. Saad** was a hardworking man who spends lots of time in the fight against drug abuse. He later died on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2007.