

SPEECH OF THE HON VPM
CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE REBOUND MASTER TRAINING WORKSHOP
THE DOCKS, CAUDAN-
FRIDAY 19 APRIL 2024 @ 14h45

Mr. Maximilian VON HEYDEN, Executive Director of the FINDER AKADEMIE

Miss Sandrine VALERE, Supervising Officer of My Ministry

Permanent Secretaries of My Ministry

The Chief Technical Officer,

Senior Officers of my Ministry,

Mr. Sewraz CORCEAL, National Drug Coordinator

Mr. Vikram JOOTUN, Director of the MFDC,

Senior Educators and Educators,

Distinguished Guests.

Good afternoon to all of you

It is indeed with great pleasure and a profound sense of purpose that I stand before you today to once again highlight the significance of the REBOUND programme and the pivotal role of Educator's in drug prevention initiatives in schools.

The scourge of drug abuse poses a formidable challenge to society globally, threatening to undermine the very fabric of communities and jeopardizing the aspirations of people. The threat is even greater and more daunting for young people and that in itself indicates the need to build protective fences without which the health is being put at stake, their brain development affected and certainly the impact on academic performance and social interaction is more than deleterious.

Again, our commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child dictates to us the need to protect children from drug-related harm.

Hence, because prevention is key, we need to both educate our learners and foster deep resilience in them—in short, in the face of this formidable adversary,

it is imperative that we respond with unwavering resolve and commitment to proactive prevention strategies.

The REBOUND programme, ladies and gentlemen, is an effective means to combat drug abuse among our youth. Two things speak in its favor: one, it has been developed with meticulous care and informed by the latest research and best practices, and two, it represents a comprehensive approach to drug prevention, taking on board the cognitive, developmental and environmental dimensions. By targeting students aged 14 to 25 years, REBOUND seeks to empower our young people with the knowledge, skills, and resilience needed to resist the allure of substance abuse and make informed choices that will shape their future life trajectories.

But we also need mentors, guides, counsellors and coaches. That explains why, at the heart of the REBOUND programme lies a recognition of the pivotal role that Educators play in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of our youth. It is Educators who not only impart academic knowledge but also inculcate crucial life skills and values. As such, it is incumbent upon us to equip our educators with the tools and resources they need to effectively deliver drug prevention education in our schools and communities.

But you will have noticed that this particular training targets our Senior Educators from both public and private secondary institutions. You, ladies and Gentlemen, are being called upon to have recourse to a cascading effect by, in turn, empowering Educators in your schools. Through targeted training initiatives, such as the workshops conducted by Mr. Maximilian von Heyden, Executive Director of Finder Akademie, you are being equipped with the knowledge and strategies that you will pass down so as to strengthen the hands of Educators who would confidently address the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by drug abuse.

Mark my words, ladies and gentlemen, this program generate interest because the pedagogy it resorts to is one that will strike a positive chord in our students. The videos that will be used as resources have something that speaks in their favour they have an open end note meaning that the realistic situations and dilemmas young people confront provide the space for interaction will catalyse

open debates and discussions. And that is what students relish most—non-prescriptive and open-ended dialogue, one that provides a platform for, self-reflection, critical thinking and creativity.

I would really wish you to see this whole exercise as having an inter-generational impact. Remember that by investing in Educators' training, we are investing in the future of our society. You are fully alive to the fact that the impact of drug abuse extends far beyond individual lives: it affects families, communities and society as a whole. By addressing drug abuse effectively, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more resilient society for generations to come

Here I need to publicly show my sincere appreciation for the wonderful support being provided to my Ministry by Mr. Maximilian VON HEYDEN, the creator of the REBOUND programme. He has brought his wealth of expertise, dedication, and passion to our mission of safeguarding the well-being of our youth. Through his innovative approach, he has spearheaded the implementation of a groundbreaking drug prevention programme that holds the promise of transforming countless lives for the better.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education, I extend my thanks to Mr. VON HEYDEN for his invaluable contributions to our cause.

I would also like to convey my warmest thanks to Mr. Sebastian LINKE, the German Film Director, whose exceptional talent and unwavering commitment are bringing to life a series of short films that capture the essence of young people's lives and the challenges they face in our ever-changing world. Through his masterful storytelling and keen insight, he has crafted scenarios that resonate with authenticity and realism, providing a powerful lens through which our educators can engage with students on topics that are both relevant and meaningful.

To me, it is obvious that these films, with their ability to evoke empathy and stimulate thought-provoking discussions, represent a valuable tool in our arsenal of educational resources.

Last, but not the least, I would also like to thank the Mauritius Film Development Corporation, and its Director, Mr. Vikram JOOTUN for the exceptional support

and proactive efforts exhibited by the MFDC team during the shooting of the Rebound clips. It has been brought to my attention that your staff's dedication and resilience in overcoming difficulties were instrumental in ensuring the successful completion of the shooting.

Throughout the filming process, their professionalism and commitment were evident, even in the face of challenges. Your proactive approach and ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances played a crucial role in maintaining the momentum and quality of the production. I would like to commend each member of the MFDC team for their hard work, perseverance, and collaborative spirit.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my Ministry's commitment to the Fight against Substance Use. Together, let us stand united in our determination to create a future where our youth are empowered to make healthy choices, pursue their dreams, and fulfill their potential.

Thank you.