

**PRESENTATION TO GAMBLING
REGULATORS ASSOCIATION FORUM
By: Mrs. Matshediso Matsapola at
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Responsible Gambling and Public
Education

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Responsible gambling is when an adult uses disposable income to make a bet or bets offered by a licensed gambling operator merely for entertainment.

- Irresponsible gambling on the other hand, occurs when a person views gambling as a probable source of income or quick wealth and uses his income, property or savings to take a bet offered by any gambling operators, including an illegal gambling operator

- There are serious social and financial consequences that flow from irresponsible gambling

- Those who view gambling as a probable source of income or quick wealth may become:
 1. Problem gamblers; or
 - 2 People who are addicted to gambling

- Speaking loosely, a problem gambler is a person who routinely loses his income but still has a little bit of control on over his gambling activity

- A person who is addicted to gambling is one who has lost all control; he has an uncontrollable urge to gamble and gambles to satisfy the urge and his/her life is dominated by the desire to gamble.

- For purposes of this presentation, we will ignore the significant differences between a problem gambler and an addicted gambler
- We shall treat them both as irresponsible gamblers and concentrate on the consequences of their behavior.

- What are some of the most serious consequences of irresponsible gambling
- A gambler routinely loses his income and fails to meet his/her financial obligations.
- Failing to meet one's financial obligations may cause a heap of family problems.

- 1. Children often drop out of school
- 2. Spouses divorce
- 3. Domestic violence occurs
- 4. Prostitution becomes an alternative source of income.
- 5. Alcoholism and drug addiction manifest itself

- There is very little doubt that although gambling is a legal business, it produces unintended negative social and financial consequences
- If left unchecked, these consequences ruin lives

- What then should be done to minimize the social and financial impact that is brought on by irresponsible gambling

- In South Africa, through a private – public partnership initiative the South African Responsible Gambling Foundation (SARGF) was established
- The aim of the SARGF is to
 - (a) increase public awareness on the ills that irresponsible gambling produces
 - (b) conduct research to obtain facts regarding irresponsible gambling
 - (c) offer counseling and treatment to the affected gamblers and their families

- What are some of the Main Challenges the SARGF faces
- Problem gamblers and addicted gamblers are reluctant to seek help
- There is no collaborative effort between relevant social interventions organizations with the SARGF

- There is no relationship between SARGF and law-enforcement entities
- There is little joint effort made between SAGRF and Regulators to combat illegal gambling
- No effort is made to train community based counselors

- There is no continental platform created for meaningful interaction between organizations that deal with responsible gambling.
- Responsible gambling remains a low priority for most stake-holders

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I recommend the following for GRAF members:
- Because it causes devastating consequences that impact on the lives of ordinary citizens, responsible gambling must be priorities at all levels

- A sustainable funding model must be devised
- A Continental Responsible Gambling Commission or Forum must be established
- More community based counselors must be trained and well resourced

- Regulators must spare no effort in combating illegal gambling
- Relevant law-enforcement entities including court personnel must be trained to readily identify crimes that are associated with irresponsible gambling

- All the entities that are and will in the future be established to deal with responsible gambling issues must form a meaningful platform to interact with other intervention community based organizations.

- **THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**

