

More Like Prison Than A Hospital

ALLOW me some space in your esteemed newspaper to state my view on recent changes made at the Katutura State Hospital.

The adjacent communities are experiencing drastic changes in structures at the said hospital. All brought on by its current management. High security fences and electronic gates that will only open on production of a hospital identity card were installed. The casualty and outpatient departments are under reconstruction. The main gate is relocated. All credit to the management.

However, the hospital management is missing its priorities. Ask any worker at this hospital, including a large portion of the said management, and one will realise the grave discontent and rejection of the recent changes. I am of the opinion that the said hospital needs a board including active community members. The latter will increase community input and accountability to deliver a more community-friendly service, something that is definitely lacking. This hospital needs an increase in bed capacity, nursing and medical staff and equipment.

Study of human behaviour tells us that structures are there to serve people and not to control people. There is no system men cannot beat. Just because any form of development should coincide with the mentality and knowledge of people, otherwise it is of no use to them. What the communities around the hospital need is a paradigm shift and not high wires. The Customer Care Officer must do her work in mobilising the community, informing them through popular print and electronic media of changes made to the system. This would bridge the gap of ignorance between adjacent communities and the hospital. To be honest, these people have no vision for this hospital, no care for the patients and only the nurses are getting the blame. This

hospital is being run by politicians who lack vision and are motivated by power not to serve people. Imagine if they ruled Namibia, the whole country would be full of arrogance, high fences and electronic gates, the very things we were freed from.

The entire hospital has got only one Electrocardiogram (ECG) machine, less than five IVAs, no laundry for linen and hospital uniforms, bed and staff shortages, just to mention a few. I challenge the management to reveal their recent spending for the sake of accountability, after all it is the taxpayers' money being wasted. These gates and fences are very expensive to maintain and some of them have already experienced mechanical problems. The physical planning was poor and fits the Windhoek Central Prison better than it does to a hospital. The other day the bus could not fit through the main entrance and it is unused until today. It is common sense that at a hospital the emergency centres should be first to be clearly visible and within reach, but this is not the case. Pregnant woman are dropped by taxi at the gate and they have to find their way, birth pains and all, to the maternity department, approximately 150 metres away. Not to mention stab wounds to the casualty further on. It is just a matter of time and we will pick up corpses and babies between the gate and the hospital itself.

Finally, regimes came and regimes went. The once mighty Roman Empire that ruled the world is no more today. Mobutu was ruling DRC with an iron fist, but he is no more. So was Laurent Kabila, but he is no more. This principle also applies to the current management.

Hospital Employee, Windhoek

Note: Name and address provided - Ed