

Most people like to think about themselves as not rich enough or able enough to help a person in need.

But there's one who has set her own disability and personal shortcomings aside to cater for the needy.

Regina Kondobolo, who got awarded for her efforts last week by International Women's Association of Namibia (IWAN) - a charity organisation that funds non-profit organisation, which care for the needy - runs a day care centre that caters and nurses for the mentally ill and deserted people, mostly women and children.

The centre was established 23 years ago in 578 Gamba Street in Wanaheda.

Kondobolo, who was still a registered nurse at the time, fractured her spinal cord in an accident when she fell down the stairs; an accident that would see her being wheelchair-bound.

While she was recuperating, she made a decision not to go back to work and rather start a self-gratifying programme that would cater for the needy.

"I got bored and thought of starting something at home that was related to my job, so I started the Hephata Day Care Centre," said Kondobolo.

She added that most of the people are now her family since some of them were deserted. Others have passed on and she has had to run around and make their funeral arrangements all by herself without any help from their (deceased) family members.



Regina Kondobolo (in wheel-chair)

Disability is not inability ... indeed

The day care centre consists of former teachers, nurses and she even, at one time, cared for a lawyer.

"Most of these people were once very successful people within society and how they ended up mentally ill and/or deserted by their families, only God knows," she said sympathetically.

Amongst those in her care today, are three little children whose mother passed on in a fatal car accident a few months back.

Asked about what challenges she faces, Kondobolo was not hesitant to say that her greatest challenge is movement as she is stuck in a wheelchair.

Luckily, her daughter-in-law now helps her around the house with chores.

IWAN learnt about Kondobolo's efforts for the good cause; helping the needy through an article that was written about her and her work a few years back in a local daily.

On 21 March this year, with the help of the US Embassy, they went to paint and clean the Hephata Day Care Centre.

Rachel Schmidt, a member of IWAN, described Kondobolo as a loving, humble and giving woman, "Nothing can stop her and her disability gives her more abilities to do more. She prefers her donations to come in material things rather than as money."

Kondobolo was all tears and smiles when she received her Annual Achiever's Award. It was a defining moment of her work that she shared with the members of IWAN who hugged and encouraged her to keep helping others needier than she is.