



Life skills and peer education in Africa:
 Young people and local communities commit to a healthy future
 - without alcohol and other drugs

Programme countries	Partner
Republic of the Congo	CTPAD (Coordination Technique des Projets et d'Appui au Développement Communautaire)
Republic of Tanzania	Blue Cross Tanzania
Chad	Blue Cross Chad (Croix-Bleue Tchadienne)
Republic of Togo	Blue Cross Togo (Croix-Bleue Togolaise)

Context - Alcohol as a Problem

According to the WHO, **8,000 people worldwide die every day** from the consequences of harmful alcohol consumption. These are three million deaths per year that could be avoided through better measures to protect people. Reducing alcohol and drug use and related harm is an important item on the global agenda of both the WHO and the UN, with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.5 calling for "strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, namely narcotic drug abuse and the harmful use of alcohol".. Alcohol consumption is a burden on health systems and societies as a whole and has a negative effect on 12 of the UN's 17 SDGs. **Consequently, the use of alcohol and other drugs is one of the biggest obstacles to sustainable development.**

According to the WHO, African countries bear the greatest burden of global alcohol consumption. Especially harmful to consumers is Heavy Episodic Drinking (HED), which refers to extremely harmful and excessive drinking patterns of regular intake of 60 grams of pure alcohol in one sitting. For example, in Congo over 80% of those who consume alcohol practice HED. Young people under the age of 25 are particularly vulnerable due to poverty and unemployment. Additional risk factors are family problems and difficulties in the social environment, lack

of awareness of the *dangers* of alcohol, easy access to alcoholic beverages and insufficient implementation of the laws.

Besides alcohol, Tramadol, a pain-relieving opioid, has increasingly become a problem among African youths and constitutes a serious risk. Many young people consume this mood-boosting painkiller to increase their performance at work or school and deal with pressure and problems in their daily life.

International Blue Cross - Who we are

*A society free of violence, oppression, and alcohol- and drug-ridden
conditioned disease - **that is our vision.***

International Blue Cross (IBC) is a non-governmental organisation working worldwide to reduce alcohol and drug-related health and societal problems. As an umbrella organisation and international actor in development cooperation, we are currently present in 38 countries through our national member organisations. IBC's work includes the implementation and promotion of **alcohol and drug prevention** programmes. We offer **therapy and counselling** for those affected and are involved in **lobbying and policy advice** worldwide. IBC is committed to an inclusive globalisation of justice - including those who are most excluded from society.

Programme targets 2024



The overall objective of the programme is to prevent harm from alcohol and drug use among children and young people in Togo, Tanzania, Chad, and the Republic of Congo. In doing so, the young people are not only taught life skills but also trained to become health ambassadors (peer educators) in their communities. Specific objectives with reference to both countries for 2023 to 2024 are:

1. **Improved life skills (life skills)**

Strengthening the well-being and resilience of a total of 6,300 children and young people through life skills education.

2. Gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence (GBV)

Demonstrating the link between alcohol and drug use and gender inequality and violence through educational activities in the field of violence prevention among a total number of 10,000 young people and adults



3. Local communities are empowered to shape local policies

Formation of citizens' groups within local communities, who are empowered through workshops to act together and advocate for better regulations/improved legislation in the field of alcohol policy and to claim their rights through the formation of citizens' initiatives (4 initiatives in total). In addition, the population of the countries is sensitised to the risks and harms of alcohol and drug use, as well as related (gender-based) violence, through radio broadcasts and social media activities.

Table 1: Project beneficiaries by activity 2024

Activity	Life skills training	Peer educators	SGBV	Empowerment training	Media awareness-raising measures*
Chad	2'500	70	4'000	100	30'000
Tanzania	800	20	1'000	50	10'000
Congo	1'800	40	3'000	100	30'000
Togo	1'200	30	2'000	100	30'000
Total	6'300	160	10'000	350	100'000

*indirect beneficiaries

Inclusion in international objectives

IBC works in accordance with the prioritised **UN Development Goals**, and has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC). Specifically, the Life Skills and Peer Education programme promotes the UN Sustainable Development Goals of health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, peace, justice, and strong institutions.



Sustainability of the project objectives

We place particular emphasis on the sustainability of our programmes. This is achieved by empowering people to **help themselves** and at the same time influencing political decision-makers. **An external programme evaluation certifies the programme's sustainability and relevance.** In 2020 the evaluation concludes that the programme contributes to achieving the sustainable development goals of the UN Agenda 2030, brings about **long-term behavioural change by reducing alcohol consumption and gender-based violence**, and thus promotes an overall **improvement in the quality of life**. The external evaluator recommended to expand its implementation to other countries.

Target groups and activities

The programme targets **disadvantaged groups** and focuses its core activities on children and adolescents or young adults between the ages of 12 and 25. The programme beneficiaries are students at public schools in the cities of Lomé (Togo), Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), N'Djamena (Chad), Arusha (Tanzania) as well as young motorbike taxi drivers in precarious employment (Lomé and N'Djamena).

Our prevention programme addresses the growing problem with life skills and peer multiplier trainings as well as media and lobbying work in cooperation with its local partner and member organisations.

Theory of Change

Life skills training refers to the **teaching of life and everyday skills** to prevent health and social problems. The focus is on building skills through active "self-learning". As an education and awareness programme, the focus lies first on building awareness of alcohol and drug issues, thus positively influencing young people's behaviour. This is complemented by activities to **create better framework conditions (Fig 1 Prevention Triangle)**.

- A) In the field of **education**, IBC promotes the personal and social development of young people. In life skills trainings, participants practice and deepen cognitive and social skills. This includes, for example, communication skills, empathy and analytical



skills, self-confidence as well as non-violence, peaceful conflict resolution, and decision-making skills. The trainings include the topics of **addiction, HIV, discrimination, violence, and gender issues.**

Participants are guided to analyse addiction and consumption of alcohol and drugs and to understand how these are related to the other thematic areas. They learn, for example, the great influence alcohol consumption has on risky sexual behaviour, and how this simultaneously increases the risk of contracting HIV-Aids. In the training sessions, they are supported to grow into self-confident and healthy adults.

Trained life skills trainers conduct training sessions twice a month during regular school lessons. These are complemented by extracurricular activities such as sports, art, and theatre. Pupils and motorbike taxi drivers participate in the life skills lessons for at least one school year.

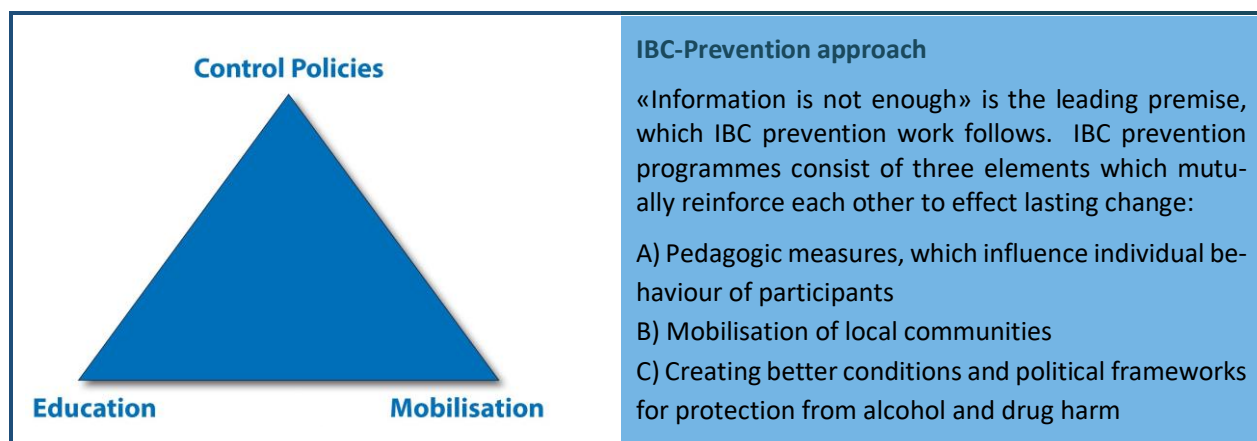


Fig. 1 Prevention Triangle

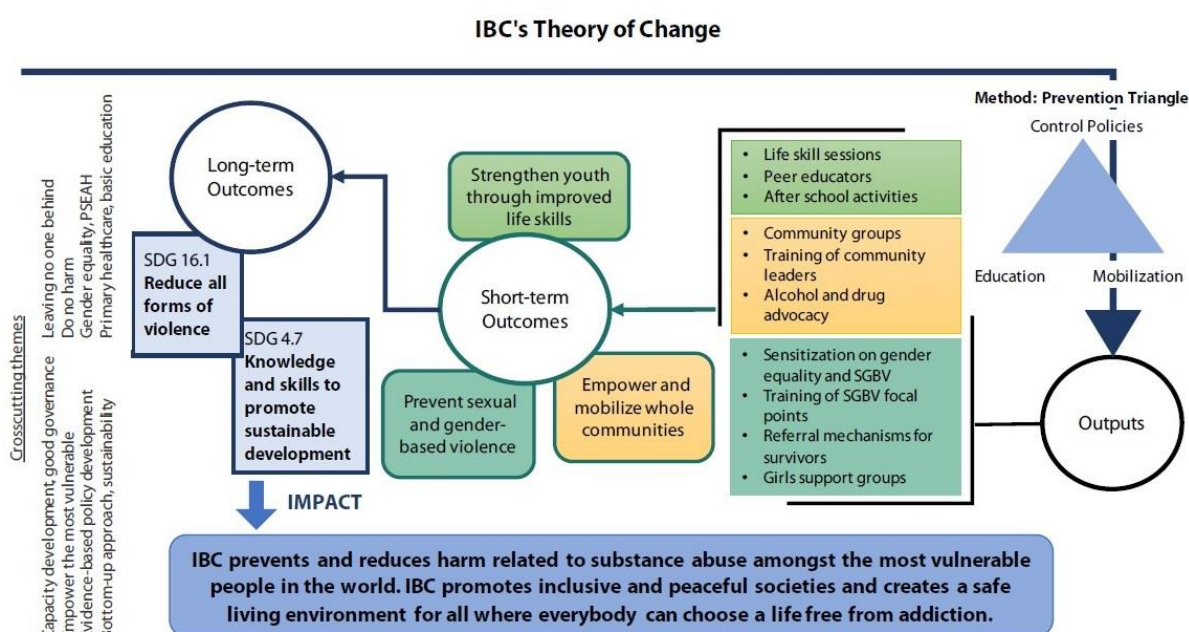
- B) **Mobilising local communities**, for example, educates and sensitises adults and young people as well as policymakers. They are supported in advocating for social change.

This concerns, for example, educational work with adults and young people in communities as well as political decision-makers. Depending on the local context, civil society actors can influence local legislation and launch campaigns and initiatives that contribute to a better youth protection and social climate. Examples include the introduction of a minimum age for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, a ban on alcohol sales near schools or a ban or restriction on advertising and marketing.

- C) As part of its **policy work**, IBC advocates for **improved institutional protection** through alcohol policy interventions and local education and media work. These aim to protect young people from alcohol consumption by stopping sales to minors and enacting effective laws to protect young people and children, including the regulation of advertising.

In addition, IBC partners collaborate with local TV and radio stations to disseminate content that sensitises the population with regard to the dangers of alcohol and drug consumption. Public events to raise awareness among young people as well as adults take place regularly in this context. In contact with local decision-makers, village elders, mayors, ministries, and other local organisations, the programme teams develop concepts for better youth protection. The awareness-raising work and media campaigns contribute in a broader sense to strengthening local institutions and making them effective, inclusive, and transparent.

The diagram illustrates the entire programme logic (**Theory of Change**):



Young multipliers - peer education

In addition to the measures listed above, the IBC prevention programmes focus on the training of youth multipliers (peer education), both among pupils and among motorbike taxi drivers. Peer educators act as ambassadors by **spreading the skills** they have been **taught among their peers**.

They organise the awareness-raising work in the life skills clubs, for example, through group discussions and role-playing, and complement this with leisure activities such as theatre and football tournaments or music and poetry events. The peer educators are an important part of the programme in all countries and central to the sustainability of the projects.



During a training session, a peer educator in Congo gives a presentation

Programme focus - prevention of gender-based violence

An increased programme focus for the programme phase 2021-2024 is on the promotion of gender equality and the **prevention of gender-based violence (GBV)**. Violent behaviour towards girls and women in the programme countries occurs mainly in connection with alcohol consumption and is favoured by a patriarchal character of society.

As the target group is at an age when values for future life are

being consolidated, this offers the opportunity to address gender roles, gender-based violence, rights and duties in the family structure and to question and analyse attitudes and attitudes towards them. In addition to the concrete treatment of these topics within the life skills lessons, so-called gender focal points act as contact persons who provide assistance with questions on gender-based violence and act as mediators and links between young people affected by violence and experts.



"Unfortunately, violence against girls and women is far too common here. Alcohol is a big issue here. Therefore, we put a special focus on counseling affected girls and women and helping them with the involvement of the family!"

Angeline, Gender Advocate at Blue Cross Chad (centre)

Partners

The IBC prevention programme is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Implementing partners are closely evaluated and screened for good organisational governance by IBC prior to any collaboration. On the ground, IBC and its partners work with local and international organisations, communities, and ministries to put the harms caused by alcohol and drug use on the local and global political agenda. The individual partnerships are listed below:

	International	National	Government
Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mission Evangélique Braille MEB - UNESCO - INRAP L'Institut national de recherches archéologiques préventives - CARITAS - UNICEP - GOTHIA - Other African Blue Cross Organisations, South-South Knowledge Transfers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Média Freelance - APEEC Association des Parents Élèves et Etudiants Congolais - ADC Association pour la défense des droits des consommateurs - CEDIAM Centre Diocésain d'information et d'assistance aux maladies du SIDA - CILONG Cimité de Liaison des Organisations Non Gouvernementales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DSEPSA Direction Départementale de l'Enseignement Primare et Secondaire et de l'Alphabétisation - PNLS Plan National Lutte contre le SIDA

Togo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IAMANEH - WHO - UNESCO - UNDP - Other African Blue Cross organisations, South-South knowledge transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Réseau des Ong et Associations anti-Drogue du Togo - Réseau Men Engage - AFAD Alliance Fraternelle Aide pour le Développement (<i>funded by lamaneh</i>) - GF2D Groupe de réflexion et d'action Femme, Démocratie et Développement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CNAD Comité National Anti-Drogues - Ministry of Education - Ministry of Security and Transport
Chad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF - IPPF - WHO - UNDP - Other African Blue Cross Organisations, South-South knowledge transfer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Association pour le marketing social au Chad AMASOT - STOP Tobacco Chad - Centre Diocésain de la recherche Action en Alcoologie (CEDIRAA) - Association pour la défense des droits des consommateurs (ADC) - Association Chrétienne pour la lutte contre l'alcoolisme au Tchad (ACLAT) - Moto Taxi Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministries: de la Santé Publique; de l'action sociale de la femme, de la famille et de la solidarité nationale; de l'éducation nationale et de la promotion civique - CNLT Comité National de Lutte contre le Tabac - INJS Institut National de la Jeunesse et des Sports - Programme Nationale de Lutte contre le Tabac l'Alcool et les Drogues (PNLTAD)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other Blue Cross Organisations: Blue Cross Kisumu (Kenya), Blue Cross Botswana, Blue Cross Uganda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Group - Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Tanzania - Ministry of Health in Arusha - Elimu Yetu development foundation - College institutions, radio stations - Other NGO's in life skills education promotion in schools, college and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local government authorities at regional, district and council level with their departments in Arusha region

Local : Municipalities; Community Initiatives; Neighbourhood Leaders; Mayors; School Principals; Police; Alcoholics Anonymous; Local Churches



Communauté de Coopération



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Direction du développement
et de la coopération DDC