

Life Skills and Peer Education Programme – Chad

2020 Annual Report

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Local Partner Organization:
Blue Cross Chad
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N'Djaména



Picture 1: Member of the Blue Cross theatre group in the Atrone district (N'Djaména) during an awareness raising session

1. Development of the Programme¹

1.1. Approach

IBC focuses on **evidence-based best approaches** to tackle substance abuse problems, including **life skills, alcohol policy advocacy, self-help and mutual aid methods**. These approaches give clear directions to the formulation of effective intervention methods against alcohol-related harm, protecting the most vulnerable populations against increased burden of disease, violence, marginalisation and discrimination. Concretely, IBC bases its intervention on the so-called **prevention triangle**, combining prevention strategies through education, community action and alcohol policy advocacy, in order to have a lasting impact on societies (three-level prevention approach: individual level, community level, policy level) and assure long-term project sustainability.

The strategic objective is to contribute to the reduction of alcohol and substance abuse among in and out-of-school youth in the capital city of N'Djamena. **Youth will learn to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to make healthy decisions about alcohol and drugs and related risks, including HIV / AIDS transmission**. Beside targeting young people (students and motorcyclists), the program also seeks to reach **adults** (parents and community leaders) as well as **government institutions** (local and national political and administrative authorities) who play a key role in shaping and enabling a safe environment to protect young people.

1.2. Objectives Programme Phase 2017-2020

Objective 1 – Life Skills and Peer Education:

Implement a coherent program for life skills education and prevention of substance abuse among vulnerable youth populations using locally adapted, culturally appropriate peer education methods in the national curriculum.

Objective 2 – Community Action:

Sensitize and mobilize community members including teachers, parents and the general public to increase awareness of the effects of alcohol-harm on the socio-economic factors and health of its citizens.

Objective 3 – Prevention of gender-based violence:

Increasing knowledge and developing life skills in relation to gender equality and gender-based violence to prevent gender-based violence and assist survivors.

Objective 4 – Alcohol Policy Development:

Drive the national alcohol policy agenda to create evidence-based policies to protect youth and create an environment for healthy living.

¹ Note: This document provides a summary of the year 2020. More details can be found in the full report from Blue Cross Chad (in French) attached to this report

Objective 5 – Capacity Development:

Develop the capacity of the local partner to create scalable, replicable and relevant projects in the field of health and specifically, addiction.

2. Context Chad 2020

COVID-19 has strongly impacted the IBC Projects in Chad in multiple ways:

- Schools remained closed from March – September 2020. No Life Skills and prevention sessions in schools could be held during this time
- Mass gatherings were prohibited, negatively impacting the planned mass activities such as public conferences, open days, marches, etc.
- Closure of on-premise sale of alcohol (as mentioned above)

In addition, COVID-19 has brought new realities:

- Evidence points towards the **increase of domestic violence**, especially violence against women and girls. The IBC members in Chad, Togo and Uganda report on increased domestic and gender-based violence within the communities. According to them, cases of girls dropping out of school, unplanned pregnancies and forced marriages have increased since March 2020 (no official country statistics available though). This represents a serious backlash in yearlong efforts of achieving gender equality and fighting against gender discrimination.
- The topic of **stigma and discrimination** in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, as our teams in Congo and Chad have witnessed an increase in discrimination of people being sick and having recovered, specifically people having been diagnosed with COVID-19, suffering from exclusion even after recovery.
- **Juxtaposition of vulnerabilities**. In Chad, the measures taken worldwide to tackle COVID-19 have led to an inflation of prices of basic food. Additionally, multiple floods in the capital N'Djamena have forced many people to leave their homes behind.
- Increased **disparities and inequalities between rich and poor** – the rich ones getting even richer since the start of the pandemic and the poor ones getting poorer and more vulnerable.
- **Myths and fake news** around alcohol and COVID-19.

3. COVID-19 Project Adaptation

Especially at the beginning of the pandemic, a variety of **myths, fake news and misinformation** about COVID-19 and alcohol were circulating especially in the Global South, such as:

- Consuming alcohol destroys the virus that causes COVID-19
- Drinking strong alcohol kills the virus in the inhaled air by disinfecting mouth and throat
- Alcohol stimulates immunity and resistance to the virus



The WHO elaborated a factsheet on "[Alcohol and COVID-19: what you need to know](#)". IBC has distributed its content largely among its members and audiences worldwide through regular newsletters, trainings and community sensitization activities in project countries. The focus on the COVID-19 response of IBC and BC Chad has laid on the understanding and respect of the prevention measures (washing hands, keep a distance, proper use of mask, etc.), the **prevention of alcohol and drug abuse as a way to dealing with emotions and stress because of COVID-19**, and the **strengthening of life skills during the pandemic**: decision-making skills, interpersonal and communication skills, coping and self-management skills.

In **Chad**, the COVID-19 response was based on three pillars:

1. face to face community awareness raising campaign with distribution of masks, hand sanitizer and information leaflets
2. social media awareness raising campaign
3. radio programmes awareness raising campaign

Blue Cross Chad, with their peer educators and Life Skills clubs, conducted **virtual life skills** sessions via WhatsApp groups and Facebook. Three partnerships with local radio stations were signed. Project staff and peer educators conducted **regular radio emissions** to spread life skills messages such as stress resistance, peaceful resolution of conflicts, SGBV prevention and myth busters regarding fake news about the COVID-19 situation ("Drinking alcohol does not protect you against COVID-19 and can be dangerous" etc. – based on WHO publication: https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/437608/Alcohol-and-COVID-19-what-you-need-to-know.pdf?ua=1). The peer educators have also registered various songs and slogans on these topics which were broadcasted on the radios (examples are available upon request).

BC Chad project staff, in collaboration with local politicians, community members and peer educators, conducted **door-to-door COVID-19 sensitization campaigns** in three vulnerable neighborhoods of N'Djamena, underlining the importance of respecting the prevention measures (social distancing, personal hygiene, etc.). Over 1000 households were individually reached and sensitized. The initiative of Blue Cross Chad to mobilize local authorities and populations in the COVID response inspired and was followed by many other non-profit organizations in Chad.

Some project activities, especially **training activities**, could still be carried out despite COVID-19 although with smaller participant numbers, in order to respect the national COVID guidelines (no events with more than 50 people and no public assemblies): Amongst others, the training of the SGBV focal points at schools and training of project staff in provision of psychosocial care for SGBV survivors.

The central message of the IBC COVID response was the propagation of the WHO prevention measures, the myth busters, **key messages about alcohol harm prevention and SGBV prevention, as well as essential life skills during the pandemic, such as stress resistance,**



innovative thinking and decision taking. IBC took a clear stance on using the existing skills of promoting health through life skills that lead to positive health behaviors. This positioned IBC partners correctly as health behavior experts instead of medical experts on Covid-19.

4. External Evaluation Summary

International Blue Cross (IBC) has mandated the Swiss company [RANAS](#) to evaluate its Life Skills and Peer Education projects in Chad and Congo. RANAS is expert in behavior change in the field of health. The overall goal of this external evaluation was to **assess the life skills and peer education projects in Chad and Congo between 2017 and 2020** and review the projects' relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The evaluation, through the methods of desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and interviews with beneficiaries, showed clearly that IBC's work in Chad and Congo has a **strong impact on reduction of substance abuse and related behaviours** (sexual risk behaviours and GBV), the related knowledge and attitudes. The impact of IBC's local work goes beyond the effect on beneficiaries, **influencing communal, structural and governmental levels** by changing people's perception about substance abuse and even encouraging legal changes.

The evaluation underlined that the projects are **highly relevant** in their countries and target groups – to a degree that **IBC's work should be extended to more areas worldwide** where populations are suffering from substance abuse and related negative behaviours.

Furthermore, the implemented projects are seen as sustainable and likely to maintain effects for a reasonable amount of time, because **behaviours are changed, leading to life-long improvements in the lives of beneficiaries, their families and communities.**

Although efficiency and effectiveness are perceived as high, the evaluators **recommended IBC to improve the monitoring and evaluation on a local level**, for example by conducting before-and-after analysis of behavioural indicators, and by providing further training and support to the local teams in these methodologies and processes. This way, IBC's strengths are being maintained and further extended to embrace changes which are arising out of **continuous learning and development.**



5. Results 2020

5.1. Quantitative Data

Blue Cross Chad - Table of Direct Project Beneficiaires in 2020					
N°	Main Activities (for complete activity list, consult Annual Report by BC Chad)	Number of sessions	Total Participants	Female	Male
01)	Life Skills sessions in schools	238	3868	1072	2796
03)	Awareness sessions by 20 Life Skills clubs	102	3113	1320	1793
04)	Online Life Skills sessions during lockdown	39	449		
04)	Life Skills sessions for motor taxi drivers	53	273	2	271
05)	Training of Peer Educators	In School Peer educators Gender Focal Points Out of school Peer Educators Total	88 38 13 139	37 38 0 75	51 0 13 64
06)	Celebration of 4 international days (women's day, etc.)	4	2450	735	1715
07)	Participants of community activities - Awareness raising camapaign on COVID-19 - Moto Taxi caravan against alcohol and drugs - Community mobilisation Total	1 1 16 sessions	916 567 537 2020	437 120 168 725	479 447 369 1295
08)	Self-help groups	5 groups	78	15	63
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS		12390	3944	7997

Results 2020

5.2. Qualitative Analysis

Life Skills and Peer Education

Life Skills sessions have been implemented from January – March 2020 and from October – December 2020. Some Life Skill Clubs conducted less activities than planned or had to adapt the schedule due to COVID-19 restrictions. Life skills sessions were implemented in 20 schools and 14 motor taxi sites in Chad. Virtual life skills sessions via WhatsApp have also been focusing on stress and conflict management during the lockdown. The results show an increase of awareness in the schools and on the sites of the motorcycle cab drivers, besides the reduction of alcohol consumption among the beneficiaries. In addition, the management of financial resources has improved for some beneficiaries. Four motorcycle cab drivers were for example able to acquire their own motorcycle during the year.

The external evaluation identified the following impact in the field of the **IBC comprehensive prevention approach**:

- **Reduced risk behaviours and improved Life Skills:** The majority of the key informants assesses the contribution of the project to reducing substance abuse and alcohol harm as positive. The beneficiaries estimate on average that the project strongly contributes to reducing alcohol-related harm (such as GBV, violence and discrimination) of the beneficiaries.
- School personnel confirmed that **alcohol vendors at some school gates are forbidden** as a change caused by the programme and that the pupils got more confident in their behaviours
- **Women's rights** are strengthened - girls learned to become leaders
- Since police officers have been informed about the project and some police officers have been trained, a change in the acceptance of the drug and alcohol problem as a sickness could be achieved, which has also been emphasized in TV advertisements. (goal: avoid stigmatization and discrimination of people suffering from addiction)

Parents of beneficiaries emphasized the following changes that the programme has made:

- The youth have understood the negative consequences of alcohol and tobacco consumption
- A **reduction of violence at the schools** has taken place
- Youth stopped to consume drugs and they started to discuss about drug consumption
- Change of mentality in a positive sense
- Parents who were used to drinking a lot reduced their alcohol consumption and they are more often at home now, their health has improved, and they invest their time in other things now.

Key informants reported amongst others that:

- **communities are safer places** after the programme due to the increased awareness and the dealing with misinformation about alcohol and the harms of alcohol consumption.
- in the churches and at schools, the topics of alcohol and drugs can be discussed now, which was not the case before the programme took place.
- The increased understanding of alcohol harm made some families think about **getting other incomes than the one from brewing alcohol**.
- People started to talk about alcohol also without being directly related to the IBC and that the alcohol sellers show a more responsible behaviour, including **not selling alcohol to minors** anymore.
- Some parents **stopped sending their children to buy alcohol**
- Some beneficiaries now live in their own houses, they own for example a moto taxi and changed their lives (**economic empowerment**)

Conclusion:

According to the different respondent groups (beneficiaries, IBC staff, local project partners, parents of beneficiaries), the programme has made differences on the **level of individual behaviours** and regarding the economic situation of individuals. Furthermore, the programme led to higher knowledge and improved life skills of the beneficiaries, particularly that of girls. Differences were also reported on the **community level**, regarding the work on substance abuse. Changes were stated about the **governmental level** - legal changes are taking place - and about the social level: to talk about addiction is not a taboo anymore

Gender Equality

In 2020, project activities continued to have a strong focus on SGBV prevention. To prevent and speak up against SGBV has been a central message of the BC Chad COVID-19 response (see more above).

BC Chad has appointed a female gender focal point within its team, who is in charge for accompanying the support group for survivors of SGBV. In the words of the gender focal point of BC Chad: «These meetings allow the girls to express themselves. They find psychological relief from their problems. **Those who thought they were the only ones to suffer in silence realize that there are others in the same situation.** They share their problems and together we try to find possible solutions or directions.»

“I am NELEM Emelie, a student at the AMOUL private institute in Farcha, N’Djamena. Before going to university, I was a peer educator in the high school of DJOUGOULIE, N’Djamnea. I was verbally and psychologically abused by my cousins and my stepmother.

I am part of the Blue Cross groups of victims of gender-based violence. My impressions about the bi-monthly meeting of GBV survivors are quite satisfying. Not only I, but many other girls had the opportunity to express themselves and to free themselves from the burdens we have carried for a long time. I thought I was the only victim of violence, but when I took part in these meetings, I realised that there were many other victims like me who were asking to be helped; I was able to express myself and then I received advice and guidance from our gender focal point, which enabled me to adopt a new attitude towards my cousins and stepmother, so today I live in peace.

I ask our coaches to continue advising, guiding and giving strategies to other girls who are victims of GBV in order to deal with some of the violent guardians because most of us are adopted girls. Finally, I would like to thank Blue Cross and the project team for everything they do for us."



To increase their knowledge and capacity, BC Chad organized a training session on the psychosocial management of GBV and on the laws and regulations on gender-based violence in Chad. This training targeted staff members, local politicians, key peer educators, and community members.

Community Action and Alcohol Policy Development

In 2020, IBC set up a series of online trainings on the topic of **alcohol policy advocacy**. Several themes have been developed: Understanding the challenge, the alcohol problem from the perspective of participants, unregistered consumption, the role and purpose of the alcohol industry, the WHO global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol, existing policies and legislation, evidence-based policies to reduce alcohol harm, planning for the next steps, relevant documentation and follow-up.

Following the training, the IBC partner organizations Blue Cross Togo, CTPAD (Congo) and Blue Cross Chad presented an action plan to mobilize, raise awareness and engage policy makers, local leaders and communities to take actions to reduce alcohol harm in their communities. The action plans are expected to be implemented in the first semester of 2021.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2020, the Monitoring and Evaluation of the project was assured on four levels:

- **Beneficiary level:** the beneficiaries are actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. BC Chad specifically trained the peer educators in budgeting, accounting and reporting. This strengthens peer confidence in the project, as BC Chad communicates with beneficiaries in a transparent manner on the budget of

planned activities, as part of accountability and good governance. The beneficiaries can take part in the decision how the budget dedicated for their activities can be spent.

Additionally, the project beneficiaries are organized in a steering committee (comité de pilotage), which meets at least twice a year to evaluate the past months and participate in the planning of future activities.

Especially during the pandemic, the beneficiaries and peer educators were at the front-line of the COVID-19 response of BC Chad, organizing themselves in several WhatsApp and Facebook groups, distributing flyers and raising awareness in their communities.

- **BC Chad level:** The project team has weekly team meetings which assure the weekly monitoring and planning of activities. The team keeps agile and dynamic to quickly respond to changing circumstances and prevent problems. The project accountant participates at part of the meeting.

The project team is responsible for receiving the activity reports from the peer educators and prepare activity reports for the project coordinator, Mr. Bedingar Ngarossorang. The team collects quantitative and qualitative data to track project indicators and prepares quarterly financial and narrative reports for IBC.

Yearly project audits are conducted by an internationally recognized auditor, respecting international audit standards.

- **IBC level:** The IBC Programme Officer and Finance Officer review the quarterly financial and narrative reports, and have regular calls with the project coordinator in Chad. In 2020 these calls took place on a monthly basis, to closely accompany and monitor the local COVID-19 response. IBC also organizes capacity building sessions for Blue Cross Chad. In 2020, IBC has given trainings on good governance, alcohol and COVID-19, behavior change in prevention work, notions of gender and SGBV (sexual and gender-based violence), and alcohol policy advocacy.

Yearly audits of IBC are conducted by an internationally recognized auditor, respecting international audit standards.

- **External Evaluation:** 2020 being the last year of a four year programme cycle (2017-2020), IBC mandated RANAS to conduct an external evaluation of the programme in Chad and Congo – to assess the overall impact of the programme. IBC is very pleased with the outcome of the report – showing the important contribution the project give to the achievement of the SDGs. The evaluation report was shared with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Faroer Islands on 3rd February 2021.



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5.3. Voices of the youth – personal witness from project beneficiaries

“My name is MAHAMAT WANMOUL. I am 24 years old, I am a moto taxi driver at the Ngosso site in N'Djamena.

Blue Cross has totally changed my behaviour and the way I live with my colleagues. I used to be a heavy smoker and take tramol to maintain my balance.

But since 2020, when I started to take part in the Blue Cross activities at our motor taxi site, I personally decided to give up all these products. I now live a healthy life without these toxic products. And I can confirm that since I have given up cigarettes, alcohol and tramadol, I realise that I am also spending less money on unnecessary things. In all sincerity, the Blue Cross has done a lot for me and my family. I am a father with children and today I am no longer into cigarettes, alcohol and tramol which is so good for the family.

Thank you!”

“My name is MAHAMAT SALEH, I am 20 years old, I am a peer educator from Amtoukoui high school.

I joined the life skills club in the 10th grade. I took part in many activities of Blue Cross Chad. Through the participation in all these activities I have noticed a great change in myself. I personally changed the way I live with my colleagues and friends at school and in the neighbourhood.

Before, I was not interested in Christians. I only had Muslim friends. Because our fathers used to tell us that we should not eat with Christians around the same dish. This was “haram”. That's what stayed with me. This made me hate Christians. But when I joined the life skills club and with the life skills education we received in class, I abandoned all this bad behaviour. Today I am very happy with these activities because thanks to the Blue Cross I have learned peaceful cohabitation, living together and I have met new friends from other schools.

Thank you and long live the Blue Cross.”