

# Annual Report 2023



**DOING IT TOGETHER**

[www.internationalbluecross.org](http://www.internationalbluecross.org)

*Strength through Collaboration: Teamwork in Brazzaville, the Republic of Congo*

## Message from the President and General Secretary

The strength of International Blue Cross (IBC) lies in its close connection with its members, supporters, staff and volunteers. Our natural collaboration is fostered thanks to the IBC Academy and regular meetings around the world.

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Thank you for being part of our vibrant network!

In 2023, we were pleased to welcome a new member organisation, Naya Suruwat Nepal, which focuses their efforts on treating addiction through self help groups.

The second newcomer is the Youth Connect network, which meets online and equips youth from different countries to contribute to societal change through local action.

The year included significant alcohol and other drug policy related advocacy meetings and events where IBC participated with its members.

There is a commercial pressure felt in all parts of the world, weakening traditionally strong Nordic alcohol monopolies and at the same time delaying and obstructing evidence based policy development in many countries, especially in Africa.

There is also a serious concern about the legalization of cannabis in Europe, and we want to thank the network of similar-minded NGOs and researchers for their collaboration to resist these developments.

IBC Programmes offer high quality prevention interventions that are creating impactful societal changes. We wish to thank everybody who has contributed to the success of our mission by giving their time, skills, resources, money or prayers to advance our work.

Your contribution makes significant changes in people's lives. We hope you enjoy reading the stories in our report.



**Reinhard Jahn**  
President



**Anne Babb**  
General Secretary

## **IBC at a Glance**

### **Who We Are**

IBC is a Christian value-based, politically independent non-governmental organisation. The roots of today's organisation lie with the Blue Cross Movement founded in 1877. The international umbrella organisation was founded in 1886, currently comprising 38 national Blue Cross organisations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. This vast organisational network tackles alcohol- and other drug-related health-, social-, and development issues through advocacy, prevention, treatment, and aftercare programmes. IBC promotes this approach through a joint global voice and enables exchange and learning between Blue Cross Organisations around the world.

### **Our Vision**

People live dignified and healthy lives in a world where societal structures and services enable a life free from addiction as well as alcohol- and other drug-related harm.

### **Our Mission**

Prevent and reduce the harmful use and dependency of alcohol- and other drug-related harm, especially among the most vulnerable people. Engage Blue Cross Organisations worldwide to promote the mission, with a holistic view of the human being as a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual, and social wellbeing.

### **Our Values**

Love • Solidarity • Excellence  
Respect • Empowerment  
Inclusiveness • Good governance

### **Key Strategic Focus 2021- 2028**

- Promoting a life free from alcohol and other drugs
- Strong member organisations
- Christian value-based approach



## IBC in numbers

The IBC network combines expertise in tackling alcohol and other drug-related health issues, social and development issues through prevention, treatment, advocacy, and aftercare programmes. We promote a healthy and fulfilling life, free of alcohol, other drugs, and all addictions, through evidence-based comprehensive prevention and intervention models.

### Investing in prevention provides a tenfold return in savings by reducing the future need for treatment!

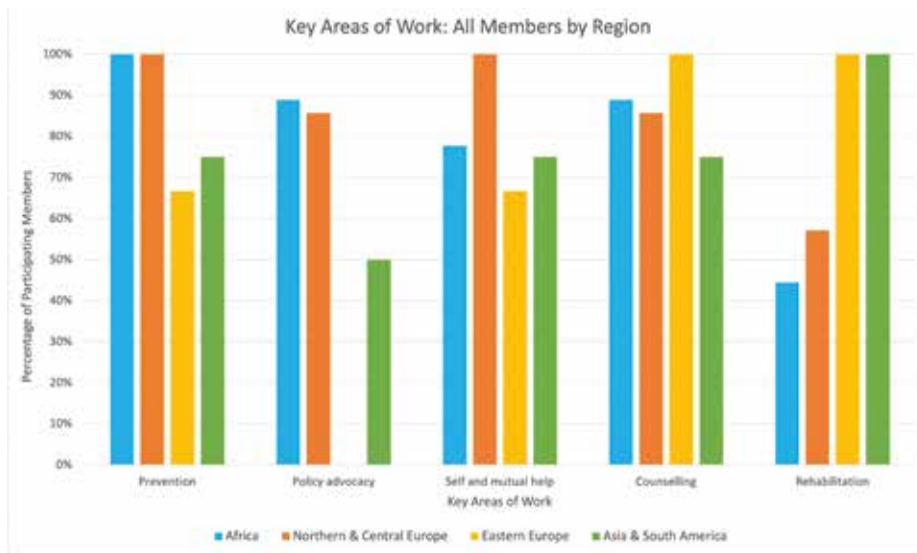
IBC and its members are involved in various areas of work, with activities varying by region. The **most common areas of work and intervention** for all member organisations (MOs) are prevention (21 MOs; 91%), followed by counselling (20 MOs; 87%), self-help (19 MOs; 83%), advocacy (16 MOs; 70%)

and rehabilitation (15 MOs; 65%). These results are related to our focus on preventative work.

Activities in day centres (10 MOs; 43%), sheltered housing (6 MOs; 26%) and capacity building (13 MOs; 57%) are statistically the least developed among member countries. However, in certain regions member organisations are specialized in these fields with decades of professional experience working in day centres and employment programmes, including running charity shops.

The distribution of **key areas of work by region** demonstrates a general focus on prevention in Africa and Northern and Central Europe, whereas Eastern Europe, Asia and South America the focus is on rehabilitation. Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe further emphasize counselling and self and mutual help groups. The strong focus on prevention shows a large sense of cohesion among member organisations and is reflected in IBC's strategic priorities.

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## Successful IBC-Academy

The IBC Academy was launched in spring 2023 and its success we are proud to report. Based on previous discussions with each member organisation which provided valuable insights into their strengths and challenges, a tailored training plan was developed to meet their needs. The IBC-Academy was born.

To cater to these diverse needs and support our Member Organizations (MOs), the IBC Academy is designed as a mixture of workshops and training courses, with a focus on the exchange of experience between members.

These sessions covered a wide variety of topics including addiction, prevention and sensibilisation, self-help, good governance, Christian values in action and advocacy. Groups also focused on project developments, reporting and fundraising

Through the exchange of best practices, expert input and thematic series of mee-

tings, the member organisations benefit from each other and this strengthens our network.

The Academy has received positive feedback from our members, which encourage us to expand our range of topics further in the coming years!

### Denmark:

*"Keeping connected is very important for us."*

### Uganda

*"The IBC Academy is particularly important as a platform for sharing and exchanging ideas. It has not only bolstered our confidence but also enhanced our skills. Learning and discovering the initiatives of people in other countries is both empowering and inspiring for us."*



Promoting organizational learning



## Christian Values in Action!

Historically, Christians have a strong tradition of supporting those in need. This is at the core of the Christian faith, “loving God above all and neighbor as yourself”. The faith propels Christians into action to reach out to the most vulnerable so that everybody can experience a new chance and be treated with love, finding hope and support in any given situation.

6 Over time, the responsibility for social and health care has shifted to the state. In this process, evidence-based professional developments and human rights-based approaches have been added to best practice guidelines. So, how does all this fit together when we want to maintain the Christian values as an integral part of our social work approach?

The most important thing is to openly discuss this and seek an understanding what it means to be able to offer this extra dimension of support. These two elements are not in competition with each other. This enables holistic services

that enables a person’s bio-psycho-social-spiritual needs. It is an offer that does not exclude other forms of support.

At the organisational level, Christian values drive us to develop structures and services that do not leave anyone behind. At IBC, we continually evaluate how our organisations identify themselves and how to integrate faith-based tools such as prayer, spiritual reflection,

and existential discussions as opportunities in our services. Most organisations now work in faith-secular partnerships and need to be clear about their approaches to fulfill all quality criteria without losing their opportunity to offer Christian services. This is why we focus on this topic in the IBC Academy so we can ensure that Christian values remain a priority.



*National Women's Week in Chad*

## Programme Snapshot: Making schools equitable and safe!

IBC and its partners in Brazzaville (Congo), N'Djamena (Chad), Lomé (Togo), and Arusha (Tanzania) have been successfully running the Life Skills prevention programme since many years. In 2023, 6'973 pupils participated in the sessions in schools on life skill development for alcohol- and other drug prevention. During these sessions students cover topics such as valuing yourself as a human being, taking care of your brain, reasons to say no to alcohol or strategies for dealing with anger.

An important focus in the project is gender equality and the awareness about gender-based violence. In Congo, anonymous feedback is collected from female students who can report teachers that offer good grades for sexual favors, while in Chad they run additional support sessions for victims of gender-based violence. In Tanzania, 12 students were trained as gender focal points, who are a first contact for concerned students and teachers. They work to raise awareness in their schools about gender equality and violence.

### Example activity from Togo: Men engaging in gender equality

The team in Togo introduced a new angle on how we perceive the issue of gender-equality and the role men have in shaping a more equitable world. In 2023, Blue Cross Togo facilitated various sessions with both male and female project participants dealing with questions such: Am I a real man? What defines a real man? Does my gender define my profession? With illustrative images and role-plays (e.g. a man cooking, a man carrying his baby on his back, a man crying) participants discussed perceptions of masculinity and what is considered acceptable behaviour for men, along with underlying assumptions.

The goal of the exercise is to question stereotypes and free themselves from rigid conceptions of masculinity. Our participants are vulnerable children and adults who have been exposed to the realities of violence, addiction, and crime from an early age. Adults of the student's support structures were encouraged to be positive examples and

Young men engaging in gender equality



integrate good practices into education. This includes encouraging boys to express emotions freely and engage in tasks traditionally associated with girls without fear of judgment.

The resolutions resulting from these sessions reflect a positive change in mentality, as expressed by one participant: *"Before, I thought that girls wearing short skirts were guilty if they were raped, but now I'm starting to think differently: I'm against short skirts, but I understand that nothing, absolutely nothing, can justify or excuse rape. Consent must always be clear."*

## Success story from Uganda

IBC supports its members in facilitating weekly self-help groups in seven countries, with a focus on the most vulnerable individuals. In Uganda, as in most African countries, access to residential treatment is extremely sparse and expensive, which is why self-help groups often offer the only accessible form of help. They provide a safe environment in which participants can engage in the topic of addiction to alcohol and other drugs.

### Finding “back to normal”: James’s success story

I am James Basalirwa, a resident of Kitayundwa village in Uganda. At the beginning, I didn't want to participate in the self-help groups. Superficially, I hated treatment and rehabilitation because I was forced to give up alcohol and other drugs, but deep down because it felt humiliating and I was embarrassed. However, the mutual self-help group run by Ring of Hope (Blue Cross Uganda) is completely different.

While there are basic rules of conduct, I am not put under pressure. When I talk about my condition, I'm sharing with people that can understand me and I no longer feel alone. I truly feel that my participation in the group makes a difference. By listening and speaking, I discover things and feelings that help me



better orientate myself in the world of “healthy” people.

Within the group, I learned to accept my weaknesses and articulate my strengths. I learned that there is an amazing power in caring for someone else and feeling cared for. The support and stability this provides can help people suffering from addiction fulfill their potential. As a person with an addiction problem you often find yourself in unexpected situations. Life is unstable and it feels like you have little control.

Now I can count on help from people who care about me.

It makes me happy to know that there are people who are fighting to give us dignity and a voice while we tackle our condition. Despite suffering from substance use we are trying to exist and fulfill our dreams, which is at times difficult in a society that regards us with caution and fear. I am highly motivated to implement what I have learned and to use the support I found to teach myself how to quit drinking alcohol or taking other drugs. I know that since I joined the Ring of Hope self-help group I have made progress on my recovery. I can feel how my life is returning to normal and I can start thinking about returning to my occupation as a vegetable farmer in my community of Kitayundwa.



## Volunteer Engagement Worldwide



### **Michelle Eichenberger**

I'm a student in international relations in Geneva and did an internship with International Blue Cross during the summer of 2023. The period that I worked for IBC gave me a profound understanding of the operations and challenges encountered by an international NGO fighting to raise awareness around alcohol and other drug related harm. I enjoyed gaining a fresh perspective while supporting the IBC team in various tasks.



### **Danielle Evans**

On returning to Switzerland after my first year of university, I was seeking an opportunity to apply and gain skills, ideally with an NGO. IBC's welcoming and engaging team meant I felt involved from day one! Working on administrative tasks in English proofreading and data presentation has provided me with valuable practical experience, whilst contributing to their mission in supporting those affected by alcohol and other substance-related harm.



### **Sakshi John**

My journey with IBC started in November 2022 as an intern and I'm now volunteering. Having met the most inspiring women and therefore got to know IBC better, I was able to offer my help in many ways. I support the mission of the organisation and want to give my best to help those affected by alcohol and other drug addiction. I am very proud to be a part of IBC!



### **Kelly Serra**

I have been supporting the IBC-team in fundraising and translations for the last 7 months. I have been passionate about helping others, especially children, since I was a young girl. Supporting IBC's incredible work brings joy, and I am grateful to contribute and learn with a wonderful team that makes a difference in many people's lives all around the world.

## Meet IBC Member Organisations



*Project visit by Anne Babb to Congo Brazzaville*

### Republic of Congo, Central Africa

In June 2023, the Blue Cross Congo held its General Assembly in Brazzaville with 30 participants, marking it a decade since the previous assembly. One significant focus of the GA was the organisational change to separate the powers of the General Secretariat and the board. Overall, the General Assembly proved to be a great success!

The Congolese Blue Cross hosted the Secretary General Anne Babb in Brazzaville. During the two-day visit, board members underwent training to enhance their skills on strategy implementation. They focused on pinpointed tasks for their meetings to actively support

financial and operational accountability, ensuring timely decisions for the smooth functioning of the secretariat activities. In addition, more than 10 volunteers benefitted from IBC self-help training. The

hard work of everyone involved finally culminated in the initiation of the first self-help project for the Congolese Blue Cross, helping people to break free from their addiction problems.

### Nepal, Asia

Our newest member organisation Blue Cross Tansen Nepal achieved significant milestones in 2023, notably moving ahead with the participation of local community. After the launching the self-help groups, participation was initially very low due to societal taboos and the resulting fear of stigma within the community. Fortunately, participation is steadily increasing, with clients who witness positive change from this programme encouraging others to join.

In June, BC Nepal was able to organize a street awareness programme on alcohol and other drugs in collaboration with the local police department and government officials. The event saw attendance from various local stakeholders, including hotel owners, shopkeepers, and community members.

The initiative was positively received by the Chief District Officer, who advocated for extending the programme to all ten village development committees and municipalities in the Palpa district. The BC team looks forward to increasing their collaboration with these government units, community members, and local churches, seeking volunteers to further their initiatives.



*Street awareness programme in Tansen, June 2023*



Information event at the conference  
"Drug policy for the future"

## Sweden, Northern Europe

In 2023, the Blue Ribbon celebrated its 140th anniversary, marked by public events held throughout the year across the country, culminating with the association's annual meeting at the school Helliden in Tidaholm.

During these events the association engaged in talks and shared insights with local members. One key focus was advocating for increased awareness and support for children and young people from difficult family backgrounds, based on a concept from Blue Cross Norway. Additionally, they have launched a new initiative aiming at assisting rela-

tives of individuals struggling with addiction such as alcohol and other drugs, pharmaceuticals, or gambling.

Furthermore, the Blue Ribbon actively participated in various external conferences, using these platforms to disseminate information. Local Blue Ribbon associations play a crucial role in organizing outward-facing events that blend entertainment, informational sessions, and discussions around alcohol and other drugs alongside further social and health issues.

## Togo, West Africa

In 2023, the prevention project in Togo reached a total of over 1,300 students in twelve different schools, 43 hairdressing apprentices and 18 motorbike taxi drivers. Various topics relating to self-reflection, decision-making and resistance to peer pressure were addressed during the sessions. The active involvement of the peer educators also played a decisive role, as they led eight extracurricular life skills clubs that organized interac-

tive discussions and animations. Additionally, two sports tournaments were arranged, with 480 young people participating. These events proved to be effective platforms in raising awareness about the risks associated with alcohol and other drugs. The project in Togo has received a lot of positive feedback!

In addition, a political initiative was launched that mobilised 58 local religious leaders and aimed to restrict young people's access to alcohol. Social campaigning as well as television and radio programmes expanded awareness of the project's impact.



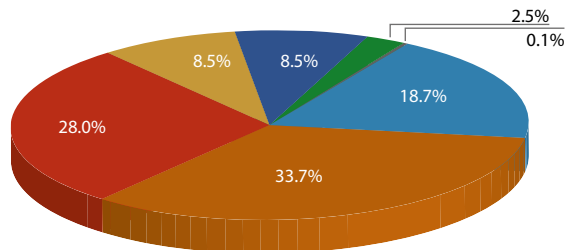
Life Skills facilitation in Togo

# Abridged Version of the Financial Statements Based on Swiss GAAP FER 21

Assets	2023 CHF	2022 CHF
Cash and Cash Equivalents	484,943.34	634,790.19
Short-term Receivables	26,595.57	46,895.05
Accrued Assets	35,190.85	17,771.94
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>546,729.76</b>	<b>699,457.18</b>
Financial Assets	398,244.39	352,625.22
Furniture and Equipment	2,256.08	1,416.06
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>400,500.47</b>	<b>354,041.28</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>947,230.23</b>	<b>1,053,498.46</b>

## Income

Foundations	18.7%	Blue Cross Organisations/ Associations	8.5%
Public Institutions	33.7%	Churches	8.5%
Membership Fees	28.0%	Private Donors	2.5%
		Companies	0.1%



Liabilities and Equity	2023 CHF	2022 CHF
Trade Accounts Payable	20,614.41	34,185.36
Deferrals	99,190.64	29,010.67
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>119,805.05</b>	<b>63,196.03</b>
Provisions	40,000.00	20,000.00
<b>Total long-term Liabilities</b>	<b>40,000.00</b>	<b>20,000.00</b>
Chad	0.00	38,952.31
Congo Brazzaville	0.00	32,199.36
Brasil	0.00	405.56
Eastern Europe	2,243.58	64,077.33
Denmark, Finland, Greenland	188.37	5,502.01
Life Skills Programme	5,879.65	27,525.31
Burkina Faso	0.00	1,528.66
Music Groups	0.00	8,875.09
Alcohol Policy	0.00	547.38
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>8,311.60</b>	<b>179,613.01</b>
Paid-In Capital	433.25	433.25
General Reserve	10,000.00	10,000.00
Organisation Reserve	315,249.67	315,249.67
Solidarité	331,300.66	331,300.66
Organisational Development	122,130.00	133,705.84
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>779,113.58</b>	<b>790,689.42</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>947,230.23</b>	<b>1,053,498.46</b>

	2023 CHF	2022 CHF
<b>Income</b>		
Membership Contributions	209,959.20	214,320.54
Donations and Contributions	287,337.21	408,688.58
Government Grants	253,291.18	280,386.48
Other Income	4,725.14	5,719.63
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>755,312.73</b>	<b>909,115.23</b>

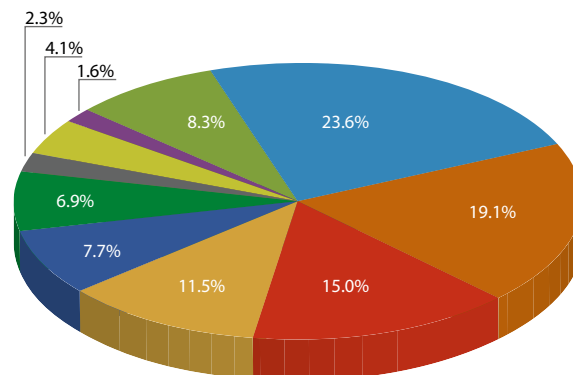
## Expenses

Project Expenses	-719,253.80	-714,117.54
Fundraising Expenses	-58,698.00	-72,632.80
Administrative Expenses	-159,669.33	-122,224.62
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>-937,621.13</b>	<b>-908,974.96</b>

<b>Operating Result</b>	<b>-182,308.40</b>	<b>140.27</b>
Financial Income Incl. Foreign Exchange Profit	24,449.00	8,259.12
Financial Cost Incl. Foreign Exchange Loss	-25,017.85	-57,919.77
<b>Financial Result</b>	<b>-568.85</b>	<b>-49,660.65</b>
<b>Operating Result Before Changes in Funds</b>	<b>-182,877.25</b>	<b>-49,520.38</b>
Allocation to Project Funds	-509,021.06	-636,581.32
Withdrawal from Project Funds	680,322.47	685,381.70
<b>Funds Result</b>	<b>171,301.41</b>	<b>48,800.38</b>
<b>Result Before Allocation</b>	<b>-11,575.84</b>	<b>-720.00</b>
Withdrawal from Organ. Development Fund	11,575.84	720.00
<b>Result for the Year</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

## Expenses

CHAD – Life Skills	23.6%	BRAZIL – KIDS support	2.3%
CONGO – Life Skills	19.1%	Selfhelp Uganda, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Nigeria, Ghana, Madagascar, Rep. Congo	4.1%
TOGO – Life Skills	15.0%	Sensibilisation general	1.6%
TANZANIA – Life Skills	11.5%	Ukraine (Romania and Poland refugee support)	8.3%
Knowledge transfer/ Sensibilisation MO's	7.7%		
Alcohol Policy	6.9%		





## Audit Report 2023

The Financial Statements 2023 have been prepared according to Swiss GAAP FER, in particular standard 21 "The accounting for charitable, social non-profit organisations". BDO AG, as statutory auditor, has examined the Financial Statements. The examination was conducted in accordance with the Swiss Standard on Limited Statutory Examination.

This standard requires that the examination is planned and performed to identify material misstatements in the Financial Statements. Based on the limited statutory examination, nothing has come to the statutory auditor's attention that causes him to believe that the Financial Statements of International Blue Cross do not give a true and fair view of the financial position, the results of operations, and the cash flows in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER or do not comply with Swiss law and the association's article of incorporation.

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Among our current partners and donors are:

### INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- The Foreign Service of the Faroes – Government of the Faroe Islands

### FOUNDATIONS & SOCIETIES

- Foundation Widmer et Creux
- Foundation Jugendsozialwerk Blue Cross Baselland
- Foundation Solidarity with the World
- Foundation Dästner-Schild
- Starr International Foundation
- Global Giving Foundation
- Interaction – StopPoverty
- KoGe Cooperation Community
- Blue Cross Zurich 4 + 5
- Blue Cross St. Gallen
- Blue Cross Switzerland (You help, we help)
- Blue Cross Germany
- Blue Cross Denmark
- Blue Cross Finland

### CHURCHES

- Association of churches (Partnerwerke) Zurich
- Evang. Ref. Parish Köniz
- Evang. Ref. Church of the city of Lucerne
- Evang. Ref. Parish Johannes Bern
- Evang. Ref. Parish Frieden Bern
- Evang. Ref. Parish Rheineck
- Evang. Ref. Parish Rapperswil-Jona
- Evangelical Anabaptist Church Bern (ETG)

## Tribute to Donors and Partners

- Reformed Church Vechigen
- Reformed Church Winterthur-Seen
- Reformed Church Horw
- Reformed Church Ittigen
- Reformed Church Bümpliz
- Reformed parish Rigi south side
- Roman Catholic Church Langenthal
- Catholic Church Region Bern
- Catholic Church town of Zug
- Catholic Church Lausanne
- Catholic parish of St. Niklaus
- Parish of Kirchlindach

### MUNICIPALITIES & CANTONS

- Lottery Fonds Canton Bern
- Lottery Fonds Canton Glarus
- Swisslos Fonds Canton Obwalden
- City of Rapperswil-Jona
- Municipality of Pfeffingen

### COMPANIES

- Black Gazelle



Thank you for  
your support  
– you help  
change lives!

## Network Committee



**Reinhard Jahn, Germany**  
President IBC  
Managing Director at BC Germany  
Board member since 2008



**Hans Eglin, Switzerland**  
Vice President IBC  
Central Board BC Switzerland  
Board member since 2016



**Ingalill Söderberg, Sweden**  
Journalist and municipal commissioner  
Board member since 2012



**Lars Thidemann Jensen, Denmark**  
Vice General Secretary  
of Blue Cross Denmark  
Board member since 2021



**Holger Lux, Romania**  
MD, Director rehabilitation centre  
for addicted men  
Board member since 2008



**Ewa Duda, Poland**  
Addiction therapist, Blue Cross  
promotion coordinator  
Board member since 2021



**Rolf Hartmann, Brazil**  
President of Blue Cross Brazil  
Board member since 2008



**Revocatus Nginila, Tanzania**  
Project Coordinator Blue Cross  
Tanzania  
Board member since 2016\*



**Patrick Acheampong, Ghana**  
General Secretary of Blue Cross  
Ghana  
Board member since 2021\*

## Secretariat Staff



**Anne Babb**  
General Secretary



**Katrin Schmidt**  
Finance Officer



**Anna Schwaller**  
Administration & Project Assistant



**Julian Sterling**  
Programme & PR/Fundraising Officer



**Flavia Ganarin**  
Programme Officer



**Sybille Dirren**  
Programme Officer



**Sonja Pönisch**  
Networking & Administration



**Anja Tuchtenhagen**  
Fundraising and PR



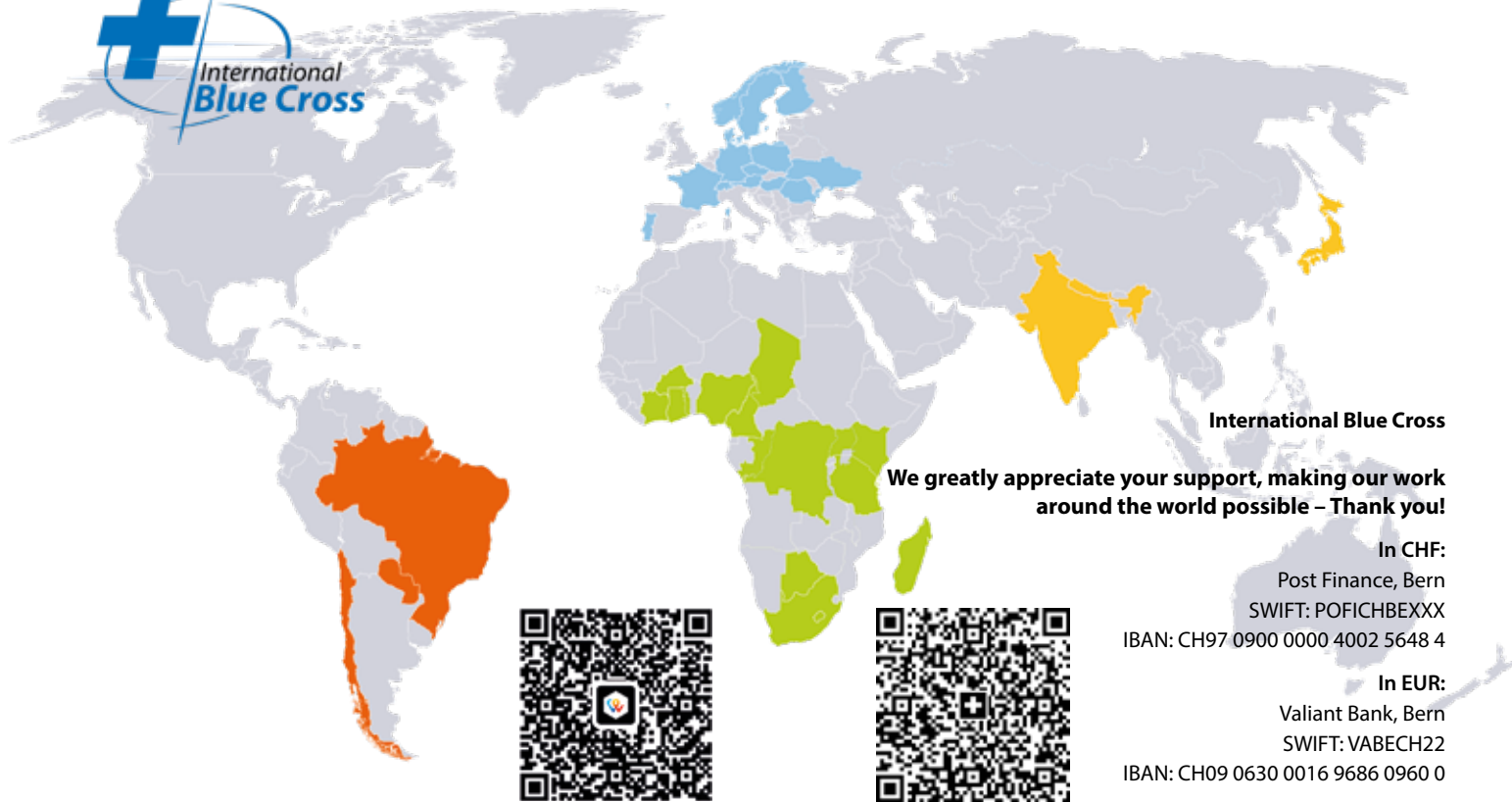
**Ediom Nelson**

Alcohol and Drug Policy Advocacy Officer



**Tao Anatole Gonba**

The Network Committee extends a warm Thank You to all supporters, partners and above all its volunteers who have dedicated in total 1,400 hours of their time to IBC in 2023.



**International Blue Cross**

**We greatly appreciate your support, making our work around the world possible – Thank you!**

**In CHF:**

Post Finance, Bern

SWIFT: POFICHBEXX

IBAN: CH97 0900 0000 4002 5648 4

**In EUR:**

Valiant Bank, Bern

SWIFT: VABECH22

IBAN: CH09 0630 0016 9686 0960 0

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