

KICK FOR CHANGE

FOOTBALL AGAINST ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

Approach

Utilising the UNODC's 'Line Up, Live Up' curriculum, the project integrates football sessions to deliver life skills training. Training weeks, community counselling groups, emotional social learning workshops, stakeholder meetings, and bi-annual community outreach football tournaments form the comprehensive strategy.

Objectives

To promote youth health and wellness, prevent substance abuse, cultivate life skills, enhance family and community interactions, reduce youth violence and crime, and establish a stakeholder network addressing wellness, mental health, and harm reduction in Zambia.

Description of the Situation

In Livingstone in Zambia, alcohol and drug abuse is causing devastating effects on individuals, families, and communities, leading to serious health consequences and social issues. Substance use problems have led adolescents to make unhealthy decisions, such as sexually risky behaviours, violence and crime. Furthermore, drinking and using drugs are common coping mechanisms in adolescents, and this periodic tendency can very rapidly turn into a regular habit that results in addiction.

Zambia stands among the African nations with the highest alcohol consumption rates (WHO, 2015) and the greatest prevalence of regular alcohol use among adolescents, surpassing 73 other low and middle-income countries (de la Torre-Luque et al., 2021). Additionally, Zambia faces challenges with the abuse of various substances, including marijuana, cigarettes, opiates, cocaine, and inhalants such as glues and petrol.

The consequences of substance use are multifaceted, encompassing mental health issues that are highly stigmatised, as well as associations with lower socioeconomic status, reduced education opportunities, unemployment, homelessness, positive HIV status, or engaging in sex work (Biemba et al., 2020). Disturbingly, approximately 70 percent of Zambian adolescents experiencing mental health problems prefer consulting traditional healers over seeking formal medical treatment options (Mayeya et al., 2014).

Livingstone, in particular, faces elevated crime rates, which police and media reports attribute to the escalating drug use, especially alcohol and marijuana, among young people, exacerbated by high rates of unemployment. Alarming, our research suggests that some parents of adolescents in Livingstone have been involving them in purchasing drugs and alcohol on their behalf.

I. Project Overview

1. Region & location (city & country):

Livingstone in the Southern Province of Zambia.

2. Please tell us about this project and how will you run it, who will you work with and how will you help them.

In Livingstone in Zambia, alcohol and drug abuse is causing devastating effects on individuals, families, and communities, leading to serious health consequences and social issues. Substance use problems have led adolescents to make unhealthy decisions, such as sexually risky behaviours, violence and crime. Furthermore, drinking and using drugs are common coping mechanisms in adolescents, and this periodic tendency can very rapidly turn into a regular habit that results in addiction.

The inspiration for this project emerged from insightful focus group discussions during previous sexual and reproductive health projects, where the topics of alcohol and drug abuse, often paired with petty crime, were discussed. Recognising the urgent need for improved awareness and support, the project aims to provide assistance to those struggling with addiction and education of their peers.

Play it Forward Zambia will be the primary implementation partner with support from another local Zambian NGO called ReachAll. ReachAll has actively engaged in several targeted education initiatives within local schools situated in economically disadvantaged areas, where drug and alcohol abuse rates were notably high. Throughout the planning phase, we have held numerous meetings with dedicated ReachAll staff, involving them in every step of the project design.

- **Training weeks** - workshops on curriculum delivery and counselling session planning and safeguarding workshop (2 weeks). We will provide training using the 'Line Up, Live Up: Life Skills Training Through Sport' curriculum designed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- **Life skills and mentorship through football session delivery in 4 schools** (3 x 10 weekly sessions). The curriculum uses specific football drills to deliver the information on the pitch to adolescents in a way that is fun, engaging and easy to remember.
- **Community counselling support groups with parents** (3 x 10 weekly sessions). Our project counsellors will run weekly support sessions targeted at community leaders and parents/guardians.
- **Emotional Social Learning workshops with teachers** (3 x 5 day training sessions). Research indicates that SEL programming significantly raises test scores while it lowers levels of emotional distress; disruptive behaviour; and alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use in adolescents.
- **Stakeholder meetings** to strengthen the project's reach, impact and referral systems (x3). Important to build long-term strategies with state actors which include the Zambia Police Service, Zambia Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) and the Ministry of Health.
- **Community outreach football tournaments** (x3) - Additionally, all adolescents, teachers and parents and the wider community will be invited to the football tournaments. These

outreach events provide an opportunity for the different community groups to come together and play in a safe and competitive environment. The project stakeholders will have tents at the event where fun games, learning opportunities and clinical support will be provided.

3. **Please note the key programme partners you work with and names of organisations and areas of work. We're interested in how you work with other organisations, so please tell us about these here too.**

On this project we will be working with:

ReachAll

ReachAll is an education organisation focused on empowering children from vulnerable backgrounds and enhancing the quality of education in community schools. They specialise in delivering comprehensive training in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to teachers, creating positive teacher-learner relationships. Through our partnership, ReachAll will use SEL strategies to address emotional distress, disruptive behaviour, and substance use among adolescents. This partnership will strengthen identification and referral mechanisms within classroom settings, promoting a supportive learning environment.

African Shade

African Shade, based in Livingstone, provides crucial community services and support to young individuals affected by substance abuse and domestic violence. Operating Kayumba House, a supervised halfway house led by internationally trained addiction counsellors, African Shade offers vital counselling and rehabilitation services. Doreen, one of their skilled counsellors, will deliver counselling support sessions to community and parent groups in the project, contributing to holistic support and intervention efforts.

Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) Zambia

Our engagement with the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) Zambia has been instrumental in understanding programmes within Livingstone, particularly in schools. Through ongoing collaboration, we aim to enhance prevention education in schools by leveraging DEC's expertise in substance use awareness and enforcement. Knowledge sharing with DEC is critical to identifying prevalent substances within our target communities, informing tailored prevention strategies and educational interventions.

J. Beneficiaries

1. **Who are the key beneficiaries that will be affected by this funding.**

The primary beneficiaries will be ages 13 to 18 years old from 4 separate schools in Livingstone in grades 8-12. We are aiming for a 50/50 gender split. This is dependent on the exact ratio of males/females in school classes which we will have more clarity on in the subsequent project planning phases. These beneficiaries come from diverse socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, with many facing challenges related to poverty, limited access to education, and gender inequality.

Zambia is a lower middle-income country (LMIC) with 60% of the population living below the poverty line (\$2.15/day) and 40% of those people living in extreme poverty. A reported 2 in 5 people aged 18-24 are unemployed. It is expected that most beneficiaries selected will be in school as we are

working with school classes. However, special provisions will be made to include those who have had periods of suspension, lower attendance and behavioural issues.

Please state the number of beneficiaries you estimate will be affected by this funding.

1,500 (20 community coaches x 25 adolescents x 3 groups per year)

60 (20 teachers x 3 groups per year)

75 (25 parents and community members x 3 groups per year)

Total: 1,635

K. Measurement and Evaluation

We understand that organisations have varying levels of planning and evaluation, according to organisation size, structure, and the project area. Please answer the following questions as best you can for your organisation and project, we appreciate this will look different for different organisations.

1. **Please outline the benefits or outcomes that you expect to achieve as a result of the funding? How will you know whether you are successful? What are the main challenges to achieving change?**

This project contributes towards the following SDGs:

Sustainable Development Goal 3: 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.'

Specifically, Target 3.5: 'Strengthen prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.'

By enhancing knowledge of the consequences of crime and substance abuse and developing life skills, the project aims to positively influence beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of at-risk adolescents and prevent anti-social and risky behaviour.

Before the start of the project and in consultation with our partners, our Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator will design a project monitoring framework to measure change against our project objectives. Monitoring and evaluation processes will be reviewed, indicators will be updated and data sources will be verified. Our organisation will use digital tools such as KoboToolbox on our tablets to collect data from surveys, meeting minutes and focus group discussions.

The following project outcomes will be measured:

1. Increase in adolescents' personal and social skills
2. Change in adolescents' drugs and alcohol-related attitudes and beliefs
3. Change in adolescents' violence and crime-related attitudes and beliefs
4. Teachers, parents and community members have increased knowledge and awareness of drug and alcohol abuse in adolescents
5. Referral pathways are strengthened for adolescents who need clinical support
6. Project partners learn from each other and share impact to relevant stakeholders

Challenge 1: This project will work with a particularly vulnerable group of adolescents who may be suffering from mental health issues, substance abuse and addiction.

Mitigation Strategy 1: During coach training there will be dedicated sessions to safeguarding. The coaches will be taught about identifying and reporting incidents and how to keep themselves safe from harm when dealing with at-risk individuals. Further safeguarding drills will be delivered in the curriculum sessions for adolescents.

Challenge 2: Non-alignment of stakeholder strategies in dealing with social issues such as crime, violence and drug abuse and addiction.

Mitigation Strategy 2: It is important to bring on state actors (such as Zambia Police, ZDEC and relevant ministries from the onset of the project with stakeholder meetings to explain the Kick for Change project aims, activities and strategies.

Impact

Adolescents engage less in risk and anti-social behaviour and demonstrate resilience in the face of violence, crime and drug use.

2. Please briefly describe how you think our support could be sustainable beyond this year of funding?

Sustainable Development Goals

This project contributes towards Sustainable Development Goal 3: 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.' Specifically, Target 3.5: 'Strengthen prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.'

Empowered community coaches and teachers have the skills to continue delivering life skills and emotional social learning training to adolescents even after the project has finalised. The involvement of stakeholders will advocate to alleviate resources and increase information sharing in schools and communities.

A second year of Kick for Change programming would use significantly less financial resources with reduced training hours, lower contribution of Play it Forward staff time and reusing equipment (footballs made from recycled materials).

The other project stakeholders will have built mutual connections throughout the year, forming partnerships that bring students, schools and communities together.

Qs – Is this a pilot programme? How long has it been running for? How is it going to be funded after our support?

Yes, this is a pilot project as it represents our first direct engagement in substance abuse prevention and youth counselling in Livingstone. We've conducted preliminary meetings and research to inform our approach. To sustain this programme beyond the initial support:

- We'll advocate for increased government resources by demonstrating project impact to key stakeholders like the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC) and Ministries of Education and Health.
- We'll seek further funding from trusts, foundations, and international development agencies.
- Community engagement and fundraising events will mobilise local support and more resources.
- Empowering youth leaders through peer education will ensure sustainability by enabling the project to continue with minimal resources and support.