Project Title: “KIDS Support Groups”
In partnership with the Blue Cross Brazil

Country context

According to the Brazilian National Drug Report 2009 an estimated 12.3% of the adult urban population in Brazil suffers from dependence on alcohol, making alcohol misuse a significant public health issue. Blue Cross Brazil is providing treatment and aftercare services mainly in the three Southern states of Santa Catarina, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, where alcohol and drug use is most prevalent. The organization collaborates with 12 affiliated treatment centres that employ the therapeutic community approach and provide stationary treatment to more than 1500 clients per year.

Key Alcohol Consumption Facts for Brazil
- Total population: 1.9 million
- Human Development Index (2013): 85
- Adult per capita consumption (drinkers only): 18.51 litres of pure alcohol
- Per capita consumption: Stable
(Who-Global Status Report on Alcohol, 2011)

Project Summary

Through research and experience with its clients in the Self Help Groups, the Blue Cross Brazil identified the need to create support groups for children of alcohol/drug dependent parents. Alcohol abuse is a significant public health issue in Southern Brazil. Children, who come from families where one or both parents drink face abuse, face social exclusion, are terrified of abandonment and are 10 times more likely to fall into the same pattern. KIDS Support Groups promote a place for welcoming and orientation for children affected by their parents’ substance abuse by building confidence and a network of people to rely on and trust. They provide positive guidance during a critical time in one’s life when behavior and decision-making are easily influenced. The groups help these children to realize that nothing is wrong with them - their parents’ addiction is not their fault. In the long-run, KIDS support groups create physically and mentally healthy adolescents and adults that can function in society, eventually becoming positive agents for change.

Project Objective

The objective of the KIDS Support Groups is to promote a place for welcoming and orientation for children affected by their parents’ substance use/abuse as strategy of prevention and assistance to people in circumstances of social vulnerability and of hazard. Through targeted training of KIDS Group leaders/facilitators, the Blue Cross Brazil will expand its successful program of Self Help to reach beyond the substance abusers and provide much needed care for family members.

This project is financed in partnership with:
Target Group

The target group is children between the ages of 4 and 11 from families participating in Blue Cross Brazil’s self-help program. These children are directly affected by the use, abuse or dependence of their parents or caregivers. Children whose family members do not participate in the Blue Cross Self Help groups are also welcome participants.

Proposed Results

- Over 130 children (average of 6 children per meeting) receive weekly support and are assisted to develop coping strategies that allow for a positive development of their personality and prevent addictive behaviour in the future
- Over 120 parents are strengthened in their ability to raise their kids in a drug-free environment and by utilizing positive parenting strategies, through the participation in Blue Cross self-help groups for adults and through individual assistance by group leaders
- 60 Volunteers (trained to establish and lead KIDS Support groups
- The Blue Cross Brazil "Support Group" project team has in-depth knowledge in the accompaniment and support of "KIDS Support Groups"

Activities

- Train 50 group leaders per year to establish and expand KIDS Support Groups in each of the three proposed states (Santa Catarina, Paranà and Rio Grande do Sul)
- Establish 22 new KIDS Support Groups in three different states by the end of 2015
- Produce and print a professional handbook for KIDS Support Group leaders
- Blue Cross coordinator accompanies the leaders of new KIDS Support Groups through regular coaching as well as participation in meetings
- Group leaders organize regular home visits/work with parents

Project Duration: The main project implementation phase is 2015-2017.