



CAMEROONIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE BETTERMENT OF YOUTHS

CABY Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Empowering Youths for a Sustainable Future in Cameroon

Focus: Drug Abuse, At-Risk Behaviours, and HIV/AIDS Prevention

Executive Summary

Substance abuse among youths is a global sociocultural concern. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that 275 million people used drugs in 2020¹, with over 36 million suffering from drug use disorders. The 2022 World Drug Report highlighted that 284 million people aged 15-64 used drugs globally in 2020, marking a 26% increase over the previous decade². By 2021, the figure rose to 296 million, according to the 2023 World Drug Report³.

Regionally, the 2023 World Drug Report notes that drug consumption among youths under 25 years varies, with Africa recording a prevalence of 27%⁴. Concurrently, while the global HIV pandemic is declining, high-risk subpopulations such as young girls and women, and young boys and men and key groups—remain vulnerable to HIV due to high-risk behavior, with sub-Saharan Africa being the most affected. Notably, substance abuse increases the risk of HIV transmission among young people due to drug-related high-risk behavior.

In Cameroon, statistics from the National Committee for the Fight Against Drugs, cited by a 2022 publication of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC) reveals that *21% of school-aged Cameroon youths (15-25 years) had*

¹ https://www.unodc.org/unodc/press/releases/2021/June/unodc-world-drug-report-2021_pandemic-effects-ramp-up-drug-risks-as-youth-underestimate-cannabis-dangers.html Consulted on 30/12/25

² https://www.unodc.org/res/wdr2022/MS/WDR22_Booklet_1.pdf Consulted on 10/12/2024

³ <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefoxbd&q=Report+in+2023+indicates+that+an+increase+of+296+million+people+worldwide+used+drugs+in+2021> Consulted 30/2024

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/unodc-world-drug-report-2023-enarruzh> Consulted 27/12/2024



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*experimented recreational drugs*⁵, equating to 21,000 per 100,000 youths in 2021. Among these youths, 10% are regular users, with 60% aged 20-25 and over 15% affected as early as age 15⁶. These drugs include tablets (such as; tramadol, fentanyl, codeine, methamphetamine), herbs (such as; cannabis, tobacco), alcoholic drinks (such as; “fighter”, “Fighter”, “Goal”, “Bullet”, “Tombo”, “Player”, “Jupiter” etc.), and powder (such as; cocaine). Drug abuse in schools is a significant concern, contributing to violence among students and against teachers⁷.

The Cameroonian Association for the Betterment of Youths (CABY) is a Non-Governmental Organization dedicated to fostering a brighter future for Cameroon’s youth through culturally grounded and community-oriented initiatives. Our primary aim is to promote a drug-free society, with the goal of preventing drug use and abuse among youths in Cameroon by at least 5% over the next five years. This will be achieved through strategies such as sensitization campaigns, life skills development programs, strengthening school programs, and peer mentorship initiatives, including the creation of anti-drug clubs in schools. Other approaches include workshops, seminars, policy advocacy, referrals to mental health support services, sports and cultural activities, alternative opportunities, research, partnerships, and collaboration with other organizations.

CABY aims to reach 20,000 youths (2,000 per region) through communication strategies designed to foster behavioral change. Over the past five years, CABY

⁵ <https://cdhc.cm/admin/fichiers/Statements2022-06-2613-53-20.pdf> Consulted on 23/10/2024

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has reached approximately 5,345 youths through sensitization campaigns, television programs, football tournaments, and debates. During this period, CABY observed three (3) cases of slight behavioral change, one (1) case of absolute transformation, and one (1) referral case that was not unresolved. Despite these achievements, challenges and weaknesses remain in addressing substance abuse among Cameroon's youth. Cultural resistance—such as difficulty obtaining parental consent in some sports academies and limited awareness of the importance of the campaign—hindered progress. Logistical difficulties, including accessing remote areas, limited logistical materials, and insufficient time for planning and execution, further compounded these challenges. These issues were largely due to insufficient funding to cover campaign logistics and operational costs.

CABY also faced strategic weaknesses, particularly in following up with participants to sustain behavioral change, which was largely due to lack of human and financial resources. Drawing from past successes and lessons learned through exchanges with youths, CABY is committed to refining its strategies and enhancing its impact moving forward.

Our vision, 2025-2029 Strategic Plan prioritizes addressing the interconnected challenges of drug abuse, at-risk behaviour and HIV/AIDS which are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural fabric of our communities. This focus aligns with CABY's overarching goal of creating resilient, informed, and responsible youths who can contribute to a sustainable and culturally enriched Cameroon.

Our Paradigm Shift: CABY envisions a transformative future wherein if youths as culturally embedded agents from diverse sectors (public institutions, civil society, sports, media, business, amid others), alongside development agents and



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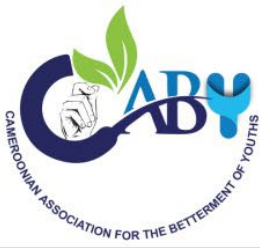
government officials at various levels (central, regional, and local) are provided with the necessary resources, opportunities, tools, and constructive platforms for collective action, and if engaging these stakeholders (including family, community leaders, schools, community organizations) in a shared commitment to address pressing issues like drug abuse, at-risk behaviours, and HIV/AIDS, and fostering trust and collaboration, then conditions will be created for meaningful and transformative dialogue. This participatory approach will empower youths to take an active role in prevention efforts, contributing to the creation of healthier, more inclusive, and resilient communities.

Capacity and Resilience Building: CABY's approach to capacity building is specifically tailored to address the challenges of drug abuse, risky behaviours, and HIV/AIDS among youths in Cameroon. Our training modules will provide practical skills and knowledge to young people and community stakeholders through inclusive and collaborative sessions. Key topics will include the causes, access routes, effects of drug abuse and way forward, strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention, life skills development, and resilience building.

Between 2025 and 2029, CABY aims to organize 50 workshops, mentorship programs, and capacity-building events targeting over 20,000 young people.

These sessions will focus on:

- Educating participants on the causes, access routes, dangers of drug abuse and associated risky behaviours.
- Promoting HIV/AIDS prevention through awareness and behavioural interventions.
- Developing leadership and life skills to empower youth as change agents in their communities.



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CABY will encourage peer-to-peer learning by involving trained youths in leading some of these sessions, fostering a community-oriented and collaborative spirit. Past successful initiatives such as our youth drug awareness training programs, urges CABY to cultivate a generation of informed and responsible young leaders.

Transformative Dialogue and Engagement: CABY will establish platforms for constructive dialogue to engage with drug abuse, risky behaviours, and HIV/AIDS at the root level. These platforms will bring together youths, community leaders, government officials, and other stakeholders to foster open communication and develop collective solutions.

Through dialogue sessions, CABY will address interconnected issues, including:

- Drug abuse and its link to juvenile delinquency and HIV/AIDS.
- How at-risk behaviours and HIV/AIDS undermine youth potential and community stability.

Our facilitators will create safe spaces for participants to share perspectives, bridge divides, and build mutual trust. By hosting these dialogues in schools, community centers, and public forums, CABY aims to empower communities to take collective ownership of these challenges, fostering a safer, healthier, and more supportive environment for young people.

Mobilizing Media for Social Change: CABY recognizes the critical role of media culture in influencing perceptions and behaviours, particularly among youth. To combat drug abuse, at-risk behaviours, and HIV/AIDS, CABY will harness the power of traditional and digital media to deliver targeted educational content that promotes healthy lifestyles, factual awareness, and positive decision-making.

Our media campaigns will focus on:

- Raising Awareness: Addressing myths and misinformation about drug abuse, risky behaviours, and HIV/AIDS.

- Promoting Healthy Lifestyles: Encouraging youths to adopt drug-free, responsible, and health-conscious behaviours.
- Empowering Youth: Providing factual and accessible information that equips young people to make informed choices.

Using platforms such as radio, television, social media, and community outreach programs, CABY will produce 10 educational videos and organize 50 media engagement events over the next five years. These efforts will include:

- Debunking harmful myths and addressing misinformation about drug abuse, at-risk behaviours and HIV/AIDS.
- Engaging audiences with relatable content, including stories, interviews, and interactive discussions.
- Inspiring youth-led initiatives to combat drug abuse and promote HIV/AIDS prevention.

Through these initiatives, CABY aims to empower young Cameroonians to lead healthier, more responsible lives while fostering inclusive and resilient communities.

Transforming At-Risk Behaviour and Drug Abuse Among Youths:

CABY defines “At-risk Behaviours” as choices made by youths that significantly increase the likelihood of negative outcomes, particularly concerning health, safety, well-being and overall lifestyle. These behaviours are exemplified by unsafe sexual practices, propagation of offensive language, risky physical activities, and violence. In the context of CABY’s strategic plan, at-risk behaviours encompass drug abuse, engagement in unsafe sexual practices, and involvement in criminal or violent activities, all of which can exacerbate the spread of HIV/AIDS and other social issues.



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CABY's strategic approach towards transforming at-risk behaviours and drug abuse

CABY's strategic approach to transforming at-risk behaviour is grounded in a Five-Axis Model, which aims to address the underlying factors contributing to these behaviour while empowering youths and communities to make healthier choices. This approach draws from proven models, such as those used in "The MTV Staying Alive Foundation's Shuga Series (Pan-African, including Cameroon) with a focus on addressing risky behaviour, HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse through popular media, applying them in the context of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, and risky behaviours.

Five-axis models for transforming at-risk behaviour and drug abuse

CABY's five-axis models include awareness and education, skills development and economic empowerment, rehabilitation and reintegration, strengthening school programs, and peer mentorship initiatives, health services and support networks through community engagement. CABY seeks to create lasting change by providing the tools, education, and support needed to transform at-risk behaviours and drug abuse while creating healthier and more resilient communities across Cameroon.

Evidence-Based Research Approach

CABY recognizes the importance of data-driven strategies in tackling critical issues like drug abuse, at-risk behaviours, and HIV/AIDS. To ensure its interventions are effective and impactful, CABY will implement evidence-based research projects aimed at uncovering the root causes and effects of these challenges. This approach will involve needs assessments, community surveys, and policy analyses to provide actionable insights for targeted and sustainable

solutions. Research findings will play a pivotal role in shaping CABY’s future initiatives, policy recommendations, and advocacy efforts, ensuring informed decision-making and long-term impact. Between 2025 and 2029, CABY plans to publish four research reports on key topics, including:

- Trends in drug abuse and its associated risks.
- Behavioural factors contributing to HIV/AIDS prevalence.
- The socio-economic impacts of illegal immigration.
- Youth perspectives on cultural diversity and environmental responsibility.

These reports will be valuable resources for policymakers, educators, and civil society organizations, offering data-driven guidance to address youth-related challenges in Cameroon effectively.

Community Engagement and Outreach

CABY adopts a grassroots-centered approach to addressing drug abuse, at-risk behaviour, and HIV/AIDS, recognizing the importance of local cultural contexts and community dynamics in fostering sustainable impact. By actively involving local leaders, parents, educators, and youth organizations, CABY’s strategy integrates community values and traditions into a comprehensive framework for change. This culturally grounded approach prioritizes education and awareness, ensuring that interventions resonate with the lived experiences of the communities served.

Building on informed successes, such as school-based and sports-centered anti-drug campaigns, CABY will expand its outreach over the next five years to include 100 community events hosted in schools, cultural spaces, and local gatherings. These events will explore:

- The socio-cultural and economic factors contributing to drug abuse and its link to risky behaviour, such as juvenile delinquency.
- Community-specific strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention through education and behavioural transformation.

By leveraging these localized interventions, CABY seeks to strengthen community networks, empower youths as change agents while promoting healthier and more resilient social systems. This lens ensures that the initiatives are not only effective but also sustainable, rooted in the cultural and social realities of Cameroon’s diverse communities.

Advocacy and Sensitization

CABY recognizes advocacy and sensitization as critical cultural practices capable of reshaping social narratives and advancing collective understanding among diverse stakeholders. By adopting this approach, CABY ensures that messages are grounded in fact-checked details, contextual realities, and culturally sensitive strategies.

Thus, addressing complex issues like drug abuse, at-risk behaviours, and HIV/AIDS requires unpacking the socio-cultural systems that shape individual and collective actions. Advocacy and sensitization, therefore, serve not merely as educational tools but as interventions that challenge these systems and promote inclusivity and collaboration. Case in point, the “the Mobile HIV Testing Units” partnering with international organizations like UNAIDS, visited schools, markets, and neighbourhoods and provided free HIV testing, counselling and sensitization on drug abuse. This increased accessibility and awareness among hard-to-reach youths, fostering their agency as cultural brokers and advocates

within their communities. Youths in this campaign were trained to navigate the intersections of tradition, modernity, and health, mobilizing government bodies and other stakeholders to address the root causes of drug abuse, risky behaviours, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. This initiative highlighted the power of youth-centered, culturally informed advocacy in driving systemic change.

CABY remains committed to an approach that prioritizes cultural competence, participatory engagement, and systemic understanding to empower youths and communities. Advocacy and sensitization are transformative processes for building resilient and healthier societies.

Objectives and Interventions

Objective 1: Strengthen Youth Capacity and Resilience

Intervention: Develop and carry out research, deliver workshops, seminars, anti-drug school clubs (on the dangers of drug abuse), the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and reshaping at-risk behaviours.

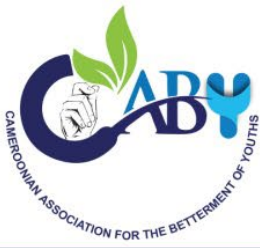
Target: Host 50 workshops annually, reaching 20,000 youths by 2029.

Outcome: Empowered young individuals who are well-equipped to make informed choices about their health and behaviours.

Objective 2: Foster Community Awareness and Dialogue

Intervention: Organize town hall meetings, school forums, and intergenerational dialogues on drug abuse, at-risk behaviours and HIV/AIDS.

Target: Conduct 60 dialogue sessions nationwide by 2029.



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Outcome: Increased community engagement in preventing drug abuse and at-risk behaviours, with improved understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention strategies.

Objective 3: Leverage Media for Social Change

Intervention: Use social and traditional media to run campaigns combating drug myths and promoting healthy lifestyles.

Target: Produce 15 video campaigns, 30 radio programs, and launch a youth-centered digital platform.

Outcome: A well-informed public that supports youth empowerment and behavioural change.

Objective 4: Promote Research-Driven Solutions

Intervention: Conduct annual studies on drug use, HIV/AIDS awareness, and youth behaviour trends.

Target: Publish four research reports to guide interventions and inform stakeholders.

Outcome: Evidence-based strategies that address the root causes of youth-related challenges.

Objective 5: Expand Community-Based Outreach Programs

Intervention: Develop school-based campaigns and outreach events on drug abuse, at-risk behaviour, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Target: Reach 20,000 students and youths through 100 events by 2029.

Outcome: Greater awareness and behavioural change among the youth population.

Objective 6: Advocate for Policy and Systemic Change

Intervention: Partner with policymakers to create robust drug and HIV/AIDS prevention and youth health policies.

Target: Influence national policies to incorporate youth-friendly health, drug and HIV/AIDS prevention frameworks.

Outcome: Institutional support for sustainable youth development initiatives.

Cross-Cutting Themes

Gender Inclusion: Ensure equal participation of young men and women in all CABY programs.

Partnerships: Collaborate with local governments, NGOs, and international organizations for resource mobilization and program implementation.

Cultural Sensitivity: Tailor interventions to respect and integrate Cameroon's diverse cultural contexts.

Monitoring and Evaluation

CABY will implement a robust monitoring framework to track progress and measure impact.

Key metrics include:

Number of youths trained and reached.

Changes in drug use, risky behaviours and HIV/AIDS awareness levels.

Community Engagement Outcomes.

Annual impact reports will guide adjustments to ensure effective program delivery.

Conclusion

CABY's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan is a holistic approach to tackling drug abuse, at-risk behaviour, and HIV/AIDS among Cameroonian youth. By combining capacity-building, community outreach, media engagement, and evidence-based strategies, CABY is poised to drive sustainable change. Through partnerships and collaboration, we aim to create a healthier and more resilient future for Cameroon.

