

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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Dear Reader,

If I were to summarise the focus of KoGe's work in 2025, I would say that it was to move beyond simply talking about shifting from transactional to transformational partnerships to actually implementing that shift. Across 37 countries, KoGe member organisations and their partners continued to show that meaningful change happens when relationships are built on trust, respect and shared responsibility. While "equal partnerships" has become a common phrase in international cooperation, KoGe's experience this year reminds us that it must be more than just a tagline. It must be an intentional way of working.

Throughout 2025, KoGe invested in learning how decisions can be made more collaboratively, how different voices can be heard and how power can be shared more intentionally. In this report, you will read about how, in Uganda, communities now manage and maintain their own water system, serving 17 villages through locally elected structures. In Bolivia, local partners helped bring attention to obstetric violence and advanced the conversation around respectful maternity care. In Chad, years of collaboration and advocacy by a partner organisation contributed to stronger alcohol control measures and the country's first national alcohol policy. These achievements were not delivered to communities. They were achieved with communities. The same spirit can be seen throughout KoGe's wider programme. One million people globally were reached through initiatives promoting safer communities, better access to health care, sustainable livelihoods, quality education and greater awareness of rights.

This is particularly significant in a year marked by growing uncertainty. Conflicts, shrinking civic space and reductions in international cooperation (IC) funding have made the work of IC organisations more challenging than ever. Yet these pressures have also highlighted the importance of local ownership and strong partnerships. When trust exists, when decisions are shared and when local organisations are enabled to lead, communities become more resilient and better equipped to navigate change.

The lessons from 2025 are clear. Equal partnerships are not a destination that can be reached once and for all. They are a continuous commitment to working together with humility, openness and mutual respect.

Best regards on behalf of our entire Community of Cooperation



Sarah Makenjera, President

TOWARDS EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

LEARNING TO SHARE POWER



At the IBC 2025 General Assembly, Blue Cross members reflected on power, leadership and decision-making

Across the international cooperation sector, organisations increasingly recognise that sustainable change depends not only on technical expertise but also on the way people work together. Questions of participation, locally led cooperation and equitable partnerships have become central. Yet building equitable partnerships requires more than new policies or revised strategies. It requires organisations to reflect continuously on how they learn, make decisions and collaborate.

In 2025, KoGe explored these questions through its “Learning Journey on equal partnerships”, with a particular focus on participatory leadership and decision-making. Rather than asking how leaders can make better decisions, participants explored how organisations can create decision-making processes that involve more voices and build greater ownership. Practical methods such as the ladder of participation (conceived by Sherry Arnstein) and gradients of agreement (developed by Kaner, Berger and Community-at-Work) helped participants bet-

ter understand different levels of involvement within a group and move beyond simple yes-or-no choices. The aim was not to reach consensus at all costs, but to make decisions that are transparent, inclusive and trusted by those involved.

An important contribution to this process was the promotion of active listening skills, the practice of inclusive conversation circles and, more generally, the use of participatory facilitation methods across the network. In 2025, KoGe trained members and worldwide partners in Liberating Structures, a repertoire of facilitation methods proposed by Henri Lipmanowicz and Keith McCandless. These methods help ensure that everyone – not only the most outspoken participants – can actively contribute to discussions. By creating space for dialogue, reflection and collective problem-solving, they encourage diverse perspectives and strengthen shared ownership of decisions. Participants highlighted that these approaches fostered trust and more balanced discussions.

KoGe also encouraged organisations to reflect on their own partnership practices, organisational cultures and decision-making processes. Building on earlier work on decolonial approaches, members used various reflection frameworks to examine questions of communication, power and accountability within their own organisations and partnerships. These reflections reinforced the understanding that strengthening equitable partnerships is an ongoing process that requires openness, dialogue and continuous learning.

The experience of 2025 confirmed an important insight: equitable partnerships cannot simply be defined through guidelines. They are built through everyday practice. By integrating participation, shared reflection and collective decision-making into its own learning processes, KoGe continues to strengthen not only the capacities of its members and partners, but also the way the network itself works together. Learning is therefore more than a means of improving programmes. It is an essential part of building stronger, more trust-based partnerships.

Tackling Root Causes

In 2025, KoGe implemented a second learning journey on transformative programming, combining knowledge exchange with dialogue, peer learning and critical reflection. During a regional workshop in Lusaka, Zambia, participants revisited their own programmes through a transformative lens, exploring how to address root causes, shift power dynamics and strengthen

advocacy for lasting change. A concrete result of this learning journey was the development and introduction of KoGe’s practical self-assessment tool that helps organisations assess the gender-transformative potential of their projects, identify gaps and reflect on how to make their projects more transformative. The tool is already being applied by several member organisations.

Sharing Power in Practice

What does it take to build more equitable partnerships? Two KoGe member organisations reflect on changes in their organisations and partnerships and on the tensions and limitations they continue to encounter.

Katharina Gfeller, Head of International Relations, Mission 21

What does sharing power with your partner organisations mean in practice and where are you currently on this journey?

For Mission 21, partnership goes beyond funding and project implementation. It means being on a shared journey, being part of a faith- and value-based community, working towards common goals and learning from each other. Our partnership survey showed that this understanding is widely shared but also that some partners still feel too much like implementers. We therefore need to keep examining who makes decisions and where

we can create more space for co-creation. On a strategic level, our board has initiated an organisational development process together with our partner organisations and continental assemblies to examine the potential and current limitations of decision-making and participation processes.

How has reflecting on your own history shaped this journey?

Critically examining our missionary history, including with researchers from the countries concerned, has opened our eyes to how power has shaped (and continues to shape) relationships. It has made us ask whose voices are heard, which ones are missing and from whose perspective history is told. This is not only about the past. It influences how we understand partnership and power today.

Has the KoGe Learning Journey influenced how you work?

Listening is fundamental. Working across different contexts means taking time to understand each other and learn from different perspectives. The KoGe Learning Journey has encouraged us to further strengthen participation, co-creation and shared responsibility in our own organisation. In meetings and workshops, we increasingly share facilitation and other roles across the team. This creates a different dynamic but it also requires leaders to be willing to let go.

Where does sharing power remain difficult?

We operate within structures that set real limits. Donor requirements, earmarked budgets, compliance and reporting obligations do not always align with locally led approaches. We therefore try to be transparent about what cannot be changed and where partners can decide. When a budget had to be reduced in Cameroon, for example, our partner church decided how to distribute the reductions. For us, one thing is clear: shifting more responsibility and risk to partners needs to be complemented by sharing decision-making power in order to support equitable partnerships. This is why we need to keep questioning where power lies and what we can change in our own practice.

Shifting more responsibility and risk to partners needs to be complemented by sharing decision-making power.

**Anne Babb, General Secretary,
International Blue Cross (IBC)**

What does sharing power with your partner organisations mean in practice and where are you currently on this journey?

As IBC, we have established a network organisation with our members, meaning that sharing power is built into our organisational structure. Countries choose to become members, remain independent and responsible for their own actions and have equal votes no matter what they contribute. At our 2025 General Assembly, members reflected on power, leadership and decision-making. They approved a revision of our statutes to ensure more geographically inclusive representation on the Board. Today,

its nine members represent Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Western and Eastern Europe. The IBC Academy, which facilitates learning and knowledge exchange across the network, is another example of how we try to distribute knowledge, share power and support our members.

We have built an organisational architecture to distribute power more equally and will continue to look at different elements such as skills, governance structures and learning to continue this journey.

We have built an organisational architecture to distribute power more equally.

What is changing as a result for your partner organisations, your own organisation and the partnership as a whole?

More equal partnerships open doors for honest sharing among our partners, our board and us because they create trust, allow different voices to be heard and allow us to talk about difficulties and challenges without fear. For our partners the clearest shift at IBC is from controller to facilitator in service delivery, resulting in greater autonomy for them as well as increased ownership. Partners are experts at what they do, can shape decisions and bring their own contextual realities into the programme design. Programmes are now more focused on actual needs and successful solutions.

What remains challenging on the journey towards more equitable partnerships? Where do you still see limitations or tensions?

One challenge is that funding comes with requirements and standards, which can create tensions with partners' autonomy. A second is that some partners manage relatively large project budgets while having limited resources for their own organisational development. We also see challenges where academic training in alcohol- and drug-related issues is limited. Know-how therefore needs to be acquired elsewhere and this can create power imbalances that we need to address along this journey.

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED A SPOTLIGHT ON THE YEAR 2025



Creating income opportunities through vocational training in Pakistan

In 2025, KoGe's SDG 16+ programme reached approximately 1,000,000 people in 37 countries. The following sections highlight facts, figures and results from across the programme. Short stories, voices from participants and examples of interventions complement the picture of what we have achieved. Together, they illustrate how change can take place at different levels, within communities, institutions and public policy.

Our three expected outcomes are:

1. Reduce all forms of violence
2. Access to economic resources and basic services
3. Social and political inclusion and respect for rights

Support by SDC

KoGe's programme 2025–2028 is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

KoGe total programme costs 2025:
CHF 17,093,296
Contribution of SDC 32.8%

REDUCE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE

OUTCOME 1

KoGe focused on combatting SGBV, promoting the peaceful resolution of conflicts and protecting children from violence.

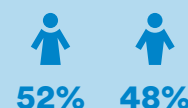
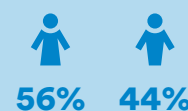
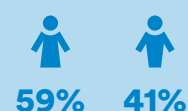
In 2025:

94,000 people participated in prevention activities in the field of **SGBV**.

32,500 caregivers were trained in **non-violent methods** to raise girls and boys.

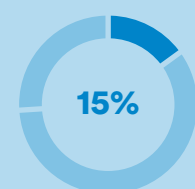
28,000 people participated in **peacebuilding projects**, with 70% stating afterwards that they perceived their environment as more peaceful.

In total, KoGe collaborated with more than **154,000** people.



In 2025, we collaborated in **25 countries**:

Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru; Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zimbabwe; Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines



KoGe direct programme costs (without overhead):

CHF 16,657,285

Expenditures for outcome 1:

CHF 2,562,301



Addressing Obstetric Violence through Respectful Maternity Care

Preventing violence against women also means addressing harmful practices in health care, including obstetric violence. In Bolivia, an initiative supported by Connexio develop shows how awareness, training and advocacy can promote more respectful maternity care.

Obstetric violence remains a significant concern in Bolivia: according to the national study *Recuperar el Parto* (2025), nearly 60% of women reported experiencing some form of obstetric violence during childbirth. To address this, the Observatorio de Violencia Obstétrica Bolivia (OVO Bolivia), with support from Connexio develop, worked with health professionals, women's organisations and public authorities. More than 160 health professionals took part in training on maternity care and the prevention of obstetric violence. Assessments before and after the training showed that participants who had

gone through the programme had a better understanding of obstetric violence and maternity care standards and were more open to rights-based approaches. Women's organisations and community groups were also involved in raising awareness of respectful maternity care and women's rights.

At the same time, the initiative worked towards broader changes in health care and legislation. Engagement with regional health authorities, members of parliament and the Human Rights Commission of the Chamber of Deputies supported efforts to promote the draft Law on Respectful and Intercultural Childbirth. By combining prevention with engagement at the institutional and policy levels, the initiative addressed obstetric violence from different angles. Recent political developments, however, may affect progress towards legal change.

ACCESS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND BASIC SERVICES

OUTCOME 2

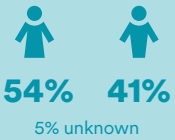
KoGe contributed to strengthening the resilience, inclusion and self-reliance of marginalised and vulnerable populations by supporting sustainable livelihood opportunities, access to essential health services and inclusive education and vocational training.

In 2025:

462,500 people had access to **quality primary health care** including prevention measures, treatment, psychosocial support and mother and child health. In addition, **193,000 consultations** were conducted.

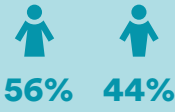


104,500 people participated in measures to improve **sustainable livelihoods** and 75% of the surveyed participants confirmed that they apply the knowledge gained.



5% unknown

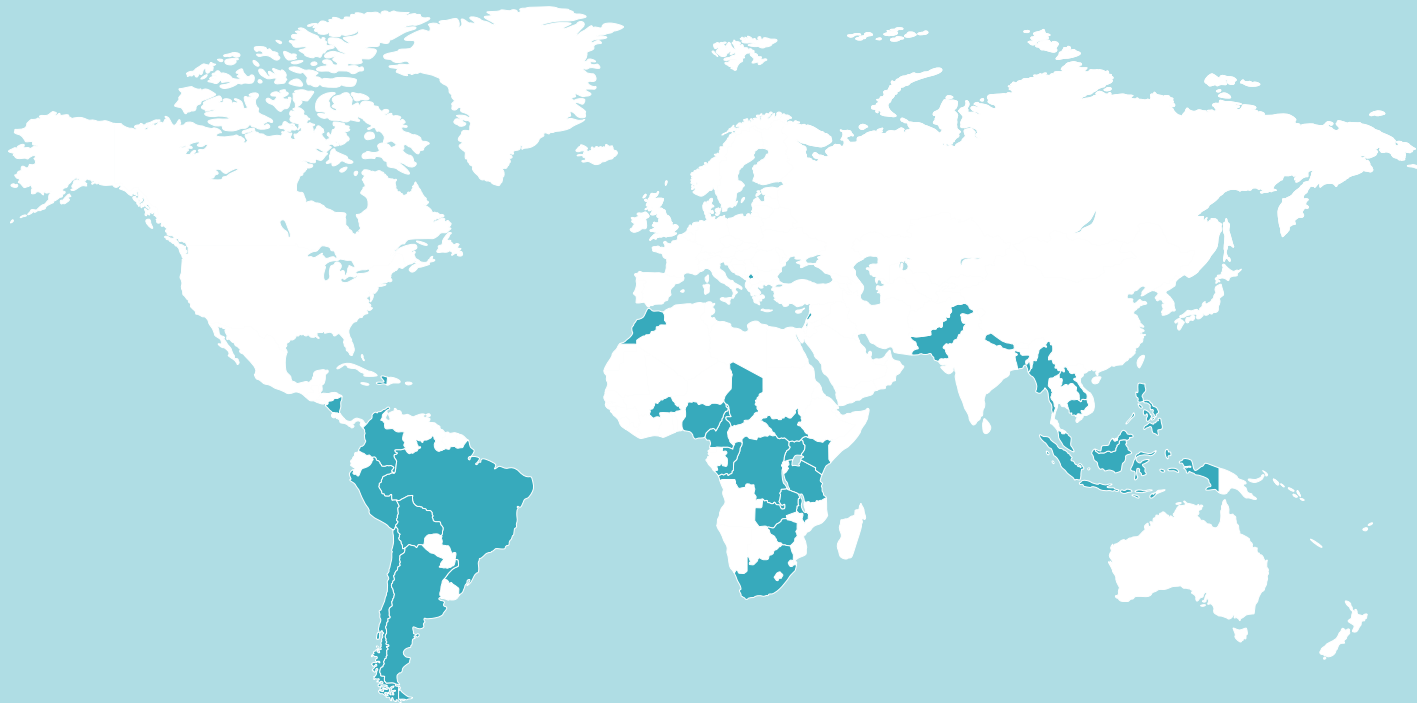
11,000 people completed **basic education** or **vocational training**.



In total, KoGe collaborated with more than **643,500** people.



KoGe direct programme costs (without overhead):
CHF 16,657,285
Expenditures for outcome 2:
CHF 9,818,960



In 2025, we collaborated in **33 countries**:

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe; Palestine; Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines

Sustainable Water Access through Community Governance

In Uganda’s Rukiga District, families in Kihanga Parish had long struggled with ageing water infrastructure and unreliable sources. Collecting water could take hours, and the water available was not always safe, exposing communities to recurring waterborne diseases.

In 2025, community members and staff from ena’s partner organisation KDWSP (Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme) worked together to rehabilitate the Kihanga Gravity Flow Scheme. The result is more than improved water infrastructure: the community now plays a central role in managing and maintaining its own water supply. A community-elected water and sanitation committee, operating under community by-laws, oversees the system, organises maintenance and promotes good hygiene and sanitation practices. Households and local institutions contribute user fees, which are

managed locally and used to pay for repairs and keep the system running. Community technicians have also been trained to carry out maintenance themselves, reducing reliance on outside support, while village leaders support accountability and collective participation. Through this approach, responsibility for managing the water system has increasingly shifted from external actors to the community itself.

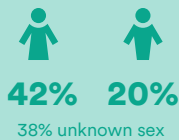
Today, the rehabilitated system serves all 17 villages in the area. Community members elect their representatives, review how funds are used and plan future improvements together. The experience in Kihanga shows that lasting access to safe water depends on more than infrastructure alone. When communities have the skills, structures and resources to manage essential services themselves, investments can bring benefits that last long after a project has ended.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INCLUSION AND RESPECT FOR RIGHTS OUTCOME 3

KoGe focused on combining social and political empowerment with rights awareness, rights-based advocacy and practical life skills training. The interventions successfully fostered safe spaces for dialogue, strengthened community resilience and enabled concrete behavioral and policy changes.

In 2025:

101,500 people participated in activities that promoted **social and political empowerment**. 80% of the surveyed participants reported an increased social and political participation.



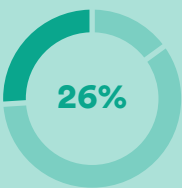
50,200 people were informed and trained on **human and civil rights of marginalised people**.



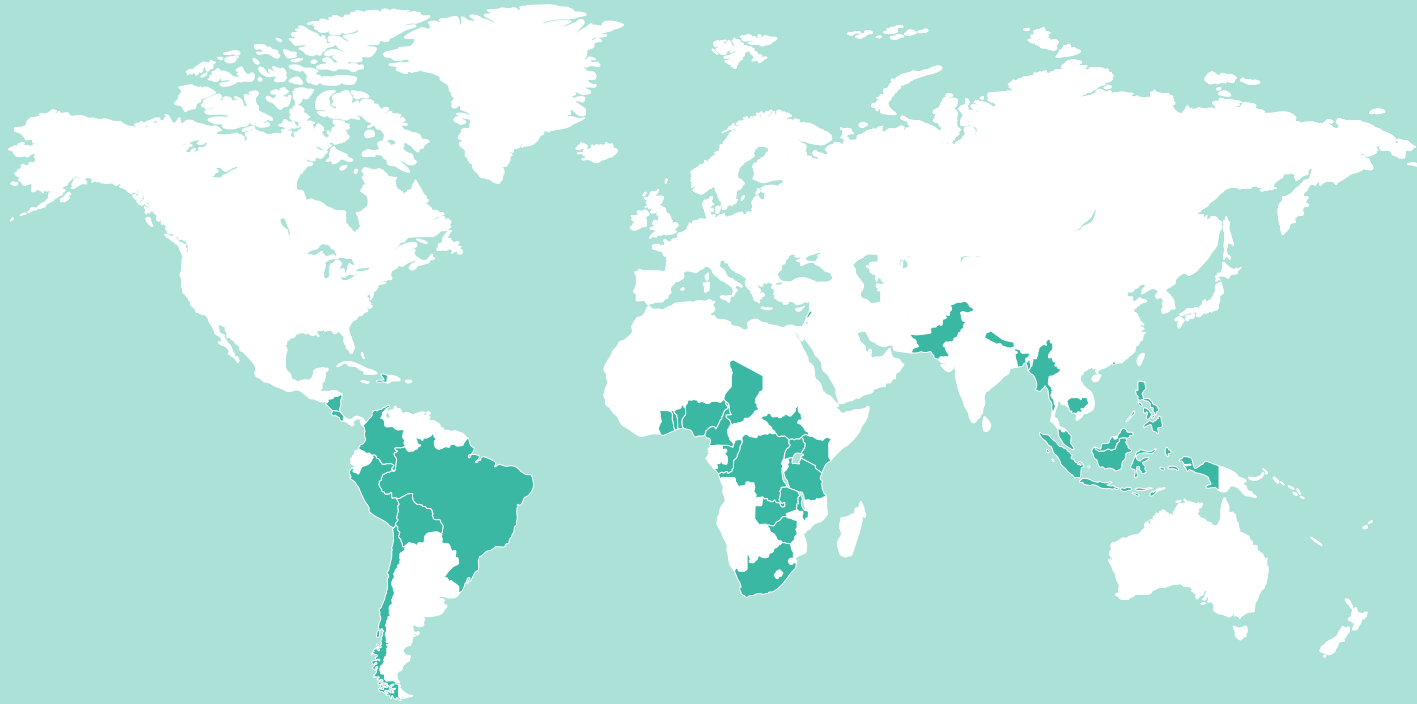
20,500 children and youth participated in **life skills education** sessions. 94% of the surveyed participants reported an improved quality of life thanks to the application of the learned skills.



In total, KoGe collaborated with more than **172,000** people.



KoGe direct programme costs (without overhead):
CHF 16,657,285
Expenditures for outcome 3:
CHF 4,276,024



In 2025, we collaborated in **34 countries**:

Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Haiti, Nicaragua, Peru; Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe; Palestine; Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines

Turning Advocacy into Public Health Policy

Evidence-based advocacy and strong partnerships enable civil society organisations to become trusted policy actors and drive lasting public health reforms.

Blue Cross Chad exemplifies this approach. Supported by IBC, Blue Cross Chad leveraged decades of advocacy and collaboration with government ministries to address alcohol-related harm. It began by co-founding a platform on alcohol, tobacco and drugs. Over two decades, four ministries joined, building ties with the government’s tobacco focal point. Sustained lobbying expanded that focus into a national programme covering alcohol and drugs, giving the issue recognition, resources, and a mandated government counterpart.

By the early 2020s, cheap, strong alcohol sold in small plastic sachets became a serious problem due to unregulated production and distribution. The coalition documented harmful effects and presented evidence to decision-makers, successfully advocating for stronger regulation. These efforts contributed to a Presidential Decree adopted in September 2022, banning the import, production, sale and consumption of sachet alcohol. In 2025, the Governor of Mayo-Kebbi Ouest Province introduced the ban ahead of a national rollout, with Blue Cross Chad supporting awareness raising and training for local decision-makers. The sachet alcohol ban also created momentum for Chad’s first national alcohol policy. In 2025, Blue Cross Chad joined the official drafting commission as a recognised civil society partner, contributing in particular to prevention measures. Through continued participation in national policy platforms, the organisation helps ensure prevention expertise and community perspectives are included. Its position reflects decades of persistent advocacy that gradually elevated alcohol and drug harm on the political agenda.

FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS 2025
BALANCE SHEET

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	287,729	245,694
Receivables	0	0
Accrued income	3,146	0
Total current assets	290,874	245,694
Total fixed assets	0	0
TOTAL ASSETS	290,874	245,694
LIABILITIES		
Third-party liabilities	4,512	673
Liabilities to SDC	8,925	8,925
Liabilities to affiliated organisations	8,796	30,481
Accrued expenses and deferred income	10,000	18,026
Total current liabilities	32,233	58,105
Long-term provisions	0	0
Other long-term liabilities	87,312	87,312
Total long-term liabilities	87,312	87,312
Total restricted fund capital	49,877	0
Total acquired unrestricted capital	121,452	100,277
TOTAL LIABILITIES	290,874	245,694

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	2025	2024
INCOME		
Member contributions	20,537	24,999
Programme contribution SDC	5,650,500	7,044,000
Repatriation of SDC contributions programme phase 2023–2024	0	–8,925
Total contributions	5,671,037	7,060,074
Other income	638	165
Total other income	638	165
TOTAL INCOME	5,671,675	7,060,239
EXPENSES		
Programme contribution to Frieda (member of the KoGe until 31.12.2024)	0	699,825
Programme contribution to Connexio develop	252,810	307,805
Programme contribution to Horyzon	357,770	388,977
Programme contribution to International Blue Cross (IBC)	209,787	177,103
Programme contribution to Mission Evangélique Braille (MEB)	130,000	128,542
Programme contribution to Mission 21	2,224,071	2,508,000
Programme contribution to Salvation Army Switzerland	863,039	1,044,699
Programme contribution to Service de Missions et d’Entraide (SME)	306,372	411,424
Programme contribution to ena	790,650	1,001,751
Total programme contributions to member organisations	5,134,499	6,668,126
Quality management and learning structure	297,578	390,645
KoGe project funding	30,112	81,658
Total support costs directly linked to the programme	327,690	472,303
Total administration and HR	138,205	160,889
TOTAL EXPENSES	5,600,394	7,301,318
OPERATING RESULT	71,281	–241,079
Financial result	–229	–220
OPERATING RESULT BEFORE CHANGE IN FUND CAPITAL	71,052	–241,299
Fund allocation	–5,650,500	–7,044,000
Fund withdrawal	5,600,623	7,310,463
Change in fund capital	–49,877	266,463
ANNUAL RESULT BEFORE ALLOCATION TO ORGANISATIONAL CAPITAL	21,175	25,164
Allocation to organisational capital	–21,175	–25,164
ANNUAL RESULT AFTER ALLOCATION TO ORGANISATIONAL CAPITAL	0	0

THE COMMUNITY OF COOPERATION IN A NUTSHELL

Who We Are

The Community of Cooperation (KoGe) is a Swiss umbrella association of eight member organisations sharing a Protestant background: Connexio develop, Horyzon, International Blue Cross (IBC), Mission 21, Mission Evangélique Braille (MEB), Salvation Army Switzerland, Service de Missions et d’Entraide (SME) and ena Switzerland. Together with around 110 partner organisations, they implement a joint programme in 37 countries. KoGe brings together faith- and human rights-based organisations with diverse expertise and strong connections to the communities they work alongside. Its network includes churches, women’s rights organisations, youth-led organisations and other civil society actors, including organisations working in contexts affected by conflict and fragility. As a platform for joint learning and exchange, KoGe enables members and their worldwide partners to share knowledge, reflect on their approaches and strengthen their work together, with an increasing focus on equitable partnerships, participation and shared decision-making.

Our organisation

Board

- Sarah Makanjera, Salvation Army, President
- Anne Babb, International Blue Cross, Vice President
- Ulrich Bachmann, Connexio develop
- Katharina Gfeller, Mission 21
- Andrea Rüegg, Horyzon (until 31.1.2025)
- Thomas Stahl, ena

Staff of the KoGe secretariat

- Sabrina Beeler Stücklin
- Madeleine Bolliger
- Mirjam Moser

Focal points

- Corinna Bütikofer Nkhoma
- Flavia Ganarin

Our member organisations



What we do

KoGe’s programme, “Delivering SDG 16+: Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies,” entered its second phase in 2025, building on the experience and lessons learnt from the first phase (2021-24) while introducing new priorities. The programme follows the SDG 16+ approach, recognising that peaceful, just and inclusive societies are closely linked to progress across the Sustainable Development Goals. KoGe and its partners work towards three main goals: reducing all forms of violence, improving access to economic resources and basic services and strengthening social and political inclusion and respect for rights.

The new programme places greater emphasis on transformative approaches that go beyond addressing immediate needs and seek to tackle the root causes of violence, inequality and exclusion. This includes strengthening the participation of people who are being left behind (LNOB), addressing unequal power relations and harmful social norms and advocating for more inclusive policies and practices. In a context of mounting violence and shrinking civic space, KoGe also continues to strengthen peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive programming.



Raising awareness of rights and inclusion during a family visit in rural Benin



The Community of Cooperation (KoGe) is the umbrella organisation of eight Swiss member organisations with a Protestant background. We share knowledge, skills and resources and are committed to a common goal: a life of dignity for all people, regardless of gender, origin or religion.

Community of Cooperation (KoGe)
Missionsstrasse 21
P.O. Box
4009 Basel

+41 61 260 22 05
info@koge.ch
www.koge.ch