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INNOVATIVE FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIPS: FINANCING MODELS FOR SAFE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Case of the NGO ALINAGNON of Benin



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INTRODUCTION

- ▶ I am **Aurélien Martial Crédo TOUGAN**, Project and Program Manager of the NGO ALINAGNON.
- ▶ The NGO ALINAGNON is a Beninese organization created in 2009 and is committed to promoting road safety and protecting vulnerable road users, particularly children in schools.
- ▶ The theme of innovative financing and partnerships for safe school infrastructure has been central to our work over the last several years.



CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

In Benin, as in several developing countries, the surroundings of schools remain high-risk areas:

- Absence of signage;
- lack of pedestrian crossings;
- Lack of safety fences to protect schoolchildren around schools;
- lack of speed bumps;
- Speeding
- lack of crossing agents in front of schools;
- etc...

Faced with these observations, **the NGO ALINAGNON** has committed to acting, despite very limited financial resources.

INNOVATIVE FINANCING APPROACHES

To address the lack of traditional financing, the NGO ALINAGNON has explored several approaches:

➤ **Community Engagement**

- Local contributions (teachers, parents' associations, mayor's office, head of pedagogical region, pedagogical advisors, education inspectors, etc.)
- Community involvement in simple actions (painting of pedestrian crossings, handcrafted signs, awareness raising through road safety clubs set up in schools, etc.)

➤ **Private Sector Partnerships**

- Local companies solicited as part of their social responsibility (CSR);
- Material or financial support to secure school zones, community-based rehabilitation centers, and training for orphans of parents affected by accidents



➤ **Local Government Engagement**

- Advocacy with town halls to integrate safety around schools into local budgets
- Co-financing/co-organization of certain actions

➤ **Support from technical partners and international NGOs**

- Seeking Grants
- Participation in regional or international programs

SOME CONCRETE ACTIONS TAKEN

Using the mechanisms described above, several actions have been implemented:

- **Sensitization of teachers, students and drivers on the safety of schoolchildren in school zones;**



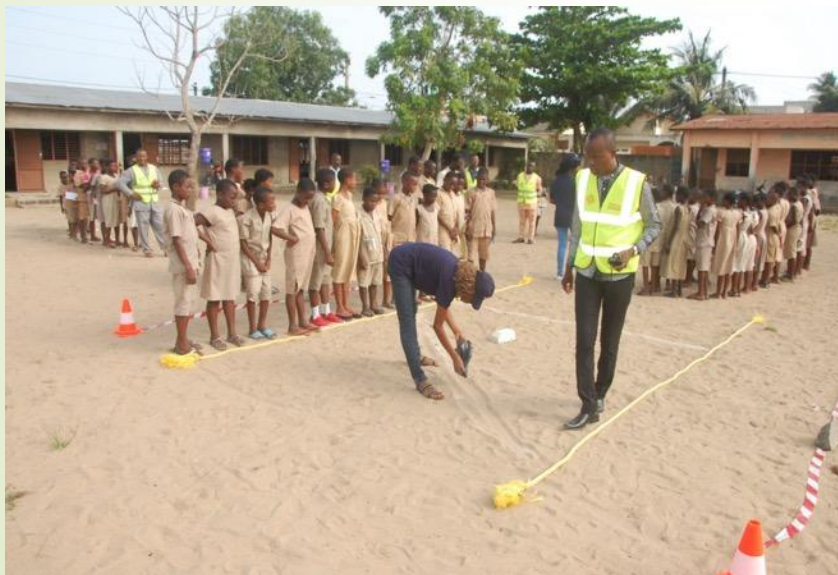
- ▶ **Marking of pedestrian crossings in selected school zones in the city of Cotonou;**



- ▶ **Training and establishment of 500 staff Traversers in front of schools with support LNB and CNSR**



➤ Establishment of road safety clubs in schools and organization of educational sessions



- Creation of an education and training center for orphans of parents who are victims of accidents



- Organization of school road safety days;



- Preparation of a practical guide for the organization of road safety lessons in classrooms with the support of Swiss Cooperation through the FoSIR program



- ▶ Installation of road signs in the vicinity of selected schools in the city of Cotonou;



- ▶ Installation of protective fences in certain school zones and in front of the RBCs in the cities of Cotonou and Porto-Novo;



RESULTS ACHIEVED

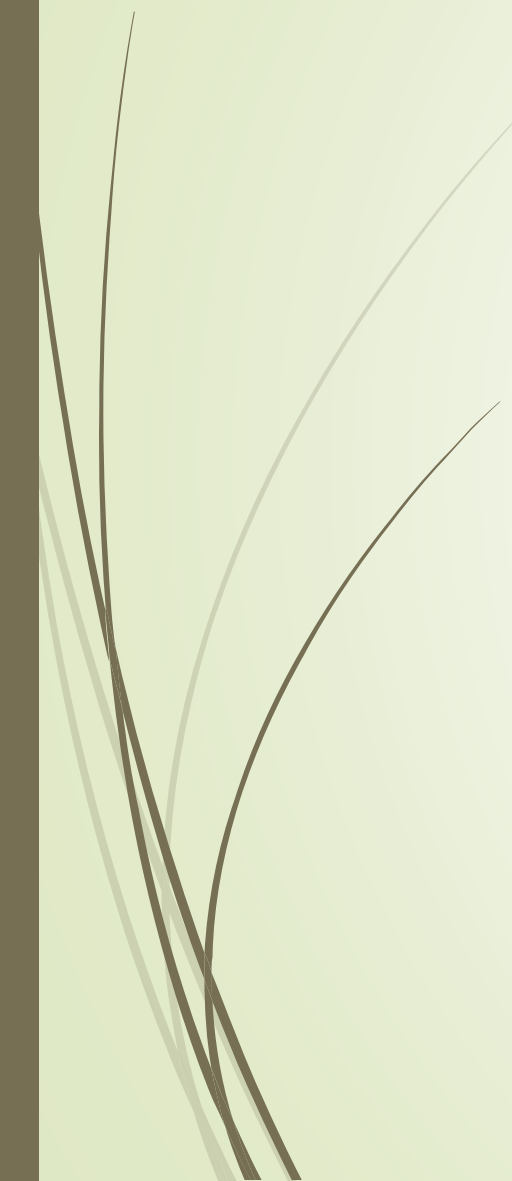
These initiatives have resulted in:

- Greater awareness on the part of some drivers;
- a reduction in risky behaviours in the vicinity of schools;
- Increased engagement of local communities in the safety of schoolchildren
- Improvement of the knowledge of teachers and schoolchildren on road safety;
- Improvement of the road safety knowledge of members of Parents' Associations;
- The systematic and periodic organization of road safety activities in certain schools;
- The recruitment of crossing agents at the level of certain schools.
- A significant reduction in the number of accidents in certain school zones;
- The existence of a practical guide for the organization of road safety lessons in selected schools.



CHALLENGES

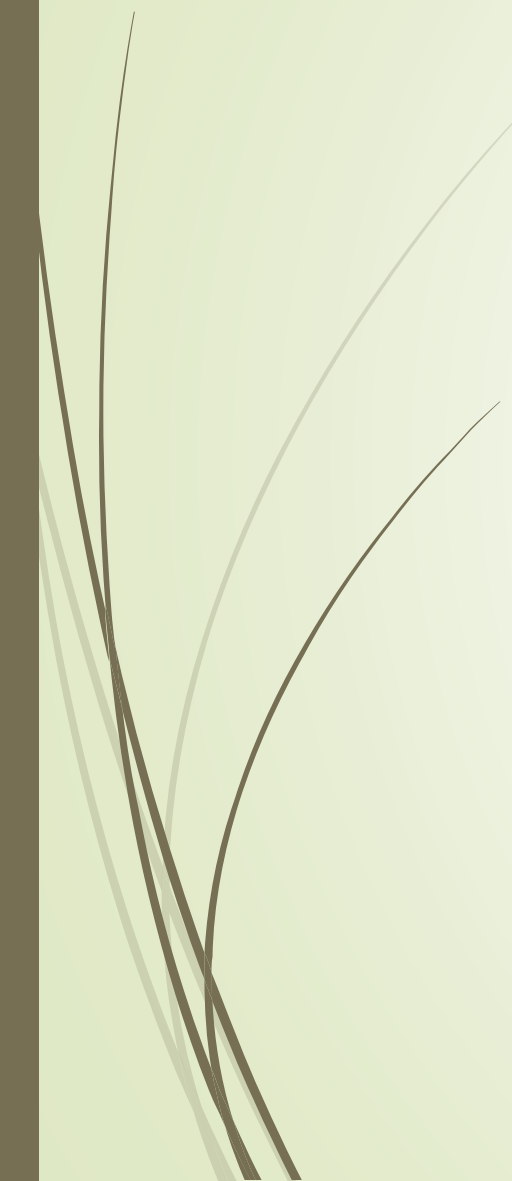
Despite efforts and results, challenges remain:

- Lack of sustainable financing
 - Weak involvement of some actors
 - Need for technical reinforcement
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LOOKING AHEAD

To go further, we envisage:

- ▶ Develop more structured partnerships with the private sector
 - ▶ Promote innovative financing mechanisms at scale
 - ▶ Strengthen advocacy for the systematic integration of school road safety into public policies
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CONCLUDING REMARKS

- ▶ The experience of the NGO ALINAGNON shows that even with limited resources, it is possible to act effectively through strategic partnerships and innovative approaches.
 - ▶ The safety of children on their way to school must be a shared responsibility.
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