

FROM EVIDENCE TO ACTION: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ALCOHOL RESEARCH AND POLICY IN DIVERSE CONTEXTS

ICARA WORKSHOP
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CONTEXT

Despite global efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm, policy adoption and implementation often lag behind the evidence base. Researchers in the Global South are increasingly generating relevant, timely research but face barriers in translating their work into actionable policy. Bridging this divide requires collaborative platforms that engage researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in mutual learning.

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

RESET Alcohol Colombia - A strategic investment in evidence, communication, and advocacy to strengthen the political environment and advance evidence-based alcohol policies – especially alcohol taxation (SAFER/WHO).

- Three Strategies:
 - Strategic coalition
 - Evidence designed for policy purpose
 - Panel discussions
- Challenges:
 - Active industry influence in Congress
 - Conflict of interest in key legislators
 - Government with saturated agenda
- Lessons Learned:
 - Evidence itself does not change policies, but it is the starting point for technical discussions
 - A long-term vision is needed, since this is an ongoing effort rather than a one-time action
 - Coalitions build legitimacy with policymakers and lead to more effective outcomes
 - We are prepared for the political opportunity

Australia & Viet Nam - Studies part of a broader WHO/Thai Health project

- Lessons Learned:
 - A collaboration between government champions and civil society.
 - The systematic use of both local and international evidence.
 - The ability to connect parliamentarians with communities affected by alcohol harm.
 - The capacity and readiness to quickly counteract alcohol industry interference.
 - Framing the issue through road safety, which provided the political hook that secured one of the most effective articles in the law and made its enforcement visible to the public.
 - Perseverance over many years, recognising that alcohol policy advocacy often requires sustained effort before it yields results in concrete policy and legislative improvements.