

COUNTRY UPDATE

RESET Alcohol Initiative Efforts in Kenya Lead to Accelerated Progress of Groundbreaking National Alcohol Policy

On July 30th, Kenya launched a new national policy on alcohol, drugs and substance abuse, paving the way for public health action to reduce alcohol harms. The policy was developed under the leadership of the National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA).

Drawing from the World Health Organization's SAFER best buys for alcohol policy, the new Kenya policy provides a comprehensive framework for effective and evidence-based measures to reduce alcohol harms, including increasing taxation and restricting marketing, among others.

Alcohol — a risk factor for over 200 diseases, injuries and conditions, including cancer, road crashes, cardiovascular and liver disease — is responsible for nearly 15,000 deaths, or 5% of all deaths in Kenya¹. It also has a tremendous negative impact on quality of life and economic prosperity, leading to over 700,000 disability-adjusted life years and costing the Kenyan economy close to 1.5% of its GDP².

In Kenya, for years, the alcohol industry stalled the development of a national policy, deemed to be a necessary condition to implement and enforce measures introduced in Kenya's 2010 Alcohol Drinks Control Act. To overcome these barriers and accelerate progress, the RESET Alcohol initiative provided legal and technical support to NACADA to inform the formulation and adoption of a national policy. This process included support for nine nationally representative policy forums to promote inclusive dialogue and solicit input from a broad range of stakeholders. Additional support was

provided to civil society partners International Institute for Legislative Affairs (IILA) and Students Campaign Against Drugs (SCAD) who supported NACADA throughout the consultative process, mobilized civil society, and communicated the harms of alcohol to the public.

"The policy provides progressive and strong measures for alcohol control, such as taxation and marketing and availability restrictions, among other measures. Kenya's journey towards adopting a national policy for alcohol control started several years ago, but always stalled, until the collaborative support through the RESET Alcohol initiative that made a significant difference."

Celine Awuor, CEO, International Institute for Legislative Affairs, Kenya

In parallel, in 2024, Kenyan RESET Alcohol civil society partners advocated for increases in alcohol taxation. This resulted in a stronger tax structure and if tax rates are set appropriately, prices of all types of alcohol products could be driven up, leading to a reduction in consumption and, ultimately, alcohol harms.

Vital Strategies applauds its Kenyan RESET Alcohol partners for their persistent advocacy as the draft policy went through extensive review, ensuring the policy remained a priority. This critical milestone is a great first step toward the regulatory reform required to reduce alcohol harms in Kenya.

ABOUT RESET

A first of its kind, RESET Alcohol is a global initiative that brings together national governments, civil society, researchers, and leaders in public health and alcohol policy to implement the World Health Organization's SAFER best buys for alcohol policy with a focus on increasing taxation, and targeted efforts to restrict marketing and availability. RESET Alcohol provides financial, technical, communication, and advocacy support to governments, civil society organizations, and research institutions, primarily in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

¹ [2024 WHO Status Report on Alcohol and Health and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders](#)

² [2024 WHO Status Report on Alcohol and Health and Treatment of Substance Use Disorders; Economics for Health, Economic Costs by Alcohol in RESET Alcohol Initiative Countries](#)