

Biannual

AHRA Consolidated Partners Report

Jul-Dec 2023

Prepared by: AHRA



Introduction

Established in 2022, the Southeast Asia Harm Reduction Association (AHRA) aims to enhance public health support for harm reduction and advocacy across Southeast Asia. AHRA collaborates with multiple countries to bolster harm reduction services, improve infectious disease prevention, and amplify the voices of affected individuals in strategic planning and donor consultations. Focusing on the well-being of individuals who use drugs, AHRA operates in Southeast Asian nations, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR (TBC), Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. This report outlines significant strides and accomplishments during the recent reporting period in advancing our mission.

Top Three Key Highlights and Accomplishments

- Program Development and Collaboration

- o Curriculum Development and Training: The Country Liaison and Trainer (CLT) from Myanmar designed and developed the Training of Trainers (ToT) program curriculum and conducted training, focusing on active learning and coaching.

- o Academic Collaboration with Karolinska Institute: AHRA's collaboration with the Karolinska Institute resulted in a comprehensive female health survey in Myanmar, showcasing a commitment to evidence-based research.

- o Global Advocacy and UN High Commissioner Report: AHRA actively participated in the release of a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights report, advocating for supportive, rights-affirming drug policies on a global scale.

- Learning Initiatives and Capacity Building

- o Learning Expert Courses: AHRA successfully hosted the "Learning Expert 1: Harm Reduction Knowledge and Learning" course in Hanoi, Vietnam, empowering individuals for local and international learning initiatives.

- o Exchange Visit to Kuala Lumpur: AHRA organized a significant exchange visit to Malaysia, enhancing harm reduction service delivery and policy advocacy strategies in Southeast Asia.

- o Video Creation for Awareness: AHRA, with support from the Global Fund and AHRN, created a video highlighting Southeast Asia's health challenges, emphasizing harm reduction's importance, and inviting support.



- Global, Regional Advocacy and Collaboration

o Appointment to CSO Group at CND: AHRA was appointed as a member of the CSO Group at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND).

o International Testing Week 2023: AHRA's Secretariat Coordinator, Murdo E. Bijl, played a crucial role in the impactful INTERNATIONAL TESTING WEEK 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, advocating for testing in ending HIV and viral hepatitis and emphasizing harm reduction.

o Orange Campaign for Advocacy: The CLT from Myanmar led the Orange Campaign, addressing violence against women and substance use vulnerabilities, successfully raising awareness and advocating for improved treatment access.

This report provides detailed insights into the collective activities and initiatives by our partners and AHRA Secretariat across regions. Individual reports are on file.





Programmatic Narrative (6-Month Period)

During the year 2023, the Country Liaisons & Trainers (CLTs) in Southeast Asia regions worked closely with AHRA's Secretariat Coordinator to implement and organize AHRA's activities in their specific countries. These endeavors aimed at furthering AHRA's core mission, focusing on alleviating harms associated with drug use, such as HIV/AIDS, blood-borne infections, and overdoses, among individuals engaged in drug use or injection, their partners, and the communities affected

Achievements and Milestones

- Program Development and Collaboration Achievements

- o CLT from Myanmar developed the curriculum on the Training of Trainers (ToT) program and conducted the ToT training organized by AHRA. Actively participating with prominent organizations, they enhanced their training skills, focusing on active learning, coaching, and participatory methods.

- o AHRA played a pivotal role in the academic collaboration with Karolinska Institute, contributing to a comprehensive female health survey. Their involvement in design, analysis, and write-up, particularly in Kachin and Shan States, Myanmar, demonstrated a commitment to advancing research for vulnerable populations.

- o CLT from Myanmar collaborated in organizing a successful 3-hour e-Seminar on "Stimulants Use & Overdose Management" for International Overdose Awareness Day 2023. Their efforts in hosting informative sessions and engaging experts highlighted dedication to substance use awareness.

- o AHRA achieved a milestone in establishing academic collaboration with the prestigious Karolinska Institute. This collaboration resulted in a comprehensive female health survey, showcasing AHRA's commitment to evidence-based strategies and interventions.





o AHRA's active participation in the release of a groundbreaking UN High Commissioner for Human Rights report showcased AHRA's commitment to human rights-centric drug policies. The organization played a pivotal role in preparing a global sign-on statement, advocating for a shift towards supportive, rights-affirming responses.

o CLT from Myanmar designed and developed promotional items under the guidance of AHRA's Secretariat Coordinator. AHRA's successful distribution of promotional items and outreach efforts, including welcoming new members, expressing gratitude to donors, and providing materials to key representatives, strengthened the organization's network and visibility. The development of informative factsheets and flyers further contributed to promoting awareness about AHRA's mission and activities.

o In the second quarter of 2023, AHRA achieved a significant milestone by hosting the "Learning Expert 1: Harm Reduction Knowledge and Learning" course in Hanoi, Vietnam. CLT from Myanmar organized that regional training with support from the Secretariat Coordinator and Admin Assistance from AHRN. Generously funded by GFATM, with expert support from the Mainline Foundation, this initiative aimed to enhance international partnerships and build ground-level capacity. Participants immersed themselves in a dynamic learning experience, gaining skills to offer learning opportunities locally and internationally. The flexible curriculum empowered Learning Experts to choose topics tailored to diverse needs, contributing to the growth of harm reduction initiatives and professional development.

o During the same quarter, AHRA marked a significant milestone with the Exchange Visit to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, organized by CLT from Myanmar under the guidance of the Secretariat Coordinator. The event focused on empowering the AHRA Country Liaison Trainers (CLT) Team with tools, knowledge, and strategies for harm reduction support and policy advocacy. Divided into two parts, the visit enhanced individual and collective harm reduction service delivery capacity and facilitated the crafting of tailored harm reduction policy advocacy plans. The collaborative efforts with key organizations emphasized the importance of uniting for progress in harm reduction policy advocacy in Southeast Asia. The insights gained during the visit laid the foundation for effective harm reduction advocacy, showcasing AHRA's commitment to "Learning Together, Adapt, and Adopt."

o Murdo E. Bijl, AHRA's Secretariat Coordinator, played a crucial role in the impactful INTERNATIONAL TESTING WEEK 2023 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Representing AHRA, he emphasized the pivotal role of testing in ending HIV and viral hepatitis, urged action to address the drugs and health crisis, and advocated for prioritizing the voices of harm reduction practitioners and people who use drugs. His valuable insights contributed significantly to the event's success, aligning with AHRA's commitment to improving the health and quality of life for people who use drugs in Southeast Asia.



o In 2023, the impactful Orange Campaign, spearheaded by CLT from Myanmar with support from the Secretariat and enthusiastic participation from all AHRN colleagues, addressed critical issues of violence against women and substance use vulnerabilities. The campaign contributed to the successful global awareness about the rising trend of female substance use, combating stigma and advocating for improved treatment access. It also focused on substance use among adolescents and children, emphasizing early intervention, reproductive health issues, and the social implications of substance use. AHRA Advocacy made significant strides, utilizing the Orange Campaign as a powerful platform for advocacy, education, and mobilization, reaffirming its commitment to creating a world free from violence and substance use-related challenges.

o The Secretariat Coordinator and CLT from Myanmar took the lead in creating a video to spread the word about health and financing challenges in Southeast Asia, especially the drug and health crisis. The video, made with support from the Global Fund and AHRN, talks about AHRA's mission, why harm reduction matters and invites development partners and governments to invest in sustained health-economic programs. It invites people to join us, support AHRA, and make a real impact on saving lives and empowering communities.

o CLT from Myanmar organized, with the Secretariat Coordinator and Finance Officer and hosted by AHRA, a crucial two-day Steering Group and Development Partner meeting in Bangkok, where AHRA's direction and sustainability were discussed. We reviewed what we achieved in the past six months, talked about how to authorize responsibilities, and introduced plans for the future. Thanks to funding from the Global Fund and AHRN, we brought together key people to plan for AHRA's sustainable growth.





This biannual report is a testimony to AHRA's unwavering dedication to addressing the pressing challenges of drug use and associated harms, advocating for evidence-based policies, and fostering global collaboration to create a safer and healthier future for all. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all partners, donors, and stakeholders who have been integral to our achievements. We look forward to continuing this journey of positive change and impact in the years to come.

Summary of Key Achievements

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