

# EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON THE FAMILY

THE DESTRUCTION BEHIND  
QUENCHING THE THIRST

## A.2.5 C1-4-3

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# OVERVIEW

- ▶ Background of alcohol use in Lesotho
- ▶ Alcohol related harm within the family setting
- ▶ Testimonies
- ▶ Presentation of findings from the survey
- ▶ Work NGOs to curb the problems
- ▶ Lesotho alcohol policy
- ▶ Alcohol Policy Alliance of Lesotho
- ▶ Conclusion

# BACKGROUND

- ▣ Alcohol consumption in Lesotho can be traced from back in the ancient era.
- ▣ Initially Basotho brewed fermented drinks with relatively low alcoholic content.
- ▣ Beer and meat were the most valued kinds of Basotho food and people invested in them with positive and healthy attributes
- ▣ Beer was taken after meals by men and it was also used to serve visitors, while soft porridge was reserved for children and women



# BACKGROUND CONTINUED

- ▣ Production of alcohol took place during ploughwing and harvest time and celebrations
- ▣ Alcohol problems started with the commercialization of alcohol
- ▣ New patterns of drinking were introduced to Basotho by those who migrated to the South African Mines and irresponsible drinking began which caused Paramount chief Griffiths to ban alcohol.

# BACKGROUND CONTINUED

- ▣ Alcohol abuse in Lesotho is now quite common and it is the most abused substance in the country.
- ▣ Alcohol abuse and opening of she-been by mothers from poor families has led to the growing number of street children; many of who sniff glue.
- ▣ Alcohol consumption in Lesotho has undergone a major transformation within a very short space of time.

# ALCOHOL RELATED HARM WITHIN A FAMILY SETTING

- ▣ Alcohol is a threat to the health and safety of the abuser and triggers other problems.
- ▣ Alcohol abuse undermines social functioning and in case of married people, alcohol abuse can cause marital conflicts which lead to divorce.
- ▣ As parents go to drink, buy alcohol to fill their fridges, they take little notice of the seed they are putting into the very fertile soil called “a child”

# ALCOHOL RELATED HARM

- ▣ A child listens to his mother, his father, his brother, his sister talking about their thirst and the next moment they see beer instead of water. They learn that beer quenches the thirst.
- ▣ Sometimes a parent comes home tired and thirsty, the fridge is empty, he sends the child, little knowing that it starts with a small innocent action and flows to a big, very big problem within no time a child is delinquent.



# POSTERS IN FAMILIES AND OFFICES

This is what  
happens when  
you drink  
milk  
instead of  
beer!



# ALCOHOL HARM

- ▣ The picture or poster is abusive alcohol advertising in the family and sometimes in offices.
- ▣ This has a very negative effect as no person would like to be like that and to a child the message is received as it is. “NO MORE MILK MAMA, I fear to be like that person.”

# ALCOHOL HARM CONT

- ▣ Babor et.al indicates that drinking patterns that lead to elevated blood alcohol levels result in problems associated with acute intoxication such as accidents, injuries and violence.
- ▣ Literature continues to show that heavy alcohol consumption can result in health problems such as liver cirrhosis, cardio vascular disease and depression. All these affect the functioning of the family negatively.



# SOCIAL HARM

- ▣ Listening to Sabina's story as narrated by raising voices, one gets into a deeper sense of what alcohol abuse does to the functioning of a family.
- ▣ Sabina says "My father died when I was two year old. I lived with my mother, stepfather, stepmother and sister. Older children teased me about my disability. My stepfather would get drunk and abuse me and often refuse to let me eat with the family. Sometimes he beat me badly. My mother wouldn't do much to protect me. I felt like no one loved me. I felt like giving up".



# Social Harm

- ▣ Violence committed by a drunken person is very painful. Sabina and her friends talked about their feelings which have high influence on what they will grow to be.
- ▣ I feel like my heart is paining
- ▣ I feel like revenging
- ▣ I feel so bad but have no option
- ▣ I REGRET THAT I WAS BORN
- ▣ I feel too much anger
- ▣ I feel it's not fair and get so angry. SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE TAKING POISON.

# SOCIAL HARM

- ▣ Alcohol abuse is among the situations that create vulnerability in Basotho herd boys, street children, children out of school and children living in child headed households.
- ▣ Manifestation of this problem is increase in the number of rape cases involving children.
- ▣ It is reported that around 31% of reported rape cases in urban areas of Lesotho involved females between 10 and 19.

# Social Harm

- ▣ In an interview with Correctional officers by the social development, they revealed that it is difficult to link sexual offences with poverty because more than half of the offenders are said to have been from alcohol outlet or at the alcohol outlet and in most cases both the victim and the offender, or one of them were under the influence of alcohol.

# SOCIAL HARM

- ▣ Tomas Babor et al (2010) said alcohol accounts for approximately 4% of deaths worldwide and 4.6 of the global burden injury and disease. They also emphasize that alcohol consumption is a risk factor for a wide range of social problems such as divorce, child abuse, family dysfunction and domestic violence.



# Economic impact

- ▣ Alcohol costs a lot of money and drinkers may start to use money that should be spent on food and other household equipment, education and health to buy drinks. One of the survey interviewees said “ people who drink are selfish, my husband takes the last M10.00 in the house to spend it alone at the she-been on alcohol” .

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

- ▣ Drinkers may get so desperate for money for alcohol that they can sell family possessions or even have sex with people in exchange for alcohol.
- ▣ A study reported by a lead author of an article in *Globe* issue #1 of 2013 reveals that 12 months of treatment, family costs directly related to family member's alcoholism decreased from an average of 20.2% to 4.3% of the total pre tax family income.

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

- ▣ Dr Salize says among 48 families under study, two of the largest family expenditures directly related to dependence were for alcoholic beverages averaging US\$310.29/month. 12 months into treatment, the costs had reduced to US\$ 86.92/month.
- ▣ Other effects included in my paper are emotional damage, violence, crime, Accidents, Child-headed households and setting bad example.

# EXPERIENCES/TESTIMONIES OF EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL ON THE FAMILY

- ▣ “I am a recovered alcoholic. My school days used to be very fruitful. I never forgot what was taught in class; as a result I used to be a brilliant student. At an early stage of my drinking, I started forgetting some of the important things. As my drinking increased, my sense of memory declined a lot”. My reputation is very bad due to my heavy drinking and smoking. I used to be dated by different men. I first did it for getting more drink and keeping company in the pubs.



# TESTIMONY- RETHABILE

- ▣ Even though I am a recovered alcoholic, it will take time to rebuild my image”. My teen age period was promising as I was one of the beautiful girls both at school and in the village. Alcoholism and tobacco have spoiled my beauty. The following are the examples of the changes:
  - ▣ My eyes are red
  - ▣ My face is dark and scared
  - ▣ My skin is dry

# TESTIMONY CONT.

- ▣ My tongue has changed color (it has black spots as well as my lips).
- ▣ Hangover anxiety is very dangerous. I once got into a terrible accident because of it. I drank the whole night at a friend's party and slept for few hours in the morning before taking off to Swaziland. Unfortunately my car collided with another one at a Conner not far from home. I got a fractured femur which led to my limping problem.

# TESTIMONY CONTINUED

- ▣ I used to neglect my husband and my child. I would sleep at the taverns while my husband was baby-sitting. Sometimes I would go bankrupt so much that I would not even buy enough grocery for my family and this was a torture to my child who realized that I spent a lot of money on beer. Thus I always feel very guilty and pray my Lord god to pardon me”.

- ▣ “My husband died while we were on separation. The main reason for our separation was my over-drinking which resulted in my irresponsibility as a married woman and a mother. I did not perform my duties as required by society. Alcoholism leads to poverty”. Rethabile said with tears close to fall from her chick. “I worked as a teacher for more than twenty years, but I could not save even a cent because I spent money in buying beer for my friends and myself. My poor husband saved some money for me. I withdrew all of it from the bank after his death. I spent all that money in she-been and expensive bars and restaurants with my friends. MY CHILD WAS LEFT BEHIND.



# Testimony cont.

- ▣ Rethabile said relations with her family members are not healthy. “ Despite stigmatization, they hated my over -drinking. Some community members also despise me because whenever I was drunk, my character changed to INSULTS, RUDENESS, AND LACK OF RESPECT. The heaviest blow is my HIV status. I cannot tell where and when I got it as I was careless in my life due to excessive drinking. I was involved with many partners due to my drinking problem. I practiced unsafe sex” .

# TESTIMONY CONT

- ▣ Rethabile took her pen down as she was writing this story for me to include in the Peer Educators training Manual With a big sigh she continues to say: “My child suffers from bronchitis and frequent flu as I used to smoke and drink while I was expectant. She sometimes lies unnecessarily. One may detect that this was caused by imitation. She imitated me as I was always lying to her father whenever I was drunk. Most people have lost trust in me because of my heavy drinking. They do not even believe that I have recovered. Example of such is my maiden family and my in-laws”.

# Has the functioning of the family been affected by any one's drinking in the family

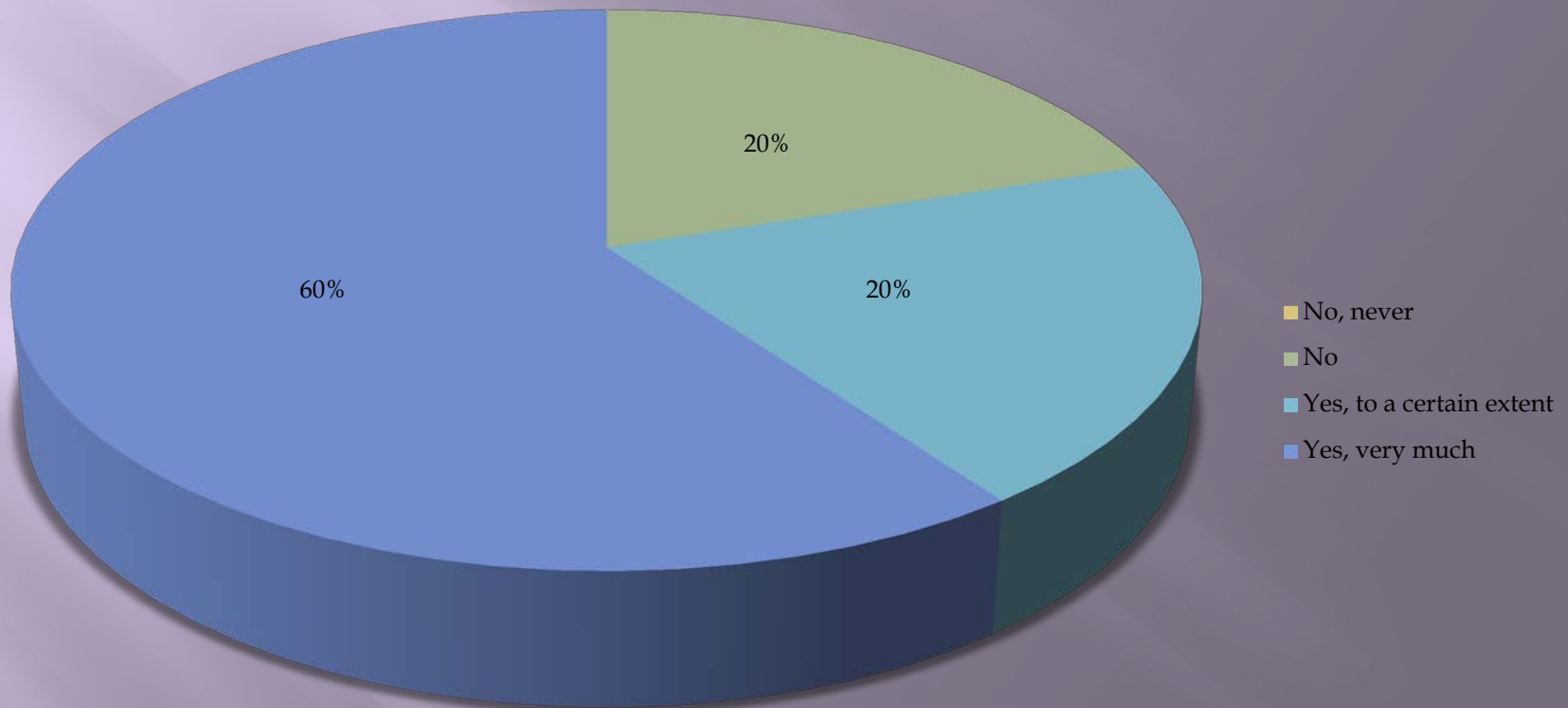
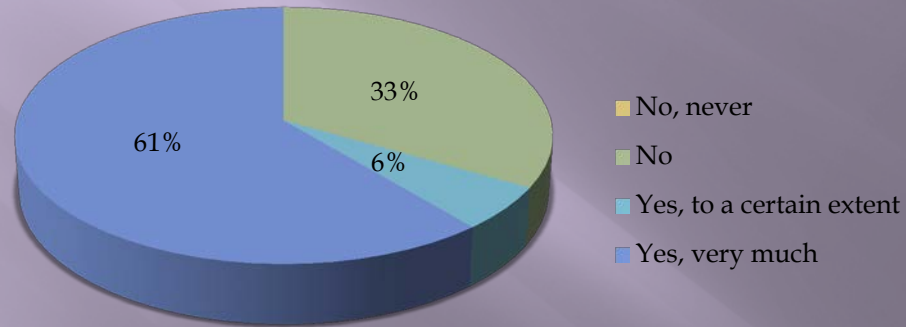
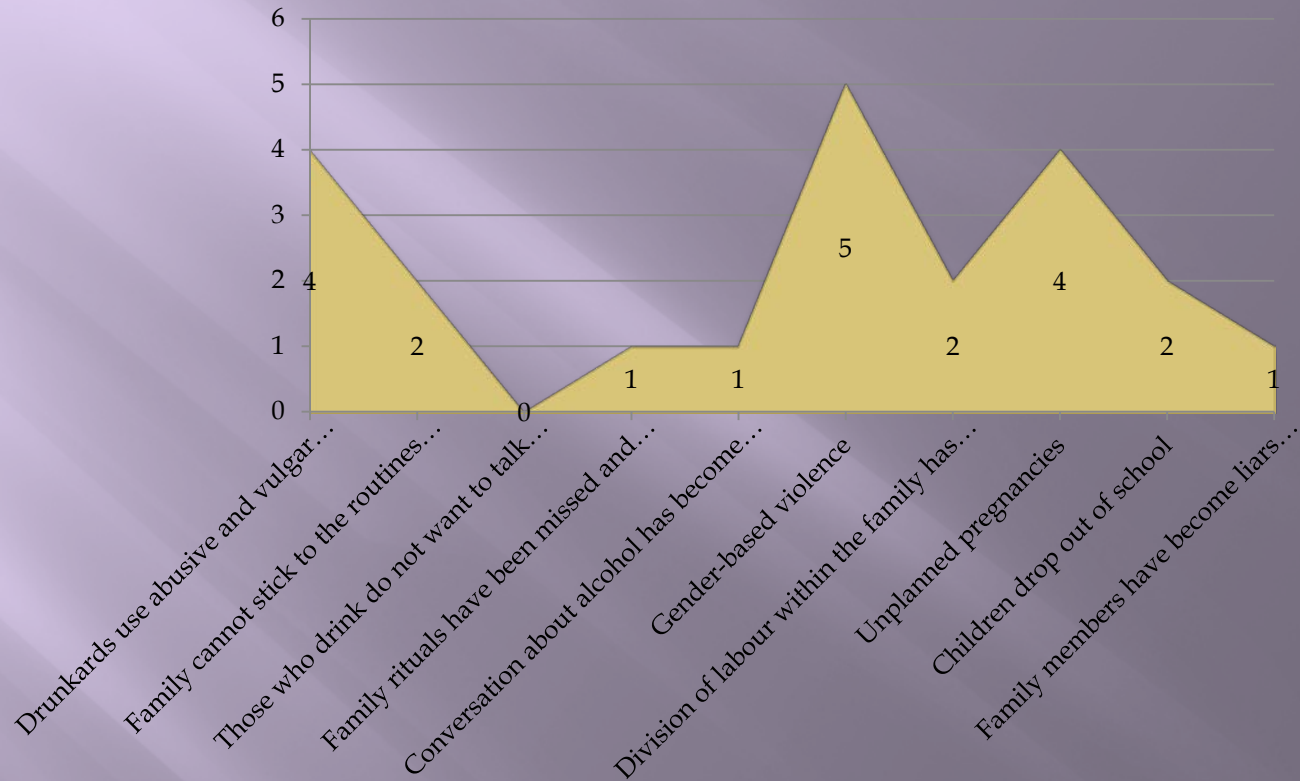


FIGURE 57: HAS THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FAMILY BEEN AFFECTED BY ANYONE'S DRINKING (KHUTSONG SEKAMANENG)?

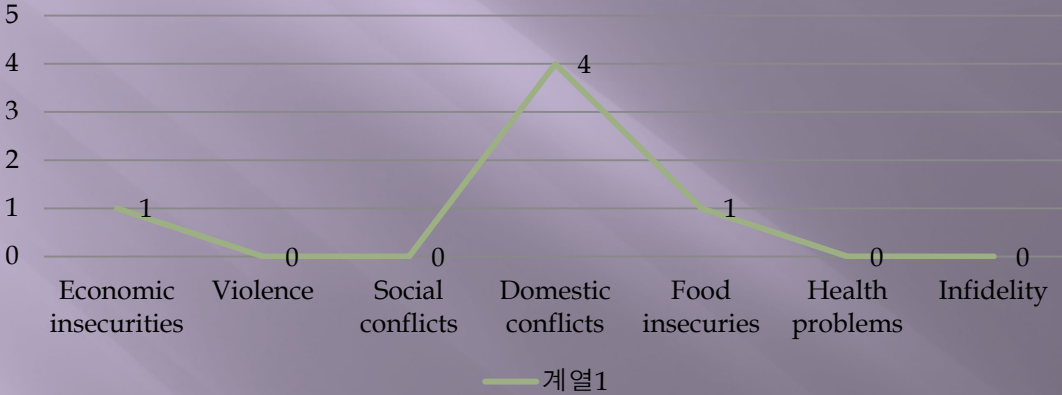




# Ways in which families have been affected in Khutsong Sekamangeng



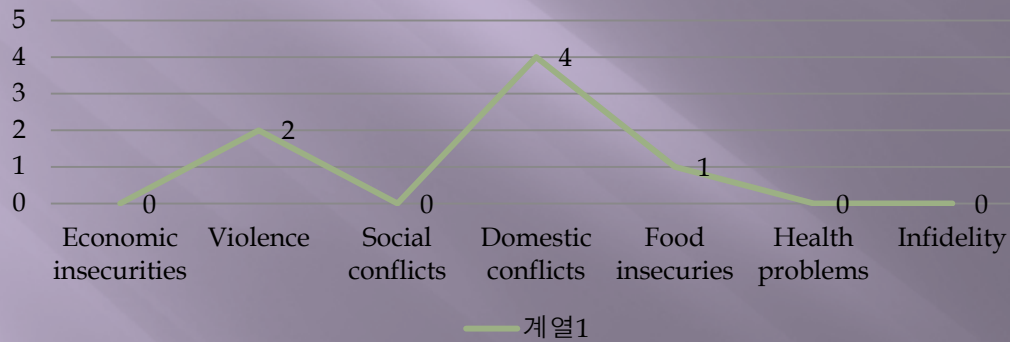
# alcohol related problems experienced by respondents: T. Bosiu



## Alcohol related problems experienced by respondents: Mt. Moorosi

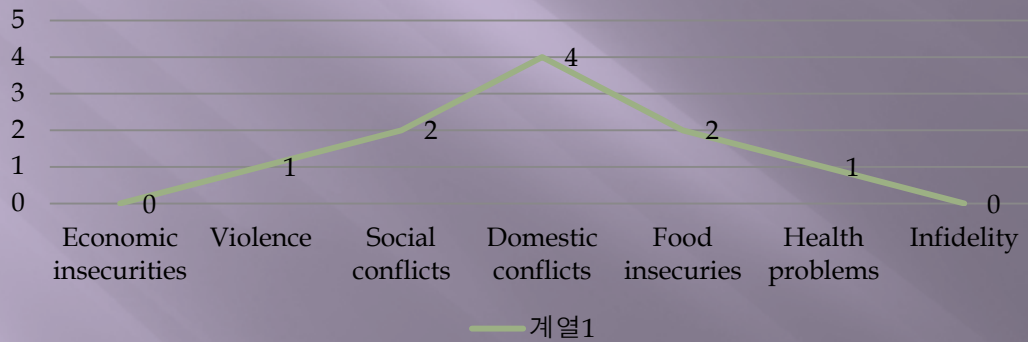


## Alcohol related problems experienced by respondents, Motsekuoa Teachers





## Alcohol related problems experienced by respondents, Khutsong Sekamaneng

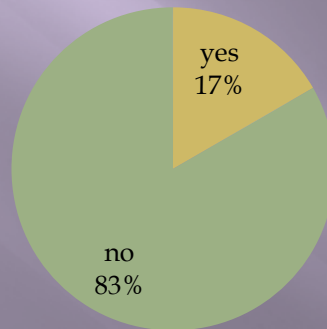


## Alcohol related problems experienced by respondents, Rivers of Life

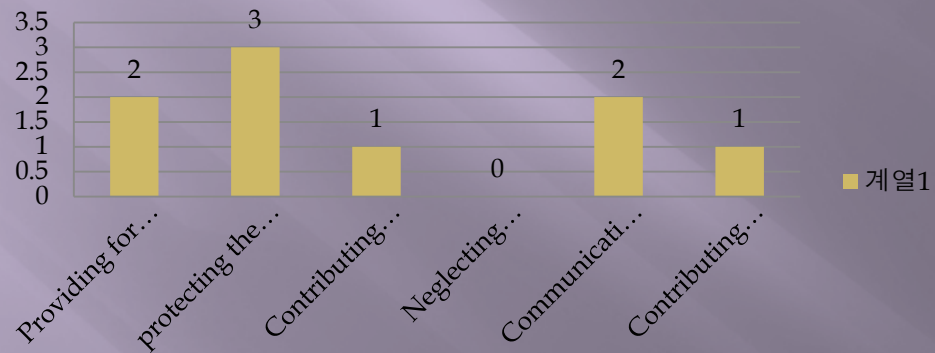


# MOUNT MOOROSI

**does drinking affect our roles in  
the family**



## Mt. Moorosi Respondents' domestic roles affected by drinking





# FINDINGS

- ▣ Using abusive language is the most common way that the abuser has affected the family members.
- ▣ Gender based violence is second
- ▣ Unplanned pregnancies and
- ▣ Schools drop outs
- ▣ The respondents' drinking affected their families through:
  - ❖ Domestic violence 16
  - ❖ Social conflicts 9
  - ❖ Violence and 5
  - ❖ Food insecurity

# NEGLECTED ROLES

- ▣ Providing for the family
- ▣ Communicating with family members
- ▣ Failure to contribute to family plans

# WORK OF NGOs TO CURB THE PROBLEM

- ▣ BLUE CROSS TBC
  - ❖ Treatment of people with alcohol problems through individual counselling, group therapy, family therapy, clients follow-up system, and occupational therapy
- ▣ BLUE CROSS TBC
  - ❖ Prevention through activities with youth, women groups, Income Generating Activities, Child development Programme and Radio programmes.

# WORK OF NGOs CONT.

- ▣ ADAAL
  - ❖ Anti smoking campaigns in 21 schools in the 3 districts
  - ❖ HIV prevention and Anti drug abuse programme in 31 schools
  - ❖ OVC Education Support programme in 20 schools
- ▣ Out of school and In-school ADAAL abstinence clubs in 30 schools
- ▣ Trainings of Peer Educators and Focal teachers
- ▣ Livelihood support programmes to 10 vulnerable households

# ADAAL WORK CONTINUED

- ▣ Establishment of parents groups in 6 councils of Mafeteng
- ▣ Establishment of Youth centre in Mount Moorosi



# ADAAL FUTURE PLANS

- ▣ Build new partnerships
- ▣ Resource mobilisation for future programmes
- ▣ Establishment of family clubs through house to house visits in selected areas
- ▣ Parent education (ICDP) with TBC
- ▣ Participation in APAL advocacy work

# LESOTHO ALCOHOL POLICY

- ▣ Passed in 2007
- ▣ Reviewed and replaced by the current draft with the following priority areas for action:
  - ❖ Leadership, awareness and commitment
  - ❖ Increasing Community action and support
  - ❖ Strengthening public education and awareness
  - ❖ Health Sector response
  - ❖ Ensuring public safety and amenity
  - ❖ Marketing of alcoholic beverages

# LESOTHO NATIONAL ALCOHOL POLICY CONT.

- ▣ Illegally and informally produced alcohol
- ▣ Monitoring and surveillance

# ALCOHOL POLICY ALLIANCE OF LESOTHO

- ▣ Established in 2012 as a network
- ▣ Membership include LCN health and Social Development Commission member NGOs, Blue Cross, ADAAL, Phela Health Communications and Kick4Life
- ▣ 24 members trained on developing advocacy messages by Savera, the Soul City advocate and President of SAAPA
- ▣ Funded by BCN to undertake a six months advocacy work for approval and translation into law of the policy

# PROGRESS SO FAR

- ▣ Meetings with Health to establish the location of the policy
- ▣ Media messages development, radio and TV presentations
- ▣ Conduct documentary alcohol availability survey. Completed three districts.
- ▣ Start mass campaigns once the video is out.
- ▣ Conduct meetings with the Parliamentarians to show case
- ▣ Evaluate the programme



# CONCLUSION

- ▣ Alcohol indeed has adverse effects on the normal function of the family.
- ▣ Evidence based policies and their strict enforcement require multi sectoral approach
- ▣ Implementation of the WHO strategy for reduction of the harmful use of alcohol.
- ▣ Support to NGOs to maximize their efforts, increase coverage and provide high quality prevention activities that directly addresses the problem from the source.

# CONCLUSION

- ▣ Need to strengthen advocacy networks for effective result based advocacy programmes.
- ▣ Support and strengthen research for evidence based programming.



