

## Success Story

### From Understanding Dependency to Strengthening Outreach and Service Delivery

Training: Understanding Drug Use and Harm Reduction – From Dependency to Policy Advocacy

Date: 14 November 2025 | Online

Implemented by: AHRA in collaboration with KHANA

On 14 November 2025, the Southeast Asia Harm Reduction Association (AHRA), in collaboration with KHANA, conducted a three-hour online training titled “Understanding Drug Use and Harm Reduction from Dependency to Policy Advocacy.” The training aimed to strengthen participants’ understanding of drug use, dependency, mental health, and harm reduction practices, while linking these to community outreach and policy advocacy.

For participants, the training was both important and practical, combining new knowledge with real-life experience that could be applied immediately in their work.

*“This training was very important for me. I gained knowledge and experience that I can now use in my work. I am able to share information about drug use, mental health, and harm reduction services with key populations during outreach.”*

— Participant, Cambodia

Participants noted that the sessions helped them better explain the consequences of drug use, available harm reduction services, and how key populations can access mental health support in the community.

The topics that stood out most were those related to mental health, family support, and accurate drug information, which participants found highly relevant for outreach work.

***“I especially liked the topics on mental health, family support, and drug information. These topics are very useful for outreach in the community.”***

The training significantly strengthened participants’ understanding of drug use and dependency, particularly in relation to the lived realities of key populations. Participants shared that they now better understand how dependency affects daily life and how to respond with appropriate support.

*“I now understand drug dependency better and the situation faced by key populations. I am more comfortable working with people who use drugs and referring them to harm reduction and mental health services.”*

The session also helped participants reframe drug use through a health and care lens, reducing fear and stigma. This was especially important given the broader social stressors affecting communities, including cross-border tensions between Thailand and Cambodia, where mental health support is increasingly needed.

As a result of the training, participants reported practical changes in their work. They are now more confident engaging with people who use drugs and supporting access to services.



*“Before the training, I was afraid of people who use drugs. Now I can work with them better, and I feel confident supporting STI, HIV, and SRHR testing and services.”*

This success story demonstrates how AHRA and KHANA are strengthening frontline outreach capacity by combining harm reduction knowledge, mental health awareness, and practical service delivery skills.