

## Success Story



*"I also learned how to be a good listener during counselling, communicate more politely, avoid stigma, and make clients feel comfortable. This motivates them to access services such as HIV testing."*

## Building Advocacy Confidence through International Drug Policy Knowledge

Training: International Drug Policy Frameworks and Advocacy for Harm Reduction

Date: 17 November 2025 | Online

Implemented by: AHRA & KHANA | Supported by Open Society Foundations

On 17 November 2025, AHRA and KHANA jointly delivered an online training on "International Drug Policy Frameworks and Advocacy for Harm Reduction." The training aimed to enhance understanding of international drug laws and strengthen advocacy skills for harm reduction among community and outreach workers.

For many participants, this was their first opportunity to learn about international drug policy frameworks and how these shape national laws and local practice.

*"After the training, I gained knowledge about drug laws. Before, I did not know about these laws and only saw people who use drugs as being criminalized or forced into treatment."*

— Participant, Cambodia

Participants shared that they can now use this policy knowledge directly during outreach, explaining drug laws, prevention approaches, and harm reduction methodologies to key populations in a clearer and more informed way.

*"Now I can use this information during outreach and explain prevention and harm reduction methods to key populations."*

One participant emphasized that the training strengthened her ability to work more effectively with local authorities and protect communities.

*"I now understand the process of working with people who use drugs and how to deal with local authorities. I feel more confident during outreach and better able to protect the community from police arrest."*

The training also helped participants connect international policies with local challenges, particularly through policy dialogue. Participants highlighted the importance of engaging local authorities and policymakers to address policy gaps and service gaps, especially around the integration of mental health into harm reduction services.

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*"The training helped us discuss challenges with policymakers, especially the need to integrate mental health into harm reduction services."*

Confidentiality and access, especially for needle and syringe programs (NSP) were identified as critical issues for improving community trust and service uptake.

Beyond policy knowledge, participants also reported improvements in counselling and communication skills, which strengthened service delivery.

*"I learned about the consequences of drug use and its impact on mental health. I can now use this knowledge for community education, especially related to HIV infection and drug use."*

This success story highlights how AHRA and KHANA are equipping outreach workers with both policy knowledge and interpersonal skills, enabling them to advocate effectively, protect communities, and strengthen access to harm reduction and HIV services.