Gaps in current regional alcohol policy and the desire for change: Opportunities for Caribbean Civil Society Organizations.

Dr. Rohan Maharaj
Unit of Public Health and Primary Care, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine
The Healthy Caribbean Coalition

www.healthycaribbean.org
The Healthy Caribbean Coalition is a civil society alliance established to combat chronic diseases (NCDs) and their associated risk factors and conditions.

Mission
To harness the power of civil society, in collaboration with government, private enterprise, academia, and international partners, as appropriate, in the development and implementation of plans for the prevention and management of chronic diseases among Caribbean people.

http://www.healthycaribbean.org/about_us.html
OUTLINE

• WHO Global Strategy
• Regional policy (2014)
• National Alcohol Household Survey (NASHTT)
• The Way Forward and Discussion
Before we go any further...

- **Policy** - A course of action or principle adopted or proposed by a government or other organization, that is advantageous or expedient.

- Science and evidence may create policy but emotion and politics determine whether anything is done.
WHO Global Strategy
WHO global strategy: The 4 priority areas for global action are:

1. Public health advocacy and partnership;
2. Technical support and capacity building;
3. Production and dissemination of knowledge;

WHO global strategy: 10 key areas of policy options and interventions at the national level

1. Leadership, awareness and commitment
2. Health services' response*
3. Community action
4. Drink-driving policies and countermeasures*
5. Availability of alcohol*
6. Marketing of alcoholic beverages*
7. Pricing policies*
8. Reducing the negative consequences of drinking and alcohol intoxication*
9. Reducing the public health impact of illicit alcohol and informally produced alcohol
10. Monitoring and surveillance

* WHO Best Buy

Reducing risks and preventing disease: population-wide interventions

A **best buy** is an intervention that is not only highly cost-effective but also cheap, feasible and culturally acceptable to implement.

Regional policy (2014)
All ESC countries have laws and policies governing alcohol. Broadly, there are 4 distinct ways in which alcohol is represented.

1. In legislation- not directly dealing with health, but with a social and economic focus
2. As a distinct national policy- recognizing the health implications of alcohol
3. In conjunction with NCDs and mental health policies
4. In conjunction with policies addressing illegal substance use
**ALCOHOL POLICY: ESC (WHO, 2014)**

| National Policies, Monitoring, Taxes, Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) | ANB | BAH | BAR | BLZE | DOM | GDA | GUY | JAM | SKN | SL | SVG | TTO |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Written national policy (adopted/revised)/National Action Plan 1 | No/- | Yes (1932/2006)/No | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- | No/- |
| National government support for community action 2 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| National monitoring system(s) 3 | No | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | No | No |
| Excise tax on beer / wine / spirits (WHO best buys) 4,5,6 | No/No/No | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/No/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/No/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes | Yes/Yes/Yes |
| National maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) when driving a vehicle (general/young/professional) 7 | No/No/No | 0.08% 0.08% | No/No/No | 0.08% 0.08% | No/No/No | 0.08% 0.08% | No/No/No | 0.08% 0.08% | No/No/No | 0.08% 0.08% | No/No/No | 0.08% 0.08% |

## ALCOHOL POLICY: ESC (WHO, 2014)

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<th>ANB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Age interactions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>National legal minimum age for off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits)</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>18/18</td>
<td>18/18</td>
<td>18/18</td>
<td>16/16</td>
<td>16/16</td>
<td>16/16</td>
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<tr>
<td>National legal minimum age for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits)</td>
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<td>18/18</td>
<td>18/18</td>
<td>16/16</td>
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<td>18/18</td>
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<td>18/18</td>
<td>16/16</td>
<td>16/16</td>
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ALCOHOL POLICY: Retail outlets
ESC (WHO, 2014)

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<tr>
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<th>ANB</th>
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<th>BLZE</th>
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<th>TTO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restrictions for on-/off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages:</strong> (WHO best buys)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time (hours and days) / location (places and density), 10,11,12, 13</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>No, No/Yes, No</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/No, Yes</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/No, Yes</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/No, Yes</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/No, Yes</td>
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<td>Yes, Yes/No, Yes</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>Yes, Yes/Yes, Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific events / intoxicated persons / petrol stations 14,15,16</td>
<td>Yes/Yes/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>Yes/Yes/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>No/No/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>No/No/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>Yes/Yes/No, Yes</td>
<td>No/No/Yes, Yes</td>
<td>Yes/Yes/No, Yes</td>
<td>No/No/Yes, Yes</td>
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# ALCOHOL POLICY: ESC (WHO, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advertising, Marketing and Labeling</th>
<th>ANB</th>
<th>BAH</th>
<th>BAR</th>
<th>BLZE</th>
<th>DOM</th>
<th>GDA</th>
<th>GUY</th>
<th>JAM</th>
<th>SKN</th>
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<th>SVG</th>
<th>TTO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legally binding regulations on alcohol advertising / product placement <em>(WHO best buys), 17,18</em></td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>Yes/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>Yes/ Yes</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legally binding regulations on alcohol sponsorship / sales promotion <em>(WHO best buys) 19, 20</em></td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>Yes/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
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<td>No/ No</td>
<td>Yes/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legally requiring health labels on alcohol advertisements/containers, 21</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
<td>No/ No</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>MAXIMUM</th>
<th>REGIONAL SCORE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written national policy (written/revised)/National Action Plan 1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National government support for community action</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10 (83.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National monitoring system(s) 3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4 (33.3%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excise tax on beer / wine / spirits (CORE WHO Best Buys) 4,5,6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29 (81%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>National legal minimum age for off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (selling) (IDEAL=18 years) 7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National legal minimum age for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (serving) (IDEAL=18 years) 8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7 (58%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions for on-/off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages: (CORE WHO best buys)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>48 (57%)</td>
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<td>Time (hours and days) / location (places and density) 9, 10, 11, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific events / intoxicated persons / petrol stations 13, 14, 15</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>National maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) when driving a vehicle (A Good Buy)16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7 (58%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legally binding regulations on alcohol advertising / product placement (CORE WHO Best Buys) 17, 18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4 (17%)</td>
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<td>Legally binding regulations on alcohol sponsorship / sales promotion (CORE WHO Best Buys) 19, 20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 (8.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legally requiring health labels on alcohol advertisements/containers 21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>252</td>
<td>119 (47.1%)</td>
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</table>
## ALCOHOL POLICY: ESC (WHO, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Policy/Government support/National Monitoring System</th>
<th>ANB</th>
<th>BAH</th>
<th>BAR</th>
<th>BLZE</th>
<th>DOM</th>
<th>GDA</th>
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<th>JAM</th>
<th>SKN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>3/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
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<td>2/3</td>
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<td>0/3</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excise tax on beer / wine / spirits (WHO best buys)</th>
<th>0/3</th>
<th>3/3</th>
<th>3/3</th>
<th>0/3</th>
<th>3/3</th>
<th>3/3</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National legal minimum age for off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (selling)</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National legal minimum age for on-premise sales of alcoholic beverages (serving)</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Restrictions for on-/off-premise sales of alcoholic beverages: (WHO best buys)</th>
<th>5/7</th>
<th>7/7</th>
<th>2/7</th>
<th>2/7</th>
<th>5/7</th>
<th>4/7</th>
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<th>1/7</th>
<th>7/7</th>
<th>4/7</th>
<th>2/7</th>
<th>5/7</th>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National maximum legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) when driving a vehicle</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
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<th>0/1</th>
<th>1/1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legally binding regulations on alcohol advertising / product placement (WHO best buys)</th>
<th>0/2</th>
<th>2/2</th>
<th>0/2</th>
<th>0/2</th>
<th>0/2</th>
<th>0/2</th>
<th>0/2</th>
<th>2/2</th>
<th>0/2</th>
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</thead>
</table>

| Legally binding regulations on alcohol sponsorship / sales promotion (WHO best buys) | 0/2 | 1/2 | 0/2 | 0/2  | 0/2 | 0/2 | 0/2 | 0/2 | 0/2 | 1/2 | 0/2 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legally requiring health labels on alcohol advertisements/containers</th>
<th>0/1</th>
<th>0/1</th>
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National Alcohol Survey of Households in Trinidad and Tobago (NASHTT)
National Alcohol Survey of Households in Trinidad and Tobago (NASHTT), 2013

• Survey of 1695 HH to determine effect of alcohol on the psychological and social fabric of the HH
• HHs willingness to support a national campaign to change alcohol regulations, advertisements and other policies.
  – 53 enumeration districts
  – Experienced enumerators from government’s CSO
  – Interviewer applied *de novo* instrument developed over an 18 month period with input from sociologist, public health practitioners, epidemiologist, psychiatrist, family physicians and statistician; pre-tested.
  – 92% response rate
Domains

- Density of outlets
- Availability
- Advertising
- Adolescent issues
- Music
- Labeling and retail sales
- Drunk driving
- Public education
- Taxation
How many bars or rumshops are there within walking distance of your home?

**Outlet Density**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of bars within walking distance of HH</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Three</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bars, Rumshops and impact on Neighbourhoods in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Outlet Density**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>DK/NR (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HH member annoyed by number of bars in neighbourhood</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH members would like to see fewer bars in neighbourhood</td>
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<tr>
<td>HH members disturbed by noise from bars</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HH members disturbed by patrons of bars</td>
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</table>
Reduce opening hours of bars and rumshops. 

**Availability**

- Yes: 37.60%
- No: 62.40%
Which of the following changes regarding alcohol do you believe members of this HH will support in a national campaign?

**Advertising**

- Ban all alcohol advertisements on TV/Radio/Newspapers/Cinema
- Ban all alcohol advertisements at cultural or sporting events
- Restrict alcohol advertisements on TV/Radio/Newspapers/Cinema

![Bar chart showing support percentages for each option]
Which of the following changes regarding alcohol do you believe members of this HH will support in a national campaign?

**Adolescent Issues**

- Advocating for proof of age to be shown before alcohol is sold

- Set the legal age for drinking at 21 years
Which of the following changes regarding alcohol do you believe members of this HH will support in a national campaign?

**Music**

Ban of songs on radio with reference to alcohol use

![Bar Graph]

- **Yes (%):** 100%
- **No (%):** 0%
Which of the following changes regarding alcohol do you believe members of this HH will support in a national campaign?

**Labeling and Retail Sales**

- More prominent labels on products displaying harmful effects of alcohol
- More prominent labels displaying alcohol concentration
- Holding sellers of alcohol responsible for amount of alcohol they sell to patrons

![Bar chart showing support percentages for each option]
Which of the following changes regarding alcohol do you believe members of this HH will support in a national campaign?

**Drunk Driving and Public Education**

- Stricter and more intensive enforcement of breathalyzer use
- Increased fines for drunk driving
- Increased public education campaign on responsible alcohol use

![Bar chart showing support levels for different alcohol changes](chart.png)
Which of the following changes regarding alcohol do you believe members of this HH will support in a national campaign?

**Taxation**

- Increased taxation on alcohol

**Bar Chart:**
- Yes (%)
- No (%)

Graph showing the percentage of support for increased taxation on alcohol.
The Way Forward for Civil Society in ESC
Gaps and Opportunities

- A comprehensive regional policy on alcohol
- Advertisement and Marketing
- DUI and driver’s license suspension
- Zero tolerance to youth drinking and driving
Opportunities

• Case studies and sharing of best practices - The Bahamas, St. Kitts/Nevis

• Follow up
  – *That public revenue derived from... alcohol ....should be employed....for preventing chronic NCDs, promoting health and supporting the work of the NCD Commissions
  – Belize meeting outcomes
Recommendations

- Be cognizant of the historical failures of overzealousness.
- Be conscious of the historical intertwining of our societies and alcohol production, trade and contribution to societal development.....
Caribbean Civil Society Work Plan: Short term

• Short working session for members of English speaking Caribbean at the PANNAPH and other regional forums
• Consolidate interest of 1st regional meeting (Belize).
• Examine gaps identified- e.g. POS declaration
• Encourage strengthening of enforcement of existing regulations and laws
• Establish working relationships with other CSOs, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs with interest in alcohol policy
  – Survey these organizations regarding priority areas (evidence-based) for possible intervention
  – Commission short public opinion polls in region as to feasibility of support for these priority areas
Short to medium term

• In recognition of CARICOM’s stated acknowledgement of alcohol as a risk factor for NCDs and CARICOM’s leadership on NCDs globally
  – Establish lines of communication with CARICOM, CMOs, and Heads of government at CARICOM meetings
  – Consider developing a regional alcohol policy

• Establish lines of communication with members of government, government Ministers and governmental organizations, statutory bodies, and government Ministries
  – Explore feasibility of support for identified priority areas
Medium to long term

• Work with governments and regional bodies to implement new regulations or laws pertinent to priority areas.
• Resume process

A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON ALCOHOL CONTROL (FCAC)
Final thoughts

• Regionally there are clear gaps in the policy landscape around alcohol
• The intertwining of culture, economic interests, political lethargy and public acceptance make change difficult but not impossible
• UWIs recent national survey in T&T suggests that many households are amenable to change
• There are clear opportunities for CSO to advocate for new policy, strengthen old ones and prepare society for change.

www.healthycaribbean.org
If you produce cars, it does not mean you need to drive fast, and you still have speed limits;

If you produce rum....
Selected Bibliography