

WHERE

- Research in **South Africa**: Khayelitsa, Klipfontein and Riebeeck Kasteel/Riebeeck West (Western Cape)
- Atteridgeville, Ga-Rankuwa and Olievenhoutbosch (Gauteng)
- Research in **Botswana**: Gaborone, Tlokweng and Francistown

TIMELINE

A 5-year project:

- Year 1:** Establish international and community advisory panels
- Years 1-2:** Fieldwork
- Years 2-5:** Data analysis, capacity building, community and policy workshops, and research translation
- Ongoing:** Capacity building, PhD and Master's training, skills transfer

Partner with us to drive meaningful change.

Contact & Partners

- ✉ chase-saproject@uct.ac.za
- ☎ 021 650 4909
- 🌐 <https://health.uct.ac.za/school-public-health/divisions/public-health-medicine>

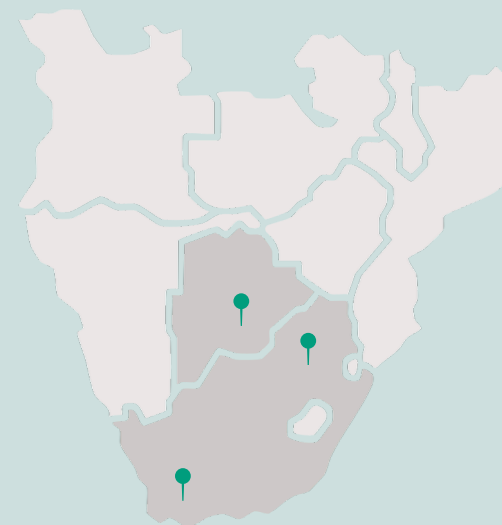


CHASE SA

Collaboration for Harm Reduction and Alcohol Safety
in the Environment in Southern Africa

HARMFUL ALCOHOL USE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

A Multi-Disciplinary Research Project Understanding
the Alcohol Environment & How Effective
Intervention Can Reduce Harm



Why this Research Matters

▶ THE CHALLENGE

Harmful alcohol use is a **major public health issue** globally, including in South Africa (SA), Botswana and other African countries.

It leads to:



⚠️ WHAT'S DRIVING THE PROBLEM?

The **alcohol industry** drives consumption and harm. In many **high-income countries**, stricter regulation has led to a reduction in drinking. In response, the industry seeks profit in **low- and middle-income countries**, where there are market opportunities and policies are weaker and harms greater.

Expansion into Africa, with South Africa as a gateway, is a **deliberate strategy**.

👤 WHAT INFLUENCES ALCOHOL USE?

Many factors shape alcohol use, including:

- Availability and affordability
- Social norms and beliefs
- Drinking locations and types of alcohol
- National alcohol policies and enforcement
- Marketing

However, understanding the drivers of harmful alcohol use is complex.

INDUSTRY INFLUENCE



Although harms are well known, the industry **emphasises economic benefits** like job creation to shape policy in its favour, while **downplaying the harms and costs** of alcohol to society.

📉 LESSON FROM COVID-19

South Africa's **COVID-19** alcohol sale bans **revealed** the scale of alcohol-related harm, with **immediate drops in injuries and deaths**. But these gains triggered strong pushback from the industry.

Similarly, in Botswana, the industry undermined messages about alcohol harms.



2019



Lockdown (April–May 2020) 47.7% decrease

Injury related deaths, Western Cape

Source:
<https://www.samajournals.co.za/index.php/samj/article/view/372>

About the Project

💡 A WINDOW FOR CHANGE

These events create a rare **opportunity for policy reform**.

South Africa is a battleground between:

- Alcohol industry influence
- Civil society actors (academics, faith, and community groups)

⚠️ *There's an **urgent need** to understand policy resistance and how to **support change**.*

🎯 AIMS & IMPACT

- ✓ **Understand** the alcohol environment
- ✓ Build a strong, **objective evidence** base
- ✓ **Co-create solutions** with communities and decision-makers
- ✓ Influence policy to **reduce alcohol harm** across Southern Africa

HOW WE WILL DO IT

The research will be done in **4 stages**:

1 EXAMINE LAWS, POLICIES AND INDUSTRY STRATEGIES

To synthesize global and local laws & policies that shape alcohol environments, and identify policy gaps to inform potential solutions.



2 DESCRIBE THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Explore where and how people in South Africa and Botswana buy and drink alcohol, and how this shapes drinking behavior. Methods include mapping outlets, observing drinking environments, household surveys and interviewing vendors, drinkers, and non-drinkers.



3 ASSESS HEALTH IMPACTS

Use existing and new data to understand how drinking patterns affect health. Mathematical models will estimate the impact of potential policies and interventions on harm and alcohol sales.



4 HARNESS COMMUNITY VOICES & CO-PRODUCE SOLUTIONS

Co-create an understanding of alcohol related problems and solutions with communities and policy stakeholders in SA and Botswana to support alcohol policy reform.



Stage 1–3: Map the alcohol environment and identify **evidence-based solutions**.

Findings will inform **Stage 4**, which focuses on **co-creating solutions** with **communities & policymakers**.