

# FACT SHEET

## Alcohol Marketing in Uganda Findings of the MAMPA project

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### Introduction

In 2010 the African regional office of the World Health Organization commissioned the Dutch Institute for Alcohol Policy and EUCAM (the European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing) to set up a pilot study to monitor alcohol marketing in African countries. This resulted in the MAMPA project. MAMPA stands for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing Project Africa and is conceived to study alcohol marketing on the African continent as well as to build capacity among national governments and NGOs in installing effective alcohol marketing policies to protect young people against the harmful effects of exposure to alcohol marketing. In the spring of 2010, the first phase of the MAMPA project began by monitoring alcohol marketing activities in the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda. An important aim of the project was to develop a method to monitor alcohol marketing in low-income countries. This Fact sheet provides an overview of the situation concerning alcohol and alcohol marketing in the Gambia as well as the findings of the the MAMPA monitoring exercise in Uganda.

### Existing Regulations

In Uganda, the advertising of alcohol is not regulated at the moment. The draft alcohol policy in Uganda relies fully on self regulation without a framework of legislation. The National Alcohol Policy being discussed is almost identical to the proposed policy in Ghana.

### Alcohol in Uganda

According to figures of the WHO, Uganda is the highest drinking country in the world, with annually 19.47 liters of alcohol consumed per capita in Uganda, and another 10.7 liters of 'unrecorded' non-industrially brewed alcohol are consumed per capita (1). The most consumed alcoholic beverage is wine, followed by beer (1). Both breweries and distillers are very active in the country. Leading breweries are Uganda Breweries Ltd and Nile Breweries, which are owned by global alcohol companies (2). Uganda Breweries is owned for 98.2% by East African Breweries Ltd, which is controlled by Diageo (3). Nile Breweries is majority owned by SAB-Miller (4), world's second largest brewery.

One of the largest distillers is International Distillers Uganda Limited which is owned completely by East African Breweries Ltd and thus controlled by Diageo. This company for example distributes products of the brands Smirnoff and Bond7. Additionally, there are over 20 national spirit distillers that produce a large variety of spirits (5).



Figure 1: Editorial in Women magazine

### Alcohol marketing in Magazines and Newspapers

The 12 magazines that were bought in Kampala show variety in the number of alcohol advertisements that are included. Alcohol advertisements are not found in the magazines focused on news and politics. However, in the magazines that contain alcohol advertising, readers are often confronted with more than one. Especially, in expensive women magazines many alcohol advertisements (of international brands) were

found. Surprising was the large number of editorials that were found.

Among the 16 newspapers examined, we found alcohol advertisements, advertorials and editorials that cover 'news' on alcohol brands or companies. In the newspapers that cover serious news and those that contain mostly gossip, we see different types of alcohol advertising. It is interesting to see that alcohol brands sponsor special sections, but these sections are not labeled in the newspaper as 'advertorial'. Furthermore, different examples of awards, campaigns, and actions that are organized by the alcohol industry which are covered in the news can be found. An example is an editorial in the newspaper Red Pepper (10<sup>th</sup> of February) which includes a story of Nile Brewery in which the brewery supports the Aids Support Organization by handing over a cheque.

### **Alcohol marketing on Television**

The most popular channels in Uganda are the government owned UBC and privately owned WBS (6). Both channels were recorded for 48 hours (1 week day and 1 weekend day). Additionally, 24 hours of the local television station Bukedde TV was recorded which is broadcasted in the Central Region of Uganda since 2009.

On Bukedde TV much advertising was found of a national festival which was sponsored by Nile Breweries. The commercial connects the musical festival with the alcohol company and its brands. Alcohol commercials are mainly broadcasted in "blocks" and clustered in and around sports and music programs. Athletic, social and financial success is a central theme in most alcohol advertisements (e.g. "Live Confidentially" by Bell Lager). It is noticeable that on the channel UBC, the alcohol advertisements were all broadcasted around international programs. The advertisements themselves, however, are specifically targeted at an African audience. In this way, the alcohol producers try to link their product to a Western lifestyle.



**Figure 2:** A shot from Bell Lager's television commercial campaign 'Live life confidently'.

### **Alcohol Marketing on Radio**

The popular channels Simba and Capital Radio were monitored on weekend and week days. An enormous amount of alcohol advertisement was encountered. In the 24 hours monitored, a total of 91 alcohol advertisements were found. Alcohol producers advertise in 'blocks' which results in a large number of (short) alcohol advertisements within a short period of time.

### **Outdoor Advertising**

Three areas were monitored on the available alcohol advertising in the public space: an area in the city centre of Kampala; a main road in Kampala; and a small fishing village named 'Kibanga Port'.

Alcohol-branded billboards of all sizes were found on the main roads and the city centre. Especially on roads that were expected to be very busy during rush hour, billboards can be found of enormous proportions. Among all billboards found, alcohol-branded billboards and telecom billboards were found most frequently. Along the main road that was monitored, we found 9 alcohol billboards on a road within 500 meters. Besides national brands such as Bell beer, posters of international alcohol brands were shown. These brands are especially targeted towards the middle and higher class who can afford to travel by car and can afford to buy these international brands.

Some of the billboards were placed nearby schools and educational centers. Two examples were found in Kampala where an alcohol-branded billboard was placed in front of a primary school and child care center. National brands were more often advertised with smaller posters on bars. These advertisements are aimed at potential customers in bars. Smaller posters and promotional items such as table cloths were found in the city centre area and in the village.



**Figure 3:** Waragi spirit billboard in front of a Primary School (Kampala, Uganda).

In the city centre both billboards, posters and other types of alcohol advertising in the public sphere were found. A total of 50 alcohol marketing practices were found in the defined area of 500 meter by 500 meter.

Also in the village, the number of alcohol advertisements was high. In total, 38 alcohol marketing practices in an estimated area of 500 by 500 meters were found. The number of alcohol advertisements found in the village reflected the large number of alcohol selling points.

#### **Other forms of marketing**

**In-store promotions:** Alcohol is marketed heavily at alcohol selling points. Supermarkets set up large displays of alcohol. Alcohol bottles are not only displayed in a special "beverage" section, but in the main corridor and near the counter as well. Occasionally, alcohol is promoted by giving away promotional items.

Also in-bar promotions are organized frequently. Bell Lager organizes in-bar promotions mainly through live music events and sponsorship of the Pearl of Africa Music AM Awards. Promotional teams go to these events to market their product.

**Product packaging:** In Uganda spirit producers often package their product in small sachets of alcohol. These small bags are convenient for customers to put in their pocket. Packaging alcohol per unit is equivalent to the sale of traditional local spirits that was and is sold on the street (7). A disadvantage of the package is the low prize of the sachets and the ease with which minors can hide the small sachets in their school bag or drivers of vehicles can hide them in their uniform.

#### **Corporate Social Responsibility:**

Corporate Social Responsibility is a popular marketing instrument among global alcohol companies and national subsidiaries in Uganda as well as the other countries monitored. The industry organizes many initiatives, but the alcohol industry pays most attention to three areas: Public Health and especially HIV/Aids; Environment and especially water; educational campaigns. These three areas are found in Uganda as well. Some examples are Nile Breweries Ltd's HIV/Aids program which includes voluntary counseling and testing of employees (8); East African Breweries Ltd's own foundation which invests in clean water projects (9); and East African Breweries' educational programs about responsible drinking (10).

#### **Adherence to alcohol marketing restrictions in Uganda**

Till this moment, the government of Uganda relies fully on self-regulation to regulate alcohol marketing practices. The largest alcohol advertisers in Uganda are subsidiaries of the global companies Diageo and SAB Miller. Each of these companies have their own international marketing code of conduct (11, 12).

The companies' self-regulation codes mainly address the content of alcohol marketing. Its focus is on limiting misleading or false claims in alcohol marketing which can affect consumers' trust in the product (category). For example, alcohol advertising on television and radio is allowed on all channels at all times.

The large number of alcohol advertising found in mass media and on the streets in Uganda and its enormous sizes are not restricted by self-regulatory codes. Often the latter aggressive type of alcohol marketing defines what people see on the street. Especially in the cities, alcohol marketing is everywhere.

Although the website of Diageo (13) claims that the code of marketing practices apply equally to all Diageo businesses around the world, we see a different alcohol marketing code in- and outside the United States. Within the United States it is, according to Diageo's marketing code, not allowed to advert alcoholic beverages within 500 feet of schools, playgrounds and worship places. However, outside the US this is fully permitted. In Uganda several cases were found in which alcoholic beverages by East African Breweries (subsidiary of Diageo) were found in front of primary schools and child care centers. This shows that the self-regulation codes of the companies do not protect young people in Uganda against exposure.

#### **Conclusion**

The placement of alcohol advertising in Uganda (on the street, within television and radio programs, within "editorials" and advertisements in print media) can be seen as problematic since it reaches large amounts of young people. The placement and volume of alcohol marketing is not restricted by self-regulation, which creates a need to be addressed in an alcohol marketing policy of the government.

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