



FROM PINTS TO AI PROMPTS

*How Neoprohibitionists
and Effective Altruists
Want to Run Your Life*

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Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

2. Introduction

3. The Framework: The NGO Administrative State

3.1 The three tactics

3.2 The fourth tactic of certification

3.3 The expertise pipeline

3.4 Why it all works: Public choice

3.5 The accountability gaps

4. The Funders: How Effective Altruism Lost the Plot

4.1 The vehicles

4.2 Policy is the multiplier

4.3 What we're not claiming

5. Case Study: Alcohol

5.1 The Strange Case of Movendi International

5.2 Origins: The Good Templars and the Prohibitionist Tradition

5.3 The Modern Shift: Rebrand and Framing "No Safe Level"

5.4 Impact on the World Health Organization

5.5 Impact on National Health Regulators

5.6 Impact on Regional Health Bodies

5.7 How Movendi Is Funded

5.8 Closing Word

6. Case Study: AI Safety

6.1 The advocates

6.2 The doctrine: extinction risk

6.3 Certify

6.4 Embed

6.5 Incorporate

6.6 Fund

6.7 The bootleggers

6.8 The counterweight

7. Comparison: One Machine, Two Products

8. Policy Recommendations

9. Conclusion

Executive Summary

Neoprohibitionism, the social and political movement dedicated to banning or limiting any substance considered dangerous to public health, has evolved. The scope is larger and more sweeping than the public moral crusades of the past. It now builds authority inside international bodies and the scientific class, and then exports it to the national agencies that defer to them. And it has new flagbearers.

Effective Altruism has joined the neoprohibitionist fold.

Effective Altruism began as a rigorous, evidence-tested strategy for philanthropy. Rather than invest in causes that made donors feel good, it promised the best measurable results for humanity. It won praise among philosophers, economists, and wealthy people who wanted evidence-based giving to do the most good.

Somewhere along the way, the pursuit of influence eclipsed the pursuit of evidence. Today, hundreds of millions of dollars flow from a small circle of Effective Altruism funders into advocacy groups, research shops, and fellowship programs that build shadow structures to restrict individual choice and new technology in the name of a new “safety” paradigm. The playbook began with the temperance movement’s war on alcohol, and the same mechanism is now shaping AI regulation. The tactics are the same, and so now are the funders.

Our findings:

- A global abstinence group sits inside the WHO: Movendi International, the renamed international body of the 175-year-old Independent Order of Good Templars, holds official relations status with the World Health Organization and is one of four groups coordinating civil society engagement in the WHO’s global SAFER alcohol initiative.¹
- EA grants lead to higher consumption taxes on alcohol: A \$63,000 seed grant from an Effective Altruism incubator helped lay the groundwork for an “investment case” on alcohol taxes in Sri Lanka. GiveWell then recommended \$15 million for RESET Alcohol to advocate for higher alcohol taxes, and Sri Lanka raised its alcohol excise duties by about 20% in July 2023 and another 14% in January 2024.²

1. World Health Organization, “List of Entities in Official Relations with WHO,” February 25, 2026, <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/non-state-actors-in-official-relations-with-who>. United Nations Economic and Social Council, Decision 2011/228 (granting special consultative status to IOGT International), July 25, 2011, <https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023/dec-2011.228.pdf>. World Health Organization, “About SAFER,” n.d., <https://www.who.int/initiatives/SAFER/about>.

2. Charity Entrepreneurship, “Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions,” n.d., <https://www.charityentrepreneurship.com/center-for-alcohol-policy-solutions>. GiveWell, “RESET Alcohol Initiative — General Support (December 2021),” published November 2022, <https://www.givewell.org/research/grants/RESET-alcohol-December-2021>. EconomyNext, “Sri Lanka Hikes Cigarette, Alcohol Taxes 20-pct,” July 1, 2023, <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-hikes-cigarette-alcohol-taxes-20-pct-124882>. Ada Derana, “Gazette Issued Increasing Excise Duty on Liquor,” January 1, 2024, <https://www.adaderana.lk/news.php?nid=96052>. Ministry of Finance, Sri Lanka, Mid-Year Fiscal Position Report 2024, <https://treasury.gov.lk/api/file/6a72e1e4-4f13-46de-8e5f-7fccabeb1548>.

- Funded researchers write national drinking guidance: Canada’s 2023 guidance cut the “low-risk” threshold from 15 drinks a week for men and 10 for women down to just two. Three of its most influential authors have documented ties to Movendi International, including Movendi-funded research and Movendi-paid travel, conflicts the guidance’s own review judged to be “of low significance.”³
- The same donors also fund the AI safety movement: The funders behind the alcohol tax campaign, specifically Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and his wife Cari Tuna, also bankroll the leading “AI safety” groups, a fellowship program that places staffers in congressional offices and federal agencies, and groups pushing a new wave of state laws to constrain frontier AI models.⁴

This matters because consumers pay for all of this in the form of higher prices, narrower choices, biased health “guidance” shaped by funded research, and AI technology that arrives later, costs more, or never even reaches them at all.

As we will explore in our policy section, we recommend full disclosure of who funds the “technical assistance” that writes this legislation; conflict-of-interest rules that apply to advocates lobbying institutions; and a firm limit on agencies treating outside guidance as binding law without public comment or democratic input.

3. Catherine Paradis et al., Canada’s Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report (Ottawa: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, January 2023), https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/CCSA_Canadas_Guidance_on_Alcohol_and_Health_Final_Report_en.pdf. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, Update of Canada’s Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines: Disclosure of Affiliations and Interests, December 2021, <https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2021-12/CCSA-Lower-Risk-Drinking-Guidelines-Disclosure-Affiliations-and-Interests-2021-en.pdf>.

4. Brendan Bordelon, “How a Billionaire-Backed Network of AI Advisers Took Over Washington,” Politico, October 13, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/13/open-philanthropy-funding-ai-policy-00121362>. Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, “Governor Newsom Signs SB 53, Advancing California’s World-Leading Artificial Intelligence Industry,” September 29, 2025, <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/09/29/governor-newsom-signs-sb-53-advancing-californias-world-leading-artificial-intelligence-industry/>. Office of Governor Kathy Hochul, “Governor Hochul Signs Nation-Leading Legislation to Require AI Frameworks for AI Frontier Models,” December 19, 2025, <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-signs-nation-leading-legislation-require-ai-frameworks-ai-frontier-models>.

Introduction

In January 2023, the World Health Organization's European office announced that "no level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health," and a senior official added that risk "starts from the first drop of any alcoholic beverage."⁵

For such a sweeping statement, there was little scrutiny inside the institutions that repeated it. That isn't an accident. It's the final product of a well-oiled policy machine that turns contested advocacy into a global consensus, and then launders that consensus to governments as if it were settled science.

We focus on the areas of alcohol policy and rules on artificial intelligence. Though these are vastly different product categories that don't seem connected, the same network of funders and advocates has gained influence in both, bound by the philosophical notion that individuals cannot be trusted with their own choices. These are the neoprohibitionists. We aim to reveal their tactics that can have pernicious consequences for citizens, consumers, and individuals.

In our 2023 paper, *Temperance Revived: The Core Tenets and Tactics of Neoprohibitionism*, we introduced a public choice analysis of prohibitionist politics and policy, focused on the movements furthering prohibition on products like nicotine, alcohol, and gambling. We asked how groups advocating lifestyle restrictions, such as Bloomberg Philanthropies and Movendi International, became so politically successful.⁶

We see the results in the steady rise of so-called "sin taxes" on consumer goods and services, whether on alcohol, nicotine pouches, or sports betting.

Then, we named Movendi and its influence on alcohol policy. This paper now follows the money to see how the same funding and tactics are also being directed elsewhere. We show the tactics of the global campaign to stigmatize, tax, and ultimately restrict alcohol at work on developing technologies like artificial intelligence. As we will explore, these campaigns now share funders and are united by an ideology of control and restriction.

5. WHO Regional Office for Europe, "No Level of Alcohol Consumption Is Safe for Our Health," January 4, 2023, <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/04-01-2023-no-level-of-alcohol-consumption-is-safe-for-our-health>. The quoted official is Dr. Carina Ferreira-Borges, then acting Unit Lead for Noncommunicable Disease Management and Regional Advisor for Alcohol and Illicit Drugs at WHO/Europe.

6. Emil Panzaru, Bill Wirtz, Yaël Ossowski, David Clement, and Michael Landl, *Temperance Revived: The Core Tenets and Tactics of Neoprohibitionism* (Consumer Choice Center, 2023). Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, "Bloomberg Philanthropies Continues Its Life-Saving Leadership in Global Fight Against Tobacco," March 22, 2012, https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/press-releases/2012_03_22_bloomberg.

Why now? On alcohol, the United States has withdrawn from the World Health Organization and its mandates.⁷ The Department of Health and Human Services withdrew a formal alcohol study drafted by advocacy-linked researchers,⁸ and the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, released in January 2026, replace numeric daily drinking limits with a recommendation to “consume less alcohol for better overall health.”⁹ At least at the federal level, the United States is shedding the influence of the neoprohibitionists.

On AI, however, the same funding network is pouring money into state frontier-model laws and the 2026 midterm elections to tilt power in its direction, even as a new UN scientific panel takes up the issue.¹⁰

As in our earlier paper, we are limiting ourselves to describing how this system works, not condemning those who drink, those who donate, or those who research. The usual caveats apply. Heavy drinking can wreck lives and families. Some AI risks deserve attention. Our concern is narrower: who writes the rules, who pays for them, and who is left out of the room.

Throughout this paper, we present our framework for understanding how modern neoprohibitionism functions, its key funders, demonstrable case studies of alcohol control and AI safety, a comparison of the two, and policy recommendations aimed at limiting the pernicious influence of these groups to restore freedom of choice for consumers and users.

This is the story of how a well-intended, evidence-minded philanthropy took a detour into sprawling funding and influence campaigns to restrict both people and technology, and the people who bankroll it all.

7. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “United States Completes WHO Withdrawal,” January 22, 2026, <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/united-states-completes-who-withdrawal.html>.

8. Isabella Cueto, “Major Report That Tied Moderate Drinking to Disease Won’t Be Released, Researchers Say,” STAT, September 4, 2025, <https://www.statnews.com/2025/09/04/federal-alcohol-health-study-not-released-dietary-guidelines/>. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, A Study Fraught with Bias: How the Biden Administration’s Alcohol Intake and Health Study Tried to Undermine the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, January 7, 2026, <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Final-Report-ICCPUD-Alcohol-Intake-Study-010726.pdf>.

9. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030, January 7, 2026, <https://cdn.realfood.gov/DGA.pdf>.

10. United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 79/325, “Terms of Reference and Modalities for the Establishment and Functioning of the Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence and the Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence Governance,” August 26, 2025, https://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/110/2025/12/A_RES_79_325-EN.pdf. Reuters, “Anthropic to Donate \$20 Million to US Political Group Backing AI Regulation,” February 12, 2026, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/anthropic-donate-20-million-us-political-group-backing-ai-regulation-2026-02-12/>.

The Framework: The NGO Administrative State

At the center of this system is a unique arrangement we call the NGO Administrative State.

In a typical liberal democracy, agencies in the administrative state will apply rules and issue-specific legal guidance based on laws that have been written, deliberated on, and passed by elected representatives. This is a familiar, if not ideal, concept in our bureaucratic age. It represents the creep of government regulations into private affairs, commerce, and all the other aspects of everyday life.

The NGO Administrative State takes this concept even further, exposing how the regulatory apparatus relies on unelected and unaccountable private nonprofit organizations to create a basis for regulations. It imports entire models of legal guidance written elsewhere by privately funded advocacy networks and nongovernmental organizations, endorsed by supranational bodies and adopted by public agencies with little accountability. The end result looks like law. It's even executed as law. But no legislature voted on it.

3.1 The three tactics

In *Temperance Revived*, we identified three tactics that neoprohibitionists use to build what we called a “culture of prohibition.”¹¹

The first is moralizing externalities. An externality is a cost imposed on a third party outside a transaction or interaction. Every action creates a cost for someone else, but neoprohibitionists tend to focus on drinking, smoking, vaping, and gambling as uniquely pernicious. As we wrote then, nobody talks about an “epidemic” of noisy parties. They talk about an epidemic of alcoholism.

The second is elevating private interests behind ethical appeals. Careers, budgets, reputations and entire bureaucracies are predicated on prohibitionist policy, yet those interests are hidden behind the language of public health. New taxes “save lives,” and that settles any debate.

The third is marginalizing the opposition. Critics are “linked to industry” and therefore should be written off. Their evidence is “questionable” even though it is based on sound science, and the evidence for restrictions is always sacrosanct and never to be questioned.

11. Panzaru et al., *Temperance Revived*, 7–9.

These tactics, though they evolve, continue to work. But they no longer explain how a small group of Swedish teetotalers or a handful of Effective Altruism-influenced AI safety groups can shape the laws and set the parameters of debate in dozens of nations.

3.2 The fourth tactic of certification

To build on our previous research, the fourth tactic is now one of the most important: certification.

Certification turns moral claims into technical ones. The temperance movement labeled drinking a sin, and now the WHO says no level of drinking is safe. AI safety advocates once argued that building more powerful large language models was reckless, and now politicians and institutions are citing those claims to justify banning superintelligence.

This process follows a particular pattern. Philanthropists and advocates fund the research, staff the review, or draft the technical guidance to introduce a particular restriction. An authoritative public body publishes it, and national agencies cite that work as evidence for action. By the time the claims reach a legislature, they arrive as settled science.

This allows moral claims to be converted into claims of expertise that remain resistant to public challenge and justify future coercion. “Drinking is wrong” becomes “alcohol is always dangerous.” “AI comes with risks” becomes “experts agree on AI extinction risk.” Once a claim becomes certified and repeated by a public body that has the appearance of being neutral, a policy choice becomes an obligation for compliance. Any dissent to that narrative becomes “industry interference.”

This is a quieter tactic than the temperance marches of the 19th century because it wraps itself in empiricism and in the supposedly gentle image of the experts guiding the well-being of individuals who do not know better. It is also far more effective, assuming responsibility for steering entire societies while claiming knowledge of each person’s circumstances and well-being.

3.3 The expertise pipeline

Certification works through a pipeline made up of five stages. We will examine these in detail in the sections that follow.

- Fund: Private philanthropists finance advocacy NGOs and university centers that produce studies, modeling, and policy toolkits.

- **Certify:** Supranational bodies like the WHO or a UN scientific panel publish and amplify those findings as neutral technical guidance. In the cases we document, these are shaped or written by the same people tied to the funding groups.
- **Embed:** The same funders pay for advisers placed inside government ministries and legislative offices, where the guidance is turned into policy.
- **Incorporate:** National agencies adopt the guidance by reference, in dietary guidelines, label rules, tax structures, or legal safe harbors.
- **Entrench:** Courts defer to this guidance as expert consensus, and legislatures and parliaments cite it as evidence.

3.4 Why it all works: Public choice

None of this requires a shadowy conspiracy. It is all about incentives.

Economist Bruce Yandle's "bootleggers and Baptists" model explains why regulation so often serves both moral crusaders and those who profit from restricting a product.¹² In the NGO Administrative State, the Baptists are temperance groups, billionaire philanthropies, and rationalists convinced of worst-case AI scenarios. The bootleggers are revenue-hungry finance ministries, and in AI, incumbent firms that gain when compliance costs rise for their competition.

3.5 The accountability gaps

The pipeline runs through three gaps in ordinary accountability.

The first is incorporation by reference. When an agency adopts an outside standard by citing it, the standard itself often escapes notice-and-comment review.¹³

The second is fiscal sponsorship. A project run via a larger charity's tax status doesn't file its own disclosure, so donors and spending are obfuscated.

The third is "technical assistance." Drafting a tax law for a finance ministry isn't classified as lobbying in most countries, even when it is paid for by foreign donors who want to see that law passed.

Each gap wipes away more of the funders' fingerprints. By the time the law is passed, it looks homegrown.

12. Bruce Yandle, "Bootleggers and Baptists: The Education of a Regulatory Economist," Regulation 7, no. 3 (May/June 1983): 12–16, <https://www.cato.org/regulation/may/june-1983/bootleggers-baptists-education-regulatory-economist>.

13. Incorporation by Reference, 1 C.F.R. Part 51, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-1/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-51>.

The Funders: How Effective Altruism Lost the Plot

Effective Altruism began with a simple, appealing idea: philanthropy should aim for the best possible consequences and give where the evidence shows you can provide the most good per dollar.

GiveWell, founded in 2007,¹⁴ rates charities by measurable outcomes and gives donors interested in Effective Altruism useful metrics. Examples include charities that provide mosquito nets in malaria-prone areas, deworming where it is necessary, and vitamin supplements to countries with poor diets. Giving What We Can, launched in 2009,¹⁵ asks members to pledge a share of their income to the “most effective” causes.

But the Effective Altruism movement has always had two distinct strands. Alongside the empiricists at an organization like GiveWell exists a “rationalist” community focused on speculative, long-range risks to humanity. Eliezer Yudkowsky’s Singularity Institute, later MIRI, dates to 2000. Nick Bostrom’s Future of Humanity Institute at Oxford opened in 2005.¹⁶

By 2016, the wing of the EA movement focused on long-term or existential risk began to win out. In April of that year, Holden Karnofsky of the Open Philanthropy Project, itself a spin-off of GiveWell, published “Hits-Based Giving,” arguing that a funder should accept thin evidence and a high chance of failure in favor of high-risk bets.¹⁷ A month later, Open Philanthropy named risks from advanced AI as one of its top priorities.¹⁸

This is the precise moment that empiricism in Effective Altruism was eclipsed. The empiricists didn’t disappear, but they became a much smaller part of the operation. Both wings of the movement reached the same conclusion: that “impact per dollar” lies not in delivering goods but in changing laws. Good Ventures and Open Philanthropy began to focus on “effectively” investing in alcohol taxation and AI regulation policy as the best course for their advocacy. From then on, the movement’s money began to focus not on theory, but on policy.

14. GiveWell, “Our Story,” n.d., <https://www.givewell.org/story>.

15. Giving What We Can, “Our History,” n.d., <https://www.givingwhatwecan.org/history>.

16. Machine Intelligence Research Institute, “About MIRI,” n.d., <https://intelligence.org/about/>. Future of Humanity Institute, “Future of Humanity Institute 2005–2024,” 2024, <https://www.futureofhumanityinstitute.org/>.

17. Holden Karnofsky, “Hits-Based Giving,” Open Philanthropy Project, April 4, 2016, <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/research/hits-based-giving/>.

18. Holden Karnofsky, “Potential Risks from Advanced Artificial Intelligence: The Philanthropic Opportunity,” Open Philanthropy Project, May 6, 2016, <https://coefficientgiving.org/blog/potential-risks-advanced-artificial-intelligence-philanthropic-opportunity>.

4.1 The vehicles

Most of the Effective Altruism money in this paper traces back to one couple and their philanthropic efforts: Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz and his wife, Cari Tuna. They have pledged to give away most of their fortune. Much of it has gone to causes that few would label controversial, such as malaria prevention. But our concern is the share spent on changing laws toward neoprohibitionism.

The couple’s foundation, Good Ventures, is the primary vehicle. Open Philanthropy, which in late 2025 became Coefficient Giving, decides where it goes.¹⁹ For the past decade, Open Philanthropy was also the largest funder behind GiveWell’s grant recommendations, including the RESET Alcohol grants discussed below.²⁰ Charity Entrepreneurship, an EA incubator, seeds new organizations designed to qualify for those donations, and provided the initial funding for the alcohol tax initiatives in Sri Lanka.²¹

This is not the only money in the story. Movendi has its own funding, rooted in Swedish temperance and lottery revenue. What is new is that two different streams now reach the same institutions and push for the same policies.

Table 1. The funding vehicles

VEHICLE	WHAT IT IS	ROLE IN THIS PAPER
Good Ventures	Foundation of Dustin Moskovitz and Cari Tuna	The original source of the money
Open Philanthropy (now Coefficient Giving)	The main Effective Altruism grantmaker	Funds GiveWell recommendations, AI safety groups, Horizon fellows
GiveWell	EA charity evaluator	Recommends the \$15 million RESET Alcohol grant (Dec. 2021)
Charity Entrepreneurship (now AIM)	EA incubator	Seeds CAPS with \$63,000 (2021)

Sources: notes 19–21.

19. Coefficient Giving, “Open Philanthropy Becomes Coefficient Giving, Expanding Work with Multiple Donors,” press release, November 18, 2025, <https://coefficientgiving.org/?p=34846>.
20. GiveWell, “Coefficient Giving Commits \$175 Million to GiveWell Opportunities,” The GiveWell Blog, December 18, 2025, <https://blog.givewell.org/2025/12/18/coefficient-giving-commits-175-million/>.
21. Charity Entrepreneurship, “Ambitious Impact (AIM): A New Brand for Charity Entrepreneurship and Our Extended Ecosystem,” Effective Altruism Forum, 2024, <https://forum.effectivealtruism.org/posts/cpuFnLtpbbsLKcbbq/ambitious-impact-aim-a-new-brand-for-charity>. Charity Entrepreneurship, “Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions,” see note 2.

4.2 Policy is the multiplier

The EA modus operandi rests on cost-effectiveness arithmetic: dollars per life saved, or per disability-adjusted life year (DALY) averted.

Applied to something like mosquito nets, the math checks out. The funder pays for each net, and each net protects someone and saves them from malaria.

In policy, the math is incomplete. Lobbying for a tax costs the funder only the price of the lobbying itself. The ultimate cost of the tax, for example a tax on alcohol, is paid by drinkers at the checkout, and by the producers, workers, and entrepreneurs who make and sell it.

Let's look specifically at the alcohol campaign. Charity Entrepreneurship's case for its Sri Lanka alcohol tax project was that it could avert 25,700 DALYs at roughly \$128 each, a benefit-to-cost ratio of about 84 to 1.²² GiveWell's own estimate is 13,922 deaths averted at \$1,798 per life saved.²³

Those are remarkable returns. But that's because they count only what the donor spends, and not the ultimate impact on consumers and citizens where those taxes are applied.

The same logic applies to the AI safety movement. When the downside is framed as human extinction, any regulation looks affordable and necessary. A model that can justify two alcohol tax hikes in six months can justify a strict licensing regime for an entire industry.

4.3 What we're not claiming

Most GiveWell philanthropy still directs money to buy mosquito nets and vitamin A, and to fund many worthy global vaccine initiatives. Those are all impactful and necessary endeavors that no objective observer can criticize. Nor do we claim that alcohol is harmless, that AI carries no risk, or that anyone in this network is acting in bad faith. We allege no secret coordination, cabal, or conspiracy. The funders publish their grants, and much of this paper draws on their own records.

Our claim is narrower. When this network turns to policy, its method tends to favor coercive measures paid for and ultimately borne by someone else: taxes over treatment for drinkers, licensing over open release for AI models.

22. Charity Entrepreneurship, "Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions," see note 2. The page gives the benefit-to-cost ratio as 83.94.

23. GiveWell, "RESET Alcohol Initiative — General Support," see note 2. GiveWell, "Vital Strategies BOTE (public)," cost-effectiveness spreadsheet linked from the RESET grant page, https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1TFotEyDjTB3_9Y5cem660_HCb2mzPQsXLeoITnQcbt0.

Case Study: Alcohol

5.1 The Strange Case of Movendi International

Movendi International is often presented as a public health NGO, when in reality it is the modern face of the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT), a 175-year-old temperance fraternity that requires its members to pledge lifelong abstinence.

Since rebranding in 2020, the organization has repositioned alcohol as an obstacle to “development and human rights,” and has embedded itself in the institutions that write alcohol policy. It holds official relations status with the World Health Organization (WHO), special consultative status at the United Nations (UN), serves as a founding civil society partner of the WHO’s SAFER initiative, and is named as a partner in RESET Alcohol (a multimillion-dollar philanthropic program designed to help governments raise alcohol taxes, restrict access, and ban marketing).²⁴

We find that Movendi’s influence runs through three main channels:

1. Formal access to the WHO, UN and EU processes
2. Coordinated advocacy with allied NGOs and sympathetic officials
3. Financially supported research and policy work, like the researchers behind Canada’s 2023 alcohol guidance and the now-withdrawn U.S. Alcohol Intake and Health Study.

Its funding comes from a patchwork of Swedish lottery profits, government aid, EU grants and U.S. Effective Altruism philanthropy, most of it disclosed only in fragments. Consumers and policymakers deserve to know who is shaping the advice they are given, and who is paying for it.

5.2 Origins: The Good Templars and the Prohibitionist Tradition

The IOGT was founded in New York State in 1851 as a fraternal order modeled on Freemasonry, with lodges, rituals, and a pledge of total abstinence that members still take.²⁵ The Good Templars helped build the movement that produced both U.S. Prohibition (1920–1933) and the Nordic state alcohol monopolies that survive today.

24. WHO, “List of Entities in Official Relations with WHO,” see note 1. ECOSOC, Decision 2011/228, see note 1. WHO, “About SAFER,” see note 1. GiveWell, “RESET Alcohol Initiative — General Support,” see note 2.

25. Union of International Associations, “Movendi International,” organization profile, n.d., <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100061037>. Movendi International, “Introducing Movendi International,” January 10, 2020, <https://movendi.ngo/blog/2020/01/10/introducing-movendi-international/>.

Sweden became the movement's center of gravity. Swedish membership peaked in the early 20th century at roughly 307,000, about a tenth of the adult population. By 2024 it had fallen below 20,000.²⁶ The 2020 rebrand to Movendi International dropped titles like "Chief Templar," but the abstinence pledge stayed.²⁷

Unable to mobilize the masses, the organization turned to professional lobbying. Movendi claims 178 member organizations in 63 countries but employs fewer than 10 people.²⁸ Nearly all of its institutional capacity, money and political strategy are generated in Sweden and exported under an "international" banner.

5.3 The Modern Shift: Rebrand and Framing "No Safe Level"

The rebrand also changed the message. Movendi no longer calls for prohibition. It calls itself "the premier global network for development through alcohol prevention" and vows to defend "every person's right to live free from alcohol."²⁹

That framing moves alcohol policy out of health ministries, where it is weighed against personal freedom and consumer welfare, and into development and finance ministries, where budgets are bigger and oversight is thinner. The policy menu mirrors the WHO's "Best Buys": steep excise taxes, minimum pricing, advertising bans, cancer warning labels, and fewer outlets with shorter hours. Its "Big Alcohol Exposed" platform casts the entire sector as a predatory "industrial complex."³⁰

The second shift was scientific. In January 2018, IOGT International, as Movendi was then called, joined the American Institute for Cancer Research and the U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance in convening an invitation-only "Alcohol Control as Cancer Control" symposium at Johns Hopkins.³¹ Seven months later, the IHME/Lancet study claimed there is no safe level of drinking, and Movendi and its allies worked to make that finding official doctrine.³² By January 2023, WHO Europe was declaring that "no level of alcohol consumption is safe for our health."³³ A contested reading of observational

26. IOGT-NTO, Hållbarhetsrapport 2023 (2024), <https://www.iogt.se/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/iogt-nto-hallbarhetsrapport-2023.pdf>.

27. Movendi International, "Introducing Movendi International," see note 25.

28. Movendi International, "FAQs," n.d., <https://movendi.ngo/who-we-are/the-movendi-way/faqs/>. Movendi International, stakeholder contribution to TRIS notification 2024/0351/LV, July 1, 2024, <https://technical-regulation-information-system.ec.europa.eu/en/notification/26014/stakeholder-contribution/file/4626>.

29. Movendi International, "FAQs," see note 28.

30. Movendi International, Big Alcohol Exposed, n.d., <https://bigalcohol.exposed>.

31. American Institute for Cancer Research, "Think Before You Drink: Rising Trend of Drinking Can Cause More Cancers in the US," February 1, 2018, <https://www.aicr.org/?p=24682>, reporting the January 30, 2018, symposium AICR co-convened with the U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance and IOGT International. U.S. Alcohol Policy Alliance, "Alcohol Control as Cancer Control," symposium program, Johns Hopkins University, January 30, 2018.

32. GBD 2016 Alcohol Collaborators, "Alcohol Use and Burden for 195 Countries and Territories, 1990–2016: A Systematic Analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016," *The Lancet* 392, no. 10152 (2018): 1015–1035, published online August 23, 2018, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31310-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31310-2).

33. WHO Regional Office for Europe, "No Level of Alcohol Consumption Is Safe for Our Health," see note 5.

data is now the premise for labeling and guideline campaigns on three continents, even though the most recent major U.S. review found that moderate drinkers had lower all-cause mortality than people who never drink.³⁴

5.4 Impact on the World Health Organization

Movendi is not an outside commentator on WHO policy. It is part of the machinery.

It holds official relations status with the WHO, giving it standing to address WHO governing bodies, and has held UN ECOSOC special consultative status since 2011.³⁵ The WHO names it as one of four groups coordinating civil society engagement in SAFER.³⁶ Movendi's staff, writing as IOGT International a month before the rebrand, co-authored the 2019 BMJ paper that laid out SAFER's architecture, alongside WHO alcohol officer Dag Rekve and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) senior adviser Maristela Monteiro.³⁷ Movendi has also co-organized WHO webinars on "protecting alcohol control policies from vested interests,"³⁸ contributed to the WHO's guide for journalists,³⁹ claims credit for shaping the Global Alcohol Action Plan,⁴⁰ and backs the WHO's "3 by 35" push to raise real alcohol prices at least 50% through taxes by 2035.⁴¹

The WHO bars producers from alcohol policy under strict conflict-of-interest rules, and its framework for engaging non-state actors is supposed to police exactly this kind of entanglement.⁴² In practice, it applies only to industry. An organization whose members swear lifelong abstinence helps write the guidance, run the webinars, and brief the journalists.

34. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Review of Evidence on Alcohol and Health (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.17226/28582>; news release, December 17, 2024, <https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/new-report-reviews-evidence-on-moderate-alcohol-consumption-and-health-impacts>.

35. WHO, "List of Entities in Official Relations with WHO," see note 1. ECOSOC, Decision 2011/228, see note 1.

36. WHO, "About SAFER," see note 1.

37. Dag Rekve et al., "Prioritising Action on Alcohol for Health and Development," BMJ 367 (2019): l6162, published December 6, 2019, <https://www.bmj.com/content/367/bmj.l6162>. Co-authors include Kristina Sperkova and Maik Dünnebier of IOGT International (renamed Movendi International in January 2020) and PAHO's Maristela Monteiro.

38. World Health Organization, "Webinar: Protecting Alcohol Control Policies from Vested Interests," September 3, 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2021/09/03/default-calendar/webinar-protecting-alcohol-control-policies-from-vested-interests>.

39. World Health Organization, Reporting About Alcohol: A Guide for Journalists (2023), <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240071490>; Movendi International, "WHO Publishes Reporting About Alcohol Guide for Journalists," April 21, 2023, <https://movendi.ngo/policy-updates/2023/04/21/who-publishes-reporting-about-alcohol-guide-for-journalists/>.

40. Movendi International, "World Health Assembly Adopts Historic Global Alcohol Action Plan – Movendi International Makes Four Recommendations for the Way Forward," May 28, 2022, <https://movendi.ngo/media-release/world-health-assembly-adopts-historic-global-alcohol-action-plan-movendi-international-makes-four-recommendations-for-the-way-forward/>.

41. World Health Organization, "WHO Launches Bold Push to Raise Health Taxes and Save Millions of Lives," July 2, 2025, <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-07-2025-who-launches-bold-push-to-raise-health-taxes-and-save-millions-of-lives>; World Health Organization, "3 by 35 Initiative," n.d., <https://www.who.int/initiatives/3-by-35>; Movendi International, "Movendi Welcomes Ambitious New WHO-Led Initiative to Raise Pro-Health Taxes and Save Millions of Lives," July 3, 2025, <https://movendi.ngo/media-release/movendi-welcomes-ambitious-new-who-led-initiative-to-raise-pro-health-taxes-and-save-millions-of-lives/>.

42. World Health Organization, Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (WHA69.10, 2016), https://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/Framework_Engagement_non-State_Actors.pdf.

5.5 Impact on National Health Regulators

Canada and the 2023 Guidance on Alcohol and Health

Canada's January 2023 guidance, produced by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), cut the "low-risk" threshold from 10–15 drinks a week to two. Three of its most influential authors, Tim Stockwell, Timothy Naimi, and Adam Sherk of the University of Victoria's Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR), have documented ties to Movendi.⁴³ The university lists Movendi as the funder of a CISUR review on alcohol and COVID-19, "one of a regular series funded by Movendi International."⁴⁴

The CCSA's own disclosure record shows Movendi paid travel, accommodation, and meals for Stockwell and Naimi, and the CCSA judged these conflicts to be "of low significance."⁴⁵ Stockwell and Naimi have also co-authored IOGT's Alcohol and Society reports and appeared on Movendi's podcast.⁴⁶

An abstinence organization funded, flew, and platformed the scientists who wrote a country's drinking guidance, then promoted that guidance the day after it came out.⁴⁷

United States: The ICCPUD Alcohol Intake and Health Study

The Canadian model nearly crossed the border. The Interagency Coordinating Committee on the Prevention of Underage Drinking (ICCPUD) commissioned an Alcohol Intake and Health Study to inform the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines.⁴⁸ Naimi sat on its six-person panel.

43. Paradis et al., Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health, see note 3.

44. Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research, "A Review of the Evidence Regarding Alcohol and COVID-19," University of Victoria, n.d., <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/projects/archive/projects/covid-alcohol-review.php>.

45. CCSA, Disclosure of Affiliations and Interests, see note 3. For both Stockwell and Naimi, the record states that "travel, accommodation and meals are provided by Movendi International."

46. Sven Andréasson et al., Alcohol and the Coronavirus Pandemic, Alcohol and Society 2021, <https://alcoholandsociety.report/written-reports/alcohol-and-the-coronavirus-pandemic>. Movendi International is listed among the report's supporting organizations.

47. Movendi International, "Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report," Science Digest, January 18, 2023, <https://movendi.ngo/science-digest/canadas-guidance-on-alcohol-and-health-final-report/>. The CCSA released the report on January 17, 2023. See also Movendi International, "Canada: Big Alcohol Called Upon to Step Out of the Dark and Face the Public with Their Resistance to Warning Labeling," January 31, 2023, <https://movendi.ngo/policy-updates/2023/01/31/canada-big-alcohol-called-upon-to-step-out-of-the-dark-and-face-the-public-with-their-resistance-to-warning-labeling>.

48. Public Health Institute, "Draft Report: Scientific Findings of the Alcohol Intake and Health Study for Public Comment," January 14, 2025, <https://www.phi.org/thought-leadership/draft-report-scientific-findings-of-the-alcohol-intake-and-health-study-for-public-comment/>.

After more than 100 members of Congress objected,⁴⁹ HHS shelved the study,⁵⁰ and the House Oversight Committee found that all six panelists were affiliated with anti-alcohol advocacy groups.⁵¹ In a September 24, 2026, letter to HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer asked the department to weigh disciplinary, contractual, or legal action, including debarment, against the study's contractor and panel members, who he says published study data without authorization.⁵² Even before its federal setback, the movement was working the states: Alaska now requires alcohol-cancer warnings, and similar bills have been introduced in Vermont, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.⁵³

Low- and Middle-Income Countries: Sri Lanka, Nepal and Beyond

Sri Lanka is RESET Alcohol's proof of concept. Movendi Vice President Pubudu Sumanasekara heads its Sri Lankan affiliate (ADIC), consults for RESET through Vital Strategies, and sits on the government's National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol.⁵⁴ After the 2022 debt default and IMF bailout, Sri Lanka raised alcohol excise taxes repeatedly through 2023 and again in 2024, and both Movendi and RESET claim the wins.⁵⁵

Nepal implemented SAFER with the WHO, UNDP, and four NGOs, Movendi among them.⁵⁶ RESET is now expanding to Vietnam, South Africa, Ethiopia, the Philippines, and Colombia.⁵⁷

An advocacy group now sits on both sides of the table, lobbying governments and advising them.

49. Rep. Mike Thompson, Rep. Dan Newhouse, et al., letter to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, October 7, 2024, <https://www.winebusiness.com/content/file/thompson-newhouse-letter-to-hhs-and-usda-10-7-241.pdf>.

50. Cueto, "Major Report That Tied Moderate Drinking to Disease Won't Be Released," see note 8.

51. House Oversight Committee, A Study Fraught with Bias, see note 8.

52. James Comer, Chairman, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, letter to Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Secretary of Health and Human Services, September 24, 2026, <https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Letter-to-HHS-ICCPUD.pdf>.

53. Alaska Beacon, "Alaska Becomes First State to Require Warnings About Alcohol-Cancer Link Under New Law," April 29, 2025, <https://alaskabeacon.com/briefs/alaska-becomes-first-state-to-require-warnings-about-alcohol-cancer-link-under-new-law/>. Vermont General Assembly, H.376 (2025), as introduced, <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Docs/BILLS/H-0376/H-0376%20As%20Introduced.pdf>. Connecticut General Assembly, Proposed Bill No. 431 (2025), <https://prdxext3.cga.ct.gov/2025/TOB/S/PDF/2025SB-00431-R00-SB.PDF>. Massachusetts General Court, S.1550 (194th General Court, 2025), <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/S1550>.

54. Movendi International, "Meet Pubudu Sumanasekara," n.d., <https://movendi.ngo/who-we-are/meet-us/international-vice-president/>; Movendi International, "Sri Lanka: Community of Experts Calls for Better Alcohol Taxation," April 22, 2024, <https://movendi.ngo/policy-updates/2024/04/22/sri-lanka-community-of-experts-calls-for-better-alcohol-taxation/>.

55. International Monetary Fund, "IMF Executive Board Approves US\$3 Billion Under the New Extended Fund Facility (EFF) Arrangement for Sri Lanka," Press Release No. 23/79, March 20, 2023, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/03/20/pr2379-imf-executive-board-approves-under-the-new-eff-arrangement-for-sri-lanka>. EconomyNext, "Sri Lanka Hikes Cigarette, Alcohol Taxes 20-pct," see note 2. Ministry of Finance, Sri Lanka, Mid-Year Fiscal Position Report 2024, see note 2.

56. WHO Country Office for Nepal, "Nepal Partners with WHO to Implement SAFER Initiative," April 19, 2022, <https://www.who.int/nepal/news/detail/19-04-2022-nepal-partners-with-who-to-implement-safer-initiative>.

57. Vital Strategies, "Alcohol Taxes for Public Health: The Watchword Is Progress," May 22, 2025, <https://www.vitalstrategies.org/alcohol-taxes-for-public-health-the-watchword-is-progress/>. GiveWell, "Vital Strategies BOTEC (public)," see note 23.

5.6 Impact on Regional Health Bodies

WHO Europe: Movendi is accredited to the WHO European Regional Committee, where it presses for higher taxes and conducts what it calls “bilateral and coalition-driven advocacy work,” including lobbying Regional Director Hans Kluge.⁵⁸ It has also hosted a “Future of Alcohol Policy” conference with WHO Europe.⁵⁹

PAHO: Movendi’s closest tie is to Maristela Monteiro, PAHO’s senior alcohol adviser for 17 years, through co-authorship, joint events, and podcast appearances.⁶⁰ Movendi’s president also presented SAFER at the 2022 launch of PAHO’s alcohol policy courses for government officials.⁶¹

European Union: A registered EU lobby with a €878,000 budget,⁶² Movendi has filed TRIS submissions backing restrictive national alcohol laws in Finland and Latvia,⁶³ supported Ireland’s cancer warning labels,⁶⁴ and joined 18 other groups in a European Ombudsman complaint to curb industry input into the Commission’s wine package.⁶⁵

5.7 How Movendi Is Funded

Movendi says it is funded mainly by membership fees, donations, government grants, and philanthropy. In practice, money flows through the wider IOGT family and its partners rather than one transparent budget.⁶⁶

58. WHO Regional Office for Europe, RC71 side event programme, “Alcohol Control Policies: Tackling the Gap Between Evidence and Policy Action,” September 16, 2021, <https://movendi.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/RC71-side-event-alcohol-eng.pdf>. Movendi International, “WHO Europe Regional Committee Meeting Adopts Historic Framework for Action on Alcohol,” September 15, 2022, <https://movendi.ngo/media-release/who-europe-regional-committee-meeting-adopts-historic-framework-for-action-on-alcohol/>.

59. Movendi International, “The Future of Alcohol Policy – Mini-Conference,” Stockholm, May 3–4, 2023, <https://movendi.ngo/event/the-future-of-alcohol-policy-mini-conference/>.

60. Movendi International, Alcohol Issues Podcast, episode 8, November 18, 2020, <https://movendi.ngo/policy-updates/2020/11/18/new-alcoholissues-podcast-episode8-alcohol-use-and-harm-in-americas/>, which introduces Monteiro as PAHO’s Senior Advisor on Alcohol and Substance Abuse. International Society of Substance Use Professionals, “Dr Maristela G. Monteiro,” profile, n.d., <https://www.issup.net/node/10502>.

61. Pan American Health Organization, “Launch – Building Capacity for Alcohol Policy in the Americas: PAHO’s New Online Courses,” April 5, 2022, <https://www.paho.org/en/events/launch-building-capacity-alcohol-policy-americas-pahos-new-online-courses>.

62. LobbyFacts, “Movendi International,” datacard (EU Transparency Register ID 100748931218-91), n.d., <https://www.lobbyfacts.eu/datacard/movendi-international?rid=100748931218-91>.

63. Movendi International, TRIS contribution 2024/0351/LV, see note 28. Movendi International, stakeholder contribution to TRIS notification 2023/0543/FI, 2023, <https://technical-regulation-information-system.ec.europa.eu/en/notification/24741/stakeholder-contribution/file/3702>.

64. European Commission, TRIS notification 2022/441/IRL (Ireland, alcohol health labelling), Movendi International contribution of September 22, 2022, <https://technical-regulation-information-system.ec.europa.eu/en/notification/17834>.

65. Movendi International, “EU Let Wine Industry Write Its Own Rules, but Civil Society Is Taking Action to Put Common Good First,” April 30, 2026, <https://movendi.ngo/media-release/eu-let-wine-industry-write-its-own-rules-but-civil-society-is-taking-action-to-put-common-good-first/>.

66. Accent, “Miljonlotteriets negativa trend kan vara bruten,” March 24, 2025, <https://accentmagasin.se/iogt-nto-rorelsen/miljonlotteriets-negativa-trend-kan-vara-bruten>. TV4 Nyheterna, “S säljer lotteriverksamheten efter kritiken,” June 27, 2025, <https://www.tv4.se/artikel/7HHzdLQyOnIqV97xuLO0IA/s-saeljer-lotteriverksamheten-efter-kritiken>.

Movendi International, “More Support for SAFER: Norway Invests Into WHO’s Alcohol Policy Work,” December 19, 2020, <https://movendi.ngo/?p=36990>. GiveWell, “RESET Alcohol Initiative — General Support,” see note 2. Open Philanthropy, “Vital Strategies — RESET Alcohol Initiative (2024),” <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/?p=23177>. “New Initiative Launches to Address Neglected Global Health Crisis of Alcohol Harms,” PR Newswire, November 1, 2022, <https://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/new-initiative-launches-to-address-neglected-global-health-crisis-of-alcohol-harms-301664043.html>. Charity Entrepreneurship, “Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions,” see note 2. European Commission, Erasmus+ project 2024-1-SE02-KA220-YOU-000257285, <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2024-1-SE02-KA220-YOU-000257285>.

Table 2. Alcohol policy: funding sources and recipients

SOURCE	RECIPIENT	AMOUNT (WHERE KNOWN)	PURPOSE / SIGNIFICANCE
Miljonlotteriet (Swedish lottery, wholly owned by IOGT-NTO)	IOGT-NTO, Movendi's Swedish member organization	>SEK 1.6bn surplus over 15 years; returns fell from SEK 133m (2018) to ~SEK 43m (2024)	IOGT-NTO's most important source of income. A temperance movement financed by gambling; in 2025 IOGT-NTO agreed to buy the Social Democrats' lottery business for SEK 57.5m.
Sida (Swedish government aid), via Forum Syd/ForumCiv	IOGT-NTO Movement	~SEK 12m/yr (2010–12); SEK 63.3m committed 2025–29 (SEK 19.4m paid by mid-2026)	Agreement explicitly funds “policy advocacy” and “social-norm change” on alcohol, alongside Movendi, GAPA and NCD Alliance
Swedish Institute (government agency)	Movendi International and member organizations	Not disclosed	“Be Loud For Change” alcohol-and-cancer campaign (2021–23) designed to “drive policy change”; 2022 conference with WHO Europe.
GiveWell / Open Philanthropy via RESET Alcohol	Vital Strategies (administrator); Movendi a named consortium partner	US\$15m (Dec. 2021) plus US\$10m (2024); US\$2m of the first grant for global partners incl. Movendi; Movendi's share undisclosed	Work in 15 or more countries to raise alcohol taxes and restrict availability and marketing; US\$2.7m for staff embedded in government.
Charity Entrepreneurship / Effective Altruism donors	Center for Alcohol Policy Solutions (CAPS), founded by Kristína Šperková, then Movendi's international president	US\$63,000 seed grant (2021); CAPS then secured ~US\$800,000/yr for 2.5 years through its cooperation with Movendi, Vital Strategies and UIC	Seed money that helped lay the groundwork for the Sri Lanka “investment case”; CE says it was crucial to Sri Lanka's selection for RESET.
European Union (Erasmus+)	NormShift consortium (Movendi project)	Not disclosed (grant 2024-1-SE02-KA220-YOU-000257285)	Youth “social norms” project; EU funding also listed in Movendi's lobby-register filings.
Norad (Norwegian aid)	FORUT (IOGT-affiliated development NGO; GAPA secretariat)	Not quantified here	Development-framed alcohol prevention in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malawi, Sierra Leone.
Norway (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	WHO SAFER (not Movendi directly)	NOK 5m/yr from 2020	Ecosystem funding for the WHO program in which Movendi is a civil-society partner.
Movendi itself (outgoing)	CISUR researchers (Stockwell, Naimi, Sherk)	Not disclosed	Research funding and sponsored travel/meals for scientists behind Canada's guidance.

Sources: note 66.

Two things stand out. Much of the money is public: Nordic taxpayers and the EU underwrite a group that lobbies those same governments. And the newest stream is Effective Altruism philanthropy routed through Vital Strategies, which pays not just for research but for advisers placed inside government ministries.

Movendi's share of RESET funding, its payments to CISUR researchers, and the value of its Swedish Institute and Erasmus+ grants have never been publicly itemized.

5.8 Closing Word

The Good Templars have not abandoned their goals; they have just changed their methods. A movement that once marched for prohibition now works through WHO technical programs, EU consultation mechanisms, regranting consortia and a small number of sympathetic researchers to present its conclusions as a neutral “global consensus.”

None of this is illegal, and advocacy groups are allowed to make their case.

But the public is entitled to know when the “independent” science behind drinking guidelines is being funded by an abstinence organization, and when a government’s tax advisor is also a lobbyist.

Case Study: AI Safety

The same donors who fund the alcohol tax campaign also fund the movement to regulate and restrict artificial intelligence. They're using the same pipeline and tactics, albeit at a far larger scale.

6.1 The advocates

The Center for AI Safety (CAIS) plays the role Movendi plays for alcohol. In May 2023, it organized a one-sentence statement, signed by hundreds of researchers and executives, declaring that “mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war.”⁶⁷

Alongside it stand MIRI, the Future of Life Institute, and a growing roster of policy shops, many of them funded by Open Philanthropy.⁶⁸

6.2 The doctrine: extinction risk

“No safe level” has an AI equivalent: the claim that advanced models pose an existential threat to humanity.

The argument works the same way. A contested projection becomes an unquestionable premise, and once the downside is framed as extinction, any restriction looks acceptable, whatever it costs.

At the movement's far end, MIRI and PauseAI call for an international treaty halting frontier AI development,⁶⁹ the AI version of the Framework Convention on Alcohol Control that temperance groups have long proposed.

6.3 Certify

The certifying bodies are taking shape. The International AI Safety Report, chaired by Yoshua Bengio, presents itself as a scientific consensus document for governments.⁷⁰

67. Center for AI Safety, “Statement on AI Risk,” May 30, 2023, <https://www.safe.ai/work/statement-on-ai-risk>.

68. Open Philanthropy, “Center for AI Safety — General Support (2023),” <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/grants/center-for-ai-safety-general-support>; “Machine Intelligence Research Institute — General Support (2020),” <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/grants/machine-intelligence-research-institute-general-support-2020>; “Future of Life Institute — Artificial Intelligence Risk Reduction,” <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/grants/future-of-life-institute-artificial-intelligence-risk-reduction>.

69. Machine Intelligence Research Institute, “A Draft of a Treaty, with Annotations,” online resources for Eliezer Yudkowsky and Nate Soares, If Anyone Builds It, Everyone Dies (Little, Brown, 2025), <https://ifanyonebuildsit.com/13/a-draft-of-a-treaty-with-annotations>. PauseAI, “PauseAI Proposal,” n.d., <https://pauseai.info/proposal>.

70. Yoshua Bengio et al., International AI Safety Report (UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, January 29, 2025), <https://internationalaisafetyreport.org/publication/international-ai-safety-report-2025>.

In August 2025, the UN General Assembly created an Independent International Scientific Panel on AI, often likened to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and in February 2026 it approved the panel's 40 members by a vote of 117 to 2, over the objections of the United States.⁷¹

If the WHO certifies for alcohol, this panel certifies for AI.

6.4 Embed

The closest parallel to RESET's embedded ministry staff is the Horizon Institute for Public Service. Horizon, funded largely by Open Philanthropy, places fellows in congressional offices, federal agencies, and think tanks, and reporting by Politico in 2023 documented how these fellows ended up shaping AI policy from inside the government.⁷²

In RESET's focus countries, the donors pay for staff inside government agencies. In Washington, they pay for staff inside Congress.

6.5 Incorporate

The laws are arriving. Colorado's 2024 AI Act gave companies an affirmative defense if they followed the NIST AI Risk Management Framework or ISO/IEC 42001, incorporation by reference in its plainest form; the legislature repealed and rewrote the law in May 2026, before it took effect.⁷³

California's SB 1047, co-sponsored by the CAIS Action Fund, was vetoed in 2024,⁷⁴ but its successor, SB 53, became law in 2025.⁷⁵ New York followed with the RAISE Act.⁷⁶ In Brussels, the EU's General-Purpose AI Code of Practice turns voluntary commitments into de facto compliance requirements.⁷⁷

71. UNGA, Resolution 79/325, see note 10. Edith M. Lederer, "UN Approves 40-Member Scientific Panel on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence over US Objections," Associated Press, February 12, 2026, <https://www.news4jax.com/tech/2026/02/13/un-approves-40-member-scientific-panel-on-the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-over-us-objections/>.

72. Bordelon, "How a Billionaire-Backed Network of AI Advisers Took Over Washington," see note 4.

73. Colorado General Assembly, SB24-205, Consumer Protections for Artificial Intelligence (2024), codified at C.R.S. § 6-1-1701 et seq., <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-205>. Colorado General Assembly, SB26-189 (2026), signed May 14, 2026, which repeals and reenacts SB24-205 with effect from January 1, 2027, <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb26-189>.

74. Office of Senator Scott Wiener, "Senator Wiener Responds to Governor Newsom Vetoing Landmark AI Bill," September 29, 2024, <https://sd11.senate.ca.gov/news/senator-wiener-responds-governor-newsom-vetoing-landmark-ai-bill>.

75. Office of Governor Gavin Newsom, September 29, 2025, see note 4.

76. Office of Governor Kathy Hochul, December 19, 2025, see note 4.

77. European Commission, "The General-Purpose AI Code of Practice," July 10, 2025, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/contents-code-gpai>.

6.6 Fund

Open Philanthropy's AI portfolio runs into the hundreds of millions of dollars. It includes \$55 million to found Georgetown's Center for Security and Emerging Technology in 2019,⁷⁸ grants to CAIS, Horizon, and the Future of Life Institute, and a \$30 million grant to OpenAI in 2017 that came with a board seat for Holden Karnofsky.⁷⁹

6.7 The bootleggers

Here the AI case goes further than alcohol.

In alcohol, the bootleggers are finance ministries chasing revenue. In AI, they're the largest labs. Licensing regimes, compute thresholds, and liability rules raise costs for everyone, but only a handful of well-capitalized firms can absorb them. Open-source developers and new entrants can't.

The overlap is direct. Dustin Moskovitz was an early investor in Anthropic,⁸⁰ and in February 2026, Anthropic gave \$20 million to Public First Action, a political group backing AI regulation in the midterm elections. It gave another \$20 million in July 2026, which it says is for public education and policy work rather than candidates.⁸¹

When the safety funder and the commercial winner overlap, the Baptists and the bootleggers are the same people.

6.8 The counterweight

As with alcohol, accountable institutions are pushing back. The federal government is moving to preempt the patchwork of state AI laws with a single national framework.⁸²

For consumers, the stakes are simple. Fewer competitors mean higher prices, slower innovation, and less choice, and the open-source tools that let people run AI on their own terms are the first to go.

78. Open Philanthropy, "Georgetown University — Center for Security and Emerging Technology," January 2019, <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/grants/georgetown-university-center-for-security-and-emerging-technology>.

79. Open Philanthropy, "OpenAI — General Support," March 2017, <https://www.openphilanthropy.org/grants/openai-general-support>.

80. Anthropic, "Anthropic Raises \$124 Million to Build More Reliable, General AI Systems," May 28, 2021, <https://www.anthropic.com/news/anthropic-raises-124-million-to-build-more-reliable-general-ai-systems>.

81. Reuters, "Anthropic to Donate \$20 Million," see note 10. Anthropic, "Donating Another \$20 Million to Public First Action," July 21, 2026, <https://www.anthropic.com/news/donation-public-first-action>.

82. Executive Order 14365, "Ensuring a National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence," December 11, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/12/eliminating-state-law-obstruction-of-national-artificial-intelligence-policy/>.

Comparison: One Machine, Two Products

Put the two cases side by side and the shape is hard to miss.

Table 3. Alcohol and AI safety, stage by stage

PIPELINE STAGE	ALCOHOL	AI SAFETY
Funder	Open Philanthropy via GiveWell; Charity Entrepreneurship; Swedish lottery and Nordic aid money	Open Philanthropy / Coefficient Giving; Moskowitz
Advocate	Movendi International	Center for AI Safety
Research shop	CAPS, CISUR, IHME	CSET, MIRI
Certifier	WHO (SAFER, 3 by 35)	International AI Safety Report; UN Scientific Panel on AI
Embedded staff	RESET's \$2.7 million for ministry staff	Horizon fellows in Congress and agencies
Legal vehicle	Excise schedules, labels, drinking guidelines	State frontier-model laws, NIST/ISO safe harbors, EU Code of Practice
Entrenchment	IMF/World Bank conditions; court deference; treaty proposal	State law patchwork; halt-treaty proposals; UN panels
Bootleggers	Revenue-seeking finance ministries	Incumbent AI companies
Counterweight	2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans	Federal preemption

Source: sections 5 and 6.

In both cases, cost-effectiveness modeling stands in for democratic debate over tradeoffs. Embedded staff blur the line between lobbyist and government adviser. Moral claims are presented as settled science, and critics are dismissed as “Big Alcohol” or “Big Tech accelerationists.”

But the analogy has limits, and we should name them. Alcohol control relies on fiscal tools, while AI safety relies on licensing and liability. The alcohol campaign targets fiscally strained governments in the Global South, while the AI campaign targets legislatures in the richest countries.

RESET is a small bet for Effective Altruism, while AI safety is its flagship cause. And Movendi is an old organization now drawing on new money, while most AI safety groups were built by that money from the start.

None of that changes the core finding. The pipeline doesn't care what product it's pointed at.

It won't stop at alcohol and AI, either. Sugary drinks already sit beside alcohol and tobacco in the WHO's "health tax" push, and nicotine alternatives, ultra-processed foods, and gambling are drawing the same arguments. Whatever comes next, the funders already have the playbook.

Policy Recommendations

Rather than accept a system in which privately funded networks write public rules, governments should restore the accountability that ordinary rulemaking is supposed to carry.

- **Disclose who pays for “technical assistance.”** Governments should require registration and funding disclosure for any outside group that drafts legislation or tax schedules, as they would for lobbyists. Fiscally sponsored projects should report their donors and spending separately rather than disappearing into a sponsor’s consolidated return.
- **Apply conflict-of-interest rules to everyone.** WHO member states should insist that the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors applies to advocacy groups as strictly as it applies to industry. Authors of national dietary guidance should disclose funding from advocacy organizations, and agencies should treat it as a real conflict, not a “low” one.
- **Stop turning outside guidance into law by reference.** Congress and state legislatures should bar agencies from giving binding effect to external guidance without full notice-and-comment review, with sunset clauses so incorporated standards are re-examined. After *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo* (2024),⁸³ courts should give no special deference to agency-adopted outside guidance.
- **Keep tax policy sovereign.** Excise mandates don’t belong in IMF and World Bank loan conditions, and any memorandum of understanding between a government and a philanthropic consortium should be made public.
- **Protect open competition in AI.** Congress should adopt a national AI framework that protects open-source development and rejects licensing regimes that only the largest AI companies can afford.

83. *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, 603 U.S. 369 (2024), https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/23pdf/22-451_7m58.pdf.

Conclusion

In *Temperance Revived*, we proposed a culture of consumer choice as the counterweight to neoprohibitionism. That still holds when examining Effective Altruism, but it must extend to expertise itself.

A culture of consumer choice means scientific pluralism instead of manufactured consensus. It means adults who are trusted to weigh risks for themselves. And it means technical guidance that answers to elected institutions, not to the donors who paid for it.

No one denies that heavy drinking can wreck lives, or that new technologies carry real risks. A free society can warn, treat addiction, and punish real harm, and it can continue to deliver value for consumers.

What it shouldn't do is let a handful of billionaire-funded networks write dietary, fiscal, and technology law for the planet.

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