

**Forum:** Youth Assembly

**Issue:** Developing Strategies to Reduce the Levels of Tobacco Consumption

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## Introduction

[Tobacco](#), as described by the [World Health Organization](#) is the “leading cause of death, illness and impoverishment”, and has resulted in over 8 million deaths per year. Worldwide, it’s been estimated that 1.3 billion people use tobacco products, 80% of which are in low and middle income countries. Furthermore, the use of tobacco has put burdens on the world economy. According to the WHO, tobacco use has resulted in an estimated US\$ 1.4 trillion annually in healthcare costs and loss of productivity.

The usage of tobacco is a global [epidemic](#), posing a severe health threat throughout the world. Tobacco not only puts their users at risk, but also the public. Users can develop serious tobacco-related illnesses such as, cancer, diabetes, stroke, heart and lung diseases... Tobacco also associates with second-hand smoking, causing strokes, lung cancer and heart disease. Inhaling tobacco exposes the body to over 7000 toxicants, harming almost every organ.

For many years, the tobacco industry was part of many illegal actions, whether it is the smuggling of their own products or misleading health claims. These illegal actions lead to an increase in the total sale of their products, by being untaxed and unregulated. Furthermore, the tobacco industry seems to be targeting a new generation of tobacco users, the youth, through the use of advertising, promotion and sponsorships. This persuades the youth to try tobacco products, which then increases the overall tobacco consumption. These are few of numerous strategies the tobacco industry uses in order to increase demand and sale of their products.

There have been many efforts made from both organizations like the WHO and the government in an attempt to control tobacco as well as decrease tobacco consumption. These efforts range from advertising bans to the regulation of tobacco package labelling. However, the

tobacco industry strategically continues to evade these bans and regulations. Without implementing effective and stringent policies, the number of tobacco users worldwide will only continue to rise at an alarming rate.

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is a health agency in the United States. They protect the American population from health threats.

### **Epidemic**

An epidemic is a rapid spread of a communicable disease affecting millions of people at a particular time.

### **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

The Food and Drug administration is a federal agency based in the United States, in charge of regulating all food, drugs, cosmetics...

### **Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)**

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is a treaty adopted by the WHO, aiming to reduce tobacco consumption.

### **Nicotine**

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug used in tobacco products.

### **Tobacco**

Tobacco is a plant, part of the Solanaceae family.

### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

The World Health Organization is an agency of the United Nations, responsible for handling global health threats.

## WHO MPOWER

MPOWER is a set of 6 measures, with the objective of reducing tobacco consumption. As by the World Health Organization, these high impact measures include, “monitor tobacco use and prevention policies, protect people from tobacco smoke, offer help to quit tobacco use, warn about the dangers of tobacco, enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and raise taxes on tobacco”.

## Key Issues

### Misleading health claims

Tobacco companies have made countless false and misleading claims suggesting that the tobacco product is less harmful, less toxic or has a lower risk of developing diseases. However, these ‘less harmful’ tobacco products are just as dangerous and damaging to the public's health. Over the last 50 years, the risk of passing away or developing tobacco-related diseases has drastically increased simultaneously, when most smokers’ switched to ‘less toxic’ or ‘less harmful’ cigarettes. The tobacco industry has yet to publicly accept their use of these false and/or misleading claims. Without policies implemented, aiming to prevent these false claims, the numbers of deaths and diseases will continue to rise.

### Smuggling of tobacco products

For decades, the tobacco industry has been smuggling their own cigarettes, shisha and smokeless tobacco across borders. In 1998, internal documents from 7 tobacco companies and 2 affiliated organizations were made public. These documents belonged to Philip Morris Incorporated, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation, the Tobacco Institute and the Council for Tobacco Research. The documents revealed that smuggling of their products were one of the fundamental parts of tobacco companies’ business strategies. As a result, it reduced the average market price, leading to a rise in their total sales. Furthermore, these products undermine control measures as they are untaxed, unregulated, do not include health warnings and/or don’t follow any of the packaging laws. As a consequence, these products are more available and accessible to people especially among the youth and people suffering from poverty, leading to an increased use of tobacco products. In addition,

poverty rates will rise significantly due to the money spent on tobacco as well as the cost of treating the negative health effects.

### **Advertisement, promotion and sponsorships**

Tobacco advertising and promotion enhances social acceptability of both tobacco products and the tobacco company itself. The tobacco industry claims that advertising is only used for brand share and that it does not increase total consumption of their products. However, leaked tobacco company documents have proven otherwise. Internal documents show that advertising is crucial in giving the motivation for people to smoke or start smoking and it increases total consumption as well as promoting brand share. Moreover, they use sponsorships to allow them to effectively reach a global audience and improve their image.

#### *Targeting the youth*

The tobacco industry successfully targets the youth in their advertising and promotion, increasing the likelihood that they will begin smoking or use any tobacco products. They influence the youth into believing that using tobacco products is a 'normal behaviour'. For example, children are more aware of these tobacco companies/brands due to the frequent sponsoring or sporting events or celebrity endorsements. Celebrity endorsements urge and influence children to be just like their favourite celebrity or the celebrity that they idolize. According to the WHO, the majority of smokers began using tobacco products before the age of 18.

### **Nicotine and addiction**

Nicotine is the main, highly addictive drug used in tobacco. When consuming nicotine, it releases a chemical called dopamine in the brain. It makes the person feel good, making it harder for someone to quit. Like many drugs, nicotine makes the brain continuously repeat the same behaviour. Nicotine puts smokers at high risk of becoming lifelong smokers as well as being exposed to numerous toxic chemicals. Teens are particularly sensitive to nicotine, since their brains are developing, it makes them more vulnerable to getting addicted. Three out of four teens who started smoking in high school will continue to smoke as adults.

### **Negative health effects**

Consuming tobacco is extremely harmful to your health, harming nearly every organ in the body. Every substance used in these tobacco products are toxic, ranging from nicotine, to tar, and carbon monoxide. Cigarettes contain around 600 ingredients and when burned it creates over 7,000 chemicals, no less than 69 of these chemicals cause cancer. Consuming these tobacco products increases the risk of countless diseases including heart disease which could then lead to strokes or heart attacks. Along with an increase in infections and having a greater risk of lung conditions like emphysema.

### *Second-hand smoke*

The combination of smoke exhaled by the smoker and the burning end of either a cigarette, cigar or pipe could get inhaled involuntarily by non-smokers. The smoke released from the burning tobacco and the smoke exhaled is more toxic than the smoke inhaled. Both adults and children who are often around or near smokers are at high risk of developing health problems. A few of the health problems caused by second-hand smoke include: lung cancer, respiratory infections and asthma. According to the [CDC](#), second-hand smoke causes over 41,000 deaths in the US alone, approximately 7,330 of those deaths are from lung cancer and 33,950 of these deaths are from heart disease.

## **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

The World Health Organization, founded in 1948, has played a significant role towards the improvement of the public's health and the quality of human life. The organization is responsible for purveying on serious global health matters, within the UN. Furthermore, they provide support to nations as well as monitor and assess global health trends. The WHO has countlessly made efforts to reduce tobacco consumption. In response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic, the WHO member states have adopted the [WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#). WHO FCTC strongly emphasizes the importance of using a variety of measures to manage as well as reduce supply and demand of tobacco products. In addition, in July 1998, the WHO established the Tobacco Free Initiative. The TFIs main mission is to reduce the global burden of both diseases and deaths caused by tobacco use. Their objectives are, to increase the number of countries with sufficient tobacco control policies and to ensure that

countries are effectively equipped to implement methods to control tobacco in order to maximize the number of countries adopting and being part of the WHO FCTC.

### United States of America (USA)

Smoking and tobacco consumption in the US has always been a major issue, and began to rapidly gain popularity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through the increased use of advertising and promotion. According to the NCBI, in the 1960s, tobacco rates were at its highest peak, with over 40% of the adult population smoking in the US. Over the last few decades, US smoking rates have remarkably decreased, from 40% in 1960 to 16.1% in the present time, as reported by the CDC. However, this implies that more than 30 million adults still smoke. Stated by the CDC, each year, over 480,000 deaths occur due to cigarette smoking in the US, with 41,000 of these deaths are caused by the exposure of second-hand smoke. In addition, following China, India and Brazil, the United States is the world's fourth largest producer of tobacco. On July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, the US passed down a new, effective law banning tobacco companies from using words like 'low' or 'mild' on their labels and advertising of their products. In addition, on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019, President Trump signed a legislation to increase the minimum age from 18 to 21 for the sale of any tobacco products. By increasing the minimum age to purchase any tobacco products, it will further help protect the youth from beginning to smoke or use any sort of tobacco. As a result, there will be a decrease in the number deaths, disease and costs from consuming tobacco.

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

CDC, founded in 1946, is the leading public health agency in the United States, focusing on implementing strategies to prevent and control disease outbreaks, health promotion and education to overall improve the health of the nation's population. They ensure that all food and water are safe, preventing the population from developing any health complications. Moreover, they work along member nations to reduce any health-related threats to the people in the United States. When a health threat is present, the qualified professionals at the CDC attempt to discover what is causing people to get sick and how they could solve the issue before it becomes catastrophic. Furthermore, by increasing their understanding of the health threat and controlling its source, they keep disease from spreading to other nations.

In 1999, the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) launched the National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP), which aimed to decrease the number of diseases and deaths caused by tobacco products. The NTCP is the sole national program, providing assistance to not only all 50 states in the US, but also the 8 US territories, 8 national networks, The District of Columbia and 12 tribal support organizations. They have also contributed 72 million American dollars to provide assistance to tobacco control programs. The main goals of these programs are to avoid people between the ages of 15-24 from beginning to smoke, encouraging the public to stop consuming any form of tobacco, decreasing the hazard caused by second-hand smoke, finding and eradicating any disparities relating to tobacco.

## China

China is the world's most populated country, with a population of 1.4 billion. It is both the largest producer and consumer of tobacco in the world, having around 300.8 million smokers, which is almost one-third of the total number of smokers worldwide. According to the WHO, "about one in every three cigarettes smoked in the world is smoked in China". At least once a week, more than 700 million non-smokers, with about 180 million children, are exposed to second-hand smoke in China. In 2003, China signed the WHO FCTC and confirmed in 2005. In 2006, the WHO FCTC obtained legal force in China. The WHO is assisting China to the enforcement of [MPOWER](#) measures, which are 6 high impact strategies and measures that could reduce the overall demand of tobacco products. China has yet to implement a national smoke-free law, however, they enforced a smoke-free law in Beijing. This law became official in 2015, stating that all indoor public places are smoke free including: restaurants, hotels, airports and public transport facilities. This law protects 20 million people in Beijing, China.

## Singapore

Singapore is one of the strictest countries in the world, implementing firm rules and policies citizens and tourists must follow. The continuous devotion to the rules is what makes Singapore's economy one of the most stable economies in the world with their standards of living being one the highest in South East Asia. To protect their population from the harms caused by tobacco, Singapore has enforced laws regulating the manufacture and sale of tobacco products. In the early 1970s, they started banning smoking in public places, especially in buses, theatres and cinemas. In the present day, the law bans the sale of any tobacco products through either vending machines or the internet. Furthermore, it is illegal to sell single

cigarettes, small packets of cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and waterpipe tobacco. In addition, anyone under the age of 18 is not allowed to purchase any tobacco products. Their tobacco control measures are based on the NTCP, aiming to make Singapore as the country of non-smokers, introduced in 1986. Their stringent policies and laws resulted in Singapore to have one of the lowest adult smoking prevalence in the world, having only 13 percent.

### Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

The [Food and Drug Administration](#) was founded 1906, operating mainly in the United States. They are in charge of protecting the public's health through managing and controlling nations foods, drugs, cosmetics, tobacco products and more. They continue to regulate the manufacturing, marketing and distribution of tobacco products in order to protect people from the damage caused by consuming tobacco. Their main strategy to control these products is based on science. The FDA has gained the ability to implement measures that could make tobacco products less addictive, less appealing to the public and overall decrease the harm caused by these products. On June 22, 2009 the Congress passed the FDA Center for Tobacco Products, aiming to make death and disease caused by tobacco part of America's past. They launched their first campaign in 2014 called, "The Real Cost", educating the youth on the negative effects of smoking. This campaign was one of the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products many accomplishments. By regulating the products produced from the tobacco industry and educating the youth on the health risks involved, not only did the FDA decrease the number of people using tobacco but they prevented 587,000 children between the ages of 11 and 19 from starting to use tobacco as well.

### Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
1492	Christopher Columbus gets introduced to dried tobacco leaves as a gift from the American Indians.	Tobacco was later introduced to Europe, where it began gaining popularity.



<b>1881</b>	James Bonsack invents the cigarette-making machine.	The Bonsack machine could roll up to 210 cigarettes per minute. This machine led to an increase in cigarette production by 3.4% each year.
<b>June 1906</b>	The Food and Drug Administration was formed.	The FDA would later become the leading federal agency in charge of protecting the public's health through the regulation of labels on packaging and ensuring the safety of all food products. They continue to control the manufacture, marketing, and distribution of all tobacco products.
<b>1940</b>	The Global Lung Cancer Epidemic begins.	The rise in popularity of the cigarette habits led to the global lung cancer epidemic. It was recognized as the cause of the epidemic. Lung cancer caused around 1.76 million deaths worldwide.
<b>1954</b>	Sir Richard Doll confirms the link between lung cancer and smoking.	With Sir Austin Bradford Hill, he published an article in the British Medical Journal warning smokers that they are more likely to die from lung cancer rather than non-smokers. This article led

		to an increase in research on more of the health effects smoking poses on the public.
<b>1955</b>	The Federal Trade Commission revealed that the health benefits stated on cigarette ads are all false.	This led the FTC to implement voluntary guidelines forbidding cigarette companies from stating false health benefits.
<b>1966</b>	Health warnings start to emerge on cigarette packs.	These health warnings on cigarette packs lead to an increased health knowledge among both smokers and non-smokers.
<b>1984</b>	The FDA approves 'Nicorette'.	The nicotine gum helps smokers manage their cravings and reduce their dependence on nicotine. This will then make it somewhat easier for smokers to quit. This gum led to the creation of new replacements for smoking. All forms of smoking replacements, such as gums and spays, increased the smoking cessation rates by about 150% to 200%.
<b>1999</b>	The CDCs Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) launched the National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP).	From 2009 to 2017, the National Tobacco Control Program reduced the

		prevalence of tobacco use by 6%, from 34.6% to 28.6%.
<b>2003</b>	WHO adopted the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control	For countries that had weak tobacco control measures, the WHO FCTC have introduced more effective measures and in countries that already have tobacco control measures, they have made efforts to strengthen them.
<b>2008</b>	WHO introduces the MPOWER measures.	Once these measures are all implemented, it could reduce the prevalence of smoking in the Eastern Mediterranean region.
<b>2014</b>	FDA Center for Tobacco Products launches their first campaign, 'The Real Cost'	This campaign educated the youth on the negative effects of smoking. It reduced and in some cases prevented youth from trying to smoke.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

### FDA's ban on 'Light' cigarette descriptors

One of the main sectors the FDA continues to control every stage in the making and the sale of all tobacco products. Over the past few years, cigarette companies used words like 'light' or 'mild' on the labels of their packaging. Research has shown that these words are misleading to consumers and many smokers believe that those 'light' cigarettes are less harmful to their health compared to other cigarettes. Hence, in June 2010, the FDA banned the use of 'light' or any other similar words that convey a message that the product is less harmful on any cigarette

packs. Cigarette companies were obligated to remove such words from their packaging and stop the sale of cigarette packs with those misleading words on it. Following the removal of those words, the number of misperceptions temporarily decreased in both the UK and Australia. Nevertheless, the tobacco industry has found a way to evade the ban through the use of color on their packaging. According to the WHO, a year after the ban, it was reported that 92% of smokers can identify the brand they usually use and 68% were able to name the color linked with the brand. They used color on the cigarette packs and advertising as a way to express a message or to communicate information. Consumers are linking the color of the cigarette pack to the ones they used to buy, therefore, being fooled into thinking that the cigarette is less harmful. In order to effectively eliminate all false beliefs, future policies and regulations regarding the packaging of tobacco products must consider both direct and indirect messages being delivered.

### **Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act of 2002**

Each year, the tobacco industry spends billions on advertising with only one sole purpose, to influence the youth to smoke. People who are exposed to tobacco advertising often find it to be appealing, increasing the chance of them trying the product. In 1986, a ban on all tobacco product advertising on TVs and radios took place. However, instead of using TVs and radios to advertise, tobacco companies moved on to billboards, magazines and many other forms of advertising as another way to among the public. As a response to this, numerous countries across the world began restricting or banning on other forms of advertising. For example, through the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002, the UK, banned advertising on billboards and other forms of advertising in 2003. In the same year, tobacco sponsorships at sporting events began to gradually decrease, thus, lowering the dependence on the revenue of tobacco companies. This prevented tobacco companies from reaching a global audience and reduced their influence.

Despite all the efforts made in restricting or banning such advertising forms, the tobacco industry is starting to strategically promote their product through the use of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. This is a significant problem, which will allow the tobacco industry to reach a new audience, the youth. They are targeting events that attract a large amount of people and influencers, urging them to share pictures of their sponsored adventures as a way to reach a new generation of smokers.

## CDC Intervention

CDC is one of the leading US health institutes delivering numerous efforts in order to decrease the number of deaths and prevent the number of tobacco-related diseases from rising. They continue to support tobacco control campaigns and programs aiming to limit the exposure of tobacco to the youth, prevent the youth from starting to consume any tobacco products and helping people quit using tobacco. In 2018, CDC gave over 72 million dollars to tobacco control campaigns and programs, further showing their support in decreasing tobacco consumption. In 2012, CDC started “the first-ever paid national tobacco education campaign” (*About the Campaign 2020*) known as ‘Tips, aiming to encourage the adult population of the US to try and quit smoking. This campaign is different from other campaigns with similar goals, as it does not only educate them on the risks smoking poses on their health but it entertains people who have severe health conditions either caused by smoking or exposure to second-hand smoke. They provide people who smoke with resources that could help them quit. From the support given by the CDC, state quit lines are capable of managing the rising number of calls received in the course of the ‘Tips’ campaign.

## Possible Solutions

### Increase price

One of the most effective ways to control tobacco consumption, is to increase price on all tobacco products. Increasing the price on tobacco products through taxation, reduces demand of tobacco and further motivates people to stop using tobacco. Moreover, it reduces youth tobacco consumption and helps poor people to stop using tobacco by making it less affordable for them. Not only does it help poor families reallocate their money on essential goods, but it also increases productivity among them. Furthermore, it increases revenues, benefiting the government. The WHO stated that in high income countries, when tax increases on tobacco by 10%, tobacco consumption will be reduced by 4%. However, the outcome of increasing prices of tobacco products is likely to have a bigger impact in low and middle income countries rather than high income countries. As the prices of more expensive tobacco products increase, it is vital to substantially increase the prices of the cheaper tobacco products in order to prevent

people from switching to cheaper products. To ensure maximum impact, the prices should be increased more on the most used tobacco products and the cheaper tobacco products.

### **Complete ban on explicit and implicit tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorships.**

A complete ban on both explicit and implicit tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship could significantly reduce tobacco consumption. This could also prevent tobacco exposure to the youth and decrease the chance of them beginning to use tobacco products. It ensures that the public, especially children, from getting influenced by the marketing efforts from the tobacco industry. In addition, the behaviour of children regarding tobacco use is situated by marketing. Furthermore, once a marketing ban is placed, the overall consumer demand of tobacco products will gradually decrease. To make these bans as effective as possible, complete bans on all forms of advertising, promotion and sponsorship must be implemented.

### **Smoke-free policies**

As discussed previously, the exposure to second-hand smoke is a major public health issue we are facing today which is the reason why implementing smoke-free policies are vital to combat the effects of tobacco use. Smoke-free must be placed to ensure the safety of non-smokers by reducing their exposure to second-hand smoke as well as prevent both the youth and young adults from starting to smoke. Not only does smoke-free laws and policies protect non-smokers but it also further motivates tobacco users to quit. It also improves the health of the workers and the general public. Bans should be put in place in all indoor places prohibiting the use of tobacco products, especially cigarettes. Furthermore, there should also be policies put in place to either restrict the use of tobacco products or completely ban the use of tobacco products in public places.

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## Appendices

- I. WHO, The truth about the tobacco industry ...in its own words

<https://www.who.int/tobacco/media/en/TobaccoExplained.pdf?ua=1>

- II. WHO, Tobacco

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>