

This bulletin highlights the key activities, focusing on Tobacco Control and TB, carried out in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Nepal, Philippines, Timor-Leste and Vietnam during September 2022.

September 2022

Vol. 003

INDONESIA

HIGHLIGHTS

Helping farmers grow a better future

Research shows that tobacco growing is neither safe – it can result in green tobacco sickness – nor lucrative, with the World Bank noting that most Indonesian farmers rely only partially on tobacco income.

Magelang Regency, Central Java is a major producer of tobacco. The Union together with Muhammadiyah Tobacco Control Support Centre, The University of Magelang (MTCC UMM) are working with farmers in Central Java to create mitigation solutions for tobacco farmers and counter industry messages about farming.

One of the initiatives was the creation of the Muhammadiyah School for Farmers which supports farmers to move away from tobacco farming. The school was borne out of the realization that many farmers would like to move away from tobacco farming but lack the skills and knowledge to do so. In addition to emphasizing the importance of crop diversification, the school focuses on improving farmer welfare and skills; increasing Indonesia's food security; and inspiring a new generation of farmers.



The Union visit to Windusari District to witness firsthand the success stories from the farmers.



The Union meeting with tobacco farmers from Tlahap Temanggung



Farmer, Mr Istanto and Dr Tara Singh Barn, The Union, with harvested sweet potatoes

61-year old Istanto from Candisari Village, Windusari District has been helping to drive the program by sharing his story with other farmers. In 2013, he switched planting to sweet potatoes and saw his profits grow four-fold. Following his example and with the aid of the school, tobacco farmers from 12 out of 20 villages in the Windusari District have started growing sweet potatoes in addition or instead of tobacco.

Overall, The Union in collaboration with the farmers school, Indonesia Multicultural Farmers Forum and MTCC UMM, has helped approximately 2,000 farmers in Central Java shift or diversify their crops to include produce such as sweet potatoes, coffee and chili. The program has also engaged over 400 youth and millennial farmers to shift attitudes towards tobacco farming. The Magelang regency has reduced the area of tobacco plantation from 7,573 hectares in 2012 to 5,265 hectares in 2022.

BUILDING MAYORS' LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Kulon Progo - a whole community approach to tobacco control

The Union team met with the Kulon Progo Regency to renew commitments for tobacco control. The Union also met with SEMARKU a unique organisation consisting of youth volunteers, civil police and local health officers that drive tobacco control efforts in the city. Such collaboration between sectors and all levels of community is an excellent example for other regions to synergize smoke-free implementation and enforcement.



Meeting with Kulon Progo Regency



Meeting with Mayor of Bogor

Sustaining partnership with Bogor city

The Union team met with the Mayor of Bogor city to discuss strengthening tobacco and TB control, as well as to get an endorsement for the plans of the upcoming 7th APCAT Mayors Summit, of which the Mayor is the co-chair.

Committing to create smoke-free Sukabumi

No Tobacco Community, Bogor, had a meeting with Mayor of Sukabumi. The Mayor acknowledged the importance of smoke-free and tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS) ban. The Mayor also agreed to implement smoke-free areas, point of sale display ban and TAPS ban. The Mayor has endorsed the establishment of a smoke-free task force and issued a circular letter on the implementation and enforcement smoke-free.



Meeting with Mayor of Sukabumi



Smoke Free Workshop for the Youth at INA TIME

Bringing together young people to make cities smoke-free

Smoke Free Workshop for the Youth at INA TIME was participated by around 30 young people from high school and university. The workshop aimed to gain support from young people as peer educators and influencers and to support city government to implement smoke-free regulation. The Union, Denpasar Health Office and Young Leaders from Udayana University spoke about the importance of smoke-free and how the young generation can contribute to tobacco control programs.



Meeting with Mayor of Tangerang

Integrating tobacco control into tuberculosis programs in Tangerang City

The Union, along with ADINKES, held a meeting with Mayor of Tangerang to share the importance of integrating TB and tobacco control. The Mayor extended his appreciation and looks forward to further collaboration and partnership with The Union. Also discussed was a tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship ban in the city of Tangerang, as this is where the busiest international airport is located.

Building commitments and capacity of Palembang City

The Union held a meeting with Palembang Mayor Expert Staff for Economic and Development along with the related agencies such as Health Office, Civil Police, Education Agency, Tourism Agency, and Governance Department to provide technical assistance and strategic guidance for smoke-free. The Union also trained 50 officials in smoke-free enforcement best practices.



Meeting with Palembang Mayor Expert Staff for Economic and Development



The Union staff sharing smoke-free enforcement best practice

Committing to end tobacco epidemic

Head of The Union's partner Tobacco Control Support Centre (TCSC), Dr Sumarjati Arjoso has shown her commitment to ending the tobacco epidemic by donating an office space in her own personal property to TCSC.



TCSC office at Dr Sumarjati Arjoso's home

Joining hands to increase excise tax on tobacco products

The Tobacco Control Network handed letters of support from Tobacco Control Organizations to the Director General of Customs and Excise to show the support on increasing excise tax for 2023 and to simplify the tax tier. The network also requested the Director General to support tobacco control by monitoring the use of excise stamps, as they are found covering the pictorial health warnings.



Meeting with the Director General of Custom and Excise

BANGLADESH

Uniting to build tobacco-free Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Mayors' Summit for Tobacco Control and Disease Prevention was held in Cox's Bazar on 23-24 September 2022.

The mayors decided that strong steps will be taken to implement the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) (Amendment) Act, 2013 and Tobacco Control Implementation Guidelines for Local Government Institutes in order to prevent tobacco-related diseases and deaths.

The Mayor Alliance for Healthy Cities, Cox's Bazar Municipality, Dhamrai Municipality, Tobacco Control and Research Cell of Dhaka International University and Aid Foundation jointly arranged the event, with the technical support of The Union and Asia Pacific Cities Alliance for Health and Development (APCAT).

Mayors from 18 municipalities, including the Mayor of Rangpur City Corporation, participated in the conference.



Bangladesh Mayors' Summit 2022

VIETNAM

Working together to strengthen tobacco control law enforcement

With The Union's support, VNTCF organized a policy workshop on tobacco control law enforcement. The purpose was to share experience on inspecting and monitoring the implementation of the law and discuss measures for strengthening enforcement. More than 100 delegates from ministries and provinces across the country participated in the workshop. Representatives from the National Assembly's Social Committee and Office of the Government also attended the workshop. Good practices including integrating tobacco control within food safety inspections or applying technology to mobilize communities were shared.



Policy workshop on TC Law enforcement

Integrating tobacco control into GBVP activities



CCIHP meeting with Gender-based Violence Prevention Network

CCIHP, in collaboration with the Gender-based Violence Prevention Network, organized a meeting with its members to discuss the possibility of integrating tobacco control into the work of the network. Representatives from WHO, VNTCF and 20 member organizations attended. Several member organizations committed to include tobacco control into their work with young people. This was the first in a series of four meetings, which hope to develop a joint plan for monitoring the implementation of the tobacco control law.

Strengthening NCD and tobacco control measures

The Union provides technical and grant support to the National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP) at the Ministry of Health Cambodia. In September 2022, the NCHP participated in:

- a Ministry of Tourism meeting to review the draft standard operating procedures on the implementation of smoke-free environment in tourism facilities.
- a tax working group meeting about legislation and governance at the Ministry of Economy and Finance.
- a meeting about the progress of the Multilateral Action Plan for the Non-Communicable Diseases 2018-2022 in Siem Reap Province.
- a consultative workshop on increased tax on sugary drink in Phnom Penh.



Meeting to review the draft standard operating procedures on the implementation of smoke-free environment in tourism facilities



Capacity building training on Tobacco Cessation in Battambang province

Tobacco cessation training in Battambang Province

Capacity building training on tobacco cessation and counselling in the context of COVID-19 for healthcare professionals was conducted in Battambang Province. 26 healthcare professionals from 13 health centres and district referral hospitals participated in the training.

Press meeting on Nepal's journey to achieve 90% pictorial health warnings

Action Nepal held a press meet with chief editors and health journalists from online and print media. Action Nepal shared the mandate for the effective implementation of 90% Pictorial Health Warnings on tobacco packs. Tobacco companies' interventions and tactics to delay the implementation of the law were shared, and Action Nepal's lawyer talked about the overall litigation process from filing to winning the case.



Chief editors and health journalists attending the press meeting



Some examples of novel tobacco products

Technical support to bring health warnings on novel tobacco products

The Union provided technical assistance to the Department of Health in drafting the administrative order for the national guidelines on graphic health warnings for vaporized nicotine and non-nicotine products and novel tobacco products in accordance with Republic Act Nos. 11900 and 10643.

Capacity building of local government

The Union and ASH Philippines, conducted MPOWER training with the local government unit (LGU) of Tigaon, Camarines Sur, as well as a brief MPOWER and ordinance orientations to the LGU of Caramoan.



Brief MPOWER and Ordinance Orientation during the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) session in Caramoan Municipality



Transcend team providing the compliance monitoring training to SF task force enforcers

Compliance monitoring in three Benguet municipalities

The Union and Transcend conducted two MPOWER and deputation training sessions to 89 smoke-free task force enforcers in the Municipality of Mankayan and La Trinidad, Benguet. Transcend assisted three Benguet municipalities (Bokod, Mankayan, and La Trinidad) to conduct compliance monitoring and recorded 33 violations, including the presence of tobacco advertisements.



Smoke-free enforcers training in Aklan

Capacity building for smoke-free enforcement

Smoke-Free Aklan provided technical assistance to Ciriaco S. Tirol Hospital in Boracay Island, and Malay Municipal Hospital, Aklan, for the establishment of their tobacco control policies. Moreover, smoke-free enforcer training was provided to increase the knowledge of task force members on the effective enforcement and implementation of Municipal Comprehensive Smoke-Free policy.



Courtesy call visit with the City Health Officer of Baguio

Building close partnership with local health offices

The Union team met with the Department of Health Cordillera Administrative Regional Office and conducted several visits to the City Health Officer in Baguio City to discuss the upcoming APCAT, possible expansion to other provinces of CAR and support to the Regional Tobacco Control Network. The Union team also visited the smoke-free office and mental health counselling clinic.



Providing technical assistance to Marikina for smoke-free

The Union grantee, MMDA, assisted Marikina City in developing a customized Designated Smoking Area (DSA) checklist based on their City Ordinance. MMDA also inspected a total of 3,252 stores within the 100 meter perimeter of 183 schools in 15 Metro Manila cities, and identified 195 stores displaying tobacco ads.

Tackling disability, co-morbidities and risk factors associated with Tuberculosis: Real-time operational research in China

Traditionally, most TB programs focus on diagnosis and treatment only. For a long time, The Union has advocated for paying better attention to post-TB health due to considerable morbidity and disability after successfully completing anti-TB treatment.

The Union with Chinese National TB colleagues, the Johns Hopkins Centre for Tuberculosis and supported by the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases is studying whether assessments at the start and end of anti-TB treatment can be implemented, following recommendations made in [the previous 2021 study](#).

The study, which is taking place in eleven clinics in China, will determine if such comprehensive assessment and care is possible within the routine setting. Patients were being assessed for co-morbidities such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension and mental health disorders, for risk factors such as smoking, alcohol use, malnutrition and occupational exposure to silica and finally for disability using the six-minute walking test.

Timor-Leste's pre-testing for new rotation of Pictorial Health Warnings

The Union grantee, National Alliance for tobacco control Timor-Leste (ANCT-TL), conducted a pre-testing for the survey on assessing the effectiveness of pictorial health warnings and to identify the most effective health warning for new rotation in Timor-Leste. The pre-testing was conducted in two Municipalities, namely Ermera and Manatuto.



One to one interview during pre-testing



Focus Group Discussion during pre-testing



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