

## **Russia in a globalizing world: Post-Soviet developments Children and Tobacco in Russia**

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- Opened at the peak of political, socio - economic and public health crisis, and since then is object rather than subject of globalization.
- Penetration of global “bads”, including multinational tobacco industry.
- Deteriorating care for children due to massive impoverishment, decline in employment, inequality in wealth leading to inequality in health, destruction of social security, etc.
- At least 1 million of “street children”, at increased risk of smoking.

### **Tobacco situation in Russia**

- Partially transparent.
- Absorption by multinational tobacco industry after 1991.
- Considerable increase in production. The largest producer in CIS region: 400 bln (more than doubled, and now catch up with Japan).
- The largest consumer in CIS: 300 bln.
- Large illegal sector, illicit trade of 100 bln, mainly to EU countries.
- Considerable increase in prevalence and consumption, especially among vulnerable groups: children and women. 72% of males, 30% of females and >50% adolescents (N.F. Gerasimenko, 2001).
- Awareness of social, political, economic, and public health aspects of tobacco epidemic in society is low.
- Tobacco is a major cause of health crisis and impoverishment.

### **State**

- State policy does not emphasize tobacco control.
  - National tobacco control action plan adopted, no program funded.
  - Federal Law ? 87-FZ, 10.07.2001 ?. “On limiting tobacco smoking” provides inadequate industry regulation. Health warnings on tobacco products can not influence children. Direct advertising of tobacco products on billboards and outdoor walls is permitted.
  - Excise tax and prices are low.
  - Law enforcement is poor. Tobacco sales to minors.
  - Quit smoking services and health education, health promotion at schools and health care are inadequate due to lack of funding.
  - Direct collaboration with the industry.
  - FCTC process.
- Health warnings

### **Private business**

- Private business is socially irresponsible with a few exceptions.
- Trade, advertising, media business promote tobacco among children.

### **Actors in tobacco policy: Tobacco industry**

- “Wild West” environment for the industry.
- Massive direct and indirect advertising, target audiences: youth and women.

- Participation in development of legislation and FCTC process at the national and global levels.
- Avoiding responsibility and regulation: social reporting, voluntary ethical codes of conduct, sponsorship.
- Imitation of civil society and public health activities among children, involving state, public leaders, public health activists.
- Shaping public opinion: emphasis on “ban on sales to minors” and “protecting smokers rights”.
- Russia has become the primary stronghold of the industry in CIS region, and in Europe together with Germany.

#### **Actors in tobacco policy: Civil society**

- Started to develop after 1990.
- Litigation case against tobacco companies unsuccessful.
- NGOs active in tobacco control and National coalition for tobacco control.
- Scarce resources, poor full time opportunities, inadequate communication and coordination, collaboration with state officials.
- Increasing interaction due to participation in FCTC process.

#### **Actors in tobacco policy: International players**

- UN: WHO and FCTC process, UNICEF, ILO.
- WB, IMF, WTO.
- Governmental agencies: CIDA, USAID, NIH, FIC, CDC, EU agencies, KTL, etc.
- Organizations: RITC, CPHA, AIHA, OSI, ENSP, etc.
- Academic institutions: LSHTM, etc.
- Information and advocacy networks: FCA, GLOBALink, Tobinfo, etc. Quit and Win Campaign.

Should consider more emphasis on protecting children from the risks of tobacco.

#### **Activities implemented by RPHA in partnership with RITC and CPHA with CIDA support.**

GYTS I (1999)

- The GYTS is a self-administered survey, with a standard methodology, that applies a core questionnaire to a representative school-based sample of students, aged 13-15 years.
- Moscow: Number of schools – 100, students - 4,755.
- 33,4% are current smokers.
- More than 60% of children are exposed in the public places or at home.
- Over 90% exposed to ads for cigarettes on billboards.
- 62,8% of current smokers purchased cigarettes in a store.
- Only 4.8% smoke at home.
- 22.4% smoked their first cigarette before age 10. 69.2% wish to quit, 76.1% tried to quit this year.
- Better understanding of the magnitude of the tobacco situation among Russian youth. Evidence submitted to State Duma, published and disseminated in Russia and abroad.
- Experience used for GYTS II, currently implemented by the Ministry of Health of Russian Federation, in developing National Coalition for Smoke Free Russia!”, in building advocacy for FCTC process (2002), also within Channeling the Outrage Campaign (2002-03), supported by WHO-EURO.
- Raised questions that needed qualitative research.

#### **Qualitative research (2002-03)**

- To discover the socio-cultural norms, beliefs and values of young people that influence their decision in whether or not to smoke.
- Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Petrozavodsk. 8-12 year old and 13-16 year old boys and girls. Total 48 individual and 12 focus group semi-structure open-ended interviews.
- Analysis of collected data is finalized.
- Children were never asked to express their feelings and opinions.
- Who is smoking in your class?
- Knowledge on risks of tobacco use is poor: “one develops cancer of the lip if does not inhale smoke”, etc.
- Social dependence is dominating compared to pleasure, empowering, emotional, full-fledged ones.
- All smoking children conceal smoking from parents. Attempted quit smoking, but failed.
- Smoking accompanies alcohol intake during leisure time spent with peers. Some students relieve school stress by smoking during breaks.
- Smoking is not compatible with sports. Smoking compromises memory, intellect and school performance.
- Adults can influence smoking among younger children. Among high school students peer influence is the key.
- A girlfriend or a boyfriend may be a smoker, but not future husband or wife.
- Teachers are more tolerant towards smoking among high school students, and are concerned more with fire safety.
- Increased Russian qualitative capacity. Workshop 26-28 May 2003 in Moscow, participation from governmental organizations, and media.
- Will provide Russian policy makers with additional information regarding tobacco control initiatives among youth. Qualitative methods will be incorporated in research, and State system “Monitoring unhealthy habits among children”.

Translation, printing and disseminating Rob Cunningham’s book ‘Smoke and Mirrors. Canadian Tobacco War’ (2001) and Analysis of tobacco policy in relation to public health in Russia, support for National Coalition for Smoke Free Russia. (2002)

### **Alleviation of tobacco epidemic among children in Russia**

- A co-ordinated advocacy effort to promote comprehensive legislation and its implementation, building upon FCTC process, is a priority.
- Prevention activities should be started earlier at school, because younger children usually try and then abstain from smoking, and are more impressed by information from adults. Participatory approaches should be used.
- School curricula should be reconsidered. Currently tobacco is discussed in detail in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, when many students are already dependent on tobacco, and cannot quit. School stress.
- The issue of activities during leisure time is important: accessible sports, etc.
- ETS should be considered as a key issue.
- Quit smoking services for schoolchildren should be developed.
- Research, for example on “tobacco myths” among children, is important.
- Technical and financial support from international organizations is needed.