

Research for International Tobacco Control (RITC)

Incorporating a social determinants perspective into tobacco control research



Facts: Global Tobacco Use

- Approximately 1.3 billion smokers.
- Currently, 5 million annual tobacco-related deaths.
- By 2030, annual death toll expected to rise to 8 million.
- By 2030, 80% of the expected tobacco-related deaths will occur in developing countries.

RITC: A Unique Program

- Exclusively focused on supporting research for tobacco control policy development
- Emphasizes Southern-led, multi-disciplinary research
- Particularly concerned about poor and vulnerable communities
- Views tobacco not only as a health issue, but also as a comprehensive development issue

RITC's Mission

To create a strong research, knowledge and funding base for the development of effective tobacco control policies to minimize the threat of **tobacco production and consumption** to health and human development in **developing countries**.

Tobacco and Development

- Evidence in some countries that tobacco use is growing fastest among the poorest groups
- Tobacco linked to household poverty as income is spent on tobacco rather than food or other basic needs (up to 10% of household expenditures in poorest families)
- Smoking exacerbates household poverty in other ways:
 - Tobacco-related illness and death of breadwinners during their most productive years (middle age)
 - paying for healthcare costs

Tobacco and Development

- Tobacco is farmed in more than 125 countries – 70% of world's tobacco is grown in developing countries.
- Problems associated with tobacco growing, particularly for small-scale farmers, are legion:
 - extremely labour intensive
 - negative environmental impacts
 - occupational health hazards
 - cycle of debt for farmers

Tobacco and Development

- Tobacco epidemic exacerbated by globalization and complex factors with cross border effects, including:
 - trade liberalization
 - foreign direct investment
 - transnational advertising, promotion and sponsorship
 - international movement of contraband and counterfeit cigarettes.

Tobacco and Development

- In current era of globalization, other forms of tobacco use (bidis, waterpipe, kreteks, etc) are spreading to every continent, although manufactured cigarettes account for 96% of total sales globally.
- Many developing countries now face a “double burden” of communicable and non-communicable diseases

Key Research Themes

- ▶ **Health Policy and Systems Interventions for Tobacco Control**
- ▶ **Tobacco Farming: Health, Social, Environmental and Economic Impacts**
 - ▶ Globalization, Trade and Tobacco
 - ▶ Poverty and Tobacco
 - ▶ Alternative Forms of Tobacco Use

Interventions for Tobacco Control

- 4 Objectives:
 - Support health policy, systems and service-focused approaches and interventions
 - Support strategies to integrate cost-effective smoking cessation interventions into existing health systems and services
 - Support research to address the “double” or “triple” burdens of acute, chronic and non-communicable disease
 - Engage the combined efforts of researchers, decision-makers, advocates, practitioners and civil society to tackle inter-sectoral health and development challenges posed by tobacco use

Commission on Social Determinants of Health

- Recognizes need to address social factors leading to ill health and inequities.
- Draws attention to the social determinants of health that are known to be among the worst causes of poor health and inequalities between and within countries.
- Social determinants include unemployment, unsafe workplaces, urban slums, globalization, gender, culture.

- Paucity of studies from developing countries on the psychosocial determinants of tobacco use among girls and boys.
- Need for more research across different cultures and time periods to further our understanding of gender differences in the determinants of tobacco use.

Social Determinants and Development Perspective

- Paucity of developing country studies investigating socio-cultural factors that influence youths' risk-taking behaviour in relation to tobacco use.
- Few studies have explored the use of tobacco in conjunction with other forms of substance abuse or risk-taking behaviours.
- More research is needed into the cause-effect relationship of tobacco/substance use and other factors such as urbanization, societal violence, social dislocation, acculturation, etc.

Social Determinants and Development Perspective

- More systematic study and gender-based analysis is needed on the association between cultural change and substance abuse resulting from the influences/impact of globalization.
- To what extent do conflict/post-conflict or post-disaster situations increase risk behaviour with regard to tobacco use?

Social Determinants and Development Perspective

- To what extent is tobacco or substance use viewed by both genders as a coping mechanism during periods of war, violence, aggression and/or tension, or during the aftermath of a major natural disaster?
- In these difficult circumstances, why are some youth more resilient to tobacco/substance abuse than others?

16 Youth Smoking in Stressed Environments: Social Determinants and Resiliency

- Focus on tobacco use by youth in ‘stressed environments’ characterized by violence, discrimination, marginalization, poverty, etc.
 - Argentina (Jujuy)
 - Colombia (Medellin)
 - West Bank (Palestine)
 - Sri Lanka

Potential contributions of the Research

- Moves beyond identification of risk factors towards resiliency factors
- Looks at determinants of smoking from a broad social determinants perspective
- Will enhance our understanding of smoking behavior for at-risk youth beyond those studies conducted in developed countries
- Will identify programs to address the needs of high-risk youth, who may not be reached by traditional environmental tobacco control measures.

Priority considerations for funding

- Project proposals that respond to RITC's core thematic areas
- Demonstrate strong potential to influence the tobacco control policy development process
- Show that key stakeholders and research users are involved throughout the research process
- Consider the effects of tobacco use and/or production on vulnerable populations
- Gender considerations

Priority considerations for funding

- Employ a multi-disciplinary research approach
- Describe the relevance of the research within broader development priorities (e.g. the environment, poverty, gender issues)
- Contain a clear dissemination strategy based on the sustained and targeted involvement of key research users and beneficiaries
- Have a Southern institution as the lead institution

Proposal Development

- Conceptual and Theoretical Framework
- User Participation
- Study Population
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Gender Considerations
- Ethical Considerations
- Dissemination Plan
- Capacity Building

For more information:

<http://www.idrc.ca/ritc>

