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, kretesks, 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
Health Policy and Systems
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.
Research on Youth Tobacco Use: Social Determinants and Development Perspective

• 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.
Research on Youth 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.
• 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?
Research on Youth 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?
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