

Survey research of public opinion with respect to FCTC in Azerbaijan.

Rufat Nasibov, Anti-smoking Alliance/Azerbaijan

BACKGROUND

Tobacco situation in Azerbaijan is not quite accessible and transparent for the general public, civil society organizations, local and international actors, even for government and decision-makers. In some cases we are faced with contradictions as well as absence or inaccessibility of many data concerning tobacco. Our efforts to influence policy makers to ratify the treaty have not had the desired effect so far. We need to intensify our efforts and think that at present stage it would be effective to strengthen our efforts by public voice, bring public opinion and attitudes towards smoking to the notice of government representatives. Therefore, this research study aims to reveal society's attitude towards smoking and tobacco control measures.

OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate FCTC ratification process in Azerbaijan through the mechanisms of mobilizing of public opinion and proof of legal advisability of joining the treaty.
- To study public opinion with respect to FCTC and bring public voice to the attention of decision makers.
- To conduct independent legal research of national tobacco laws in terms of FCTC adaptability and application in Azerbaijan.

METHODS

- Sociological survey of the population (sample – 1000 people, 4 geographic regions were covered – Baku, Ganja, Lenkeran and Guba)
- Legal study of national laws.
- Tobacco control advocacy for media

RESULTS

Some key aspects of the research are provided below (sample – 1000 persons)
Factors provoking smoking.

	Number	Percent
Smoking of parents	237	23.7
Friends	308	30.8
Smoking advertisement	300	30
Own interest	155	15.5

Attitude towards tobacco advertisement

	Number	Percent
Against all kinds of advertisement	503	50.3
I am against some kinds of ads	175	17.5
I am not against tobacco	248	24.8
Indifferently	74	7.4

Attitude towards smoking in public places

	Number	Percent
I am strongly against smoking in public places	583	58.3
Smoking in public places should be restricted	312	31.2
I am not against smoking in public places	35	3.5
Indifferently	70	7.0

What kind of measures do you think could stop spreading tobacco?

	Number	Percent
Ban on tobacco advertisement	130	13
Warning inscriptions and pictures on tobacco packages	53	5.3
Prohibition of sales tobacco to minors	142	14.2
Global cooperation on tobacco control	93	9.3
All abovementioned	582	58.2

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey results

- *Low level of knowledge on national tobacco related laws and FCTC provisions*
- *Negative attitude towards main provisions spreading tobacco – tobacco advertisement, smoking in public places, sales to minors,*
- *Support for strong tobacco control measures to stop spreading tobacco epidemic*

Legal study of national laws

- *Tobacco related laws are not comprehensive enough and there are a lot of shortcomings and vacuum points exist.*
- *Existing tobacco laws are not observed properly*
- *International cooperation in the field of tobacco control is at a low level*

Advocacy steps and dissemination

- *Letter to the President and Prime-Minister (September 2005)*
- *TV program on tobacco related issues and FCTC joining (January 2006)*
- *Series of radiobroadcast on local radio channel*
- *Roundtable for the mass media representatives and NGOs (October 2005)*

The most important fact that happened during project progress is joining the FCTC by the Azerbaijan. On September 20, 2005 the President of the Azerbaijan Republic has signed a decree on joining the FCTC, and appropriate documents were deposited at the UN on November 1, 2005. It is a great achievement for us and this was made in time taking into account the possibility to take part at the Conference of Parties (COP).