Catalyst for Change

South to South Partnership towards a Tobacco-Free Future
By 2030, tobacco use will kill ten million people each year.

70-80% of these deaths will occur in developing countries. Currently, there are about 120 million smokers in the ASEAN region or about 20% of the total ASEAN population. Already, the ASEAN region accounts for about 500,000 of the 6 million deaths caused annually by the global tobacco epidemic, and because the ASEAN region has been targeted by the tobacco industry to grow its business, this death toll is set to increase in the coming years.

The socio-economic burden of tobacco use includes higher health care costs, productivity losses related to sickness, caregiving, and premature death, costs of transportation to and from health care facilities, and psychosocial drains on families. Public costs of smoking represent a burden for the government’s budget, while personal costs of smoking impose a burden on households and reduce their spending power.
The big change

SEATCA’s mission is to save lives by accelerating effective implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in ASEAN.

- Generate policy-driven, evidence-based research
- Customized technical assistance and capacity building
- Proactive participation and knowledge sharing
- Countering tobacco industry and spearheading media advocacy
Since 2001, SEATCA has been working with our partners to curb the tobacco epidemic in Southeast Asia. As a multi-sectoral alliance, we work closely with our partners from government offices, non-government organizations, international development agencies (e.g. World Health Organization), and academe across the ASEAN region.

By fostering South-to-South collaborations, we become stronger and more unified with our common goal: to strengthen tobacco control policies and effective implementation of WHO FCTC.

SEATCA continues to extend our network and harnesses cooperation and technical assistance opportunities with regional and international partners.
Change can happen with our common objectives.

Form a supportive base for government and non-government tobacco control workers in their efforts to promote the implementation of effective evidence-based tobacco control measures.

Encourage greater cooperation between tobacco control workers at national and regional levels and act as a regional leader on issues which affect all countries in the region.

Strengthen national tobacco control movements and organize capacity building activities.

Fight tobacco industry tactics and interference to undermine effective tobacco control.

Facilitate information transfer and sharing of experience and knowledge, coordinate national and regional initiatives in tobacco control, and bring Southeast Asian issues into the international tobacco control arena.
Change in Environment

*Everyone deserves a healthy, smoke-free environment – it’s a basic right.* Every child must not be exposed to secondhand smoke and the act of smoking to avoid having tobacco-related diseases, minimize the risk of smoking initiation, and to ensure a better future for the next generation. Smoke-free environments also encourage smoking cessation and contribute to both the social unacceptability of smoking and the de-normalization of tobacco and tobacco use.

For this reason, SEATCA builds regional and local partnerships aimed at achieving a smoke-free ASEAN.

According to WHO FCTC Article 8 Guidelines, only 100% smoke-free environments provide adequate protection from exposure to second-hand smoke. Partial smoking bans and designated smoking rooms (which are supported by the tobacco industry) or protection of only certain populations (e.g. women and children) are ineffective. Within ASEAN, Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand are leading the way with comprehensive laws that create effective, population-wide smoke-free zones.
Change in Policies

Tobacco Tax

One example of a strategic policy reform initiated by SEATCA is the Southeast Asia Initiative on Tobacco Tax (SITT). Here, we encourage governments to adopt more progressive tax regimes to increase their revenues and reduce tobacco consumption in the region in line with Article 6 of the WHO FCTC. We provide research, capacity-building, and technical assistance to our partners to strengthen tobacco tax policies, engaging with national, regional, and international tobacco control advocates, academics, government officials, and public health leaders. This includes the use of tobacco tax revenues for sustainable financing of tobacco control and health promotion programs, an initiative in which we collaborate with WHO, ThaiHealth, and other prominent health promotion foundations and organizations in the region.
Tobacco Packaging

SEATCA works closely with international experts from Australia, Thailand, and Canada in developing evidence to support implementation of prominent pictorial health warnings (PHW) on tobacco product packages, and ultimately, standardized (plain) packaging. The technical assistance we provide supports policy development and implementation in compliance with FCTC Article 11 Guidelines in each ASEAN country. With SEATCA’s support, PHWs are now mandated by law in almost all ASEAN countries, most recently Indonesia and the Philippines.

SEATCA facilitates access to high-resolution and copyright-free PHW images from Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand for use by other ASEAN neighbors. We also assist countries with actual packs with PHWs to help policy makers visualize them in practice and for purposes of comparison to expose industry tactics that aim to delay and weaken health warning legislation.
Protect Tobacco Control Policies

Public health should be a priority over commercial interests, especially those of the tobacco industry. Because of the fundamental and irreconcilable conflict of interest between public health and the tobacco industry, governments should protect their public health policies from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry (WHO FCTC Article 5.3). Because tobacco industry interference is a major obstacle to FCTC implementation, the tobacco industry should be stopped from interfering and should have no place within the public health policy sphere.

SEATCA and its partners monitor tobacco industry interference in all levels and stages of developing and implementing tobacco control policies, alert other advocates and the relevant government authorities, and mobilize to counter such interference. SEATCA’s regional campaign, “Time’s Up: Don’t be Fooled by Tobacco Industry” exposes tobacco industry tactics in the ASEAN region and de-normalizes the industry. The campaign’s TobaccoWatch website dispels myths created by the industry to mislead the public and exposes the industry’s front groups and supporters, who speak on its behalf.
Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship Ban

The simplest way for people not to be attracted to tobacco use is by banning all direct and indirect forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (WHO FCTC Article 13), all of which are exploited by the industry to falsely associate their products with youth, success, and popularity. In this regard, we have established the SEATCA Industry Surveillance (SIS) program at national and regional levels focusing on four areas: direct advertising and promotion, points-of-sale (POS), fake corporate social responsibility (CSR), and social media. With this program, we can effectively monitor and counter tobacco industry tactics and activities in the region.
Spreading information that can bring change

As ASEAN’s resource hub for tobacco control, SEATCA maintains its Online Resource Center as a one-stop, online resource and database accessible at www.seatca.org. It provides a venue for accessing quality information such as research findings, policy briefs, and updated collections of news, activities, and other developments related to tobacco control in and around the ASEAN region. It also serves as a virtual platform where country partners can make requests for assistance.

Our Products:

- ASEAN Tobacco Control Atlas
- Country Report Cards
- Regional Summaries and Analyses on various tobacco control policy issues
- In-Country Research
- Factsheets
- Video Documentaries
- Case Studies
In-Country Research

Other Publications

Video Documentaries
Change began in them: Advocacy Fellowship

SEATCA has established and empowered a network of tobacco control advocates and lawyers in seven ASEAN countries. These advocates train other fellows to carry out cost-effective country tobacco control advocacies and campaigns and to counter tobacco industry’s efforts to undermine tobacco control and advance national tobacco control programs. They also build capacities of locally-trained advocates who undertake key roles in tobacco control development in their respective countries, and also mentor other local tobacco control advocates.
When Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

What happens when smoke gets in the eyes of children, literally? Several studies have shown that this can cause blindness to them.

The sad news is, children do not choose to be exposed to secondhand smoke.

Their right to grow up in an environment free from tobacco smoke must be safeguarded through actions by national and local governments, voluntary bodies, community leaders, health workers, educators and parents.

To successfully eliminate children’s involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke, we need comprehensive efforts including legislation and education.

As an organization, as parents, as responsible citizens, we need to be aware and make other people aware of the effects of exposure to secondhand smoke on children’s health. There should be more effective health education interventions targeted at family members who smoke, which not only emphasize the health benefits from quitting smoking, but also personal economic implications associated with smoking.

Tobacco control policies that aim to reduce smoking such as increasing taxes and hence cigarette prices, smoke-free policies, graphic health warnings, tobacco advertising ban, etc. are equally important. These policies have significant impact on reducing smoking prevalence and exposure to secondhand smoke among women and children. Recommendations should emphasize implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

When both education and legislation work hand in hand, instead of smoke, only a clean and smoke-free environment will be captured by the eyes of our children.
Change begins in YOU

Towards a healthy, tobacco-free ASEAN

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