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Moving hearts and minds: how the Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets campaign builds support for tobacco control policy

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► Additional supplemental material is published online only. To view, please visit the journal online (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/tc-2022-057917>).

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Received 22 December 2022
Accepted 24 April 2023

In this paper, we share background on the ‘Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets’ campaign, three short case studies from countries where the campaign had a substantial policy impact, keys to campaign success and campaign challenges. The campaign—which demonstrated that the world’s biggest tobacco companies are targeting the world’s youth with tobacco marketing and advertising—can be adapted by others in their tobacco control policy campaigns.

BIG TOBACCO, TINY TARGETS: A GLOBAL CAMPAIGN

The point-of-sale (POS), places where consumer goods are sold, is an important platform for marketing tobacco. Greater exposure to tobacco advertising and promotion at POS is associated with a greater likelihood of smoking among youth.^{1,2} In the USA, POS that adolescents visit regularly display more tobacco advertising than POS in the same community that are less popular with youth.³

In 2015, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (Tobacco-Free Kids), a US-based non-profit advocacy organisation focused on reducing tobacco use globally, collaborated with civil society organisations in Indonesia to monitor cigarette advertising and promotional tactics at POS near schools and playgrounds. When monitoring revealed concerning patterns of cigarette marketing targeting children and youth, Tobacco-Free Kids partnered with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH) and civil society organisations in other countries to observe tobacco marketing tactics, focusing on low- and middle-income countries.

Public health professionals and volunteers, with support from Tobacco-Free Kids, the Africa Tobacco Control Alliance and BSPH, have systematically collected data on cigarette advertising and promotional tactics at POS near primary and secondary schools and playgrounds in 42 countries since 2015. Four advertising and promotional tactics have been observed at POS in most countries: (1) display of cigarettes near snacks, sweets or sugary drinks, (2) placement of cigarette advertisements near the eye-level of children, (3) product display and advertisements for flavoured cigarettes and (4) sale of single cigarette sticks.⁴ These strategies were associated with cigarette brands of international tobacco companies, including Philip Morris International, British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International and Imperial Brands.⁴

Tobacco-Free Kids leads the Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets campaign. They engage with communities, provide technical assistance to organisations launching their own investigations and collaborate to disseminate research findings and advocate for stronger tobacco control policies. Their website, www.takeapart.org/tinytargets, allows the public to download reports on findings, share findings and effective policy interventions on social media and provides access to a mobile application that hosts a standardised form used to observe tobacco advertising and promotions at POS. The application also allows users to visualise and download data.

The Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets campaign has been effective in raising awareness of tobacco industry targeting of children and youth at POS and contributed to policy change. Of the 42 countries where data on tobacco advertising and promotion were collected, 32 countries have engaged in advocacy campaigns. Campaign activities have received extensive media coverage and contributed to positive tobacco control policy outcomes in at least 16 countries.

THE BIG TOBACCO, TINY TARGETS BLUEPRINT Establishing a shared vision and defined policy goal

Monitoring and campaign efforts coalesced around a shared vision and defined policy goal—to hold the tobacco industry accountable and protect children and youth from tobacco industry exploitation by strengthening tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) regulations at POS. This policy is in line with Article 13 and Article 13 implementation guidelines of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which calls for a comprehensive ban on TAPS. The scope of a comprehensive TAPS ban includes banning the display of tobacco products at POS and extends to mobile vendors.

Using a standardised monitoring methodology across countries

Monitoring focused on observing the tobacco advertising and promotional tactics used at POS located within 100–250 m of schools and playgrounds. Data were primarily collected by volunteers. Maps of areas around schools or playgrounds were created within the 100- to 250-m radius drawn around them using an online tool. The printed maps were followed by data collectors, and



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To cite: Brown JL, Parra N, Cohen JE, et al. *Tob Control* Epub ahead of print: [please include Day Month Year]. doi:10.1136/tc-2022-057917

all POS located within the radii were observed. An observational checklist, typically programmed in a mobile application, was used to capture information on cigarette advertising and promotions. The observation form was made available through a free, user-friendly mobile data collection application, KoboToolbox, beginning in 2017 and made it easy for volunteers to conduct monitoring and ensured that the same data points were being systematically collected across countries. A detailed description of how monitoring was conducted and the findings from 42 countries has been previously published.⁴

Strategic dissemination of findings

The launch of findings was often scheduled to coincide with legislative sessions where TAPS regulations were to be discussed. Advocates conducted outreach to relevant stakeholders, such as policy-makers, by publishing open letters calling for the adoption and implementation of comprehensive TAPS policies, organising private meetings to share findings and organising study tours where government leaders travel to jurisdictions with stronger TAPS policies to observe their implementation and speak with other government leaders. Advocates also used traditional and social media and special events to release the findings and influence policy discussions.

CAMPAIGN WINS

Closely following the release of findings from monitoring and campaign activities, seven countries adopted new national TAPS bans, six countries strengthened their existing TAPS bans, three countries adopted new subnational TAPS bans and three countries strengthened enforcement of their existing TAPS bans (online supplemental table 1). Examples of countries where the campaign had a substantial impact include Burkina Faso, Georgia and Pakistan.

Burkina Faso

In 2016, the African Tobacco Control Alliance worked with Afrique Contre la Tabac to collect data at 148 POS around 16 schools in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.⁵ They developed a media campaign to share the findings and engaged with journalists. Advocates conducted guided visits around the areas surrounding three of the schools visited during monitoring with journalists

to show them the tobacco advertising and promotion observed during data collection firsthand. Findings were shared with policy-makers and the public during two press conferences and several small meetings. They drew the attention of the media, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and School Parents Association. The media coverage highlighted findings and called on policy-makers to take action to save children's lives.⁶⁻⁹ Policy recommendations were well received by policy-makers, but not adopted in entirety.

In 2016, Decree No 2016-926 on the Protection of Schools was adopted and banned tobacco advertising within 400 m of schools.¹⁰ Decree No 2020-0259 was adopted in 2020—it amended Decree No 2016-926 and prohibited the sale of tobacco products, direct and indirect advertising and promotion of tobacco products, and tobacco industry sponsorship within 400 m of educational structures.¹¹

Georgia

In 2016, data were collected at 640 POS within 250 m of 104 schools in Tbilisi, Georgia.¹² Findings were shared by the Institute of Social Studies and Analyses at a conference attended by 50 stakeholders and journalists. Tobacco Control Alliance member organisations engaged in meetings with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health, the public defender and the Healthcare Committee of Parliament throughout 2016 and 2017. The results were considered by Parliament when debating new TAPS restrictions.

In 2017, Law No 860-IIS amended the Georgia Law on Advertising, making the TAPS restrictions more comprehensive.¹³ Previously, tobacco advertising and product display were allowed at POS with the content regulated and accompanied by a warning. Law No 860-IIS banned advertising outside of POS and product display (figure 1) beginning in 2018 and banned indoor advertising at POS (except for duty-free stores in airports) beginning in 2021.

Pakistan

In 2017, data were collected at 268 POS within 100 m of 133 schools across eight cities in Pakistan: Islamabad, Murree, Larkana, Peshawar, Hafizabad, Pindi Bhattian, Jalalpur Bhattian

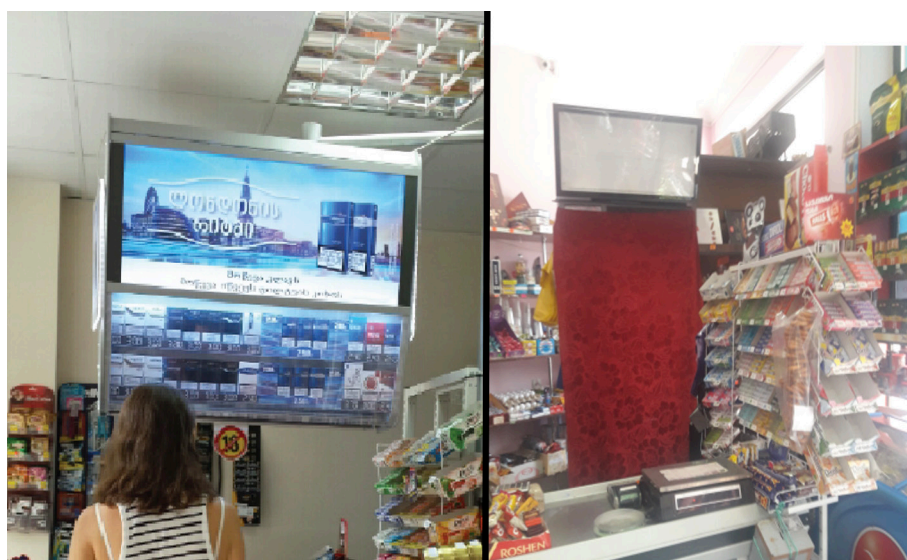


Figure 1 Tobacco product displays at convenience stores in 2016 (left) vs 2019 (right) following implementation of Law No. 860-IIS

and Shakar Dara.¹⁴ In December 2018, findings were shared at a media event with government officials, civil society representatives, students, academicians, parents and journalists.^{15 16} Advocates also shared findings with policy-makers and created a sense of urgency to pass a policy to protect youth from being targeted by tobacco advertising and promotion near their schools. In Pakistan, where the tobacco control narrative had previously been focused on the individual consequences of smoking, details on how the tobacco industry attracts children and youth and encourages them to begin smoking resonated with policy-makers and government officials.

In 2020, Pakistan approved a comprehensive TAPS ban, SRO 72(I)/2020, that includes prohibition of POS advertising and product display at fixed and mobile vendors.¹⁷

KEYS TO SUCCESS

The Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets campaign is successful at making an emotional and intellectual appeal to protect children from tobacco industry marketing and adopt more comprehensive TAPS policies. Key elements of the campaign's success are the following:

1. Mobilisation of a diverse group of advocates: The campaign mission, relative ease of data collection and the cost-effectiveness of conducting the campaign mobilised and united a diverse group of advocates. Advocate participants included organisations dedicated to children's rights, environmental rights, family values, women's rights and tobacco victims.
2. A message that resonates: The campaign message that stresses protection of children and youth as a universal priority resonates with policy-makers and the public. This contributed to increased support for strengthening TAPS policies.
3. Going beyond the quantitative data: The campaign builds a narrative around the data that highlights how common it is to see cigarette ads and promotions at stores near venues that are intended to be safe spaces of learning and play for children and youth. It uses compelling visuals, like maps illustrating the density of tobacco vendors and proximity to schools and playgrounds and photos of tobacco marketing and promotion, as supporting evidence.
4. Local evidence: Local evidence that lends credence to the message that children and youth are being targeted in their 'own backyard' is hard for policy-makers to ignore.
5. A clear 'villain': Similar findings across multiple countries make it clear that the world's largest multinational tobacco companies are behind a pattern of targeting children and youth, increasing the sense of urgency for policy-makers to take action to pass strong tobacco control policies.
6. Call to action: The campaign emphasises that there is a solution to the problem—enactment of tobacco control policies, like TAPS bans.

Challenges

Many challenges were raised during monitoring and campaign activities. The technology used for data collection (ie, mobile phones, tablets, mobile applications) was not always user-friendly and had to be modified. While largely standardised, the observational form sometimes included country-specific questions and a balance had to be reached regarding what data could be collected versus the burden placed on data collectors. While efforts were made to make data collection as feasible as possible, barriers included a lack of funding for costs such as a space to train data collectors, data collector transportation,

data for mobile phones and personnel to manage campaign activities. Safety was an issue in some places and therefore, some areas were avoided during data collection, potentially creating a bias in the data. COVID-19 presented challenges—some data were collected after March 2020 and likely underestimated the extent of tobacco advertising and promotion at POS prior to and following COVID restrictions. Lastly, tailoring the data collection methods and developing tailored campaign messages were resource intensive at times, and activities may not always be replicable in low-capacity settings.

CONCLUSION

Successful policy advocacy campaigns deploy several advocacy strategies and factors related to the political climate affect the potential for achieving desired outcomes. Consequently, we cannot apportion the extent to which the Big Tobacco, Tiny Target campaign activities directly contributed to the policy changes that followed. Elements of the campaign can provide advocates with insights on how to successfully engage stakeholders and promote tobacco control policy change. The campaign materials and keys to success outlined here can be leveraged by advocates in a variety of settings to advance tobacco control policy, keeping in mind the need for adaptation given the country context as well as how the campaign complements the other elements of a broader policy advocacy campaign.

Acknowledgements Thank you to all of the partners who collaborated on the Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets activities: Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón Argentina (FIC Argentina), PROGGA Knowledge for Progress, Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs (BCCP), Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón Bolivia (FIC Bolivia), Progressive Reinforcement of Organizations and Individuals (PROI), Smoke Free Life Coalition (SFLC), Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia (FCTC IMCG), Consumer Information Network (CIN), Centrul Pentru Politici și Analize în Sănătate (PAS Center), Universidad Católica Redemptoris Mater (UNICA), Comisión Nacional Permanente de Lucha Antitabáquica (COLAT), Clearpoint Communications Associates (CCA), University of Western Cape (UWC), No Excuse, Liges de la Santé/CIPRET-Vaud, National Association of Consumers of Armenia, Contrôle du Tabac en Afrique (ACTA), l'Education et le Contrôle du Tabac (IECT), African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA), Afrique contre le tabac (ACONTA), Coalition Camerounaise Contre le Tabac (C3T), Progressive Reinforcement of Organizations and Individuals (PROI), Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Implementation and Monitoring Center in Georgia (FCTC IMCG), Consumer Voice, Voluntary Health Association of India, Children's Media Monitoring Foundation (Yayasan Pengembangan Media Anak), Indonesia Children's Lantern (Lentera Anak Indonesia), Smoke Free Agents (SFA), Smoke-free Kazakhstan Coalition, Public Health Protection Foundation, NY SAHY, Fundación Interamericana del Corazón México (FIC Mexico), Progressive Reinforcement of Organizations and Individuals (PROI), Juventas, Nigeria Tobacco Control Alliance, SPARC, ImagineLaw, Association Prevent, Health for All Coalition, Türkiye Yeşilay Cemiyeti, Uganda National Health Consumers' Organisation (UNHCO), DEPOCEN, Corporate Accountability Colombia. A special thanks to Leonce Sessou, Malik Imran and George Bakhturidze for providing details on campaigns in Burkina Faso, Pakistan and Georgia.

Contributors All authors made a substantial contribution to the monitoring efforts that informed the campaign and developing the manuscript. All authors contributed to the conceptualisation of monitoring and design of data collection tools. DR, MC, NP and MH were involved in campaign activities. JB, DR and NP oversaw monitoring at different points in time. DR and NP collated the data. JB wrote the initial draft of the manuscript, and DR, MC, NP, MH and JEC contributed to revisions and finalisation of the manuscript. All authors approved the final version. JLB had access to the data and accepts responsibility for the work.

Funding This work was supported with funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies' Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use (bloomberg.org).

Competing interests None declared.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed.

Data availability statement All data relevant to the study are included in the article or uploaded as supplementary information.

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Supplementary Table 1. Policy achievements

Country	Year(s) monitoring conducted	Year(s) campaign activities conducted	Short description of campaign activities	Policy achievement	Relevant regulation(s)
Armenia ^b	2018	2019	With the World Health Organization, advocates organized study tour to Ireland with members of Parliament; advocacy efforts were directed towards the Ministry of Health	In 2020, an amendment was adopted that prohibits all forms of tobacco advertising, including at POS.	Law On Making Amendments In The Law “On Advertising”
Bangladesh ^{c,d}	2016	2016 - 2021	Advocates disseminated report findings to journalists, government officials, and civil society organizations in Chattogram, Rangpur, and Rajshahi; lobbied for better enforcement of national TAPS restrictions; disseminated the report on findings at the national level; and partnered with the Bangladesh Shop Owner Association to promote compliance	The Director of Education for the Division of Chattogram, Rangpur, and Rajshahi issued a Circular prohibiting sales and display of tobacco products within a 100-meter radius of educational institutes. In 2021, a Circular with implementation guidelines for local government institutions was published prohibiting issuance of licenses to sell tobacco within 100 meters of educational institutions. Enforcement operations were strengthened and fines were issued.	Circular Announcing the Tobacco Control Implementation Guidelines for Local Government Institutions
Benin ^a	2016	2016 - 2017	Advocates took journalists on a guided visit to observe tobacco advertising around schools, generating earned media; held a press conference; and met with Members of Parliament and other government officials	In 2016, a law banning the sale, advertising, and promotion of tobacco within a 500-meter radius of schools was adopted. In 2017, a law prohibiting tobacco advertising, promotion and product display was adopted, including at POS.	Law No. 2017-27 of December 18, 2017 Concerning the Production, Packaging, Labeling, Sale and Use of Tobacco, its Derivatives and Similar Items in the Republic of Benin
Bolivia ^a	2016	2017-2020	A regional report that included findings from Bolivia was released following the rollout of the “Killer Flavors” campaign in Latin America and was used to garner media attention; advocates provided technical support to the Ministry of Health in drafting the comprehensive tobacco control bill that includes TAPS restrictions	In 2017, there was a first reading of the comprehensive tobacco control bill in the Chamber of Deputies. In 2020, the bill was adopted and includes provisions that state tobacco advertising is only allowed when it cannot be seen from the outside and POS is restricted to people over 18 years. The display of tobacco is not allowed in areas directly accessible by customers. Despite this law being in place, it has not yet been implemented and a second report on findings from a second round of data collection in 2022 will soon be released to encourage implementation.	Law No. 1280 on Prevention and Control of the Consumption of Tobacco Products
Brazil ^a	2017	2017 - 2018	Advocates launched the “Killer Flavors” campaign in Latin America and released a regional report that included results from Brazil	In 2019, the Senate approved a comprehensive tobacco control bill with some restrictions on product display at POS (limits display to	ANVISA Resolution No. 213 of January 23, 2018

			and was used to garner media attention; media attention was used by advocates to exert pressure on a Supreme Court Case regarding tobacco additives and on policy makers regarding TAPS	advertising directly on the product itself), some restrictions on promotion, and requires smoking products to be displayed away from sweets and toys.	
Burkina Faso ^{a,b}	2016	2016 - 2017	Advocates organized a guided tour around schools for journalists to highlight tobacco advertising; held meetings with policy makers, the police, and school directors; and held two press conferences and gained earned media	In 2016, a Decree prohibiting tobacco advertisements within 400 feet of schools was adopted. In 2020, another Decree amended the 2016 Decree and prohibited consumption, sale, and all tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship within 400 feet of schools.	Decree No. 2016-926 Concerning Protection of Educational Domain ; Decree No. 2020-0259 Amending Decree No. 2016-926 on the Protection of Schools
Georgia ^b	2016	2016 - 2017	Advocates issued a press release on the findings and identified two champions in Parliament to sponsor a tobacco control bill and supported them in drafting the bill	In 2017, amendments to the Georgia Law on Advertising were adopted and prohibit tobacco advertising at POS, including product display. Previously, the law only regulated the content of tobacco advertising and required a warning.	Law No. 860-IIS on Changes to the Law on Advertising
India ^{c,d}	2017, 2019		Advocates focused on building support for tobacco vendor licensing in priority provinces as a means of improving compliance with TAPS provisions and urged the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation to write to all state Ministries of Development and Local Self Government in support of vendor licensing	In 2018, Lucknow city adopted vendor licensing guidelines. In 2018, the State of Rajasthan ordered licensing for the trade, supply, and distribution of tobacco. In 2019, Karnataka mandated COTPA training for members of the Bar and Vendors Association in Mysore and conducted enforcement drives in Mangalore.	The Lucknow Municipal Corporation (Determination, Regulation and Control of License Fee for Sale of Tobacco Products and License Fee) By-Law 2019; Rajasthan Municipalities Act 2009
Indonesia ^c	2015, 2020-2021	2015 – Present	Advocates organized a media event to share findings; built a campaign website; partnered with a radio station; organized youth activities; and organized a fellowship for journalists to develop and publish investigative stories on tobacco industry activity	In 2015, the ban on outdoor tobacco advertising in Jakarta was implemented. In 2018, outdoor advertising bans were adopted in Bekasi, West Pasaman, Konawe, and East Kolaka. In 2019, another 11 cities banned outdoor tobacco advertising.	Governor's Notification (No. 8 Year 2021)
Kazakhstan ^b	2019	2019	Advocates collaborated with bloggers and independent media to build support for TAPS policies and published academic journal articles to garner support for proposed tobacco control policies	In 2020, a bill was passed that strengthens bans on TAPS at POS.	Act No. 360-VI on People's Health and the Healthcare System
Mexico ^b	2019	2019-2022	Advocates engaged in targeted communication efforts aimed towards President and Health Minister	In 2022, a decree amending the General Law on Tobacco Control was passed that includes a comprehensive TAPS ban.	Decree Amending the General Law on Tobacco Control
Nigeria ^a	2016	2016-2019	Advocates held two press conferences with key stakeholders resulting in earned media and television coverage and organized sensitization meetings with policy makers; senators issued a letter to the government calling for implementation of the Tobacco Control Act	In 2019, regulations for the 2015 Tobacco Control Act were approved, allowing for full implementation of the TAPS ban.	National Tobacco Control Act, 2015 ; National Tobacco Control Regulations, 2019

Pakistan ^a	2017	2019-2020	Upon release of the report on findings, advocates met with members of Parliament and the Minister of Health to talk about tobacco industry targeting of children	In 2020, a law prohibiting all tobacco advertising and product display at POS was adopted.	SRO 72(I)/2020
Slovenia ^a	2016	2016-2017	Data from the report on findings informed the draft bill that includes a TAPS ban and prohibits product display at POS	In 2017, comprehensive regulations banning TAPS and product display at POS were adopted.	Restrictions of the Use of Tobacco Products Act
Ukraine ^{b,d}	2016	2017-2020	Advocates prepared guidelines for TAPS inspections to aide enforcement; generated media coverage with a focus on the tobacco industry's targeted marketing to children; held a press conference; launched a campaign to involve the public in reporting TAPS violations; and lobbied Parliamentarians	In 2021, a bill that closes loopholes on TAPS and extends provisions to HTPs and ENDS, as well as improves enforcement, was passed.	Law No. 1978-IX on Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on Protection from Harmful Effects of Tobacco

^aAdopted new national TAPS regulations

^bAmended existing national TAPS regulations to strengthen provisions

^cAdopted TAPS regulations at sub-national level

^dEnforcement for TAPS was strengthened