

Tobacco Control Asia Pacific Monthly Bulletin

Issue 6 (October - November 2024)



Youth leaders meet with Dr. Benget Saragih to urge stronger tobacco control measures for youth protection

Highlights

Indonesian youth rally to support stricter tobacco control measures

Jakarta, October 15, 2024 – 260 young Indonesians, led by the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM), gathered in front of the Ministry of Health to rally for stronger tobacco control measures. The peaceful demonstration, supported by Vital Strategies, showed solidarity with the recently enacted Government Regulation No. 28/2024. Signed by President Joko Widodo, the regulation aims to curb smoking and vaping, particularly among youth, by introducing comprehensive restrictions.

Key measures include banning smoking in public places like schools and healthcare facilities, raising the minimum purchasing age to 21, prohibiting single-stick sales, and tightening advertising restrictions both online and near schools. Youth leaders met with Ministry officials, including Dr. Benget Saragih, urging for stricter enforcement. Dr. Saragih assured demonstrators that their concerns would be taken seriously, despite opposition from the tobacco industry. Vital Strategies reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Ministry's initiatives to safeguard public health.

Protecting people from tobacco smoke

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Indonesia: The **East Java** Provincial Government and the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) have officially ratified a new Regional Regulation (Perda) on Non-Smoking Areas (KTR) on August 14, 2024. Led by the DPRD and Acting Governor Adhy Karyono, the regulation aims to protect public health by ensuring smoke-free environments while designating specific smoking areas. This initiative, supported by the East Java Health Office and Airlangga University, will enhance smoke-free policies across 29 regions, benefiting the province's 39 million residents

In **Yogyakarta**, ADINKES held a National Training and Workshop, focusing on stunting prevention and implementing smoke-free areas (KTR). Opened by Dr. Bima Arya Sugiarto, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, the event was attended by key officials, including the General Chair of ADINKES and representatives from Vital Strategies. The workshop emphasized Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024, which includes restrictions like banning cigarette advertising within 500 meters of schools and sales within 200 meters. With 544 participants from 61 districts, the event aimed to integrate KTR into stunting reduction strategies, share best practices, and strengthen regional implementation. The Deputy Minister also recognized 27 districts for their effective KTR initiatives, motivating others to enhance tobacco control efforts.



Deputy Minister of Home Affairs recognizing 27 districts for their effective KTR initiatives

- Vital Strategies, along with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Home Affairs, met with the local government of **Bojonegoro Regency** to provide technical assistance and strengthen support for implementing smoke-free policies.
- Vital Strategies held a high-level meeting with the Regent of **Makassar City** and the Regional Secretary to strengthen commitments for enhancing the implementation of smoke-free policies and to prepare for the launch of a smoke-free airport.
- Forty-five health office heads, smoke-free program coordinators, and task force officers were trained in **Banda Aceh** to strengthen their skills in implementing and enforcing smoke-free policies.
- In **Palembang**, thirty community health center coordinators and civil police were trained on smoke-free policies in collaboration with the shopping malls association. Additionally, random inspections of 250 venues conducted in October revealed a high compliance rate, with 238 venues adhering to the regulations.



Minister of Tourism hands over Smoke-Free Tourist City award to Kampong Cham Provincial Governor

Cambodia: Cambodia has officially declared Kampong Cham and Battambang as smoke-free tourist cities, promoting healthier tourism environments and supporting public health. Kampong Cham's recognition followed efforts to boost its ecotourism and create cleaner, more welcoming public spaces, attracting millions of tourists annually. Battambang was also declared smoke-free as part of its commitment to preserving its appeal as a cultural and historical destination. These initiatives, led by the Ministry of Tourism, aim to enhance visitor experiences by enforcing smoking bans in public spaces, supporting sustainable tourism and community well-being.

Philippines: In September 2024, the Vital Strategies' sub-grantee Transcend, local officials, and the Smoke-free task force conducted inspections in Tuding, Itogon, seizing over 150 cigarette ads from more than 50 stores, replacing them with 'No Smoking/Vaping' signs. Additionally, Transcend held MPOWER Trainer's Training for 21 participants from the Regional Tobacco Control Network to expand MPOWER implementation across the region.



Smoke-free task force with seized cigarette ads

Vital Strategies' sub-grantee PNBI (Partnerships for Health, Agriculture, Nation-Building, and Socio-Economic Upliftment Inc.), in collaboration with the La Union Provincial Health Office (PHO), conducted the Smoke-Free La Union Inception Planning Workshop. The event brought together approximately 50 participants, including representatives from 10 municipalities, national government agencies, and the private sector.



Smoke-free task force removing tobacco industry advertisement

On October 15, 2024, a composite team from the Itogon Smoke-Free Task Force, Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Virac Barangay Health Workers, and Transcend-TICI conducted inspections of business establishments in Brgy. Virac to enforce compliance with Itogon's Smoke-Free Ordinance. In line with WHO FCTC standards, the operation led to the confiscation of over 200 promotional materials from 55 establishments, reinforcing the 2020 ordinance that bans outdoor tobacco advertising.

Offering help to quit tobacco use

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Cambodia: National Centre for Health Promotion (NCHP), with support from Vital Strategies, is advancing tobacco cessation efforts in Cambodia. They recently collaborated with the Ministry of Health's Digital NCD Department to explore integrating tobacco cessation support into the 115 hotline, with a formal request submitted for this enhancement.

Additionally, NCHP conducted assessments in Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, and Battambang to review existing cessation policies and the Minimum Package of Activities at health centers, gathering insights from health workers, community members, and tobacco users. The findings will be compiled into a report. NCHP is also developing educational materials like posters and leaflets to support cessation initiatives.

Warning about the dangers of tobacco

Indonesia: Government Regulation No. 28 of 2024 mandates pictorial health warnings with standardized packaging, and a draft notification is being finalized for endorsement by the Minister of Health. Vital Strategies is providing crucial support through high-level policy meetings, media campaigns, youth mobilization, countering tobacco industry arguments, and offering legal and technical assistance to the Ministry of Health to ensure the effective implementation of this regulation.



Mock up designs of various standardised tobacco packs with 50% pictorial health warnings

Enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship

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Cambodia: The Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS) survey in Cambodia, conducted by the National Center for Health Promotion (NCHP) in 2024, evaluated compliance with TAPS bans across six provinces: Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Battambang, Kandal, Phnom Penh, and Preah Sihanouk. Through 554 observations at retail outlets, the survey uncovered widespread tobacco advertising, with 88.2% of stores displaying ads visible from the street. Promotions were prevalent, including free gifts (58.3%), branded shelving (64.1%), and extensive product displays (98.6%). Despite existing bans, nearly 50% of stores were found non-compliant, with overall adherence rates below 20%. The findings highlight the need for stricter monitoring and enforcement to curb tobacco advertising in the country.



Promotional materials monitored at the point-of-sales

Indonesia: The Acting Regent of Kulon Progo signed a circular letter enforcing a ban on the display of tobacco products at points of sale. Vital Strategies and its grantees are providing technical support for the implementation of this policy.

Philippines: Sub-grantee Smoke-Free Aklan conducted thorough monitoring of tobacco advertisements and paraphernalia to combat tobacco industry interference. They filed complaints with the Municipal Tobacco Control Task Force, issued warnings during inspections, and led "Operation Baklas," where store owners, supervised by the Philippine National Police and the Councilor for Health, repainted tobacco industry billboards to ensure compliance.

Raising taxes on tobacco

Indonesia: Two meetings were held with the Ministry of Finance to support stronger tobacco taxation policies. One meeting involved the Director General of Customs and Excise, while the other engaged the Expert Staff for State Revenue Policy. During these discussions, civil society groups emphasized the need for increased tobacco taxes to reduce consumption and generate additional government revenue.



CAPACITY BUILDING ON THE USE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM IN TOBACCO CONTROL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
The Orchard Hotel, Baguio City
September 25-27, 2024

Capacity building on the use of Geographic Information System

Philippines: To tackle challenges in issuing business permits for selling tobacco products near youth activity areas, Vital Strategies' sub-grantee, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), implemented a Geographic Information System (GIS) and provided capacity building training for officers from 15 Metro Manila LGUs on September 25-27, 2024, in Baguio City. The Metro Manila Council Secretariat also endorsed the use of GIS to enhance enforcement efforts. By January 2025, trained personnel will use GIS with digitized data to enforce compliance with tobacco and vape sales regulations.

- An orientation on the harmful effects of cigarette smoking, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), heated tobacco products, and other novel products was held on September 4, 17, and 19, 2024, in the Local Government Units (LGUs) of Lezo, Nabas, and Madalag, targeting organized adolescent groups.
- In September 2024, the Vital Strategies' sub-grantee ICH team conducted a capacity-building workshop in South Cotabato focused on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) policies, Tobacco Advertising, Promotion, and Sponsorship (TAPS), and Tobacco Industry Interference (TII). The event featured speakers from HealthJustice Philippines and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and was attended by health officials, local leaders, and representatives, including Vice Governor Arturo Pingoy and Councilor Annabelle Pingoy.

On October 14, 2024, the Ateneo Policy Center's Tobacco Control and Governance program held a workshop for the Tobacco Prevention and Control Policy Development Fellowship (TPC PDF) at Ateneo de Manila University. The event focused on reviewing Fellows' progress in developing tobacco control policies and gathering feedback from stakeholders to refine their research. Participants included representatives from the Department of Health's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Bureaus, Vital Strategies, and tobacco control advocates. The workshop emphasized evidence-based approaches to strengthen tobacco advertising restrictions, smoking cessation programs, and policy enforcement to reduce tobacco use in the Philippines.



Participants of Tobacco Prevention and Control Policy Development Fellowship workshop



Youth rally in Jakarta supporting stricter tobacco control measures to protect public health

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