

*Effective Advocacy and
Movement Building for
Tobacco Control*
Summary of conference proceedings

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Conference Background

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the world. Studies have shown that by 2030, 10 million people will die each year from tobacco related disease. Tobacco use prevalence rates in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the former Soviet (FSU) are some of the highest in the world. In addition, the tobacco industry has identified CEE/FSU as one of its most promising markets, pumping money, advertising, and products into the region. With high prevalence rates and growing investment from Transnational Tobacco Companies, the region is facing a devastating health crisis.

In order to address the burgeoning tobacco epidemic in the Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the Open Society Institute in collaboration with the American Cancer Society convened a seminar of over 65 tobacco control advocates from 22 countries of CEE and fSU. The conference sought to develop and strengthen the tobacco control movement in the CEE and fSU through building skills in policy and communication strategy, movement/coalition building, public policy analysis and strategy planning. To achieve this goal, the conference focused on promoting an understanding of key advocacy needs for developing national tobacco control plans, increasing knowledge of the science, public health, and economic arguments supporting tobacco control, and facilitating the development of CEE and fSU information and policy networks.

The seminar presented workshops and skills building sessions on strategy planning, use of media, and coalition building, through discussion of engaging physicians in tobacco control advocacy, and achieving clean indoor air policies. For each topic, presenters provided explanations of how each topic could be included in an effective tobacco control national plan. In addition, participants provided case studies from the region on tobacco control successes and challenges.

I. Strategic Planning for Action

Workshops and presentations on strategic planning provided participants with the basic steps for developing a tobacco control advocacy platform. Speakers encouraged participants to think strategically about the best entry points for tobacco control within their countries. By focusing on one component of a comprehensive tobacco control plan, advocates can develop targeted projects that are likely to have positive results within their country. Successful initiatives can then be expanded into more comprehensive national tobacco control plans. Speakers cited the following issues as key components to an effective national tobacco control program.

Tax increases: Increasing cigarette taxes is the most effective tobacco control measure. Tax increases would have a significant impact in participants' countries among populations of poor and young smokers, as they are most sensitive to pricing.

Advertising bans: Participants discussed how advertising is used within their countries to promote American and Western culture. Complete advertising bans, in conjunction with other tobacco control policies, can help to reduce tobacco use prevalence. The

problem for many countries in the region is that governments only enforce partial bans on tobacco advertising. Partial bans have a very limited effect on consumption.

Clean indoor air policies: Presentations emphasized the importance of discussing secondhand smoking as a health hazard rather than as a nuisance issue. Experiences in California and other areas have shown that restricting smoking in public places, such as bars and restaurants, does not affect the economy.

Package warnings/labeling: In order to have successful results from labeling, package warnings should cover at least 50% of the tobacco product. Best practices suggest labels should include pictures, information on how to quit, and simple, direct messages and should not list tar or nicotine levels.

Product regulation: Participants were encouraged to advocate for product regulation laws within their countries. Tobacco companies should be required to disclose all tobacco product ingredients to governments.

Cessation services: Cessation programs are an important component within a larger tobacco control program. The first policy steps in cessation programs should focus on making Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) less expensive and more available to smokers.

The Advocacy Institute recommends following a five question strategy planning process to develop an effective strategy around any of the aforementioned components of tobacco control.

1. What do we want from advocacy efforts (practical objective not vision)?
2. Who has the authority/power to make it happen (the audience)?
3. What messages are most likely to motivate our target audience?
 - a. core messages—public health benefits
 - b. tailored messages—self-interest and specific concerns for the target audience
4. Who are the most effective messengers for our target audience?
5. What is the most effective medium to reach our target audience?

Speakers from CEE/fSU discussed their own experience in building tobacco control national strategies. They emphasized that advocates need to identify a key issue within their country and then use local experts, international treaties (FCTC), and country examples to deliver their message to policy makers. Participants were reminded that successful tobacco control plans require creativity, information sharing, well developed strategies, and allies in the media and government.

The importance of coalition building and collaboration within strategy planning was underlined throughout the presentations. Building coalitions can be difficult as organizers must be willing to concede total control and share decision making powers. Discussions emphasized that successful coalitions are built on clearly articulated goals and visions, well defined roles, open communication, commitment to the coalition, and willingness to compromise.

Case Study—Romania

The Romanian case study on successes and challenges for tobacco control provided a clear example of successful coalition building. The speakers revealed how effectively NGOs, the World Bank, WHO, and the Ministry of Health collaborated to advocate for tobacco control legislation within Romania. These efforts led to the successful ratification in 2002 of the Law for Preventing and Combating effects of Tobacco Use. Although the law was passed, the panel emphasized that this was not a complete success as there has been no enforcement of the new law. The greatest challenge will now be implementation.

Strategy Planning and the role of Sub-regional/national seminars

The session outlined practical measures for designing national tobacco control seminars. The presentation provided two distinct types of seminars. The first seminar is for countries that are in the nascent stage of tobacco control, with perhaps 4-5 people within the country that have experience with tobacco control. The second seminar is for countries that are in a more advanced stage of tobacco control and have approximately 15 NGOs and/or government groups working on the issue.

For countries still in early development, the purpose of the national workshop is to develop a larger core group of tobacco control advocates. The seminar should focus on broadening tobacco control leadership, especially NGO leadership, and deepening knowledge of tobacco control policy issues. Based on experience at the recent Romanian national seminar, the Romanian team provided practical strategies for planning a workshop. Emphasis was placed on the importance of selecting and developing a core group of committed advocates with diverse strengths working collaboratively.

In countries with a more developed tobacco control strategy, seminars should focus on developing a national plan. The presentation underlined the need for “talent scouting” to identify the strongest advocates, movement building, strategic planning around a national plan, and developing coalitions.

II. Physicians and Tobacco Control

Sessions on involving doctors in tobacco control offered an overview of the arguments in support of using doctors as leaders within the tobacco control movement. In addition, presenters provided basic examples of practical methods for increasing doctors’ involvement. Participants added their own perspective through case studies from the region and active breakout sessions.

Presentations underlined the powerful role doctors can play within the tobacco control movement. Physicians have unique influence on smoking cessation based on their strong relationships with patients. In addition, physicians have credibility and authority within their governments. Participants and speakers recognized that involving physicians in tobacco control is difficult in the region as many countries have very high smoking rates

among physicians. Advocates must focus on first getting doctors to quit and then placing them in a leading role.

Participants broke into small groups to develop their own strategy, based on the five question method, for getting doctors to quit and lead. Reports to the group revealed a variety of strategies. The majority agreed that the most powerful messages for physicians were not necessarily core messages about public health but tailored messages that emphasized how being a tobacco control advocate would be personally rewarding—more patients would visit their practice, they would gain greater credibility, they would gain trust with patients, etc. In addition, most groups agreed that the best messengers would be colleagues (prominent doctors or nurses) and/or government officials (parliamentarians and Ministers of Health).

Case Studies—Slovenia and Czech Republic

In Slovenia, a campaign to engage doctors in the tobacco control movement focused on bringing tobacco control advocacy into hospitals. Advocates developed an education program within Slovenian hospitals, the program included media conferences, letters from the Ministry of Health to hospital management underlining the importance of doctors' role in tobacco control, distribution of how to quit brochures in hospitals, and poster contests. The campaign provided Slovenian doctors and hospital staff with the tools to become effective tobacco control advocates.

In the Czech Republic, campaigns to get doctors involved in tobacco control have focused on education for medical students and post-graduate education for doctors. In order to recruit young doctors to become tobacco control advocates, Charles University has placed a tobacco control education coordinator on its staff and has included tobacco control within the medical school curriculum. The University hopes that their work will decrease smoking rates in future doctors and recruit medical students to become advocates for tobacco control.

III. Clean Indoor Air Policies

Scientific and economic arguments in support of clean indoor air policies were discussed in presentations, case studies, and small group activities. During the presentations, speakers focused on providing effective arguments that could be presented to policymakers on the benefits of clean indoor air policies. A number of public health arguments were outlined, most notably, the fundamental argument that clean indoor air policies promote health and save lives. Economic arguments focused on discrediting the claim that clean indoor air regulations will reduce business' revenue.

During the breakout session, small groups developed strategies for implementing smoke-free regulations in schools. The groups developed messages that emphasized the responsibility schools and teachers have to provide children with healthy environments. Participants identified teachers, influential parents, and children as the most effective messengers and suggested that they use school magazines, contests, talk shows, and newspapers to deliver their message.

Case studies—Romania and Russia

Case studies from Romania and Russia presented best practices on enforcing clean indoor air policies. Both presentations discussed the challenges facing the region due to the pressure the tobacco industry is placing on governments and the misinformation they are spreading about secondhand smoke. Experiences from Romania emphasized the need to identify target populations and educate these groups on the serious harm of secondhand smoke. They found that providing worksite managers and employees with examples and data from other countries was very effective. In Russia, the smoke-free advocacy movement was targeted at public transportation by using written messages to convince individual drivers not to smoke. Lessons learned from the Russian experience included the importance of creativity, grass roots initiative, and collaboration with other NGOs.

Lessons learned from the Great CEE Smoke-out

Smoke-out participants from Slovakia and Ukraine discussed their successes and challenges in promoting the Great CEE Smoke-out within their countries. In Slovakia where the campaign goal was to create smoke-free zones in public areas, advocates sent letters and questionnaires to targeted groups such as hospitals, schools, and businesses. In Ukraine where the campaign was aimed to provide smokers with better cessation services, ADIC created a well publicized quitline and distributed leaflets on quitting smoking to smokers throughout the country. In addition to the importance of identifying target groups, speakers emphasized the critical role that the media played in the Smoke-out campaigns. The teams used press conferences, television clips, and newspaper articles to ensure their message was well broadcasted throughout their countries.

IV. Opportunities for Collaboration and Resources

This session provided participants with an overview of the different opportunities that are available for collaboration and funding in tobacco control. Speakers offered brief explanations of their organizations and suggested the most effective methods for collaboration.

OSI's presentation provided an overview of the Network Public Health Programs' 2003/2004 tobacco control program plans. NGO's were encouraged to identify their strategic direction and needs before approaching OSI or other funders. CIDA presented valuable advice about how to attract funding from donor countries. The presentation suggested that advocates position their project so that it fits into established national plans or international priorities (Millennium Development Goals). The ITEN presentation described the organization's work to support economists and researchers in low and middle income countries.

The European Network on Smoking Prevention and The European Respiratory Society discussed possible opportunities for accession countries through funding from the European Commission. NGOs were encouraged to join ENSP's network. Peter Anderson discussed the European Commission's plan for smoking cessation promotion

activities. The Commission is funding a project to collect data on country level cessation programs.

Resources for Tobacco Control Advocacy

A discussion of the FCTC focused on how it can be utilized in national tobacco control strategies. Speakers emphasized that the FCTC should be used as an advocacy tool to push forward legislation. NGOs were also encouraged to identify the FCTC government negotiators within their countries and try to work with them to develop a common position. Participants were encouraged to join the Framework Convention Alliance, a network of NGOs involved in FCTC ratification and implementation issues.

In 2002, the Stampar School of Public Health carried out a study of the tobacco epidemic in seven countries in Southeast Europe. The study has provided a large amount of new data on tobacco consumption and the burden of disease in the region. The data underlines that Southeast Europe is facing a terrible tobacco epidemic with higher tobacco consumption rates than CEE, higher lung cancer incidence than in CEE, and higher mortality rates caused by smoking than in the EU. Participants were encouraged to utilize data from the study as an advocacy tool within their countries.

V. Workshops

GLOBALink - Tools for tobacco control

The workshop consisted of an interactive presentation of GLOBALink services (www.globalink.org) aimed at helping the audience accomplish online tobacco control activities. Three perspectives were given: education, advocacy and communications. The participants were shown online publications and websites and online advocacy tools, such as the online-petitions.

A tour of GLOBALink restricted access network allowed the audience to see the benefits of belonging to an international tobacco control network. Participants were also given a demonstration of Localink, a tool designed to enable each organization to start their own tobacco control website, online databases, list-servs and other useful web accessories.

Proposal Writing

The session focused on the basics of proposal writing, including an exercise on how to define a project and think about matching it to a potential supporter, a brief introduction to the importance of writing clearly and effectively, a case study of how to formulate a project into a proposal, and a review of budgeting, including the importance of demonstrating sustainability and the potential for leveraging other funding.

This was followed by a question and answer session on private and public funding sources for tobacco control, including how to market a project to funders who are not explicitly interested in tobacco.

Economics of Tobacco Control

The presentation focused on economic aspects of tobacco control including the effect of taxes and non-price tobacco control measures. It also discussed the impact of tobacco control on poor and employment, and on cigarette smuggling. The participants went through an exercise applying a price elasticity concept for predicting tax collection and smoking prevalence.

The questions at the end of the session concerned smuggling, market share of brands and cigarette prices, and tobacco farming and switching to alternative crops. Participants identified the economics of tobacco as an area that they need more training in.

Medical arguments for tobacco control

The session focused on providing basic evidence about the impact of tobacco use on health including the history of the tobacco epidemic, prevalence rates, and morbidity and mortality data. An overview of the impact of smoking on main disease groups – cardiovascular, cancer, pulmonary and others was also outlined. Finally, general issues of dependence and treatment were discussed including issues of psychosocial and drug dependence and current evidence based guidelines for treatment.

General Overview

The conference addressed a wide range of issues and provided participants with a comprehensive foundation for strategic planning, communication and movement building around tobacco control. The range of topics covered in the agenda underlines the great number of issues that must be addressed in a comprehensive national tobacco control campaign.

The seminar revealed that in many countries there is a significant amount of learning that needs to take place around tobacco control issues before national strategies can be developed. Participants were encouraged to plan national tobacco control seminars in order to build wider networks of advocates and increase tobacco control knowledge within their countries. The enthusiasm and ideas set forth by participants at the seminar emphasizes that despite the challenges, there is great interest in advancing tobacco control policy within the region.

In general, seminar sessions were very well attended. Participants were engaged during the sessions and most presentations were followed by lively discussion and debate. The small group sessions provided participants with even more opportunity to voice opinions and share their experiences. Throughout the seminar, participants were willing to share case studies and lessons learned with their colleagues.

The seminar provided an important opportunity for participants to strengthen their existing coalitions and develop new contacts. There were many new faces at the seminar, especially from the fSU, which made networking a critical aspect of the meeting. In addition to the standard networking opportunities, regional breakout meetings for CEE

and fSU provided an extremely important forum for participants to express their opinions, share best practices and network with one another.

At the end of the conference, the American Cancer Society announced a small grants competition for participants. ACS plans to award nine seed grants for approximately \$5,000 each to support tobacco control activities in the region. All seminar participants were encouraged to apply for ACS grants.

Overall, the seminar participants seem to have a good understanding of the challenges ahead and are enthusiastic about confronting them. With so many dedicated advocates, increased support from the EU and global networks, OSI investment in tobacco control activities, and the adoption of the FCTC, tobacco control is gaining momentum in CEE and fSU—this might represent a tipping point.

Recommendations

For future work:

- NGOs should develop strategic long term plans for their tobacco control efforts. These plans would include a framework for advocacy, use of communication (media and meetings), and partnerships/coalitions.
- NGO funding applications should address activities which are shorter term steps towards reaching the long term goal.
- Tobacco control advocates must strategize on how to effectively position tobacco control within the development framework in order to access more bilateral/other funding.
- Tobacco control advocates should circulate their experiences and lessons learned using the CEE and NIS tobacco control policy and information networks (Health 21 and ADIC).
- Funders must recognize the different stages of tobacco control within each country (pre-contemplation, contemplation, and intervention stages) and address activities in each country accordingly.
- Tobacco control organizations should join the European Network of Smoking Prevention (ENSP) and other EU organizations, the Framework Convention Alliance, and Globalink.
- NGOs are encouraged to begin planning national tobacco control workshops to enlarge the movement following the structure outlined by the Advocacy Institute.
- EU funded organizations must recognize the importance of including the Accession countries within future work/strategy/applications.
- It is important that OSI continue communication and partnership efforts with CEE countries despite their accession into the European Union.

For future conferences/workshops:

- Future seminars should be sub-regional/national. Allowing for more in-depth discussion of common specific challenges with an outcome of concrete plans for action.

- It is important both to strengthen the skills and strategies of emerging leaders and to enlarge the movement and train new advocates. Participants who have previously attended OSI seminars should be supported in their national movement building activities, including the recommendation of new NGO participants in basic tobacco control seminars
- More time should be provided for small working groups and strategy planning sessions
- Where a strong core group of national NGO advocates has emerged, support should be given to national workshops designed to broaden the core leadership group and develop concrete strategic plans.
- More extensive mass media training should be provided for advocates from the region.
- Additional training on the economics of tobacco control should be given to CEE/fSU advocates.