

Education is essential for sustained progress in tobacco control. Many legislative or tax interventions will not be effective if there is no public understanding, support and demand for such changes. People support tax increases when they understand that the rationale is to reduce youth smoking: an average of 87 percent of respondents in Argentina, India, Japan, Nigeria, and the Russian Federation were in favour of international efforts to create a set of rules and regulations to curb tobacco use.

Schools can provide an ideal venue not only to teach about the harmful effects of smoking, but also to teach students refusal skills and an understanding of the behaviour of the tobacco industry. This includes analysing the manipulation of young people by marketing which equates smoking with growing up, freedom and being cool.

The first step with school programmes is to increase knowledge about the harm caused by smoking and to change beliefs, attitudes and intentions. This alone is not sufficient to change behaviour. A school tobacco control programme must also incorporate prohibiting tobacco use at all school facilities and events, helping students and staff

public statement:
 "If you're not old enough to drive, you're not old enough to smoke. Why not wait until you're 18 before deciding whether or not you want to smoke."
 Philip Morris billboard, Hong Kong, 1990.

private statement:
 "Youth programs support [our] objective of discouraging unfair and counterproductive federal, state and local restrictions on cigarette advertising..."
 US Tobacco Institute, 1991

to quit smoking, and ideally making the course part of a coordinated school health programme, reinforced by community-wide efforts.

To improve its public image, the tobacco industry has recently become active in smoking prevention programmes for young people. These programmes portray smoking as an adult decision, and that young people should wait until they are grown up to decide to smoke. Since young people aspire to be young adults, this type of message may actually make smoking more appealing to youth.



World No Tobacco Day: 31st May annual themes

1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Tobacco or Health: Choose Health	Women and Tobacco	Growing up without Tobacco	Tobacco in Public Places and on Public Transport	Tobacco at the Workplace	Health Services, including Health Personnel, against Tobacco	The Media against Tobacco	The Economics of Tobacco	Sports and The Arts without Tobacco	The United Nations and Specialized Agencies Against Tobacco "United for a Tobacco-Free World"	Growing up without tobacco	Cessation	The Entertainment Industry	Secondhand smoke kills. Let's clear the air	Tobacco Free Sports: Play it clean