



The Heart Foundation of Jamaica/Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control Project

INTRODUCTION

The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (for The Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control) has received a grant from the Bloomberg Global Initiative in order to facilitate the implementation of rotating picture-based package warnings on tobacco products sold in Caribbean countries. This grant is administered through the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project title	"Introducing a Picture-Based Health Warning System on Cigarette Packages in the Caribbean"
Duration of project	24 months
Proposed start date of project	APRIL 1, 2008
Project scope	Regional – The Caribbean – including Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago
Project outreach:	The population of the 4 countries involved in the project

The Bloomberg Global Initiative

The Bloomberg Initiative was established in 2006 by funds contributed by Michael R. Bloomberg (New York City's Mayor), to reduce tobacco use globally by investing in developing countries, with a particular focus on the 15 countries with the most smokers in the world:

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

The FCTC is a legally binding treaty which was negotiated by the 192 member states of the World Health Organization (WHO). The world's first public health treaty, the FCTC contains a host of measures designed to reduce the devastating health and economic impacts of tobacco. Key provisions in the treaty encourage countries to:

- Enact comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
- Obligate the placement of rotating health warnings on tobacco packaging that cover at least 30 percent (but ideally 50 percent or more) of the principal display areas and can include pictures or pictograms (Article 11)

- Ban the use of misleading and deceptive terms such as "light" and "mild".
- Protect citizens from exposure to tobacco smoke in workplaces, public transport and indoor public places.
- Combat smuggling, including the placing of final destination markings on packs; and
- Increase tobacco taxes.

The FCTC also contains numerous other measures designed to promote and protect public health. To date, 168 countries have signed and ratified the treaty, including nine Caribbean nations.

THE HEART FOUNDATION OF JAMAICA

The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ) was established in 1971 and is a member of the InterAmerican Heart Foundation and the World Heart Federation. The Foundation is involved in prevention programmes for cardiovascular disease. The establishment of **the Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control (JCTC)** was spearheaded by The Heart Foundation of Jamaica and was launched on May 31, World No Tobacco Day, 2002.

THE HFJ/JCTC PROJECT

The Project's primary objective is to facilitate the achievement of a strong CARICOM (Caribbean Community and Common Market) cigarette labelling standard, which now exists and has been updated and circulated for comment in countries, and to ensure implementation of the standard or equally strong requirements in four target countries: Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago. This includes liaising with the Ministries of Health and Bureaus of Standards in the target countries. **Although the project covers four target countries, member states of CARICOM will also benefit from this labelling standard.**

This project aims to ensure the implementation of rotating picture-based package warnings on tobacco products sold in Caribbean countries, of a minimum size of 50% of the top of each main face of the packaging. Project strategies will include lobbying of national politicians, raising awareness among key decision makers and community leaders, and mobilizing and informing strategic sectors of the public, including the media, in support of the warnings.

Other Caribbean-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) committed to the project are The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados, The Guyana Chest Society, and The Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society.

ABOUT OUR PARTNERS

The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc. (HSFB) was established in 1985. In the lead up to the Cricket World Cup (CWC) 2007 held in the Caribbean, HSFB was one of a group of regional NGOs campaigning for a tobacco free CWC 2007. The HSFB is a member of the Framework Convention Alliance for tobacco control (FCA).

The Guyana Chest Society was established in 1921 for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis. It is a non-profit non-governmental organization. It is affiliated with The International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases.

The Trinidad and Tobago Cancer Society is a non-governmental, non-profit, voluntary service organization whose main purpose is to promote the early detection of cancer through screening, education and advocacy. It was established in 1971. They operate a screening clinic and two mobile units.

The InterAmerican Heart Foundation, based in Dallas USA, was established in 1994. its mission is "to *reduce disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke in the Americas.*"

Endorsement

The project and its major outputs to accelerate the implementation of graphic health warnings on cigarette packs, has recently garnered an important endorsement from the **Caribbean Cardiac Society (CCS)**.

The CCS was formally launched in 1988 as the primary forum for Cardiologists and Cardiac Surgeons in the Caribbean region to share experiences and disseminate knowledge in Cardiovascular Diseases. The Society's

primary objective is *“the advancement of the knowledge of diseases of the heart and circulation among medical and para-medical professions in the Caribbean.”*

Project Staffing

The project office is situated in the HFJ with responsibility for implementation in four Caribbean countries. The office is staffed by a Project Manager and a Communications Officer with additional administrative support from HFJ. The Executive Director of HFJ oversees the entire project. Each of the other three countries has Project Officer in the NGO specified above.

DEATHS DUE TO TOBACCO

Although tobacco deaths rarely make headlines, tobacco kills one person every six seconds.¹ Tobacco kills a third to half of all people who use it,² on average 15 years prematurely.^{2,3,4}

Today, tobacco use causes 1 in 10 deaths among adults worldwide – more than five million people a year.^{1,5}

In the Caribbean it is estimated that the prevalence of tobacco use is about 17% in youths and approximately 10% to 25% in the population over age 15.^{6,10, 12} In a recent presentation regarding tobacco deaths in Trinidad and Tobago, it was estimated that tobacco deaths as a percentage of medical deaths, ranged from 30% in males to 14 % in females.⁷

Second-hand smoke also has serious and often fatal health consequences. These include lung cancer deaths and heart disease deaths. Second-hand smoke has been linked to several cases of sudden infant death syndrome as well as the birth of low-birth-weight babies.¹¹

THE USE OF HEALTH WARNINGS

Picture-based health warnings on tobacco packaging motivate smokers to try to quit smoking, inform potential adolescent smokers of the harms of tobacco use, and inform smokers of the harm caused to loved ones by second hand tobacco smoke exposure.⁸

Regulations governing tobacco package warnings in the Caribbean in almost all countries are largely outdated or do not exist.^{9,10} Although each country has the authority to regulate tobacco packaging on a national basis, CARICOM, has overall authority to develop standards. Although these standards are not legally required, they are customarily adopted by CARICOM countries.

The Labelling Technical Committee of the Bureau of Standards (BOS) of Jamaica is the body designated by CARICOM to develop recommendations for tobacco package warnings. The last set of recommendations done by the BOS was several years ago. In 2005 the BOS Jamaica was asked by the regional Standards body, the Caribbean Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) to revise the cigarette labelling standards for use as a prototype by Member States of CARICOM. This process is completed and the draft standards have been circulated by CROSQ for comment until early July 2009. This project will engage in advocacy to ensure that CROSQ receives additional comments in favour of best practices in support of a strong CARICOM standard.

About CROSQ

CROSQ, the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality, made up of the national Bureaus of Standards of CARICOM member states, was established in 2003 by a CARICOM Community treaty as an Intergovernmental Organisation and the regional centre for promoting efficiency and competitive production in trade and services, through the process of standardisation and the verification of quality.

The Role of Jamaica’s Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health in Jamaica has been strongly involved in tobacco control in Jamaica and the CARICOM region, having an important role in the ratification of the FCTC among the CARICOM countries. The Ministry of Health of Jamaica also sits on the Technical Committee of the BOS of Jamaica that has been developing the CARICOM standards and has been aggressively advocating for picture-based warnings in the draft standard.

POLITICAL SUPPORT

Specifically, this project has the political commitment of the Ministries of Health of Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. This group of countries together represents more than 78.3% (4,986,000) of the population of the English speaking Caribbean.

A key barrier to the development of a strong graphic health warning standard is the fact that the tobacco industry representatives are very active in the region. Effective political support across all Caribbean countries is required to counteract the pressure and lobbying that the tobacco companies are able to apply within the industry and the region.

Assuming the CARICOM recommendations remain strong, the effort will be focused on implementation by late 2009 in the four target countries participating in this project (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago).

This project will sensitize policy makers and key opinion leaders regarding the importance of communicating accurate, clear, strong, direct, specific and easy-to-understand information about the health hazards of tobacco use to smokers and second-hand tobacco smoke to smokers' families.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

This project will benefit from committed collaboration between CARICOM, regional NGOs, other key organisations and ministries of health in the Caribbean, supported by technical expertise of several international organizations including the InterAmerican Heart Foundation, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, the Non-Smokers' Rights Association (Canada) and the regional and country offices of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization.

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