

Tackling Point-of-Sale Advertising at Point of Sale

Every day, 1,200 kids below the age of ten in Pakistan begin smoking.

For decades, in most stores and kiosks in Pakistan, it was commonplace to see blaring, colorful advertisements for tobacco products and the products themselves placed right at the eye level of children. A market study from 2019, found that tobacco products were displayed at children's eye level in 95% of the 268 tobacco points of sale observed around schools in Pakistan. This is in line with the tobacco industry marketing strategy that "eye level is buy level."

Vital Strategies honed in on the problem of point-of-sale marketing and executed a vast advocacy campaign across several years, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, by displaying 100,000 posters in kiosks in 10 populous cities, educating and reminding store owners and customers that children cannot buy cigarettes and that selling individual cigarettes are illegal. An average of 200-300 customers visit each point-of-sale advertising spot daily.

Instead of absorbing attractive tobacco marketing, this meant children visiting the store were now regularly reminded that it is illegal for them to buy cigarettes and were greeted by photographs of a foot badly damaged by a smoking-induced condition. The campaign and the public support it garnered persuaded the government that there is a strong need to ban tobacco advertising at the point of sale and to keep the tobacco products away from children.

The government has recently explicitly banned this advertising and product displays on kiosk counters. Today the posters continue to be seen in the very spots where tobacco products and their advertising were once commonplace.



Population

220 million

Smoking Prevalence

32% of men, 6% of women, 4.8% of boys and 0.9% of girls currently use tobacco¹².

Tobacco Control Policies

Pakistan has a ban on tobacco advertisements, promotion and sponsorship. Pakistan also has a national ban on smoking in public places, as well as on transport, including airlines and railways. Pakistan has implemented mandatory graphic health warnings that cover 60% of the cigarette pack on both the front and back. The use of e-cigarettes is prohibited in public places and on public transport. The government also taxes e-liquids that are used with e-cigarettes.

Fact

A recent study found that the economic burden of tobacco-related illnesses in Pakistan totals US \$1.37 billion.

¹ Global Adult Tobacco Survey, 2014

² Global Youth Tobacco Survey, 2013



A boy looks at new tobacco control signage for kiosks at eye level.

This case study is part of a series highlighting our work with the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use in priority countries.

About Vital Strategies

Vital Strategies is a global health organization that believes every person should be protected by a strong public health system. We work with governments and civil society in more than 70 countries to design and implement evidence-based strategies that tackle their most pressing public health problems. Our goal is to see governments adopt promising interventions at scale as rapidly as possible. To find out more, please visit www.vitalstrategies.org or Twitter @VitalStrat.