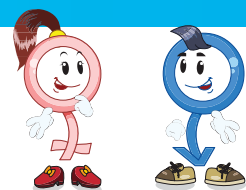




Girls and boys for change: tobacco control now



Tobacco marketing to women

A massive untapped market

With millions of customers dying from tobacco-related illnesses or quitting each year, the tobacco industry needs to recruit thousands of new smokers every day. As potential customers, women present a major marketing opportunity for the tobacco industry, especially in developing countries where rates of tobacco use among women are currently low.

Tobacco companies have a long history of targeting women and girls in their marketing campaigns. After aggressive promotional campaigns targeting women and girls, smoking among women in Japan jumped from 8.6% in 1986 to 18.2% in 1991. In recent years, the industry has stepped up its efforts to market its products to women and youth, including in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. This includes both direct marketing through advertising of tobacco products and indirect marketing through promotions and sponsorship. The Global Youth Tobacco Survey has found high levels of exposure in the Region to advertising on billboards and in newspapers and magazines. It also found that 15% of 13–15 year olds in the Region own an object with a tobacco company logo or other cigarette branding, while 9% have been offered free cigarettes.

How are women targeted?

The tobacco industry targets women through the development of female-identified brands and through advertising campaigns that depict smoking as feminine and fashionable.

- Brand names are used that appeal to women, such as Philip Morris' Virginia Slims evoking slimness and RJ Reynolds' Camel No. 9 evoking perfume.
- Misleading branding terms are used, such as "light", "ultra-light" and "low tar". Women are more likely to smoke these brands of cigarette than men in the mistaken belief that they are safer.
- Advertisements are placed in women's magazines associating smoking with romance and glamour. They use images of vitality and sophistication, slimness and beauty. Advertising even links smoking with being a modern liberated woman and with female friendship.
- Cigarette packaging for certain brands is designed to appeal to women, such as small "purse" packs that resemble cosmetics, fit into purses and evoke slimness, and in the use of feminine colours, such as pink and mauve.
- Promotional items that appeal to women are distributed, such as flavoured lip balm, cell phone jewellery, tiny purses, clothing and wristbands.
- Tobacco companies sponsor events, such as women's sporting tournaments, beauty contests and fashion shows, and promote smoking by women in films and on television to create negative role models.

Protecting women from tobacco marketing

Women have a right to be protected from tobacco marketing. We need to empower women through raising awareness of the marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship must be banned in accordance with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Article 13). We have the opportunity to prevent the tobacco industry from luring new generations of women into a lifetime of nicotine addiction. We must seize it.



**World Health
Organization**

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