

# Tobacco Control Success Story: India



The [Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids](#) (CTFK) helped India reduce adult tobacco use by 17% between 2010 and 2017. Even larger declines were reported in secondhand smoke exposure in restaurants (-34.5%) and public transportation (-24%). These public health successes were driven by policy change. Institutionalization of enforcement mechanisms at the state level, the creation of a robust tobacco control community and public education through the media also spurred the impressive progress in India.

## THE CHALLENGE

The tobacco industry's influence on policymaking—both openly and through allies and front groups—poses a significant challenge to tobacco control in India. In 2010, nearly 35% of adults used tobacco, according to the first-ever [Global Adult Tobacco Survey](#).

The tobacco industry in India had attempted to stop or stall numerous policy measures, including pictorial health warnings and raising taxes on tobacco products, both of which are mandated by the [World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control \(FCTC\)](#), to which India is a party. The industry also exploited loopholes in tobacco control laws, especially restrictions on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) and smoking in public places.

State law enforcement agencies' lack of awareness about the tobacco control laws they were charged with upholding, particularly India's [Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act of 2003 \(COTPA\)](#), presented a major challenge to curbing tobacco use in India.



## OUR ROLE

CTFK supported India's tobacco control efforts in critical ways:

- **Harnessing our wealth of experience and subject matter expertise globally** to help national and state governments enact and implement strong laws, including tax increases;
- **Strengthening local partners' capacity in political and media advocacy** through training, campaign support and mentoring;
- **Engaging the media to highlight the health harms of tobacco and the urgent need for adopting/ implementing law** through workshops, fellowships and capacity-building;
- **Empowering local civil society** to advocate national and state policymakers;
- **Providing legal assistance** to governments and civil society in more than 200 cases involving pictorial health warnings, smokeless tobacco bans, smoke-free laws and advertising bans;
- **Promoting and documenting best practices, institutionalizing reporting and review mechanisms, and supporting implementation** among local partners, including the health, education, tourism and transportation sectors. This included supporting the inclusion of training of law enforcement officers in state academies and engaging victims and doctors in public discussions about tobacco control.

## RESULTS

CTFK helped make reducing tobacco use a priority for state and national policy makers, resulting in stronger policies and enforcement and eventually significant declines in tobacco use; from 34.6% in 2010 to 28.6% in 2017.

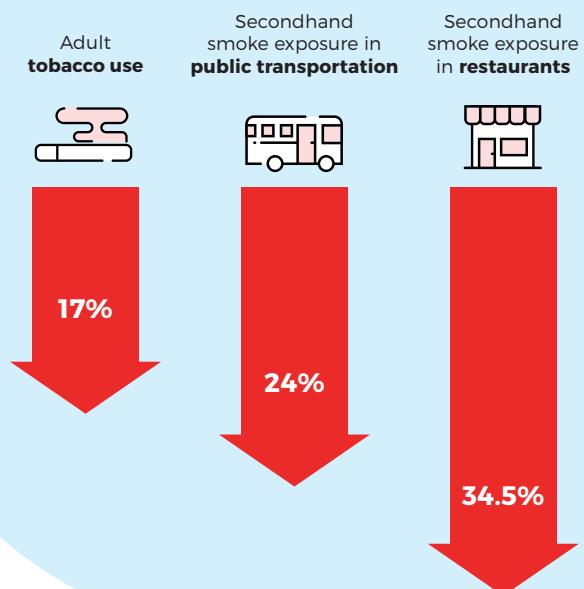
Tobacco control had traditionally been the concern of only health departments and allied agencies, but they were limited in terms of what they could do to spur compliance with COTPA. The Campaign successfully advocated for states to establish COTPA implementation Task Forces and for police departments to enforce the law. Through this engagement, multiple sectors of government became invested in a collaborative approach to implementing tobacco control laws to reduce tobacco use and improve the health of citizens.

CTFK's partners also assisted states to increase taxes to make tobacco products more expensive. For example, when the Campaign's local partners initiated tobacco tax advocacy, 15 states did not tax bidis, a type of hand-rolled cigarette popular in India. Thanks to this advocacy, 10 of those states began levying taxes on bidis as well as significantly increasing taxes on manufactured cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

CTFK's media training workshops have ensured a pool of informed and issue-sensitized journalists, keeping tobacco control on national and state agendas and educating the public.

Finally, an effective and diverse civil society movement bolstered by CTFK has built public support for tobacco control beyond the health sector. In addition to doctors and tobacco victims, the movement includes human rights activists and those fighting for the rights of women and children.

### A Decade of Progress, 2010-2017



## LESSONS LEARNED

Our work in India taught us it is possible to advance a bold vision and ambitious targets for public health policy change backed by informed and sustainable strategies. Some valuable lessons we have learned include:

- 1 Coordinating both within and beyond government sectors ensures successful campaigns like those led by local partners for pictorial health warnings and higher tobacco taxes.
- 2 Advocacy strategies should be informed by real-time intelligence about political developments.
- 3 Consistently monitoring the industry and its allies and front groups is necessary to counter their influence on decision makers and the public.
- 4 Strategic litigation is essential to the adoption and implementation of tobacco control policies.
- 5 Continued declines in tobacco use prevalence require building sustainable systems for accountability within the government and across enforcement agencies.

## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is the leading advocacy organization working to reduce tobacco use and its deadly consequences in the United States and around the world. Through strategic communications and policy advocacy campaigns, we promote the adoption of proven solutions that are most effective at reducing tobacco use and save the most lives.

1400 I Street NW, Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20005 USA

[info@tobaccofreekids.org](mailto:info@tobaccofreekids.org)

[tobaccofreekids.org](http://tobaccofreekids.org)

@TobaccoFreeKids

Tel.: +1.202.296.5469

