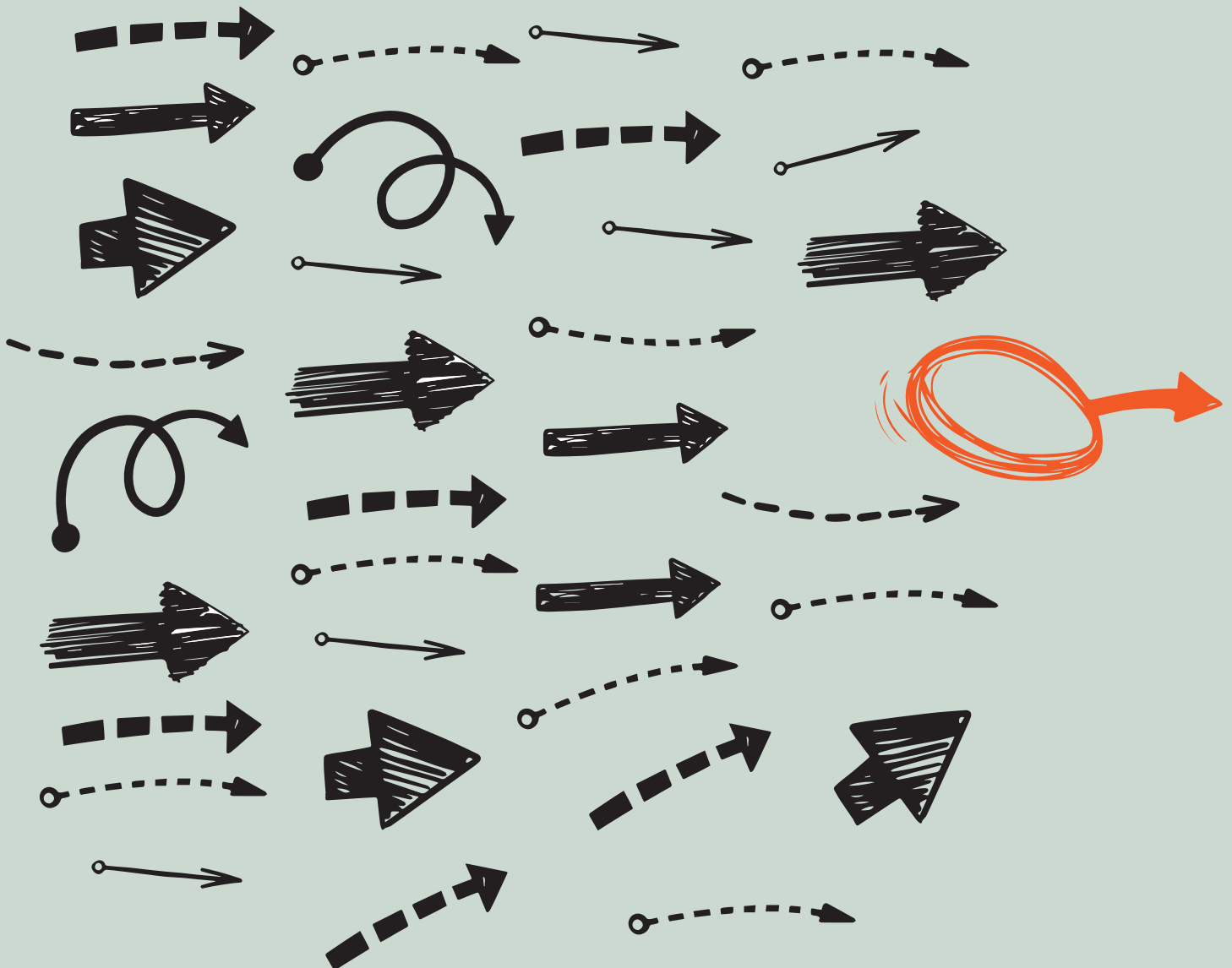


# Debunking Tobacco Industry Misinformation



## MYTH

# 1

**An increase in tobacco tax would reduce tax revenue**

## REALITY

Even though the desired result is decreased consumption, most tobacco tax increases generate additional revenue.

## MYTH

# 2

**Tobacco taxes hurt the economy**

## REALITY

Tobacco use and related diseases burden the economy.

## MYTH

# 3

**Tobacco taxes hurt the poor**

## REALITY

Tobacco taxes with lower incomes disproportionately benefit from the health gains from higher tobacco tax.

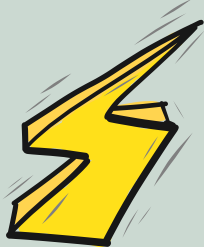
## MYTH

# 4

**Indoor smoking bans harm business**

## REALITY

Smoking bans are supported by the public and research shows they do not harm most business, including restaurants and bars.



# Tobacco Mythbusters

## MYTH

# 5

**Smoke-free policies are bad for tourism**

## REALITY

Tourists support smoke-free policies, as most do not smoke and are accustomed to smoke-free areas.

## MYTH

# 6

**Designated smoking areas are sufficient enough to protect the public**

## REALITY

The best way to protect the public is with indoor smoking bans.

## MYTH

# 7

**Smoke-free policies encourage people to smoke in their homes**

## REALITY

Exposure to smoke in the home may actually decrease after implementation of smoke-free policies.

## MYTH

# 8

**The tobacco industry is vital to the economy**

## REALITY

The tobacco industry siphons profits to international shareholders, saps economic growth and government budgets, leaving countries to contend with the health burden.

MYTH

9

Shifting from tobacco farming takes away jobs and money

**REALITY**

Farmers can shift to health-promoting crops that are more lucrative and avoid tobacco industry's exploitative contracts indebting farmers.

MYTH

10

Tobacco control measures threaten the livelihoods of farmers

**REALITY**

Tobacco industry tactics put the livelihoods of farmers at risk — not tobacco control measures consumption.

MYTH

11

Tobacco farmers are prosperous

**REALITY**

Small-holder farmers are often indebted to tobacco companies and often experience net losses.

MYTH

12

Tobacco growing and production poses no significant risks to the environment

**REALITY**

The growing and production of tobacco pollutes land, water and air — and is responsible for 5 percent of deforestation globally.

**“The tobacco industry will go to great lengths to block progress.”**



MYTH

13

Tobacco farming poses no significant risks to its workers

**REALITY**

Tobacco farmers and their families are at serious risk of exploitation and health complications.

MYTH

14

The tobacco industry is needed for interrupting illicit trade

**REALITY**

Partnerships with industry should be avoided or carefully managed, as industry is often complicit in promoting illicit trade.

MYTH

15

Tobacco tax increases will drive illicit trade

**REALITY**

Studies show a very weak causal relationship between increases in taxes and illicit trade. Illicit trade can increase even when taxes are lowered.

MYTH

16

Tobacco advertising does not influence young consumers to start smoking

**REALITY**

Exposure to tobacco advertising increases the likelihood of smoking initiation in youth.

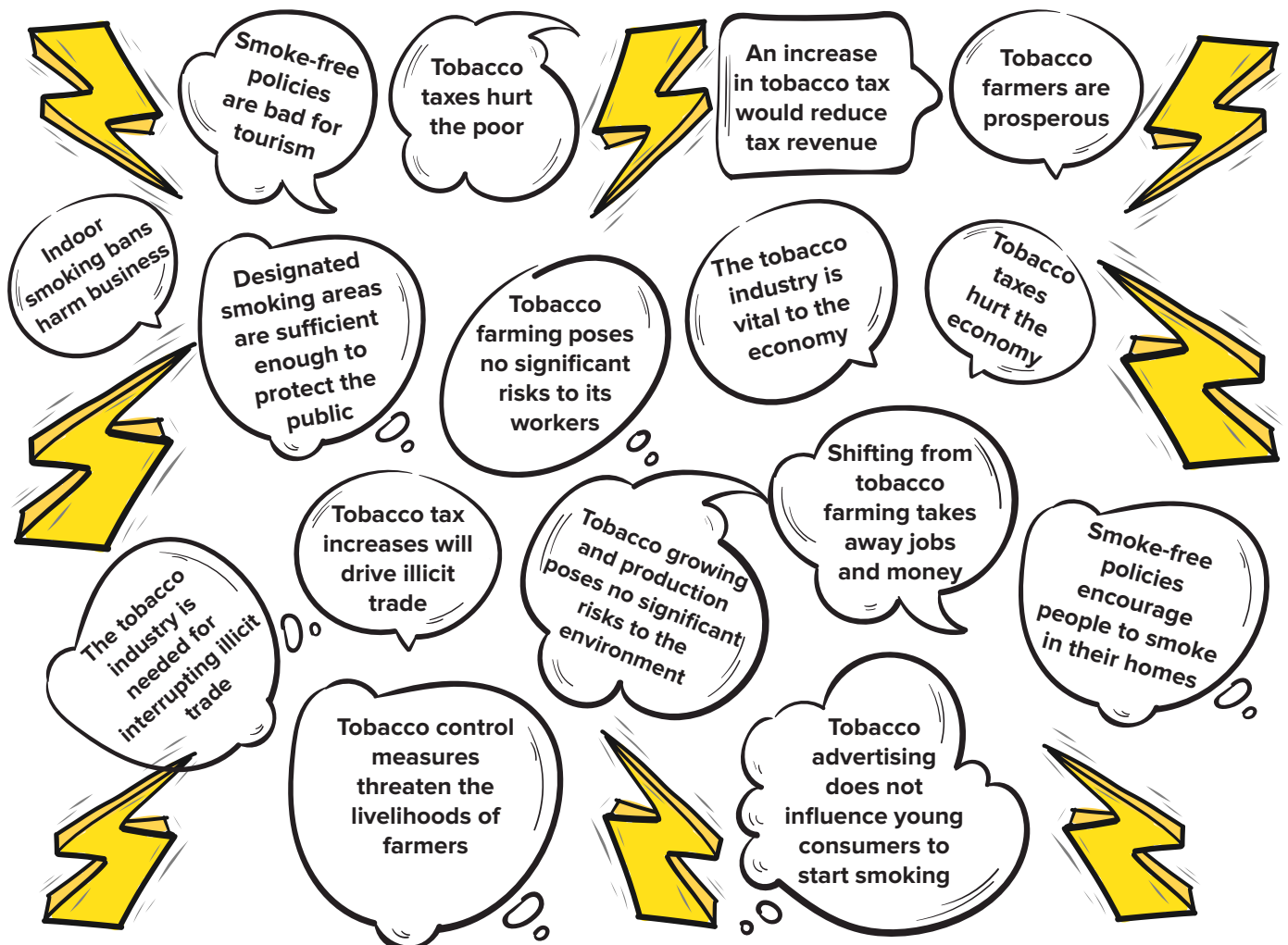
# Copyright/ Disclaimer

# Tobacco Mythbusters

## Debunking Common Myths Promoted by the Tobacco Industry

The right to health is a fundamental responsibility of the state. **The tobacco industry will go to great lengths to block progress.**<sup>1</sup> Big tobacco companies seek to maintain lax policy environments, and often employ interference tactics, for example creating industry-backed ‘front groups’ of consumers or farmers to obstruct progressive tobacco control legislation. Experiences in many countries prove that, contrary to industry-biased forecasts, tobacco control action can raise government revenue, help businesses, improve livelihoods and increase employment overall.

For decades, the tobacco industry has been using the same myths to promote tobacco products. The same tobacco fallacies are perpetuated across the globe—as one country debunks these myths, they continue to be argued by tobacco industry in another region. **This document is intended as a quick reference guide for parliamentarians with ready-to-go counter arguments when faced with these common myths.** Specific and evidence-based arguments are also provided for added support. Through increased awareness of these common arguments and the tools to combat them, parliamentarians can come together as a common front to block these tobacco industry myths once and for all.



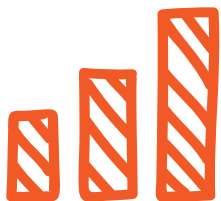
<sup>1</sup> Boseley S (2017). Threats, bullying, lawsuits: tobacco industry's dirty war for the African market. The Guardian. Available at [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/12/big-tobacco-dirty-war-africa-market?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Tweet](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/12/big-tobacco-dirty-war-africa-market?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet)

## MYTH

# 1



### An increase in tobacco tax would reduce tax revenue (because consumption goes down).



**In reality tax revenue actually increases while reducing tobacco sales, thus reducing tobacco-related harms.**

This is because the demand for tobacco products in relation to price is inelastic, meaning that as price increases the demand of tobacco — and therefore the consumption — decreases by a lesser amount.<sup>2, 3</sup>

- The Philippines generated US\$3.9 billion in incremental revenues in the first three years of implementation of the Sin Tax Law, the bulk derived from tobacco taxes.<sup>4, 5</sup> The Philippines earmarks incremental tax revenue for universal health coverage (about 85 percent)<sup>6</sup> and 15 percent of alternative livelihoods for tobacco farmers and workers in tobacco growing provinces, in line with Articles 17 and 18 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).<sup>7</sup>
- In 2015, China increased its wholesale tax rate on cigarettes from 5 to 11 percent. After one year, cigarette sales dropped by 3.3 percent. The tax delivered an additional 70 billion yuan (US\$11 billion) to the central government in that one year.<sup>8</sup>

2 WHO (2014). Raising Tax on Tobacco. What You Need to Know. (Geneva, WHO, 2014).

3 WHO. Estimating price and income elasticity of demand. Available at [https://www.who.int/tobacco/economics/2\\_2estimatingpriceincomeelasticities.pdf](https://www.who.int/tobacco/economics/2_2estimatingpriceincomeelasticities.pdf)

4 Paul JN. Earmarking Revenues for Health: A Finance Perspective on the Philippine Sintax Reform. Available at [https://www.who.int/health\\_financing/topics/public-financial-management/D2-S4-JPaul-earmarking.pdf](https://www.who.int/health_financing/topics/public-financial-management/D2-S4-JPaul-earmarking.pdf)

5 The Republic of the Philippines Department of Finance. Sin Tax Reform. Available at [www.dof.gov.ph/index.php/advocacies/sin-tax-reform/](http://www.dof.gov.ph/index.php/advocacies/sin-tax-reform/)

6 Ozer C, Bloom D, Valle AM, et al (2020). Health Earmarks and Health Taxes: What do we know?. Joint Learning Network and the World Bank Group. (Washington DC, World Bank, 2020).

7 WHO (2016). Earmarked tobacco taxes: lessons learnt from nine countries. (Geneva, WHO, 2016).

8 WHO (2016). Tobacco tax increase results in decreased tobacco consumption. Available at <http://www.wpro.who.int/china/mediacentre/releases/2016/20160510/en/>

MYTH

2

**Tobacco taxes hurt the economy.**



**In reality spending will go towards local goods and services instead of spending on tobacco products.<sup>9</sup>**

Tobacco users spend a significant portion of their budget on tobacco products<sup>9, 10</sup> and spend less on healthcare and education compared to nonusers.<sup>11</sup> Consumer spending is going to tobacco instead of household necessities and other goods and services available in local economies.<sup>12</sup> Tobacco-related harms can hurt the economy by forcing breadwinners out of the labour market. Out-of-pocket expenses for medical care due to tobacco-related illnesses can drive families into poverty or trap them there, exacerbating inequalities and escalating government social protection costs.

- In Thailand, Brazil and Malaysia, 76, 73 and 65 percent of male smokers respectively spent money on cigarettes instead of household essentials.<sup>13</sup>
- In Turkey, non-smoking households spent on average 9 percent more on food, utilities and housing than smoking households.<sup>14</sup>

9 WHO (2014). Raising Tax on Tobacco. What You Need to Know. (Geneva, WHO, 2014).

10 San S and Chaloupka FJ. The impact of tobacco expenditures on spending within Turkish households. *Tob Control*. 2016;25(5):558-563.

11 Do YK and Bautista MA. Tobacco use and household expenditures on food, education, and healthcare in low- and middle-income countries: a multilevel analysis. *BMC Public Health*. 2015;15:1098. 9

12 Eriksen M, Mackay J, Schluger N, et al (2015). *The Tobacco Atlas: Fifth Edition*. American Cancer Society and World Lung Foundation. (Atlanta, American Cancer Society, 2015).

13 *ibid*

14 San S and Chaloupka FJ. The impact of tobacco expenditures on spending within Turkish households. *Tob Control*. 2016;25(5):558-563.

MYTH

3



**Tobacco taxes are regressive and create a financial burden on poor smokers since a larger portion of their income goes to tobacco products.<sup>15</sup>**



**In reality tobacco taxation can reduce inequities.**

In reality they are not and do not. Across the world tobacco-related diseases burden the poor most. Tobacco companies target poorer countries and lower-income populations. The poor are also more likely to live in environments which make the healthy choice the difficult choice. Tobacco taxation can reduce inequities. Because lower-income groups are more sensitive to price increases in tobacco, the multiple benefits of tobacco taxes – in health, poverty reduction, education and opportunity – accrue mostly to them.<sup>16</sup>

- In Eswatini almost half of all deaths averted during the first year of the tax increased modelled in the FCTC investment case would be among the poorest 40 percent of the population.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, wealthier users, who typically still consume despite price increases, end up paying the majority portion of the tax increases. Revenue from these taxes can then be reinvested into social service programmes that further benefit the poor, increasing their progressive nature.

15 WHO (2014). Raising Tax on Tobacco. What You Need to Know. (Geneva, WHO, 2014).

16 UNDP (2019). Investment Case for Tobacco Control in Myanmar. The Case for Investing in WHO FCTC Implementation.

17 UNDP. Investment Case for Tobacco Control in Eswatini. (forthcoming)



MYTH

4

**Indoor smoking bans harm business.**



**In reality most of the public supports a smoke-free ban making it good for business.**

- In 2008, Mexico City implemented a smoke-free law covering restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The ban did not harm city business; in fact, economic evidence suggests a positive impact on restaurants' income, employees' wages and levels of employment.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2003, Mayor Michael Bloomberg enacted a smoke-free ban in New York City to protect the health of all workers at their workplaces. Industry responded with dire predictions about businesses being harmed and jobs being lost. One year later, employment in restaurants and bars had risen and business receipts were up 8.7 percent.<sup>19</sup>
- Smoke-free policies in bars, restaurants, workplaces, public transport and other public places are widely accepted by the public – even more so after implementation.<sup>20, 21</sup>
- In Uruguay and Ukraine, more than 80 percent of the adult population support smoke-free policies and in Costa Rica and Kenya more than 90 percent support them.<sup>22</sup>

18 López CM, Ruiz JA, Shigematsu LM, et al. The economic impact of Mexico City's smoke-free law. *Tob Control*. 2011;20(4):273-278.

19 New York City Department of Finance, Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and Department of Small Business Services, and New York City Economic Development Corporation (2004). *The State of Smoke-Free New York City: A One-Year Review*. Available at <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/pressoffice/NYCRReport.pdf>

20 Tobacco Free Kids (2019). *Some-Free Environments Countering Industry Arguments*. Available at [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF\\_myths\\_realities\\_en.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF_myths_realities_en.pdf)

21 ITC Project (2012). *Smoke-free Policies: ITC Cross-Country Comparison Report*. (Waterloo, University of Waterloo, 2012).

22 Tobacco Free Kids (2019). *Some-Free Environments Countering Industry Arguments*. Available at [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF\\_myths\\_realities\\_en.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF_myths_realities_en.pdf)



## Smoke-free policies are not feasible and harm the hospitality and tourism industries.



**In reality smoke-free laws do not cause adverse economic outcomes and often have a positive impact for the tourism industry.** <sup>23, 24</sup>

- Smoke-free laws are in 55 countries and protect nearly 20 percent of the world's population (1.5 billion people).<sup>25</sup>
- New Zealand experienced an increase in tourism in 2004 after adoption of smoke-free laws with 1.5 percent more overseas visitors and a 3.3 percent increase in expenditures.<sup>26</sup>
- A study among tourists at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok, Thailand found that 99 percent of tourists surveyed supported a smoke-free airport policy (partial ban and total ban) and half of tourists surveyed were smokers.<sup>27</sup>

23 Tobacco Free Kids (2019). Some-Free Environments Countering Industry Arguments. Available at [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF\\_myths\\_realities\\_en.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF_myths_realities_en.pdf)

24 US National Cancer Institute and World Health Organization. The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Control. National Cancer Institute Tobacco Control Monograph 21. (Bethesda and Geneva, US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute and World Health Organization, 2016).

25 WHO (2017). WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2017: monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies. (Geneva, WHO, 2017).

26 WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. Myth 8: Smoke-free laws harm the hospitality and tourism sectors. Tobacco Free Initiative. Available at <http://www.emro.who.int/tobacco/tobacco-free-public-places/myth-8-smoke-free-laws-harm-the-hospitality-and-tourism-sectors.html>

27 Sirichotiratana N, Yogi S and Prutipinyo C. Perception of tourists regarding the smoke-free policy at Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok, Thailand. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2013;10(9):4012-4026.

MYTH

6



**Designated smoking areas are sufficient enough to offer protection from second-hand smoke.**



- Indoor designated smoking areas still expose individuals to second-hand smoke through ventilation systems. The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers stated that the only way to effectively eliminate the health risk of indoor smoke exposure is to completely ban smoking inside and near buildings.<sup>29</sup>

**In reality designated smoking areas do not provide enough protection to the public from second-hand smoke, especially indoors.<sup>28</sup>**

28 Tobacco Free Kids (2019). Some-Free Environments Countering Industry Arguments. Available at [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF\\_myths\\_realities\\_en.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF_myths_realities_en.pdf)

29 ASHRAE Board of Directions (2020). ASHRAE Position Document on Environmental Tobacco Smoke. Available at [https://www.ashrae.org/File%20Library/About/Position%20Documents/pd\\_environmental-tobacco-smoke-2020-07-1.pdf](https://www.ashrae.org/File%20Library/About/Position%20Documents/pd_environmental-tobacco-smoke-2020-07-1.pdf)

MYTH

7



**Smoke-free policies will encourage smokers to smoke inside their homes exposing more children to second-hand smoke.**



- In Taiwan less children were exposed to second-hand smoke after implementation of smoke-free legislation. Children's exposure to second-hand smoke decreased from 51 percent of children in 2005 to 28 percent in 2013.<sup>31</sup>

**In reality smoke-free policies may actually reduce exposure to smoking in the home.<sup>30</sup>**

30 Tobacco Free Kids (2019). Some-Free Environments Countering Industry Arguments. Available at [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF\\_myths\\_realities\\_en.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/SF_myths_realities_en.pdf)

31 Wang YT, Tsai YW, Tsai TI, et al. Children's exposure to secondhand smoke at home before and after smoke-free legislation in Taiwan. *Tob Control*. 2017;26(6):690-696.

MYTH

8



**The tobacco industry is vital to the economy.**



**In reality tobacco-related harms sap government budgets and economic output.**

In reality tobacco-related harms sap government budgets and economic output, resulting in substantial loss of gross domestic product (GDP). Multinational tobacco corporations accrue most benefits from tobacco sales, leaving countries to contend with the health and development burden.<sup>32</sup>

- In Jordan in 2015 the tobacco industry generated 889 million Jordanian Dinar (JOD) (including government tax revenue, employee wages and payments by the industry to the government for goods and services). However, total economic losses to the country due to tobacco use were far higher at JOD 1.6 billion.<sup>33</sup>

32 WHO (2004). Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI). Tobacco increases the poverty of countries. See [https://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/events/wntd/2004/tobaccofacts\\_nations/en/](https://www.who.int/tobacco/communications/events/wntd/2004/tobaccofacts_nations/en/)

33 UNDP (2019). Investment Case for Tobacco Control in Jordan.



**Shifting from tobacco farming takes away jobs and money and there are no economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco farming – especially smallholder farmers – particularly in low- and middle income countries (LMICs).<sup>34</sup>**



**In reality farmers can switch to health-promoting crops which are more lucrative.**

In reality farmers can switch to health-promoting crops which are more lucrative and are not enmeshed with debt-bonded, exploitative tobacco industry contracts.<sup>35, 36</sup> There are better livelihoods and opportunities for tobacco farmers. There are other crops, crop combinations and farming systems. When there is none or little support for smallholder farmers many farmers feel they have little choice in the matter and turn to tobacco for the infrastructure and extension services needed. It is important for governments to offer support to help farmers transition to alternative crops and reduce tobacco industry's influence.<sup>37</sup>

- In Kenya when tobacco farmers switched to growing bamboo, the comparative net value of the two crops showed rates of return to be more than 300 percent higher for bamboo farmers.<sup>38</sup>
- If food was grown instead of tobacco, an estimated 10 to 20 million malnourished people could be fed.<sup>39</sup>

34 Leppan W, Lecours N, Buckles D, eds (2014). Tobacco control and tobacco farming: separating myth from reality. (London and New York, Anthem Press, 2014).

35 McKnight RH and Spiller HA. Green tobacco sickness in children and adolescents. Public Health Rep. 2005;120(6):602-605.

36 Hu TW, Lee AH. Tobacco control and tobacco farming in African countries. J Public Health Policy. 2015;36(1):41-51.

37 Leppan W, Lecours N, Buckles D, eds (2014). Tobacco control and tobacco farming: separating myth from reality. (London and New York, Anthem Press, 2014).

38 Omari MP (2009). A cost-benefit analysis of substituting bamboo for tobacco: a case study of South Nyanza, Kenya. Available at <http://www.tobaccotobamboo.org/Publications/Publications%20in%20Journals%20and%20Book%20Chapters/My%20Thesis-examinable%20draft.pdf>

39 Barry M. The influence of the U.S. tobacco industry on the health, economy, and environment of developing countries. N Engl J Med. 1991;324(13):917-20.

MYTH

10



## Tobacco control measures threaten the livelihoods of farmers.<sup>40</sup>



**In reality, corporate strategies of a monopolistic industry are a key factor that influences the global demand of tobacco.**

- The global tobacco leaf market is large enough to sustain the current generation of tobacco farmers.
- Livelihoods of tobacco farmers are at risk due to the influence of the tobacco industry placing them in a weak bargaining position in the leaf marketing chain and their vulnerability to fluctuations in demand and tobacco leaf price – not due to tobacco control measures.
- If serious action is not taken to prevent and control tobacco use, population growth and rising rates of tobacco use in LMICs is likely to influence an increase in consumption of tobacco products.<sup>41</sup>

40 Leppan W, Lecours N, Buckles D, eds (2014). Tobacco control and tobacco farming: separating myth from reality. (London and New York, Anthem Press, 2014).

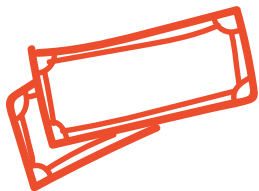
41 ibid

MYTH

11



**Tobacco farmers are prosperous.**<sup>42</sup>



**In reality tobacco farming often renders farmers indebted to tobacco companies.**

Rarely does tobacco farming generate a net gain. In actuality, it often renders farmers indebted to tobacco companies.<sup>43</sup>

- According to a 2017 survey of smallholder tobacco farmers in Zambia, farmers were not making profits but instead experiencing drastic losses in income.<sup>44</sup>
- In Indonesia, tobacco farmers experienced an enormous decline in average monthly income – three times less than previous years' income. In 2015 less than one in five tobacco farmers in Indonesia said that tobacco farming is profitable.<sup>45</sup>

42 Leppan W, Lecours N, Buckles D, eds (2014). Tobacco control and tobacco farming: separating myth from reality. (London and New York, Anthem Press, 2014).

43 ibid

44 Goma FM, Labonté R, Drope J, et al (2019). The Economics of Tobacco Farming in Zambia: Tobacco Farmers Survey Report 2019 (Lusaka and Atlants, University of Zambia School of Medicine American Cancer Society, 2019).

45 Anindita E (2015). Tobacco farming no longer profitable, survey finds. The Jakarta Post. Available at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/10/30/tobacco-farming-no-longer-profitable-survey-finds.html>

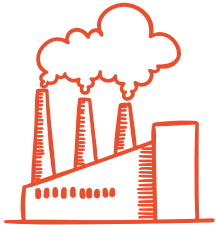


MYTH

12



**Tobacco growing and production poses no significant risks to the environment.**



**In reality tobacco farming damages the environment leading to deforestation and pollution of the land, water and air.**

- Around 5 percent of deforestation globally can be attributed to tobacco growing and production.<sup>46</sup>
- According to the Toxic Release Inventory Database, tobacco manufacturing plants released more than 456,000 kg of toxic chemicals including ammonia, nicotine, hydrochloric acid, methanol and nitrates.<sup>47</sup>
- The global production of 6 trillion cigarettes in 2014, including tobacco cultivation, led to 84 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions to climate change (about 0.2 percent of global total).<sup>48</sup>

46 Geist HJ. Global assessment of deforestation related to tobacco farming. *Tob Control*. 1999; 8:18-28.

47 WHO (2017). Tobacco and its environmental impact: an overview. (Geneva, WHO, 2017).

48 Zafeiridou M, Hopkinson NS and Voulvoulis N. Cigarette Smoking: An Assessment of Tobacco's Global Environmental Footprint Across Its Entire Supply Chain. *Environ Sci Technol*. 2018;52(15):8087-8094.

MYTH

13



**Tobacco farming poses no significant risks to its workers.**



**In reality tobacco farmers are exposed to serious health risks.**

In reality tobacco farmers are exposed to serious health risks including green tobacco sickness,<sup>49</sup> high levels of toxic agrochemicals and respiratory problems. In addition, tobacco farming is extremely labour intensive often using child labour and women's unpaid labour resulting in missed educational opportunities for children and diverts the efforts of women from more productive activities such as generating food or income.<sup>50</sup>

- Among the many dangerous pesticides used in tobacco growing are chloropicrin, a lung-damaging agent that was used as a tear gas in WWI; aldicarb, a highly toxic pesticide; and methyl bromide, a volatile and ozone-depleting chemical.<sup>51</sup>
- In 2019, British American Tobacco (BAT) reported that 2,291 tonnes of hazardous waste were produced during the tobacco manufacturing process.<sup>52</sup>

49 McKnight RH and Spiller HA. Green tobacco sickness in children and adolescents. *Public Health Rep.* 2005;120(6):602-605.

50 Leppan W, Lecours N, Buckles D, eds (2014). *Tobacco control and tobacco farming: separating myth from reality.* (London and New York, Anthem Press, 2014).

51 Tobacco Atlas. Issue Environment. Available at <https://tobaccoatlas.org/topic/environment/>

52 British American Tobacco (2019). ESG Report 2019. Available at [http://www.bat.com/groupfs/sites/BAT\\_8NXDKN.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO825KM4?opendocument](http://www.bat.com/groupfs/sites/BAT_8NXDKN.nsf/vwPagesWebLive/DO825KM4?opendocument)

MYTH

14



**The tobacco industry is needed for interrupting illicit trade.**



**In reality extensive evidence points to the tobacco industry's active complicity in directing and promoting illicit trade.**<sup>53, 54</sup>

- In 2014, British American Tobacco (BAT) was fined by customs authorities in the UK for massively oversupplying the market in Belgium, so that products were illicitly diverted back to the UK.<sup>55</sup>
- The tobacco industry promotes itself as ‘partner’ to governments trying to be part of the policy making process. The industry often argues that they are a victim of illicit trade and that they need to safeguard intellectual property rights (e.g. protecting its brand by opposing tobacco control measures like plain packaging).
- In 2018 BAT filed a lawsuit in Uruguay after the president signed a decree to enact plain packaging. The tobacco industry was unsuccessful in their efforts and Uruguay implemented a law on plain packaging in 2019.<sup>56</sup>

53 Collin J. Tobacco Politics. *Development*. 2004;47(2):91-96.

54 LeGresley E, Lee K, Muggli ME, et al. British American Tobacco and the “insidious impact of illicit trade” in cigarettes across Africa. *Tob Control*. 2008;17(5):339-346

55 Boseley S (2017). Anti-smuggling proposal ‘may let tobacco industry in by back door’. *The Guardian*. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/sep/08/anti-smuggling-proposal-may-let-tobacco-industry-in-by-back-door>

56 WHO (2019). WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2019 Offer help to quit tobacco use. (Geneva, WHO, 2019).



## Tobacco tax increases will drive illicit trade.



**Studies show a very weak causal relationship between increases in taxes and illicit trade. Illicit trade can increase even when taxes are lowered.<sup>57</sup>**

Not exactly, while tobacco tax and price differences among countries can incentivize illicit trade, there are other factors such as weak governance/lack of high-level commitment, weak customs and excise administration, corruption and complicity of cigarette manufacturers that enable it.<sup>58</sup> Therefore tax increases should be introduced together with actions to strengthen tax administration to reduce incentives for tax evasion – such as simplifying taxation, monitoring the tobacco products market and strengthening customs and police.<sup>59</sup>

- Colombia has faced this myth that tobacco taxation promotes illicit trade for years. In 2016 after implementation of a major tobacco tax increase, Colombia was able to successfully contain illicit trade growth while increasing tax revenue and decreasing tobacco consumption.<sup>60</sup>
- The World Bank Report *Confronting Tobacco Illicit Trade ‘A Global Review of Country Experiences’* includes regional case studies across 30 countries and provides input on addressing tobacco illicit trade. The report includes numerous examples that refute this myth perpetuated by the tobacco industry.<sup>61</sup>
- Other effective policies to deter smuggling include tax stamps and local-language warnings on cigarette packaging, aggressive enforcement and consistent application of penalties, and becoming a Party to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products if not already.<sup>62</sup>

57 World Bank Group Global Tobacco Control Program (2019). *Confronting Illicit Tobacco Trade: a Global Review of Country Experiences*. (Washington DC, World Bank Group., 2019)

58 *ibid*

59 WHO (2014) *Raising Tax on Tobacco. What You Need to Know*. (Geneva, WHO, 2014).

60 World Bank Group Global Tobacco Control Program (2019). *Confronting Illicit Tobacco Trade: a Global Review of Country Experiences*. (Washington DC, World Bank Group., 2019)

61 *ibid*

62 Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC (2013). *Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products*.

MYTH

16



**Tobacco advertising and promotion does not influence young consumers to start smoking.**



**In reality there is sufficient evidence to show that tobacco advertising, promotion and marketing encourages youth to pick up smoking.<sup>63</sup>**

Up to half of tobacco consumers die from tobacco-related illness,<sup>64</sup> forcing the tobacco industry to attract new consumers to stay in business leading to massive tobacco marketing campaigns to attract a new generation of smokers.<sup>65</sup>

- In Serbia in 2017, nearly a fifth of students (16.2 percent) ages 13 to 15 used tobacco products, more than half (54 percent) were exposed to tobacco advertising at point of sale, and more than one in 10 (11.3 percent) owned a item with a tobacco brand logo on it.<sup>66</sup>
- A report from the US Surgeon General on tobacco consumption in youth stated that there is sufficient evidence “to conclude that marketing efforts and promotion by tobacco companies show a consistent dose-response relationship in the initiation and progression of tobacco use among young people”.<sup>67</sup>
- Longitudinal studies have consistently shown that youth exposed to tobacco advertising and marketing are more likely to become smokers<sup>68</sup> and established smokers in young adulthood.<sup>69</sup>

63 US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2021). Tobacco Industry Marketing. Available at [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/marketing/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/marketing/index.htm)

64 WHO (2020). Tobacco Fact Sheet. Available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tobacco>

65 Tobacco Free Kids (2008). Tobacco Advertising & Youth: The Essential Facts. Available at [https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/APS\\_youth\\_facts\\_en.pdf](https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/global/pdfs/en/APS_youth_facts_en.pdf)

66 WHO and US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). Global Youth Tobacco Survey Fact Sheet Serbia 2017.

67 Office on Smoking and Health of the US National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2012). Chapter 5 “The Tobacco Industry’s Influences on the Use of Tobacco Among Youth”, in Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. (Atlanta, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012).

68 Lovato C, Linn G, Stead LF, et al. Impact of tobacco advertising and promotion on increasing adolescent smoking behaviours. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2003;(4):CD003439

69 Gilpin EA, White MM, Messer K, et al. Receptivity to tobacco advertising and promotions among young adolescents as a predictor of established smoking in young adulthood. Am J Public Health. 2007;97(8):1489-1495.



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