



## Studies on the Smokefree Class Competition

What do the teachers think?

Process evaluation on the Smokefree Class Competition in six countries

After the end of the Smokefree Class Competition in school-year 2007/2008 teachers in Poland, Slovak Republic, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Romania were asked about implementation and their experiences with the project. Some excerpts from the results:

- All together, 678 teachers' questionnaires were sent back, ranging from 51 questionnaires in Poland up to 206 questionnaires in Slovak Republic.
- In 69.1% of the classes, the weekly assessments of smoking were carried out "always" or "mostly".
- 72.9% of classes engaged in further activities on non-smoking or health promotion.
- The competition is regarded by 62.1% of the teachers "not at all" or "hardly" as a supplemental workload.
- A majority of teachers (>85%) consider the competition to be appropriate to delay the onset of smoking, to reduce smoking and to reach the target group. Furthermore, 86.3% appreciate the ease to implement the competition into the everyday work in the school.
- At least two third of the teachers rate the major rules and components of the competition (voluntary participation, class contract, weekly assessment, regular feedback, self monitoring) as "very" or "quite" useful – with the highest support for the principle of voluntary participation.
- The vast majority of teachers (95.4%) wants the competition to be offered again next school-year. The same picture is seen for recommendation of the competition: overall, 95.9% would recommend their colleagues to participate. Only 7% would not participate themselves again in the competition.
- On a scale from 1="very good" to "5="very poor", the overall score for the competition given by the teachers is 1.90 (81.0% rate the competition as "very good" or "good").
- When asked for possible wanted and unwanted side-effects of the competition, only very few teachers report remarkable occurrence of negative group pressure on smokers or non-smokers. On the other hand, smokers could profit in almost 40% of the classes "often" or "always" from positive group pressure. 61.7% of all teachers reported that none of their pupils cheated in the weekly assessments. Teachers consider concealing smoking from teachers to be more prevalent than concealing smoking from class mates. 0.8% of the teachers indicate that the class climate got "somewhat" worse and nobody reports a "clear" worsening compared to the time before the competition started.

A comprehensive report on results will be included in the final report to the European Commission.



## Is the Smokefree Class Competition effective? Two randomised control trials in Poland and Germany

Two randomised control trials on the effectiveness of the Smokefree Class Competition were completed in Poland and Germany in summer 2008:

- In Poland, two assessments were carried out in the school year 2007/2008 – the first prior to the beginning of the competition in winter 2007/2008, the second after the end of the competition in summer 2008. All together, 1,577 students from 143 classes were included in the study.
- In Germany, a four-wave randomised control trial was started in the school-year 2006/2007 with the baseline assessment prior to the 2006/2007 competition in October 2006, the second assessment after the end of this competition period in May 2007 and two follow-up assessments in October 2007 and June 2008 (prior and after a possible repeated participation in the 2007/2008 competition). 208 classes with 3,494 students were included in the study.

Currently, data of these studies are analysed. Results will be available in winter.

## Does the Smokefree Class Competition pay off? A cost-effectiveness study

An economically oriented study investigated the cost-benefit ratio of the Smokefree Class Competition in Germany. On this purpose, all costs related to the implementation of the competition were assessed in detail – including e.g. the costs for print material, support of the classes, prizes for successful classes as well as hours of work for teachers implementing the competition. These costs are related to the benefit of the competition. The benefit is determined by the number of adolescents who do not start to smoke due to participation in the competition and the resulting savings for the society. Based on different estimation on costs and benefits, several analyses reveal that also very conservative estimations result in a positive cost-benefit ratio of 1 to 3,6: With every Euro invested in the competition, at least 3.60 Euro of later costs may be saved.

*The full study is published as follows:*

*Hoeflmayr D, Hanewinkel R. Do school-based tobacco prevention programmes pay off? The cost-effectiveness of the 'Smoke-free Class Competition'. Public Health, 122, 34-41.*



## The scientific corner

### Tobacco firms paid huge amounts for endorsements from the stars of Hollywood's "Golden Age"

Smoking imagery in films can influence younger people to start smoking. This association was also utilized by tobacco companies – already decades ago as Stanton Glantz and colleagues show in a recent publication in Tobacco Control.

Industry documents released following anti-smoking lawsuits reveal the extent of the relationship between tobacco and movie studios. Researchers said "classic" films of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s still helped promote smoking today. Virtually all of the biggest names of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s were involved in paid cigarette promotion, according to the University of California at San Francisco researchers. They obtained endorsement contracts signed at the times to help them calculate just how much money was involved. According to the research, stars prepared to endorse tobacco included Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Spencer Tracy, Joan Crawford, John Wayne, Bette Davis and Betty Grable.



Source: Yousuf Karsh / Library and Archives Canada / PA-212506

One of the key documents uncovered by the researchers was a list of payments for a single year in the late 1930s detailing how much stars were paid by American Tobacco, the makers of Lucky Strike. Leading ladies Carole Lombard, Barbara Stanwyck and Myrna Loy were handed \$10,000, equivalent to just under \$150,000 in today's money, to endorse the brand, as were Clark Gable, Gary Cooper and Robert Taylor. Together, the annual price of paying actors was \$3.2m in 2008 terms.

The researchers said that the effects of the millions poured into Hollywood by "Big Tobacco" could still be felt today, despite a recent self-imposed ban on promotion within films. "Classic" films with smoking scenes, such as "Casablanca" and "Now, Voyager", and glamorous publicity images helped to "perpetuate public tolerance" of on-screen smoking, they said.

(Source: BBC News; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7632963.stm>)

*The full study is published as follows:*

*Lum KL, Polansky JR, Jackler RK, Glantz SA. Signed, sealed and delivered: "big tobacco" in Hollywood, 1927-1951. Tobacco Control 2008, 17, 313-323.*



## Smokefree Class Competition in the future

After 11 years of funding, the European Commission has decided not to continue with the financial support of the Smokefree Class Competition in the school-year 2008/2009. With other sources of funding, the following countries plan to continue with the competition in the school-year 2008/2009: Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands and United Kingdom.

To maintain the network of partners, the Institute for Therapy and Health Research (IFT-Nord, Germany) applied at the European Commission within the Public Health Programme 2008-2013 for an "Operating Grant" for the Smokefree Class Competition Network (SFC-N). After a positive first response on the proposal, the final decision whether the network will be funded in the school-year 2009/2010 is expected for late fall.

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This newsletter arises from the project "Smokefree Class Competition" which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Public Health Programme. The sole responsibility of the content of this newsletter lies with IFT-Nord. The Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.