



Smoke-Free Air

Vital Strategies helps to fight for smoke-free policies where they are needed most

Vital Strategies Helps to Fight for Smoke-Free Policies Where They Are Needed Most

Everyone has the right to breathe clean air, but around the world hundreds of millions of people continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke in restaurants, cafes, bars, offices, parks and while walking down the street. Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can be harmful. Of the more than 8 million deaths from tobacco consumption annually, 1.2 million are attributed to nonsmokers being exposed to secondhand smoke.¹

Comprehensive national and local laws that create environments that are 100% free of tobacco smoke are a proven measure to protect people from secondhand smoke.² Limiting smoking in public spaces also helps to denormalize smoking as an acceptable behavior and reinforces not smoking as a societal norm, which encourages quitting and discourages initiation.³

Smoke-free laws are economically and politically feasible to enact and enforce. There is robust evidence that shows that they work to reduce health harms and mortality from smoking-related illnesses and in helping people quit or reduce their consumption.⁴ Globally, there has been significant progress in the adoption of smoke-free laws. Since 2007, when only 10 countries in the world had a comprehensive smoking ban in place, covering just 3% of the world's population, an additional 1.6 billion people in 57 countries have been protected by best-practice smoke-free laws. However, two-thirds of the world's countries—which are home to 52 of the world's largest cities—still lack comprehensive smoke-free legislation.⁵

Vital Strategies aligns with the evidence-based technical policy package from the World Health Organization (WHO), called [MPOWER](#). It supports governments in their work to protect citizens from tobacco smoke by creating 100% smoke-free environments in indoor workplaces, public transport, indoor public places and, as appropriate, other public places.

Media Campaigns

Vital Strategies has worked with ministries of health and mayors to develop campaigns that have contributed to the introduction, strengthening and enforcement of smoke-free laws that have protected hundreds of millions from secondhand smoke.

In China, we've helped launch dozens of campaigns to change attitudes toward tobacco and to support smoke-free initiatives—and each year new cities we work with join the fold to become smoke-free. To date, 130 million people have been protected through smoke-free legislation banning the use of tobacco products in indoor and outdoor spaces in 10 cities that we've worked with, including Beijing.

Most recently in 2020, two cities that Vital supported with mass media campaigns—Wuhan and Zhangjiakou, [one of the venues](#) for the 2022 winter Olympics—became smoke-free. To urge other cities to follow suit, we helped to launch a social media campaign that was seen by over 95 million people, and to catalyze virtual runs in 20 cities with more than 100,000 runners participating under the slogan “a healthy China must be a smoke-free China.”

Viet Nam bans smoking in most indoor public spaces, but exposure to secondhand smoking remains an ongoing concern.⁶ Working with the Vietnam Tobacco Control Fund team, Vital Strategies supported the production of [national campaigns](#) to call for better enforcement of smoke-free laws in [cafés](#), [public transportation](#) and [workplaces](#).

The campaigns were broadcast across the country, and billboards that featured images and messages supporting the smoke-free PSAs were erected nationally, aiming to built momentum for stronger enforcement of the smoke-free law. A national evaluation survey showed:

- The campaigns were recalled by 42% of respondents;
- Among those who recalled the campaigns, 90% of smokers said the campaigns made them more likely to comply with smoke-free regulations; and
- 79% of nonsmokers said the campaigns made them more likely to complain about being exposed to cigarette smoke.

In 2020, the prime minister signed a decree that increased sanctions for violating smoke-free health laws.



A collage of smoke-free run posters from eight different cities across China

Smoke-Free Policies

Vital Strategies' Fight for Smoke-Free Policies



'For smoke-free laws to be successful, they must be enforced. In **India**, **Turkey** and **Bangladesh**, Vital Strategies supported the broadcast of a campaign called "[Smoke](#)," which focused on increasing compliance with smoke-free laws.

In **India**, through the Partnership for Healthy Cities, we launched campaigns to support **Bengaluru** in becoming a smoke-free city. Across the city, 25 billboards featured the secondhand smoke ad "[Baby Alive](#)" and a public service announcement that addressed secondhand smoke and designated smoking areas reached 2.8 million people.

In **Mexico**, each year support grows for the [México Sin Humo](#) (Smoke-Free Mexico) social media campaign, which builds support for national 100% smoke-free legislation. Ongoing work with the media has led to interviews and stories in national media outlets on tobacco control, including two op-eds in one of the most important newspapers in Mexico, "El Universal."

At the state level, in Jalisco, there were no smoke-free protections when Vital Strategies supported partners in developing the public service announcements "[Invisible Killer](#)" and "[How Do I Explain It To You](#)," which aired over the course of several years. In 2020, Jalisco became 100% smoke-free protecting 8.2 million people.

Our social media efforts, mass media campaigns and media relations support have also contributed to the state of Chiapas becoming smoke-free and to a national tax increase of 42% on cigarettes.

We have supported eight cities in **Indonesia** in introducing and strengthening smoke-free regulations. In Bogor, smoke-free regulations were revised to include limiting the use of vapes, e-cigarettes and hookahs in public spaces, after the "Teu Hayang Rokok" (Say No to Cigarettes in Sundanese) campaign brought attention to the issue. The "Seng Mau Rokok" (Say No to Cigarettes)



Materials from the Vietnamese campaign focusing on enforcement of smoke-free cafes.



From the PSA "How Do I Explain it to You?"

Smoke-Free Policies

Vital Strategies' Fight for Smoke-Free Policies



campaign was featured all across the city of Ambon, even under water. This built such great momentum that a smoke-free bill was drafted and passed in 2019, and enacted the next year. Most recently in 2021, Bandung—Indonesia’s third largest city—unveiled a new smoke-free law that prohibits smoking in seven types of public spaces—a tremendous outcome of the city’s participation in the [Partnership for Healthy Cities](#) global network.

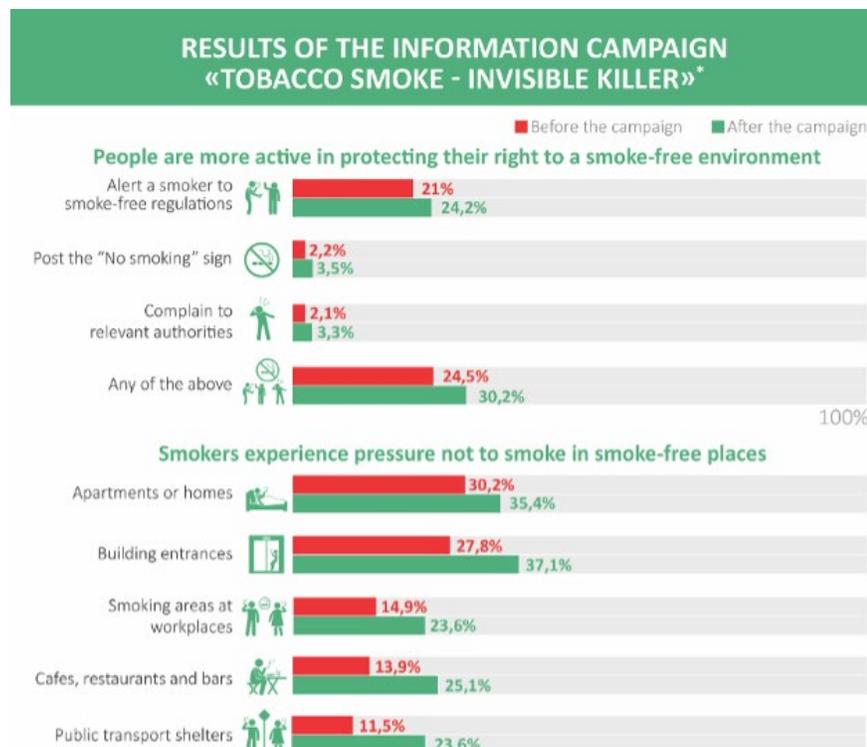
In **Ukraine**, there is a ban on smoking in public places, but enforcement is often lacking. In 2019 Vital Strategies supported the campaign, “[Invisible Killer](#),” which aired on television and radio and was featured on outdoor advertisements and social media, reaching an estimated 20 million people and resonating with many who saw it. A nationally representative survey conducted after the campaign found that smokers felt more pressure not to smoke in smoke-free areas and nonsmokers were more likely to speak up and protect their right to breathe smoke-free air.



Our team dives to the depths of the ocean to support a smoke-free law in Ambon.



The “Invisible Killer” campaign advertised on buildings in Ukraine.



Since the “Invisible Killer” campaign launched, there has been an increase in the number of people who smoke feeling pressure not to smoke in smoke-free areas and an increase in the number of people demanding that smokers obey smoke-free laws.

Vital Strategies' Smoke-Free Resources

Our “[Smoke-Free Campaign Guide](#)” is a four-phased approach to using communication to support implementation of smoke-free policies.

Find evidence-based materials for smoke-free mass media campaigns on our website, [Media Beacon](#).

Endnotes

1. World Health Organization. [Tobacco Key Facts](#).
2. World Health Organization. [MPOWER](#).
3. Drope J, Schluger N, Cahn Z, Drope J, Hamill S, Islami F, Liber A, Nargis N, Stoklosa M. [The Tobacco Atlas: Smoke-free](#). Atlanta: American Cancer Society and Vital Strategies. 2018.
4. Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. [Smoke-Free Laws Work](#).
5. World Health Organization. [WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2021: addressing new and emerging products](#). 2021.
6. Nguyen Vh, Do Da, Do Tth, Dao Tma, Kim Bg, Phan Th, et al. [Smoke-free environment policy in Vietnam: what did people see and how did they react when they visited various public places?](#) J Prev Med Hyg. 2019 Mar 29;60(1):E36–42.