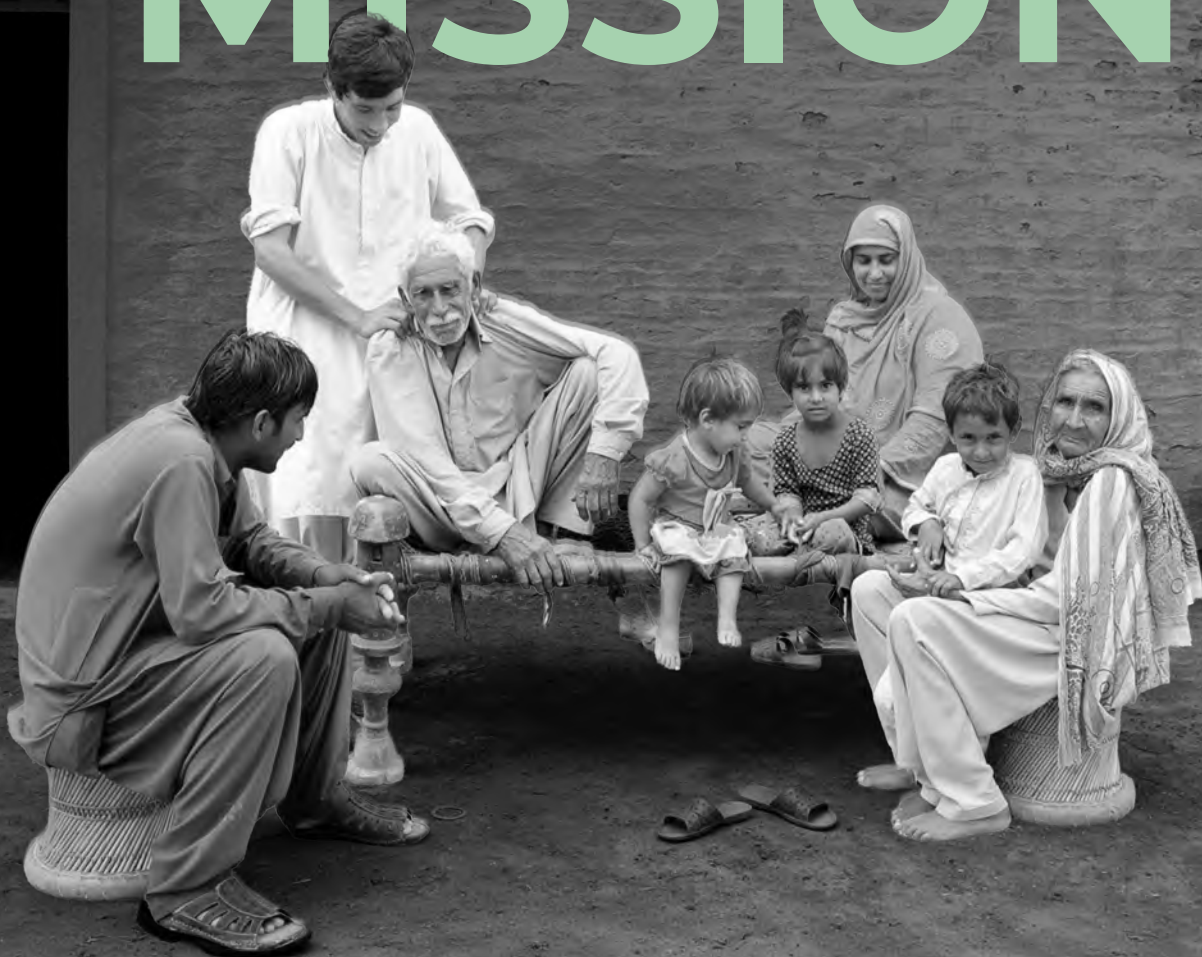


The Initiative



The Initiative is committed to promote an empowered society, of individuals who are conscious of health, education, and environmental concerns, are competent problem solvers, critical thinkers, agents of change, and are able to take charge of their lives remaining within the prevalent socioeconomic milieu of the country.

MISSION





VISION

“An empowered society that strives
for improved quality of life.”



OUR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATORS





National TB Control Program



OUR NATIONAL COLLABORATORS





WHAT WE DO

Technical Domains of Expertise

The Initiative works across a broad range of public health and development domains, combining research excellence with implementation expertise to generate evidence, strengthen programmes, and influence policy.

Tobacco Control & Substance Use Research

Research on tobacco use, cessation, novel nicotine products, taxation, policy, adolescent prevention, and implementation of tobacco control interventions.

Non-Communicable Diseases, Mental Health and Integrated Care

Research and implementation in diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory health, mental health, health systems strengthening, and integrated models of care.

Adolescent and Youth Health

Youth-centred research, behavioural interventions, advocacy, prevention programmes, and health promotion across community, educational, and sports settings.

Education and School-Based Research

Large-scale school-based research and surveys, including school mapping, student recruitment, and engagement with education authorities and school administrations.

We also deliver adolescent health, behavioural, prevention, & youth-friendly interventions in collaboration with schools, teachers, and education stakeholders.

Policy Engagement and Evidence-Informed Advocacy

Policy analysis, evidence synthesis, technical consultations, stakeholder engagement, and translation of research into policy and practice.

Air Pollution, Climate and Environmental Health

Research on environmental exposures, climate-related health risks, community awareness, prevention, and behaviour change.

Community Engagement and Social Mobilisation

Participatory research, community engagement, stakeholder consultations, Community Advisory Panels (CAPs), Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs), & Public and Patient Involvement (PPI).

Behaviour Change Communication and Health Promotion

Evidence-based communication strategies, digital campaigns, advocacy materials, youth-friendly communication, and multimedia health promotion.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Independent Quality Assurance

Monitoring, evaluation, learning systems, independent third-party monitoring, programme verification, quality assurance, compliance audits, and impact evaluation across health, education, research, and development programmes.

Independent Third-Party Monitoring, Evaluation & Quality Assurance

- Independent third-party monitoring, evaluation, verification, quality assurance, and audit services across the health, education, research, and development sectors
- Independent verification of programme activities, outputs, deliverables, and outcomes
- Field monitoring and verification visits
- Compliance and quality assurance audits
- Data quality assessments and source verification
- Process and performance reviews
- Independent assessments of health, education, research, and development programmes
- Beneficiary and stakeholder consultations
- Evidence-based reporting with practical recommendations to strengthen programme quality, accountability, and performance



HOW WE WORK

Cross-Cutting Research, Implementation & Technical Services

1. Project Implementation and Field Operations

- Planning and implementation of multi-site research and implementation projects
- Field operations management and coordination
- Recruitment, training, supervision, and performance management of research and field teams
- Development of field protocols and standard operating procedures
- Quality assurance systems
- Community engagement and stakeholder coordination
- Project monitoring, documentation, and donor reporting

2. Research Design and Data Collection

- Research protocol and study design development
- Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research
- Household, community, school-based, youth, health facility, and special population surveys
- School sampling and mapping
- Engagement with education departments and school administrations
- Qualitative interviews and focus group discussions
- Workshops and participatory research
- Digital and electronic data collection systems
- Sampling strategy development
- Data quality assurance and verification

3. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Independent Assessment

- Baseline, midline, and endline assessments
- Process, outcome, and impact evaluations
- Monitoring and evaluation framework development
- Indicator development and performance monitoring
- Third-party monitoring and independent verification
- Compliance and quality audits
- Data quality assessments
- Independent programme reviews
- Results reporting
- Learning documentation and knowledge management

4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Community engagement strategies
- Participatory workshops and co-creation activities
- Community Advisory Panels
- Youth Advisory Groups
- Public and Patient Involvement
- Community feedback mechanisms
- Engagement with civil society organisations
- Engagement with education departments, schools, teachers, parents, and students
- Government and policymaker engagement



5. Behaviour Change Communication

- Planning and implementation of multi-site research and implementation projects
- Field operations management and coordination
- Recruitment, training, supervision, and performance management of research and field teams
- Development of field protocols and standard operating procedures
- Quality assurance systems
- Community engagement and stakeholder coordination
- Project monitoring, documentation, and donor reporting

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7. Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Independent Assessment

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- Community feedback mechanisms
- Engagement with civil society organisations
- Engagement with education departments, schools, teachers, parents, and students
- Government and policymaker engagement

OUR TEAM



We encourage all qualified men and women to work with us and hire staff with suitable qualifications without distinction as to race, gender, religion, or any other discriminating factor. We value efficiency, competence, and integrity. Currently, our team includes public health specialists, epidemiologists, biostatisticians, qualitative and quantitative researchers, data and financial management experts, communications and community engagement professionals. This multidisciplinary team brings a diverse range of skills and experience from working at national and international levels in the field of public health, especially in research, communications, community engagement, and the management of multi-year, multi-country, large-scale research projects.

OUR TECHNICAL CONSULTANTS



Dr. Omar Imtiaz Hasan

Technical Consultant – Health Systems, Quality Assurance & Accreditation

MBBS | FCPS (Medicine) | DHA-Recognized Specialist | Diploma in Occupational Health (RCPS, UK) | FRIPH (UK) | Lead Auditor – OHSAS 18001 (LRQA)

Expertise: Health Systems Strengthening • Hospital Strategic Planning • Quality Assurance • Accreditation & Licensing • Occupational Health & Safety • Clinical Governance • Operational Excellence



Dr Razia Fatima

Technical advisor consultant TB strategic planning and Global Fund applications UNOPS

PhD University of Bergen Norway, MSc Epidemiology LSHTM UK) MBBS

Chair Ethics Advisory Group The International Union against TB and Lung diseases
Technical Director Health Solutions International
Highest Prestigious Award holder The Union Medal for TB 2024



Dr Sheraz

Technical Consultant - Health policy, climate change, healthcare insurance, monitoring and evaluation of healthcare programs.

PhD, MPH, MBBS, CHPE, FRSPH.

Physician, implementation scientist, and global health researcher with expertise in health systems, policy, digital health, and health security. He leads major implementation research programmes in Pakistan, has published over 25 peer-reviewed papers, and has contributed to national health reforms and international research collaborations.



Ashifa Hashmi

Technical Consultant - Maternal and Child Health (MNCH)

Master's in public health (MSPH) | Monitoring and Evaluation of Population and Reproductive Health

Extensive expertise in maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, behavior change communication, and health programme implementation, with proven experience working with international organizations including WHO, GIZ, Population Council, Ipas, and Nutrition International. Skilled in strategic planning, stakeholder coordination, capacity building, qualitative and quantitative research, and leading multi-sectoral projects to improve health outcomes in Pakistan.



COMPLETED PROJECTS



01

Duration

24 Months
July, 2015 - June, 2017

Donor

GRAND 2015 (Pfizer)

Fund Ref No

W1194558

Sponsor

University of York, UK

“The efficacy of varenicline in achieving abstinence among Hookah Smokers, A Two-Arm, Double Blind, Randomized, Placebo Controlled Trial”

The Hookah Trial was a clinical trial sponsored by the University of York and funded by GRAND 2014 (Funding: \$100829.00) Researcher Award. In Pakistan, Hookah continues as a common and traditional form of smoking tobacco. A range of behavioral and pharmacological therapies are available to support people in quitting cigarette smoking; however, little evidence exists for the efficacy of these therapies in achieving abstinence among hookah smokers. The objective of this study was to assess the efficacy of varenicline when added to behavioral support for hookah smoking cessation, by measuring biochemically validated continuous abstinence in hookah smokers.



Collaborative Partners in Project



Duration

48 Months
Nov, 2015 - Oct, 2019

Donor

**European Commission under
the Research & Innovation
action, H2020-HCO-2015 Funding scheme**

Grant No

680995

Sponsor

University of York, UK

**“Tobacco cessation within TB
programmes: A ‘real world’
solution for countries with dual
burden of disease”**

Tobacco cessation within TB programmes: A ‘real world’ solution for countries with dual burden of disease was a Clinical Trial of an Investigational Medicinal Product (CTIMP)(Funding: €434,119.00). Its study design was double-blind, randomized, parallel group, placebo-controlled trial in which adults diagnosed with pulmonary TB (PTB) disease have been screened at 13 TB diagnostic and management centers in Federal Capital and two provinces Punjab and KPK of Pakistan. The primary objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of cytisine when added to behavioral support for tobacco cessation compared to behavioral support alone on tobacco cessation in TB patients who smoke tobacco on a daily basis. This trial was funded by the European Commission under the Research and Innovation action. Trial medications were supplied by Aflofarm Pharma Poland.



Collaborative Partners in Project

ark foundation
advancement through research and knowledge

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**UNIVERSITY
of York**

**HEINRICH HEINE
UNIVERSITÄT DÜSSELDORF**



**HERD
international**

**THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH**

Duration

06 Months
Oct, 2019 - March, 2020

Donor

**European Commission under
the Research & Innovation
action, H2020-HCO-2015 Funding scheme & RCUK**

Sponsor

The Initiative, Pakistan



“Studying Tobacco Users Of Paksitan (STOP): Repeated Cross-sectional & Longitudinal Survey, STOP Survey”

In Pakistan, 19.1% adults consume tobacco causing around 160,000 deaths/year. Tobacco industry constantly interferes in policy making – a key reason for ineffectual tobacco control (Funding: £40,000.00). For example, a move to impose higher taxes on cigarettes was blocked on the basis of a fictitious industry ‘report’. This report (never made public) asserted that illicit trade constitutes 41% of the cigarette market share and an increase in taxes will lead to more smuggling – a claim often made by the industry and constantly refuted by independent research in other countries. This project aimed at providing unbiased evidence of the scope and magnitude of the illicit tobacco trade in Pakistan. Objectives of this study were as under:

1. Proportion of cigarette smokers who use illicit cigarettes.
2. Nicotine dependence and motivation to quit, among smokers.
3. Triggers to, the methods used in, and the success of quit attempts.
4. Attitude of smokers towards tobacco control policies and cessation aides (including willingness to pay) e.g. counselling, medication, e-cigarettes.



Collaborative Partners in Project



Duration

03 Months
May, 2020 - July, 2020

Donor

**Global Challenge Research
Fund, The University Court of
The University of Edinburgh, UK**

Sponsor

University of Edinburgh, Scotland

Investigating the psychological, social and economic impact of COVID-19 epidemic and its response in a cohort of smokers in Pakistan COVID 19 AND TOBACCO PROJECT

The COVID-19 pandemic affected almost all aspects of life for a large proportion of the world's population. The needs of the population living in low and middle income countries (LMIC) such as Pakistan must be assessed and addressed to avoid widening existing global health inequalities. Pakistan was on rising trajectory of the COVID-19 epidemic curve, and therefore assessing and monitoring the impact of COVID-19 was timely. In July 2019, this population based observational study (Funding: £30,575.00) was conducted to investigate the smoking behaviors in Pakistan the STOP survey. The first wave of the survey recruited 6,027 participants. During consent gathering, survey participants were asked if they would be willing to take part in a future telephone follow-up in six-month's time. This study also presented an opportunity to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on this large nationally-representative population, in order to inform health, social care and policy responses.



Collaborative Partners in Project

Duration

04 Months
April, 2020 - July, 2020

Donor

University of York, UK

Sponsor

University of York, UK

“The use and perception of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) in Pakistan: A qualitative exploratory study.”

There is now substantial evidence of the effectiveness and popularity of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) in helping smokers to quit in high-income countries (HIC). ENDS are also now available and becoming popular in low-and-middle-income countries (LMIC), including Pakistan. There is a great deal of research on the use of ENDS in HICs although their use and role in LMICs is not documented, which may differ due to social, cultural, economic differences and accessibility. Through this project (Funding: £9,800.00) we investigated how ENDS perceived and used in Pakistan a high tobacco burden country. Using qualitative methods, we explored perspectives of cigarette smokers, ENDS users and sellers, health practitioners, policy makers and civil society.



Collaborative Partners in Project



Duration

06 Months

December , 2021 - May, 2022

Donor

NIHR, UK

Sponsor

University of York, UK



Studying Tobacco Users of Pakistan (STOP2-R): Repeated Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Survey (STOP Survey)

The STOP2-R survey (Funding: £44,751.00) aimed to provide objective, regular and timely information on tobacco users (smokeless and smoked forms) living in rural areas of Pakistan to help key policy decisions. The specific objectives for this study were to assess, in rural areas, the:

1. Proportion of tobacco users who use illicit cigarettes
2. Nicotine dependence and motivation to quit among tobacco users .
3. Triggers to, methods used, and success of quit attempts
4. Attitude of tobacco users towards tobacco control policies and cessation aides e.g., counselling, medication.



Collaborative Partners in Project



Duration

15 Months
Jan, 2022 - March, 2023

Donor

NIHR, UK

Sponsor

University of York



The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on people with severe mental illness and on mental health provision in South Asia (IMPASS)

Severe mental illnesses (SMI) are chronic disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder), which typically cause considerable impairment in ability to engage in functional and occupational activities, and affect around 1% of the population, globally. SMI lowers life expectancy by approximately 10-20 years. The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected people's lives and access to healthcare in low- and middle-income countries, including in Bangladesh & Pakistan. People with SMI are at particularly high risk of being affected, as are poorly resourced mental health services. The IMPASS study (Funding: £ 32,835.00) therefore investigated the impact of the pandemic on people with SMI, and sought to understand how to support this vulnerable group in such public health emergencies in future.



Collaborative Partners in Project



Duration

35 Months
Nov , 2022 - Oct, 2025

Donor

**The Medical Research Council
(MRC) (a research council of
UKRI - UK
Research and Innovation)**

Sponsor

University of York, UK

08



Tobacco control policies and the health of Adolescents in Pakistan (TAP)

Tobacco control policies and the health of Adolescents in Pakistan (TAP) was a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded project (Funding: £328,797.00). The aim of TAP was to inform policies on plain packaging and taxation in Pakistan in order to reduce tobacco uptake and use in adolescents, thereby improving their health and preventing premature deaths and disabilities in later life. The TAP 2024 dataset was a nationally distributed adolescent tobacco and nicotine survey conducted across 9 districts in Pakistan, using both school-based and household-based cohorts. The study interviewed 14,232 adolescents aged 16–10 years (9,011 school-going and 5,221 out-of-school). The questionnaire covered current tobacco and nicotine use, exposure in different settings, product availability and access, perceptions of plain packaging, and susceptibility to future use.



Collaborative Partners in Project





Alliance
for Health Policy
and Systems Research

Duration

08 Months
Oct, 2024 - May, 2025

Donor

World Health Organization(WHO)

Sponsor

AKU

09

Institutionalizing learning by mainstreaming embedded implementation research in country immunization programmes (MAINSTREAM) In Pakistan



© WHO EMRO

This implementation research (Funding: £32,835.00) explored how closer collaboration between the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and the Balochistan Health Card Programme (BHCP) can improve fair access to vaccines for newborns in Balochistan. The study found that while most vaccinations are provided in public facilities, the majority of births take place in private hospitals, leading to missed opportunities for vaccination at birth. By integrating EPI services into BHCP-affiliated private hospitals and strengthening data and cold-chain systems, the initiative highlighted a practical, cost-effective pathway to reduce inequities, build community trust, and ensure more newborns receive life-saving vaccines on time.



**Collaborative
Partners in
Project**





Duration

02 Months
April, 2023 - May, 2023

Donor

CTFK & TFK, USA

10

Waste Recycle, Cigarette Stores study



The waste recycle cigarette pack survey (Funding: \$21,428.00) aims to assess the compliance of the tax stamp policy in combating the illegal trade of tobacco products. This survey provided valuable insights into whether the tax stamp policy was being implemented correctly and whether it had any impact on reducing the illicit trade. Additionally, the survey helped to understand the compliance of tobacco companies with the tax stamp policy.

Objectives:

1. To determine the proportion of illicit cigarettes in the cigarette market in Pakistan
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of the tax stamp policy vis-à-vis tobacco tax evasion
3. To identify regional patterns in tax stamps compliance on cigarette packs.



Duration

08 Weeks
May, 2026 - July, 2026

Sponsor

The Initiative, Islamabad

Visibility of Youth-Appealing Nicotine Content on Social Media

A multi-country study was conducted to examine how nicotine products are promoted on social media platforms popular among young people. Using a harmonised research protocol across 12 countries, the study systematically audited highly visible nicotine-related content on TikTok and Instagram. Standardised research accounts were used to collect posts identified through predefined search terms over a seven-day period. The content was analysed using a structured coding framework to assess product promotion, branding, health warnings, advertising disclosure, and youth-appealing features. These features included flavours, humour, trending music, youth slang, cartoon-style imagery, and apparent young creators. The study generated cross-country evidence on digital nicotine marketing practices and provides useful insights to support tobacco control policies, youth protection measures, and stronger regulation of online nicotine advertising.





ONGOING PROJECTS



NIHR Global Health Research Centre for Improving Mental and Physical Health Together (Centre for IMPACT)

01

Duration

59 Months
Oct , 2022 - Sep, 2027

Donor

National Institute for Health and care Research (NIHR), UK

Sponsor

University of York, UK



Centre for IMPACT (Funding: £451,588.00) aims at promoting mental and physical health in Afghanistan and Pakistan by reducing premature deaths and disabilities caused by Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). This study, focuses on three of the four key NCDs: common mental disorders (depression and anxiety), heart conditions, and diabetes. Through evaluating the key approaches to prevent and treat these, targeting those most at risk, and –uniquely– giving mental health parity alongside physical



Collaborative Partners in Project



Implementation research on tailored, multidisciplinary NCD pREvention in youthH: Targeting tobacco and aIR polLutlon Exposure For mid- to latE adolescents in disadvantaged populations

02

Duration

48 Months
Jan , 2023 - Dec, 2026

Donor

European Union

Sponsor

**Academisch Ziekenhuis
Leiden, ALBINUSDREEF
2333 ,2ZA, Leiden, the
Netherlands.**



FA4LIFE (Funding: €204,938.00) is a 4-year implementation research study, covering a research area of high uncertainty that, considering the increasing NCD burden, will become even more important in years to come. The objective of this project is to empower adolescents for a healthier future by concurrently addressing tobacco control and promoting awareness about air quality. We employed innovative, robust research methods that meaningfully engage those that matter youth, families, providers, managers and authorities. Using these methods, we improved our understanding on what is important to implement sustainable NCD prevention packages targeting young people in disadvantaged populations. The target group for this project is mid- to late-adolescents (aged 14 to 21 years old), providers (e.g., healthcare, education) and other stakeholders (e.g., family members, community leaders, policymakers).



Collaborative Partners in Project



MINISTRY OF HEALTH OF THE
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



Maastricht University

An mHealth intervention(mTB-Tobacco) for smoking cessation in people with drug-sensitive pulmonary tuberculosis in Bangladesh & Pakistan

03

Duration

47 Months
June , 2022 - May, 2026

Donor

**NIHR Global Health Unit on
Respiratory Health ("RESPIRE 2")**

Sponsor

University of Edinburgh, UK



The aim of this study was to explore the effectiveness of this mHealth intervention in the context of two low-middle-income countries, Bangladesh and Pakistan. We explored the best method to help TB patients quit smoking. The study was funded by the National Institute of Health Research, UK and was sponsored by the University of Edinburgh, UK. In Pakistan, this study was being conducted by The Initiative (a non-profit research organization in Islamabad) in collaboration with the National/Provincial TB control programs. The primary objective was to assess the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of mHealth to achieve continuous abstinence from smoking for at least 6 months. To assess improvements in TB treatment adherence and clinical outcomes simultaneously are two of its secondary objectives.



Collaborative Partners in Project





POLICY BRIEF

01

Use of tobacco taxation for tobacco control in Pakistan- MoNHSR&C, University of Stirling, University of York, The Initiative



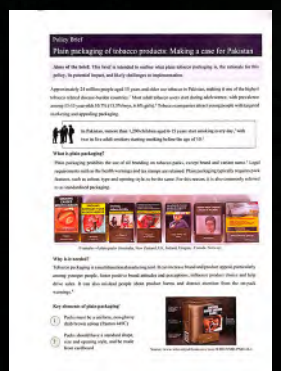
02

Use of tobacco taxation for tobacco control in Pakistan- MoNHSR&C, University of Stirling, University of York, The Initiative



03

Use of tobacco taxation for tobacco control in Pakistan- MoNHSR&C, University of Stirling, University of York, The Initiative



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4. Warsi S, Elsey H, Boeckmann M, Noor M, Khan A, Barua D, Nasreen S, Huque S, Huque R, Siddiqi K; TB & Tobacco consortium. Using behaviour change theory to train health workers on tobacco cessation support for tuberculosis patients: a mixed-methods study in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. *BMC Health Serv Res*. 2019 Jan 71:(1)19;25. doi: 10.1186/s4-3909-019-12913. PubMed PMID: 30683087; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC6347762.
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OUR PUBLICATIONS

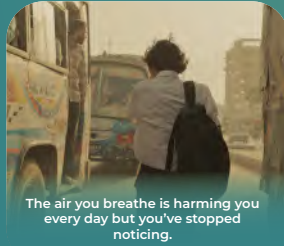


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OUR PUBLICATIONS



DIGITAL OUTPUTS



The air you breathe is harming you every day but you've stopped noticing.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgyRRP837N0&t=23s>



FRESHAir4Life (Pakistan): A Journey of Youth Engagement, Adaptation, and Impact



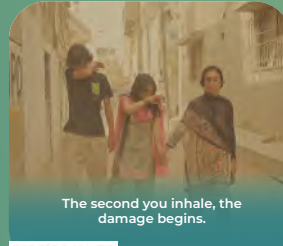
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boQP9R8U6rA&t=101s>



Karachi's youth are stepping up!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u2YMsMLD9Y8>

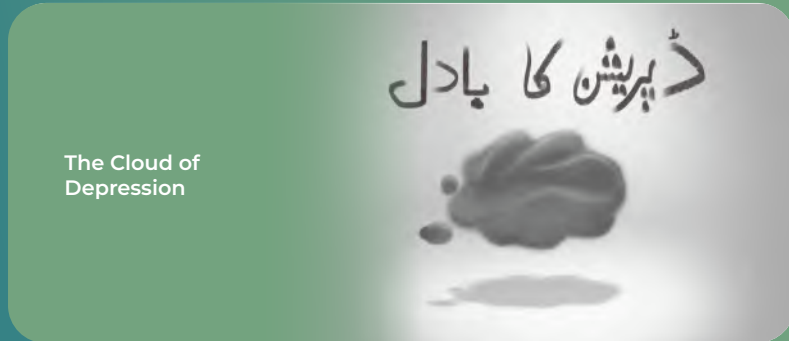


The second you inhale, the damage begins.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stnk8ibJoeY&t=4s>

FRESH AIR
4Life



The Cloud of Depression

In this powerful video animation, titled "The Cloud of Depression," we dive deep into the emotional journey of a woman as she grapples with the overwhelming weight of depression. Witness her raw and honest portrayal as she confronts the challenges, frustrations, and isolation that this mental health condition can bring.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQF2dMv7sFM>

IMPASS



The TAP Project - Tobacco Control Policies and the Health of Adolescents in Pakistan.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBOyOek16tE>



The Cigarette Chase: A Lesson in Disguise



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M25f9Hphpg8>



A Generation at Risk: Exposure to tobacco and Nicotine Products



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4ahCfFVjLE>

TAP
Tobacco Control Policies and the Health of Adolescents in Pakistan



Quit4TB Trial: mHealth for smoking cessation in people with tuberculosis (TB) **1 billion** People a Year

BIGGEST PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS

TB and tobacco are two colliding epidemics affecting the globe, including Pakistan. TB affects 10 million people and kills 1.5 million, annually. Tobacco is used by 1.2 billion people and kills 8 million annually. Smoking interacts with TB and increases the likelihood of acquiring TB. If smoking continues during TB treatment, people are less likely to recover and more likely to die.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6eaPZ4YuBs>

QUIT4TB