BIG TOBACCO
TINY TARGETS

TOBACCO INDUSTRY TARGETS SCHOOLS IN SIERRA LEONE

ATCA
AFRICAN TOBACCO CONTROL ALLIANCE

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Table of contents

Introduction 04

Methodology 05

Findings 06

- Sale of tobacco products around schools 06
- Mode of sale of tobacco products in stores 10
- Advertisement around schools 12
- Advertisement and promotion in and around stores 14
- Presence of signage in stores 16

Observations 18

Recommendations 19

Conclusion 20

Appendix 21

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Introduction

Tobacco use is known to be one of the leading causes of cancer, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. These disease conditions constitute a huge economic burden to the health sector of African countries. Tobacco use also kills up to 50% of its long-term users.

Children and youth are increasingly being targeted by the tobacco industry. Although aware of the devastating consequences of tobacco use, the industry continues to market its deadly products to children to make profits at the expense of public health.

Tobacco companies use various tactics including advertising and promotion, very often around schools, to entice children to experiment their products.

As such, children are more likely to become addicted long-time tobacco users and suffer later in life from tobacco-related diseases and premature death.

In Sierra Leone, advertising and sale of tobacco products increasingly target children and youth. Among youth aged 13-15 years[1], 7.1% currently smoke cigarettes and 3.7% currently use other tobacco products.

This survey was conducted with a view to understanding the practices of the tobacco industry to market, promote and sell tobacco products around schools in Freetown.

[1] Global Youth Tobacco Survey Sierra Leone, 2017

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Methodology

The following methodology was adopted to conduct the survey:

Observation
The methodology was based on the observation of points of sale and advertising of cigarettes and other tobacco products within **100 meters** around schools.

Tools
Observation forms were developed by a team of experts to serve as data collection tools.

Random school selection
23 primary and secondary schools in Freetown were randomly selected (refer appendix).

Training and data collection
A team was trained for the systematic collection of data.

Mapping
A mapping was done for each school to assess the level and location of sale and advertising points.

Images
Pictures were taken to illustrate the sale and advertising of tobacco products around the schools surveyed.

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Findings

Sale of Tobacco products around schools

146 points of sale of tobacco products were found around the 23 schools surveyed.

School children in Freetown could buy tobacco products from the following points of sale around schools:

◎ Permanent kiosks

95% of the schools surveyed (22 out of 23) had permanent kiosks around them selling tobacco products. A total of 38 permanent kiosks were seen around the 23 schools surveyed.

◎ Mobile vendors

Mobile vendors were the most popular sale outlets for tobacco products around schools in Freetown. A total of 66 mobile vendors were seen around 21 of the 23 **(91%)** schools.

◎ Convenience stores/groceries

82% of the schools surveyed (19 out of 23) had a total of 38 convenience stores/groceries selling tobacco products around them.

A display rack in a temporary kiosk near Modern High School, off Jomo Kenyatta Road.

A mobile vendor of cigarettes near Dr. SM Broderic Municipal Secondary School - Benjamin Lane, Freetown.

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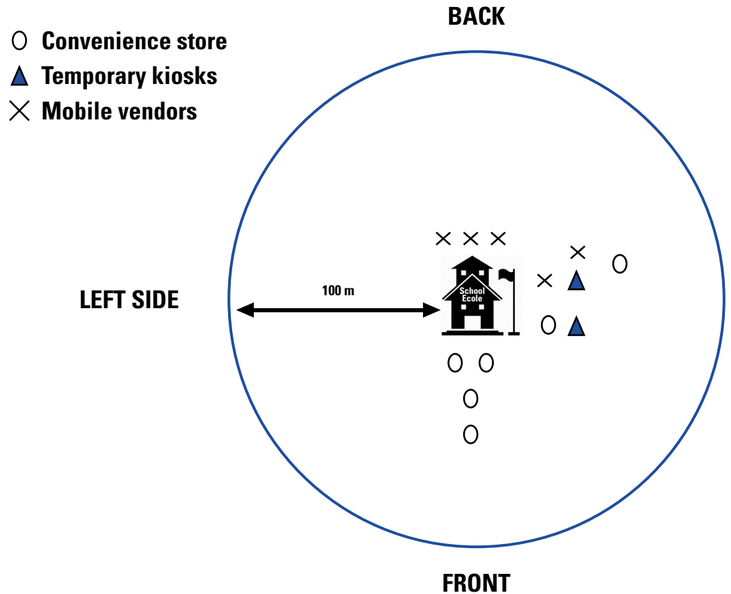

This map shows that around Methodist Boys High School, there are 6 convenience stores, 2 temporary kiosks and 5 mobile vendors selling tobacco products.

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Mode of sale in stores

◎ **Sale of single sticks**

100% of schools surveyed had stores and other outlets like mobile vendors and kiosks around them selling single sticks of cigarettes.

◎ **Sale of cigarettes in packs of less than 20**

100% of schools surveyed had stores and other outlets like mobile vendors and kiosks around them selling packs of less than 20 cigarettes.

A stand in a temporary kiosk selling single sticks of cigarettes near Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Primary school, Calaba town.

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Advertisement around schools

Tobacco products were advertised around schools using billboards, posters and umbrellas.

Billboards
2 billboards were found around Annie Walsh Girls Secondary School.

Posters
2 schools (Sierra Leone Muslim Congress Secondary School and Family Home Movement) had posters advertising cigarettes around them.

Umbrella
Advertising through umbrellas bearing the colours and brand of tobacco products, installed by temporary vendors, was also carried out. A total of 5 umbrellas were seen around 4 of the 23 schools observed.

A billboard advertising a cigarette brand near Annie Walsh Girls Secondary School - Kissi Road.

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Advertisement and promotion in and around stores

Stores in the vicinity of schools advertised and promoted tobacco products to school children in the following ways:

◎ **Advertising on windows, doors and sidewalks**
39% of schools surveyed (9 out of 23) had stores around them advertising tobacco products on windows, doors and sidewalks. A total of thirteen poster advertisements were seen in or around the stores, eleven on windows or doors and two on sidewalks.

◎ **Display on the counter**
82% of the schools surveyed (19 out of 23) had stores around them that display cigarettes on the counter

◎ **Display behind the counter**
100% of the schools surveyed had stores around them that display cigarettes behind the counter.

◎ **Poster advertising**
2 schools surveyed had stores around them that advertise cigarettes using posters.

◎ **Display with non-tobacco products**
One store displayed cigarettes with non-tobacco products.

Cigarette advertising near Annie Walsh School, Kissy Road

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Presence of signage in stores

Of the **146** points of sale found around the 23 schools surveyed, only **one** displayed a “No sale to minors” sign.

A point of sale without “No sale to minors” sign selling tobacco products and non-tobacco products liked by children near Dr. SM Broderic Municipal Secondary School - Benjamin Lane, Freetown

A temporary kiosk without a “No sale to minors” sign, close to the gate of Annie Walsh School, Kissy Road.

Observations

◎ School children can easily buy tobacco products from different points of sale around their schools.
The tobacco industry deliberately encourages the setting up of points of sale around schools so as to increase accessibility of tobacco products to young people and encourage initiation and consumption.

◎ Tobacco sale outlets are often very close to the school premises.
This proximity of tobacco points of sale to schools makes it easier for school children to buy cigarettes and other tobacco products.

◎ Cigarette advertising and promotion are common in stores around schools.
The tobacco industry uses multiple channels to advertise and promote tobacco products around schools in order to capture the attention of school children and make the use of tobacco look like a normal behaviour when it kills one out of every two smokers.

◎ Cigarettes are sold in single sticks and in packs of less than 20.
The sale of cigarettes in single sticks and in packs of less than 20 increases the affordability of cigarettes to young people, and encourages smoking and dependence on tobacco from an early age

◎ Most stores around schools in Freetown do not display "No sale to minors" sign.
In order to reduce the risk of being exposed and becoming addicted to tobacco, article 16.1 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control of the World Health Organization urges parties to adopt and implement measures to prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors, including the display of "No sale to minors" sign in sale outlets.

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Recommendations

In the light of the findings of the survey, the following recommendations are made in order to protect children in Sierra Leone from tobacco use, advertising and sale:

- Ban the sale of tobacco products to minors.
- Ban the sale of tobacco products in the vicinity of educational institutions.
- Ban all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship in Sierra Leone.
- Ban the sale of cigarettes in single sticks and in packs of less than 20.
- Prescribe the display of "No sale to minors" signage in all retail outlets in Sierra Leone.
- Prevent the interference of the tobacco industry in tobacco control policies and programme implementation.
- Support the work of civil society so that it could contribute in the adoption and implementation of strong tobacco control policies.

All these recommendations should be part of a comprehensive FCTC-compliant tobacco control law to be adopted by Sierra Leone.

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Conclusion

In Sierra Leone, the malicious practices of the tobacco industry with regards to the sale, advertising and promotion of tobacco products around schools are real and visible.

The tobacco industry denies such practices. Relying on acts carried out by British American Tobacco and other tobacco companies, a U.S. Court found in 2006 that the companies falsely denied that they marketed to youth:

"The evidence is clear and convincing - and beyond any reasonable doubt - that Defendants [tobacco companies] have marketed to young people… while consistently, publicly, and falsely, denying they do so."[2]

The results of this survey show that the tobacco industry continues to target young people, including the most impressionable and vulnerable ones: school-aged children.

Sierra Leone ratified the WHO FCTC in 2009. The Convention came into force for the country on 20 August 2009. However, it is yet to adopt a comprehensive tobacco control law that is compliant with the FCTC. Urgent actions are required to protect tobacco control in Sierra Leone from the interferences of the tobacco industry and the population, particularly the youth, from the health, social, economic and environmental consequences of tobacco use.

[2] **Source:** U.S. District Court. U.S. vs. Philip Morris USA, Inc., et. al., 99-CV-02396GK, Final Opinion (2006). Para. 3296. **Available from:** http://www.library.ucsf.edu/sites/all/files/ucsf_assets/FinalOpinion_full_version.pdf.

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Appendix

LIST OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED

No.	Name of School	School Level	Age Range
1	Baptist Comprehensive Academy	Secondary	11 to 19
2	Family Home Movement	Secondary	11 to 18
3	Dr. SM Broderic Municipal Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
4	King Fahad Islamic Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
5	Methodist Boys High School	Secondary	11 to 19
6	Model Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
7	Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Primary School	Primary	03 to 12
8	Ole Johnson Primary and Junior Secondary School	Primary and Secondary	03 to 15
9	Vine Memorial Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
10	Ahmadiyya Muslim Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
11	Modern High School	Secondary	11 to 18
12	Rising Academy Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
13	Comister Cummings John Memorial Junior Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 15
14	Annie Walsh Girls Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
15	The International School	Secondary	11 to 18
16	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
17	Government Secondary Technical School	Secondary	11 to 18
18	SOS School	Nursery and Primary	03 to 12
19	St. Joseph's Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
20	United Methodist Church Secondary School	Secondary	11 to 18
21	Methodist Girls High School	Secondary	11 to 18
22	Thomas Peterson Municipal Primary School	Primary	06 to 11
23	Comforti Primary School	Nursery and Primary	03 to 10

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Cigarette brands on sale around the schools surveyed

Gold Seal, Bond, Pine, Royal, Capital, Ceasar, Ducal, Oris, M7, Empire, 555, Ronson, Sir

This survey was conducted in the framework of the Tobacco Industry Accountability (TIA) Project. It was funded by Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) and implemented by the African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA) and its country partner, Health For All Coalition Sierra Leone (HFAC SL).

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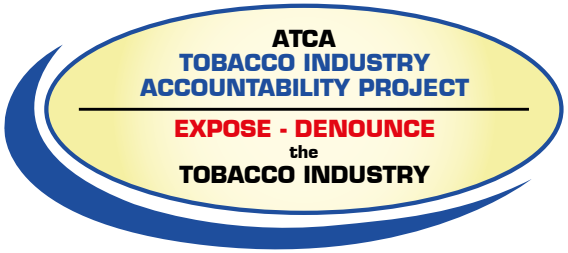
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