China

Background

- Population: 1.3 billion
- GDP: US$7.3 trillion
- 2011 GDP Per Capita Based on Purchasing Power Parity: US$8,400
- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in China, killing more than 1 million people each year, including more than 100,000 victims of secondhand smoke, China has approximately 300 million smokers who consume a third of the world’s cigarettes. Approximately 53 percent of men in China smoke. As a result of this unhealthy behavior and projecting into the future, China will continue to suffer an enormous burden of disease (morbidity) from tobacco use—and more so because the longer people smoke, the worse their disease profile will become. In addition, health experts predict that if China does not do more to reduce tobacco use, deaths from smoking may almost triple, going from 1.2 million in 2010 to 3.5 million per year by 2030. This will result in increased costs of treating tobacco-related disease and increased lost worker productivity.

Committed to reducing the devastating effects of tobacco use, China ratified the World Health Organization’s (WHO’s) International public health treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), in 2003 and enacted it in January 2006. Since then, health education campaigns have been carried out throughout China, and relevant regulations have been revised in support of the FCTC goals. The Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use that began in 2006 has made a significant contribution to the tobacco control movement and policy changes in China. In addition, since 2009, the Emory Global Health Institute has been working with 17 communities in China to implement tobacco control activities through a Gates Foundation grant.

In 2009, the Ministry of Health (MOH), in collaboration with three other government partners, launched an initiative that established a smoke-free health system. Working with the Ministry of Education, the MOH also established tobacco-free schools and, since then, smoke-free indoor spaces have gradually expanded.

In 2011, the National People’s Congress approved the 12th Five Year Plan (2011-15) that includes the requirement of a comprehensive smoking ban in all public places. In May, the Ministry of Health issued the Implementation Guidelines of the Public Hygiene Management Rules that bans smoking in 28 indoor public venues. In addition, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television issued a policy in 2011 that strictly limits smoking scenes on TV and in movies.

Some municipalities and big cities have already passed tobacco control legislation and the MOH also established a national anti-smoking hotline. Since 2008, there has been a continuous mass media campaign, and as a result of that and other activities, over 100,000 news stories on tobacco control have been published, which have greatly increased the public’s knowledge on the health risks of smoking.

China has recently been praised by the WHO for the MOH’s release of the “China Report on the Health Hazards of Smoking.” Earlier this year, the “Say No to Forced Smoking” campaign, launched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and web services corporation Baidu, drew significant attention to the 100,000 annual deaths caused by secondhand smoke in China.
In recent years, the United States and China have taken steps to address and reduce tobacco use among their populations. The recent Global Adult Tobacco Survey in China, an important tool in tobacco surveillance, has shown that tobacco use remains widespread. Data from this survey informed the most recent MOH tobacco report. The two countries hope to conduct the first Global Youth Tobacco Survey in China in 2013, which would provide insight into the younger generation's perception and usage of tobacco.

Collectively, the United States and China have worked together on tobacco control research and tobacco surveillance for many years. Most recently, in collaboration with Chinese research institutions, the U.S. National Cancer Institute (NCI) initiated nine tobacco-related research grants in China to look at different aspects of tobacco control. Some of those aspects include capacity building for tobacco control; behavioral risk factors for smoking among rural versus urban populations; the role of culture in tobacco usage among multiethnic populations; and tobacco and cancer risk.

Why greater focus was needed on establishing smoke-free worksites

Although China’s Ministry of Health (MOH) had shown great leadership in tobacco control, there was no national smoke-free workplace law. In 2011, the MOH issued a ban on smoking in public places including 28 venues; however, the rule did not include work places and did not specify penalties for violations. Thus, the majority of employees were still exposed to dangerous secondhand smoke at their worksites (according to the 2010 Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), six out of ten adults in China noticed smoking in the workplace).

In addition, the role of companies was seen as critical in tobacco control in China for several reasons, including high tobacco prevalence, the significant burden of insurance and healthcare costs borne by employers in China2 and the unique challenges in a workplace culture that promotes smoking as part of communication with one’s superiors (e.g., cigarettes are often given as gifts in social and business situations, and in order to have good “guanxi,” or relationships with co-workers, many people find it difficult to turn down cigarettes). Furthermore, there was potential for companies to play a key role not only in smoke-free workplace policies but in broader employee-focused tobacco control measures, including cessation, as well as chronic disease prevention through policies, programs, and campaigns.

Actions taken

On August 17, 2012, the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Ministry of Health of China issued a joint statement to establish the China-U.S. Smoke-Free Worksite initiative, a public-private partnership representing the next cooperative effort on tobacco control between China and the U.S.

On September 7, the China-U.S. Smoke-free Worksite Initiative (CUSW) was launched publicly in Beijing. The goal of the CUSW is to assist employers in significantly reducing exposure to secondhand smoke at the workplace, while also raising awareness of the dangers of tobacco use and encouraging people to quit smoking.

The CUSW Initiative combines the health expertise of Chinese and U.S. health agencies with the workplace experience of businesses to create and support smoke-free workspaces. The businesses and other employers that joined the initiative will be supported by the CUSW Initiative as they take steps to go smoke-free in the near future.

The CUSW is a distinct but related partnership that developed out of the Global Smoke-free Worksite Challenge (GSWC). The GSWG was established as a Clinton Global Initiative Commitment in September 2011 and serves as a cornerstone from which country-level initiatives emanate.

Participants in the CUSW signed a pledge to join the Initiative and committed to create 100 percent smoke-free workplaces and to provide clean and healthy working environments for their employees.

The leaders of the GSWC have the capacity and expertise to provide technical support to the partners in the CUSW, This support includes sharing best practices, assisting in smoke-free worksite implementation, helping publicize the many benefits of smoke-free worksites, and leading advocacy efforts to expand smoke-free policies.

Before the September launch of the CUSW, China CDC and HHS led outreach efforts to attract businesses to the launch event. They worked with tobacco control organizations to invite companies that were engaged in tobacco control work in the past, public relations companies and influential companies, such as Sohu.com, an internet company providing information, entertainment and communication services.

Key partners that led the planning and implementation of the CUSW

Ministry of Health and Center for Disease Control and Prevention of the People’s Republic of China (with the MOH Minister of Health Dr. Wang Lixiong in the leading role)
Outcomes

By December 2012, over 66 businesses/organizations joined the CUSW, and the ratio of China-based to U.S.-based organizations was approximately 10:3. These companies signed a commitment to establish and enforce smoke-free or completely tobacco-free worksite policies (see list of signatories in Appendix I). Further awareness of the initiative was built via a live Internet broadcast of the launch and a press release that resulted in news media coverage in several publications. The roundtable session and discussions after the launch provided quality networking opportunities to companies who attended the event.

In addition, Vice Minister Huang Jiefu and Dr. Howard Koh wrote an opinion editorial piece that was submitted to the Global Times and was published in October 2012 to continue to build awareness of the CUSW and the need for smoke-free worksites.

Since the launch event, additional progress has been made:

- A steering committee is being established to promote effective decision-making, ensure effective coordination between China MOH and US HHS, and facilitate implementation of the project. Proposed committee members include:
  - China MOH Department of International Cooperation (Chair)
  - China MOH Department of Maternal and Child Health Care and Community Health (Chair)
  - US HHS (Chair)
  - China CDC Tobacco Control Office
  - Sohu Philanthropy
  - General Electric (China)

- On October 31, 2012, a training workshop was held in Shanghai to recruit companies in the southern provinces of China. Representatives from more than 30 new companies learned about the harms of smoking and secondhand smoke. Johnson & Johnson and An Steel Group presented their smoke-free experiences, and participants toured the smoke-free Dow Chemical Shanghai Center.

- The CUSW project has developed strategic partnership with Sohu.com, one of the most popular web portals in China, to promote this initiative among companies and the general public. A webpage has been established on Sohu.com’s philanthropy section. The structure of the web page has been designed and basic contents have been populated, yet to be enriched in January.

- A toolkit on smokefree workplaces has been developed (based on the Global Smokefree Partnership’s Smokefree in a Box and tailored to China’s environment) and will be sent to targeted companies once finalized. The toolkit will also be available on CUSW’s web page, http://gongyi.sohu.com/s2012/cusw/.

Lessons learned (obstacles, learnings that can benefit other countries, etc.)

- Communications and media publicity are extremely important. Outreach to companies is challenging without publicity and public opinion support. Developing and implementing effective media strategies is usually not the strength of Chinese officials. All future smoke-free worksites efforts should include a communications and media strategy in the plans.
- Benefits for companies ("what’s in it for me?") need to be spelled out and need to be attractive to mobilize companies to participate. For example, for Chinese companies, public image is very important—they want to be viewed as advanced and socially responsible.
- Companies need to be mobilized to be spokespersons for this initiative and need to be more proactive in promoting it. So far, the voice from Chinese companies or business leaders is weak. Business leaders who are (or can be) influential on policy must be identified, recruited, educated and trained to speak up on the importance of smoke-free worksites, or even smoke-free laws/policies.

Benefits for each partner and for the country overall

Benefits include providing a platform for a healthier workforce and helping lead to a healthier environment in the community at-large.

The economic benefits to individual companies include increased productivity and incidental cost savings such as reduced cleaning, fewer air filters, etc.

In addition, the CUSW provides an opportunity to mobilize and engage business leaders in tobacco control, thus advancing tobacco control policies in the country. Business leaders are often opinion leaders in these countries and can influence both policymaking and public opinion.

With more and more companies in China seek creative ways to build their corporate image and with the term CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) gaining public attention, CUSW offers companies/business partners a unique opportunity to increase their competitiveness by positioning themselves as a health-conscious corporate citizen.

Appendix I

**China-U.S. Smoke-free Worksite Initiative—Signatory Companies/Organizations**

- Lenovo
- Anshan Steel Company
- Zhongyangguo Salt Co. Ltd.
- Sohu Corporation
- Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
- Baidu Corporation
- Suzhou Branch of China Mobile
- Tianlongaoxin, Dushanzi, Xinjiang
- Thermax Electric Power Plant, Dushanzi, Xinjiang
- Engineering and Technology Institute, Xinjiang Oil Company
- Sales management center of Guizhou Bailing Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd
- Waipo restaurant, Zhejiang
- Xihu State Guest House, Hangzhou
- Santai Resort, Hangzhou
- Dacheng Law Offices
- Juntao Law Offices
- Life Times
- Wanhuida Intellectual Property Agency Co. Ltd.
- Beijing Jiaxingjishun Network Technology Co. Ltd.
- Beijing Jinhuayang Technology and Development Co.Ltd.
- Suzhou Taike Electric Co. Ltd.
- Beijing Sunshine Health Consultation Co. Ltd.
- Yongyou Group
- Cimin Medical Check Group
- Budapest Success (Beijing) Medical Instrument Co. Ltd.
- Jiangyongfang Housekeeping Co. Ltd.
- First Health Report
- Lanzhou Petrochemical Company
- Dong'an Automobile Co. Ltd.
- Wanquan Pharmaceutical Company
- Lanzhou Petrochemical Company, China National Petroleum Corporation
- Beijing Yaohua Kangye Technology and Development Co. Ltd.
- Beijing Ziqier Cosmetology Co. Ltd.
- Tianjin Jinzhong Happy Shopping Co. Ltd.
- Tianjin Guifanxiang 18 Fried Dough Twist Headquarters Co. Ltd.
- Nuoweixin (China) Biotechnology Co. Ltd.
- Bohai Brand, China Offshore Oil Company
- Binhai Branch, China Mobile
- Bihai Grain and Oil Industry Co, Ltd, China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Corporation

- Guangbao Electric (Tianjin) Co, Ltd.
- Tianshi Group
- Zhongxin International Semiconductor Manufacturing (Tianjin) Co. Ltd.

http://old.cancer.org/smokefreeworksites/case-studies-china-gswc
Shenyang Xinhua Avian Electric Co., Ltd.
Darufa Supermarket, Shenyang
Starbucks Coffee Company
Pfizer Inc.
General Electric Company
Johnson & Johnson
David Diebold & Associates (H.K.) Ltd
Family Health International Beijing
CSR Asia
Population Services International
Coca-Cola Greater China
Bayer China
Edelman
APCO Worldwide
Becton Dickinson Company
Lilly China
Trimble Navigation

1http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD
2http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bizchina/2012-01/11/content_14424426.htm