

CASE STUDY

SENEGAL

Making the case for domestic
investment in tobacco control
programmes in Senegal:

A budget advocacy pilot project



Introduction

Tobacco control programmes in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are critically underfunded despite the relatively low cost of implementation and the demonstrated health and economic benefits that proven tobacco control measures can deliver. In an effort to address this, the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA), Cancer Research UK, and the American Cancer Society worked with the Ligue Sénégalaise Contre le Tabac (LISTAB) to support a budget advocacy pilot project in Senegal.



6%

of all deaths
in Senegal are
attributable to
tobacco use
every year



9.9 million USD is the estimated economic cost of smoking in Senegal

National Context

Tobacco use in Senegal presents a significant public health threat. Nationally, 13.1% of men and 0.9% of women are current tobacco users.¹ Among youth, rates are even higher, with 14.9% of young men and 6.2% of young women using tobacco. Together, this results in a significant health burden for the country: 6.07% of all deaths in Senegal are attributable to tobacco use every year.²

Tobacco use also harms Senegal's economy and poses an obstacle to progress on sustainable development. The economic cost of smoking in Senegal has been estimated at 5522 million XOF (approximately US\$9.9M). This includes the direct healthcare-related costs, the indirect costs related to lost productivity, and mortality and morbidity during peoples' productive years.³

Senegal has made much progress on tobacco control in recent years. The country ratified the World Health Organization's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2005 and in March 2014 passed a landmark tobacco control law, one of the strongest in Africa at the time. The law places restrictions on public smoking, tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and tobacco packaging and labelling. It also prohibits any interference by the tobacco industry in national health policy. It is complemented by implementing decrees on packaging and labelling and smoke-free spaces (2016).

Following adoption of the law, president Macky Sall established the National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) and the National Tobacco Control Committee (NTCC) in 2016. Some funding has been provided from the government to cover basic administrative costs, but the bulk of funding since its establishment come from external sources and has been somewhat unpredictable. In 2018, an external grant that was providing the majority of the NTCP's budget came to an end.

The Ligue Sénégalaise Contre le Tabac has been at the forefront of tobacco control advocacy in Senegal since 2011. Today, LISTAB is a coalition of over 30 organisations representing a variety of sectors and interests. Important priorities for LISTAB's work include increasing enforcement of smoke-free laws, combatting tobacco industry interference, and pushing for tobacco tax increases.

Tobacco control in Senegal suffered a major setback in early 2020 when the government's funding for the NTCP's operational budget was cut. Advocates at LISTAB agreed that urgent work was needed to establish a more sustainable funding model to drive progress on tobacco control, and that a budget advocacy approach could help accomplish this. Budget advocacy is defined by the International Budget Partnership as “a strategic approach to influence governments' budget choices, aimed at achieving clear and specific outcomes – e.g. healthier people, less poverty, or improved governance.”⁴

Pilot project summary

FCA worked closely with Senegalese member organisation LISTAB over the course of 2020 to plan and carry out a budget advocacy pilot project. The objectives were:

1.

To strengthen the capacity of civil society and government officials to conduct budget advocacy.

2.

To engage the media and create public support for increased tobacco control spending through a public education campaign.

3.

To advocate for increased budgetary allocations for tobacco control.

Project activities

FIGURE 1: TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS OVER THE COURSE OF THE 8-MONTH PILOT PROJECT



Building a diverse coalition of advocates to drive progress

LISTAB looked to organisations working in fields related to tobacco control, budget advocacy, tax advocacy, and research to form a small steering committee. The steering committee was composed of:

- **LISTAB**
With demonstrated tobacco control policy and advocacy expertise, which would take on a central leadership role in the project.
- **Pan African Institute for Citizenship, Consumers and Development (CICODEV Africa)**
A coalition-based consumers' rights organisation operational in Senegal.

- **Consortium pour la Recherche Économique et Sociale (CRES)**
A think tank with a mission to contribute to African development through high quality economic and social policy research. CRES has supported budget advocacy efforts, including for gender-responsive budgeting in Senegal.⁵
- **The National Program on Tobacco Control (PNLT)**
LISTAB decided to directly engage the government's tobacco control focal point in the work of the coalition, and their agreement to participate in this work was an early positive achievement in the project.



Taxawu Santé

The steering committee also took on the name Taxawu Santé which stands for “All for Health.” Taxawu Santé invited additional stakeholders to join the coalition’s network over time, broadening the range of interests and constituencies that were represented including: Couverture Maladie Universelle (CMU), the government agency responsible for Universal Health Coverage, representatives from the Ministry of Health and Social Action, Bagenou Goxx, the country’s largest women’s association, and the association of midwives and state nurses in Senegal.



Generating nationally specific evidence to support the investment case for tobacco control in Senegal

Economists at the American Cancer Society worked with CRES and other coalition members to generate estimates of the costs of tobacco use in Senegal and the costs and benefits of scaled-up FCTC implementation that could be used to help build the economic case for investment in the country.

KEY FIGURES FROM THIS RESEARCH DEMONSTRATED THAT:

These figures suggest that strengthened tobacco control measures, including a tax increase, can be a cost-effective way to reduce the health and economic burden of tobacco use, while at the same time generating additional revenue for the government.

Holding training workshops for civil society, government, and other stakeholders on budget advocacy

In February 2020, LISTAB staff took part in a training workshop in Saly that was organised by FCA, Cancer Research UK, and the American Cancer Society. It brought together experts in budget processes and

**0.1 %
of GDP** In 2012, the economic cost of smoking was 5522 million XOF (approximately US\$9.9M), or 0.1% of total GDP.^{6 7}

**\$ 2563
million XOF** In 2012, Senegal spent 2563 million XOF (approximately US\$4.6M) on smoking-related health costs.^{9 10}

US \$ 14 million In 2012, it would cost US\$14M (approximately 7758 million XOF), or US\$1.24 (approximately 687 XOF) per capita to fully implement the MPOWER package of tobacco control measures under the WHO's FCTC .⁸

10,300 lives In 2016, a US\$1 (approximately 554 XOF) increase in tobacco taxes could generate an additional revenue boost of US\$104M (approximately 57,632 billion XOF) and reduce tobacco-related deaths by 10,300.¹¹

analysis, experts in the economics of tobacco and tobacco control, and FCA staff. Specific sessions focused on budget advocacy basics and the investment cases for tobacco control in Senegal and Uganda. Interactive sessions allowed participants to begin to build their budget advocacy strategies.

In March 2020, Taxawu Santé also organised a budget advocacy training workshop in Senegal for additional civil society actors and government partners. Participants included officials from PNLT, CICODEV, CRES, the African Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA), Centre D'Étude de Recherche en Ingénierie Financière (CERIF), as well as representatives from the Ministries of Finance and Customs. There were presentations on budget advocacy, the health, economic, and environmental costs of tobacco use, and the budget process in Senegal. Attendees also contributed to developing the budget advocacy strategy.



Engaging political leaders to support increased tobacco taxes and increased spending on health

Through the training workshops, Taxawu Santé was able to agree on a targeted advocacy strategy to engage political leaders on the need to increase tobacco taxes in Senegal and to increase spending on tobacco control measures in Senegal, ideally using revenue from tobacco tax increases. The coalition decided to garner public and government support by proposing to use earmarking of tobacco tax revenues for pro-health causes, instead of just tobacco control. They also engaged with stakeholders in the fields of UHC and NCD prevention and control.

Taxawu Santé worked to build a closer relationship with CMU and had the first meeting in July 2020, where the agency committed to collaborating with the coalition to further campaign work. They also discussed the means and resources for budget advocacy.

Taxawu Santé, CMU, and Ministère de la Santé et de l'action sociale du Sénégal (MSAS) organised a multi-stakeholder workshop on



tobacco taxation at the National Service of Education and Information for Health (SNEIPS) in Dakar on October 1st, 2020. The objective of the meeting was to bring together stakeholders from many different sectors to discuss current levels and increasing tobacco taxes, and earmarking additional revenues generated through tobacco tax increases. Stakeholders agreed to propose an increase in current taxes on cigarette packages to 225 XOF (approximately US\$0.41) per pack, which is estimated to reduce tobacco use prevalence by 11% and generate more than 18 billion XOF (approximately US\$32.5M) in additional tax revenue each year, and to dedicate a portion of the revenue to finance tobacco control and broader public health efforts. The group also discussed appropriate mechanisms and funding models for ensuring that this revenue is spent on public health efforts. The Ministry of Finance volunteered that a special treasury account could be established for this purpose.

Stakeholders identified potential champions within other sectors to support an earmarked tobacco tax arrangement, including the Director of Medical Prevention within the Ministry of Health, the President of the Association of Government Nurses, and two advisors of the Social and environmental economic council.

This meeting was just a first step. The coalition will need to clearly articulate further work that will be required to institutionalise this tax increase and a scheme to direct revenues to pro-health spending. Further advocacy efforts were unable to be completed due to COVID19.

This meeting was an important first step, but further work will be needed to institutionalize a tax increase and ensure that the revenues from this tax are directed to spending on pro-health causes, including tobacco control.

Generating media attention

A key component of the project was a public education campaign that sought to leverage the media to increase public awareness of the state of tobacco use in Senegal, the need for additional policy progress and implementation, and the need to adequately finance this work. Most of the media campaign took place in late June 2020.

Key activities and events included: advertising on SENEWEB, a very popular web portal frequented by decision-makers in Senegal, press releases that appeared in print and online media, 5 radio show appearances, and 4 TV show appearances on networks and channels popular in Senegal. Messages emphasised throughout the campaign focused on the burden of tobacco use and NCDs in the country, the economic and health benefits of tobacco tax increases, and the importance of sustainably funding tobacco control. The coalition also highlighted messages about the critical role that tobacco control can play in supporting recovery from COVID19 and future resilience against infectious disease outbreaks.

Results

- As a result of the budget advocacy training workshops, civil society participants were introduced to new ways of supporting progress on tobacco control in their countries by addressing the need for sustainable domestic funding.
- The coalition was also very successful in building relationships with key government stakeholders from multiple sectors and bringing them to the table to discuss tobacco tax increases.
- The project successfully brought together a committed coalition of civil society organizations. Their work has continued beyond just the pilot phase of the project, and they have plans to continue work to provide input to the budget process as part of the next budget cycle.



Lessons learned

Civil society can be seen as credible stakeholders on taxation and budget issues and can play an important role in fostering inter-sectoral dialogue on tobacco control measures.

Data on the costs of tobacco use and the costs and benefits of scaled-up FCTC implementation are critical to building a case for investment in these measures and increasing the receptivity of stakeholders within economic sectors of the government to take action on tobacco control.

Achieving success through budget advocacy in Senegal will be a long-term process that requires systemic change. It will require sustained advocacy and ongoing capacity building over a time frame longer than the 8-month pilot.

ENDNOTES

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