



# **Evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot project to approbate WHO Nicotine- and Tobacco-Free Schools guidelines based on the results of a sociological survey**

## **Summary**

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## Survey information

The survey among students and school staff was conducted by the NGO «Life» and commissioned by the WHO Country Office in Ukraine. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of short information interventions when testing the WHO guidelines «Nicotine- and Tobacco-Free Schools» (hereinafter “the information campaign «Nicotine- and Tobacco-Free Schools») in four education facilities to improve and disseminate positive experiences in Ukraine and the world.

The survey was conducted in 4 secondary schools — in Kyiv (Klovskiy Lyceum №77, Secondary School No. 230), in the city of Rivne (School No. 25) and in the Rivne region (Bystrytsia Lyceum ). The survey involved 9 to 11 grade students and school staff (emphasis on students).

The survey included two rounds. The first round of the survey was conducted before the information campaign «Nicotine- and Tobacco-Free Schools», and the second round was conducted after the information campaign to identify possible changes in the awareness, behavioural patterns and attitudes of students and school staff regarding tobacco and nicotine use that could be the result of the information campaign.

The first round of the survey was conducted from September 20 to October 1, 2021, and the second round lasted from November 19 to 26, 2021.

The survey used self-completion questionnaires. Survey participants were informed about the survey objectives and topic. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were asked to read the definition of «tobacco use» and information on heated tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, and nicotine pads to ensure that all participants had the same and correct understanding of the concepts used in the survey questionnaire. After filling in, the participants returned the questionnaire to the survey organiser.

In total, 418 people took part in the survey during the first round and 391 during the second round. The maximum sampling error (95% confidence level) is 2.7% for the first round of the survey, 2.9% for the second round.

The main survey parameters are given in Table 1.

Table 1. The main survey parameters

	1st round	2nd round
Survey period	September 20 to October 1, 2021	November 19 to 26, 2021
Number of respondents, total	418	391
Including:		
Klovskyi Lyceum, Kyiv	98	98
Secondary School No. 230, Kyiv	97	99
School No. 25, Rivne	179	169
Bystrytsia Lyceum, Rivne Region	44	25
Maximum sampling error (95% confidence interval)	2,7%	2,9%

The characteristics of the participants in both rounds are similar, which indicates the absence of significant changes in the samples of the two stages of the survey.

Both male and female participants took part in the survey approximately equally. The minimum age was 14 years. The majority (95%) of respondents were students, and about 5% were teachers (Table 2).

Table 2. Characteristics of survey participants, 1st and 2nd round

	1st round		2nd round	
	Number	Percentage of respondents	Number	Percentage of respondents
AGE				
14 years	146	35,0	111	28,5
15 years	133	31,9	137	35,1
16 years	105	25,2	93	23,8
17 years	14	3,4	30	7,7
18 and older	19	4,6	19	4,9
Gender				
Male	188	45,3	172	44,3
Female	227	54,7	216	55,7
GRADE				
9th grade	187	44,7	172	44,0
10th grade	107	25,6	101	25,8
11th grade	105	25,1	99	25,3
Work at the school	19	4,5	19	4,9

# The main results

## Use of nicotine and tobacco products

- The survey shows a relatively high prevalence of tobacco and nicotine use among the target audience. Among all respondents:
  - ▶ According to the first and second rounds of the survey, the number of respondents who smoked or used other types of nicotine or tobacco products was 40.2% and 43.1%, respectively.
  - ▶ In the last 30 days, 25.0% of the first-round participants and 19.7% of the second-round participants used nicotine or tobacco products.
  - ▶ At the time of the survey, about one-fifth of 18.8% of the first-round participants smoked or used any nicotine or tobacco products, and about the same number (17.4%) during the second survey.
- The most common types of nicotine and tobacco products among respondents are:
  - ▶ electronic cigarettes, vapes (19.2% of the first-round participants and 13.0% of the second-round participants reported using such products in the last 30 days);
  - ▶ cigarettes (consumed during the last 30 days by 7.5% of the first-round participants and by 6.4% of the second-round participants);
  - ▶ hookah (used during the last 30 days by 7.5% of the first-round participants and by 4.1% by the second-round participants);
  - ▶ heated tobacco product (used during the last 30 days 6.0% of the first-round participants and by 3.8% of the second round of the survey).

## Intentions to give up the use of nicotine and tobacco products

- Among current consumers, the percentage of those who would like to give up the habit outweighs the percentage of those who would not, although a significant proportion of consumers did not have an unequivocal position. After the information campaign, the intentions to stop using nicotine and tobacco products remained almost the same as in the initial survey:
  - ▶ According to the first round, at the time of the survey, 18.8% of the surveyed participants smoked or used any nicotine or tobacco products, of which 7.7% would like to quit, 4.1% would not, and 7.0% respondents did not know for sure.
  - ▶ According to the second round results, 17.4% respondents smoked or used any nicotine or tobacco products, of which 5.9% would like to quit, 3.8% would not, and 7.7% of the surveyed participants did not know for sure.
- About half of current consumers have tried to quit using nicotine or tobacco products in the past 12 months, both in the first and second rounds.

- The second rounds of the survey conducted after the information campaign showed a significant increase in the percentage of those who have ever received help or advice on quitting smoking or nicotine products:

- ▶ The percentage of those who received advice on how to quit smoking increased from 16.3% of all respondents to 26.8% (or from 44.2% of those who have ever used nicotine or tobacco products to 76.7%).
- ▶ The percentage of those who received advice on stopping using nicotine products increased from 14.2% of all respondents to 20.1% (or from 38.8% of those who have ever used nicotine or tobacco products to 58.6%).

### **Exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke and aerosols**

- After the information campaign, the percentage of those who noticed smoking or using nicotine or tobacco products in the school building or yard has decreased slightly over the past 14 days, although it remains quite significant:

- ▶ 35.6% of the first-round participants and 31.2% of the second-round participants saw people using tobacco products (cigarettes, cigarette butts, etc.) inside the school building or in the schoolyard;
- ▶ 35.9% of the first-round participants and 29.4% of the second-round participants saw people smoking electronic cigarettes inside the school building or in the schoolyard;
- ▶ cases of heated tobacco products were observed by 31.6% of the first-round participants and 26.6% of the second-round participants;
- ▶ 7.9% of the first-round participants and 9.7% of the second-round participants saw the people using nicotine pads inside the school building or in the schoolyard.

- Survey results show that the majority of the target audience is aware of the harmful effects of second-hand tobacco smoke and aerosols (vapours), and awareness of this has increased slightly since the information campaign. However, the percentage of those who consider second-hand aerosols caused by heated tobacco products or electronic cigarettes to be harmful remains slightly lower than the percentage of those who are aware of the harmful effects of second-hand tobacco smoke. After the information campaign:

- ▶ The percentage of those who consider second-hand smoke from tobacco products harmful increased from 83.9% to 87.9%;
- ▶ The percentage of those who know about the harmfulness of second-hand tobacco aerosols caused by heated tobacco products increased from 73.3% to 82.0%;
- ▶ The percentage of those who mentioned second-hand tobacco aerosols caused by electronic cigarettes as harmful increased from 64.2% to 79.0%.

- Most people are also aware of the dangers of heated tobacco products and electronic cigarettes for smokers, and the second round of the survey showed a growing awareness of the dangers of the following devices:

- ▶ The percentage of those who consider smoking heated tobacco products harmful to smokers increased from 83.2% to 86.1%;
  - ▶ The percentage of those aware that electronic cigarettes are harmful to smokers increased from 75.4% to 84.4%.
- The survey showed an increase in the percentage of those who learned new information about the risks of nicotine and tobacco use in the last 30 days at school, from 68.4% during the first round and 81.2% during the second round of the survey. The most respondents mentioned seeing posters about the dangers of electronic smoking devices, stickers banning the use of nicotine and tobacco products, posters about the dangers of second-hand smoke.
  - About 7.4% of the first-round participants of the survey, and about the same number (8.1%) in the second round (or about 15.0% of those who observed such cases in the first round, 19.9% in the second) reported that they had been making remarks to people who have smoked nicotine or tobacco at or on school grounds over the past 14 days.
  - The majority of surveyed students and school staff know that smoking or using nicotine or tobacco products is prohibited inside the school building or in the schoolyard, and the percentage of respondents has increased slightly since the information campaign. Nevertheless, the percentage of those who are aware of the ban on smoking tobacco at school remains slightly higher than the proportion of those who consider it forbidden to smoke heated tobacco products, electronic cigarettes or use nicotine pads:
    - ▶ 87.4% of the first-round participants and 92.8% of participants in the second round of the survey are aware of the ban on smoking tobacco products;
    - ▶ 80.1% of the first-round participants and 85.8% of respondents in the second survey believe that smoking heated tobacco products is prohibited inside the building or in the school yard;
    - ▶ 72.6% of the first-round participants and 82.0% of respondents in the second round are aware of the ban on smoking electronic cigarettes;
    - ▶ 74.9% of the first-round participants and 81.0% of participants in the second survey know that nicotine pads are prohibited at school.
  - The majority of surveyed students and school staff (57.5% in the first round and 62.5% in the second round of the survey) support tighter enforcement of the ban on nicotine or tobacco products in or in the school yard.

### **Advertising and promotion of nicotine and tobacco products**

- The survey shows a fairly high prevalence of advertising and promotion of nicotine and tobacco products near schools or in:
  - ▶ 35.8% of the first-round participants of the survey and the same number (35.6%) during the second survey indicated that they had seen certain items related to smoking during the last 14 days (cigarette ends or heatstick ends, ashtrays, matches or lighters) inside the school building or in the schoolyard.

- ▶ 39.1% of the first-round participants and 46.6% second-round participants reported seeing advertising or promotion of nicotine and tobacco products, nicotine or tobacco advertising products near the school during the last 14 days.
- The majority (64.2% during the first round and 73.8% during the second survey) saw signs prohibiting smoking/using nicotine and tobacco products (cigarettes, heated tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, nicotine pads) inside the school building or in the schoolyard during the last 14 days.



## Conclusions

The survey shows that **the information campaign had some positive impact on raising awareness** about the risks of nicotine and tobacco use among the representatives of the target audience. In particular, after the information campaign:

- The proportion of people who learned new information about the risks of tobacco use and ways to quit nicotine and tobacco has increased;
- We have seen an increase in the percentage of those who know about the harmful effects of tobacco and nicotine products, both for the person who uses them and for the environment;
- The percentage of those who know that it is forbidden to use tobacco and nicotine products in the school building or yard has increased;
- Support for strengthening enforcement of the ban on nicotine or tobacco use in or in the schoolyard has also increased.

At the same time, even after the information campaign, representatives of the target audience **tend to consider electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products to be less harmful than conventional cigarettes, and awareness of the harmfulness of such products remains incomplete.**

The survey also has captured some **impact of the information campaign on consumer behaviour.** In particular, according to the respondents, after the information campaign, the prevalence of nicotine and tobacco use in education facilities decreased slightly; in particular, the proportion of those who saw cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, or heated tobacco products inside the school or in the schoolyard decreased. Also, according to the survey, in the second round of the study, the percentage of those who used nicotine or tobacco products during the last month decreased slightly, i.e. the information campaign could lead to non-use among some non-regular consumers.

However, **the information campaign had little effect on the desire to quit using tobacco and nicotine products among current smokers.** The percentage of current consumers has also remained virtually unchanged. The respondent's will to react to smoking or using nicotine or tobacco products inside the school or in the schoolyard remained the same. As the formation of such behaviour may require more time and effort, the effect of a separate short-term information campaign in these aspects may be less noticeable.

Thus, the information campaign can generally be considered quite successful (despite its short-term and minimal interventions), and the materials used were very well perceived by the target audience

It is justified to continue information campaigns about the harmful effects of nicotine and tobacco products on the health of smokers and their environment as a continuous process throughout the school year. Including the adoption of the Nicotine- and Tobacco-Free School Policy, its implementation and evaluation regularly to create a healthy learning environment, protect the health of students and school staff from the harmful effects of tobacco, tobacco smoke, nicotine, and aerosols by preventing smoking among students and reducing

the prevalence of smoking among students and teachers, as well as compliance with Ukrainian legislation. Effective monitoring through surveys is desirable twice a year to assess the impact of measures and record progress.