



Info-Technology Wars on Tobacco

Internet Stymies Big Tobacco Juggernaut

by Stan Shatenstein, Editor, Tobacco News Online, Montreal, Canada, and Michael Pertschuk, Co-Director, Advocacy Institute, Washington, D.C.*

In *The Gathering Storm*, Winston Churchill recorded Joseph Stalin's famously contemptuous retort to suggestions that he reconcile with the pope by encouraging Catholicism in Russia. "The pope!" Stalin exclaimed. "How many divisions has *he* got?" Like a Stalin without the mustache, the tobacco industry commands a vast army, and derides the heavily outgunned tobacco-control movement. Big Tobacco sells a product so profitable and, not coincidentally, so addictive, that it can fan its marketing and public relations troops across the globe, laying siege to retailers and legislators, wreaking havoc among scientists and journalists.

Though tobacco-control advocates and organizations lack the spending power of the nicotine cartel, they wield an ethereal tool that nearly levels the playing field. This not-so-secret weapon is the Internet. Able to leap continents in a single bound,



This billboard campaign to counter the romanticized, macho image of "The Marlboro Man" complements the ongoing Internet-based offensive by anti-tobacco advocates.

it helps yield scientifically grounded answers to every shoddy argument of the tobacco apologists. Industry executives can fly to strategy planning meetings by private jet, but tobacco-control advocates get there first, exchanging ideas and crafting campaigns online.

Through e-mail and the World Wide

Web, the tobacco-control community has made deft use of electronic communications to ferret out the darkest secrets of the smoke merchants. While some researchers root through privileged industry documents, others analyse and share the latest scientific and economic data. Advocates are able to strike fast, as they did recently,

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NGOs Up Ante in Global Tobacco Offensive

by William J. Bryant, Esq., former Chairman, American Heart Association, Birmingham, Alabama

For decades, the power and influence of the tobacco industry were beyond reproach, but thanks to grassroots organizations and their tactics, Big Tobacco is now being held accountable for its actions. Today, tobacco-control initiatives are underway all across America, and more than 900 clean indoor air laws, a landmark Master Settlement Agreement between tobacco companies and 46 states, and efforts to implement the World Health Organization's (WHO) proposed Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (the Framework) are a testament to their success.



Tobacco farmers, public health groups lobby Congress for tobacco growers, FDA authority over tobacco products and a cigarette excise tax.

A U.S. federal lawsuit to recover health costs paid under Medicare and other federally supported health programs due to tobacco related-illness is another step in the

right direction. The tobacco industry is currently attempting to kill this legal advance. Recently, however, the American Heart Association, the Campaign For To-

bacco-Free Kids (CFTFK) and the American Lung Association orchestrated more than 1,500 calls to the White House from volunteers and activists asking President Bush to support the lawsuit. This grassroots campaign included newspaper advertisements and a special Web site, www.DontPardonBigTobacco.org, recently spotlighted as "well worth a visit" by *MSN.com* and *USA Today*. Here, visitors can generate e-mail letters to President Bush and Congress in support of the federal lawsuit. Recently, more than 12,000 such e-mails were delivered to the White House.

Decades-Long War Continues

Fighting the tobacco industry is not new, but winning battles is. As early as 1988,

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CECheck-Up

In the summer of 2001, tobacco-control advocates uncovered a Philip Morris (PM) study claiming the “positive financial impact” of early death from smoking in the Czech Republic. In less than a week, these advocates rallied around the globe and turned PM’s “death benefit” study into a public relations fiasco for the company. At the heart of this rapid response network were the advocates’ latest, swift tobacco-control tools — the Internet and related information technologies.

This issue of the *Global Health and Environment Monitor* features two key strategies in the fight against Big Tobacco: the Internet and grassroots movements — as well as the dedicated people and organizations behind their success.

Internet-based tobacco-control networking veterans Stan Shatenstein and Michael Pertschuk lead off with how these information technology tools are linking tobacco-control advocates and enhancing their capacity exponentially — almost equally efficiently in both the industrialized and developing worlds — despite economic and technical divides.

A prime example of the success of Internet networking is presented by another veteran, Ruben Israel, in the *Insider’s View* as he relates the development of UICC GLOBALink, the largest global Internet network devoted exclusively to tobacco control.

As to grassroots movements, William Bryant of the American Heart Association illustrates how well such movements have risen to the challenge of tobacco control in the United States, garnering member support to confront the industry and to persuade legislators to institute crucial legislation. *The Centerfold* features CECE’s World-Bank/InfoDev-supported project in the Czech Republic, which successfully combines both the Internet and grassroots movements in the service of tobacco control.

CECHE in the News spotlights three of CECE’s new joint projects at home in Washington, D.C. and across the globe in South India, each of which started with a CECE seed grant, designed to catalyze programs of mutual interest.

The issue concludes with CECE Vice Chairman Mark Palmer reminding us of the historic parallels between the tobacco-control and the democracy and human rights movements, and suggesting that strategic non-violent conflict with governments and corporations (which has time and again proven effective in the struggle for democracy and human rights) could be well worth consideration for tobacco control.

*-Sushma Palmer, D.Sc.,
Chairman*

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helping make the Czech Republic “death benefit” study, in which Philip Morris announced the financially “positive effects” of early deaths from smoking, a public relations fiasco for the company.

A Communications Revolution

In recent years, lawsuits, litigation and advances in medical knowledge have all chipped away at the tobacco industry’s power. But now, desktop publishing, e-mail messaging and Internet surfing have coalesced into a communications revolution, well suited to the agile, disparate forces arrayed against the industry.

The Internet has grown exponentially over the past few decades. From a grand total of four host systems in 1969, there are now some 110 million. Only 130 distinct Web sites existed as recently as 1993, but that number has grown to well over 28 million. Virtually all of the world’s nearly 200 independent states are now wired, to differing degrees, but only 31 were online a decade ago.**

The rapid growth in wired communications has meant that organizations have been forced to learn on the job, and to deal with persistent inequities. In 1987, the Advocacy Institute pioneered and launched SCARCNet, the first Internet hub for tobacco-control advocates. SCARCNet linked advocates by providing a daily briefing and analysis of current and critical tobacco-related news, but ultimately failed in its more ambitious goal to provide an online strategic exchange. Some advocates were intimidated by the new technology, while others wore out colleagues with endless harangues about issues and events of decidedly non-global interest.

Far more successful working models have emerged, however, including advocate communities like Smokescreen and UICC GLOBALink (launched by the Advocacy Institute in 1990 for the American Cancer Society and now the responsibility of the UICC — see *Insider’s View*, p.3); news bulletins such as “Tobacco News Online” and “ASH Daily News”; and the tobacco-control Web site *par excellence*, tobacco.org, better known as Tobacco BBS.

Gene Borio, the tobacco.org Webmaster, has built upon Jack Cannon’s original “Tobacco Control E-news” and now sends individually tailored bulletins to more than 1,000 readers, and tobacco.org receives some 1,200-1,500 unique visitors each day. “Tobacco News Online,” though geared to its editor’s domestic Canadian audience, provides an in-depth look at global news and scientific developments, providing background, links and broader context for breaking stories, while dozens of smaller bulletins and list-serves respond to regional and national needs. A host of other sites, from industry document ar-

chives, to medical journal collections, to advocacy Web sites, all contribute to the work of the tobacco-control movement.

As one example, the Framework Convention Alliance recently built an e-mail network to better lobby for an effective, enforceable draft of the World Health Organization’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. At the University of Sydney, *Tobacco Control* editor and professor Simon Chapman also used e-mail contacts to develop a multi-module course, “Tobacco Control in the 21st Century.”

Future Battles

The Internet and e-mail communications help advocates respond to industry disinformation and build broad alliances. However, global tobacco sales figures leave no illusion about the enormity of the task, and the pressing need for major investments of time, energy and funding.

The current challenges are indeed great. The affordability and reliability of equipment and technology, as well as the challenge of information overload and redundancy, remain issues for many advocates in many countries. Advocates are still developing protocols for working together without being together. But, with the right coordination, and much-needed infusions of funding for researchers, archivists, publicists and strategists, the opportunities to slow the Big Tobacco juggernaut are real.

Anti-tobacco advocates may lack the iconic figure of a Marlboro Man or a Joe Camel, but they’ve learned to ride fiber-optic cables as they carry their messages to the world. There is still a long, bumpy road ahead, but the Internet and e-mail are proving to be paths that must be traveled. §

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***Hobbes Internet Timeline (<http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/>)*

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the American Heart Association initiated, and coordinated with coalition partners, to petition the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate tobacco products, culminating in then-FDA Commissioner David Kessler’s proposal to regulate tobacco products in 1995 and implement final regulations in 1996. Unfortunately, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the FDA’s authority to issue these regulations last year.

Nevertheless, today, public health groups strongly oppose any legislation that does not provide the FDA the regulatory authority it needs to protect public health. Legislation favored by the tobacco industry is particularly under fire.

For example, the American Heart Association and many others in the public health community support H.R. 1097, the FDA Tobacco Authorities Amendments Act. Introduced in 2001 by Reps. Greg

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UICC GLOBALink “Links” Tobacco-Control Experts Across the Globe

by Ruben Israel, Director, UICC GLOBALink, Geneva, Switzerland



While the Internet and World Wide Web were still unknown to the vast majority, in the early 1990s the American Cancer Society and the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) in Geneva pioneered using these new “electronic tools” as a tele-communications backbone for the international tobacco-control movement — and UICC GLOBALink was born.

By the end of 1994, this first tobacco-control information service was online, using Gopher, an obsolete version of the WWW. A year later, with a server donated by SUN Microsystems Switzerland, GLOBALink created its first Web pages. Today, the service’s infrastructure consists of half a dozen servers, redundant high-speed Internet connections and a presence on Internet 2, the research and education network.

Membership is Free and Selective

GLOBALink is now a cost-effective means of communication for tobacco-control professionals, and membership has grown from less than 80 in 1994 to nearly 2500 members in 106 countries in mid 2001. Members are international, regional, national and local organizations and individuals devoted to tobacco-control information and action in developing and industrialized countries. Membership is free via <http://join.globalink.org> or through GLOBALink headquarters, but applicants are carefully screened. The network is exclusively dedicated to linking tobacco-control experts to build a secure, high-quality web of like-minded specialists — from global tobacco policy and smoking cessation advocates in Massachusetts, to a lawyer’s group investigating the possibility of legal actions against the tobacco industry in Norway, to an anti-tobacco advocacy foundation like Swarna Hansa in Sri Lanka.

Services, Technology Show Impact

Dedicated to serving both the most advanced Internet users and those with limited Internet capabilities or poor connectivity, GLOBALink was among the first networks to completely integrate e-mail (list-servers) and WWW technologies into a single shell. Today, the service, which won the 1997 World Health Organization Tobacco or Health Award, can automatically forward information and communication messages to GLOBALink members daily. *GLOBALink Today*, for example, is

a daily single message linking to all messages served on GLOBALink during the past 24 hours.

The service hosts a large library of resources. It also allows fast access to top experts in all areas of tobacco and advocacy, and rapid response to member queries through GLOBALink’s Electronic Conferences — a tool also used for international mobilisation, such as a recent letter-writing campaign to the Canadian minister of health to support bigger health warnings on cigarette packages.

In Europe, GLOBALink is the forum for almost all members of the European Smoking Prevention Network, and in countries such as the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Hungary and the Czech Republic, GLOBALink organizes national information networks. In Hungary and the Czech Republic, GLOBALink has led “hands-on” workshops with local tobacco-control professionals to help launch, and successfully promote, these national networks.

Overall satisfaction with GLOBALink is high. In a September 1999 online member survey, 95 percent of respondents rated GLOBALink’s added value to be excellent (70%) or good (25%). Members described GLOBALink as “an excellent resource, like no other and by far the best out there for anti-tobacco activists worldwide” and credited it with providing pertinent data, and facilitating direct communication among key researchers and leaders.



Networking Tools, Services Abound

GLOBALink also has developed strategic tools for its local and national member networks and a wide range of services for its membership, including: general and subject-specific discussions; daily, weekly, and monthly newsletters contributed by various members; newsclipping (in collaboration with Tobacco BBS); Tobacco Control Factsheets (<http://factsheets.globalink.org>); Web publishing; world tobacco death clocks (<http://tobaccoVictims.org>); free Web hosting for each member organization; an optimized search engine for the Tobacco Industry documents; and technical and strategic assistance.

Furthermore, GLOBALink has developed services that combine tobacco-control and Internet resources. These comprise: *LOCALink*, Internet services at local or national levels (<http://www.localink.org>); *TobaccoPedia*, an online tobacco encyclopedia which provides links to tobacco-related Web sites (<http://www.tobaccopedia.org>); and *TobaccoAcademy*, an international distance-learning project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. (Web site is currently under construction.)

Looking Ahead

A decade ago, tobacco-control professionals were scattered across the globe. GLOBALink united these advocates into one of the world’s largest virtual health-promotion communities. Today, the international tobacco-control movement is able to mobilize people, information and resources in less than an hour using GLOBALink and the tools it provides. And the system will continue to evolve to serve members and their changing needs. For instance, video conferencing and the sharing and editing of documents in real time may be features for the future.

Simultaneously, the inequities of Internet access and affordability must be addressed. While GLOBALink employs instant modern technologies and the Internet rapidly expands, the cost of Web access remains inversely proportional to the economic resources of a country. To this end, GLOBALink will continue to seek donations to assist advocates in developing countries and to advance, and enhance, the tobacco-control movement worldwide. §

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MINISTR ZDRAVOTNICTVÍ VARIJUE: KOUŘENÍ ZPŮSOBUJE RAKOVINĚ

Despite a health warning, this Czech billboard for Petra, the most popular domestic cigarette brand, produced by Philip Morris, cajoles, "One for all, all for the gang."

TOB-CCP "Nets" Tobacco Control in Czech Republic

by Hana Sovinova, M.D., National Institute of Public Health, Prague

Maintaining pace with global trends, Internet use in the Czech Republic has grown phenomenally, with some government institutions, major businesses, centers of learning, prominent nongovernmental organizations and individuals fast becoming Internet proficient and dependent. The recently established European Internet Network, with an estimated monthly global audience of 300,000 and more than 5 million hits per month, has chosen Prague as its base, and its rapid rise in the last 18 months is indicative of the growing presence and impact of the Internet business in the Czech Republic.

Internet-Based Program Launched

With particular emphasis on the Internet, in June 1999, the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Communications, Health and the Environment (CECHE), and the National Institute of Public Health (NIPH) and Institute of Clinical and Experimental Medicine in Prague set out to increase tobacco control in the Czech Republic through a landmark project — the World Bank/InfoDev-funded Internet-Based Tobacco Control Program. This 18-month program aimed to build the indigenous capacity of Czech health professionals and lay volunteers in the use of contemporary information technology to heighten public awareness and catalyze policy change necessary for the creation of a tobacco-free environment in the Czech Republic.

The program focused on Internet and computer communications technology with an emphasis on regional, national and international linkage and outreach, and transferability to other Central and Eastern European countries. Its main activities included model targeted information technology and skills transfer workshops, a Tobacco-Control Conference and continued dissemination of tobacco-control information via print and electronic media through health-related news stories and special health-promotion events to increasingly engage more Czech groups in tobacco control. A Web site (<http://www.szu.cz/drogy>) was also posted with an electronic *Tobacco and Health* bulletin, resource directory, a Czech language list-serve and other resources for professionals and consumers.

This Internet program eventually led to the establishment of a Tobacco-Control Training & Communications Program (TOB-CCP) with two key components to carry forward the project: a 40-member Internet-Based Tobacco Control Network (the Network), and the Czech Heart Association (CHA), a grassroots organization with the dual targets of cardiovascular disease and tobacco control.

Tobacco-Control Network Established

The Internet-Based Tobacco Control Network is a coalition of public health

Ministry of Health Tobacco

There's no question that tobacco use and deadly chronic diseases go hand in hand. The latest epidemiological survey of cardiovascular risk factors in the Czech Republic, showing a decline in smoking frequency among men since 1985, this prevalence remains unchanged. Political changes in the region in the 1990s started the ball rolling with Cerebrovascular Disease in the Czech Population, put much-needed spotlight on the Environment, this program helped to further reduce the risks and reduce the risks. This trend has opened the door to more specific and aggressive tobacco control.

practitioners from Czech district hygiene stations and health-related nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations devoted to using the Web for research and communications on tobacco-control issues. Representatives from these groups attended Internet training workshops in October 1999, December 1999 and March 2000 at NIPH in collaboration with CECH's Geneva-based partner UICC GLOBALink. Gradually, a network evolved with one to three individuals from each organization. The Network has grown from an original group of 11 in fall 1999 to more than 40 members in December 2000.

Internet training enabled Network members to increase their communications and collaboration, join GLOBALink, enhance contact with local and regional press for health stories, and participate in drafting new legislative bills for parliamentary consideration. A focal point of Network action was participation in the World Health Organization's bi-annual "Quit & Win" campaign, a worldwide program to reward smokers who kicked the habit.

Network Assessment Yields Results

In October 2000, about 25 of the 40 Network members participated in an assessment to quantify their Internet communications activities, including Web page visits, research, tobacco-control campaigns, e-mail for professional activities, workshop participation and technological connectivity. Results revealed that a large majority had written health news stories, a sizeable group regularly used health Web sites, and a budding group contributed to tobacco-control legislation using the Internet. Increase in knowledge and skills, as well as contacts with each other and with other health professionals through GLOBALink, for example, rated highest among the gains members said they had acquired from the formation of the Network and participation in the TOB-CCP.

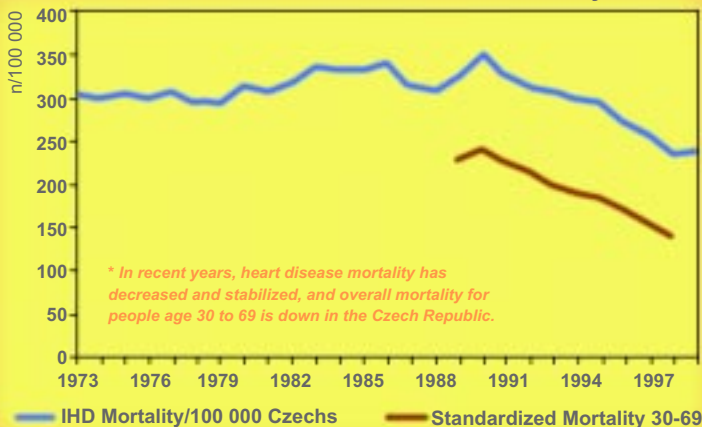
While a significant majority of respondents demonstrated technological connectivity through daily computer access, only two-thirds reported having daily Internet access, underlining the high cost and limitations of Internet use in the Czech Republic. That a sizeable majority participated in writing health news stories and contacting journalists, however, demonstrates the success of their media outreach training. And while the Network profile strongly indicates a reticence in legislative advocacy, overall, Network members have become technologically proficient.

Having served as the foundation for development of the CHA, the Network will continue as a loosely knit partnership, with regular communications via electronic means, and e-conferences via Czech GLOBALink and its electronic bulletin and list-serve. Plans are also underway to organize two annual one-day seminars focused on innovations and the world's best tobacco-control practices. In addition, the Network is actively participating in the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and is supporting a bill "on protection against the harmful effects of tobacco products, alcohol and other addictive drugs." In essence, this network of experts, established and functional thanks to the TOB-CCP project, has become one central tool for the implementation of effective measures to reduce the tobacco epidemic and improve tobacco control in the Czech Republic. §

Health and NGOs Network to Combat Tobacco and CVD in Czech Republic

...and in hand. And, unfortunately, the Czech Republic has been plagued by both for decades. The Czech population shows that 37 percent of men and 21 percent of women smoke; and while there is a small but significant decrease in smoking in women. Meanwhile, lung cancer mortality in Czech men is among the highest in the world, and cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality has consistently increased. In fact, in the last decade, the country has made significant strides towards tobacco and CVD control. (See chart below.) The country is on the ball. Financed through the U.S. Agency for International Development and involving the Center for Communications, Health and Tobacco in the Czech Republic by, among other measures, sparking healthy lifestyle changes in the population. In the last decade, leading to a greater than 30 percent decrease in ischaemic heart disease in all ages, in part from reduced non-HDL cholesterol levels. — R. P.

Ischemic Heart Disease vs. Standard Mortality Trends



Czech Heart Association Sets Anti-Tobacco Agenda

by Rudolph Poledne, Ph.D., Atherosclerosis Research Laboratory, Institute of Clinical and Experimental Medicine, Prague, and Jan Bruthans, M.D., Executive Director, Czech Heart Association, Prague

The adverse trends in cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality were known to the Czech medical community well before the 1980s; but it took more than a decade, and the World Health Organization's MONICA Project, before serious attention was given to curtailing these negative trends.

The tide turned in 1998 when three representatives of the Czech Cardiology Society and the Czech Atherosclerosis Society visited the American Heart Association's (AHA) headquarters in Dallas to learn more about the structure, financing and activities of the AHA. This visit planted the seed for a grassroots Czech entity that would commit long term to combatting CVD, reducing tobacco use and reforming tobacco policies in the Czech Republic.

The Czech Heart Association (CHA) began to take form in 1999 as part of the World Bank/InfoDev-funded Internet-Based Czech Tobacco-Control Training and Communications Program (TOB-CCP). The project's International Tobacco-Control Conference held in October 2000 stressed the role of civic associations in tobacco control and officially launched the CHA. Modeled after the AHA, the CHA is committed to using public outreach, legislative advocacy and media relations as primary tools for tobacco control and CVD prevention in the Czech Republic.

The CHA's legal groundwork was laid early in 2000. Office space was leased, and an experienced executive director hired for the association, which is currently housed at the Institute of Clinical and Experimental Medicine (IKEM) in Prague. IKEM held three meetings to consult with core

specialists. The planning committee of the Czech Society of Cardiology met in January 2000 and voted to propose the establishment of the CHA at its May meeting in Brno.

A board of directors for CHA was established in 2001, comprising 15 professionals representing cardiology, cardiovascular surgery, cardiovascular research and nursing, among others. Simultaneously, the association sponsored *The Day of the Healthy Heart* campaign, in cooperation with six radio stations in Prague. More than 20 broadcasts were transmitted throughout the Czech Republic. Numerous public queries ensued on cardiovascular health, risk factors and treatment, and these were fielded directly or by phone and mail. A CHA "roundtable" with six research-based pharmaceutical companies was organized and held its first meeting in early 2001.

Recently, the CHA has been developing informational materials and conducting programs designed to establish its leadership in tobacco control and CVD prevention. Two legislative advocacy and tobacco-control project dissemination workshops in cooperation with TOB-CCP's Internet-Based Tobacco Control Network — one in February 2001 on the acceleration of tobacco-control legislation changes and a regional symposium in May 2001 on dissemination of the TOB-CCP model to other Central and Eastern Europe countries — exemplify the CHA's leadership efforts. The association also enhanced and converted the initial TOB-CCP Web site to a CHA one (<http://www.casrdce.cz>) that became operational in early 2001.

The CHA is currently developing and distributing smoking cessation software based on software obtained at the 11th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Chicago in 2000. This new software is designed for cardiologists to use in smoking cessation counseling with post-myocardial infarction patients.

The CHA is also producing 100,000 information leaflets describing angina and myocardial infarction symptoms for Czech men aged 40 to 70. The heart-shaped leaflets, prepared with the help of leading Czech radiologists, describe the risk of acute myocardial infarction and will be distributed by district groups and general practitioners throughout the country. A nationwide fundraising campaign is underway to help print these leaflets and provide ongoing support for the CHA. (Currently, limited support for the CHA comes from the set-up, equipment, personnel, resources and partnerships generated by the Internet-Based Tobacco Control Program, and from local corporations and the Czech Ministry of Health for specific events.)

Going forward, the CHA is poised to assume the activities and responsibilities of its parent, TOB-CCP, and to work in collaboration with TOB-CCP's Internet-Based Tobacco Control Network. The association's future efforts focus on school outreach, Internet training, media relations and advocacy. Collaboration with Czech State TV on educational efforts is also in the works. Special emphasis will be placed on strengthening the CHA's local and international partnerships to facilitate direct assistance and support to promote CVD prevention, smoking cessation, tobacco control and volunteerism among the Czech public. Such relationships will advance ongoing and future tobacco-control activities and contribute to organizational capacity-building. And while the CHA has already demonstrated long-term sustainability potential through high-visibility programs and clever leveraging of resources, its long-term survival means sophisticated fund-raising protocols and extensive outreach programs to ensure its efficacy and enhance its impact. §

CECHE Unveils Nutrition Scholarship Program

This spring, the Center for Communications, Health and the Environment (CECHE) established an annual nutrition scholarship program at the University of the District of Columbia's (UDC) Nutrition and Food Science Program in the university's Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. The scholarship program was created to enhance UDC's American Dietetic Association-accredited program, and at the request of the university, a public land-grant institution which has consistently and successfully recruited freshmen, but has been unable to retain these recruits through to degree completion primarily due to financial constraints.

CECHE scholarship funds help recruit and retain two deserving, academically strong students every year. It is also hoped that the program will strengthen the productive partnership with community organizations, and will facilitate scholarship funding and increase student enrollment.

The student recruitment efforts are directed towards attracting new students to the Nutrition and Food Science Program from within or outside the UDC system, whereas the student retention scholarship facilitates degree completion for students already enrolled in the program.



UDC Nutrition and Food Science Program Director Dr. Prema Ganganna poses with premier CECHE Nutrition and Food Science Scholarship winners Erica Hudson (above) and Kimelia Alexis Austin (right).

Director of the Nutrition and Food Science Program, Dr. Prema Ganganna, and Dr. Rachel Petty, dean of UDC's College of Arts and Sciences, collaborate with the District of Columbia Public School System to recruit eligible new students for the program. To be eligible, a new recruit must

be: a resident of the District of Columbia; have a minimum 2.5 grade point average; be motivated to pursue a career in the field of nutrition or food science; and have an established need for financial assistance. The incoming freshman must also submit a short essay on his/her "future plans of action as a nutritionist in the community."

The criteria for the retention scholarship include: continuation in UDC's Nutrition and Food Science Program; achievement of the highest grade point average in the program and/or a position on the dean's list during the previous academic year; and



Symposium Looks at Children from Global Perspective

The Georgetown University's Child Development Center (GTUCDC) in partnership with and supported by CECHÉ hosted a symposium, "Caring for Children: A Global Perspective," at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City on May 17, 2001.

The underlying principle of the symposium was the belief that children have basic needs for protection, health, education and the guarantee of human rights. With the new millennium as the target to reach education and health care for all (as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), the symposium was designed as a forum for scholars, public policy specialists and concerned citizens to think through the diversity of childhood and the consequences of policy for the future of the world's children.

CECHE Vice Chairman, Ambassador Mark Palmer, was the keynote speaker. He stressed global democracy as a fundamental need and globalization as an immense good for children, emphasizing that both provide potential for unprecedented achievement over the next 25, 50 and 100 years.

Following the keynote, panels addressed: childhood from a cultural perspective; health and educational challenges for the 21st century; and community successes in caring for children. Health challenges panel member CECHÉ Chairman Dr. Sushma Palmer discussed *Global Health in Transition*, remarking that a new paradigm in global health presents the opportunity to ensure that children not only survive, but also realize their full potential for good health. She proposed a Global Health Agenda for this decade that emphasized: *greatly reducing the burden of excess mortality and morbidity suffered by the poor; developing more effective health systems to cope with present and future challenges; investing in expanding the global research and knowledge base that made the 20th century health revolution possible; and providing global leadership and advocacy, especially for global or regional health problems such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.*

A monograph representing the symposium will be widely circulated. Furthermore, the results of the symposium are being incorporated into GTUCDC's Communities Can, an ongoing, international project initiated with assistance from and supported by CECHÉ, that helps communities to develop systems of care that recognize the central role of the family.

an established need for financial assistance. An advisory committee of faculty members from the Nutrition and Food Science Program screens candidates and awards the two scholarships.

The first CECHÉ Nutrition and Food Science Scholarships were awarded to Erica Hudson and Kimelia Alexis Austin in March 2001. The scholarship recipient in the student recruitment category, Hudson is a UDC sophomore majoring in Nutrition and Food Science with a GPA of 3.0. She served five years on active duty with the U.S. Navy and is currently a Navy reservist. She aspires to become a dietitian and volunteer for the Peace Corps. She is expected to graduate in May 2003.

Student retention scholarship recipient Austin is a UDC junior also majoring in Nutrition and Food Science. She worked as a dietary technician at Greater Southeast Hospital in Washington, and is presently employed at the U.S. Soldiers' Home, also in the District, as a dietary technician. Upon completion of her baccalaureate degree, anticipated in 2003, Austin plans to pursue a dietetic internship program in an accredited institution and become a registered dietitian. §

CECHE Sponsors Communications Strategies, PSA Testing in South India

Among the first countries in the world to have a government-sponsored family planning campaign, India continues to suffer from a serious problem of too many people and too few resources. Only 36 percent of married women aged 13 to 49 currently use modern contraception, and women with no education have 1.8 more children than women with a high-school education. India's maternal mortality ratio also remains high, which researchers attribute to a lack of access to health care.

To examine the impact of health beliefs on family planning in India, during June

and July 2000, CECHE sponsored the fieldwork of graduate student Kalyani Subbiah, working under Prof. Fiona Chew of the SI Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University in New York. With the objective to develop optimal communications strategies for family planning, Subbiah interviewed 74 economically and educationally disadvantaged married women of reproductive or childbearing age in Chennai, South India. The interviews addressed family-planning practices, nutrition and socio-cultural factors specific to India, such as gender issues, and female feticide and infanticide.



Subbiah canvasses PSA test-study participants.

Initial data show that, in India, family planning is not a health, economic or education issue alone. It is a social issue, with the diversity in culture, religion and society individually impacting choices.

Simultaneously, Subbiah helped CECHE test the impact of four maternal and child health public service announcements (PSAs) it produced in 1998 during its media-training program in India. Disadvantaged, childbearing women were recruited using a snowball sample and randomly assigned to a treatment or experimental group (where they viewed the four videos) or to a control group (where no videos were shown). PSAs were tested on 22 women in the experimental group, and the responses compared with 19 women in the control group. The research objective is to assess whether exposure to a specific PSA would predispose the viewer to adopt the behavior promoted. The data are currently being analyzed, and results will soon follow. Stay tuned. §

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Ganske, R-Iowa, John Dingell, D-Mich., and Henry Waxman, D-Calif., the bill treats nicotine in tobacco as a drug; grants the FDA authority to require that consumers be informed of the specific components in tobacco products; allows the agency to regulate any harmful ingredients in tobacco products; and restricts marketing that appeals to children. The tobacco industry is attempting to block this legislation in Congress and has resorted to the introduction of "Trojan horse" alternatives (i.e., bills aimed at hiding their true intent to provide little, if any, real regulatory powers to the FDA).

Grassroots lobbying efforts on FDA oversight and other initiatives continue, however. In fact, nearly a decade ago, the American Heart Association initiated a historic dialogue with tobacco growers that resulted in the formation and subsequent report of the presidential tobacco commission, which was charged with addressing economic and public health concerns. On July 25, 2001, nearly 300 tobacco farmers and representatives of public health organizations picked up this battle standard and lobbied Congress on key provisions contained in a presidential tobacco commission report that recommended FDA authority over tobacco products, initiatives to help tobacco farmers break their economic ties to the industry, and a proposed increase in federal cigarette excise taxes to pay for these and other initiatives.

While the heat may be on stateside, abroad the tobacco industry continues its assault on public health. With U.S. tobacco manufacturers now focused on securing large international markets for products, grassroots organizations often fight an uphill battle. That fact underscores the importance of WHO's Framework.

The initial, and historic, Framework

hearings took place in October 2000 in Geneva. More than 500 organizations submitted comments in support or opposition to this important international treaty process, with many submissions made electronically over the Internet (including my comments on behalf of the American Heart Association). Representatives of 144 organizations and institutions also testified before the hearing panel (including the World Heart Federation). During this process, the Framework Convention Alliance, a group of nongovernmental organizations from around the world, was formed to improve communications between growers and public health groups engaged in the Framework process. The Internet has greatly facilitated communications among alliance members, allowing strategies to be built and actions to be taken in a timely manner.

Leveling the Battlefield

In fact, the Internet is a powerful and increasingly popular tool in many grassroots tobacco-control efforts, offering nongovernmental organizations the opportunity to distribute information and quickly mobilize vast numbers of individuals across major geographical areas with relative ease. The Internet will continue to prove its value in this war against a foe with boundless resources and immense influence, as the Center for Communications, Health and the Environment (CECHE) has proven with its successful Internet-Based Tobacco Control Program in the Czech Republic. At the same time, CECHE, the American Heart Association and many other grassroots organizations in the United States and abroad will fight the war for public health in the tobacco-control movement on all fronts, representing the first line of defense in an ongoing, but increasingly victorious, struggle. §

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Struggles for Global Tobacco Control and Democracy and Human Rights Make Powerful Allies

by Ambassador Mark Palmer, Vice Chairman, Center for Communications, Health and the Environment (CECHE), Washington, D.C.

There is a natural symbiosis between those struggling for tobacco control and those fighting for democracy and human rights across the globe. There is an attitudinal bond — the desire for people not to be enslaved by addiction or by dictatorships and not to give in to large corporations or too powerful governments. And there are common strategies and tactics — the need to organize, campaign and challenge unjust and unwise laws. But most of all, experience tells us that the success of one can help the other.

Non-Violent Conflict Brings Results

In 1988 in then-communist Hungary, the first public demonstration was on the health and environmental impact of the Nagymaros dam proposed for increasing hydroelectric power from the Danube. The fact that the environmentalists succeeded in creating a nongovernmental, independent organization and holding a public demonstration had enormous psychological and subsequent political consequences for the country. In less than two years, this democratic seed grew into a network of civil society organizations and a successful struggle to achieve a full range of human rights. In March 1989, an immense national demonstration took place to raise all Hungarians' concerns. Within weeks, the barbed wire along the Austro-Hungarian border came down. Gradually, the stymied tobacco-control movement in Hungary spurred into action, and in 1999 the Hungarian Parliament passed strong anti-tobacco legislation.

Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, government protection of tobacco since World War II assured its affordability for the masses and top revenues for government coffers. In less than half a century, cigarette smoking and tobacco-related diseases and deaths among middle-aged men in this region became among the world's highest. With the advent of democracy in the 1990s, however, the medical community, politicians and media in the region mobilized to institute tobacco control and fight for the survival of their countries' populations. In Poland, the Society for Tobacco Control, a nongovernmental organization founded in the early 1990s, gathered 50 member signatures and started down the road to comprehensive tobacco legislation. The organization's efforts culminated in the Polish Parliament's passing of The Tobacco Con-

trol and Health Protection Act on November 9, 1995.

In China, tobacco-control advocates face an especially uphill battle. The largest source of government revenues — some \$12 billion in 2000 — comes from the government-owned national tobacco company. A long-time proponent of "lighting up," the communist government has instituted half-hearted measures to discourage new smokers or encourage its estimated 300 million smokers to quit. And it hasn't permitted the kind of challenge to its health and fiscal policies that is essential for real progress in tobacco control and other health policy matters. For example, the non-violent struggle of Falun Gong, the health, exercise and spiritual movement based on traditional Chinese health practices, faces daily, severe persecution by the Communist Party, but it has attracted huge numbers of adherents and drawn world attention and support. Possibly inspired by this movement's democratic spirit, a group of Chinese lawyers has announced plans to sue Chinese and Western tobacco firms. And the struggles of Chinese democracy activists carry larger significance, as the battle, and achievement, of human rights in China will enable an even more vigorous fight for tobacco control.

Tobacco Control is a Global Issue

Whereas democratic societies such as the United States, Europe, Japan, and the newly democratic countries face the challenge of how to balance the "rights" to market harmful tobacco products with health priorities, dictatorships, because of enormous revenues from tobacco, are allowing Philip Morris to become their number-one advertiser. The challenge of tobacco revenue vs. human lives is epitomized in Philip Morris' recent study in the Czech Republic announcing the financially "positive effects" for the Czech economy of early deaths from smoking. (See ad.)

Indeed, tobacco-control advocates living in democratic societies have often successfully resisted unjust laws and practices, perhaps most effectively through individual and grassroots activity. But these Western tobacco-control movements devote almost all of their effort to their own domestic challenge.

The lesson from the human rights struggle is that no nation is an island. Dictatorships are a threat to democracies, and dictatorships are collaborating with



This ad, with a \$1,227 price tag on a corpse, derides Philip Morris' recent claims that early deaths from smoking confer "financial benefits."

the tobacco industry in smuggling, for example, which will wash back over the United States and other Western countries until stopped.

In 1998, as part of the broad tobacco-control bill spearheaded by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., the Center for Communications, Health and the Environment led a major effort to establish an American Center on Global Health and Tobacco (ACT). ACT was explicitly modeled upon the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, which was established in 1983 by a bipartisan effort in Congress to sponsor programs across the globe to promote democracy with congressional funds.

Predictably, Philip Morris, RJR, et al, saw the establishment of ACT as the most threatening part of Sen. McCain's legislation and secured its omission. But it is never too late. A much more limited "Master Settlement Agreement" between 46 U.S. states and the tobacco industry in 1998 created the American Legacy Foundation, which has demonstrated the power of well-run anti-tobacco media campaigns within the United States. It is time to spread these lessons across the globe. As a start, we should consider two steps:

1. Eliminate the U.S. subsidy of approximately \$60 million for tobacco exports and spend this amount per annum on international tobacco education through an entity such as ACT.
2. Open a dialogue with, and apply the more active and creative non-violent strategy and tactics of, the human rights movement to tobacco control — starting at the upcoming XII World Conference on Tobacco or Health.

The tobacco-control movement has demonstrated considerable flair, but it could go further and gain more by employing the principles of strategic non-violent conflict with governments and corporations. §