

THE UNION SOUTH EAST ASIA REGION IN 2015: BRINGING THE UNION CLOSER TO YOU

FROM EVIDENCE TO PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Since our founding as a global scientific organisation in 1920, The Union has drawn from the best evidence and expertise to advance solutions to public health challenges affecting people living in poverty.
KNOW. SHARE. ACT.

KNOW

- Union research in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* suggested that Bangladesh's distinctive approach to tobacco control policy enforcement may offer a sustainable and flexible model for other countries (2015, 12(1), 474-487).

SHARE

- The Union piloted the inclusion of qualitative research methods into the successful Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORT IT) model.
- The Union supported tobacco control in Pakistan this year by backing advocates who took the government to court for reneging on 85% graphic health warnings on cigarette packs.
- The Union Office in Myanmar provided *Expert Patient Counsellor Training* to 40 people living with HIV (PLHIV) Network members.
- The Union supported extensive tobacco control efforts in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
- The Union's Programme to Increase the Catchment of Tuberculosis Suspects (PICTS) covers three projects in 15 townships and has diagnosed and treated over 900 TB cases so far in Myanmar.
- The Union, in partnership with Apollo Hospitals in India, launched test software that reminds TB patients to take their medication via text and voice message and notifies health authorities of new TB cases.

ACT

- Project Axshya, an innovative and enormous project designed to improve access to TB diagnosis and treatment in India, has been approved by The Global Fund to continue through 2017, based on the consistently high performance rating of the project since its initiation in 2010.
- The Integrated HIV Care (IHC) Programme provided antiretroviral treatment to over 23,000 HIV positive patients through its 34 service delivery points in 24 townships in Myanmar.
- The Union South-East Asia, in collaboration with the World Diabetes Foundation and Jagran Peהל Initiative, launched a successful multimedia campaign raising awareness about TB-diabetes linkages among 300,000 people and 4,000 medical and paramedical staff across 10 districts in three states of India.
- More than 250 mothers and their children benefited from the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) programme, which helps HIV positive mothers give birth to HIV negative children through The Union Office in Myanmar.



TB-FREE INDIA CAMPAIGN CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST TB

The Call to Action for a TB-Free India is a nationwide campaign aiming to unite all stakeholders against TB. It was launched by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, India, Shri J. P. Nadda in April 2015.

The campaign has raised support from three important groups so far – civil society organisations, corporate leaders and private health sector representatives.

Representatives from 46 CSOs working on TB met in New Delhi to discuss their vital role in achieving a TB-Free India. Meanwhile, corporate leaders pledged support to ending TB at an event in Mumbai, launched by Mr Richard Verna, US Ambassador to India. Also joining the cause as TB champions were Mr Amitabh Bachchan, Bollywood actor and TB survivor, Mr Ratan Tata, Chairman, Sir Ratan Tata Trusts, and Dr Jagdish Prasad, DGHS, Government of India, along with corporate leaders and key stakeholders. The third event uniting forces against TB brought together the Indian Medical Association with 30 national medical associations.

The campaign will culminate in a Call to Action Summit in 2016.

The campaign is part of the Global Challenge TB project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented in India by The Union South-East Asia Office under the stewardship of the Government of India.

TOBACCO CONTROL IN INDIA NOW COVERS 350 DISTRICTS IN 25 STATES

The Union continued to provide technical support to tobacco-control programmes in India in 2015 and has expanded support to 350 districts in 25 states by means of smokefree laws, tobacco advertisement, promotions and sponsorships bans, and graphic warnings on tobacco packaging, under the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use.

Smokefree laws were implemented in 14 cities, thus protecting about 20 million people from the harms of second-hand smoke. The Union has supported smokefree laws in over 100 jurisdictions in India since 2009.

Additionally, eight states have banned the sale of loose cigarettes and tobacco products for not carrying the mandatory pack warnings.

