



# Research to Reduce Tobacco-Related Inequalities: Worldwide Implications For and Exemplars of Tobacco Control

Pre-Conference Workshop • 14th World Conference on Tobacco or Health

Mumbai, India • March 8, 2009 • 8:30am – 4:00pm

## Summary of Pre-Conference Workshop

On March 8, 2010, TReND had the honor of hosting the pre-conference workshop, titled *Research to Reduce Tobacco-Related Inequalities: Worldwide Implications for and Exemplars of Tobacco Control*, at one of the world's largest public health events, the [14<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Tobacco or Health](#) (WCTOH). The 14<sup>th</sup> WCTOH took place in Mumbai, India. This was the first time in 12 years that the triennial conference took place in a developing nation, and the first time ever to take place in a country that ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). Most recent conferences were held in the U.S. and Finland.<sup>1</sup>

The theme for the 14<sup>th</sup> WCTOH was “*Tobacco Control: The Way Forward; Multisectoral Approach to Tobacco Control Policies, Pathways, Partners and People*,” and the TReND pre-conference workshop played a critical role in the conference agenda by highlighting the growing epidemic of global tobacco-related inequalities. According to the World Health Organization, tobacco use is the single most important risk factor for untimely death. WHO estimates that 5.4 million people worldwide die annually from tobacco-related disease and by 2030, deaths are expected to be over 8 million per year. Most critically, research indicates that tobacco use and its associated disease-burden is not equally distributed within and across societies. Social factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and caste are all important determinants of tobacco-related inequalities.

In light of this growing epidemic and its disproportionate burden across populations, the purpose of the TReND preconference workshop was *to examine tobacco-related inequalities that are created and maintained globally by factors of social stratification such as gender, socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, and caste*. More specifically, the workshop provided a unique opportunity for sharing knowledge and discussing innovative paths forward to reduce tobacco-related inequalities through measurement, communication, intervention, and policy research efforts. Additional information regarding the specific goals of the workshop can be found [here](#).

The planning committee for the workshop was led by TReND's Deborah McLellan with support from Xingzhu Liu from the Fogarty International Center. With [65 speakers and participants](#) from 22 different countries, the workshop revealed the high level of interest in tobacco-related inequalities from the global tobacco control community. The [workshop agenda](#) featured many internationally recognized researchers who shared their own experiences in conducting research on tobacco-related health inequalities across the globe. TReND also hosted six scholars representing different regions of the world who contributed their own unique perspectives and experiences. Finally, and perhaps most important, the workshop allowed time for lively participant discussion regarding the need to establish a “*global tobacco control network focusing on ways to keep inequalities issues central to tobacco control research and policies*.”

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<sup>1</sup> Finland has since signed (in 2003) and ratified (in 2005) the FCTC; the U.S. has signed (2004) but not yet ratified the treaty.



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Participants felt strongly that a *global network on tobacco-related inequalities* was an essential step toward facilitating and expanding dissemination of research which would help support country efforts in adopting an inequities lens toward tobacco control intervention and policy efforts (e.g., in support of FCTC implementation), and it would allow for the opportunity to develop global mentorships and professional networks. Participants also felt strongly about the need to “*push for new ways of doing research*” including new topic areas and methodologies.

Key outcomes resulting from the workshop included:

- Broader dissemination of TReND’s web portal, [www.tobaccodisparities.org](http://www.tobaccodisparities.org), which offers the most comprehensive and up-to-date information about research, programs, policies, and resources relevant to tobacco and health disparities.
- Broader dissemination of [TReND’s Toolkit](#) on tobacco-related inequalities. The toolkit, which was provided to workshop attendees on a take-home CD, contains a number of resources to provide assistance for starting, or continuing, work on tobacco-related health inequalities.
- Development of a TReND special journal issue highlighting the growing epidemic of global tobacco related inequalities. (Not yet available.)
- Heightened awareness of the need to establish a Global Network on Tobacco-Related Inequalities.