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Republika ng Pilipinas  
**Kagawaran ng Edukasyon**  
Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim

**OUA MEMO 00-0720-0115**  
**MEMORANDUM**  
31 July 2020

To: **Undersecretaries**  
**Assistant Secretaries**  
**Regional Directors and BARMM Education Minister**  
**Bureau and Service Directors**  
**Schools Division Superintendents**  
**Designated Tobacco Control Coordinators**  
**Designated Brief Tobacco Intervention Providers**  
**Youth Formation Coordinators**  
**School Heads**

Subject: **CONTEST AND WEBSHOP ON LETTER WRITING**  
**FOR TOBACCO CONTROL**

The Bureau of Learner Support Services-School Health Division (BLSS-SHD) is organizing a series of content creation contests for DepEd personnel and learners to strengthen the key messages and sustain the gains of DepEd's online campaign dubbed **BIBO: Batang Informed tungkol sa Bisyo, Batang Iwas Bisyo**, launched by the BLSS-SHD and the Public Affairs Service (PAS) as part of the celebration of the National No Smoking Month in June.

The contests, the campaign, and the overall celebration, per DepEd Memorandum No. 55, s. 2020 titled **Dissemination and Adoption of the Theme of the World No Tobacco Day 2020 for the National No Smoking Month**, are anchored in the theme of the World No Tobacco Day 2020, "Protecting youth from industry manipulation and preventing them from tobacco and nicotine use."

While the National No Smoking Month is set in June, DepEd's efforts to help create a tobacco-free generation continue all year long. These efforts include the contests that are supported by webinar-workshops (webshops) scheduled in the succeeding months.

Second in the series of contests is **Letter Writing for Tobacco Control** which is open to all enrolled learners and will run until 31 August 2020. Attached are the contest mechanics for reference.



**Office of the Undersecretary for Administration (OUA)**

[Administrative Service (AS), Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS), Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Service (DRRMS), Bureau of Learner Support Services (BLSS), Baguio Teachers Camp (BTC), Central Security & Safety Office (CSSO)]

Department of Education, Central Office, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City  
Rm 519, Mabini Bldg; Mobile: +639260320762; Tel: (+632) 86337203, (+632) 86376207  
Email: usec.admin@deped.gov.ph; Facebook/Twitter @depedayo



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As support for those who intend to join the letter writing contest, a webshop is scheduled on **14 August 2020 at 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM.** where there will be a brief overview of the legislative process and access points for advocacy, a discussion on the current legislative efforts on tobacco control and e-cigarettes, and a skills enhancement session on letter writing.

All interested learner-participants may register at <https://bit.ly/bibowebinar2reg> until 10 August 2020 for the chance to be given exclusive access to the webshop platform where they can interact with the resource persons. Those who will not be accommodated can still join the webshop through Facebook Live of DepEd Philippines and DepEd Tayo, the recording of which will be available after the webshop.

Bureau and service directors and division heads concerned (e.g., Public Affairs Service (PAS), Information and Communications Technology Service (ICTS), Youth Formation Division (EFD), etc.) are requested to provide necessary assistance for the conduct of the contests and the webshops (e.g., technical support, information dissemination, mobilization of participants).

The Youth Formation Coordinators, as well as designated Tobacco Control Coordinators per [DepEd Memorandum No. 147, s. 2018](#); and the designated brief tobacco intervention (BTI) providers per [DepEd Memorandum No. 110, s. 2019](#), are enjoined to actively participate in and promote the activities, especially to DepEd's learners.

For information and dissemination.

  
**ALAIN DEL B. PASCUA**  
Undersecretary



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## Attachment 1

### MECHANICS FOR LETTER WRITING

#### 1. Content

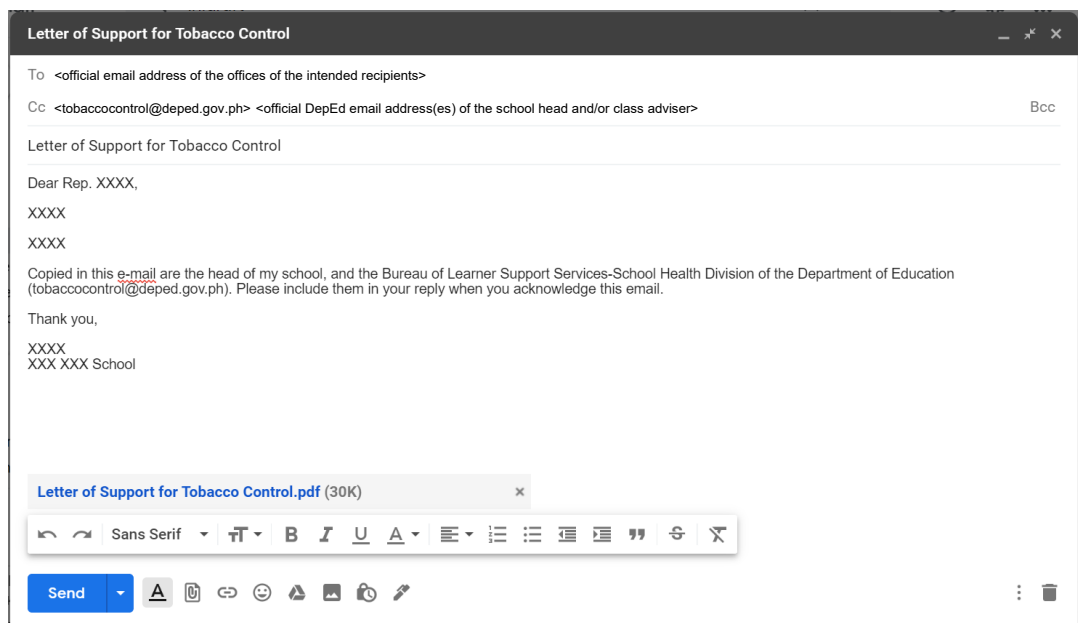
- 1.1 The letter must amplify the theme of the World No Tobacco Day 2020 - **protecting youth from industry manipulation and preventing them from tobacco and nicotine use**—and reinforce its call to action, policy options, key messages, and Frequently Asked Questions. (Attachment 2)
- 1.2 The letter must express support to and/or propose one or more existing legislations on tobacco control and e-cigarettes, either at the local level or the national level.
- 1.3 The letter must be in multiple copies, separately addressed to the following:
  - 1.2.1 The local chief executive (mayor), *and* the presiding officer of the *Sangguniang Bayan* or *Sangguniang Panlungsod* (usually the vice mayor) of the municipality or the city where the learner currently resides, *and* the chair(s) of the committee concerned (e.g., Committee on Health, Committee on Education), if proposing or supporting local legislation; or
  - 1.2.2 The Speaker of the House, *and* the incumbent representative of the legislative district where the learner currently resides, if proposing or supporting legislative measures at the lower house of the Congress of the Philippines; or
  - 1.2.3 The Senate President, *and* the chair(s) of the Committee concerned (e.g., Committee on Health and Demography; Committee on Basic Education, Arts and Culture; and Committee on Finance), if proposing or supporting counterpart measures in the Senate.
- 1.4 The letter must be the original composition of the participating learner.

#### 2. Participants

- 2.1 The contest is open to all learners enrolled in public elementary and high schools nationwide.
- 2.2 Participants must join individually and compose the letter on their own.
- 2.3 The adviser and the school head of the learner may assist the learner in the submission of the learner's letter to the intended recipients, as laid out in this mechanics.

### 3. Submission

- 3.1 The letter must be sent through e-mail directly to **the official email addresses of the offices of the intended recipients (legislators)**, carbon-copying (CC) [tobaccocontrol@deped.gov.ph](mailto:tobaccocontrol@deped.gov.ph), and the official DepEd email address of the learner's school head and/or class adviser, if the email is not sent by them. The letter may be sent by either the participating learner if he/she has a registered email address, or by his/her school head and/or adviser on his/her behalf.
- 3.2 The email must have the subject **Letter of Support for Tobacco Control**.
- 3.3 The letter saved in pdf format must be attached to the email.
- 3.4 The body of the e-mail must have a brief background of the attached letter, and must include the following: Copied in this e-mail are the head of my school, and the Bureau of Learner Support Services-School Health Division of the Department of Education ([tobaccocontrol@deped.gov.ph](mailto:tobaccocontrol@deped.gov.ph)). Please include them in your reply when you acknowledge this email.
- 3.5 It is not necessary to mention in the email that the sending of a letter is part of a contest.



*Screenshot of How the Email Would Look Like*

- 3.6 The Bureau of Learner Support Services-School Health Division (BLSS-SHD) shall consider as an entry to the contest **every letter** that it will receive through email that is sent to the intended addressee where [tobaccocontrol@deped.gov.ph](mailto:tobaccocontrol@deped.gov.ph) is CC'ed. The letter must not be sent separately or forwarded to BLSS-SHD.

- 3.7 The contest ends on 31 August 2020.
- 3.8 Participating learners are encouraged to post on social media a copy/copies of their letter(s), either on their own social media accounts (if they are allowed to have one given their age; e.g., 13 years old) or on the social media accounts or pages of their parents/guardians/school heads/advisers/schools, tagging or mentioning in the caption DepEd (DepEd Philippines [@DepartmentOfEducation.PH] and EskweLABAN sa Sigarilyo [@tobaccofreedeped]), and the social media accounts/pages of their intended recipients (legislators), and using the hashtag #DepEdBIBO.
- 3.9 Participating learners may have multiple entries (e.g., different letters sent to different intended recipients) but can only win once.

#### **4. Validation of Entries and Selection and Announcement of Winners**

- 4.1 Once the BLSS-SHD receives the email from the participating learner, it will reply to the sender of the email, including the sender's intended recipients (legislators) in the reply (CC). The BLSS-SHD shall also re-attach the participating learner's letter in the reply, and CC some of its partners. The entry will only be included in the judging when confirmed that the intended recipients' email addresses are valid (e.g., as published on their website/email does not bounce back/at least one of the intended recipients replies).
- 4.2 Before recognizing any participating learner as a winner, BLSS-SHD shall reach out to the learner through a video conference for a standard on-the-spot validation exercise.
- 4.3 Winners will be announced through a memorandum from the Office of the Undersecretary for Administration.
- 4.4 Winners will also be announced on Facebook.

#### **5. Judging**

- 5.1 The entries will be judged given the following criteria:

Organization/Format/Structure	30%
Content (Adherence to the theme, creativity/personal expression, accuracy of data and information, persuasion)	40%
Language (Clarity of explanation, grammar, spelling)	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

- 5.2 The decision of the judges will be final and irrevocable.

## **6. Prizes**

- 6.1 There will be 17 winners of PhP 2,000.00 each. Cash prizes shall be for direct payment, subject to the usual DepEd accounting rules and regulations.
- 6.2 All winners will receive Certificates of Recognition.

## **7. Usage of Submitted and Winning Entries**

- 7.1 By submitting an entry, participants agree to grant DepEd the right without obligation, to use the submitted letter for any purpose determined, such as, but not limited to, uploading it on DepEd's social media platforms, featuring it in DepEd's programs and activities both online and offline, including it in DepEd's presentations, and sharing it with partners.
- 7.2 DepEd has the right to make necessary edits to the letters, as needed.
- 7.3 DepEd shall have the right of ownership of the winning entries, which may be improved for official use and distribution.

## Attachment 2

### ABOUT THE 2020 WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

(Source: WHO)

For decades, the tobacco industry has deliberately employed strategic, aggressive and well-resourced tactics to attract youth to tobacco and nicotine products. Internal industry documents reveal in-depth research and calculated approaches designed to attract a new generation of tobacco users, from product design to marketing campaigns aimed at replacing the millions of people who die each year from tobacco-attributable diseases with new consumers – youth.

In response to the tobacco and related industries' systematic, aggressive and sustained tactics to attract a new generation of tobacco users, World No Tobacco Day 2020 will provide a counter-marketing campaign and empower young people to engage in the fight against Big Tobacco.

#### **The World No Tobacco Day 2020 global campaign will serve to:**

- Debunk myths and expose manipulation tactics employed by the tobacco and related industries, particularly marketing tactics targeted at youth, including through the introduction of new and novel products, flavours and other attractive features;
- Equip young people with knowledge about the tobacco and related industries' intentions and tactics to hook current and future generations on tobacco and nicotine products; and
- Empower influencers (in pop culture, on social media, in the home, or in the classroom) to protect and defend youth and catalyze change by engaging them in the fight against Big Tobacco.

#### **How are tobacco and related industries manipulating youth?**

- **Use of flavors that are attractive to youth** in tobacco and nicotine products, like cherry, bubble gum and cotton candy, which encourages young people to underestimate the related health risks and to start using them
- **Sleek designs and attractive products**, which can also be easy to carry and are deceptive (e.g. products shaped like a USB stick or candy)
- **Promotion of products as “reduced harm” or “cleaner” alternatives** to conventional cigarettes in the absence of objective science substantiating these claims
- **Celebrity/influencer sponsorships and brand sponsored contests** to promote tobacco and nicotine products (e.g. Instagram influencers)

- **Point-of-sale marketing at vendor outlets frequented by children**, including positioning near sweets, snacks or soda and providing premiums for vendors to ensure their products are displayed near venues frequented by young people (includes providing marketing materials and display cases to retailers)
- **Sale of single stick cigarettes and other tobacco and nicotine products near schools**, which makes it cheap and easy for school children to access tobacco and nicotine products
- **Indirect marketing of tobacco products** in movies, TV shows and online streaming shows
- **Tobacco vending machines** at venues frequented by young people, covered in attractive advertising and pack displays, and undermining regulations on sales to minors
- **Litigation to weaken all kinds of tobacco control regulations** including warning labels, display at point of sale, and regulations that limit access and marketing to children (specifically provisions to ban the sale and advertising of tobacco products near schools)

### **How can you join the fight against the tobacco epidemic?**

- **Celebrities and social influencers** – Reject offers of “brand ambassadorship” and refuse any form of sponsorship by nicotine and tobacco industries.
- **Social media companies** – Ban advertising, promotion and sponsorship by the nicotine and tobacco industries and prohibit influencer marketing of tobacco or nicotine products.
- **Film, television or drama production companies** – Pledge not to depict tobacco use or e-cigarette use.
- **Parents and relatives** – Educate children and adolescents on the harms of nicotine and tobacco product use and empower them to reject industry manipulation.
- **Nurses and health practitioners** – Provide children, adolescents, young adults and their parents, with updated information about the risks associated with use of these products and empower users to quit through the offer of brief cessation advice.
- **Schools**– Raise awareness of the dangers of initiating nicotine and tobacco product use, adopt tobacco and e-cigarette free campuses, refuse any form of sponsorship by the nicotine and tobacco industries, and prohibit representatives from nicotine and tobacco companies from speaking at school events, school camps, etc.



- **Youth groups** – Organize local events to engage and educate your peers and build a movement for a tobacco-free generation. Advocate for the adoption of effective tobacco control policies in your community to curb and prevent the manipulation of nicotine and tobacco industries.
- **National and local governments** – Support the implementation of comprehensive tobacco control policies, as outlined in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. This can help prevent industry evasion of tobacco control legislation and exploitation of regulatory loopholes, protect children and adolescents from industry manipulation and prevent younger generations from initiating nicotine and tobacco product use.

### **Some key policy options include:**

- If not banned, regulate ENDS and ENNDS
- Ban the use of flavourings attractive to youth in nicotine and tobacco products
- Enact comprehensive bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of nicotine and tobacco products, including cross-border advertising;
- Adopt large, graphic labels that warn about the health risks of nicotine and tobacco products
- Offer tried and tested cessation interventions, such as brief advice from health professionals, national toll free quit lines, cessation interventions delivered via mobile text messaging is recommended, and where economically feasible, promote nicotine replacement therapies and non-nicotine pharmacotherapies for cessation
- Implement and enforce policies to prevent tobacco industry lobbying and interference in tobacco control policy
- Regularly increase tax to reduce affordability by young people<sup>1</sup>
- Increase the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 25 years old<sup>2</sup>

### **Key messages**

- Tobacco products kill more than 8 million people every year. To maintain revenue, tobacco and related industries are continuously eyeing for new consumers for their products.

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<sup>1</sup> Not from the WHO website but a relevant policy option for the Philippines

<sup>2</sup> Not from the WHO website but a relevant policy option for the Philippines

- Tobacco companies spent over 8 billion in marketing and advertising and the world lost 8 million lives from causes related to tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke.
- Tobacco and related industries' marketing strategies to children and adolescents include:
  - Over 15,000 flavors, most of which attract children and adolescents
  - Social media influencers and marketing
  - Sponsored events and parties
  - School scholarships
  - Sleek, sexy designs
  - Product placement in entertainment media
  - Free product samples
  - Single stick cigarettes make addiction more affordable
  - Selling products at eye level for children
  - Product placement and advertising near schools
- We want to create a generation that is free from tobacco and second-hand smoke and to reduce if not to eliminate death and diseases brought about the use of such product.
- Break free from the manipulation of tobacco and related industries by raising awareness on how to deal with their ploy and to be informed of the harm caused by consuming their products.
- Tobacco use is responsible for 25% of all cancer deaths globally. Use of nicotine and tobacco products increases the risk of cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary disease.
- Over 1 million people die from second-hand smoke exposure every year.
- Children and adolescents who use e-cigarettes at least double their chance of smoking cigarettes later in life.
- E-cigarette use increases your risk of heart disease and lung disorders.
- Nicotine in e-cigarettes is a highly addictive substance and can damage children's developing brains.
- Smoking shisha is just as harmful as other forms of tobacco use. Its smoke is toxic and contains substances that can cause cancer.
- Smokeless doesn't mean that it's harmless.
- Smoking is expensive, and you pay for it with your looks and your health. It causes bad breath, yellow teeth, wrinkly skin, unhealthy lungs and a poor immune system.

- Chewing tobacco can cause mouth cancer, tooth loss, brown teeth, white patches and gum disease.
- We encourage everyone to become educated, spread awareness and create a tobacco-free generation.

### **Tobacco and related industry tactics to attract younger generations**

There are 1.3 billion tobacco users worldwide. That number would be even larger if tobacco didn't kill half of its users. Every four seconds, tobacco takes another life. Decades of the tobacco industry's deception and devious tactics have hooked generations of users to nicotine and tobacco, driving this global epidemic. The multi-billion-dollar industry recruits new tobacco and nicotine users to reward investors with as much profit as possible and keep its business alive. Tobacco and related industries have increasingly preyed on children and adolescents, employing advertising tactics and targeting them directly with a new portfolio of products that threaten their health. These industries are moving at a rapid speed to launch existing and new products and use every means to expand their market share before regulations can catch up with them. Tobacco and related industries continue to oppose evidence-based measures, such as increases in excise taxes and comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and have threatened legal actions against governments that try to protect the health of their citizens.

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):**

- **How has the tobacco industry previously manipulated people and attracted new users?**

As awareness of the harms of tobacco use grew and global tobacco control efforts intensified over the last decade, social acceptability of tobacco use declined. This catalyzed the tobacco industry to revisit old tactics to restore its tarnished reputation and secure a new generation of users.

The tobacco industry has made well-researched, calculated attempts to redesign and rebrand its products to sustain profitability. It introduced cigarette filters and the so-called "light" and "mild" tobacco products as an alternative to quitting, reducing tobacco users' perceptions of risk and harm, and undermining effective tobacco control policies. Such misleading marketing continues today, with the industry advocating for the harm reduction approach through new products such as electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENNDS), commonly referred to as 'e-cigarettes', and heated tobacco products (HTPs).

- **How are tobacco and related industries marketing new and emerging products?**

E-cigarettes are often promoted as “reduced risk”, “smoke-free”, “socially acceptable” consumer products. These promotional strategies have the potential to renormalize smoking and drive long-term use of addictive nicotine products which, like tobacco, are undoubtedly harmful to the consumer, under the guise of being a healthier alternative. Tobacco and related industries exploit the fact that the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes have not been established and they are not yet regulated in most countries, enabling them to work around tobacco advertising bans and promote use of their products in smoke-free environments.

Some manufacturers also tend to talk about e-cigarettes with HTPs together, thereby confusing potential consumers, and making it difficult to tell the difference between a tobacco and a non-tobacco product. These social-positioning techniques, coupled with strategic marketing tactics, are particularly effective in targeting children and adolescents and have the potential to sustain nicotine addiction in youth globally.

- **What sponsorship schemes are used to manipulate children and adolescents?**
  - **Celebrity and influencer endorsements.** Advertising is increasingly shifting to social media platforms, and the nicotine and tobacco industries are no different. “Influencers” on social media who reach and engage children and adolescents are invited by these industries to serve as “brand ambassadors” or offered financial incentives to promote their products. Social influencers have the potential to give their audiences the impression of more authentic promotion of the products, particularly when posts do not disclose the sponsorship details.
  - **Scholarships.** Tobacco and ENDS-related entities have offered scholarships to high school, college and graduate students, some requiring applicants to submit essays on the dangers of tobacco and the potential benefits of ENDS use.
  - **School programmes and youth camps.** Tobacco and ENDS-related entities have paid schools for the opportunity to speak in classrooms or after school. They have also sponsored summer camps to spread misconceptions about the risks of ENDS use and market their products under the guise of promoting “safer alternatives” to conventional tobacco products.
- **What advertising tactics are used to target new, young consumers?**
  - **Digital and social media advertising.** With the pervasiveness of smartphones and constant Internet access, nicotine and tobacco companies have strategically used digital and social media

platforms to reach younger generations, including through their favourite apps and video games. Social media platforms allow users to interact with the marketing features, which increases exposure and influence among children and adolescents. They also allow marketers to access profile details of users and their friends and effectively target potential customers. Countries that have adopted advertising, promotion and sponsorship bans, but have not explicitly banned cross-border advertising, are susceptible to exposing their youth to digital and social media advertising originating from other countries. Just over 100 hashtags associated with tobacco companies have been viewed more than 25 billion times around the world between 2007-2016.

- **Attractive displays in retail shops.** Vendors near schools are frequently paid to display nicotine and tobacco products in their retail shops, along with sleek point-of-sale display boards, attractive marketing materials and bright, colourful cases to attract young customers. Modern, attractive retail spaces with a wide variety of products that appeal to youth are also now commonly used to market new and novel products.
- **Advertising materials and products at eye-level of children.** In many countries, nicotine and tobacco products can be found at children's eye levels and near shops selling toys, electronic gadgets, sweets, snacks or soda.
- **What marketing ploys are used to attract children and adolescents to nicotine and tobacco products?**
  - **Flavours that appeal to youth.** Tobacco products, such as smokeless and water pipe tobacco, are sold in sweet and fruity flavours, which may increase appeal to non-smokers and mask the harsh tobacco taste. To date, researchers have identified over 15,000 e-cigarette flavours available, including flavours proven to appeal to youth, such as cotton candy and gummy bear. Advertisements of flavoured products may enhance appeal and encourage children and adolescents to buy and try nicotine products. The flavours may lower perception of the harmfulness and addictiveness of nicotine products.
  - **Sleek, pocket-sized designs.** ENDS and HTPs are extensively promoted as modern, high-tech and high-end lifestyle products, with minimalist designs, and high-profile product launches that portray them as attractive and harmless products. The sleek designs can be deceptive, available in shapes resembling a USB flash drive, and can be easily concealed in a young person's hand.
  - **Cartoon characters.** Some ENDS-related entities use cartoons and child-friendly imagery, such as unicorns, to brand their products and market sweet flavours.

- **What promotional tactics are used to tempt children and adolescents?**
  - **Product placement in entertainment media, such as television and cinema.** Children and adolescents who watch movies and television shows containing depictions of smoking are at an increased risk of initiating smoking. Exposure to tobacco products or e-cigarette marketing in entertainment media influences children and adolescents' intention to use these products.
  - **Free product samples.** Nicotine and tobacco product samples are distributed in high traffic areas, and particularly venues frequented by youth, such as street corners, shopping malls, festivals and concerts, to attract new consumers. In over 50 countries, at least 10% of students aged 13-15 reported ever being offered a free cigarette by a tobacco company representative.
  - **Merchandise with company logos.** In over 120 countries, at least 1 in 10 students aged 13-15 reported having an object with a tobacco company logo on it.
  
- **What distribution mechanisms are used to facilitate access to these products?**
  - **Single stick cigarettes.** The sale of cigarettes individually or in small packets increases the affordability and accessibility of tobacco products for school children. Young people that start experimenting with single stick cigarettes do not benefit from exposure to health warnings on cigarette packs. A recent investigation in 45 countries found that students aged 13-15 reported recently purchasing single cigarettes, and in some countries, as many as 80% of students reported purchasing single cigarettes.
  - **Disposable e-cigarettes.** The option to test and toss different flavours of e-liquids, particularly for a low initial cost, has driven use of disposable e-cigarettes among children and adolescents. In some countries, where flavours are banned in refillable cartridge-based e-cigarettes, children and adolescents have turned to disposable e-cigarettes to continue using flavoured products.
  - **Vending machines.** Tobacco vending machines provide young people with easy access to tobacco products without needing to provide a form of identification to verify age. In some countries, tobacco vending machines are placed in areas frequented by youth, such as near schools, with attractive advertising and pack displays.

- **Internet sales.** Nicotine and tobacco products sold online facilitate sale to minors, particularly where age verification mechanisms are not in place. Online sales also allow children and adolescents to purchase products being sold in other countries where regulations may differ.

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