

RECOMMENDATIONS

In Zimbabwe, the adoption of recommendations especially at policy level, are hampered by the economic use of tobacco. Tobacco is the main foreign currency earner in Zimbabwe and its use locally is increasing. One huge problem that cannot be overshadowed by the economic use of tobacco is its increased use by young people and the long-term effects to their health.

From this survey, the increased use of cigarettes and other tobacco products by young people has been shown and many recommendations especially specific intervention programmes can be drawn. From the discussion above, three broad recommendations are given:

1. Awareness campaigns on the dangers of cigarette smoking & tobacco products need to be intensified. Most school based anti-smoking campaigns are done on the World-No-Tobacco Day but there is need for regular education on the dangers of tobacco. Also, anti-smoking campaigns should not just target people with access to television and radio, but should also be targeted for those without access. In the rural areas, use of other tobacco products is rampant as shown and information on the dangers of these should be provided, through means accessible to the rural people, who are the majority, constituting over 60% of the population in the country. However, due to insufficient government funding for information dissemination various information, education and research initiatives can also be developed and implemented by NGOs operating within communities.
2. Educational programmes and health promotion campaigns can serve a useful role in tobacco control, particularly in areas where the harms of tobacco use are not widely known. However, unless they are backed up by strong public policies, which help young people refrain from using tobacco, educational programmes have only modest results. Such education programmes and health promotion campaigns should be placed in the overall context of strong and coherent tobacco control policies.
3. Due to the fact that children are likely to start smoking if they grow up in an environment where tobacco advertising is prolific, where smoking rates are high among adults (including those that serve as role models for young people), where tobacco products are cheap and easily accessible, and where smoking is unrestricted in public places, the tobacco control policies need to take this into consideration. Besides drafting such policies, their enforcement and public awareness need to be considered. The starting point could be the law already in place on the sale of tobacco products to children aged below 18, which does not seem to be adequately enforced or known to the public.