

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS)

The GYTS is a school based tobacco specific survey, which focuses on adolescents aged 13-15 years. According to the Ugandan education structure¹, this age-group is at secondary education level i.e. Senior One-Senior Three students. It assesses students' attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to tobacco use and environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) exposure, as well as youth exposure tobacco use to prevention curriculum in school, community programs, and media messages aimed at preventing and reducing youth tobacco use. The GYTS provides information on where tobacco products are obtained and used, and information related to the effectiveness of enforcement measures.

School surveys are a useful data collection technique as they are relatively cheap and easily administered with a self-administered questionnaire, tend to get reliable and accurate results, and non-response is lower compared to other settings where surveys are implemented. Hence, justification for conducting a global school-based survey under the UN project on Youth and Tobacco.

Objectives of the GYTS

1. To document and monitor the prevalence of tobacco-use including: cigarette smoking, and current use of tobacco, cigars or pipes;
2. To obtain an improved understanding of and to assess students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to tobacco-use and its health impact, including cessation, environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), media and advertising, young people's access, and school curriculum;
3. To provide information to guide programming and advocacy work addressing youth tobacco use.

Tasks of the GYTS

The GYTS attempts to address the following issues:

- Prevalence of tobacco use;
- Age of initiation of cigarette use;
- Levels of susceptibility to become smokers;
- Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke;
- Exposure to tobacco advertising;
- Identify key intervening variables, such as perceptions and attitudes towards tobacco-use, which can be used in prevention programs.

¹The education structure of Uganda at secondary school level is six years-Senior One to Senior Six for 13-18 age-group.