

Center for Sociological Research and Marketing
"CBS-AXA"

Research report

A Qualitative Study on
Primary School Children:

POINT-OF-SALE ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION OF CIGARETTES

Carried out within the framework of: Tobacco Smoke-Free Republic of Moldova

Beneficiary: Center for Health Policies and Studies (PAS Center)



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Context

The effects of tobacco use on the health and development of children are widely recognised. Studies carried out in this field attest that the vast majority of smokers started this habit by the age of 18. 49.2% of pupils who had ever smoked in the Republic of Moldova began smoking by the age of 10 (54,1% boys and 40.5%- girls).¹

There are several reasons why children start smoking, and several studies² from different countries carried out over the years have shown that cigarette promotion encourages children to smoke. It has been shown that teenagers become smokers namely because of advertising and marketing strategies used (packaging, promotions). Direct or indirect advertising of tobacco items³ in the mass media and the cinema through the use of brand names to promote products or services, as well as outdoor advertising of tobacco articles is prohibited in the Republic of Moldova. Law No. 278 from 14.12.2007 on Tobacco and Tobacco Products allows advertising of the trademark image and logotype of tobacco products to final consumers inside specialised points of sale of tobacco articles and smoking accessories (lighters, matches, ashtrays).

As for Law No. 1227 from 27.06.1997 on Advertising, it allows outdoor advertising at the point of sale of tobacco products. Exceptions on cigarette promotion in commercial establishments and on smoking accessories provided for in the legislation make cigarette producers and distributors quite resourceful. Children's exposure to cigarette advertising can be a greater risk factor than having a smoker in the family which may even undermine the advice and practices of surrounding people. For this purpose, we conducted a survey among primary school children to determine their response to point-of-sale promotion of smoking and display of cigarette packages.

The study was conducted at the request of the Center for Health Policies and Studies (PAS Center) within the framework of the project "**Tobacco Smoke-Free Republic of Moldova**" funded by the "Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids" and "Bloomberg Philanthropies". The project aims at contributing to the improvement of the national legal framework in accordance with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control of the World Health Organization (FCTC) and developing an efficient mechanism for implementation.

The FCTC mentions the worldwide spread of smoking among children and adolescents, particularly at increasingly younger ages. Sociological research is part of civil society initiatives to show the impact of point-of-sale cigarette advertising and promotion on children. Civil society participation is essential to achieve the FCTC objective which establishes the need to protect present and future generations from the negative consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke for health, ecology, social and economic environment by providing a framework for tobacco control measures with the goal of reducing the prevalence and considerable use of tobacco and exposure to tobacco smoke.

¹ The results of the national survey on the consumption of alcohol, drugs and tobacco among pupils in the Republic of Moldova (ESPAD), Chisinau, 2012

² American Lung Association Tobacco Policy Trend Alert – Joe Camel to Kauai Kolada – The Marketing of Candy-Flavored Cigarettes; <http://www.lung.org/assets/documents/ALCOHOL-FLAVORED-ADDENDUM.pdf>
Children, Adolescents and Advertising Committee on Communication – Pediatrics, 2006.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/118/6/2563.full>

³ Legea Nr. 278 din 14.12.2007 cu privire la tutun și la articolele din tutun - <http://lex.justice.md/md/327126/>

Methodology

The qualitative study comprised 4 group discussions, with two discussions carried out with primary school children (grades 1-4) from the Chişinău municipality, and the other two – with focus groups including parents who accompanied them (see Table 1. Research Design). Given the specifics of the group including minors, children were accompanied by their parents who provided their consent on interviewing children. In order to facilitate the process of waiting for children for persons who accompanied them and draw on the experience and opinions of parents, group discussions with parents were simultaneously carried out in a separate room.

Table 1. Research Design

Category interviewed	Technique used	Number of respondents
Primary school children	2 Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 FG – with pupils from grades I-II (7-8 years) – 8 children (girls -5, boys -3)• 1 FG – with pupils from grades III-IV (9-10 years) - 8 children (girls -3, boys -5)
Parents of the interviewed children	2 Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 FG – with parents of children from grades I-II – 7 respondents• 1 FG – with parents of children from grades III-IV – 7 respondents

Snowball sampling was used for the selection of children for this study, taking into account the following criteria: age, sex, and location of the institution attended by the children. Thus, there was held one group discussion with pupils from grades I-II and the other one - with pupils from grades III-IV, ensuring age-specific communication.

Due to the specifics of the basic interviewed group including primary school pupils, the research team used age-specific interviewing techniques, such as:

- drawing;
- associations;
- role playing.

Therefore, interview guide questions will be addressed in accordance with the age of children (see Annex).

Group discussions lasted an average of 1.5 hours.

Data collection period: March 21-22, 2015.

I. Children's Opinions and Perceptions of Cigarettes and Smoking

All children have previously seen several cigarette brands - *"I've seen all of them"* (F, 8 years). Virtually all cigarette points of sale are conspicuously located— *"I saw them near the shop next to my house, I first thought they were candy"* (F, 8 years old)

Tobacco consumption is widespread in society - *"very many people smoke"* (F, 8 years old). Children easily mentioned several smokers in their environment: family members, relatives, and neighbors who smoke - *"my neighbors smoke, and my Dad smokes, and my mother and my mother's friends too, but one of her friends doesn't smoke because she is pregnant"* (F, 7 years old)

People smoke in the streets, on public transport (drivers), at entertainment facilities, and in the school environment, and children have taken notice of that.

Most interviewed children know that smoking is harmful, they have noted that it primarily affects the respiratory system, but also the heart, skin, and immune system. The vast majority of children are aware of the fact that tobacco is addictive - *"once a person tries to smoke a cigarette, it is no longer possible to quit it"* (M, 7 years old). Also, some interviewed children have highlighted the risk of premature aging and early death as consequences of tobacco consumption.

Children from this age group (7-10 years) are puzzled over the fact that, on the one hand, they are told that smoking is harmful, while, on the other hand, it is spread and promoted in society:

- there are many warnings on cigarette packs, but smoking is still spread;
- *"if they are harmful, why are they sold?!"*;
- some adults tell them that it is not good to smoke, but they themselves smoke;
- their close ones promise them that they will no longer smoke, but fail to comply with the promise and/or do this secretly.

The inappropriate behavior of certain adults in public places forms erroneous attitudes and perceptions of children regarding cigarettes and smoking - *"two people were holding cigarettes and saying that they did not care if they died sooner."* (M, 7 years old)

Moreover, some children **condemn the behaviour of adult smokers**, stressing the fact that they are witnesses of improper actions of adult smokers.

"There are 2 tables near my house and people with beer and cigarettes come there and leave ash, making them dirty. I see them every day." (M, 7 years old).

Children have mentioned **several factors that, in their opinion, stimulate smoking**:

- accessibility of cigarettes (both availability/distribution, cost, but also their marketing to minors);
- entourage, group of friends, desire to assert oneself;
- family members who smoke;
- smoking considered as a normal/common practice;
- advertising and promotion of cigarettes and smoking

II. Perceptions of Cigarette Advertising

Children consider that cigarettes are promoted "so that more and more people buy them and spend money on them" (F, 9 years old). Some children are aware that children are also targeted by cigarette promotion in order to ensure the quota of smokers - "so that when children grow up, everyone smokes". Smoking and cigarettes are promoted through various direct and indirect strategies:

- **Smoking in public**- "very many people smoke";
- Presence of **smoking characters in cartoons and films**;

Both children and parents have listed many cartoons in which characters smoke: „Nu, pogodi!“ („Well, Just You Wait!“); "Tom and Jerry", "Tarzan," "101 Dalmatians" and so on. Actors in several feature films smoke. And while accessing various sites children are not protected from cigarette promotion, which in some cases appears as spam -"my son was searching for information for a school subject and a beautiful lady with a cigarette suddenly popped up" (parent).

- **Magazine, Internet and TV advertising**; although some forms of advertising are no longer permitted in the Republic of Moldova, for example, on TV, children claim that they have seen cigarette commercials during programmes for children. Although this aspect is hardly imaginable, the luxury of detail with which children describe these spots shows that they have watched them. Even though it was probably through another source, they certainly saw these spots.

"I recall a man riding through the desert on a motorcycle. When he was thirsty, he took out a cigarette pack, began to smoke and said that it could replace water". (F, 9 years old)

"Marlboro is for cowboys". (M, 10 years old)

- **Point-of-sale cigarette promotion**;

While cigarette advertising in the mass media is prohibited in the Republic of Moldova, point-of-sale advertising complies with the legislation in force. Even though theoretically cigarette promotion is aimed only at adults, adult smokers in particular, the strategies used are attractive for children as well, and in some cases they are directed specifically toward children and adolescents. All consumers in commercial spaces, regardless of their age, whether they are smokers or not, are exposed to the influence of slogans and images that simulate smoking.

Thus, several factors contribute to capturing children's attention: mode of positioning and arrangement of cigarettes in kiosks and shops; forms of packages; brand names etc.

Forms of point-of-sale cigarette advertising and promotion mentioned and discussed by children:

a) **Point-of-sale advertising** through:

- cigarette placement – „in the showcase“; „near candy“ ; „there are chips that I like very much“

Displaying cigarettes in the showcase **at eye level encourages the buyer to purchase cigarettes.**

"Cigarettes are here (cigarette packages displayed in the showcase). I am a person who wants to buy something. I look (at the showcase) and see cigarettes. If they were displayed



below (hidden), nobody would see cigarettes. Everybody would buy other things and leave." (M, 7 years old)

„Cigarettes are sold up there in every shop." (F, 8 years old).

At the same time, **displaying cigarettes near candy** and chewing gum generates erroneous perceptions among children. Children have an association that cigarettes are as harmful as candy, given that some of them are not allowed to eat candy and chewing gum. Parents and teachers have told them that excessive consumption of sweets could affect the health of children, and they (especially those in grades 1-2) make an analogy with cigarettes.

"because candy is like cigarettes, harmful if you eat it a lot". (M, 8 years old).

"they poison you just like gum. We have learned at school that they are not tasty, they can harm something in the liver. Sweets, Chupa Chups that are made from dyes ... they (cigarettes) all are chemicals". (8 years)

Some children consider that Moldpresa news stands sell cigarettes to promote newspapers and books, given that few people read, but many smoke. Thus, according to those interviewed, parents buying cigarettes will think of certain things that their children need: books, chocolates etc. - *"Some fathers want to smoke a lot and they put books alongside cigarettes so that they notice children's books and buy something".* (M, 9 years old)

- mode of arrangement – „very nice”;
- attractive lighting - the materials used, illumination (laser), and colour range;
- the use of other techniques of capturing attention at the point of sale. Children are permanently exposed to cigarette advertising through other objects, with **coin plates** used most commonly, but also through other objects and events that might attract children.

„they always put something new (cigarettes) in the coin plate" (F, 8 years old);

„ (cigarettes from the coin plate) cost 8 lei near the house" (M, 7 years old);

„I always see this (the coin plate with cigarettes) in stores" (F, 8 years old).

The interviewed children stated that during winter holidays, showcases where cigarettes were displayed were adorned and illuminated in the most attractive way.

"At Christmas not the cash register is adorned with lights and not the shelves, but the cigarettes". (F, 9 years old).

Other holidays are also used by cigarette producers and distributors to promote these products. An example is the marketing strategy of using *Mărțișor* in an accompanying image in March that has caused the following perceptions:

- *Mărțișor* is a national symbol;
- „*Mărțișor* out of cigarettes” – the package being white and the price tag background being red;
- cheaper cigarettes;
- you can have both cigarettes and *Mărțișor* - *"they give you a Mărțișor if you buy cigarettes"* (M, 9 years old);



- false perceptions: purity, health -*"long ago people wore chest amulets to avoid diseases, evil people, and evil things."* (M, 8 years)

Practically all interviewed children, except for one girl, sometimes go alone to stores near their home to buy milk and bread, but also sunflower seeds, ice cream and other goods. Both discussion groups included children who had bought alcoholic beverages and cigarettes for their parents or close relatives. The risk of tobacco consumption for these children increases enormously.

b) Promoters (ladies) who offer cigarettes and gifts to buyers:

It is assumed that they target only smokers, however, many children are also attracted by the way they are dressed, they get curious as to what they promote, and most children know that cigarettes are advertised.

"You can buy (cigarettes) in the store near my home" (M, 7 years old).

"They are sitting and offering people to buy (cigarettes)" (F, 8 years old).

"So that people buy cigarettes and they make money, but in any case money is thrown to the wind " (M, 7 years old).

"I was with my mom at the store and while mom was paying, I went out to look at magazines. There was a woman who gave out free cigarettes, said it was a new product and gave samples." (F, 9 years old)

Some children think that these ladies, usually beautiful and gentle, selected after certain standards, smoke too. Thus, if they are given the message that smoking is not so harmful and "condemnable".

c) Attractive packaging/ cigarette packs (this subject will be addressed in the next chapter).

III. Cigarette Packs as Promotional Tools

The attractiveness of cigarette packs, mentioned by the children, serves as a means of promoting smoking:

- attractive colors;
- images: flowers, fruits, different outlines, holographic images, etc.
- smell: *"mint", "apple", "strawberry", "fruit scents";*
- shape: *"lipstick", "perfume", "medicine", "tea/coffee", "iPhone";*
- size: unusual sizes arouse the most interest;
- name: *Kiss, Glamour, OK, Astra etc.;*
- visibility.

See the table below (Table 2) illustrated with images of cigarette packages and children's remarks.

Table 2. Children's associations regarding cigarette packages

Category	Imagine
<p>attractive colors</p> <p>„I like blue very much” (M, 7 years old)</p> <p>„it looks as if it is made of gold” (M, 10 years old)</p> <p>„these are my favorite colors” (F, 10 years old)</p> <p>„I chose this one (Richmond) because there is a warning, and it gets multicolored when you move it, letters are multicolor like a rainbow.” (M, 9 years old)</p>	
<p>images: flowers</p> <p>with associations of:</p> <p>„something pleasant”; (F, 7 years old)</p> <p>„beauty” (F, 7 years old)</p> <p>„for me flowers mean goodness”. (F, years old)</p>	
<p>images, flavor: fruit/plants</p> <p>„he smelled them, liked the scent, wanted to try them and liked smoking”. (F, 10 years old)</p>	
<p>shape: „lipstick”, „perfume”, „drugs”</p> <p>„mom usually buys those and they smell like menthol.” (M, 9 years old)</p>	

<p>shape: <i>tea/coffee</i> „I think here are tea bags”. (M, 7 years old)</p>	
<p>shape: <i>mobile phone „iPhone 4”; „Siemens”</i></p>	
<p>name: <i>Kiss, Glamour, OK, Astra</i> „my favorite car is Opel Astra” (M, 8 years old) „Glamour, for example means that you dress glamorously, but Kiss means ,kiss””. (F, 8 years old) „it says Glamour and looks nice” (F, 10 years old)</p>	
<p>The combination of cigarettes after the national flag colors: Tricolor</p>	

Children in both group discussions pointed out the shape and presentation of cigarette packs intended for girls and for boys - "For girls ... because they have flowers" (F, 7 years old) "for boys ... I like red" (M, 7 years old).

According to children's perceptions, packaging of some cigarettes creates a strong association with candy and chewing gum:

- **Taste, flavor of candy:**

„I want to eat them because they smell nice and have a picture of strawberries.” (M, 7 years old)

„and I've got cigarettes with menthol because I like menthol.” (F, 8 years old)

- **Packaging similar to gum packaging:**

„some kind of Dirol gum”. (M, 10 years old)

„cigarette packs, just to replace (their content) with gum” (M, 9 years old);

Some children perceived cigarette packs as convenient pieces **to build something** and started playing with them. Other children had a more reserved attitude, noting that those were disgusting and horrible. However, these children were also subsequently drawn to the packaging and smell of cigarettes.

IV. Behaviour of Children

Both discussion groups included children who had bought cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. Although regulatory acts prohibit marketing of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages to minors, the study has found that children purchase these products without any significant impediments. Only in a few instances sales assistants asked them for whom they purchased cigarettes or warned them that they would no longer sell these products to them. And in these cases children continued to buy cigarettes at another point of sale.

The price of cigarettes is affordable for children, and they admit to have this amount of pocket money. Some children know prices of certain brands of cigarettes, which shows that it is possible that some of them purchase cigarettes, or or/and they are promoted so aggressively that children are aware of these details - *"every time I go to the shop, Bond is 15 lei but now it's 10 lei ... when I go to buy some bread or something to some markets, I see a new Bond price of 15 lei, but here I can see that it is 10". (M, 10 years old)*

The accessibility of cigarettes to small children is also determined by the fact that some older pupils and even adults do not take action. Moreover, some of them encourage primary school children to try to smoke. Some parents think that it is funny to see small children smoking – *„I have 3 boys in my class who are naughty, neglect schoolwork and have only ,2' notes ... they asked a man to give them cigarettes to smoke, and he gave each one a cigarette and lit them". (M, 7 years old).* However, other adults (buyers) intervene when children ask to sell them cigarettes at the point of sale.

Some children easily imitate smokers. This is a practice that they often see in different environments and consider it to be natural - *"I come from school and see many people smoking a cigarette as they go, like that wolf ... from the story with the hair and the wolf („Nu, pogodi!" („Well, Just You Wait!") animated cartoon") (M, 7 years old)*

- **Widespread cigarette stubs** - a possible start for children smokers.

Some children are tempted to smoke cigarettes and collect cigarette stubs that they light and try to smoke.

- Some children consider that smoking: **"relaxes you"**;
- Other children perceive smoking as **"a way of standing out"**;

"they smoke because they want to look stronger, older. Before they started smoking, they had been inconspicuous, but now everyone sees them and they think they are famous". (F, 9 years old)

"they started smoking because they had been inconspicuous - nobody had noticed them. There are kids in class who want to be seen, asked more, but are left aside and are quiet. And in order to get noticed, they try many methods, but maybe neither of them functions and they choose the most difficult and

harmful way ... they could even take out the cigarette and say: "See, I was the smallest one in the kindergarten, the most insignificant one, but now I am the strongest one"." (F, 9 years old)

- Smoking as **a way of socializing, connecting and getting accepted by the group;**
"because some in the company think they are smart and don't want to lose their fame. If he's not going to smoke along with all his friends, they are going to laugh at him and they will no longer be friends". (M, 10 years old)

It is worth noting that these last two issues were mentioned in particular by children from grades 3-4, who are at an age when they are trying to stand out through various methods.

V. Opinions and Attitudes of Parents Regarding the Impact of Cigarette Promotion on Children

In the interviewed parents' opinion, spreading consumption of cigarettes and smoking in public places directly and indirectly affects children. On the one hand, children are in a situation in which they inhale cigarette smoke when they are in public places, and, on the other hand, these practices and behaviors cause curiosity of children, in particular those that are prone to imitating adults.

Most parents prefer to avoid discussing smoking and cigarettes.

Parents are worried about the mode of cigarette sale, the fact that their points of sale are very widespread, and that the legislation in this area is not complied with, given that cigarettes have become cheaper. In these circumstances, cigarettes are becoming more accessible to children.

"I'm a smoker, but I don't like what is happening in the market, cigarettes are cheap and children can purchase them very easily too";

"This (cigarette pack) costs 10 lei which is very little". (parent)

"Children usually have this kind of pocket money". (parent)

Some **parents are convinced that their children are not interested in cigarettes (smoking)** because they have discussed that they are bad for health. Other parents consider that their children have been informed at school or have read information, viewed anti-tobacco reports/films and are informed in this area- *"My son saw a video on the Internet about the influence of cigarettes on the organism. It showed how lungs darkened and this has had a major influence on him".* At the same time, some parents admit that they do not really know how to react in situations in which children try to smoke or that they are facing certain problems in this regard. Judging from their previous experience with older children, their intervention is not always adequate.

"...when he was eight years old he tried to smoke. My husband allowed him to try, he himself took a cigarette and lit it, he already knew how to use it. My husband had been watching him put it in his mouth until it burnt his tongue. Since then my son has not been smoking". (parent)

"When my son was small, he used to take everything in his hands, including broken cigarettes and those thrown on the ground. We were always hiding matches so that he wouldn't light a cigarette. He did not get over it until my husband burnt his palm a little." (parent)

Methods of indirect advertising, mentioned by the interviewed parents within the framework of the study:

- Raffles with prizes – **"cigarettes"**, including for non-smokers;

"There is on-the-spot advertising in some stores, for example, of new menthol flavoured cigarettes. Various competitions are organized. I have participated in a contest of this kind and got a pack of cigarettes, being a non-smoker." (parent)

- Offering goods featuring a cigarette brand name, ex: bags;
- Offering free cigarettes at certain entertainment facilities;
- Selling cigarettes in inappropriate places, an example of which being "Xerox" kiosks which are usually in the vicinity of educational institutions;

"They opened Xerox kiosks with the aim of promoting tobacco. You go there to make a copy and are told that it's not working, but cigarettes are sold. I believe that these stalls were opened in order to sell more cigarettes." (parent)

Parents stated that there are promotions targeting smokers as well, but they stimulate the consumption of certain brands, usually more expensive ones, such as:

- selling two packs of cigarettes at the price of one and a half/one and offering other incentives - *"two packs at the price of one and a half with a free lighter."* (parent);
- being offered a free pack of cigarettes considered to be of a higher class at the purchase a cigarette pack.

Parents were shown two videos made in the Russian Federation⁴ in which children of the same age as theirs gave their opinion on cigarette packs. Parents were surprised by the children's reaction to cigarette packs and the details that they observed, the way they were attracted by cigarette packaging, namely colours and designs, items that appear on the package, the associations made by the children depending on certain packaging and category for which they are intended. Many parents in both group discussions have acknowledged that they have not realized that cigarette packs could be so attractive to children until watching the videos, were worried by this fact and have noted that it has made them wish to discuss the subject of tobacco consumption more with their children.

Box. Parents' opinions after watching the videos

"Smokers don't pay attention to colours, while children notice that". (parent)

"We do not see all these aspects – that they are thin, they are yellow, they are pink, there are flowers, but you have seen how children pay attention to all these details." (parent)

"The manufacturer does not work for the consumer but for the future consumer. When I go to the store, I look at a cigarette as at a cigarette, but you've seen how children made observations - these are for girls because they are pink, and those are for boys. I haven't seen this, for example, I am not interested in it, but children are already interested in cigarettes ... " (parent)

„we remained shocked by the fact that our children know so much. Many parents don't realize how apprehensive they are ... I was touched by the movie. I haven't had any idea that there are roses, and that children paid so much attention to cigarettes". (parent)

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t9SBG-snjg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01MOEimN8U4>

„I was touched by the movie. I haven't had any idea that there are roses, and that children paid so much attention to cigarettes ... all cigarettes should have the same packaging so that there aren't any flowers, packaging should not be attractive". (parent)

"for me personally it was a wake-up call to discuss these issues more with my children. We don't really draw their attention to these issues, but they need to be discussed with caution. "

"have you noticed how a child said that only a Cowboy smokes Marlboro. These guys are cool. Ads where they show various businessmen and our children aim for that. "

VI. Needs

To protect children, we should listen to their opinion on measures of combatting tobacco consumption. The law is meant to influence people's competences, and the data presented in the previous chapters demonstrates that the existing normative acts and the way they are observed do not protect children from cigarette promotion.

Thus, children's suggestions on protecting children from point-of-sale tobacco advertising and promotion include:

- Sale of cigarettes **at special locations** where only adults are allowed;
- The most appropriate placement of cigarettes is near **alcoholic beverage shelves**;
- Cigarette packaging should not be so attractive;
- **Cigarettes should not be displayed at conspicuous places** - *"Take them out from there (from the showcase)"* (M, 7 years old).
- Some children consider that **cigarettes should not be sold** because they are harmful;
- Children would **replace cigarettes in the showcase** with: books, magazines, sweets, ice cream, soft drinks, toys, etc.;

Some children are more categorical and believe that cigarettes should not be sold because they are harmful and costly.

The children also offered the following suggestions for reducing cigarette consumption:

- Increasing the cost of cigarettes so that they would not accessible;
- Decreasing the quantity of cigarettes sold in a pack.
- Allowing smoking at the age of 25-30.
- Prohibiting smoking in public;

Children consider that measures should be taken to combat tobacco consumption among pupils.

"If the president arranged a meeting I would call and say what is happening at our school - all children who are older than 5th grade smoke, except for girls. When someone goes into the bathroom, it stinks of smoke". (M, 8 years)

Parents believe that there should be harsher punishments for those who sell cigarettes to minors. Some parents, however, are skeptical of tobacco consumption reduction measures, noting that: *"cigarettes are promoted by those on top (politicians), no one's going to turn back"* (parent).

According to the respondents including both children and parents, social campaigns should be organized to raise the awareness of parents regarding the impact of smoking on the health of smokers, but also on

children around them - *"My father stopped smoking when he saw an advertisement on a channel that when a father smokes even on the balcony, even indoors, smoke gets near his daughter and she suffocates."* (M, 10 years).

Conclusions

- **In children's opinion, the following factors stimulate smoking:** accessibility of cigarettes, both availability and price; a group of friends; the example of family members who smoke, smoking as a normal thing; advertising and promotion of cigarettes and smoking.
- **Children from the Chişinău municipality are directly exposed to the promotion of smoking and cigarettes through:** widespread smoking in public; point-of-sale advertising; attractive packaging of cigarette packs; smoking characters in several cartoons and films, but also through indirect actions declared as promotions targeting smokers.
- **Point-of-sale promotion of cigarettes does not protect children,** they are attracted and influenced by: the way cigarettes are placed (in the vicinity of products that are attractive for children, at eye level); strategies of capturing attention (positioning, colors, lights) and the cigarette pack design: (shape elements, names of trade marks), etc.
- **The design of many cigarette packs is oriented toward children and adolescents** through the colour range used, the shape of the pack, images (flowers, fruit), names (Kiss, Glamour, OK), etc. According to children's perception, some of cigarette packs create a strong association with candy and chewing gum. In addition, cigarette packs create associations with perfume bottles, lipstick, mobile phones and other items attractive to teenagers etc.
- Certain ways of point-of-sale cigarette promotion (promoters, the use of symbols such as *Mărţişor*, fruit, etc.) **create erroneous perceptions about smoking and** artificially diminish the perceptions of tobacco consumption risks.
- **Most parents do not realize the risks to which their children are exposed** through point-of-sale cigarette promotion. They are surprised by how children perceive cigarette packs.
- **Cigarettes are accessible to children,** including both the possibility of purchase and price. Both discussion groups included children who had bought cigarettes and alcoholic beverages contrary to the legal provisions. Control of adolescent smoking in the Republic of Moldova requires effective intervention methods, because the existing ones are non-functional.
- Children are puzzled over the fact that they are told how harmful smoking is and **there are warnings on cigarette packs, but, on the other hand, cigarettes are promoted.** At the same time, they do not understand why so many adults, including people close to them, say that it is not good to smoke and/or promise that they will not smoke, but proceed otherwise.
- **Children believe that cigarettes should not be placed in showcases.** They should be replaced with candy, toys, books, etc. Cigarettes should be sold in special establishments that only adults can access. Various measures should be set to restrict children's access to tobacco products.
- **Smoking in public places, including schools, is a disturbing phenomenon for children.**

Interview Guide for primary school children

I. Introduction

1.1. Presentation of the research subject

1.2. Discussion rules

- sincere answers,
- there are no right or wrong opinions, but just different points of view,
- confidentiality ensured,
- the necessity of audio recording.

1.3. The presentation of participants (age, the class in which they teach, at what institution)

II. Drawing (kiosk/boutique)

Children will be asked to draw a kiosk/boutique that they see most often near their home or en route to school where they go to. The activity will be held until all children come – an introduction will be made later and the drawings will be discussed.

- Could you please tell me what you have drawn? What is sold in these kiosks?
- (If it has not been mentioned previously) But are there other kiosks? What is sold in those? What other products are sold in kiosks?

III. Images

Let's look at a few images – we will analyze them one by one.

- What do you notice in this image? What else do you see?
- Which one attracts your attention the most? Why?
- How do you think - why were they put ... near cigarettes?
- Why are cigarettes displayed at your eye level?
- When you look at candy, do you see cigarettes nearby?
- Do you like how cigarettes are arranged? What exactly do you like? Why do you think they have been arranged so nicely?
- (Mărțior image) How do you think, why cigarette price tags are so big and visible from afar?
- (images with ladies) Have you seen ladies dressed like this in stores? What were they doing? Why do you think they offer this information/products?

IV. Cigarettes - general perceptions

- How do cigarette kiosks look/how would you describe cigarette kiosks? How do you know that cigarettes are sold there? What have you seen in these kiosks?
- Let's play a game, for example, find as many qualifiers as possible for the word ball: round, large, small or actions that you make with it: jump, roll, throw, etc. I would like you to do the same thing for the word 'cigarette'. Please find qualifiers and we will write them together.
- With whom have you discussed cigarettes or smoking? How did you come to talk about this subject?
- In addition to kiosks, where can you buy cigarettes?
- Have you ever purchased cigarettes? For whom?
- What about shops/markets - where are cigarettes located? Near what products?
- Where do you think cigarettes should be placed in stores? Near what products? Why?

V. Packs

I have a few packs here (**cigars will not be mentioned**)

- What associations do you have with them?/What have you thought of when you saw them?
- What do you like about them? And what don't you like?
- Which of these packs you like most?
- Now I will ask you to group packs as you wish, but you will have to explain why you did it this way. Does anyone have other grouping criteria? Which ones exactly?

- Could you please tell me which of them you have seen at least once? Where?
- Have you seen any objects with the name of cigarettes or their logotypes printed on them? Which ones exactly?

VI. Behaviour

- Has any of your classmates or friends tried to smoke or smokes?
- Can anyone of you imitate someone who smokes? Anyone else wants to try?
- Have you ever tried to smoke? Have you ever been thinking of smoking? What was the situation?
- How are people who smoke? How do you think, why do people generally smoke?
- How do you think children could be protected from cigarette promotion? And from smoking in general?
- How do your parents protect you?
- With what products would you like to replace cigarettes in the showcase?