

☞ **Global Partnerships for Tobacco Control** ☞
Essential Action

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GETTING TO KNOW YOUR "BUDDY" ORGANIZATION

Developing close, trusting relationships are fundamental to the Global Partnerships program and key to its long-term success. Since participants represent such a wide range of organizations, activity interests, countries, cultures, and ages, there can be no single method of getting to know each other. Instead, we recommend the following list of questions, grouped by category, to guide you through the process. How you decide to share the information is up to you. You might communicate back and forth by email over the course of several weeks. Or you might put together a scrapbook about your organization to send to your partner—an activity that youth organizations and schools might find especially fun.

The questions are designed to help you get to know each other personally, as well as to give you insight into your partner organization's social, cultural, economic, and political reality. They should also help you obtain basic practical information, e.g. the time zone difference between you and your partner, and be conscious of some of the inevitable cross cultural differences that may arise. Not all questions will be relevant to all partnerships. For example, due to U.S. domination of global media, international groups are likely to know more about the U.S. than American groups know about their partner organizations' countries. On the other hand, American groups may find that their partners have a very narrow idea of what the U.S. is like and may want to offer insight into the diversity of cultures within the country that rarely make the international news or scenes in Hollywood movies. As with all cross-cultural encounters, you may find that you learn more about your own culture and experience through exploring another's. The partnership may give you a new perspective on your tobacco control activities and add exciting new dimensions to your work.

We realize that this is very long, but certainly not exhaustive, list of questions. Feel free to add your own questions. And don't worry – *we do not expect you to ask or answer all of the questions (with the exception of those in the "Important Practical Issues" section)!* Pick and choose as you wish. Instead of spending an inordinate amount of time tracking down answers to some of the questions, you or your partner may want to consult references, such as *Tobacco Control Country Profiles* distributed at the 11th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Chicago (August 2000) or the older *WHO Tobacco or Health – a Global Status Report*. If you are able to meet in person or talk on the phone, be mindful of some of cross-cultural differences related to communication styles that may exist. Try not to dominate the conversation. Be an active listener. Let your partner know if you don't fully understand something he or she has said. Ask follow up questions. And don't worry, we're not going to quiz you on the answers—so go ahead, feel relaxed, and have fun getting to know each other!

The questions are organized into the following categories:

1. Your Partner's Country and Culture
2. Tobacco-Related
3. Your Partner's Organization
4. Personal
5. Cross-Cultural
6. Important Practical Issues
7. General Discussion
8. Partnership-Related

Occasionally a question will be followed by a "☞" symbol, indicating a related joint activity. At the end, we suggest a few ways you might follow up on the knowledge you gain.

Your Partner's Country and Culture

- Where is your country located?
- What other countries border it?
- How long has your country been in existence?
- What does its flag look like?
- Has your country ever been colonized? If so, by whom? What impact do you think it has had on your culture? What other historical influences have shaped its culture, commerce, and national identity?
- How many ethnic groups live within your country or community? How many languages do they speak?

☞ Ask your "buddy" how to share some basic phrases in his/her native tongue e.g. "Hello," "Goodbye," "My name is...", " etc. Practice using them when you communicate with each other.

- What are the most popular religions?
- What are the most important holidays in your country? What do they celebrate or commemorate?

☞ Write down the dates of important holidays, e.g. Christmas, Ramadan, Independence Day, or personal/family holidays, e.g. birthdays. Send a note to your partner organization on these days to let them know you are thinking of them.

- What sorts of food dishes do people in your country like to eat?

☞ Exchange recipes (or search the web) for popular dishes from each other's countries and prepare them for others in your organization.

- What type of music is popular in your country?

☞ Send each other mixed cassettes of some of your favorite music.

- How do people dress in your country? Are there any materials or fashions that are specific to your area of the world?
- What are the most popular forms of entertainment? What were the some of the most popular movies last year?
- What form of government do you have? Is it stable?
- What have been some of the major current events in your country this past year?
- What is the climate like? Hot or cold? How many seasons do you have?

☞ Check the world weather report periodically to see how hot or cold it is in your partner's region.

- What rough percentage of the population lives in cities? In rural areas? Is there much rural-urban migration?
- What are the most popular forms of transportation?
- How do people make a living? What are the most common occupations?
- What is the approximate per capita GDP? What is the breakdown of wealth between rich and poor?
- What is your country's national currency? What is the exchange rate between you and your partner's currencies?
- What is the cost of living? For example, how much does a kilogram of rice or a three room place to live cost?

☞ Pick 10 commodities available in both of your countries and compare and contrast their cost in US\$ in each of your communities.

☐ How healthy are your country's citizens? What is the average life expectancy? Infant mortality rate? What are the most common health risks? Does your government provide universal health coverage? If not, how do people pay for medical costs?

Tobacco-Related

- ☐ Does your country grow tobacco? If so, how much? How does it affect farm workers?
- ☐ Is your country a net exporter or importer of tobacco?
- ☐ Which multinational tobacco corporations do business in your country? Do they import their products or make them in country?
- ☐ Do multinational tobacco corporations have licensing agreements with local manufacturing companies? If so, what share of the national cigarette market do they have?
- ☐ Is smuggling a problem?

☞ Search online industry documents for mentions of your partner organization's country. See activity menu for more information.

- ☐ What forms of tobacco are used most often in your country, e.g. cigarettes, chewing, bidis?
- ☐ What cigarette brands are most popular? What themes are associated with them, e.g. youth, adventure, sports, freedom, "America"? What images are used in advertising to invoke these themes? Which brands are most popular with youth? With adults? With women? With the wealthy? With the poor?

☞ Exchange photos of advertisements and marketing promotions for various cigarette brands. Compare and contrast the themes with those in your own country. In particular, note the images, colors, words, languages, race used. See activity menu for more information.

- ☐ How much does each brand cost? An average pack of cigarettes is equivalent to what percentage of the average person's daily salary? How much rice, eggs, or vegetables could it buy?
- ☐ Are cigarettes sold singly or by the pack?
- ☐ How extensively do tobacco corporations invest into sports and cultural events?
- ☐ Have tobacco corporations operating in your country tried to change their image or marketing strategy recently due to the lawsuits they are facing internationally? If so, how?
- ☐ Have tobacco companies tried to establish "anti-tobacco" youth education programs in your country? If so, how?
- ☐ Do tobacco companies have a favorable relationship with your government? If so, how is this relationship manifested?
- ☐ For how long have people smoked in your culture/country? Was tobacco ever used in religious ceremonies? How have smoking patterns changed over time? Is there a taboo against women smoking? What percentage of men and women smoke?
- ☐ When and where are the most popular times and places to smoke?
- ☐ How familiar are people in your country with the short and long term health effects of smoking? Of exposure to second hand smoke?
- ☐ What anti-tobacco laws has your country passed? Are they enforced? How?
- ☐ Is smoking allowed in public places, e.g. schools, hospitals, government buildings, public transportation?
- ☐ Are there warning labels on cigarette packets sold in your country? If so, what do they say?

☞ Compare and contrast the warning labels in each of your countries. Which are stronger? How could they be improved?

- ☐ Are there any tobacco advertising restrictions? Bans on sales to minors?
- ☐ What is the tax rate, if any, on cigarettes, both domestic and imported?
- ☐ Have any religious leaders in your country spoken publicly against smoking and/or the tobacco industry? How do they connect the issue to the basic tenets of their faith?
- ☐ How many cigarettes are sold each year per person? Assuming an average cost, how much money does this equal? In comparison, how much money is spent, per capita, on health?
- ☐ What are the most common smoking-related diseases in your country? How has their occurrence changed over time, e.g. the age and gender of those affected? Are these problems increasing, decreasing or staying the same?
- ☐ What sort of support exists for people who develop a smoking-related disease, such as cancer of the lung or larynx or chronic emphysema? What are their short and long term chances of survival?

Your Partner Organization

- ☐ How long has your organization been in existence?
- ☐ How many staff, leaders, and/or volunteers do you have?
- ☐ Where are you located?
- ☐ What subpopulations do you work with?
- ☐ What have been your primary activities?
- ☐ What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- ☐ What do you think you could do better?
- ☐ What are your ambitions in the future?
- ☐ What specific political, social, cultural, financial etc. barriers do you face?
- ☐ What aspects do you feel you have at your advantage?

Personal

- ☐ From which part of your country are you from?
- ☐ For how long have you worked in tobacco control? What other kinds of work, if any, have you done? What led you to get involved with tobacco control work?
- ☐ Do you have a family? If so, what are the names and ages of your children?
- ☐ What language do you use to communicate with friends and family?
- ☐ What other countries have you lived in or visited?
- ☐ What's your typical daily routine like?
- ☐ Do you have any interesting stories related to your work in tobacco control?

Cross-Cultural

- ☐ How do people address each other in your culture? By first or last name? Does this depend on the age, gender, and/or social position of those involved? How would you prefer to be called? What title do you use? Are you comfortable with someone you don't know well using your first name?
- ☐ What are relationships like between men and women? Is it appropriate for men and women to be friends? What are gender relationships like in your culture?
- ☐ Is there anything inappropriate for a man or woman to wear?
- ☐ How much personal space do people like to have in your culture? How close or far away do they usually stand from each other when talking? Is it acceptable to make eye contact?

- How do people view time? Are people generally prompt to meetings? What priorities do people place on their job, friends, and family?
- How do people in your culture view someone who smiles a lot? Or who makes a lot of facial expressions?
- How do people deal with conflict in your culture?
- What is the highest form of praise? Of insult? in your culture?
- How are decisions made among members of a group? By consensus? Voting? One person taking initiative and others following?
- What qualities do you admire in a leader?
- Are there any parables or folktales that are popular in your culture? Any adages that give insight into social norms or values?

Important Practical Questions

- What is the time zone difference between us?
- What is the best way to contact you?
- Do you have access to a fax machine? To the internet? To email? A CDrom?
- How often do you check your email? Is it expensive or time consuming to download?
- Can you open large attachments?
- What is your phone number and country code?
- How much does it cost to send or receive a fax, make a phone call, or send a letter? This amount represents what percentage of your daily salary?
- How reliable is the mail system? How long does it take to receive mail from overseas? Do you have to pay any fees to pick up a package at the post office?
- How comfortable are you speaking/writing English? Other languages?

General Discussion

- It's not always easy being a tobacco control advocate—what keeps you going?
- If you could say one thing to the CEO of Phillip Morris to his face—what would it be?
- What stereotypes do people in your country have of people in my country or area of the world (be honest!)? Where do you think these stereotypes come from?

Partnership-Related

- What attracted you to the Global Partnership program?
- What do you think you can offer your partner?
- What do you think your partner can offer you?
- What activities and projects would you like to work on? Which are highest priority?
- What guidelines should we set together? What are our expectations of each other, in terms of how often we communicate, the amount of time we commit to a joint project etc?
- What short and long-term goals can we set for our partnership?
- Is there anything that we haven't shared already that it is important that the other know?

SUGGESTED "GETTING TO KNOW YOU" FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

- ☞ Make a scrapbook or poster about your partner organization using information gleaned from your communication in addition to photos, newspaper articles, and other research to display at your organization and share with visitors—or- make a scrapbook about your own organization to send to your partner organization. Include photos of staff, your office, activities you work on etc.
- ☞ Your partnership is newsworthy. The international dimension adds a new twist to discussions of domestic lawsuits and policy, and the human interest side makes a compelling story. Contact your local newspaper to tell them about your new partnership and see if they will do a story on it. Essential Action can offer advice and assistance as needed.
- ☞ After getting to know each other, you might write a joint opinion piece or letter-to-the-editor of your local newspaper about a tobacco control issue near and dear to your hearts, emphasizing the cross cultural nature of the problem—whether it be advertising targeting youth people, rising cancer rates in women, or the need for smoke free public places.
- ☞ Write a letter to your country's delegation to the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Emphasize what you have learned from your partner organization about the global nature of the tobacco epidemic.
- ☞ Host a party with the purpose of introducing others to your partner's country and culture. Decorate the room with photos from magazines. Serve food and place music from their country. Invite local people from the country to come teach some words in their language, sing songs, tell stories and/or show photos from their country. Take pictures to share with your partner organization.

Do you have any suggestions for how we might improve this document? Any questions we left out that you think are important? Any fun, creative activities we omitted? Anything that you feel is not culturally appropriate to ask? Let us know! We welcome any and all recommendations you have to offer. Contact Anna White at awhite@essential.org, 202-234-5176 (fax), 202-387-8030 (phone).