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1. General Information

Project Title: 12th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH 2003)

FWP2002 (SPC2002.411)

Name and Contact of the Coordinator

Initial budget of the Project

2. The Abstract

Main objectives of the report:

- to document and evaluate the preparations and carrying out of the 12th World Conference on Tobacco or Health (WCTOH 2003)
- to help the planning of future world conferences,
- to help Finnish partners in organizing future international events.

Methods:

The report material is based on the documents from the conference organization and on discussions with some of the key people in the conference organization. In addition, we have used an evaluation based on the visitors' and the organizers' feedback. The press coverage and the publicity of the conference are evaluated in a media review.

Results:

The conference succeeded according to expectation. The collaboration and division of labour between the organisations involved proceeded well. There was the anticipated number of participants and there was a good balance in their mix of professional backgrounds. The conference programme successfully incorporated all current multidisciplinary issues concerning tobacco control. The assessments of the participants concerning the arrangements and the conference programme were mainly 'excellent' or 'good'.

The conference increased global knowledge on tobacco-related health issues and best methods in the reduction of tobacco use. These kinds of global efforts strengthen European capacities to tackle the tobacco epidemic and to deal with tobacco related health problems of the new EU member states. It also served as a platform to improve collaboration between health professionals and decision makers in Europe.

The media coverage of the conference showed that there is increased media awareness on tobacco-related health effects. For instance, European support for the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the efforts by the European Union to decrease smoking among young people were widely covered in the European and national media.

Major conclusions and their significance:

12th WCTOH further indicated the need for such events as forums for international debate and discussion that bring together people involved in tobacco control worldwide. The next WCTOH will be build on the achievements of the 12th conference and continue the work of the global movement on tobacco control. The declaration of the 12th conference emphasises a commitment to the follow-up of joint activities, by calling "for greater coordination and cooperation between all sectors of

the tobacco control movement with a view towards establishing a world association for tobacco control.”

2. Project Objectives

The conference was built on the achievements of the previous conferences and latest scientific evidence in the field.

There is a clear evidence that comprehensive tobacco policy is the most effective way to reduce tobacco consumption and tobacco-related disease. The conference aimed at increasing evidence-based knowledge of various global actors on tobacco-related health effects and best methods in reducing tobacco use and offering them the opportunity to benefit from each other.

It also endeavoured to strengthen activities aimed at the reduction of tobacco use in the European Union and globally. It facilitated collaboration between health professionals and decision makers on national, European and international level in the area of tobacco control. It also aimed at enforcing and expanding European and international networks and establishing networks between different professional groups.

4. Background and aims

As part of the closing ceremonies of the 11th World Conference on Tobacco Or Health held in Chicago 6-11 August 2000 Helsinki was announced as the site of the 12th Word Conference. The applicants were National Public Health Institute, Cancer Society of Finland and Finnish Centre for Health Promotion.

The Finnish participants at the Chicago conference were to deal with the planning for the next World Conference. It was already stated that the 2003 conference would be characterised by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

The preparatory meeting of the organising committee was held in October 2000 in Helsinki. In addition to the main organisers, all the major Finnish public health organisations and government representatives took part in the meeting.

At the international level, the main actors were the WHO and the EU together with a network of several international organisations.

The aims of the conference briefly were to

- unite global and local actions
- broaden partnership
- strengthen capacity building
- develop comprehensive health promotion and
- work towards a tobacco free future

5. Organisation (Methods)

The three main organisers of the conference, National Public Health Institute, Cancer Society of Finland and Finnish Centre for Health Promotion agreed to organise the conference in close

cooperation with each other so that they held collective responsibility for the arrangements, the committees, marketing and finance.

The following committees assisted the organising committee:

Programme Committee
Social Programme Committee
Communications Committee
Abstract Committee
Ancillary Meetings Committee
Continuous Professional Development Committee

In addition, an executive committee oversaw the practical work on the conference, which started in January 2003.

International preparatory work was carried out by an International Steering Committee. In addition to this the organisers assembled an International Advisory Board to support the effort in March 2003.

The practical arrangements of the conference were made by the congress bureau CongCreator, which got the task through competitive bidding arranged by the main organisers.

The general principles of the contract between Cancer Society of Finland and CongCreator were:

- Practical arrangements of the conference and preparatory tasks
- The organising committee takes care of the budget, collection of admission fees, and the expert-tasks related to the contents of the conference
- In general both parties aim for a successful event

Programme Committee was responsible for the production of the programme in the conference. The views of the Organising Committee and the International Steering Committee were taken into account in the planning of the programme.

A theme was chosen for each day of the conference: the Framework Convention on Tobacco control, Youth, Addiction, Tobacco Control Policy, and Culture & Religion. The structure of the programme was conventional. Mornings, especially the plenaries were planned according to the theme of the day. It proved impossible to extend the thematic framework to the workshops in the afternoons.

The programme of the conference covered the full diversity of issues concerning the tobacco epidemic. The conference went beyond traditional themes, including new topics such as technology in prevention and other future scenarios.

The *abstracts* of oral and poster presentations were welcomed by the programme committee. Both submission and evaluation was done on-line for the first time in WCTOH history. A form for abstracts was available on the conference Internet site. The abstracts were written in English and were about 300 words long.

The programme committee had decided early on to evaluate all the abstracts. The process helped to group presentations into themes and divide abstracts into oral and poster sessions. An

international review panel evaluated and chose the oral presentations. The review process was based solely on the content of submitted abstracts. Two independent reviewers, representing their field of expertise, performed evaluation with blinded information.

Altogether 1,673 abstracts were submitted of which small proportion had to be rejected or cancelled. Accepted abstracts were published in the Abstract Book and on-line before the conference.

6. Results

Plenaries

The main themes of the conference were dealt in the plenaries by leading experts in the tobacco control.

Monday 4 August:

- Beyond the convention
- The World Conferences on Tobacco or Health past, present, future
- The role of civil society in tobacco control policies

Tuesday 5 August

- South Africa - tobacco control essential to development
- Thinking outside of the box: Tobacco control and the youth of yesterday, today and tomorrow

Wednesday 6 August

- How could single interventions add up to substantial cuts in tobacco use at population level?
- Tobacco addiction - Control by product regulation

Thursday 7 August

Implementation of Policies:

- Ethics of policies of prevention
- Policy design implementation in tobacco control - national and international perspectives

Friday 8 August

- Taking back the culture: Nonsmokers' rights
- Religion and tobacco Control in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Main sessions

The main sessions were a continuation of the plenaries. The themes of the sessions were the following.

Monday 4 August: Beyond the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; Country profiles; Economic aspects of tobacco; Countries in transition; Human rights, treaties and tobacco

Tuesday 5 August: Global trends & smoking; Sponsorship and/or social responsibility; Tobacco, alcohol and drugs; Clinical and educational settings

Wednesday 6 August: New science; Cessation methodology; Passive smoking; Smoking and cancer.

Thursday 7 August: Ethics, society & tobacco; Litigation experience; European policy; Control policy in action.

Workshops and other sessions

Conference workshops and special sessions promoted networking and innovations within the tobacco control community. Altogether 100 workshops and 94 other sessions were organised.

The themes included FCTC, legislation, litigation, global economy, fundraising, ethical issues, tobacco-related diseases and epidemiological issues. Also ETS, health promotion, addiction, prevention, programmes and cessation were discussed. The agenda included cultural and religious aspects as well as gender and age perspectives.

Poster sessions

A special exhibition was arranged for posters. In addition to the daily poster session in the mornings, there were the 'best poster' sessions which ran daily between 13.30-15.00 from Tuesday to Thursday. Delegates chose the posters they wanted to have in this session.

Altogether 1022 posters were submitted in the conference. The posters were well located and were on view all week. The location of the posters made it possible for the delegates to view them during the lunch and other breaks in the official programme.

Ancillary meetings

Along with the scientific programme there was an opportunity for international and national non-profit organisations to arrange ancillary meetings before or during the conference. Those interested in organising a meeting were asked to submit an abstract regarding the nature of the meeting. Technical equipment as well as catering services were available for a fee.

Altogether, the programme committee approved 34 these meetings to be held in the Fair Centre.

Opening and Closing ceremonies

The conference opening ceremony was held in the Finlandia hall on Sunday evening 3th August. Speeches were given by the Conference President Dr. Liisa Elovainio, President of UICC, Chief Executive Officer of the American Cancer Society John Seffrin, Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, EU Commissioner David Byrne, Director-General of WHO Jong-Wook Lee and Chair of the International Steering Committee Dr. Pekka Puska. In addition to the speeches, there was a music performance.

In the closing ceremony on Friday 8th of August a proposition for a declaration by the declaration committee was approved as a declaration of the 12th WCTOH. The host town of the next WCTOH, Washington D.C. was introduced in the ceremony. The closing words of the conference were given by the Conference President Dr. Liisa Elovainio.

7. Way forward

The follow-up of the declaration of WCTOH and incorporating its aims in the Millennium targets has been active after the conference. The declaration has been sent to the ministers of health of WHO member countries.

The organisers would like to put focus in the next conference on geographical balance and on the agenda of the developing countries. Part of the science must be clear enough and the abstracts should be scientifically diverse.

In addition, it is important that science and practice are balanced and lobbying and advocacy are not forgotten. Innovative ideas and new partners, such as environmental movements, should be brought into the process as well.

The WCTOH should be seen as an international discussion arena for people working on similar goals in different conditions around the world. Ideas should be collected globally in order to achieve overall views on the topics tackled by the conference.

9. Evaluation

The Finnish Centre for Health Promotion contributed an evaluation at the conference. The aim of the evaluation was to give feedback on the planning, preparation and results of the conference for the organisers. This information is also to help the future organisers of the WCTOH. The evaluation was carried out using an evaluation form, which was distributed at the Conference for the participants. Of the 2057 participants 222 returned the questionnaire.

12th World Conference on Tobacco Or Health gathered participants from all over the world. Europeans and North Americans formed the major part of the conference participants. 42% of the participants were from Europe and 29% from North America. Australia/Oceania with 9% and Far East/Asia with 8% were the together the third biggest area represented. 4% of the participants were from Africa, 3% from Middle East and 1% from South America.

Professionally the background of the participants was well balanced between academics (34%), non-governmental organisations (28%) and government/municipal employees (28%). Only a small number of participants worked for other branches (4%) or the private sector (2%).

The participants seemed to be generally satisfied with the conference. 51% of the participants who answered the question on the overall evaluation of the conference thought that it was good. 23% rated the Conference as excellent. 18% answered that the Conference was average. Only 5% of the participants thought that the conference was fair, and no one judged it as poor.

Generally, the standard of the presentations was highly appreciated. However, people wanted more interaction and less simultaneous activities. They also felt that catering standards could have been better.

The major part of the participants, 44%, agreed that the topics of the programme were well planned and 26 % strongly agreed on this. 15% could not give opinion on this. 10 % disagreed that the programme was well planned, though no one strongly disagreed on this.

Plenary sessions were found to be interesting and the balance of perspectives and presentations was good. Participants found that the speakers were good and inspiring. Participants expressed the hope for a better representation of women among plenary speakers and more interactivity. The quality of the *main sessions* and the venue was generally good. The variety of topics and speakers was mentioned as a positive feature of the main sessions.

Workshops and paper sessions were characterized very informative, helpful and interesting. A high level of knowledge and good organising were appreciated among the participants.

A major part of the participants thought that the *exhibition* was a success. Participants were especially happy that food was available in the same venue as the exhibition and posters.

The *social programme* of the conference was generally well appreciated.

Opening ceremony and Terry Luther awards were especially appreciated. Many events, such as, the farewell party at the Opera, were mentioned as being too expensive.

Quality and amount of the *information in advance* were well balanced. Information on the Internet was generally considered very good and helpful, but the i-planner was mentioned to be difficult to use.

Expert Evaluation

The Finnish Centre For Health Promotion also contributed an expert evaluation on the conference, in which the organisers and key personnel of the committees evaluated the event. The expert evaluation was carried out by an e-mail interview after the conference, and some conclusions can be made based on these interviews.

Overall the Conference succeeded as expected. Sessions were generally of high quality and themes supported each other. The distributed material was relevant and correct. Material distributed in the media centre helped to concentrate on the hot topics.

The biggest challenge for the organisers was the insecurity of the finances. As the conference was a world scale event, resources for communications, in particular, should have been more stable. Communications is one of the key factors of success in an event like this, and therefore the importance of the communications should have been recognised already in the beginning of the preparations.

From the point of view of the organising committees, the arrangement of the Conference worked well. There were enough committees and the committees did their work well despite of the lack of the recourses.

Programme and Topics

Overall, the topics and the programme were multidisciplinary, as intended. As always, some of the matters were covered more than others. The topic covered the best were smoking cessation, addiction and the Framework Convention.

Nowadays it seems that research on addiction receives much attention, while for example the point of view of the social sciences is not properly represented. This trend was seen also in the conference, where abstracts on social science were almost non-existent.

The biggest challenge now and at future conferences is the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The Framework Convention was well covered, but, for example, the Asian point of view on it could have been broader. In addition, discussion about harm reduction could have been more prominent.

Gender equality was one of the goals of the conference. This goal was strongly emphasised, but it could have been realised better.

From the point of view of achieving professional knowledge and skills, the conference succeeded well. Plenaries, main sessions, workshops and paper sessions were of high quality and the themes supported each other. On the other hand, it would have been possible to devote even more to them.

Unfortunately, those in charge of the conference did not have enough time to participate in many sessions, and therefore their opinion is mainly based on the experience of dealing with the abstracts in the arrangement of the conference.

Organising and Committees

>From the point of view of the organisers, it can be said that everything went well as everybody cooperated and took care of their responsibilities. There were enough organising committees and these committees were established already early in the preparation phase. The personnel responsible of the organising committees felt they succeeded in their tasks. Some obstacles were faced during the preparations, but these problems were handled quickly and efficiently. Also the conference office was helpful and offered a variety of services.

The biggest problem for the organising committees was the uncertainty and lack of financial resources.

10. Dissemination of the results

Communications and media activities were an essential part of the conference. This event was seen as a unique opportunity to distribute key information about tobacco control in the international and national media as well as in the international media.

The conference website served both the needs of the conference participants and the media. The daily press conferences gathered internationally known experts to present their views and concerns on tobacco. These press conferences attracted Finnish and international media, and especially because of active participation of leading international newspapers the main messages of the conference gained preferred coverage.

Information material on the conference was provided for the media and for the participants before and during the conference. These materials were distributed on the conference website, by mail, at the international events, in the Fair Centre and via e-mail. The main information materials were:

- Conference brochures

- Conference newsletter
- Background materials
- Press releases
- Conference newspaper
- Photos
- Other marketing materials: ready-to-print ads, etc.
- Other publications

Each day of the Conference press briefings took place in the Media centre. The aim of the press conferences was to cover as many significant topics as possible, and make them interesting for different kinds of media.

Media coverage

The aim of the communications team was to reach as many media as possible. To do this, media alerts were sent three times before the Conference for domestic and international media. Also networks of the health organisations helped to gain the attention of the media. Accreditation to the Conference started in May 2003. Eventually the conference gathered 120 media representatives, of whom 45 were international and 75 domestic journalists.

Overall the media coverage of the conference was good, especially considering geographic location of Finland. The Conference featured daily in the domestic media. The topics covered were mostly the same as in the press briefings.

International Media

International media coverage was based on the activity of the international news wires, such as Reuters, AP and AFP. This was because only very few international media have correspondents in Finland. Topics that went through the international news wires were mainly the research revealing increased smoking among teenage girls, new graphic warnings on the cigarette packs and the problems in developing countries.

Coverage in the other international media was based on e-mail press releases during the conference and arranged telephone interviews. Telephone interviews were an essential tool for getting the message of the conference through internationally. During the conference the Media Centre organised numerous telephone interviews and sent material to the international media. Usually journalists wanted to interview a particular speaker or expert on a certain topic. Sometimes journalists wanted to find persons to interview based on knowledge of a certain language. Among the media that covered the conference outside Helsinki were the BBC, The Times, El Pais and Financial Times. The Conference Media Centre was also contacted from Brazil, Mexico, and France.

The Conference was closely followed by the Irish and Norwegian media, as the debate on tobacco policies was particularly active in these countries. The articles published concentrated on the follow up of the Conference discussions on their complete smoking bans. Also the tobacco industry and health effects of tobacco were covered.

In the North American media the most comprehensive topic seemed to be the research revealing increased smoking among teenage girls. This research was published in the press briefing

organised by the CDC. Among the media covering the topic were The Boston Globe, The Sun Herald Mississippi, Buffalo News, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, CBS, Miami Herald, and the Washington Post.

Nordic media were very interested in the Conference, and articles on it were published regularly during the week in papers such as Dagens Nyheter (Sweden), Svenska Dagbladet (Sweden) and Aftenposten (Norway). Icelandic newspaper Morgunbladid followed the conference intensively and started a wide public debate about smoking in Iceland.

Some registered journalists supported communication activities by translating press releases into their own language and sending them to their domestic media and health associations (Norway and Japan).

Latin American countries received reports from a correspondent, who worked for CNN Spanish, Caracol Radio and for radio stations in Peru and Bolivia.

Other conference topics that drew special attention in the international media were the problems of the developing countries, new warning signs on tobacco packs and smuggling. Also the opening of the conference received widespread media attention.

Domestic Media

The Conference was intensively followed by the domestic media. The conference was covered during the week by the main newspapers, TV channels and radio stations. Also professional, medical and health publications wrote articles of the topics of the Conference.

Media attention started already the previous week before the Conference started, when a pre-press briefing was held in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on 31 July. This press briefing on the nicotine replacement treatment and public health insurance received much attention, and was publicised in several news programmes and by all the main newspapers and radio stations. The same press briefing also informed the media about the tax cuts on tobacco products, which would be less than expected. This was also widely published in the media. The third point that was stressed in the briefing was the plan to allow tobacco sales only for the licensed retail sale.

The launch of the Conference attracted media attention. The presence of the Director-General of the World Health Organisation Dr. Lee Jong-Wook and of EU Commissioner Mr. David Byrne also received coverage. Both speakers stressed the importance of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and of decreasing smoking among young people.

Other newsworthy topics were snus and health, Finnish people smoking the least in Europe, the general decrease in the smoking habits of young people and cigarette smuggling.

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