

**Report:**

**2000 Suriname Global Youth Tobacco Survey**

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## **2000 Suriname Global Youth Tobacco Survey**

### **Introduction**

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) formed part of the Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI) of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), at which technical support was given by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, U.S. The GYTS was the first phase of a project of the United Nations Foundation for International Partnerships (UNIFIP), "Building Alliances and Taking Action to Create a Generation of Tobacco-free Children and Youth". The purpose of this project was to gather evidence, extend technical support and create strategic collaborations in order to call attention, in a positive manner, to the negative results of smoking and to stimulate and support children and young people at making a choice for a healthy, active and tobacco-free lifestyle. Based on the results from the GYTS, relevant programs can then be planned, executed and evaluated.

The GYTS has been executed in various parts of the world since December 1998. Barbados was the first Caribbean country to participate, namely in 1999 via UNICEF, and an increased participation in the year 2000, of countries in the Caribbean and Latin America, was encouraged. Via the PAHO/WHO Office of Caribbean Program Coordination (CPC) and the PAHO Secretariat in Washington, U.S., invitations had been sent earlier that year to countries in the Caribbean and Latin America in which the conditions for participation were also mentioned. The main conditions were: the appointment of a research-coordinator who would be in charge of the research; providing data about the number of young people between age 13 and 15, attending school, who would be the target group; and the execution of the research in the period prior to the start of the school-vacation. Thanks to the work of Dr. Barnett of the PAHO/WHO Office of Caribbean Program Coordination (CDC), Suriname has participated in the GYTS activities since 1999. In the same year, Gerold Vliet of the Foundation World Wide Promotions was appointed by PAHO as research-coordinator of the project for Suriname with support of the Ministry Of Public Health in Suriname.

### **Purpose:**

- The purpose of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey is, among others, providing a standard research- and measuring instrument and the methodology for gathering information with regard to smoking among young people and relevant issues which can be used for setting up programs and making comparisons between countries.
- Gathering up-to-date information with regard to the health problems amongst young people and adolescents related to smoking.

Please note that the absolute numbers of certain groups (for example, ETO, or otherwise young people age 12) are too low to reach definite conclusions in this regard. The observed values rather indicate trends therefore.

## Methodology

50 VOS schools in Suriname participated in the period July – August 2000, in a research into the smoking habit among youngsters: the Global Youth Tobacco Survey research project was aimed at school-going youngsters between age 13 – 15. The selection among classes of the participating schools was made arbitrary. All students of the selected classes could participate in the research. The cooperation of both students and teachers has been optimal. A total number of 1788 persons have been surveyed.

## I. Smoking habit

19 questions have been asked with regard to the smoking habit of students.

### Total number

In answer to the question “*Have you ever experimented with cigarettes?*”, 54.3 % of the interviewees said “*Yes*”. This means that more than half of the teenagers going to school in Suriname, are ‘ever smokers’. This is indeed a high percentage. 16.3% also admitted, moreover, to have smoked on at least one or more days within the last 30 days. It gets alarming when 8.5%, so almost a tenth of all teenage youngsters in Suriname admitted to have used other forms of tobacco in the past 30 days. These were rolling tobacco, cigars, small cigars etc. It would not be a surprise if further research showed that marijuana is also used. There are already fervent smokers amongst these groups of pupils and students since, in total, 3% admitted to have smoked on at least 20 days within the past month when they were asked the question “*Have you smoked on at least 20 days within the past 30 days?*”. This percentage corresponds with the group of young people who have been surveyed and whose answer was ‘yes’ (4.1%) to the question “*Do you long for a cigarette in the morning or at all times?*”.

Table 1: A few questions put before students with regard to their smoking habit

Questions	%
<i>Have you ever experimented with cigarettes?</i>	54.3
<i>Have you smoked on at least 20 days within the past 30 days?</i>	3.0
<i>Do you long for a cigarette in the morning or at all times?</i>	4.1

Almost a fourth (22.5%) of the youngsters smokes regularly at home whilst only 5.4% smokes at school. More is allowed at home, therefore, than at school. It is striking, however, that young people do not dare to smoke at a friend’s home since only 9.7% admitted to do so. The number of smokers among young people is highest during social events. 39.0% admitted to smoke during social events. There is less zest for smoking at public places (16%) and the answer can be found in the fact that smoking is not allowed in the shopping center, young people do not often visit a park and many school-going youngsters do not hang out at the corner of streets.

The fact that almost a fourth of all young people smoke at home can be attributed to the fact that 32.4% of the parents smoke. Please note that 45.7% of the youngsters indicated that they do not smoke and of this group 48.3% of the parents do not smoke either.

There are not many restrictions in Suriname, legally or socially, with regard to selling cigarettes to young people. Thus it appears that 83% of the active smokers can buy cigarettes without any form of resistance. This was definitely significant among young people above 16 (among girls, 90%).

## Gender

More boys (62.8%) than girls (46.0%) admitted to have experimented once with cigarettes. The number of boys was also higher (23.4) than the number of girls (10.0) admitting to have smoked on 1 or more days within the past 30 days. Fervent smokers can also be found more among boys (5.7%) than among girls (0.6%) when the question is asked “*Have you smoked on at least 20 days within the past 30 days?*”. It is no surprise therefore that only boys (6.6%) have the urge to smoke at all times or in the morning. Notwithstanding this strong urge amongst boys, smoking is less allowed at home to boys than to girls. 9.9% of the boys admitted to smoke regularly at home, 40.2% smokes regularly during social events while 22.2% claimed that they smoke in public places (park, shopping center, street-corners). The proportions are different among girls. Almost more than half (48.7%) admitted to smoke regularly at home. 35.6% smokes regularly during social events while only 4.3% smokes regularly in public places. The impression is given parents are more lenient towards girls than towards boys with regard to smoking. Even so, boys are more daring since 8.9% smokes regularly at school while none of the girls was doing so.

Table 2: A few questions put to boys and girls with regard to smoking

Questions	Boys (%)	Girls (%)
<i>Have you ever experimented with cigarettes?</i>	62.8	46.0
<i>Have you smoked on at least 1 or more days during the last 30 days?</i>	23.4	10.0
<i>Have you smoked on at least 20 days during the last 30 days?</i>	5.7	0.6
<i>Do you long for a cigarette in the morning or at all times?</i>	6.6	0.0

## Schools

The ETO schools show the highest score because a percentage of no less than 72.1% of the interviewees answered with ‘yes’ to the question “Have you ever experimented with cigarettes?” while the percentage was lowest among LBGO students (49.3%). The percentage among LTS students is high as well, namely 69.0% while it is a surprising fact that more than half of all MULO students (52.4%) has experimented with cigarettes once. To the question “*Have you smoked on 1 or more days within the last 30 days?*” the MULO students showed the lowest percentage (12.6%) while the percentage was highest among ETO students,

namely 30.6%. Still, there are no fervent smokers among the ETO students while a percentage of 7.4% was reached among LTS students when they were asked the question “Have you smoked on 20 days during the last 30 days”? The urge to act tough is highest among LTS and ETO students because they are not allowed to smoke at home.

Only 6.7% and 7.9% respectively smoke regularly at home. These groups of students also smoke more regularly at school, 8.8% and 7.9% respectively, at social events, 43.1% and 48.8% respectively and in public places 30.8% and 27.0% respectively. The fact that a fourth of all MULO students (22.5%) smoke at home regularly nonetheless while only 6.5% smokes regularly at school. We find a similar situation at the LBGO schools. 32.1% smokes at home regularly while none of the interviewees admitted to smoke at school.

Table 3: A few questions put to students with regard to their smoking habit

<b>Questions</b>	<b>MULO %</b>	<b>LBGO %</b>	<b>LTS %</b>	<b>ETO %</b>
<i>Have you ever experimented with cigarettes?</i>	52.4	49.3	69.0	72.1
<i>Have you smoked on at least 1 or more days during the last 30 days?</i>	12.6	18.2	29.0	30.6
<i>Have you smoked on at least 20 days during the last 30 days?</i>	2.6	2.1	7.4	0.0
<i>Do you long for a cigarette in the morning or at all times?</i>	6.7	0.0	5.4	0.0

### **Age groups**

It is alarming, still, that almost half of the youngsters age 12 (43.7%) answered with ‘yes’ to the question “Have you ever experimented with cigarettes?” This percentage is even somewhat higher than the percentage of the group age 13 (38.2%). Youngsters age 16, for the largest group (61.4%).

The group of young people age 16 received the highest percentages at most questions. 22.0% smokes at home regularly while 7.6% smokes regularly at school. The percentage of young people age 16 smoking during social events regularly is high (40.9%). It is striking that 4.5% of the group age 16 has smoked on at least 20 days during the last 30 days and the same number (4.1%) admits to have a longing for a cigarette all the time or in the morning.

### **Remark**

Since the age group 12 till 15 years is small, it is better to make it one group.

## **II. Knowledge and attitude towards smoking**

### **Total**

86.3% of the non-smokers answered “No” when asked if they would definitely not smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette. So 13.7% is not sure but only 0.5% admits that they will maybe smoke and 0.1% admits that will smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette. A

simple calculation shows us that 13.7% of this group has not given a clear “No” to this question and they can therefore be labeled as belonging to the group of smokers.

In order to obtain a clear picture as to whether the youth in Suriname receives the necessary information at home with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking, the following question was asked: “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences of smoking with you?” 72.4% of the non-smokers group answered ‘yes’ which means that 27.6% does not receive information at home. From where, then, do they get the motivation not to smoke? There is a possibility that smoking is not being discussed within the family because no one smokes and the problem therefore never presented itself. It is striking, however, that among the group of smokers, the same percentage (73.0%) received information at home from a family member about the harmful consequences. This means that 27% did receive information but it has had no effect on their smoking habit. If the information given at home had the same effect on the smokers as on the non-smokers, we can assume that this information was not given professionally enough.

Table 4. Questions with regard to knowledge and attitude towards smoking

Questions	Smokers (%) “Yes”	Non-smokers (%) “Yes”
Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences of smoking with you?	73.0	72.4
Is it difficult for someone to stop smoking?	36.5	38.0

That information is lacking is clear from the fact that only 38.0% and 36.5% of the non-smokers and the smokers group respectively, are convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. 86.4% of the group of non-smokers indicates that they will not smoke during the next 12 months. 0.8% indicates that they might smoke and 0.5% is definitely convinced to smoke within the next 12 months. We see once again that within this group of non-smokers, surely a tenth (13.6%) are potential smokers (see table 5). When asked “Did you already smoke before the age of 10?”, 19.0% answered ‘yes’. So almost a fifth of the group of young people in Suriname start smoking before the age of 10! This is an alarming fact!

Table 5: The percentage of students who will or will not smoke within the next 12 months

	%
Definitely not	86.4
Possibly not	12.3
Possible	0.8
Definitely	0.5
Total	100

## Gender

To the question put to non-smokers as to whether they would definitely not smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette, 83.7% of the boys and 88.1% of the girls answered “No”. So girls are firmer in their decision not to smoke than boys. This impression was also given when the question was asked, “Would you smoke if your best friend offered you a cigarette?” 0.7% of the boys and 0.4% of the girls answered ‘yes’. Still, 0.2% of the girls confirms that they will smoke if they were offered a cigarette by their best friend. There are no boys who confirmed this. A simple calculation shows us that 16.3% of the boys and 11.9% of the girls has not answered this question with a firm “No” so that they can be labeled as belonging to the group of smokers in future.

In order to obtain a picture of the youth in Suriname as to whether they are receiving necessary information at home with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking, the following question was asked: “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences with you?”. From the group of non-smokers, 74.3% of the boys and 71.5% of the girls answered “yes”. So 25.7% of the boys and 28.5 % of the girls do not receive information at home. It is striking, however, that among the group of smokers, more girls (74.6%) than boys (71.0%) received information from a family member at home with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking. So more boys than girls indicate to receive the defects in question, still, the number of boys smoking is larger.

From the group of non-smokers and smokers among boys, only 36.2% and 37.25 respectively are convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. Among girls the percentages are 39.1% (among the non-smokers) and 35.5% (among the smokers). 85.4% of the group of non-smokers among boys and 87.2% of the group of non-smokers among girls indicate that they will also not smoke during the next 12 months. 0.7% of these boys and 0.9% of these girls are definitely convinced that they will smoke within the next 12 months. We once again see that, among the group of non-smokers, at least a tenth (14.6% of the boys and 12.8% of the girls) are potential smokers. When asked “Did you already smoke before the age of 10?”, 18.7% of the boys and 18.0% of the girls answered “yes”. So, both boys and girls start to smoke at a young age!

### **Schools**

The largest group which answered “No” to the question addressed to the non-smoking group as to whether they would definitely not smoke if they were offered a cigarette by their best friend, were the MULO students (89.6%) and the smallest group that of the ETO students (71.4%). The percentages for LBGO and LTS were 79.9 and 86.5%.

To the question “Will you maybe smoke if your best friend offers you a cigarette?” only the MULO students (0.8%) answered “yes”. Still, only the LBGO students (0.4%) confirm that they will smoke if their best friend offers them a cigarette. There are no other students who confirm this. In order to obtain a picture of whether Surinamese youth receives necessary information at home with regard to the harmful effects of smoking, the following question was asked: “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful consequences of smoking with you?”. From the non-smoking group, the MULO, LBGO, LTS and ETO students, 75.5, 64.2, 80.0 and 53.9% respectively, answered “Yes”. So, 46.1% of the ETO group does not receive information. It is striking that this is also the largest group (72.1%) that has experimented with smoking.



Of the non-smokers and the smokers at MULO, only 40.2 and 34.5% respectively, were convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. Among the LBGO students, the percentages are 34.3% (for the non-smokers) and 38.4% (for the smokers). The numbers of the LTS and the ETO students are too small to provide a reliable result.

89.6% of the group of non-smokers among MULO students and 79.9% of the non-smokers among the ETO students indicate that will not smoke during the next 12 months as well. Here as well, it is clear, that the ETO students are more willing to smoke since 20.1% gave an unsure answer. 0.9% of both MULO and LBGO students indicate that they may possibly smoke while 0.9% of the MULO students are definitely convinced that they will smoke during the next 12 months. To the question “Did you already smoke before the age of 10?”, 18.8% and 18.2% of the LBGO students answered “Yes”.

### **Age group**

To the question put amongst non-smokers as to whether they would definitely not smoke when offered a cigarette by their best friend, there was no clear difference in answer among the groups. The percentages of students age 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, which answered with “No” were 86.5, 87.1, 87.8, 85.7 and 86.8% respectively. It is striking though that 2.2% of the students age 14 and 0.5% of the students age 15, reacted positively to the question “Will you maybe smoke if your best friend offered you a cigarette?” Still, only the group age 15 (0.5%) confirmed that they will smoke if their best friend offered them a cigarette. There are no other students who confirm this. In order to obtain a picture of whether the youth in Suriname receives necessary information at home of a family member with regard to the harmful effects of smoking the following question was asked “Has a family member ever discussed the harmful effects of smoking with you?” From the non-smoking group age 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, the percentages 78.2%, 79.0%, 68.9% and 71.4% respectively, answered with “Yes”. So, 31.1% of the youngsters age 15 do not receive information.

From the non-smoking and the smoking group age 12, only 34.4 and 40.3% respectively were convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking. Among the youngsters age 13, this was 42.9% and 0.0% respectively and among the youngsters age 14, 44.4% and 31.6%, from the group age 15, 31.5% and 55.3% and from the group age 16, 37.0% and 31.8% respectively.

## **III. Knowledge with regard to exposure of smoking**

### **Total number**

The group of non-smokers were asked various questions with regard to the reaction of the community on smoking. As such the following questions were asked: Do boys who smoke have more friends?, are they more appealing?, are they more intelligent or do they have a more macho appearance? 30.6% remarked that they have more friends, 25.5% thinks they are more appealing while 15.6% shares the opinion that they are more intelligent or have a more macho appearance.

When these questions were asked to the group of smokers, their reaction was that respectively .....% of the smokers are more attractive while 15.6% shared the opinion that smokers appear more intelligent or that they have a more macho appearance.

When these questions were asked to the group of non-smoking girls with regard to group of smoking boys, their reaction was respectively 31.7%, 24.8% and 16.1%. There are no striking differences between these groups.

When these questions were asked with regard to the group of smoking girls, the opinion of the group of non-smoking boys was 24.2%, 18.0% and 11.6% respectively. Among the group of non-smoking girls, 25.5% stated that they have more friends, 16.7% thinks they are more appealing and 12.5% shares the opinion that they are more intelligent or that they appear more sophisticated. When these questions were put before the group of smoking girls with regard to the group of smoking boys, their reaction was 21.0%, 27.6% and 26.8% respectively. There are striking differences nevertheless with regard to the opinion of smokers among boys and girls on the effect of smoking on themselves and their fellow-companions.

Table 7: Questions with regard to the reaction of the environment on smoking

	<b>Non smoking boys</b>		<b>Non smoking girls</b>		<b>Smoking boys</b>		<b>Smoking girls</b>	
	<b>B</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>G</b>
More friends	28.3	24.2	31.7	25.5	28.7	18.7	21.0	15.7
More attractive	26.9	18.0	24.8	16.7	29.4	15.6	27.6	16.1
More intelligent/ macho appearance/more sophisticated	15.6	11.6	16.1	12.5	33.8	25.9	26.8	18.0
Helps to have a more calm feeling/at events, parties, social meetings	29.4		25.1		35.4		38.7	

Both non-smokers and smokers were asked the question as to who shared the firm opinion that smoking is bad for your health. Among non-smoking boys and girls: the answer was 59.8% and 64.6%. They were asked afterwards if they shared the opinion that smoking by others can harm your health. 36.5% of the smoking boys answered confirmatively while 53.4% of the smoking girls shared this opinion as well. Both groups were then asked whether someone smoked in their presence either at home or elsewhere, within the past 7 days.

46.9% of the non-smoking boys and 51.6% of the non-smoking girls experienced this as a problem at home. The percentages among the smoking groups are higher, 68.2% for the boys and 76.8% for the girls. They were then asked if someone had smoked in their presence within the past 7 days, either at home or elsewhere. Among the non-smoking group, 60.6% of the boys and 59.6% of the girls answered “Yes”. This information clearly shows that the youngsters in the non-smoking group are passive smokers while the youngsters in the smoking group are active- and passive smokers.

## Schools

Table 8: Questions with regard to the reaction of the environment towards smoking

	Non smokers MULO		Non smokers LBGO		Non smokers LTS	
	B	G	B	G	B	G
More friends	27.7	21.0	35.8	34.0	27.5	22.6
More attractive	17.7	10.7	41.9	28.5	-	-
More intelligent/ macho appearance/more sophisticated	11.3	8.8	25.3	20.8	-	12.8
Helps to have a more calm feeling/at events, parties, social meetings	25.3		29.3		-	

Remarkable from table 8 is the fact that strikingly higher percentages were noted among non-smoking LBGO students. Table 8 shows us that both non-smokers and smokers at LBGO shared the same opinion with regard to this question. Almost a third of these students (28.5%) think that girls appear more attractive and 41.9% thinks this to be so for the boys. More than a third shares the opinion that smoking boys (35.8%) and girls (34.0%) have more friends. The non-smoking MULO students have qualified smoking lower but more than a fifth thinks that smoking boys (27.7%) and smoking girls (21.0%) attract more friends.

Surprisingly in this group of smokers is the fact that the smoking MULO students plainly share the same opinion as the smoking LBGO students with regard to being 'more appealing' (see table 9). A remarkable difference is nevertheless 'having more friends'.

Twice as much LBGO students as MULO students think that boys have more friends. 38.5% and 19.2% respectively. This while the difference in percentage is even three times more among the girls. 32.7% and 10.1% respectively.

Table 9: Questions with regard to the reaction of the environment towards smoking

	Non smokers MULO		Non smokers LBGO		Non smokers LTS	
	B	G	B	G	B	G
More friends	19.2	10.1	38.5	32.7	19.4	10.5
More attractive	32.4	17.2	30.3	14.3	-	-
More intelligent/ macho appearance/more sophisticated	34.4	22.7	31.9	28.9	-	-
Helps to have a more calm						

feeling/at events, parties, social meetings	41.5	44.4	-
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Both non-smokers and smokers were asked about their firm opinion with regard to smoking being bad for your health. This question was asked to the non-smoking and smoking MULO students. The answer was 91.9% and 75.4%. The question was then asked if they share the opinion that smoking by others could be harmful to your health. The answer was 65.7% and 50.2% respectively. The non-smoking and smoking LBGO students were asked the same question: the answer was 75.4% and 64.5% respectively. The question was then asked whether they share the opinion that smoking by others can be harmful for your health. The answers were 53.9% and 42.2% respectively.

The question was then asked to the students whether someone smoked in their presence either at home or elsewhere, within the past 7 days. The non-smoking and smoking MULO students gave a positive reaction to the question with regard to someone smoking in their presence at home, namely 47.1% and 74.9% respectively. To the question whether someone has smoked in his or her presence elsewhere the positive reaction was 60.0% and 82.3% respectively.

The non-smoking and smoking LBGO students gave a positive reaction to the question with regard to someone smoking in their presence at home, 56.4% and 68.9% respectively. The question whether someone has smoked in their presence the positive answer was 60.7% and 86.2% respectively.

#### IV. Attitude towards stopping with smoking

A third of the active smokers would rather stop smoking. This means that there is a great need for help during stopping with smoking. This is also clear from the fact that 68% have tried to stop smoking but without success. There are also students who have stopped smoking. Of this group approximately 59.8% has already stopped a year or longer. In order to have a view of the reason for stopping with smoking, 57.1% of the boys and 52.9% of the girls did so because of health reasons. The boys and girls also answered positively with regard to money reasons, respectively 4.1% and 2.7%. 13.3% and 6.8% respectively, stopped because the family disapproved, 1.6% and 2.5% respectively because friends disapproved and because of other reasons, 23.9 and 35.2% respectively. It is clear here as well that it is wise to find out what the other reasons may be.

Table 10. Periods during which they stopped with smoking

Months	%
1 – 3	16
4 – 11	10
12 – 24	10
More than 24	12
More than 36	50

The urge to stop smoking has also been surveyed. As such, 89.9% of the active smokers think they can stop if they want. But the same research has shown that 68.3% has already tried but failed.

## V. Knowledge about media messages

A survey was also made of whether students had received anti-smoking messages through the media in the past month. Apparently, 31.9% had seen a lot of messages, 41.8% had only seen a few and slightly more than a fourth (26.3%) had not seen any messages at all (see table 11).

Table 11. The percentage of students who received anti-smoking messages through the media within the past 30 days.

	<b>Many messages (%)</b>	<b>A few messages (%)</b>	<b>No messages (%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	31.9	41.8	26.3
Girls	35.7	39.3	24.9
Boys	27.7	45.1	27.2

We can conclude therefore that certainly 68% of the Surinamese students receive information insufficiently via the media with regard to the negative effects of smoking. This means there is still a lot to do. Anti-smoking messages can also be given during games, concerts, in discotheques, at parties and at other gatherings. During this research, it was also surveyed whether the students had ever received anti-smoking messages.

Table 12. The percentage of students who received anti-smoking messages during games, concerts, discotheques, parties and other gatherings

	<b>Many messages (%)</b>	<b>A few messages (%)</b>	<b>No messages (%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	26.7	45.4	28.0
Girls	28.9	41.9	29.2

Table 12 shows us therefore that approximately 63% of the Surinamese students insufficiently receive anti-smoking messages during games, concerts, in discotheques, at parties and at other gatherings.

There are obviously many factors that can influence the smoking habit of the youth. One of these factors is a movie in which famous actors light up a cigarette after an heroic deed. The students were asked whether they saw actors smoking in the movie on television or on a video. Only 29.2% answered 'sometimes', 2.8% answered 'never' and 68.1% answered "often".

A policy measure to stop films in which the actors smoke from being shown on television is not possible. Still, a better education to young people would be to point out to them that actors who do heroic deeds are only fantasy and that this fantasy does not correspond with reality.

Another factor that can stimulate smoking is having or wearing items (t-shirt, pen, bag etc) with the logo of a cigarette brand on them (see table 13).

Table 13: Percentage of students who have something with a cigarette brand as logo

	<b>Yes (%)</b>	<b>No (%)</b>
<b>Non-smokers</b>	20.6	71.4
<b>Smokers</b>	31.0	69.0

So, a percentage higher than 20% seems to have such a logo. It is remarkable that cigarette brands can be seen during sports events or other broadcasts on television. 49.9% of the students claim to have seen this a lot in the past 30 days. 40.1% claims to have seen this sometimes. So, together, 90% of the students have seen cigarette advertisements during sports events on television.

A much occurring fact is that notice boards are being used as means of advertising for cigarettes. Among non-smokers, 29.2% claim to have seen a notice board in the past 30 days. Among active smokers, 31.6% claim to have seen notice boards. A survey was also made as to whether students had not seen any advertisements for cigarettes within the past 30 days. Among non-smokers, this percentage was 25.3% and among smokers 24.4%.

The largest part, namely 75%, sees cigarette ads regularly while approximately 70% has not notice any anti-smoking messages.

## **VI. What is taught at school**

At school some attention is indeed given to the harmful effects of smoking. 45.6% of the students have received information about the dangers of smoking in classes during the past year. Respectively, 43% and 49% of the boys and girls. These percentages are still less than half. If we look at table 9, it seems that the least information was given at LTS and ETO.

## **Conclusions**

### **Smoking habit**

- More than half of the school-going youth in Suriname (54.3%) has experimented with smoking, once.
- There is a higher tolerance with regard to smoking. Almost a fourth (22,5%) of the school-going youth admitted to smoke regularly at home while only 5.4% dared to smoke at school. It appears, therefore, that more is allowed at home than at school.
- Although there is a higher tolerance towards girls, more people of the male gender smoke than people of the female gender.
- More is allowed at home than at school while demonstrating tough behavior during social events stimulates young people to smoke.
- Almost a fifth of the youth in Suriname starts smoking before age 10. This is an alarming fact!
- 72.4% of the non-smokers and 73.0% of the smokers admits to have received the necessary information with regard to the harmful consequences of smoking from a family member at home. The information had no effect therefore on the habit of smoking.
- That expert information is necessary is proven by the fact that three-quarters of the active smokers would rather stop smoking now. 68% has tried to stop smoking in the past year but without success.
- Boys drink more than girls. More boys (62.8%) than girls (46.0%) have experimented with smoking. Among fervent smokers who have smoked on at least 20 days during the past 30 days, the number of boys is also larger (5.7%) than the number of girls (0.6%).

Notwithstanding this fact, there is a greater tolerance in the society towards girls who smoke. 48.7% of the girls against 9.9% of the boys smoke at home.

- Most smokers can be found at ETO, no less than 72.1% has experimented once with cigarettes. Still, there were no fervent smokers on ETO. On LTS, 69.0% answered this question with “Yes” and there were indeed fervent smokers among LTS students (7.4%). The urge to act tough is greatest at ETO and LTS because they are not allowed to smoke at home. Only 6.7% and 7.9% respectively claim to smoke regularly at home. Most smoking occurs at social events (43.1% and 48.8% respectively) and in public places (30.8% and 27.0% respectively). A reverse situation can be seen among MULO and LBGO students. These youngsters are allowed more at home. The percentages of MULO students smoking regularly at home are 22.5% and 32.1% for LBGO students. Only 6.5% of the MULO students smoke at school, none of the LBGO students smoke at school.
- Almost half of the students age 12 (43.7%) have experimented once with smoking. As they get older they start smoking more since the percentage of students age 16 and up who are smoking is 61.4%. An alarming fact is that 19% of the school-going youth admits to have smoked before the age of 10. Almost a fifth of the young people in Suriname start smoking before they are teenagers.

### **Knowledge and attitude towards smoking**

13.7% of the non-smokers are potential smokers because they do not know how they will react if their best friend offered them a cigarette. Most students receive information at home with regard to the harmful effects of smoking but there are no results. The conclusion can be made expertise and approach to tackle this problem is lacking at home. The information received by the young people in Suriname with regard to the harmful effects of smoking is not effective enough. Among non-smokers only 38.0% and among smokers only 36.5% is convinced that it is difficult to stop once someone starts smoking.

### **Knowledge and exposure of smoking**

Both non-smokers (87.1% and smokers (72.2%) share the opinion that smoking is harmful to your health. A strikingly low percentage of the non-smokers (62.8%) and of the smokers (43.2%) shares the opinion that smoking from others is harmful and 31.2% even states that they are not convinced that smoking from others can harm your health. Although many students do not smoke, they are more than often exposed to smoking from others.

50.0% of the non-smokers experience this at home and 60% experience this elsewhere. So many non-smokers are passive smokers.

### **Attitude towards stopping with smoking**

A third-quarter of the smokers would rather stop smoking but do not succeed. Most people stop smoking because of health reasons.

### **Knowledge about media messages**

The largest number of students (75%) sees cigarette advertisements regularly while approximately 68% remarks anti-smoking advertisements insufficiently.

### **What is taught at school**



Less than half of the students learn at school about the harmful effects of smoking. It is recommended to start an aggressive anti-smoking campaign already at primary school.

## **Recommendations**

- It is recommended not to allow smoking during social events.
- If an anti-smoking campaign is held among young people in future, it must be considered that success is only possible if the parents are involved as well.
- The young people in Suriname must receive information from experts.
- It is recommended to apply the same rules for boys and girls; so there should not be more tolerance towards girls.
- An aggressive anti-smoking campaign must be held.
- In order to achieve an effective result, it is important to increase information with regard to the harmful effects of smoking.
- A tax increase on cigarettes so that it becomes less accessible.