



# Tobacco Control Success Story: Protecting Kids from Big Tobacco's Influence in Indonesia

For 15 years, children participating in Indonesia's national badminton trials were required to wear jerseys that advertised one of the country's most powerful tobacco brands on their chests. These children, all between the ages of 5 and 18, were not only targeted with tobacco advertising; they were exploited to help advertise the company's deadly tobacco products. In 2021, following a multi-year campaign spearheaded by the Indonesian civil society group Yayasan Lentera Anak (Children's Lantern Foundation) with support from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, the Indonesia Badminton Association (PBSI) dropped the tobacco company, Djarum, as the corporate sponsor—a dramatic and promising development for public health in Indonesia.

## THE CHALLENGE

The Djarum Foundation, founded by PT Djarum, one of Indonesia's most powerful tobacco companies, had been the corporate sponsor of the national badminton tryouts since 2006. Participants included 5- to 18-year-old children from across Indonesia. The auditions were nationally televised, and the children were required to wear jerseys displaying the Djarum tobacco brand logo.

Unfortunately, Indonesia lacks comprehensive tobacco control regulations that prohibit this kind of tobacco marketing and event sponsorship. Current regulations on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) fall short of protecting consumers, including youth, from tobacco promotion and the economic exploitation of young people by the tobacco industry.

Badminton is a highly popular sport in Indonesia, and Indonesian athletes have won a number of international tournaments. Young children aspiring to compete nationally or internationally in badminton had no choice but to participate in the Djarum-sponsored auditions.

Many event organizers in Indonesia have been hesitant to take a stance against tobacco companies, which provide resources, infrastructure and training for popular events, while using sponsorships to promote their brands. A common concern is that no other sponsors will step forward to replace the tobacco industry's support. In addition, the goodwill purchased by Djarum through its badminton sponsorship allowed the company to falsely portray itself as a hero in the eyes of the public and policymakers, making it difficult for tobacco-control and youth advocates to point out how egregious the sponsorship was.

## OUR ROLE

To combat Big Tobacco's influence, the Indonesian tobacco control movement joined forces with child protection and human rights groups.

At the suggestion of the child rights community, Yayasan Lentera Anak and other civil society groups argued that Djarum's badminton sponsorship violated the "child economic exploitation" article of Indonesia's Child Protection Law. Lentera Anak and nine other organizations reported the Djarum Foundation to Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (the Indonesian Child Protection Commission), a government agency, demanding an end to marketing tactics targeting young Indonesians. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' Global Legal Center provided legal advice on TAPS.

Djarum fought back with a smear campaign on social media that attempted to intimidate the civil society groups and influence the government's decisions. Lentera Anak and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids responded by coordinating more closely with child protection and human rights groups; mobilizing lawyers and youth to build and defend their case; generating widespread media coverage; and conducting outreach to elected officials and government ministries.



## The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids:

- **Developed a strategic campaign plan with local partners** to ensure that Lentera Anak had a strong argument and legal case against Djarum. This included gaining support from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission and child rights organizations to fight the influential tobacco company.
- **Developed a mitigation plan** to prepare for a counterattack from Djarum. This included outreach to a range of influential experts in marketing and communications, child psychologists, child protection senior advocates and lawyers to confirm that evidence of Djarum violating the Child Protection Law during its badminton auditions was well-documented. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and Lentera Anak also supported focus group discussions with the Indonesian Child Protection Commission and child rights organizations to expand the network of allies in the fight against the tobacco industry.
- **Reached out to the media** to highlight how the tobacco industry was violating child economic exploitation laws. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids worked closely with its media partner, Aliansi Jurnalis Independen (the Alliance of Independent Journalists), Jakarta, which ran media workshops and successfully generated quality coverage on the topic.
- **Launched a social media campaign (#TangkisEksplorasiAnak #SmashDjarumOut)** to amplify the issue and educate the public on Djarum's illegal marketing tactics.

## VICTORY

The outcry from the child protection and tobacco control communities pushed the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (MWECP) to issue decree PP59/2019, which mandated the Ministry to coordinate and consolidate reports from government and nongovernmental institutions engaged in child protection issues. The reports identified four categories of child rights violations, including the unavailability of smoke-free areas and the TAPS ban.

## ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is the leading advocacy organization working to reduce tobacco use and its deadly consequences in the United States and around the world. Through strategic communications and policy advocacy campaigns, we promote the adoption of proven solutions that are most effective at reducing tobacco use and save the most lives. For more information, please visit [tobaccofreekids.org](http://tobaccofreekids.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

After a two-year legal battle, Djarum removed its logo from the participants' uniforms in 2019. In 2021, Djarum withdrew its sponsorship from the national badminton auditions. In January of 2021, PBSI announced that it had ended its sponsor relationship with Djarum and replaced it with Telkom, a state-owned telecommunication enterprise. This demonstrated not only that Big Tobacco's influence can be mitigated, but that other companies can step in to support the activities it once funded.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids' initiative to discredit the tobacco industry in Indonesia shows that it is possible to fight Big Tobacco and its deceptive tactics by engaging the right civil society groups and the media, and by mobilizing key government officials with the power to confront the tobacco industry—even in a country that has weak tobacco control regulations and is heavily influenced by the industry.

- 1 **Choose your battle wisely:** Pick a unique case against one powerful brand that has the potential to impact the actions of other tobacco companies, rather than trying to take down the entire industry at once.
- 2 **Know your target's weaknesses:** To maximize profits, the tobacco industry aims to create a positive name for itself, making it sensitive to anything that may harm its reputation or expose its true intentions. The best way to draw government and public attention to the tobacco industry's dishonorable tactics is by exposing the way these companies exploit and target children.
- 3 **Effectively prepare your case:** The tobacco industry must be held accountable using consistent monitoring and public exposure in close collaboration with local partners—including, in this case, child protection organizations.
- 4 **Activate social media campaigns and involve the media:** For the best outcomes, policy advocacy should be supported by media interventions to educate the public about the issues at stake.

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