

THE LEADING ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE PROMOTION OF ACTIONS TO TACKLE NON-COMMUNICABLE CHRONIC DISEASES (NCDs) IN BRAZIL

Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of death in Brazil. In 2007, they accounted for 72% of deaths in the country. Brazil is committed to taking actions to address Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases and has launched a Strategic Action Plan to tackle NCDs in Brazil during 2011-2022.

ACT+, a non-governmental organization focused on tobacco control and control of Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases (NCDs), is coordinating a number of initiatives in order to contribute to and strengthen the implementation of the Plan in Brazil. Among these initiatives, one of the highlights is the preparation of a "shadow report" to monitor the plan from the viewpoint of civil society.



MONITORING THE PLAN

The first shadow report aims to critically evaluate the implementation of the national Plan to tackle NCDs, with emphasis on the actions proposed along the Health Promotion Axis (Axis II). Various sources of information have been used to prepare this report, including document analysis, bibliographical reviews on the subject and interviews with experts.

Major achievements:

◆ Improvement of surveillance mechanisms, more specifically monitoring risks and protective factors related to NCDs.



◆ Implementation of effective policies for tobacco control, such as the National Tobacco Law which raises taxes, bans tobacco advertising at point of sale and increases the size of warning labels on cigarette packs.

◆ Development of the "New Eating Habits Guideline" for the Brazilian population.

◆ Review of the so-called "Dry Law," the Health Academy Program, and the Popular Pharmacy Program in Brazil, and inclusion of HPV vaccines for teenagers in the National Immunization Program.

Challenges:

- ◆ Improve the mechanisms of governance and civil society participation in the implementation and monitoring of the Plan, including review of targets and indicators.
- ◆ Encourage inclusion of the topic in the agendas of the National Health Council and other instances of popular participation at all three levels of government.
- ◆ Monitor the actual impact of voluntary agreements with the food industry by measuring indicators related to the Plan's healthy eating habits.
- ◆ Adopt tax policies to reduce the consumption of alcoholic and sugary beverages.
- ◆ Implement a complete ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship of tobacco products by adopting standardized packaging for cigarettes.
- ◆ Regulate ultraprocessed food advertising and improve labelling, particularly for children.
- ◆ Expand the scope of the Health Academy Program.
- ◆ Develop coordinated and multisectoral actions for effective implementation of the Plan.
- ◆ Protect public policies addressing NCDs from commercial and economic interests of sectors which profit from the consumption of products responsible for the aggravation of risk factors.
- ◆ Develop and implement strategies and actions to tackle NCDs which are sensitive to social inequalities of the Brazilian population, in order to help reduce health system inequities.
- ◆ Include the issue of NCDs in policies for sustainable development.

OTHER INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY ACT+ FOR ADDRESSING NCDs INCLUDE:

- ◆ Preparation and discussion of a document with recommendations to avoid conflicts of interest in the implementation of public policies related to NCDs.
- ◆ Establishment of a multi-sector working group, involving public and private hospitals and health care provider entities, to discuss strategies for training health professionals on NCDs and their risk factors.
- ◆ Organization of a strategic multi-sector event to discuss and develop proposals for strengthening the National Health System in the area of prevention, care and treatment of NCDs.

NETWORK

One relevant pillar to achieve effective results in addressing Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases (NCDs) is working in partnership with civil society organizations to encourage the exchanging of experiences, the implementation of advocacy, increased social participation monitoring the action-oriented plans, engagement in discussions in councils and health conferences and support of mobilization actions by the population.

To this end, **ACT+** coordinates the NCD Network, a coalition comprised of representatives from civil society organizations, including medical and professional associations, consumer rights organizations and individuals who are engaged in promoting advances in response to NCDs.