



King Hussein Cancer Foundation  
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## Get our Children Before They Turn 26 Years of Age

By HRH Princess Dina Mired

I was part of the generation who were known for their great hospitality and generosity. The best of everything came out for the guests, from the food to the tableware. However, we always knew how particularly valuable a guest was when, the shiny silver tray would suddenly appear ...neatly stacked with cigarette packs of all brands...and not just the local brands mind you ... And the tray would be passed around to all the guests proudly and ceremoniously around the room, taking care not to step on the children running around through clouds of smoke.

...And this is how a generation of smokers came to be. At least then, the deadly statistics were not known...we simply did not know the facts...

Now 30, 40 years on...we **know** the facts, we **know** that tobacco industry is responsible for the death of 50% of our population from cancer, diabetes, heart disease and lung diseases. We also know that tobacco industry is expected to kill **a billion** souls this century...

However, what we don't know is that the scene, strategy and the tactics of the tobacco industry are essentially still the same, but with one difference; the tactics have become ever more sophisticated, sneakier and more effective, especially in the developing countries.

Tobacco industry are actually amazing profitable businesses. They have clear strategies that are unwavering, long term and focused. Their overall arching goal is to get **YOU, our YOUTH** to pick up **your** first cigarette or shisha and more importantly to never let it go...

They have fine-tuned their marketing research to a total science. They figured out that if young people don't start smoking by age 26, they almost certainly won't start. So they made it their business to know YOU.

They know **YOU, our YOUTH** more than your parents do. They Know **YOU** our **Youth** more than you know yourself. They know **your** vulnerabilities, your life stages and transitions, your ego, your stresses and most importantly they know when to strike. They take note of your life passages, peer pressure and stressful points in your life. They understand that youth are more vulnerable to marketing than adults and therefore they strike through sneaky integration with your activities; school, work, college, military service...etc

They understand the transition from smoking that first cigarette to becoming a confirmed pack-a-day smoker. They even have names to these strategies: The "preparatory stage", "trying stage", "experimental stage", "regular use stage", and the end game ..."addiction".

Tobacco companies have budgets that supersede countries. Tobacco companies spent 10 Billion in 2008 to market their products. They gear their budget to pay for price cuts through coupons and giveaways to make tobacco products more affordable to **YOU**, design products that appeal to **YOU** by using flavoring, or by using misleading terms such as "slims" and "thins" to entice especially girls to consider tobacco as an aid to weight loss..."light" or "low tar" and many devious ways to get **YOU**.

When you are in the mood to experiment, they make sure they are there right outside your school. When you feel the need to be cool, they find YOU and worse, they have defined what **cool** is for you When you need to rebel against your parents, they are also there selling you cigarettes cheaper than candy!

And they have the capital to spend and spend and spend to make sure that **YOU** remain their lifelong customer. It is **YOU** who provide them with their fuel to thrive. **YOU** our precious YOUTH are their lifeline, unfortunately they are not ***your lifeline***...

The minute you pick up that cigarette or shisha, you are doomed. You are already on death row. And then when you are sick, be it from cancer, heart disease ...etc, they suddenly disappear from your life.

They, who were always ever-present in your life and activities, they simply disappear. They will not be by your bedside when you are sick. They will not pay your hospital bills with the tainted dollars they earned at the back of your health...

So what is to be done? Governments are obliged to protect **YOU** from tobacco, be it the cigarette and shisha and other tobacco products. They need to be serious in de-normalizing both tobacco use and tobacco industry through effective communication and strict adherence to article 5.3 of FCTC.

They need to raise tobacco taxes sharply, and the revenues collected to be used as ammunition to strengthen implementation of national tobacco control plans. Governments need to implement every single line of the WHO EMPOWER program. And they need to start NOW.

However, we also need **YOU** our Youth to be part of the battle. The best defense is offense. You need to be empowered with knowledge and facts. You need to know that you are not *choosing* the cigarette or the shisha; **YOU** are but a pawn in a very nasty billion-dollar industry that has blood on its hands.

You need to be empowered. YOU need to get your power back; you need to be able to see the facts clearly through the dense smoke screen. You need to arm yourselves and others with advocacy and leadership skills. You need to arm yourselves with knowledge and facts about the tactics of the tobacco industry that targets YOU. You need to take ownership of the tobacco movement and to make a decisive decision not to be the victim anymore.

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HRH Princess Dina Mired has led the King Hussein Cancer Foundation (KHCF) in Jordan as Director General since 2002. In her capacity as Director, she founded, developed and institutionalized the fundraising and development function and programs at the Foundation, making it one of the best fundraising institutions in Jordan and the region.

As the mother of a cancer survivor, Princess Dina makes exceptional efforts to combat cancer and is very passionate about the cause. Under her direct leadership, KHCF has succeeded in enlisting all segments of society in the fight against cancer with the sole purpose of supporting cancer patients in Jordan and the Arab World. Princess Dina also leads the largest not-for-profit cancer coverage program (CCP) in Jordan, with over 110,000 members.

HRH Princess Dina, born Dina Mohammad Khalifeh, married HRH Prince Mired Raad Zaid Al-Hussein in 1992 and is the proud mother of three children. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Financial Analysis from Warwick University, as well as a Master's degree in International Banking and Financial Services from Reading University; both in the United Kingdom.

Since she is one of the leading figures promoting early detection and screening of breast cancer for women in Jordan, Princess Dina was appointed as the Honorary Chairperson of the Jordan Breast Cancer Program (JBCP), and also serves in a number of high-profile international roles through which she advocates and gains support for the fight against cancer including:

- Honorary Co-President of Harvard University Global Task Force for Expanded Access to Cancer Control and Care in the Developing World



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- Member of the Presidential Advisory Panel of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)
- Ambassador of the UICC World Cancer Declaration Ambassadors Program
- LIVESTRONG Global Envoy for the LIVESTRONG Foundation
- Active member of the Clinton Global Initiative
- Honorary Member of the Mediterranean Task Force for Cancer Control in Italy
- Ambassador for the Global Smoke-free Worksite Challenge
- Member of the Advisory Board of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Child

In September 2011, Princess Dina was elected to deliver the keynote speech on behalf of all civil society (social, civic and voluntary organizations) at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly High Level Meeting on NCDs; the first ever High Level meeting on NCD's in which HRH urged world leaders to put the fight against (NCD's) as a priority on the General Health Agenda.



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