



WADING THROUGH THE SMOKE: LIMITING TOBACCO USE IN AFRICA

In Ghana, a working-class laborer will spend half a day's salary to purchase a single pack of cigarettes. In Kenya, that same pack will keep more than two pounds of fish off the dinner table of a growing family. As the economies grow in many African countries, so has the popularity of smoking.

For the past three years Dr. Jeffrey Drope, assistant professor of political science, has worked with health officials and advocates in 12 African countries to develop and analyze the results of tobacco control policies. The work was part of the Africa Tobacco Situational Analysis project, sponsored by a Canadian government agency and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

As an international politics professor, Drope focuses on the impact and variation in economic policy used by different countries. His earlier work focused on non-tariff trade policies. Since starting on the tobacco project in 2008, he has become increasingly involved and now is summarizing his results in a book, which is due out this spring. The book, *Tobacco Control in Africa: People, Politics and Policies*, for which Drope is editor and contributor, will include a chapter on each country.

Each country has unique challenges and varying results but provides examples for future success, says Drope. For example, he

cites the challenges in Kenya, which passed smoke-free laws but has been challenged with monitoring and enforcing the new law.

"If current trends continue, by the mid-2020s, 85 percent of tobacco deaths will be concentrated in Africa, Asia and Latin America," Drope says. "The book is meant to help lay the framework for other countries and help avoid unnecessary deaths in the future."

The publisher, Anthem Press, has agreed to make the book available online for free so it is accessible to scholars, policymakers and practitioners in developing countries who might otherwise not be able to afford the book.

The program's success in these first 12 countries prompted the Gates Foundation to support its expansion to 17 additional countries. This effort will be led by a new coalition, the Africa Tobacco Control Consortium, and headed by the American Cancer Society. Drope was appointed to the consortium's research committee, charged with guiding development and implementation of research initiatives. — AB

