



Food & Nutrition (FaN) Project Bulletin April – May 2021

WELCOME MESSAGE

We are hoping for a quick recovery for St. Vincent after the volcanic eruption of La Soufriere. That plus the upcoming hurricane season, reminds us of the importance of achieving regional food and nutrition security. We must focus on reducing our dependency for processed and ultra-processed foods and building sustainable and resilient food systems using our own agricultural and natural resources.

INTERVENTIONS

Ongoing activities - Communities: 15 Merit and Needs-Based Grant Projects to Improve Livelihoods Among Vulnerable Groups in Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

On March 5th before the eruption of the La Soufriere volcano, Mr. Jethro Greene (Coordinator of ECTAD) chaired an official handover ceremony in SVG where 3 groups each received USD\$7000: **(1)** Greiggs Production & Marketing Association; **(2)** Women in Agriculture and Rural Development and **(3)** Mesopotamia Poultry & Small Ruminant Producers Association. Please read more about the handover ceremony [here](#) and follow our social media pages to learn how these groups are coping since the eruption of La Soufriere. In Jamaica, 9 groups have been selected for grant funding; 8 of these groups are doing agri-based projects and will each be assigned an extension officer from the Rural Agriculture Development Authority. One group, whose work focuses on inner-city livelihoods, will be supervised by Professor Fitzroy Henry, FaN Research Co-Investigator.

The FaN Community Spotlight – Recently FaN had the opportunity to interview, 20 year old Zachary Moore, youth advocate with [The Future Farmers Think Tank](#) and the brains behind Barbados-based [BOAMS](#), a food security and agriculture advocacy project. Here's a short summary of what Zachary shared with us.

BOAMS stemmed from a desire to learn more about and be a part of food production at various levels. The plan is to become a social enterprise that empowers those who seek to work in the agriculture industry and to advocate on the behalf of agriculturalists. At a time when farming needs to become more sustainable and held to a higher standard, the Caribbean imports a large percentage of food stuff at the expense of nutrition security and farming subsidies. Agriculture must be approached like a business and science to make farming an industry that is desirable to enter. Agricultural co-operatives are only one solution, we need to create companies, engage the public, and invest in agricultural stock. Ultimately, I want people to know that young farmers in the region are highly intelligent and love agriculture despite the challenges, and "at the end of the day all roads lead to agriculture because food is the most important commodity. Hence, so are farmers!"

FaN PROJECT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Academic Publication "Ultra-processed food (UPF) consumption in Barbados: evidence from a nationally representative, cross-sectional study" by Dr. Rachel Harris, Prof. Nigel Unwin (FaN University of Cambridge Research Lead) et al was recently published in The Journal of Nutritional Science. Access the full article [here](#).

Relevant Findings: **(1)** UPF consumption (mainly sugar-sweetened beverages, industrial packaged breads, and baked goods) contributed to almost 40.5 % of dietary energy for the overall population. **(2)** This high percentage of energy from UPF is similar to levels found in high-income, developed countries. **(3)** One-in-four persons consume >50% of their daily calories from UPF, this being significantly higher in younger persons (25-44 years).

Recommendation: Public health initiatives, education and policy encouraging the consumption of minimally processed fresh foods are required to improve the overall diet quality of Barbadians.

Virtual Presentations Prof. Alafia Samuels (FaN Principal Investigator) and Mr. David Neilands (Steering and Working Group Member) both presented at the 12th World Obesity Live Series: **Obesity & Cancer- A looming Public Health concern for the Caribbean region.** Watch the full virtual event [here](#).

Mr. Neilands, "Combating obesity through food security interventions".

Relevant takeaways **(1)** Of the 871 thousand hectares of land in the region 80% of small farmers own less than two hectares. **(2)** Almost all CARICOM countries import >60% of the food they consume and export commodities such as fruits and vegetables as raw materials.

Recommendations: **(1)** A systems approach to obesity prevention, and treatment including but not limited to product reformulation. **(2)** Commercial development and expansion of healthy product options to meet increasing consumer demand and contribute to healthier food options from small and medium size enterprises.

Prof. Samuels, "Obesity policy recommendation for the Caribbean"

Relevant takeaways: **(1)** The major cause of childhood obesity is a shift in diet towards more UPFs. **(2)** Multinational food and beverage companies promote the overconsumption of UPFs in developing countries¹. **(3)** [The Port of Spain Declaration](#) is one regional health mandate that offers a holistic approach to address obesity issues. **(4)** Taxation, legislation, and regulations are effective instruments available to promote healthier diets. A [study](#) by PAHO, the Jamaican Ministry of Health & Wellness and the University of Technology provided evidence to support octagonal warning labels in the region.

Recommendation: Engage and include food and drink companies in policy implementation only after policy goals and objectives have been determined.

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Website: www.onecaribbeanhealth.org | Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Food4ChangeCaribbean>



Did you know?
The CARICOM Commission on the Economy has recommended a tax on processed foods [click](#) to learn more.