

Food & Nutrition (FaN) Project Bulletin- November 2020

Welcome Message

As the world continues to battle COVID-19, we in the Caribbean face the vulnerability of our food value chains that threaten our food security. With travel and physical distance restrictions, we have nurtured new stakeholder relationships, worked closer with our country teams, and expanded our on-line interventions. This month's bulletin shares project updates and introduces our new logo - Food4Change Caribbean.

RESEARCH

Jamaica Food Consumption Survey

Carried out between December 2019 and March 2020, the survey of 374 participants examined food consumption patterns, determinants of food choices, self-perceptions of dietary behavior, and nutritional knowledge. Key findings included:

- Half of respondents who considered themselves unhealthy eaters, tended to be younger, female, less educated and unmarried.
- The main reasons for eating unhealthily included "great accessibility of unhealthy foods" and "scarcity of time to prepare healthy foods".
- The main reasons for eating healthily included "personal habits" and the perception that "healthy foods are more nutritious".
- Understanding of healthy versus unhealthy foods and drinks is generally well aligned with food based dietary guidelines, but less so of younger and less educated participants.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Household Food Security in the Caribbean

In June 2020, the survey was done in 8 countries (Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago) by telephone, self-administration and personal (physical distant) interviews. Of the 2257 households 52% were headed males and 47% by females. The stratified random sample captured groups from across the economic scale. Large groups were civil servants/salaried employees & unskilled workers.

- Severity impact: Household income fell by 26% overall. The largest drop was among the lowest income earners.

- Coping Strategies: Over 60% used up savings and another 21 % borrowed; over 30% sought official assistance but those who needed the most got the least.
- Hunger: 40% of households experienced some form of hunger and 42% of them said it was moderate or severe. 16% said their diet was not good or poor.
- Food Sources and Food consumption: About 80% experienced a rise in food prices.

FaN Project Team Spotlight

"This month we congratulate Dr. Arlette Saint Ville, who hails from the island of St. Lucia who was a FaN project post-doc researcher and recently appointed Lecturer in the Faculty of Food and Agriculture, University of the West Indies St. Augustine campus, in Trinidad & Tobago."

INTERVENTIONS

There are 4 priority settings for project interventions- **(1)** Schools, **(2)** Communities, **(3)** Policy and **(4)** Private Sector. Below are some up-to-date details about on-going interventions.

Schools

- *Support for CARICOM implementation of the revised Health and Family Life Education curriculum*
The project is providing digital content to teachers and students using a virtual Knowledge Portal.

Communities

- *Food security at the household level and specific barriers to access*

Using a survey instrument data was collected from vulnerable communities within the three project countries. The household data collected has been used to design a web-based system that will publish a list of healthy and affordable food items every six months. This system is currently being developed, it will be finalized in 2021.

- *Farmers Academy*

In collaboration with UWI Open Campus and Helen's Daughters, a St. Lucian based NGO focused on empowering rural women in agri-business entrepreneurship and farming, the project will deliver a blended "Farmers Academy" in St. Kitts/Nevis and St. Vincent & Grenadines.

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