



Food & Nutrition (FaN) Project Bulletin June – July 2021

WELCOME MESSAGE

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, July 29th from 2:00 - 3:30 PM (Eastern Caribbean Time) FaN is collaborating with the University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus for a joint webinar “Shifting to sustainable, healthy diets: A Dialogue Ahead of the World Food Systems Summit 2021”. Please join us by registering [here](#) today!

RESEARCH

FaN Country Team Update and Revitalization Webinar Series

From the beginning of the FaN project, the idea of Country Teams was recognised as central to effective country level research and interventions. Because COVID has restricted travel, we have instead decided on a series of three webinars for St. Kitts and Nevis (SKN) and also for St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG).

- **Launch of the SKN Country Team Webinar Series**

On June 10th, 2021, the first webinar instalment for the SKN Country Team, “Dietary Patterns in SKN: Trends, Drivers, and Impact” was held. The webinar, jointly chaired by Principal Investigator Prof. Alafia Samuels and SKN Country Team Lead Mrs. Latoya Matthew-Duncan, provided an opportunity for (1) Researchers Ms. Charmaine Metivier & Mr. Samuel Gabriel, Dr. Madhuvanti Murphy and Prof. Fitzroy Henry to present evidence-based findings related to consumption patterns, food choice determinants and food security, and most importantly, (2) for attendees to reflect on how this research reflects the current situation in SKN. Read more in this [summary report](#).

INTERVENTIONS

Food 4 Change Caribbean (F4CC) Grocery Grab Competition

The FaN project’s first public health [social media challenge](#) was launched on Instagram and Facebook on May 3rd, 2021. Recognising a need for new and innovative ways to promote nutrition and health messages using the F4CC brand, the Grocery Grab Competition invited social media users to compete for vouchers from leading grocery stores in JA, SKN and SVG. The main winner from each country has been invited to a voucher presentation ceremony in his/ her respective country and will participate in a guided, socially distanced grocery store tour with a local nutritionist. The tour will incorporate a brief interview and educational session on (1) proper nutrition label reading, (2) the harmfulness of ultra-processed foods, (3) affordable healthy eating and (4) meal planning. It will be filmed and used in FaN’s public health promotion campaigns. Follow our [social media pages](#) for additional updates about this initiative.

Trans Fats in Jamaica’s food supply

The Minister of Health and Wellness of Jamaica quoted Prof Fitzroy Henry’s FaN research (analysis of trans-fat, saturated fat, sodium, and sugar) in his parliamentary debate, reporting that 39% of Jamaican packaged foods contain trans fats. This analysis was done using FaN project enhanced lab facilities at the Bureau of Standards

and Scientific Research Council. Click [here](#) for details of the lab upgrades and see [pages 33-36](#) of the Minister’s Report.

Front of package labelling

The project had supported CROSQ in the initial stages of this initiative to utilize black hexagons, which are proposed as the regional standard. Countries are now voting.



FaN PROJECT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) 65th Annual Health Research Conference

On June 16th-18th, the 65th CARPHA conference was held virtually for the first time because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Its overarching theme was, “**Pandemic, NCDs and Climate Change – The Caribbean’s Triple Threat.**” There were 9 concurrent sessions; the concurrent session *5b Nutrition: Food Security* was chaired by Prof. Alafia Samuels, and included 2 FaN research outputs. Dr. Madhuvanti Murphy presented “Understanding Consumer Food Consumption Behaviour in the Context of Non-Communicable Diseases” and Mr. Samuel Gabriel presented, “Identifying and Assessing the Determinants of Unhealthy Dietary Habits Among a Sample of Survey Participants in Jamaica”. The session ended with a panel discussion on food security. FaN was also represented during the poster sessions, by project MPH scholarship recipient Nikisha Hazel whose [research](#) “Children’s perspectives of healthy eating: An evaluation of school meal programme in SKN” was featured.

Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) – Our Food, Our Health, Our People Accelerating Healthy Food Policies to Tackle NCDs

Mr. David Neilands, Steering and Working Group Committee Member, recently moderated an HCC panel discussion “**Innovation Food Solutions for a Healthier Caribbean**” where he asked local food producers to consider their roles in fulfilling the CARICOM mandate to reduce the food import bill by 25% by 2025. Taking a multisectoral approach he recommended: (1) government interventions for better production and export of local products (for e.g., farming subsidies, regional trade agreements and policies for transnational “Big Food” companies), (2) community development to connect farmers cooperatives to markets, (3) the removal of communication barriers between large and small private sector entities for regional food producers, (4) capitalisation on business opportunities during COVID-19 that would allow for profit re-investment into public health research and (5) strategic marketing of healthier, regional food alternatives like cassava and sweet potato pasta which can be used in traditional meals that are usually energy-dense and nutrient poor.

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

