

The System Driving Unhealthy Eating: A Participatory, Stakeholder Engagement Approach in the Caribbean

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BACKGROUND

The Caribbean experiences a high burden of obesity and chronic diseases, driven by an unhealthy diet. This study aimed to create a map of the current food system which is driving unhealthy eating, and to identify potential points for intervention.

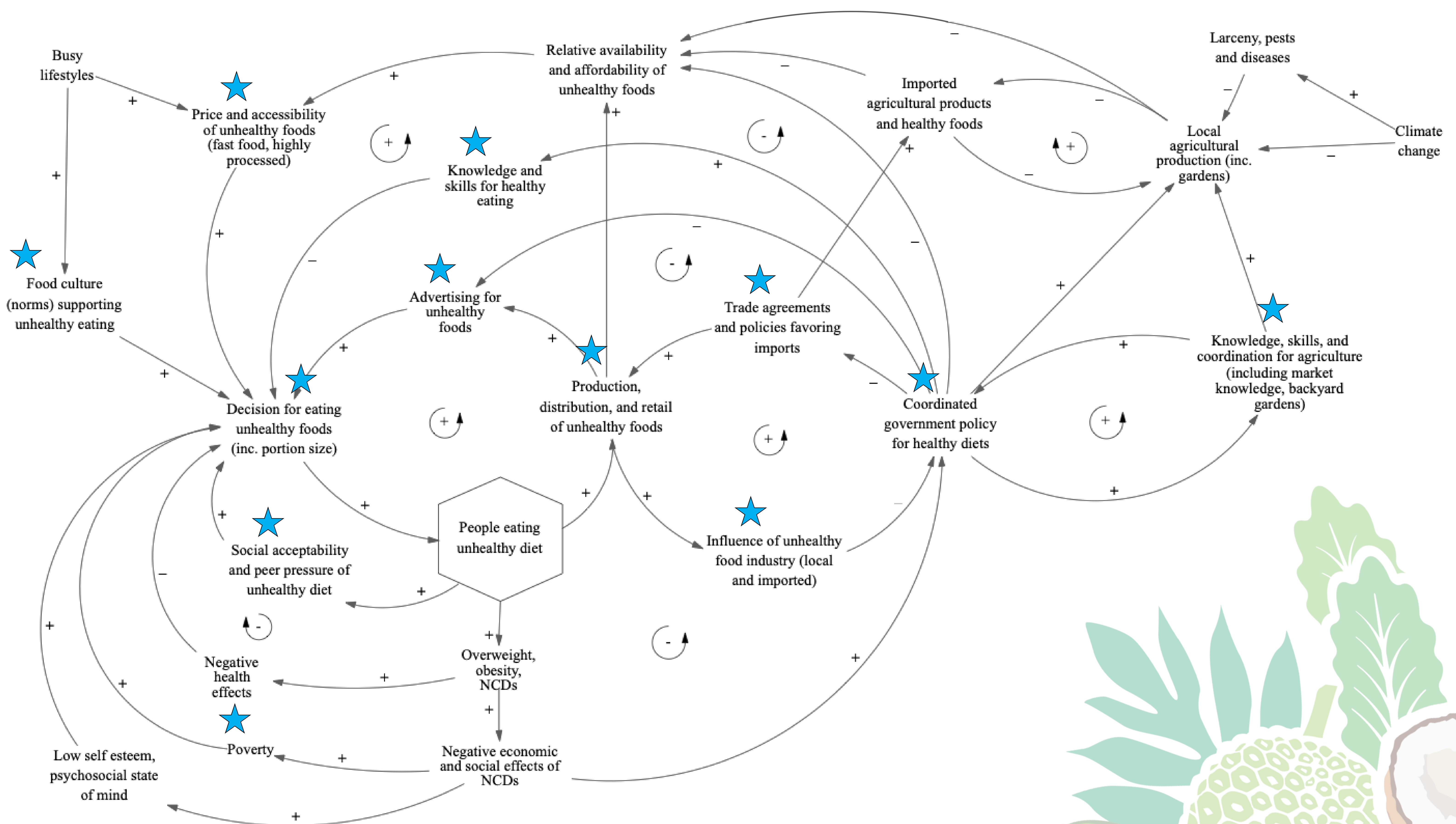
METHODS

Stakeholders from across the food system in Jamaica (n = 16), St. Kitts and Nevis (n = 19) and St. Vincent and the Grenadines (n = 6) engaged in two “group model building” workshops in 2018. Participants collaboratively described and mapped the system driving unhealthy eating and identified points for interventions.

RESULTS

Stakeholders described similar underlying systems driving unhealthy eating across the three countries. Participants dominant drivers as: (1) availability and price of unhealthy foods, (2) shifting cultural norms on eating, and (3) aggressive advertising from the food industry.

See causal loop map below; blue stars indicate where the FAN project intervened in 2018-2022.



CONCLUSION

Group model building is an effective tool for engaging a highly diverse group of stakeholders in better collective understanding of a complex problem and potential interventions. The FAN project used this map to design its subsequent interventions.

