The Belizean Experience

GRADUAL BAN OF UNHEALTHY FOODS & SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES IN SCHOOLS
**Nutrition Indicators** (MICS, 2015)

**Stunting**
Chn <5 years (15% PR)

**Underweight**
Chn <5 years (5% PR)

**Overweight**
Chn <5 years (7% PR)

**Micronutrient Deficiency**
Chn <5 years 13% PR
- **Iron deficiency**
  Chn <5 years 7% PR
- **Vitamin B 12 deficiency**

**Adolescents Diabetes**
36.7% Country IR

OUR REALITY...

1 in 3 Caribbean Children is OVERWEIGHT or OBESE

12.6% girls & 12.5% boys ages 13-15 are obese
34% adolescents are overweight
32% adolescents are obese

[2011 Global School Based Student Health Survey]
HEALTHY FOODS IN BELIZEAN SCHOOLS (all levels)

- Gradual ban of unhealthy foods and sugar-sweetened beverages
  - Enact legislation with an accompanying implementation plan to ban (over a 2-3 year period) unhealthy foods and SSBs in schools.
  - Take actions to promote healthy nutrition in schools:
    - Conduct consultations with the relevant stakeholders, i.e. government ministries, manufacturers, school vendors, and parents, among others
    - Implement a communication/marketing strategy to strengthen leadership and organizational practices to remove unhealthy foods and SSBs in schools
    - Support the promotion of healthy foods in schools, in accordance with the National Menu for School Feeding Programs
    - Discourage sponsorship, advertising or marketing of unhealthy foods and SSBs on school premises, at school events and sporting activities
OUR JOURNEY

1. Multi-Sectoral
   - Memorandum of Agreement (MoE, MoH, MoA)
   - National Sustainable Schools Feeding Technical Committee
   - National Food and Security Commission
   - Discussion on Front of Label Packaging

2. School
   - School Feeding Programs
   - School Gardening
   - National Menus for School Feeding Programs
   - National Registry for School Feeding and School Gardens

3. Parliament
   - Belize Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition
     - Legal/sustainable institutional frameworks & financial structures
     - National budgets to fight against malnutrition, hunger & food insecurity
SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAMS

• **Early Childhood**
  – School/Community sponsored with minimal fee charged to students

• **Primary**
  – Government funded in 3 of 6 districts (<1% of schools)
  – School/Community sponsored with minimal fee charged to students

• **Secondary**
  – Government funded via SEN
  – School/Community sponsored with minimal fee charged to students
SCHOOL GARDENS

• **Early Childhood**
  – Minor landscaping efforts by the School

• **Primary/Secondary**
  – Support from Government or the Community

Adapted from the Brazilian Model
Support legislation to achieve **zero hunger**, reduce **malnutrition** and increase **food security**.

Ensure adequate **budgets and resources**, **surveillance** and **accountability** processes.

Provide **policy direction** for technical committees.

Support development of **advocacy/communication plans**.
Creating Supportive Environments For Healthy Children

Belize Parliamentary Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition

- Multi-Sectoral Actions
- Technical Committees
- Supporting Agencies
- Schools
- Community
Creating Supportive Environments For Healthy Children

Clear Blueprint or Plan of Action

- Develop nutrition legislation, regulation and policies; monitor and evaluate programs and interventions
- Identify funding to support at least one healthy meal per child in all Belizean schools
- Consider tax-effective measures on SSBs and unhealthy foods
- Gradual elimination of the sale of unhealthy foods and SSBs in schools
- Advance the Front of Label Packaging discussion
- Teacher professional development on NCDs, school feeding and gardening, and physical education

Likely strong opposition by commercial and political interests

Advocacy and public education on nutrition literacy for both adults and children
thank you!