

Evidence – Healthy School Food Policies

Building on Strong Foundations of Innovative Health Policies



ACCELERATING NUTRITION POLICIES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Children

Bridgetown, Barbados – September 17-18, 2019



Nutritional Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



WHO Collaborating Centre on
Nutrition Policy for
Chronic Disease Prevention

INFORMAS module structure

ORGANISATIONS	PROCESSES	Public sector policies and actions			Private sector policies and actions			
		<p>How much progress have (international, national, state and local) governments made towards good practice in improving food environments and implementing obesity/NCDs prevention policies and actions? <i>(University of Auckland)</i></p>			<p>How are private sector organisations affecting food environments and influencing obesity/NCDs prevention efforts? <i>(Deakin University)</i></p>			
FOOD ENVIRONMENTS	IMPACTS	Food composition	Food labelling	Food marketing	Food provision	Food retail	Food prices	Food trade & investment
		<p>What is the nutrient composition of foods and non-alcoholic beverages? <i>(The George Institute)</i></p>	<p>What health-related labelling is present on foods and non-alcoholic beverages? <i>(University of Oxford)</i></p>	<p>What is the exposure and power of promotion of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages to different population groups? <i>(University of Wollongong)</i></p>	<p>What is the nutritional quality of foods and non-alcoholic beverages provided in different settings (eg. schools, hospitals, workplaces)? <i>(University of Toronto)</i></p>	<p>What is the availability of healthy and unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages in communities and within retail outlets? <i>(University of Auckland)</i></p>	<p>What is the relative price and affordability of 'less healthy' compared with 'healthy' diets, meals & foods? <i>(University of Queensland)</i></p>	<p>What are the impacts of trade and investment agreements on the healthiness of food environments? <i>(Australian National University)</i></p>
POPULATIONS	OUTCOMES	Population diet		Physiological & metabolic risk factors		Health outcomes		
		<p>What is the quality of the diet of different population groups? <i>(University of Sao Paulo)</i></p>		<p>What are the burdens of obesity and other risk factors? <i>(WHO)</i></p>		<p>What are burdens of NCD morbidity and mortality? <i>(WHO)</i></p>		

Definitions

Key starting point

❑ Foods in *Public Sector Settings**

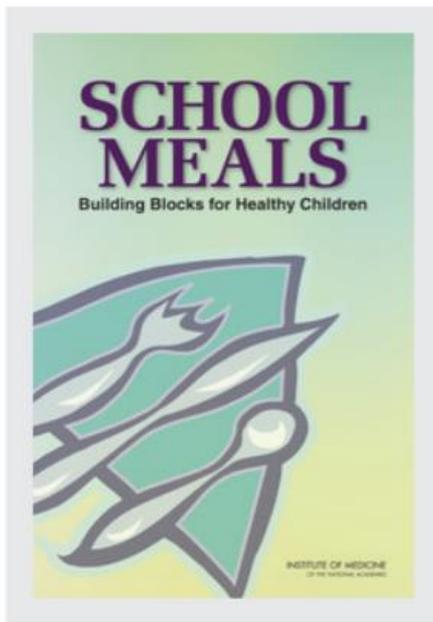
- refers to the food supply chain in relation to foods that are purchased, served or sold in publically funded institutions
- Focus on schools, but efforts can be applied to other settings where children gather and eat;

- ❑ *Publically funded institutions includes facilities such as daycares/child care centres, **schools**, hospitals, long-term care facilities for the elderly or infirm, military facilities, prisons, government owned or operated work sites or buildings, and **public buildings such as sports facilities, recreation centres, community centres, etc.**

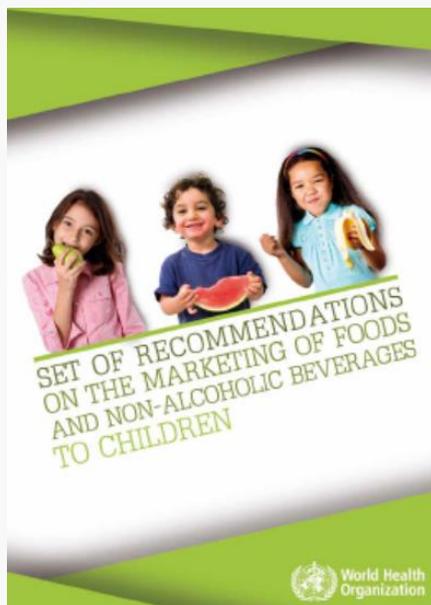
Some lessons learned from review of previous healthy school food programs

- ❑ Many programs have been set up without monitoring or evaluation frameworks, plans or funds/people to evaluate them
- ❑ Many jurisdictions have reported “*implementation*” of their standards, but NOT “*compliance*” with them
 - Actual compliance can be much lower than self report data
- ❑ Need both food-based and nutrient-based standards

SCHOOL FOOD PROGRAMS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE HEALTH OF CHILDREN



**“Building Blocks for Healthy Children”
National Academies (2010)**



“a wide range of techniques are used to market these products, reaching children in schools ... and in many other settings.”
**- 12 Recommendations
WHO (2010)**

ENDING CHILDHOOD OBESITY



IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMMES THAT PROMOTE HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS, HEALTH AND NUTRITION LITERACY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS.

- 5.1** Establish standards for meals provided in schools, or foods and beverages sold in schools, that meet healthy nutrition guidelines.
- 5.2** Eliminate the provision or sale of unhealthy foods, such as sugar-sweetened beverages and energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods, in the school environment.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effectiveness of school food environment policies on children's dietary behaviors: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Renata Micha¹*, Dimitra Karageorgou², Ioanna Bakogianni², Eirini Trichia², Laurie P. Whitsel³, Mary Story⁴, Jose L. Peñalvo¹, Dariush Mozaffarian¹

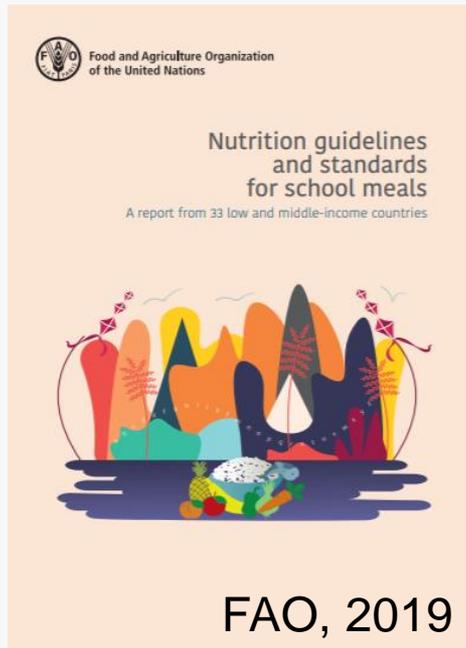
1 Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, Boston, MA, United States of America, **2** Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, Agricultural University of Athens, Athens, Greece, **3** Policy Research, American Heart Association, Dallas, TX, United States of America, **4** Global Health Institute and Community and Family Medicine, Duke University, Durham, NC, United States of America

91 interventions – (55 Can/USA; 36 EU/NZ; 0 – Asia/Africa/SA/Caribbean)

↑ Fruits; ↑ Fruit and Vegetable consumption
↓ Sugar Sweetened Beverage consumption
↓ unhealthy snacks
↓ Total fat; ↓ saturated fat and sodium; but not total calories



MANY ADVANTAGES OF HEALTHY SCHOOL FOODS



- ❑ Sustainable Development “Poverty eradication, health, education, food security and nutrition continue to be the essential priorities and targets for sustainable development (UNGA, 2015).
- ❑ Schools can make a sizeable, long-lasting impact on these determinants(Bundy et al., 2009; Faber et al., 2013; WFP, 2013; GLOPAN, 2015).
- ❑ One such entry point is the (regular) **provision of nutritious meals through school-based programmes**. This can improve vulnerable children’s attendance levels, attention capability and parent motivation, potentially affecting academic performance and future enrolment, particularly for girls (Bundy et al., 2009; WFP, 2013; World Bank, WFP and PCD, 2016).

Some lessons learned from review of previous monitoring programs

- Paucity of data evaluating the nutritional quality of foods, particularly in LMIC
- Many programs set up without monitoring or evaluation frameworks, plans or funds/people to evaluate them
- Many have reported “*implementation*” of healthy food standards, but NOT “*compliance*” with them
 - Actual compliance can be lower than self report data
- Very little data about the broader food environment in schools

Healthy School Food Policies

**BUILDING A SUITE
OF HEALTHY FOOD
POLICIES THAT
LEVERAGE AND
SCALE UP IMPACT**

What's the Ideal Approach*

Policies that go hand-in-hand:

- Ensuring the Nutritional quality of what is sold and/or served in schools; e.g. limits on foods high in sodium, sugars, saturated fats etc; coordinate with FOP labelling
- Healthy beverages, restricting SSB sales in school cafeterias and vending machines
- Restricting food marketing within schools; e.g. signs and promotions, scoreboards, events and prizes, 'educational materials' with logos and promotions

Monitoring And Evaluation

ADAPTATION OF DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Rating Scores for Policies and Monitoring their Implementation

Typically a simple ORDINAL scale used:

0 = not mentioned or excluded from policy

1 = weak or partial

- ❑ Vague, general or unclear wording
- ❑ Goals for future, but little evidence of implementation; no timelines
- ❑ Voluntary – “may”, “could”; “encouraged to”
- ❑ A number of exemptions listed
- ❑ Narrow application or many loopholes

2 = strong, meets or exceeds expectations

- ❑ Specific language, clear actionable statements, times
- ❑ Mandatory criteria “must”, “shall” - STRENGTH
- ❑ Broad application with few loopholes or exemptions - COMPREHENSIVE

SAMPLE – Policy Rating Guide

1. Legislative basis:

- Overseen/mandated by a Govt Department;

2. Application:

- All Primary school(s)/students are subject to the Policy
- All middle school(s)/students are subject to the Policy
- All high school(s)/students are subject to the policy
- Applies to all school programs where foods are provided
- Applies to all foods sold in school – e.g. school canteens, cafeterias
- Nutrition standards for vending machines or limiting/prohibiting vending machines on site

SAMPLE – Policy Rating Guide

3. Nutritional Standards. There are:

- General nutrition standards for foods, e.g. meets Food Guide
- Nutrition standards for foods, based on minimum number of food group / food guide servings
- Standards for compositional quality of the foods – e.g., certain proportion of whole grains
- Standards for nutritional quality of the foods – e.g., limits on sodium, sugar, fats; or cannot have a FOP
- Restrictions on SSB
- Nutrition standards for beverages, e.g. limits or restrictions on:
 - flavoured/sweetened milks,
 - number of juice servings counted as fruit serving

SAMPLE – Policy Rating Guide

4. Nutritional Standards (others):

- Nutrition standards for snacks
- Use of artificial/non-nutritive sweeteners
- Buy local/sustainability standards
- Processed/packaged foods vs cooked meals (e.g., NOVA system)
- Nutrition standards apply to foods served or sold at fundraisers, celebrations

5. Food Promotion – Restrictions on:

- Commercial food marketing to children in schools or on school property
- ‘Educational materials’ with food company branding
- Food company or food branding on signs, scoreboards, equipment, uniforms, prizes

SAMPLE – Policy Rating Guide

6. Support tools:

- Financial programs in place to support costs of healthy foods
- Financial programs to support the participation of students and/or schools, based on need
- Training and support tools for school administrators, principals, and/or teachers
- Training and support tools for cafeteria workers, food suppliers etc.

7. Accountability

- Clear accountability for who is responsible for ensuring compliance with the guidelines
- Families are made aware of the school food standards

Adapting the Rating Guide

- ❑ Select each criteria to be monitored per section; modify or adapt as appropriate
- ❑ Give specific examples to assist users in its application
- ❑ Can also clarify what not covered in section

Why healthy school foods?

- Schools can lead the way towards healthier diets
- Build life long healthy eating habits
- In some programs – is an important source of daily nutrition

Key Aspects to remember

- Who is covered? How broad?
- What is covered? How comprehensive?
- Restrict food promotion in schools
- Will require support tools for implementation and monitoring/accountability

Thank You! – Questions

Mary.labbe@utoronto.ca

INFORMAS Healthy School Foods Network

Funding Support



E.W. McHenry
Endowed Chair
(M. L'Abbe)



L'ABBÉ LAB
Food and Nutrition Policy Research for Population Health

Acknowledgements



Research Team:

Mavra Ahmed, PhD
Beatriz Franco-Arellano, MSc
Jodi Bernstein, MPH, PhD
Anthea Christoforou, PhD
Kacie Dickinson, PhD
Salma Hack, BSc
Kimiya Karbasy, BSc
Christine Mulligan, BSc
Sarah Murphy, BSc
Alena Ng, BSc
Alyssa Schermel, MSc
Lana Vanderlee, PhD
Laura Vergeer, BSc
Madysen Weippert, BSc

<http://labbellab.utoronto.ca/>