CIVIL SOCIETY EXPERIENCES ADVOCATING FOR FOOD POLICIES IN JAMAICA

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Healthy Caribbean Coalition - Our food, Our health, Our people
Accelerating Healthy Food Policies to Tackle NCDs
July 1, 2021
• **Objective** – to increase public and policy maker awareness on the health impact of unhealthy foods and beverages (*foods high in added sugar, saturated & trans-fat and sodium*) and to build support for obesity and NCD prevention policies.

• **Jamaica’s health landscape**
  - Increasing NCDs and obesity in adults and children
  - Unhealthy eating practices
  - NCDs - almost 80% of deaths in Jamaica
  - Vulnerability to COVID-19
  - Need to provide a supportive environment to encourage healthy eating

Policy priorities - Aligned to national, regional and international plans and policies:
- Front of Package Labelling
- Support for healthy foods in schools
- Sugary drinks tax
- Restriction of the Marketing of unhealthy foods to children
I find that more young people are becoming overweight and obese. Some as early as their 20's, and even children. Sugary drinks may bring on obesity which could increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN’S HEALTH. SUPPORT A SUGARY DRINKS TAX.


"I find that more young people are becoming overweight and obese. Some as early as their 20’s, and even children." Sugary drinks may bring on obesity which could increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

Phase 1

Phase 2 – FOPL

Right to know
ACTIVITIES

Public Education & Outreach
- Materials
- Schools, churches, community/civic groups, guest lectures
- Forums & Webinars

Advocacy meetings
Ministers and MDAs
- Technical support to advance policies

Social media
- Regular posting on healthy nutrition, physical activity know your numbers, gardening
- Podcast
- Twitter chat

Media engagement
- Journalism training
- Articles, ads, radio series
- Letters to the editor/Interviews
ACHIEVEMENTS

• Partnerships
  – 18 formal NGOs partners many outreach partners
  – National Food Industry Task Force
  – Cobranding with the Min. of Health

• Restriction of beverages in schools effective Jan 2019

• School nutrition policy to be signed off by Cabinet

• Meeting with several ministries & providing technical support
  – School nutrition policy and Interim guidelines
  – Cabinet submission for SSB tax
  – FOPL and Nutrition Labelling meetings
  – Marketing of unhealthy foods to children

• Strong public support for campaign (Aug. 2019 Post-campaign Evaluation Findings)
  – 92% strongly support or support front of pack warning labels on food and drinks
  – 82% strongly agree on the policy requiring clear warning labels on the front of food and beverage packages that warn when foods are high in sugar, salt or fats
  – 87% strongly agree to support government efforts to increase children’s access to healthy foods and drinks
  – 71% - support of a tax on sugary drinks
<table>
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<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES - barriers to a healthier food environment</th>
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<td><strong>Socio economic issues affecting access to and availability of healthy foods</strong></td>
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<td>• Social determinants of health, food security</td>
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<td>• Lack of knowledge of healthy eating practices</td>
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<td>• Geographic location etc.</td>
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<td><strong>Framework policies/ plans are in place; recommended policy solutions not yet implemented</strong></td>
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<td>• Requires political will and resources</td>
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<td>• Process not always clear</td>
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<td><strong>Increase in marketing and corporate social responsibility</strong></td>
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<td>• Blurred lines between CSR and interference</td>
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<td>• Marketing to children</td>
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<td><strong>Lack of evidence base-decision making</strong></td>
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<td>• Challenges to existing evidence</td>
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<td><strong>Aggressive food industry lobby and push back</strong></td>
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<td>• Law suit</td>
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<td>• SSB tax and FOPL</td>
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<td>• Delay tactics</td>
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<td>• Regional coordination</td>
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Sugary drinks tax

JMEA Vows To Fight To The Death’ Against Sugary Drinks Tax

The Steele Doctrine’ could well apply to proposed sugary drinks tax

The ‘Steele Doctrine’ could well apply to proposed sugary drinks tax

MR Marcus Steele, Carreras Limited managing director, is no doubt looking out for his company’s well-being, but his warning about the likely consequences of an additional tax on cigarettes could apply to the proposed tax on sugary drinks.

Of course, we in this space do not hesitate to throw our support behind the Health Ministry’s campaign to reduce sugar intake, especially among children. The science has clearly established the obvious dangers to health from over consumption of sugar.

What we are concerned about is the proposal for yet another tax that, fly high, fly low, will be passed onto non-consumers, whether directly or indirectly, through price increases on other products handled by the same distributor.

A tax on sugary drinks, if it goes forward, should by no means be a first resort. That is seeking the easy way out, as is our wont in this country. The Health Ministry has indicated it will be looking next to the reduction of consumption...
BSJ, Manufacturers At Loggerheads Over Packaging Standards

Richard Pandohie | Front-of-package labelling – the JMEA perspective

Deborah Chen | Is evidence being ignored in front-of-package labelling

JMEA concerned about implementation of front of package labelling

Using a very well-funded campaign, certain stakeholders – Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC), The Heart Foundation of Jamaica (HFJ), The Ministry of Health and Wellness, among others – have engaged in a campaign that has portrayed...
Increase in corporate Social Responsibility since COVID-19
March 2020 - present

• Similar activities seen in the region

• Financial & In kind donations

• Food donations and care packages to health care workers and vulnerable groups e.g. –unintended long term consequences

• **Donations must be responsible** - while needed & necessary, care must be taken to ensure that what is provided does not exacerbate our NCD challenges and cause longer term health issues

PATH students to receive meals from chain restaurants
20 March 2020 – Jamaica Observer

Red Stripe Offers Nutritional Support For Infirmarys
Care Homes
25 March - Cleaner

RED STRIPE, part of the Heineken Company, earlier this week donated 1,500 cases of Malta to the Ministry of Local Government to support nutrition programmes in Infirmarys across the island. The product, with an approximate retail value of $6 million, will benefit residents in all 14 Infirmarys and three Golden Age Homes managed by local municipalities.
LESSONS LEARNT/WAY FORWARD

- Public education (especially grass roots)
- Support from local and international partners
- Beneficial endorsement of the media campaign by the Ministry of Health & Wellness
- Multi-stakeholder involvement, engaging the media and partnerships with other NGOs
- Use Evidence base to strengthen advocacy for policies
- Sustained media and social media presence
- Focus group testing is an important step to the cultural acceptability and effectiveness
- Pre and post campaign testing are important steps to evaluate the campaign
- Industry push back is often times driven by external forces and influences
- The public does not necessarily recognize industry interference so it is important that these are highlighted in the context of the food our nation eats

PAHO, UTECH Study, 2020 - Superior Efficacy of Front-of-Package Warning Labels in Jamaica
Thank you!

For more information
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