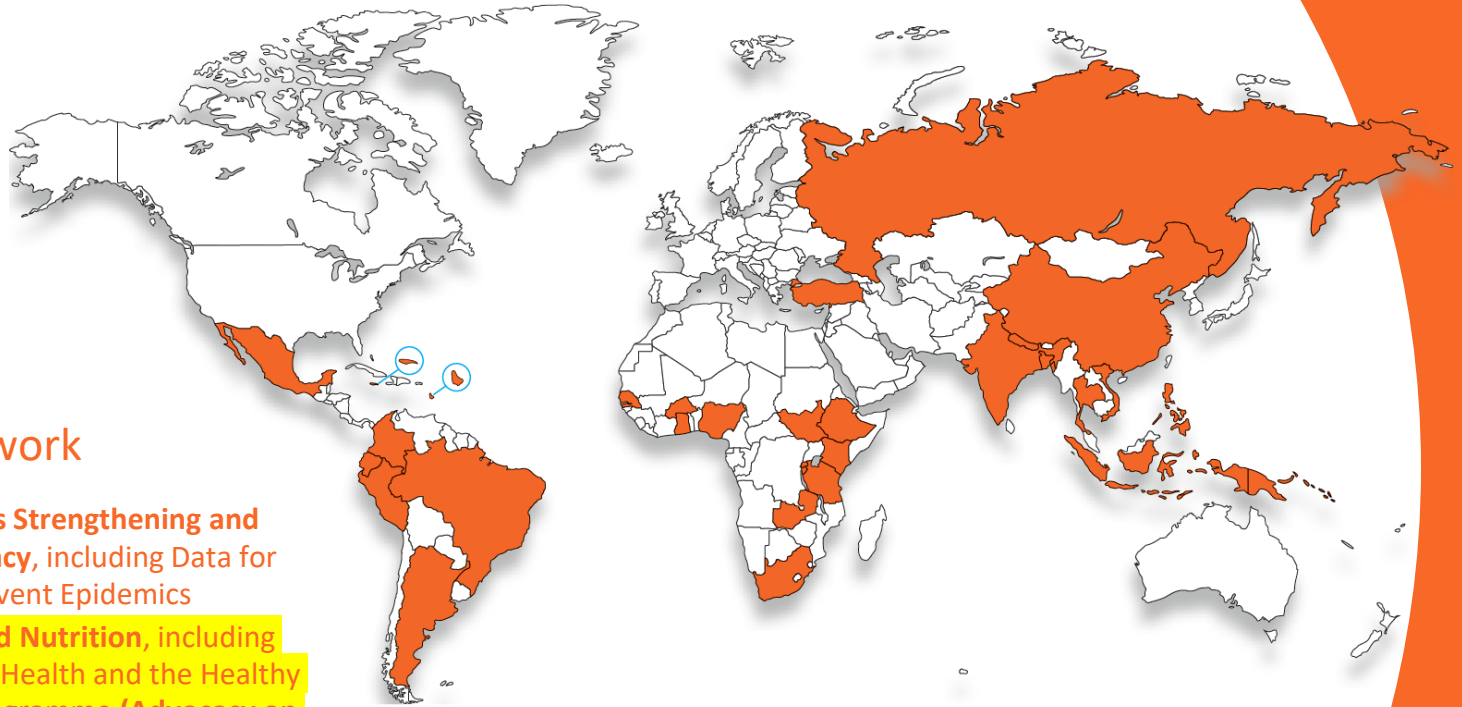




Role of civil society in the promotion of SSB taxes as instrument of public health policies

Rachel Morrison, Senior Advisor, GHAI





Clusters of work

- **Health Systems Strengthening and Budget Advocacy**, including Data for Health and Prevent Epidemics
- **Food Policy and Nutrition**, including Cardiovascular Health and the Healthy Food Policy Programme (**Advocacy on SSB Taxes, School food environments and FOPWL**)
- **Injury Prevention**, including Child Drowning Prevention and Road Safety

Phase 1 **Analyze**

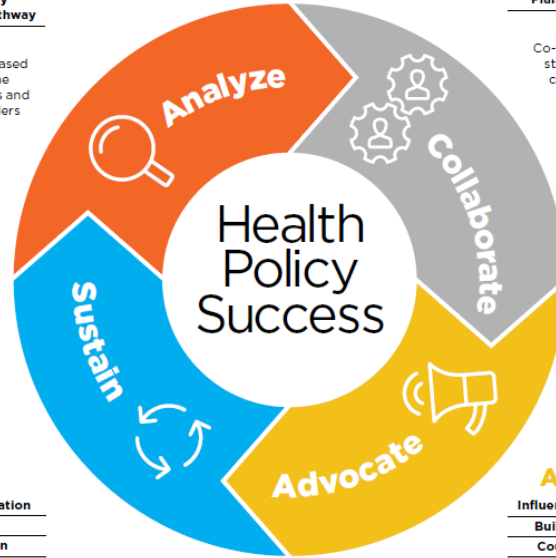
Conduct a
Landscape Analysis
Set Your Policy Objective
Assess the Policy
Decision-making Pathway

Outcome:
Political mapping based
on research of the
policy/legal process and
relevant stakeholders

Phase 2 **Collaborate**

Build Partnerships
and Champions
Develop a Strategic Plan
Plan Communications

Outcome:
Co-created advocacy
strategy including
communications



Phase 4
Sustain
Monitor Implementation
Defend Policy
Refine Campaign

Outcome:
Policies are maintained
and improved, supported
by sustained advocacy

Phase 3
Advocate
Influence Decision Makers
Build Public Support
Counter Opposition

Outcome:
Decision makers act to
pass and implement policy
with public support free
of opposition influence

Global Health Advocacy Incubator

Changing Policies to Save Lives



Civil Society Organizations

CSO's because of their constitution and nature have a critical role to play in supporting public health policies. Across the region there are several CSO's that have been established to support evidence-based policy implementation. **GHAI works directly with CSO's** to assist in legislative and policy reforms that have long lasting impact on the lives of people across the region





CSO's are critical in building and sustaining stakeholder support amongst key groups, individuals, creating powerful coalitions that can support policy development or implementation

Open letter to the National Standards Bodies of CARICOM in reference to the CARICOM member state voting on the final draft CARICOM Regional Standard for Specification for labeling of pre-packaged foods (FDCRS 5)

WE ARE WRITING AS LEADERS in health and nutrition across the Caribbean to urge your stakeholders represent diverse sectors of society and senior policymakers in ministries of trade, commerce, business, finance, and agriculture, to support the approval of the Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard for Specification for labelling of pre-packaged foods (FDCRS 5), which includes the octagonal front-of-package warning label and the PAHO Nutrient Profile Model.

Among various nutritional labelling systems, scientific evidence, including from the Caribbean region, underscores the superior effectiveness of the octagonal warning label, which empowers consumers to quickly, correctly, and easily identify products with unhealthy nutritional profiles. Caribbean countries have some of the world's most alarming rates of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and obesity. These conditions not only place immense strain on our health care systems, but also pose a significant threat as underscored in the recent Bridgetown Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health. They jeopardise our regional development objectives and the attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

At the heart of these diet-related health challenges lies the overconsumption of foods high in sodium/salt, sugar, and fats—a situation which is in part due to the lack of awareness of the content of many foods. Current nutrition labels are difficult to read and understand and are often misleading.

Studies conducted globally, as well as regionally in Jamaica and Barbados, show that the octagonal warning label outperforms all other labels in allowing consumers to quickly, easily, and correctly identify foods high in sodium/salt, sugar, and fats. In Barbados, the introduction of octagonal warning labels has the potential to reduce NCD deaths by 36 per cent while saving the Government in excess of US\$700 million in mortality costs annually.

The impact of the octagonal warning labelling system extends far beyond the supermarket aisle. It has the capacity to easily identify those food products which should be regulated in various settings, including schools, and be subjected to taxation (unhealthy products) and subsidies (healthy products). The HCC and partners' newly launched campaign, Octagonal Warning Labels, helps consumers **MakeInformedChoices** speak to this and the other co-benefits of implementing this labelling standard.

The time to act is now, as we echo the commitment made by Caribbean Heads of State and Government in the 2007 Declaration of Port of Spain to address the "epidemic of chronic NCDs" by prioritising prevention through strong policies. Approval of this Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard and the octagonal warning label not only honours this historic commitment but also represents a significant step towards safeguarding the nutrition and health of our citizens. The rising levels of childhood obesity in the region and the associated increased risk of NCDs, heighten the imperative for action.



Our collective voices build on the signatures of support from over 400 Caribbean public health professionals, academics, and ordinary citizens, and over 40 regional organisations.

We implore your stakeholders to consider the urgency of this matter and the profound impact that your decision will have on the immediate and future nutrition, health, and well-being of Caribbean people and, by extension, national and regional development.

By approving the Final Draft CARICOM Regional Standard for Specification for labelling of pre-packaged foods and the octagonal warning label, through a fair and balanced vote including all key stakeholders, you will send a clear message of commitment to improve the lives of citizens across CARICOM and securing a healthier future for the region.

REGIONAL PARTNERS



Sir Trevor Hassell, President, Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)
Dr Diago Jales, Director General, OECS Commission
Pieter Burt, Representative IC, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean
Dr Joy St John, Executive Director, Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)

SIGNED



Professor Simon Anderson, Director, George Alleyne Chronic Disease Research Centre (GA-CDC)
Nicole Foster, Law Lecturer & Head, Law and Health Research Unit, Faculty of Law, University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus
Dean Chambliss, Subregional Program Director for the Caribbean, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

HCC PATRON



Sir George Alleyne, Director Emeritus, Pan American Health Organization

NCD COMMISSION CHAIRS



Saleman Bulbulia, Chair, Barbados NCD Committee
Dr Trevor Ferguson, Chair, Jamaica National Commission on NCDs
Dr C. Jane Noel, Chair, Grenada NCD Commission

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION PARTNERS



Aibi Bagho, Founder and Programme Director, Lake Health and Wellbeing
Dr Sonia Nixon, Chair, Grenada Cancer Society
Deborah Chen, Executive Director, Heart Foundation of Jamaica
Laura Tucker-Longworth, Founder and Chair, Belize Cancer Society
Dr Karen Sealey, Founder and Chair, Trinidad and Tobago NCD Alliance
Gretta Yearwood, Chief Executive Officer (Interim), Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados
Shanique Bawden, Jamaica Youth Advocacy Network
Juanita James, President, Antigua and Barbuda Diabetes Association
Dr Nancy Charles Laro, President, Fondation Haïtienne de Diabète et de Maladies Cardiovasculaires, Haiti
Dr Tamara Remy, President, St Lucia Cancer Society
Dr Vanessa White-Barrow, President, Association of Nutritionists and Dietitians

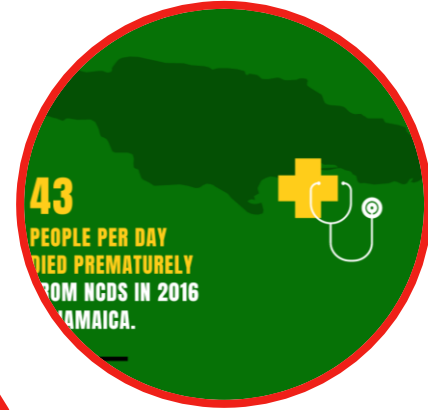


You deserve a vote that will lead to healthier choices.





CSO's create high impact engaging public communications includes advertisements, billboards, posts on social media



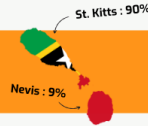
CSO's have been strong supporters of evidence generation, dissemination and simplification

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

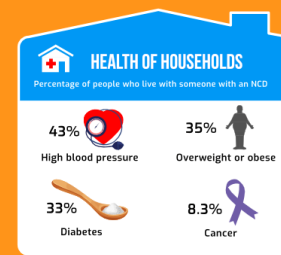
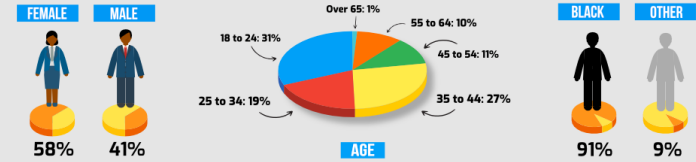
SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES (SSB)



AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs) SURVEY



**SURVEY POPULATION
423 RESPONDENTS**



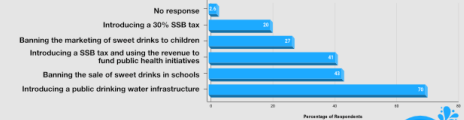
VIEWS ON NCDs, OBESITY AND OVERWEIGHT

66% - stated that NCDs, obesity and overweight are a major problem in St. Kitts and Nevis

83% - felt that it was either very important or important for the Government to implement strategies to tackle NCDs, obesity and overweight



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS IN FAVOR OF SSB POLICIES



FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.YOURESWETEENOUGH.COM



CSO's have been able to counter misleading claims by private sector interests seeking to disrupt health policy development





CSO's have been able to create opportunities for young people to express themselves and share their perspectives on their health needs.





CSO's play an important role in maintaining the prioritization of Public Health policy issues on government ministry agendas





CSO's have supported
legal actions in defense of
public health policy
instruments.



It's time for government to enact

#HealthyFoodPolicies

for our children and our future

NOW IS THE TIME!

“CSO’s by their very nature play an integral role in creating and sustaining critical health policy instruments like SSB Taxes”

*R.Morrison- PAHO SSB TAX Workshop,
November 2023*

