

MEALS4NCDs

Providing Measurement, Evaluation, Accountability & Leadership Support (MEALS) for NCDs Prevention



MEASURING THE HEALTHINESS OF GHANAIAN CHILDREN'S FOOD ENVIRONMENTS TO PREVENT OBESITY AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

PROJECT LAUNCH BROCHURE
AUGUST 2019





PROGRAMME FOR LAUNCH

Date: Thursday, 15th August 2019 | **Venue:** Erata Hotel, Okponglo, East Legon

Moderator: George Graham

Speaker(s):

- UG Management
 - Prof Julius Fobil (Dean, SPH)
 - Mrs. Stella Amoa (Director, PAD UG)
 - Prof George Obeng Adjei (Director of Research, ORID)
- Dr Amos Laar (AL)
- Dr Stefanie Vandevijvere (SV)
- Prof. Mary L'Abbe (ML)
- Prof. Michelle Holdsworth (MH)
- Reps of MOH, FDA, NCD Programme, NPDC, WHO, UNICEF, CSO (Ghana NCD Alliance/VALD)
- Hon. Dr. Sebastian Sandaare (Parliamentary Select Committee on Health)
- Prof. Kaleab Baye (KB)
- Prof. Richmond Aryeetey (RA)
- Prof. Charles Agyemang (CA)
- Dr. Gershim Asiki (GA)

Timing	Activities
09:30 – 10:00 (30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call meeting to order and welcome - AL - Introduction of agenda - MC - Brief introduction of speakers/dignitaries - MC - Messages from UG and partners: MOH, FDA, NCD Programme, NPDC, WHO, UNICEF, CSO (Ghana NCD Alliance/VALD), Parliamentary Select Committee on Health, MEALS4NCDs Project Advisory Board and WPHN Association
10.00 – 10:15 (15 mins)	The Project - AL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What the project is about - Why the project is needed - What we will do in this project
10:15 – 10:30	<i>Tea/Coffee break</i>
10:30 – 11:30 (1 hr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work package 1 (Food promotion), 15 mins) - SV - Work package 2 (Food provision), 15 mins - ML - Work package 3 (Community Readiness Model) (15 mins) - MH - Questions/clarification (15 mins)
11:30 – 12:30 (1 hr)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How we will involve stakeholders (15 mins) - RA - Potential use of project data, communication and knowledge translation plans in Ghana, Africa, and Globally (15 mins) - GA & CA - Feedback and questions from stakeholders (30 mins)
12:30-13:00 (30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closing remarks and next steps - AL - Group Photography and Media Interaction
13:00 -14:00	<i>Lunch and departure</i>

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Between 1980 and 2015, Ghana recorded over 500% increase in adult obesity

43% of all annual deaths in Ghana accounted for by NCDs

Local surveys show that Ghanaian households report frequent consumption of foods known to contribute to NCDs; foods high in calories, sugars, saturated fats and salt

Anecdotal evidence points to a high number of misleading marketing of such foods in both private and public-sector settings

Unhealthy food environments drive unhealthy diets

Actions focused on creating healthy food environments are urgently needed, to encourage the consumption of healthy foods

Ghana is experiencing an increase in obesity and nutrition-related non-communicable diseases (NR-NCDs). Current statistics for Ghana estimate that annually, NCDs account for about 43% of all deaths. Ghanaian households report frequent consumption of foods high in calories, sugar, saturated fat and salt, all of which are known to contribute to NCDs. Simultaneously, anecdotal evidence points to a high number of misleading marketing of such foods in both private and public-sector settings. It has long been recognized that the physical and social environments - in which we live, work, and eat are critical determinants of health. More

recently, there has been a greater focus on the food environment as a key determinant of health. Available evidence shows that unhealthy food environments drive unhealthy diets; unhealthy diet is one of four main risk factors for NCDs. Actions focused on creating healthy food environments are urgently needed, to improve the relative availability, affordability and diversity of healthy foods; and to limit availability and promotion of unhealthy foods. Improving food environments of children and adolescents has the greatest potential to prevent obesity and NCDs.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Focusing on restricting unhealthy food marketing to children and improving school nutrition environments, this project will adapt approaches developed by the International Network for Food and Obesity NCDs Research Monitoring and Action Support (INFORMAS) for Ghana to measure and support public sector actions that create healthy food marketing and provision environments for children /adolescents.

Specifically, the project aims to:

1. Describe the nature and extent of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverage promotion on television, in stores, and in and around schools;
2. Determine the nutritional quality of foods and non-alcoholic beverages provided or sold in child-serving institutions (mainly primary and secondary schools);
3. Assess community stakeholders' readiness to accept, and capacity to implement obesity/NCD prevention interventions.

TARGET BENEFICIARIES

PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES

The primary target beneficiaries of this project are male and female children aged 17 years or younger.

The choice of our primary target beneficiaries was informed by three considerations:

1. The Global rapid rise in overweight /obesity among children and adolescents
2. Calls from existing global public health resolutions, guidelines and frameworks to tackle food promotion targeting children
3. Requests from local/Ghanaian policy

makers who participated in a related project a year ago.

SECONDARY BENEFICIARIES

It is also anticipated that the project will benefit the following groups:

- Academics
- Governments
- Policy makers
- Programme implementers
- Civil Society
- Private Sector
- General Public

WORK PACKAGES

Planned to be conducted over a period of 3 years, the project will be delivered through 2 main work packages (WP); a **Food Promotion package** and a **Food Provision package**, both adapted from approaches developed by INFORMAS. Additionally, the project will

implement the **Community Readiness Model (CRM)**, which is not included in the INFORMAS protocol to generate data that will complement those from the Food promotion and Food provision work packages.



WP1: Food Promotion

This work package will systematically collect and analyse advertising, publicity and sales promotions of food to children via television, and outdoor advertising within school zones. Findings will be compared to existing national policies on food promotion to children to evaluate the degree of implementation and the extent that these are effective in reducing the negative impact of food promotions on children and compared to international benchmarks



WP2: Food Provision

The purpose of the Food Provision work package is to evaluate the nutritional quality of the foods and beverages sold or provided to children in child-serving institutions such as primary, junior high, and senior high schools. In this package, we will examine the school food environment in terms of both provided foods and sold foods (e.g. those available in vending machines, foods sold in cafeterias or school canteens)



Community Readiness Model (CRM)

The CRM aims to answer the question of how ready “the community” is to accept and implement actions to improve food environments of children. In this exercise, “the community” will be operationally defined both over geographic space (geographic community), and over stakeholder of interest (interest community).

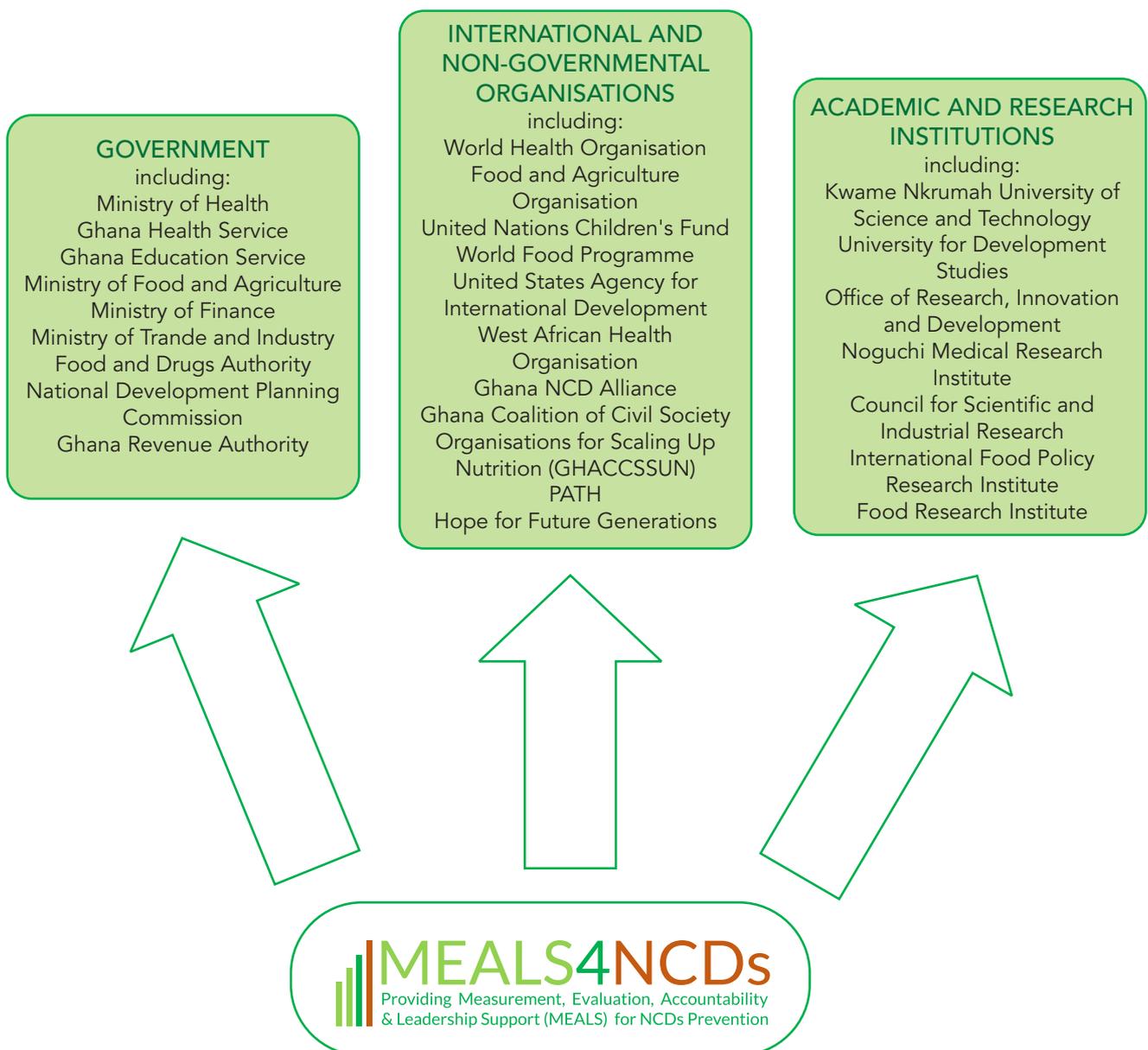
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The project will engage government and other stakeholders in ways that ensure acceptability of its findings, promotes optimal reach, implementation, and institutionalization of food environment improvement actions. These will help reduce the burden of nutrition-related NCDs. Although presented here as a three-year study, the overarching goal of this project is to measure and support public and private sector actions that create healthy food environments.

Hence the name “MEALS4NCDs Project”. The project will provide Measurement, Evaluation, Accountability, and Leadership Support for NCDs prevention. This requires sustained actions beyond the life of the project and beyond the Work packages indicated. To this end, planned engagement with relevant stakeholders will continue beyond the third year and will invoke the regulatory, legislative and fiscal levers of the Food Environment arsenal.

STAKEHOLDERS

Non-exhaustive list of stakeholders to be engaged



ANTICIPATED PROJECT OUTCOMES

An anticipated outcome of this project is to identify/generate both policy and practice interventions to promote healthy food environments, and thus prevent nutrition related-NCDs in Ghana. We envisage that such

interventions will have whole-of-community impacts, benefitting various primary and secondary groups (academic, social and economic, policy and practice) in the following ways:

Academic Impacts	Health, social, economic Impacts	Policy and practice Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissemination of project findings at local, regional, international conferences, and scientific publications to benefit academic researchers in Africa in particular and also the global academic community• Provision of mentoring, training, and sustainable capacity building to young and early career researchers• Facilitation of workshops to allow sharing of academic knowledge and learning from the different institutions involved in the research team• Formation of an Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN), encompassing a critical mass of experts to continue with healthy food environment research and advocacy work beyond the life of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment and institutionalization of food environment monitoring system into public health delivery systems in ways that regularly disseminates information to key actors (such as policy makers, government, and programme implementers), to impact on public health• Use of evidence generated from study by advocacy groups to advocate for review of policies and guidelines in the relevant ministries and local governments, and practices among nutrition and health stakeholders• Improvements in environments that drive unhealthy food consumption, resulting in well-nourished populations who will have better capacity for cognitive development and participation in the labour market, which will eventually impact positively on economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultative meetings with diverse, but relevant government and non-governmental stakeholders supportive of nutrition, health systems, and NCDs: these meetings will aim to deliberatively agree on the strategies for feeding project findings into policies, practice, and scale up.• Generation of policy briefs (covering food promotion and food provision) to facilitate dialogue with relevant stakeholders

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

To facilitate translation of project results into policy and practice, deliberate efforts will be made to disseminate project findings as widely as possible via a **Project and Scientific Management Team / Project Dissemination, and Exploitation Working Group** comprising Investigators and Project Advisory Board. This team will undertake standard and effective dissemination activities such as publishing peer-reviewed manuscripts and presenting at local or global scientific conferences. The team will also

create an open-access project website (www.meals4ncds.org), generate and disseminate project reports, produce policy briefs, and conduct consultative meetings/ dissemination workshops. Additional efforts to disseminate study data more widely after the conclusion of the project and to support its ultimate application may entail: packaging of the research findings into user-friendly formats e.g. press releases, research briefs, and policy briefs guided by our research findings.

OUR TEAM

INVESTIGATORS

This project is a collaboration between 10 researchers from 7 academic and research institutions across Ghana, Kenya, Netherlands, France, and Belgium.

University of Ghana, Ghana (Lead Institution)



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(Project Principal Investigator/
Project Leader)
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Dr. Stefanie Vandevijvere
(Co-Investigator)
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PROJECT STAFF/EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS



Akua Tandoh
(Project Associate/
Doctoral student)



**Gideon Senyo
Amevinya**
(Monitoring and
Evaluation Specialist)



Wilhemina Quarpong
(Project Associate)



ADVISORY BOARD

This project is supported in process and methodology by the expertise of a high-level Project Advisory Board to ensure the research team achieves its objectives. The Board's role will be crucial in providing expert guidance in relation to the implementation of the project, dissemination and future plans to scale-up the innovation and implement the project's findings in other countries.

CURRENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



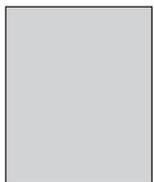
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Mr. Issah Ali
 Vision for Alternative Development
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Ms. Lilian Selenje
 (Nutrition Manager)
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Ms. Joana Ansong
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