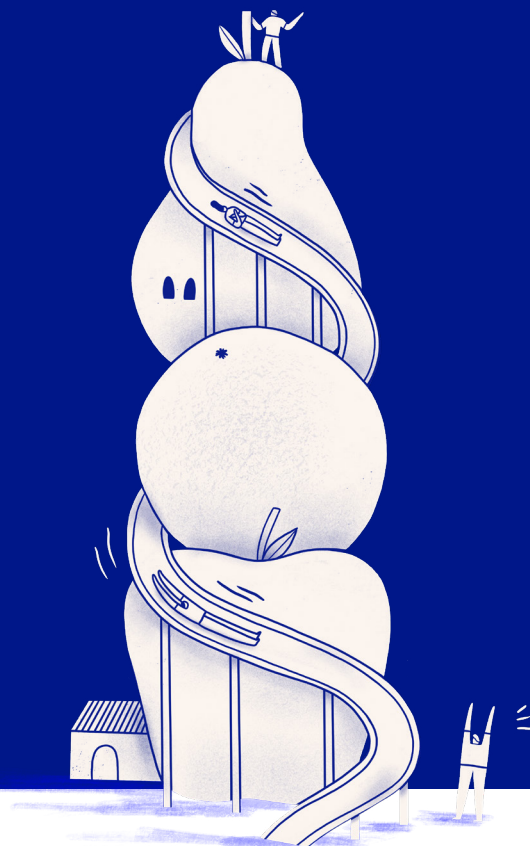


# Food Policy

Supporting strong healthy food policies to address rising rates of obesity and promote healthier food environments.



**Poor diet and obesity are major drivers of cancer, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes, costing US \$2 trillion globally per year.**

The world is in a global nutrition transition where hunger and obesity often coexist, traditional diets are being displaced, and people increasingly consume cheap ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks. The result is one-third of the world's population is already overweight or obese.

Vital Strategies works closely with partners in Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica and South Africa. We also support work in other countries including India and Ethiopia. Our work helps achieve healthy food policy goals through focused audience research, strategic communication and evaluation.

**Vital Strategies is a leading technical partner for the Bloomberg Philanthropies Food Policy Program.**

Learn more at [www.vitalstrategies.org](http://www.vitalstrategies.org)

## Focus Countries



## Our Partners

- Bloomberg Philanthropies
- Global Health Advocacy Incubator
- University of North Carolina
- O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law
- Center for Science in the Public Interest

## Technical Intervention Package

Vital Strategies supports partners to research and develop strategic responses to policy proposals. We help partners drive public and policy maker support for high-impact policies aimed at creating a healthier food environment.

## Taxation on Sugary Drinks and Junk Food

Offers a win-win approach for governments

- Taxes increase government revenue that can be used for public health.
- Taxes help reduce consumption and improve health, particularly among lower-income consumers—many of whom are disproportionately affected by the ill effects of obesity and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).

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## Clear Front-of-Package Nutrient Labeling

Empowers consumers to make informed and healthier choices

- Simple nutrient labels that identify unhealthy products are an effective way to discourage consumption of ultra-processed food.
- Clear front-of-package nutrient labels minimize the effort and time consumers need to make purchasing decisions. They can increase a customer's intention to purchase healthier products or, conversely, decrease the intention to purchase unhealthy products.

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## Restrictions on Marketing, Especially to Children

Protects children from exposure to marketing of unhealthy food and beverages

- Children are highly receptive, cannot recognize advertising intent and are extremely vulnerable to food marketing.
- Marketing regulations can prohibit advertising during children's television programming, limit or ban product giveaways, or ban product placement of unhealthy foods and beverages in children's movies.

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## Promoting Healthy Food Policies in the Public Sector, Especially in Schools

Provides a healthy food environment

- Unhealthy school food environments prevent children from making good eating decisions and learning healthy food habits.
- Strong policies that restrict access to unhealthy food, ban marketing and include standards for healthier meals increase healthy food intake while reducing sugar, fat and sodium consumption across children's entire diet.

**Food policy communication campaigns can influence the policy agenda by:**

- increasing public knowledge and identifying the problem of obesity
- enabling people to voice their call for strong food policy
- supporting the actions of policymakers to provide the solution of policy change.

## Healthy Food Policy Fellowship

- To guide national policies and further expand evidence, Vital Strategies awards Healthy Food Policy Fellowships to support future leaders and build research and legal capacity in focus countries.
- Successful applicants are awarded a multiple-year fellowship for the duration of their Ph.D. program (up to five years) to support their studies at top universities in their home country or abroad.

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## Selected Accomplishments

- We supported partners in Mexico to develop mass media campaigns that were instrumental in the introduction of a 10% tax on sugary drinks in 2013. Evaluation has shown that after the tax was implemented there was a significant reduction in sugary drink purchases, increases in water purchases and no change in total employment.
- South Africa became the first country in Africa to pass a tax on sugary drinks, at approximately 11% of the purchase price. Vital Strategies provided South African partners with strategic, technical and capacity-building support to implement three national mass media campaigns highlighting the health harms of sugary drinks consumption. The tax was implemented in April 2018.
- In Brazil, a rapid transition from traditional diets to diets high in ultra-processed foods and beverages has led to a jump in obesity rates. In October 2020, the Brazil Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA) approved front-of-package warning labels. Vital Strategies supported partners in Brazil over a number of years to develop the successful communication campaigns to support this policy.