

Development of a research agenda for improving the healthiness of urban retail food environments in the East Asia and Pacific Region

Online interactive workshop

Wednesday 18 November

Background

UNICEF is committed to preventing childhood overweight and obesity as part of a broader agenda to improve nutrition in the East Asia and Pacific Region. A critical area for UNICEF is improvement of the retail food environment in the region, given the growing sale and consumption of highly processed foods, high in fat, sugar and salt, which is driving the rise in overweight. Retail has the power to influence the consumption patterns, food preferences and eating habits of children, their families and caregivers through a range of strategies. UNICEF has started to work with Deakin University and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) in Australia to identify the tools and methods that are appropriate for assessing the retail food environment, and related policies and strategies. The ultimate aim is to support governments and other partners to improve retail food environments and contribute to healthier diets for children and their families.

An interactive online workshop to initiate the development of a research agenda to improve the urban retail food environment in the East Asia and Pacific Region will take place on 18th November over three hours. An initial scoping study prepared by Deakin University will be presented to stimulate discussion and reflections from experts in this field of research. The scoping study describes different retail food environments and how they impact upon population diets. It provides an overview of the available research methods, tools and data sources that can be used to generate evidence for influencing the healthiness of retail food environments in urban areas.

Goals

The overarching purpose of the workshop is to initiate the development of a UNICEF research agenda on improving the healthiness of urban retail food environments in the East Asia and Pacific Region.

Specific objectives are:

- To outline the proposed areas of research that are primary targets for influencing retail food environments in the East Asia and the Pacific Region;
- To promote reflections on research priorities in the short, medium and longer terms, based on their likely impact, feasibility, cost, and relevance to the agenda in the region;
- To integrate recommendations of experts in support of building a plan of action for research methods in the region.

Participants

This workshop brings together a group of international and regional researchers interested in urban food retail environments with UNICEF staff from country, regional and global offices working on nutrition and private sector engagement.

For questions, please contact:

UNICEF EAPRO:

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Deakin University:

Adrian Cameron adrian.cameron@deakin.edu.au
Gary Sacks gary.sacks@deakin.edu.au

Agenda

Session 1: Retail food environments in EAPRO

9.00 am – 9.50 am Bangkok / 1.00 pm – 1.50 pm Melbourne

This session will highlight the importance of policy for improving food environments and indicate the role that research and evidence play in supporting the development of policy. The scoping study findings will be presented. Short videos/animations from experience in Australia will be included to illustrate key points.

Welcome and introductory remarks

Roland Kupka, UNICEF EAPRO
Sandro Demaio, VicHealth

Setting the scene

Roland Kupka, UNICEF EAPRO

Presentation of scoping study findings

Adrian Cameron, Deakin University

BREAK (10 minutes)

Session 2: Group discussions

10.00 am – 10.50 am Bangkok / 2.00 pm – 2.50 pm Melbourne

This session will be divided into break-out groups for discussion on three focus areas for research related to retail food environments in the region.

(1) Supermarkets (including convenience stores)

Facilitator: Georgina Berlaro, UNICEF Philippines

(2) 'Fast food' outlets (including quick service restaurant chains and formal outlets)

Facilitator: Gary Sacks, Deakin University

(3) Informal markets (including vendors around schools, workplaces)

Facilitator: Jee Hyun Rah, UNICEF Indonesia

BREAK (10 minutes)

Session 3: Panel discussion

11.00 am – 11.45 am Bangkok / 3.00 pm – 3.45 pm Melbourne

This panel session will report on the group discussions and reflect on priority research areas for UNICEF.

Facilitator: Karla Corrêa, UNICEF EAPRO

Panellists: Gary Sacks, Deakin University
Jee Hyun Rah, UNICEF Indonesia
Georgina Belardo, UNICEF Philippines
Jo Jewell, UNICEF New York
Salome Rebello, National University of Singapore

Session 4: Priorities and next steps

11.45 am – 12.00 am Bangkok / 3.45 pm – 4.00 pm Melbourne

The final session will summarise the priorities identified and next steps for UNICEF.

Final remarks: Fiona Watson, UNICEF EAPRO