

Applying a system dynamics lens to understand the mechanisms of the European School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme

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Abstract

The European School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (EU-SFVS), which aims to increase children's Fruit and Vegetable (FV) consumption, has low leverage and faces challenges in significantly reducing the problem of children's low fruit and vegetable consumption. The problem is separated into personal, social, and behavioral components. To fully comprehend EU-SFVS potential, a broad range of analysis and consideration of the highly interconnected actors in various settings is required. We take a systems approach in this article and provide an illustrative causal loop diagram that can hypothetically explain the complexity of children's habituation dynamics and causal connection across different settings (home, school, society, and policy) and actors (children, parents, teachers, and policymakers) in the scheme. EU-SFVS promotes FV consumption, FV liking, and socio-behavioral exposure to FV among children. However, in order for the reinforcing loop of habituation of FV intake to outweigh the various balancing loops that limit its strength, this policy initiative must work closely with other core settings such as the home and the community.