

IUNS Task Force on Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition

Report Form 2019



IUNS
INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF
NUTRITIONAL
SCIENCES

Task Force Chair/s

Gina Kennedy, USAID Advancing Nutrition, USA

Task Force Members

- Harriet Kuhnlein, Steering Committee (Prof Emeritus, McGill University, Canada)
- Thingnganing Longvah, Steering Committee (Senior Scientist, National Institute of India, India)
- V. Prakash, IUNS Representative (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, India and Vice-President IUNS)
- Bee Chotiboriboon, Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University (INMU), Thailand
- Namkolo Covic, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Ethiopia
- Treena Delormier, School of Human Nutrition, McGill University, Canada
- Rebecca Kanter, Department of Nutrition, University of Chile
- Patrick Maundu - Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (KENRIK), National Museums of Kenya
- Nasrin Omidvar, School of Nutrition Sciences and Food Technology and National Nutrition & Food Technology Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Summary of Activities in 2019

The major activities of the IUNS Task Force in 2019 were:

- Quarterly meetings and establishing short and long term goals
- Preparation of an Opinion piece authored by the Task Force
- Representation at international events

Report of Activities and Achievements in 2019

- **Quarterly meetings and establishing short and long term goals**

The task force is comprised of nine task force members and one IUNS representative, including seven women and three men, with members from Africa, Asia, North and South America and the Near East. During 2019, the Task Force had three conference call meetings on 27 March, 16 May and 30 October. Meeting notes are available upon request. During the meeting of 27 March the task force defined short-term and long term goals.

In the short-term, the task force will seek to:

- Produce tangible, written outputs as quick wins by mid-2019.
- Develop funding plan (use of USD 10K from IUNS and pursue fundraising ideas)
- Continue to raise awareness and advocate for the place of traditional and indigenous foods in food systems (this is individual as attendance at conferences and can be collective such as organizing workshops, side events at symposium)
- Build up areas of collaboration on common topics across the countries and foster exchange of methods and research findings among TF members as well as wider community. Seek convergence around common topics, for example, role and position of Traditional and Indigenous foods in FBDG and Ag/Nutrition policies (Iran, Ethiopia, Chile).

Our long-term goals are to:

- Publish our efforts as peer review publication (or at least in a distributed format to reach audience)
- Fundraising for a face to face meeting, and support to a publication or workshop
- Establish greater collaboration with the TF on Sustainable Diets

- Preparation of an Opinion piece authored by the Task Force

As a quick win to raise the external visibility of our Task Force and to promote group cohesion, an opinion piece is being authored as a collective written work. The opinion piece has been drafted and will be submitted in Q1 2020 to an appropriate journal. This will serve as a spring board for future published material aimed at raising thematic issues of global importance and will also be used to promote greater visibility of IUNS.

- Task Force Representation at other events

The IUNS Task Force members are each active in promoting the IUNS Task Force during attendance at international and regional events. IUNS was mentioned by the following members during the following events;

Dr. Delormier and Dr. Kuhnlein, gave a plenary presentation with Gwich'in Elder Norma Kassi from Old Crow, Yukon Territory, Canada, about the history and development of the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment of McGill University on September 18, 2019 at the Fourth Annual Native American Nutrition Conference in Mystic Lakes, Minnesota, USA.

Dr. Kuhnlein served on the planning committee of the 4 conferences to date.

Dr. Maundu has been very active in raising visibility of our topic with media, as well as interaction with policy makers and other key players. As for example on local Kenyan TV <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAWC18slK64>.

He has prepared summary drafts of the following activities; (i) Leafy vegetable promotion in Kenya: looking back (30yrs) and (ii) Foodways documentation: getting communities and school pupils involved. He has reviewed the Kenya food based dietary guidelines to see the extent to which local foods are represented, although local foods are given as examples in these guidelines, there is still a predominance of exotic foods, some of which are still unknown to people in many rural areas. He is currently working with FAO on a book "Indigenous Fruits and Vegetables of Tropical Africa". The book will be published FAO and Prota. We hope the book will help push the local foods agenda especially in Africa. Its publication is meant to coincide with the International year of fruits and vegetables. The target audience will be policymakers, local practitioners, development organizations, NGOs and the private sector, as well as researchers, trainers, advanced growers and stakeholders in the horticulture value chain in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Longvah delivered the keynote lecture at the Kohima Institute in July on "The Indigenous peoples' food system and the need for its preservation" also on "mainstreaming indigenous foods: Perspectives from Northeast India at the MSSRF conference in Chennai August 2019. He is in the process of documenting the indigenous food systems of Northeast India and plans to publish this as a book later this year

Dr. Kanter's affiliation with IUNS was highlighted during the following;
Seminar for the Program for Human Nutrition, Johns Hopkins University, February 2019
Seminar for the Center for a Liveable Future, Johns Hopkins University, June 2019
Poster Presentations, Nutrition 2019 (Annual Conference of the American Society for Nutrition), June 2019
Inaugural Plenary, Meetings-Conference of the Chilean Society for Nutrition, October 2019
Symposium talk, First Chilean Conference of Agroecology, October 2019

Dr. Omidvar organized and chaired the 4th food and nutrition discussion forum in Iran on Concepts, Approaches and Challenges on Food and Nutrition System Analysis on June 19, 2019 in Tehran Iran.

Dr. Bee worked toward completing her dissertation that looked at the following research areas of importance to the task force, roles of local food in contribution to participatory food security strengthening, how tribal youths working in urban context adapt and bring back their indigenous food preference to keep their dietary intake healthy, how to increase people's awareness in the city on the significance of local food; cultivation and household cooking, to better nutritional health, population well-being, and healthy environment.

Dr. Kennedy co-authored a review paper entitled " Ethiopia's food treasures: Revitalizing Ethiopia's underutilized fruits and vegetables for inclusion in the food-based dietary guidelines for improved diet diversity, nutrition and health of the population" (Available from: <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/106126>). Dr. Kennedy has contacted FAO on the possibility of jointly organizing an IUNS event on the theme of food-based dietary guidelines.

2020 Plans

In looking forward to 2020, we will consolidate our collective activities in written form, either as peer review papers or research briefs. We will continue to seek opportunities for face to face engagement, which has up to present proven very challenging. We will continue to discuss resource mobilization and begin planning for the Task Force symposium at the IUNS meeting in Tokyo in 2021.