Prevention and Control of Malnutrition (International Malnutrition Task Force)

Task Force Report Form 2022

IUNS
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES

Task Force Chair/s

Joint Conveners:
Professor Ann Ashworth, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, UK
Professor Alan Jackson, University of Southampton, UK

Task Force Members

Regional focal points and representatives:

South/Southeast Asia

Dr Tahmeed Ahmed, ICDDRB, Bangladesh

Sub-Saharan Africa:

Dr Beatrice Amadi, University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia.
(Professor David Sanders who was a regional focal point for sub-Saharan Africa has sadly died and there is thus an unavoidable change from the original proposal)

Latin America:

Dr Ana Maria Aguilar, Medicina Universidad Mayor de San Andres, La Paz, Bolivia;
Professor Michele Monroy Valle, University of San Carlos, Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Engagement with young professionals:

Dr Reggie Annan, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana.

Partner representatives:

Dr Sultana Khanum, Global SUN Civil Society Network, Bangladesh (until mid-2022), and Global Health Forum (from mid-2022)

Has your objective(s) as a task force been modified since the original proposal? Is so, please provide brief justification.

No

Have the activities to be undertaken been modified since the original proposal? If so, please provide brief overview and justification.

No

Brief overview of Activities since last annual report

Our main activities have been:-

- capacity building in relation to scaling-up WHO guidelines for treatment of severe acute malnutrition
- interactions with WHO re scoping review and guideline development
- participation in discussions regarding school feeding and healthy development
- organising symposium for 22nd IUNS-ICN in Tokyo.

Please list any successes accomplished during this period (aligned with proposed measures of success from original proposal, or include justification for modifications)

Capacity Building

1. A third paper has been published resulting from a 2-year research project 'Investigating the efficacy and effectiveness of a Malnutrition eLearning course for global capacity building'. The latest paper is entitled Annan R. et al. Implementing effective eLearning for scaling up global capacity building: findings from the malnutrition eLearning course evaluation in Ghana' in Global Health Action 2020: 13(1):1831794.

2. A paper describing key findings from our capacity building work has been published entitled 'Scaling-up improved in-patient treatment of severe malnutrition: key factors and experiences from South Africa, Bolivia, Malawi and Ghana' by Kauchali S. et al. Global Health Science & Practice. 2022: 10(2): e2100411. This involved collaborations with IMTF regional partners in Bolivia and Ghana and national implementers in Malawi and South Africa. Substantial improvements in inpatient mortality have been sustained at scale.

3. At the request of IUNS we published a paper about IMTF to coincide with the ICN Congress. It is: The International Malnutrition Task Force: A model for the future? By Jackson A. et al. Trends in Food Science and Technology 2022: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tifs.2022.09.002

Interactions with WHO

4. In collaboration with IUNS Task Force ICONIC, we successfully bid in October 2020 to undertake for WHO a scoping review of evidence to identify key issues in the identification and treatment of severe wasting and oedema in children aged six months and over. This review was submitted in December 2020 and is being used by WHO to develop PICO questions for the WHO Guideline Development Group.

School feeding and healthy development

5. Professor Jackson continued collaborations with academics and policy makers regarding school feeding and healthy development of children in low and middle income countries. Discussions are also underway with academics and policy makers in Jamaica and with Professor Don Bundy of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine regarding formation of an inter-sectoral group to address child violence and its possible amelioration through school feeding.

6. Professor Jackson also represented IUNS/ IMTF on the UN School Nutrition panel, which is a coalition of UN agencies, academia, and civil society. The objectives of the Group are:-

- To create a platform that brings together a group of active and committed technical experts and agency representatives working on school nutrition.
- To support joint narratives, resources and initiatives on school nutrition based on identified gaps.
- To facilitate interagency communication, feedback and knowledge sharing in relation to new and upcoming work on school nutrition.
- To advocate for the inclusion of school nutrition within the broader school health and food systems agendas.
- To compile a library of school nutrition resources.
- To spread awareness, knowledge and good practices on school nutrition among a wide spectrum of stakeholders

7. Professor Jackson also represented IUNS/FANUS/Nut Society in October 2022 and presented 'Building community ownership by empowering nutrition extension officers' at the School Meals Coalition Week.

22nd IUNS-ICN, Tokyo

h) A Symposium entitled 'Building capacity to scale-up improved inpatient treatment of severe malnutrition: experiences of South Africa, Bolivia, Malawi and Ghana' has been organised and accepted.

Please mention your plans for the coming year and how they have been adapted based on success to date (if appropriate).

We are nearing the end of our current extension and, if granted a further extension, we propose that we apply the experience gained by our Task Force in capacity building and scaling up WHO malnutrition guidelines to a new task of improving school meals and nutrition education of young children.

Although school feeding has a long history, it is insecure both in its delivery to the most vulnerable and its sustainability. Cancer and obesity are predicted to be the scourge of future years, and helping children and their teachers to understand better the relation between nutrition, physical activity and NCDs is vital to reducing disease prevalence. A Task Force, established along similar lines to the IMTF, could help develop a school-feeding agenda, build capacity, and aim for sustainable delivery. This would be interdisciplinary, bottom-up, and engage with both agriculture and education. The collaboration with ICONIC would be maintained.

The plan would be to start small (as was done in IMTF) by building capacity in10-12 schools and establishing a cadre of school nutrition extension officers. We believe such a cadre would provide an attractive career pathway. Our experience with IMTF has reinforced the need for mechanisms to assure quality and competence of delivery, and a system that supports sustainability.

We will willingly expand on objectives and organizational matters etc. should this outline be deemed to have merit.