

IUNS Task Force on Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition

Report Form January 2021 to October 2022



IUNS
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SCIENCES

Task Force Chair/s

Dr. Gina Kennedy, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Task Force Members

- Dr. Harriet Kuhnlein, Steering Committee (Prof Emerita, McGill University, Canada)
- Dr. Thingnganing Longvah, Steering Committee (Senior Scientist, National Institute of India, India)
- Dr. Vish Prakash, Vice President of IUNS and Representative in this Task Force (Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, India)
- Dr. Sinee Chotiboriboon, Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University (INMU), Thailand
- Dr. Namkolo Covic, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Ethiopia
- Dr. Treena Delormier, School of Human Nutrition, McGill University, Canada
- Dr. Rebecca Kanter, Department of Nutrition, University of Chile
- Dr. Patrick Maundu - Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (KENRIK), National Museums of Kenya
- Dr. Nasrin Omidvar, School of Nutrition Sciences and Food Technology and National Nutrition & Food Technology Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Iran
- Zeyuan Wang, PhD candidate, University of Toronto, task force intern. Zeyuan Wang is a young career scientist, serving as volunteer with the task force since February 2021. Zeyuan is pursuing his PhD from the University of Toronto, Canada and has an MSc in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Michigan. He will be providing support to Task Force members who are organizing Food System Summit Dialogues and assisting with preparations for the ICN meeting in Tokyo.

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

No. Our objectives have not changed since the original proposal.

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

As per the original 2017 task force proposal, the emphasis of this term of the task force has been oriented toward Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition, with the objective of documenting diverse national and local food systems and promoting elements within them for improving nutrition and health in various ways, including livelihood development of knowledge holders. Covid has disrupted some of our anticipated opportunities for face-to-face meetings and in-person learning exchange, nevertheless, TIFSaN members have remained very active, and we have been able to conduct many joint activities as well as provide our individual expertise to support TIFSaN.

In terms of activities, we have fulfilled our original ideas to;

1. prepare and deliver policy briefs to national governments, UN agencies, and scholastic societies to promote potential beneficial nutritional and environmental impacts of local traditional/Indigenous food systems to better enable governments to meet SDG commitments.
2. prepare and present symposia on "Why and how to document local cultural food systems of Indigenous/Tribal Peoples" and related topics on biodiversity and food composition and
3. prepare and present a plenary and/or symposium at the next IUNS-ICN Congress in Tokyo

In addition to the above, we completed the following three additional activities.

1. Preparation of a Journal supplement/ E Book and
2. Task Force publication in IFoST
3. A Task Force reunion of members past and present during ICN

Brief Overview of Activities since last annual report

Collectively during 2021, the task force was actively engaged in contributions to the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). We also had a proposal for a supplementary issue on Local, Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems in the 21st Century to Combat Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change accepted for publication in the journal Frontiers.



Task Force Meetings

The task force met virtually over Zoom four times during 2021, in January, February, April and December and five times in 2022, in April, June, September, October and November. We will have a face-to-face meeting in December 2022 during the ICN. Meetings were more sporadic over the summer months due to member availability, time zone incompatibility and Covid concerns. During 2021, the meetings were also held earlier in the year in order to discuss UN FSS contributions and prepare jointly for UN FSS Dialogues, while in 2022 we meet very frequently in the from June onward to prepare for the ICN.

Contributions to the United Nations Food Systems Summit

- **UN FSS Independent Dialogue on Traditional and Indigenous foods for Food System Transformation in Africa**

Task force members **Patrick Maundu, Namukolo Covic** and **Gina Kennedy**, co-organized a UN FSS Independent Dialogue with the African Nutrition Society on the topic of Traditional and Indigenous Foods for Food Systems Transformation in Africa.

The Independent Food Systems Summit dialogue was held virtually on May 20th, 2021 and attended by 65 participants. The dialogue focused on the role of traditional and indigenous foods as an important component of Africa's food system but that are increasingly threatened by a widespread dietary transition, rampant food imports and migration pervasively taking place across the continent. The convenors chose to look across action tracks through the lens of how African Traditional and Indigenous Foods can be included and utilized to contribute towards more sustainable food systems.

- **Independent dialogue on Indigenous Food systems of China with Good Food Foundation of China**

Zeyuan Wang co-organized with Good Food China, a UN FSS independent dialogue to discuss the documentation and use of Indigenous and Traditional Food in China. The dialogue was in Chinese and 37 people joined this dialogue. Mr. Jian Yi, **Dr. Gina Kennedy**, and Dr. Qi Wang were invited to give speeches about Indigenous and traditional nutrition and food systems from different perspectives. Mr. Zeyuan Wang gave an overview for the current studies in Indigenous and traditional nutrition and food systems in China, and three Chinese Indigenous (ethnic minority) students shared their traditional foods. The dialogue generated a report in Chinese with an English translated version

- **White Paper on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems**

Task Force members Harriet Kuhnlein and Gina Kennedy contributed to The White Paper / Whipala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems. The White/Wiphala paper is a collective Paper coordinated by the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems, edited by a Technical Editorial Committee and with inputs received from Indigenous Peoples, researchers, academics and scientists from six different socio-cultural regions. In total, the White/Wiphala paper has received 60 contributions from 39 organizations and 10 individual experts. The paper was prepared to articulate the lessons that can be learned from Indigenous Peoples and advocates for their inclusion on the agenda of the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit to aims to stimulate dialogue and solutions on how to cultivate more efficient, sustainable, resilient and equitable food systems that are able to eliminate hunger and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

- FAO. 2021. The White/Wiphala Paper on Indigenous Peoples' food systems.

Journal Supplement and E-book

Rebecca Kanter prepared the proposal for a supplement on Local, Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems in the 21st Century to Combat Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change. The proposal was accepted in 2021 by Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems. Task force members **Rebecca Kanter** and **Gina Kennedy** are serving as guest editors. The supplement is a collection of twelve articles that highlight themes that cut across Indigenous, traditional and local diets and their link with sustainable diets, Indigenous and traditional foods and food-based dietary guidelines (FBDGs), case studies about public policies to strengthen indigenous, traditional and local food systems and Indigenous, traditional and local diets and food systems for climate change resilience. All papers are available as open access public goods at [Frontiers](#) website. Task force members are currently working with the journal to turn the set of papers into an E-book for distribution at the upcoming ICN. For more information visit: [Local, Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems in the 21st Century to Combat Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change](#).

2nd International Agrobiodiversity Congress 15-18 November 2021 (virtual)

The 2nd International Agrobiodiversity Congress was held from 15-18 November 2021 using a virtual platform. Several task force members were asked to participate in the Congress, which helped us to promote the task force objectives to raise awareness, deepen knowledge and contribute to dialogue around greater use of traditional and indigenous foods for food systems and nutrition.

The role of traditional and Indigenous foods within food systems was a consistent thematic element of day two and day four discussions.

Days two (16 November) of the Congress featured food system concepts ranging from the agro-biodiverse value chains, the food environment and consumer demand for food biodiversity. Day four (18 November) featured a special **Indigenous Peoples**

Session which was a platform for discussion on agrobiodiversity practices and challenges from the often-marginalized perspectives of Indigenous communities. This session shed light on the knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples' food systems, the food generation and production techniques that account for the rights and responsibilities over natural resources.

Gina Kennedy moderated a session on consumer demand and healthy diets, where she and other speakers promoted the task force theme of traditional and Indigenous foods as integral parts of food systems transformation needed to secure healthy diets for all. The discussion addressed consumer knowledge, cultural awareness, attitudes and practices related to diverse, nutritious foods and diets and how this impacts consumer choices and ultimately diet quality.

Harriet Kuhnlein provided a presentation titled "Documenting and strengthening food systems of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and the United States" presented during a session on Indigenous Peoples'. Dr. Kuhnlein called attention to the situation of Indigenous Peoples in North America (diverse ecosystems, numbers of Indigenous Peoples, systematic cultural attributes and ecosystem threats) and provided examples of how Indigenous Peoples have documented their traditional food systems as examples for other Indigenous Peoples to follow and how Indigenous Peoples can mobilize strengthening their food systems and resist threats.

Thingnang Longvah was also a speaker during a session on Indigenous peoples. The Indigenous Peoples session was a platform for discussion on agrobiodiversity and diet practices as well as challenges from the often-marginalized perspectives of Indigenous Peoples. This session aimed to shed light on the knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples' food systems, from food production and acquisition to food preparation, consumption and dietary outcomes in a changing world.

Namukolo Covic moderated a session on 'Shaping Diverse Food Environments for Healthy Diets'. This session drew on the discussions in the Scientific Symposium and present solutions to be implemented across the policy and business sectors. This session drew on the discussions in the Scientific Symposium of the day of the Policy and Business Forum by presenting potential solutions based on what the panelists have been working with, in different aspects of their work, policy and, business domains of food systems and also touch on how their efforts might support the very much desired transition to better diets while promoting sustainability. With a strong perspective on leveraging available biodiversity in relation to traditional and Indigenous foods, the panel addressed questions such as:

- How can diverse nutritious foods reach all layers of the population in a convenient way?
- How can consumers be encouraged to make healthy, diverse food choices?

Manuscript "The role of traditional knowledge and food biodiversity to transform modern food systems" published in Supplementary issue of Trends in Food Science and Technology



Gina Kennedy, Patrick Maundu and Zeyuan Wang, together with Danny Hunter, co-authored a manuscript for the supplementary issue of Trends in Food Science and Technology which featured

six case study examples that demonstrate multiple approaches that use food biodiversity confer benefits across a range of food system outcomes. The case studies demonstrate contributions to the body of knowledge on food composition, dietary diversification, strategies to prioritize crops that regenerate soil and purify water, require few inputs or can grow in harsh conditions, as well as provide increased income to communities and rebuild cultural knowledge. Some approaches were initiated by government and others at community level; they all demonstrate ways to achieve greater integration of food biodiversity into food systems. This collection of case studies illustrates a fraction of what is currently being done to support biodiverse food production and consumption. The article concludes that the evidence base for how to bring greater food biodiversity back into our food systems should be improved and should not be an isolated occurrence, but rather a continuous process.

22nd IUNS-ICN International Congress of Nutrition in Tokyo, Japan December 6-11, 2022

The task force will host a Symposium "The advantages and challenges of incorporating traditional foods in food-based dietary guidelines for more sustainable and inclusive population guidance" as part of ICN Track 5 Food Culture Practices and Nutrition Education. The symposium will be held on Saturday 10 December and include presentations from **Harriet Kuhnlein, Nasrin Omidvar, Treena Delormier and Namukolo Covic. Gina Kennedy** and Anna Lartey will co-Chair the session. The objective of this symposium is to use available evidence and examples from specific regional, national and sub-national contexts to discuss the challenges of incorporating traditional foods into FBDG, to learn from case study examples how culture and specific needs of Indigenous Peoples can be recognized in FBDG and reflect on sustainability considerations. The outcome of the symposium will inform development of FBDG to prompt sustainable healthy diets within contextual realities. On 8 December, the task force is hosting a reunion of past and present members to promote and celebrate the accomplishments of the current and past task force terms and look toward building a strong foundation for a subsequent term.

Independent Task Force Member Contributions to TIFSaN objectives

In addition to activities that the task force conducted with the participation of two or more members, several task force members have been very active in promoting traditional and Indigenous food systems for improved nutrition. Some of the most notable accomplishments related to the theme of our task force are highlighted below.

Harriet Kuhnlein is very active in the field of Indigenous Peoples' food systems and nutrition. Harriet serves on The Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty (TIP) Advisory Board. Harriet was awarded the Unsung Heroes of McGill University Award during McGill's Bicentennial celebration in the spring of 2022. Harriet serves on the Steering Committee of the Native American Nutrition Conference Annual Meetings. Harriet is also active on the FAO HUB on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems. In addition to the White paper mentioned above, Harriet was a reviewer for the 3rd FAO book within the series on Indigenous Peoples, titled "**Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems: insights on sustainability and resilience from the frontline of climate change**" (<https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5131en>). Harriet continues to serve on the Advisory Board of the project, "Transforming AI/AN STEM Learning via Indigenous Knowledge Translation and Education" funded by the National Science Foundation to the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community and colleagues to advance Indigenous Coast Salish environmental sustainability.

Vish Prakash, participated in a post UN FSS meeting that addressed traditional food through the theme of "scale down" rather than "scale up".

Namkolo Covic participated in Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security 2021, the theme of which was "Rediscovering Our Local African Diets for Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition". Namukolo contributed to development of the theme seeking to build on the UNFSS process to position African Traditional and Indigenous Foods within the broader tool kits for sustainable food system transformation towards better diets, better resilience for food security long term.

Namukolo co-authored the paper Street vending of traditional and Indigenous food and the potential contribution to household income, food security and dietary diversity: the case of Gaborone, Botswana. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2021.1988799>) which was also a featured element in the Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security. The paper proposes strategic directions for promoting increased production and processing of nutrient-rich African food crops.

The summary of the recommendations from the technical parallel sessions on the subthemes is reflected in this ppt that was presented at the main event on 29 October in front of high-level African Union dignitaries and regional heads of institutions like FAO, WFP, UNICEF etc. The SUN Movement and Assistant UN Secretary General were also present.

A Summary communique on the event can be found here https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/41110-pr-PR-Commemoration_of_12th_ADFNS-Oct_2021_rev.pdf

Namukolo Covic made a presentation (24 June 2021) on "**Indigenous food systems and their potential for healthy diets and sustainable production**" for the Science Days presentations of the UNFSS ahead of the UNFSS pre-Summit event on the theme, "Achieving healthy diets for all: What are the gaps constraining progress?"

Treena Delormier, made a presentation on Food Security and Food Sovereignty Truth and Reconciliation Canada on behalf of the Canadian Nutrition Society during the International Child Health Conference.

Rebecca Kanter, led and co-authored the e-book (ISBN 978-956-404-757-7) *El Aroma Del Sofrito: Recetas sostenibles para alimentar el alma y adaptarse a las crisis desde la cocina*. [The Aroma of Lightly Fried Vegetables: Sustainable recipes to feed the soul and adapt to crises from the kitchen] (In Spanish, www.rebeccakanter.com/libro) which was also a featured element to close the task force related research project funded by National Research and Development Agency of Chile (ANID) "Healthy and Sustainable Diets for Chileans: Recovering Traditional Diets based on methodologies suggested by current and prior Task Force members. The e-book proposes strategic directions for promoting healthy and sustainable diets using local foods and traditional culinary preparations in the Chilean context, but that can be extended to other countries and regions.

Patrick Maundu was an active participant in the Government of Kenya's strategy to improve food security and promote the use of local resources. Patrick spent much of 2021 providing training in indigenous knowledge, and indigenous fruits and vegetables. Patrick Maundu is a co-author on the publication submitted on 'Safeguarding the Biodiversity Associated with Local Foodways in Traditionally-Managed Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes in Kenya'. The paper examines the value of traditionally managed landscapes as important sources of food and other resources important in household nutrition and health. It also looks at the current threats to such landscapes and likely loss of indigenous knowledge and the food biodiversity. The paper also gives four case studies that have attempted to improve our understanding of the food-health-landscape nexus, methods used and the importance of community and multi-stakeholder participation. The paper is part of eleven case studies from all over the world put together by the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) and the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS). The case studies will be published by Springer during 2022 as Satoyama Initiative Thematic Review Volume 7.

Dr. Maundu's work in Kenya's work of documenting and promoting traditional foodways [particularly under the leadership of the National Museums of Kenya and Bioersity International] has caught the attention of UNESCO. During the sixteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held 13 to 18 December 2021, the work was nominated for the 2021 Register of Good Safeguarding Practices (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/8c-register-01193>) and (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/BSP/success-story-of-promoting-traditional-foods-and-safeguarding-traditional-foodways-in-kenya-01409>).

Nasrin Omidvar took part in the accountability Partner Advisory Group meeting of INFORMAS. She led the discussion on food environment. Nasrin presented on the Food Environment in the Mediterranean region, where sustainability of food systems was part of the discussion.

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

In 2021 our task force made substantial contributions to the UN Food System Summit through organization of FSS Dialogues as well as contributing to papers. The momentum from our contributions to these events carried forward into additional activities such as the nomination of the theme Rediscovering Our Local African Diets for Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition as the theme for the Africa Union Africa Day for Food and Nutrition Security. The task force also advanced our plans to provide substantial contributions during the upcoming ICN through presentations at our side session and the launch of our Frontiers journal supplement on the topic of Local, Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems in the 21st Century to Combat Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change and our publication The role of traditional knowledge and food biodiversity to transform modern food systems in the IUNS supplemental issue of Trends in Food Science and Technology.

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

We are looking forward to the opportunity to apply for a new task force term. Our application will be centered around why and how to promote traditional and Indigenous Peoples' food systems for food and nutrition security. We completed a brief questionnaire of current task force members to solicit members' opinion on needs for a new term. The current members feel the need to document, update and collate learnings on research methods and tools for documenting the food systems of Indigenous Peoples'. They feel there is a need to disseminate findings, build capacity and engage youth to advance global understanding of Indigenous Peoples' food systems within the context of global health, nutrition and climate challenges. Our research strategies will include document, respect, protect and promote.