

**Amos Laar, PhD. Professor of Public Health Nutrition.** Department of Population, Family & Reproductive Health, School of Public Health, University of Ghana, Post Office Box LG 13, Legon-Accra, Ghana. E-mail: [alaar@ug.edu.gh](mailto:alaar@ug.edu.gh)

### Professional summary

Amos Laar is a Professor of Public Health Nutrition at the University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana. He has expertise in mixed-methods research, public policy analysis and policy evaluations. Currently, his research explores the connection between food environments and diet-related non-communicable diseases; as well as how social forces, commercial influences, and structural violence affect the realization of health. He is an active researcher, having successfully led/co-led more than 25 research grants totaling over \$20 million. His scholarly works include over 150 scientific publications in prestigious journals (including The Lancet, Nature Foods, BMJ Global Health, Food Policy, Advances in Nutrition). He has enormous experience in teaching and mentoring with cultural humility - having taught at the university level, various levels including bachelors, masters, and doctoral.

Amos Laar offers expert advice to state and non-state actors, as well as United Nations agencies. In 2011, he represented Ghana as one of the public health nutrition experts at the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and in 2024 at the UN SDG2 Expert Group Meeting in Rome. In 2021, he served as curator of Ghana's Food Systems Dialogues and played a cardinal role in the development of Ghana's Food Systems Strategy and Investment Plan (2023-2030). He also played a key role in the development of Ghana's first-ever food-based dietary guidelines. In 2023, he led a coalition of civil society organizations and academics to mount a successful advocacy intervention in support of Ghana's sugar sweetened beverage tax. The "Healthier Diets for Healthy Lives Project" which he leads, is currently assisting the government of Ghana to develop a nutrient profiling system and four food-based policies (restricting what can be served, sold, or marketed to children, front-of-pack labeling, public food procurement, and food-related fiscal policies).

Beyond Ghana, Amos Laar has provided guidance on food environment and food systems policies to several other sub-Saharan African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda. He was a member of the Expert Panel that facilitated the implementation of the Food Systems Transformative Policy initiative in Ghana, Malawi, and Rwanda. He was recently appointed by the African Union as a Convener of the "Food Security, Nutrition, Health, and Food Safety Technical Working Group." This group of experts contributed to the development of Africa's food systems strategy for the next decade (2026-2035). He is a member of the Food Systems Countdown Initiative, which monitors food systems transformations across six continents.

Amos Laar has served as an expert reviewer for WHO guidelines, including those on low-sodium salt substitutes, carbohydrate, saturated and trans-fatty acid intake for adults and children, non-sugar sweetener use, and food-based dietary guidelines. Currently, he is among the WHO experts overseeing the development of guidelines on optimal consumption of animal source foods.

He served as the President of the African Nutrition Society from 2016 to 2020 and currently convenes the Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN). FERN assists multiple African countries in developing food-based policies. In 2019, he was honored in The Lancet (Diabetes and Endocrinology) for his significant contributions to combating diet-related non-communicable diseases in Africa. He is a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

### Educational qualifications

April 2023 **Cert. in Leadership.** Harvard Business School Executive Education, Boston, MA, USA

June 2014: **M.A.** Bioethics. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

June 2009: **Ph.D.** Public Health. University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.

Dec 2005: **MPH.** Master of Public Health. University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.

May 2003: **BSc.** Nutrition & Biochemistry. University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.

| Active Projects/Grants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                       |                      |                                                                  |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Role                                  | Duration of          | Funder                                                           | Grant value     |
| Developing evidence and action toward a double-duty food-based policy bundle to ensure healthier diets in Ghana ( <b>HD4HL Project</b> ): <a href="https://www.hd4hl.org/">https://www.hd4hl.org/</a><br>Grant Amount:                                                          | Principal Investigator (Project Lead) | 02/1/2022-01/31/2025 | IDRC, Canada/Rockefeller Foundation                              | ~CAD 1.2million |
| Beyond the dialogues: Tracking Ghana's commitments to transform its food systems ( <b>Beyond the Dialogues Project</b> ). Grant Amount:                                                                                                                                         | Principal Investigator (Project Lead) | 02/1/2024-12/31/2025 | IDRC, Canada                                                     | ~CAD 400,000    |
| Transforming Africa's Urban Food Environments Through Strengthening Linkages between Food Systems Stakeholders in Cities Across Europe and the Continent ( <b>AfriFOODlinks Project</b> ): <a href="https://afrifoodlinks.org/">https://afrifoodlinks.org/</a><br>Grant Amount: | Co-Investigator.                      | 12/1/2022-11/30/2026 | European Commission                                              | ~Euro 12million |
| Completed Projects/grants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                       |                      |                                                                  |                 |
| Title                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Role on the Project                   | Duration             | Funder                                                           |                 |
| Creating A Favorable Environment and Stakeholder Buy-In for Food-Related Fiscal Policies In Ghana (The A4H Project) <a href="https://www.advocating4health.org/">https://www.advocating4health.org/</a>                                                                         | Principal Investigator (Project Lead) | 02/1/2022-03/31/2024 | Bloomberg Philanthropies/Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI) |                 |
| Measuring the healthiness of Ghanaian children's food environments to prevent obesity and non-communicable diseases.                                                                                                                                                            | Principal Investigator (Project Lead) | 03/2019-02/ 2022     | IDRC, Canada                                                     |                 |
| Developing a package of effective regulatory interventions for healthier food environments in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda                                                                                                                                                        | Co-Investigator                       | 04/2020 - 03/2023    | IDRC, Canada                                                     |                 |

### Publications 10 out of a total of 150

1. **Laar, A.**, Tagwireyi, J. and Hassan-Wassef, H., 2023. From dialogues to action: commitments by African governments to transform their food systems and assure sustainable healthy diets. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 65, p.101380.
2. **Laar, A.**, Amoah, J.M., Massawudu, L.M., Pereko, K.K., Yeboah-Nkrumah, A., Amevinya, G.S., Nanema, S., Odame, E.A., Agyekum, P.A., Mpereh, M. and Sandaare, S., 2023. Making food-related health taxes palatable in sub-Saharan Africa: lessons from Ghana. *BMJ Global Health*, 8(Suppl 8), p.e012154.
3. Tandoh, A., Aryeetey, R., Agyemang, C., Holdsworth, M., Asiki, G., Zotor, F., ... & **Laar, A.** (2023). The Africa Food Environment Research Network (FERN): from concept to practice. *Global Health Promotion*, 30(2), 5-10.
4. **Laar, A.K.**, Addo, P., Aryeetey, R., Agyemang, C., Zotor, F., Asiki, G., Rampalli, K.K., Amevinya, G.S., Tandoh, A., Nanema, S. and Adjei, A.P., 2022. Perspective: Food Environment Research Priorities for Africa: Lessons from the Africa Food Environment Research Network. *Advances in Nutrition*.
5. **Laar, A.** (2021). The role of food environment policies in making unhealthy foods unattractive and healthy foods available in Africa." *The Lancet EclinicalMedicine* 36 (2021).
6. **Laar, A.**, Barnes, A., Aryeetey, R., Tandoh, A., Bash, K., Mensah, K., ... & Holdsworth, M. (2020). Implementation of healthy food environment policies to prevent nutrition-related non-communicable diseases in Ghana: National experts' assessment of government action. *Food Policy*, 101907.
7. **Laar, A.**, Baye, K., Zotor, F., Asiki, G. and Lartey, A., 2023. The African food environments: An editorial. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, p.1181096.
8. Friel, S., Collin, J., Daube, M., Depoux, A., Freudenberg, N., Gilmore, A.B., Johns, P., **Laar, A.**, Marten, R., McKee, M. and Mialon, M., 2023. Commercial determinants of health: future directions. *The Lancet*, 401(10383), pp.1229-1240.
9. Schneider, K. R., Fanzo, J., Haddad, L., Herrero, M., Moncayo, J. R., Herforth, A., ... **Laar A.**, ... & Wiebe, K. (2023). The state of food systems worldwide in the countdown to 2030. *Nature Food*, 4(12), 1090-1110.
10. **Laar, A.**, Osei-Kwasi, H. A., Laar, M. E., Bosu, W. K., Nanema, S., Asiki, G., ... & Vandevijvere, S. (2022). Monitoring food environments and systems for sustainable diets in Africa: Lessons from Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa. In *Routledge Handbook of Sustainable Diets* (pp. 673-691). Routledge.