

International Malnutrition Task Force Report Form 2024



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, ICDDR, Bangladesh

Sub-Saharan Africa:

- Dr Beatrice Amadi, University Teaching Hospital, Lusaka, Zambia.

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 representative :

- Dr Sultana Khanum, Global Health Forum

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

Our mandate was to address problems of malnutrition in childhood in all its forms. We have worked with partners successfully to build capacity of pre-service and in-service health professionals to prevent and treat malnutrition, and we have facilitated the successful scale-up of improved inpatient management in under-resourced hospitals in several LMIC countries. We are now broadening our ambition to improving school meals and nutrition education of young children by applying the experience gained by our Task Force in capacity building and scaling up.

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

We are utilising our links to various organisations and individuals to see how best to position our future activities. We are raising our profile regarding our school feeding endeavour through international workshops and symposia, and enlisting academics and researchers in Africa and Asia to form a nucleus to make and implement action plans.

Brief overview of activities since last annual report

1. Malnutrition Guideline Development:

Professor Jackson continued to serve as Chair of the WHO Guideline Development Group on the management of severe acute malnutrition in infants and children.

2. School feeding and healthy development:

- a) Professor Jackson and Dr Khanum continued interactions with policy makers regarding school feeding and healthy development of children in low and middle income countries. Discussions are also underway between Professor Jackson and 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 and adolescent school health and nutrition.
- b) Professor Jackson represented IUNS/ IMTF on the UN School Nutrition Panel, which is a coalition of UN agencies, academia, and civil society.
- c) Dr Khanum helped organise the scientific programme for the Nutrition Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh which was held in early 2025. This included a session entitled : School Meal Programs as an Intervention for Reducing Nutritional Disparities : An Epidemiological Perspective.
- d) Dr Khanum continued to attend meetings of the Global Health Forum in an advisory capacity.

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

- September 2024, Dhaka, Bangladesh: workshop/seminar on school nutrition as part of the 10-year celebration of the LSHTM Alumni Bangladesh Chapter.
- October 2024, Accra, Ghana: a 2-day **School Health and Nutrition Workshop** was convened by the Africa Nutrition Society (ANS) at the University of Cape Coast as a pre-conference to the 9th Africa Nutrition Conference (ANEC). IUNS/IMTF played a major role in planning the Workshop which sought to review school health and nutrition across Africa, share positive/negative experiences, identify challenges and the role of nutritionists in their resolution, and plan how best to establish a realistic school feeding programme. IMTF and ANS are now preparing a formal report following the Workshop to capture and consolidate experience to date, and to provide the basis for a plan of coordinated action.

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

23rd IUNS-ICN, Paris. A Symposium entitled 'Developing professional nutrition capacity to advance school health and nutrition in Africa' has been submitted with speakers from Ghana, Zimbabwe, and the UK.

4th International Conference on Pediatrics and Neonatal Care, July 2025: Paris. Oral presentation accepted. S. Kauchali and A. Ashworth Breaking the cycle of wasting and stunting in volatile contexts: integrating cross-sectoral, accelerated, and accountable nutrition interventions.

We will be following up on recommendations from the School Health and Nutrition Workshop report, including professional development of school nutrition extension officers. The School Health and Nutrition Workshop also demonstrated the need for nutritionists to become active in ensuring an adequate provision of sufficient foods of quality from local resources. We have worked with others to submit a proposal to IUNS for a Task Force on the use of appropriate technology to improve the quality of school meals and reduce waste of locally available foods.

We shall continue to provide a Chair to facilitate the Task Force on International Collaboration on Nutrition in relation to Cancer (ICONIC). This Task Force will continue to enable specific activities in:

1. Accessing and utilising the WHO online portal for chronic non-communicable diseases to promote nutritional health in young people with a focus on cancer-risk in children, teenagers and young adults.
2. Establishing a quality assurance framework for anthropometry in relation to school meals, children's health, and monitoring and evaluation.
3. Delivering a capacity building course and training in research grant applications in nutritional epidemiology.