

Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition

Report 2024



Task Force Chair/s

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

Active 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. Sinee Chotiboriboon, Institute of Nutrition, Mahidol University (INMU), Thailand
- Dr. Namukolo 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.

In March, 2024, we added the following new members to the Task Force,

- Dr. Tesfaye Hailu Beke, Ethiopia, Post-doctoral researcher at Division of Human Nutrition and Health, Wageningen University
- Dr. Zeyuan Wang, China, University of Toronto
- Dr. Carol Zavaleta Cortijo, Peru, Co-chair of the Indigenous Peoples Observatory Network
- Dr. Tanisha Aflague, Philippines/USA, Associate Professor of Nutrition, University of Guam
- Dr. Pattamaporn Joompa, Thailand. Researcher, University of Mahidol
- Dr. Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan, USA, Professor, Department of Rural Health, Oklahoma State University

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

No. We have not modified our objectives.

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. TIFSAN members have remained very active.

We completed and presented several key activities during the IUNS meeting in Tokyo, December, 2022.

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 webinar series "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 Paris

Brief overview of activities since last annual report

During the period January to December 2024 five regular meetings were convened, in April, July, August, September and December 2024. In addition, the task force has completed the following activities;

1. Recruitment of new members to the task force
2. Organization of a webinar series together with the Sustainable Diets task force
3. Preparing for ICN 2025
4. Joint and independent activities of task force members

1. Recruitment of new members to the task force

An expression of interest announcement to join the task force was prepared and circulated through our networks. The objectives of recruiting new members were to i) strengthen our membership of scientists self-identifying as and conducting nutrition research with Indigenous communities and ii) to strengthen participation of early career scientists. Seven expressions of interest were received by the application deadline of 23 February, 2024 and reviewed by a panel in March 2024.

The seven expressions were judged by a panel consisting of Dr. Harriet Kuhnlein, Dr. Treena Delormier and Dr. Gina Kennedy. The criterion considered by the panel were i) stature in science, ii) contribution to Indigenous Peoples Food Systems and iii) geographic diversity. Six of the applicants were invited to become new task force members and all six accepted. Dr. Zeyuan Wang, Dr. Tesfaye Beke and Dr. Pattamapoorn Joompa, represent early career leaders in the field of Traditional Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition. Dr. Carol Zavaleta Cortijo, Dr. Tanisha Aflague and Dr. Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan have a body of established research work with Indigenous communities. New task force members were introduced and welcomed during the April meeting.

2. Webinars co-organized by TIFSAN and Sustainable Diets task forces

The TIFSAN and Sustainable Diets task forces agreed to host a series of webinars on the topic of food and Knowledge Systems: Building the evidence for Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Diets. The webinars were co-hosted with the support of the Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT and the Ag2Nut community of practice who hosted the platform and distribution list. The objectives of the webinars were to :

- Strengthen the narrative across the agriculture, food system and nutrition communities on how evidence on food systems and diets of indigenous and traditional communities should be acquired, disseminated and used.
- Provide examples and discuss how to incorporate indigenous knowledge into the evidence base while also respecting Indigenous Data Sovereignty
- Navigating diverse viewpoints and approaches to gathering knowledge (perceived) contradictions: holistic vs reductionistic approaches; innovation vs tradition; global vs local
- Stimulate additional forms of knowledge dissemination through engaging a wider community of practice on the topic.



The first webinar was held on May 3rd and featured Dr Harriet Kuhnlein, Dr. Rebecca Kanter, Dr. Partick Maundu and Dr. Tesfaye Bekele. This first webinar in the series focused on research methodologies used to collect data on community knowledge related to traditional and indigenous foods. Ninety participants were online and the YouTube recording has had 235 views.

The second webinar was held on 2 July 2024 on the topic of Indigenous perspectives in research on Indigenous Peoples food Systems. The speakers for this webinar were Dr. Michael Kotutwa, Dr. Valerie Blue Bird Jernigan and Dr. Treena Delormier. This webinar is also available on you tube and has received 122 views. The webinars have been successful in bringing diverse members of the large community together to discuss best practices in community-based and participatory research methods, including diverse approaches and inclusive research perspectives. Experiences gained from the webinars were a useful context from which to build out or side session for the IUNS-ICN meeting in Paris, August 2025.



[Ag2Nut-IUNS-Alliance Indigenous Food Systems & Healthy Diets Part 1- Participatory Methods 2024-05-02](#)

The IUNS Task Forces on Sustainable Diets and on Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition 3-part webinar series on “Food and Knowledge Systems of Indigenous Peoples to Advance Healthy and Sustainable Diets”. This series were co-hosted by Ag2Nut, IUNS, and The Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT. The first webinar is on ...

www.youtube.com



[Ag2Nut Alliance IUNS Webinar Recording July 2 2024](#)

The IUNS Task Forces on Sustainable Diets and on Traditional and Indigenous Food Systems and Nutrition 3-part webinar series on “Food and Knowledge Systems of Indigenous Peoples to Advance Healthy and Sustainable Diets”. This series were co-hosted by the International Union of Nutrition Sciences (IUNS) and The Alliance of Bioversity and ...

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3.Preparing for IUNS-ICN 2025

The task force has prepared and submitted an abstract for an ICN side session and is also preparing to respond to the request for new task force proposals.

3.1 ICN side session

An application for a task force side session was prepared and submitted by the requested deadline. The title of our session is "Sharing an historical perspective, tools and ongoing global research to document the importance and value of Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Communities food and nutrition knowledge of food biodiversity to improve food and nutrition security of all peoples".

The session objectives are to :

- Provide case study examples and discuss how Indigenous and Traditional knowledge can be used as the foundation for improving nutrition and health of Indigenous Peoples and all communities
- Learn about place-based projects from around the world, with an intentional focus on youth engagement.
- Present and discuss diverse approaches and perspectives that accompany research methods used to build upon the scientific evidence base on Indigenous Peoples Food Systems
- Position the taskforce thematic area within the context of larger global initiatives

Moderators: Gina Kennedy and Treena Delormier

Speakers :

- Dr. Gina Kennedy, Opening remarks and overview of TIFSAN taskforce objectives and outputs
- Dr. Patrick Maundu, Methods engaging youth to document Traditional Food Systems and Traditional food knowledge on biodiversity in Kenya
- Dr. Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan, Community-academic partnerships with Indigenous peoples to restore traditional foods, biodiversity and food practices to promote healthy diets and reduce chronic disease.
- Carole Zavaleta – Peru, Climate change, nutrition, food biodiversity and Indigenous Peoples'
- Treena Wasonti:io Delormier, Decolonising biodiverse diets and Indigenous Food
- Dr. S Chotiboriboon and Dr. P Joompa, Interdisciplinary research linking traditional, biodiverse food systems, climate change and socioeconomic situation of Karen (PWO), Thailand
- Zeyuan Wang, Document Indigenous Food in China through Youth Participation

3.2 New Task Force proposals

Task force members have agreed to organize two submissions for the upcoming call for new Task Forces. One submission will be on the topic of **Indigenous Nourishment & Knowledge: A Task Force for Food Sovereignty** and the second task force topic is on **Territorial diets : biodiverse, sustainable and healthy**. TIFSAN members have been providing framing language and contributing ideas to both of these proposals.

4. Joint and independent activities of task force members

In addition to our joint activities, members of our task force have undertaken the following task force related activities in 2024;

Dr. Omidvar has been working on updating FBDG with an emphasis on sustainability and has sent in a proposal FBDG for agro-ecological zones. She has held speaking engagements in Iran, discussing the need for higher education for food and nutrition, the need to upgrade nutrition training programs in higher education and also the need to place some emphasis on working on traditional foods and cultural aspects of food intake.

Dr. Harriet Kuhnlein participated in activities related to the Task Force on Traditional and Indigenous Peoples Food and Nutrition Systems. Harriet attended the Society of Ethnobiology annual meeting in St. Louis and received the 2024 Distinguished Ethnobiologist Award. She participated in a TIFSAN sponsored Webinar on May 2, 2024 and presented "Documenting Food Systems of Indigenous Peoples: Methodology for the CINE/FAO Projects 2001-2009". She continued on the advisory board of the 5 year project with the Swinomish Nation "Transforming American Indian and Alaska Native STEM Learning via Indigenous Knowledge Translation, Education, and the Environment" supported by the US National Academy of Sciences. Harriet continues as a member of the Advisory Board of The Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity and Food Sovereignty, and the Faculty and Board of the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) of McGill University, Montreal. She attended the FAO Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems Annual Meeting 2024 in Rome, October 14-18, 2024. She contributes to the Hub drafting committees for 5 reports on: Co-Creation of Knowledge and Ethical Engagement, Indigenous Peoples and Indicators of Poverty, Ultra-processed Food Products, Food Security, and Food Composition.

Dr. Zavaleta-Cortijo is co-leading a three-year research program to explore the nexus of climate, food, and health systems. The program, known as IPON, operates in 13 nations across the seven socio-cultural regions of the world. She leads the research efforts in Peru and Bolivia, focusing on documenting and promoting Indigenous foods and knowledge systems. She published an opinion piece titled "Indigenous Knowledge and Leadership for Climate Change Adaptation in Nutrition" under the guidance of two task force researchers, Professor Harriet Kuhnlein and Dr. Gina Kennedy. Additionally, she attended the FAO Global Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems Annual Meeting in Rome from October 14–18, 2024. Dr. Zavaleta-Cortijo collaborates with other TIFSAN members, contributing to several of the Hub's drafting committees. She has also applied to the "Call for Experts on Indigenous Peoples' Food and Knowledge Systems" by the HLPE-FSN.

Zeyuan Wang organized and convened "**The 1st Interdisciplinary Sustainable Food Systems Forum along the Silk Road Countries**" with China, and three Central Asian, and Caucasia countries. Participated in and published "Standards of practice to guide ecosystem restoration" with FAO, contributing to ecosystem restoration from Indigenous people's perspective. Co-organized an event with the Culinary Research Center at the University of Toronto for the Global Indigenous Youth Food Symposium. Conducted fieldwork to document the dietary biodiversity of nomadic Kazakh and Kyrgyz in Central Asian steppes and Tajik groups in the Pamir Mountains. Joined the Annual Global-Hub Meeting in Rome and joined the committee for ultra-processed foods, Indigenous people's mobility and livelihoods, and knowledge co-creation. Served as an academic guide and contributed to a documentary (the Three Worlds of the Blang People) about Indigenous food systems in the tea forest ecosystem. Published four peer-reviewed papers about Indigenous and traditional food systems and nutrition.

Ms. Chotiboriboon and Dr. Joompa have been conducting an interdisciplinary research project since 2023, examining the impacts of the economy, society, nutrition, and climate change on traditional food systems. They also support youth engagement in research and food system restoration.

The research findings and lessons learned have been shared nationally and internationally (accessible at <https://jorgegmolinos.wixsite.com/rise>), highlighting the ongoing need for field research on climate change, food systems, and nutrition challenges.

Dr. Gina Kennedy participates in the Periodic Table of Food Initiative a research effort to document the composition of edible biodiversity found around the world using state of the art omics techniques. She leads collaboration with nine PTFI Centers of Excellence and numerous research projects.

Please list any successes accomplished during this period

- Collaboration with the Sustainable Diets Task Force

Planning for the collaboration between these two IUNS TF began in 2022 with a meeting at the IUNS ICN in Tokyo, attended by several members of both TFs. [Note: both TFs held collaborative sessions at the ICN.] In 2024 we actively collaborated with the task force in preparing a concept note and delivering a webinar series, incorporating the concepts of Indigenous and Traditional Diets with Sustainable Diet concepts. In addition to the successful webinar series, reported above, our collaboration had lead to joint ideation of a new task force on Territorial diets.

- Expansion of task force membership

Based on experience with preparing for the IUNS in Tokyo as well as feedback from task force members, in 2024 we undertook a process to recruit new task force members in order to assist us in meeting our task force goals in 2024 and mid-2025 and to provide additional support in preparing for IUNS in Paris. In March 2024, we welcomed six new members to the task force, representing five new geographies, and a mixture of early and mid-career scientists. Early career researchers include, Zeyuan Wang, from China, Pattamaporn Joompa from Thailand and Tesfaye Bekele from Ethiopia. We also welcomed mid-career experts, Valarie Blue Bird Jenigan, USA, Tanisha Aflague Philippines and Guam and Carol Zavaleta Cortijo, Peru. Our new members have been integrated into the webinars and preparations for the ICN side session and ideation of new IUNS task forces.

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

We are focusing on delivery of our task side session during the ICN in Paris and preparing ideas for new task forces.

1. We will prepare to lead a session during the IUNS meeting in Paris 2025.
2. We will prepare ideas and the pitch for the Expression of Interest for new Task Forces
3. We are soliciting interest to prepare a paper for the ICN publication