



DEVELOPING THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND TALENT OF YOUTH TO FURTHER FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

The following case study was received as a result of a call issued by the Committee on World Food Security for case studies highlighting examples of initiatives aimed at 'Developing the knowledge, skills and talent of youth to further food security and nutrition'. The cases received provide the background for a discussion of lessons learned and potential policy implications at a special event on October 15th, 2015 during CFS 42. Find out more at www.fao.org/cfs/youth.

Reason for submission:

The UNSCN is a member of the UN Interagency Task Force (UNIATF) on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). One of the UNIATF 2014-2015 work plan activities is to develop a chapter for the Facts of Life publication on the Control and Management of NCDs, spearheaded by UNICEF.

The UNSCN Secretariat believes that it is important for the CFS to consider malnutrition in all its forms in its workstreams and not just focuses on undernutrition. Malnutrition in all its forms is closely tied to the food systems (not) producing foods to ensure a healthy diet for all. One of the four main risk factors for NCDs is unhealthy diets. Currently, many countries are undergoing dramatic nutritional and epidemiological transitions, and the global food system is simultaneously unable to provide enough food for some, while providing too much food for others. Micronutrient deficiency, stunting, underweight, and overweight and obesity are all symptoms of the same underlying problems: poverty, inequalities and a dysfunctional food system that is unable to meet people's health and nutrition needs. There is an increased focus on the importance of food systems for producing healthy diets, most recently highlighted at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2). Sustainable food systems are needed in order to produce healthy foods that are accessible to all and both the CFS and the younger generations have an important role to play. For this reason, the UNSCN Secretariat would like to propose that this case study be included in the background document.

Proposed Title: Facts for Life Chapter on Non-Communicable Diseases: For Youth, By Youth

Background

Provide brief overall context of where the initiative took place

Facts for Life is a well-known global UN collaborative translated into more than 200 local languages with important messages for children, parents, caregivers, and the community to use in changing behaviours and practices to help protect children's health. In 2014, UNICEF embarked on drafting an additional chapter to the Facts for Life publication, entitled "Healthy Living and the Prevention, Control and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases in children and adolescents." The specific aim of this chapter is to provide key information, stimulate behaviour change, guide community



action, and influence policy and decision-makers on a range of critical issues on NCDs affecting children. Feedback on the draft was collected from multiple groups, but focused on youth groups and networks to provide feedback via website, e-mail, social media (facebook, twitter etc.) and group focus discussions. The feedback process for consultation was managed by NCD Child, a coalition of organizations and individuals, emerged from the Child-Focused Working Group (CFWG) of the NCD Alliance.

Challenges

One main challenge is to engage youth and adolescents on subject matters that may not be of great importance and interest and popular with that age group. Generating interest in food and health topics therefore needs to be done through appealing channels and “modern” approaches.

Approach Used

Outline why the approach was chosen for the specific challenges and context

The 65th Annual UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) Conference for Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), taking place on August 28th, 2014, brought together NGOs, health groups and specifically youth organizations as an opportunity to meet new people and learn about the incredible work so many are doing to make the world a better place for those effected by NCDs. NCD Child hosted a side-event during the conference to facilitate discussions on the topic of: Healthy living and the prevention, control and management of NCDs in children and adolescents. The event was an opportunity for NCD Child and UNICEF to recruit reviewers for the chapter and host real time face-to-face consultations with youth, as well as hear inspiring young people share stories about extraordinary lives with NCDs.

Additionally, UNICEF lead a series of Activate Talks on September 23rd 2014, hosted by NCD Child at United National General Assembly (UNGA) which used social media, live-streaming, and video to engage youth around the world to help highlight innovative solutions of children living with and treatment of NCDs globally. Activate Talks brought together innovators, experts and thought-leaders to showcase the latest innovations that can deliver progress on the major issues confronting the most vulnerable and marginalized children in each country. Youth were further involved in the event as speakers. The talks took place throughout 2014, and were live-streamed on an innovation web portal.

Outcome and Impact Achieved

How many youth benefitted? How did they benefit? How were food security and nutrition improved?

Information collected from the events/conferences was used as feedback for the UNICEF Facts for Life NCD Chapter. The Talk was used as an opportunity to answer the following questions:

- How can innovations help us in the equity agenda for children and NCDs?
- How can young people be better supported to be innovators?
- What new innovations need to be developed in prevention of NCDs?



- What type of policy innovations are needed at the country level to address care and access for children living with NCDs and for prevention of NCDs?
- What innovative advocacy messages can be built in social media and outreach to join together young groups living with and passionate about NCDs?

In addition, the chapter originally was very health oriented but after receiving feedback from the events/conferences, a more balanced approach was taken, highlighting the importance of food security and healthy diets in the management of NCDs globally.

Lessons Learned/Opportunities for Scaling-Up

How should the approach be adapted to other situations in the future? Suggestions for overcoming challenges?

Active engagement with the target audience for the chapter ensured that the key messages and underlying supporting information were presented in ways that they understood and which were relevant to the situation and needs. Assumptions of the writing team as to how young people would perceive the messages and what would work were able to be tested to ensure that the language was not patronising and assuming too much or too little knowledge. In terms of future use, the approach used here reinforces the benefits of active engagement of the target audience for any approaches aimed at helping people make changes in their lives. One challenge is ensuring that pilot work and pre-testing and engagement is done in such a way as to ensure that it captures the diversity of views present in the target group, either through saturation of discussions until no new ideas emerge, or in the selection of participants to ensure they represent the spread of views of the target audience.

Policy Implications

What policy changes are needed to support this type of initiative and scaling up?

There are a number of lessons to learn from the approach used in this FFL chapter; firstly that any approach to developing policies and actions should be based on a wide variety of evidence and including dialogue with the target audience. Secondly the need to consider the context in which actions can be put into practice. The approach adopted in the FFL chapter was to consider the wider socioecological context in which young people and families live, and supporting information and message therefore cover consideration as to what families, communities, and institutions need to do to support healthy lives in young people. While young people can do a lot themselves to live more healthy lives, they cannot do it on their own. Policies and action therefore need to consider this wider context when considering ways to scale up.

Best regards,

UNSCN Secretariat Team