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SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

A skilled workforce: key to delivering the Decade for Action in Nutrition

Barrie Margetts

UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF
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Skilled workforce critical across all pillars:

- Sustainable food systems for healthy diets
- Aligned health systems providing universal coverage of essential nutrition actions
- Social protection and nutrition education
- Trade and investment for improved nutrition
- Safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages;
- Strengthened governance and accountability for nutrition.

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One obstacle at country level is the lack of capacity to effectively address public health goals when they are in conflict with private sector interests. To overcome this commitment to



- **strengthen**, as necessary, essential population level, people-centred **public health functions and institutions** for effective prevention and control of NCDs
- continue **investing in health workers** as an essential part of strengthening health systems and social protection.
- ensure a **highly skilled, well-trained and well-resourced health workforce** to lead and implement actions to promote health and prevent and control NCDs.
- ensure the availability of **resources and strengthen the capacity** to respond more effectively and equitably to NCDs

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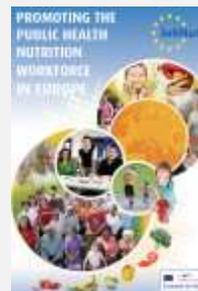
Summary of where we are

- The effectiveness of previous action plans has been limited by poor and weak implementation.
- Major Issue where double burden exists
- Training and workforce limitations acknowledged
- Competencies have been developed, but need updating

Public health nutrition capacity: assessing the quality of workforce preparation for settings as nutrition programmes
Hagen Christensen^{1,2}, Mikael M. de Roos³, Miriam Gökkuş⁴, Janne Kumpulainen⁵, Christian L. Johnson⁶, Arvid Sjöström⁷, James M. Margetts⁸ and Roger H. Stolley⁹ on behalf of the WHO Nutrition Working Group

Capacity building for a strong public health nutrition workforce in low-income countries
Mikael M. de Roos^{1,2}, Mikael M. de Roos³, Miriam Gökkuş⁴, Janne Kumpulainen⁵, Christian L. Johnson⁶, Arvid Sjöström⁷, James M. Margetts⁸ and Roger H. Stolley⁹ on behalf of the WHO Nutrition Working Group
Bull World Health Organ 2107;95:385-388

Professional training in nutrition in Central and Eastern Europe: current status and opportunities for capacity development
Mikael M. de Roos^{1,2}, Mikael M. de Roos³, Miriam Gökkuş⁴, Janne Kumpulainen⁵, Christian L. Johnson⁶, Arvid Sjöström⁷, James M. Margetts⁸ and Roger H. Stolley⁹ on behalf of the WHO Nutrition Working Group



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Existing workforce

- To date training in nutrition, where it exists, tends to focus more on individual level clinical, rather than population level preventive approaches to nutrition.
- Within primary care training and staff skills to deal with the rising tide of obesity are weak and poorly organised.

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Nutrition workforce pyramid (Delisle et al 2017)

Core PHN workforce

- Job descriptions and ongoing professional development need to reflect the different levels of knowledge and skills required to operate at different levels within the system:
 - Senior level, PhD- advocacy and planning
 - Mid-level, MSc, Programming and coordination, supervision training
 - Junior level BSc, implementation, counselling training

Key role Supporting other workforces with their nutrition roles

- Support for health and other professionals : integrating nutrition interventions into their activities (eg weight management, school curriculum)
- Support for community health nutrition and extension workers: delivering specific services to the community (eg school feeding, children centre parent training etc)

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Revising training

- Revising course content and curricula to prepare staff for their work, and integration of these skills into daily practice amongst graduates will take time, and will need to be supported financially, and by senior management and the system to enable them to work effectively.
- To cover food systems, sustainability and professional conduct including understanding and avoiding conflicts of interest
- Professional bodies need to understand and avoid conflicts of interest in the way they operate, including funding for meetings and professional training

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Summary

- An appropriately trained and resourced workforce, supported by clear job descriptions, is critical to delivering the Decade for nutrition.
- The development of this workforce needs to be based on a revised and updated list of competencies in public health nutrition that covers new developments in understanding food systems, professional integrity (conflicts of interest), role in supporting wider health and related workforce, and understanding the wider ecological context
- Urgent need for a review of:
 - existing training to assess how these competencies are covered in training as well as a review of existing
 - job descriptions and roles, particularly for East and Central Asian countries.
- Based on these reviews need to develop a strategy to support the development of the required workforce, and the necessary long term career planning

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Declaration

- I am Emeritus Professor in Medicine at University of Southampton; my main sources of income are my university and state pensions
- I do not do any work funded by the food industry, and where possible never attend meetings funded by industry, or give presentations funded directly by the food industry
- Over the last few years I have engaged in paid consultancies for WHO (HQ and regional offices); UNICEF, and The World Bank. I have co-chaired (unfunded apart from travel expenses) a working group at IARC, Lyon.
- The conference organisers funded my travel and accommodation

INTERNATIONAL DECISION ON
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World Health
Organization



UNICEF



World Bank
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