Nutrition Intervention Research and Training in West Africa

Update CAADP Workshop
Dakar, November 2011

Shawn K. Baker – HKI
Félicité Tchibindat - UNICEF
• Cairo 1978: “Emphasized the special need for regional training institutions in Africa where few countries have advanced training capacities in nutrition”

• Manila 1996: “…depend significantly on the quality and quantity of trained personnel.”
Regional Milestones

- **1995** – Nutrition Focal Points meeting for Francophone West African countries started under the auspices of OCCGE: recognizes need to increase Nutrition capacity
- **1999** – Nutrition Focal Points meeting expands to include all 15 countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- **2000** – West African Health Organization (WAHO) created through the merger of OCCGE and the West African Health Community (WAHC)
- **2001** – First WAHO strategic plan recognizes Nutrition as one of eight program priorities and includes activities for human resource capacity building in nutrition
- **2002** – Nutrition Focal Points transitioned to ECOWAS Nutrition Forum, with more broad-based participation and issuance of recommendations
- **2008** – Second WAHO strategic plan adopted, including focus on development of human resources for health and development of research capacity within sub-region
- **March, 2009** – Dakar Nutrition Research and Training Capacity Building workshop organized jointly by WAHO, HKI and UNICEF
- **July, 2009** – ECOWAS Assembly of Health Ministers adopts resolution for Action on Nutrition, including calling on WAHO to host Secretariat for regional Nutrition Research and Training Initiative and calling on Partners to support the initiative
Types of nutrition-related training needs

• Undergraduate (bachelor) level – public nutrition program managers, laboratory/field technicians

• Clinical – Nutrition components of medical, nursing, social worker training

• Masters level (MSc, MPH) – District, national planners; laboratory managers; trainers

• Doctoral level – Scientists, academicians, policy makers
Meeting of UNU/IUNS in Manila provided estimates of national needs for nutrition professionals per 5 million population
Estimated number of new nutritionists required annually* in West Africa, by level of training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Population (millions)</th>
<th>BSc</th>
<th>MSc</th>
<th>PhD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglophone</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>360 – 1,800</td>
<td>36 – 180</td>
<td>18 – 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francophone</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>298 – 1,140</td>
<td>23 – 114</td>
<td>11 – 112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All W Afr</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>592 – 2,960</td>
<td>59 - 296</td>
<td>30 - 148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Assumes median of 10 years of active professional life
Research: 1998-2008 Review of Literature

- 412 articles identified
- Focused on infant and young child feeding practices; micronutrient deficiencies; overweight and obesity.
- Primary author of 46% located in an institution outside of West Africa.
- 41% were cross-sectional studies.
- “Our findings indicate that few peer-reviewed research studies are being published on key public health nutrition topics of priority to West Africa considering the magnitude of nutrition problems.”
- Critical need for public health nutrition research driven by program delivery priorities in West Africa
Consensus statement of Dakar workshop participants, March 26-28, 2009

Workshop led by WAHO, UNICEF and HKI included regional and international academicians, public health program managers, and representatives of technical assistance and donor agencies.

Concluded that there is need for a broad-based regional nutrition research and training initiative to include:

- Advocacy
- Community-focused, public health nutrition research
- Relevant pre-service and in-service training at all levels
Capacity Building – The West African Health Organization, UNICEF and Helen Keller International convened a workshop of experts from regional and international academic departments of nutrition science, representatives of public health programs and donor agencies in Dakar in March, 2009 to review the current situation with regard to regional nutrition training and research capacity. The group concluded that a major initiative will be required to strengthen, expand, and coordinate existing academic programs in human nutrition and related applied, program-linked research activities.

The Assembly of Health Ministers calls on the West African Health Organization to host the Coordinating Center for the West Africa Public Health Nutrition Research and Training Initiative and calls on Partner Organizations to support the West African Health Organization in implementing the action steps identified in the workshop Consensus Statement.
Regional nutrition research and training center interaction, collaboration and support

Regional CENTER of excellence for the management of
1. capacity building
2. research
Capacity Building - Other Milestones

- Task group led by HKI finalized proposal for first 2 years (December 2009)
- Proposal submitted to over 20 donor agencies by HKI and UNICEF (European Union)
- UNICEF committed $200,000 and HKI committed $100,000 of own resources
- Publication of workshop report and background papers as special supplement of *Global Public Health*
- Terms of reference of Coordinator and Training Coordinator finalized by WAHO, UNICEF and HKI
Capacity building - Way forward

• Set up Secretariat (staffing, organizational agreements)
• Continue resource mobilization:
  – “We fully support, but it is not in our work plan ….”
• Inaugural Steering Committee meeting
• Draft detailed work plan including:
  – Curriculum review, harmonization and mainstreaming:
    • Pre-service (physicians, nurses, social workers, etc)
    • Specialized degrees (bachelors, masters, doctoral)
  – Research priority setting using WHO methodology (CHINRI)
  – Coordinate with EU-funded SUN RAY project “SUstainable Nutrition Research for Africa in the Years to come”
  – Center(s) of Excellence