

H.1. Workshop: Community based nutrition programmes

Organised by: EUPHA section on Food and nutrition
Contact: christopher.birt@liverpool.ac.uk

Chairpersons: Christopher Birt, UK and Enni Mertanen, Finland

The double burden of under-nutrition and obesity is one of the leading causes of death and disability globally. In 2011, 165 million children under the age of 5 years were stunted and 52 million had acute malnutrition, while 43 million were overweight or obese. Among adults, 500 million women were anaemic, and 500 million people were obese. Childhood malnutrition is the underlying cause of more than one in three deaths among children under the age of 5 years, and negatively affects cognitive development, school performance and productivity. Approximately 200 million children are unable to attain their full development potential because of stunting and micronutrient deficiency. Improving nutrition is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the agenda for sustainable development. A healthy diet is an important means for preventing and controlling

non-communicable diseases (NCDs), as stated in the High-level Political Declaration on the prevention and control of NCDs (1).

What are the advantages and limitations of community based nutrition programmes that address the healthy diet as an important means for NCD prevention is the question providing the main focus of proposed workshop. Presentations will highlight 1) a participatory approach to food-based health promotion and to perspectives on the creation of consistent foodscapes across the community, engaging schools, retailers and media, 2) a community based social marketing intervention promoting healthy eating and activity behaviours of elementary and middle school children and their parents, 3) a strengthening of the evidence base concerning the effects of sugar-enriched drinks on the health of children, and the development of associated health advocacy activities, and 4) cross-sectoral approach on strengthening local food supply chains between kindergartens, schools and other public institutions and local producers.

Key messages

- There is potential, as demonstrated in several European countries, for community-based integrated activities to improve nutrition, engaging a number of local organisations to work together.
- Community-based activities, involving children themselves (who are often victims of a poor nutrition culture), designed to improve their own nutrition, can demonstrate very positive outcomes.