

Call for papers

Investment in nutrition and in nutrition research has been grossly insufficient, despite the fact that only nine out of the 46 countries in sub-Saharan Africa are on track to achieve the MDG 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger). **The SUNRAY project “Sustainable Nutrition Research for Africa in the Years to come” aims to develop a nutrition research agenda for sub-Saharan Africa.** To aid this process, a set of scientific papers will be prepared that identify how environmental changes will impact on nutrition in Africa and the challenges for future research. Each paper will set out clear recommendations to guide future nutrition research in Africa.

Specifically the papers will

- Develop recommendations for nutrition research to support "sustainable nutrition" for the next 10-15 years that will mitigate the impact of potential environmental changes on nutrition in Africa.
- Discuss the institutional challenges to set up, organise and fund this research programme.

Topics for the papers

1. Climate change and potential impact on nutrition in Africa
2. Trends in international, regional and domestic markets, and potential impact on nutrition in Africa
3. Socio demographic changes and potential impact on nutrition in Africa
4. Trends in water availability and accessibility and potential impact on nutrition in Africa
5. Social dynamics and potential impact on nutrition in Africa

The analysis will consider the nutritional needs for Africa as a whole with specific emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa.

Governance, political dynamics and health are cross cutting issues in all papers.

Description of the papers

Working paper 1 Climate change and potential impact on nutrition in Africa

Climate change affects poorer African countries disproportionately and further undermines current efforts to reduce poverty and undernutrition. Regions most likely to be adversely affected by climate change are those already vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity such as sub-Saharan Africa. Climate change affects nutrition security through various causal pathways including impact on food security, water and sanitation, health, maternal and child care practices and many socio-economic factors. Undernutrition in turn undermines the resilience of vulnerable populations decreasing their ability to cope and adapt to the consequences of climate change.

The paper on climate change and nutrition will review the existing information on the impact of climate change on nutrition security in Africa and the necessary adaptation and mitigation strategies to address these challenges in different regions. A multi-sectoral analysis will identify the research needs for nutrition and other sectors to effectively address the impact of climate change on nutrition security in Africa in the next 10-15 years.

Working paper 2 Trends in international, regional and domestic agricultural and food markets, and potential impact on nutrition in Africa

Local, national and international agricultural and food markets play a critical role in the welfare of poor people and on food security and nutrition. International agricultural and food markets have an impact on food vulnerability and volatility of food prices, while regional and national markets impact food availability and value chains, food stability and consumer and household access to food. The access to basic inputs and infrastructure, the elimination of agricultural trade distortions, the reduction of food price volatility and the capacity of poor countries to cope with food price fluctuations have been one of the most important debates of the last years. In addition to the structural causes of food price volatility and resulting food insecurity –such as the lack of investment in smallholder producers, the lack of social protection policies and programmes and the distorted international trade rules, there is a perverse effect derived from short term policies and actions, such as recent biofuels policies and increasing speculation in commodity markets. However, in the years to come it is necessary to also consider an array of critical issues when dealing with governance of food related markets, in particular, the effects of climate change on agricultural adaptation and mitigation, and the increasing pressure over scarce natural resources such as water, land and carbon.

This paper will provide an analysis of the existing information on the trends in the international, regional and domestic markets in Africa and their impact on nutrition. The analysis will identify the research needs for trade, economy, nutrition and other sectors in order to mitigate the impact of these markets' trends in the nutrition status of Africa and in particular in sub-Saharan Africa.

Working paper 3
Socio demographic changes and potential impact on nutrition in Africa

Various parts of Africa are undergoing unparalleled socio-demographic and population structure changes. Exponential population growth and increased per capita food consumption, rapid urbanisation, migration and social policy affect food and nutrition security of households throughout the continent. These macro changes induce competition for resources i.e. availability and accessibility to health services and food thereby affecting the livelihoods of the current and next generation of Africans.

A paper on “Socio demographic changes and potential impact on nutrition in Africa” will map the significant socio-demographic trends, identify the pathways through which they affect the nutrition status of Africans with specific attention to the traditional and emerging vulnerable groups and social strata. A cross cutting analysis will seek to identify the research needs for the nutrition community to tackle the socio-demographic challenges ahead for the coming decades. Regional differences, urban-rural differentials in eating habits, use of food and preferences (e.g. demand for animal source foods) and the double burden of nutrition (underweight and obesity) will be taken into account in this analysis.

Working paper 4
Trends in water availability and accessibility and potential impact on nutrition in Africa

Widespread scarcity of fresh water resources results from poor water management practices, inappropriate land use and impact from climate and extreme climatic variations. Lack of access to water affects hundreds of millions of people in Africa. Water quality and access are related to nutrition in various ways. Water scarcity adversely affects livestock, crop, and fish production. Inadequate hygiene practices due to lack of water and knowledge of the link between water and disease, directly affect the nutrition status of the population. These problems are exacerbated in Africa by a growing population, forced migration and displacement that lead to competition for land and water.

This paper will review the existing information on the trends in water availability and accessibility and its effects on nutrition in Africa, and in particular undernutrition in sub-Saharan countries. It will analyse and identify nutrition research needs to address the negative effects of water scarcity and limited access for the coming decades.

Working paper 5
Social dynamics and potential impact on nutrition in Africa

African societies are undergoing important social changes in both rural and urban areas. These changes, driven by (i) demography and the natural, physical, social and financial environment (including globalisation, modernisation and urbanisation), (ii) economic, political and ideological choices, (iii) formal and informal institutions, including markets and service providers are likely to impact on nutrition status in African households and communities. In addition, a digital and social revolution challenges the traditional social norms and structures and offers innovative ways to stimulate social cohesion and equity.

Household dynamics (values, beliefs, culture, traditions, decisions mechanisms and trade-offs) potentially change the way households produce, access and utilise food, livelihood strategies and assets (including pre- and post-shock strategies), their social resilience, access to health services (including beliefs and traditions on management and treatment of disorders) and maternal and child care and feeding practices to name just a few. In addition, changes in community dynamics (i.e. gender, stigma, benefits and opportunities for women leadership) have important repercussions on household nutrition and food security. A thematic paper on “Social dynamics and potential effect on nutrition in Africa” will seek to (i) better understand and map the interrelationships of social, cultural and economic factors as well as human behaviour and experience as they relate to food and nutrition and (ii) to document on how they (are likely to) affect nutrition status or place people at risk of malnutrition or influence implementation of nutrition interventions/programmes. In particular, the analysis will identify the research needs for the nutrition community in order to mitigate the impact of social changes on nutrition status in sub-Saharan Africa.

Video message

The author(s) of the papers will be invited to present a summary of the papers and the recommendations for the nutrition research community during a short video message. The message will be played during each of 3 regional workshops in Africa where researchers and stakeholders in nutrition will develop a blueprint for a nutrition research agenda for sub-Saharan Africa. The modalities, timing and format of the video (personal interview, recorded power point presentation etc.) message will be determined in consultation with the author(s).

Characteristics of the papers

- Academic excellence
- Expert opinion based on in depth and sound academic evidence
- Inclusion of simulation models with projections where necessary and feasible
- Consideration of future scenarios
- Consideration of gender
- Consideration of potential impact on malnutrition rates and types of malnutrition (i.e. undernutrition and obesity), emerging nutritionally vulnerable groups and geographic vulnerability
- Papers will be written in English

Format requirements

The papers will follow an academic format with approximately 8000 words (including references and tables), and about 50 AMA style references, with a structured abstract of max 300 words.

The structure of the paper will follow: introduction, methods, results, discussion and a conclusion section. The latter will detail specifically the recommendations the future for nutrition research in Africa.

Selection procedure and time line

The author(s) will have to send the final paper, including the video, on the **12th August 2011**. Drafts will be sent according to the following calendar:

- May 15: Submission of proposals.
- May 18: Announcement of the selected authors.
- May 30: Submission of the final outline for the selected 5 papers. Two pages including the final outline agreed with the Evaluation Committee, table of contents and keywords.
- 30th July: Submission of the first draft. 15 pages text double spaced, 8000 words maximum
- 12th August: Submission of the final draft.
- 30th September: Video recordings. 10-minutes talk explaining the main results and recommendations of the paper.

Selection and evaluation criteria

- The call is open to any interested party. Africa-based researchers or research teams are encouraged to apply.
- The final selection and the peer review will be organised by a SUNRAY Evaluation Committee and other external expertise if necessary.
- Selection and evaluation criteria will consider the quality of the proposed outline and methodology, track record of the author(s) on the specific research themes, multidisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach of the paper.

Payment

The total fee per paper will be **15.000€**. This quantity includes all the expenses that might be generated in the elaboration process, including the payment to the other authors who you might be collaborating with.

The payment will be done in the following way:

- 3.750€ after the submission of the final outline
- 7.500 € after the submission of the first draft
- 3.750€ after the submission of the final draft

Ownership of copyright

The author(s) will retain the intellectual property of the draft and final paper. Nevertheless, SUNRAY can make use of the results and data obtained from the papers so they can be used on the website, in the workshops and during other dissemination activities.

Cancellation of the contract

The contract could be cancelled unilaterally if the researcher does not comply with its contractual obligations and with the incomppliance of any law which might be applicable. SUNRAY will get in contact with the contractor and will give him/her five working days for its correction. If there is no correction, SUNRAY will be able to finalise the contract immediately.

Deadline and contact

Financial compensation of a **maximum of 15000€ per paper** is foreseen.

If you are interested in producing a paper, please send your expression of interest to Paula San Pedro, psanpedro@intermonoxfam.org (deadline May 15, 2011). The proposal should include:

- Name and contact details of the principal author together with a CV and a list of publications;
- Names of collaborating authors and/or institutions;
- A proposal (indicating the topic and number of the working paper) of maximum 2 pages detailing (i) an outline of the paper, (ii) the methodology which is going to be used and (iii) basic literature references.

The SUNRAY Consortium

- Institute for Tropical Medicine, Belgium (coordinator), Dr. Patrick Kolsteren
- International Foundation for Science, Sweden, Mrs. Nathalie Persson Andrianasitera
- Wageningen University, The Netherlands, Dr. Fré Pepping
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