

Introduction

The UN [nutrition] Network (UNN) galvanizes the United Nations family to support nutrition gains at the country level, and in turn, unleash the power of nutrition to drive sustainable development. Founded in 2013 by the Principals of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Network, today, rallies as many as sixteen agencies.¹ This three-fold increase in membership is a vote of confidence in the Network, recognizing that it is changing mindsets to embrace collective action on nutrition across sectors and institutions. While the UNN is one of the four main networks in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement, its services and tools have also been availed by non-SUN countries, who are equally keen to consolidate UN technical expertise and help governments address nutrition holistically.

UNN-REACH² has played a catalytic role in setting up and strengthening UNNs at the country level, as demonstrated in various stories in *Tales Be Told* – both

1 These include: FAO; the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); IFAD; the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); UNICEF; the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN); WFP; WHO and the World Bank.

2 REACH stands for the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and undernutrition initiative, which is the intensive support arm of the UNN’s multi-sectoral technical assistance facility.

Series 1 and Series 2. In addition, UNN analytical tools have provided a vehicle for mobilizing the United Nations around nutrition as well as for establishing a common language and front. The Network has also capitalized on the leverage of United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) to further instill joint approaches and elevate nutrition on the political agenda, even in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Launched in 2019, *Tales Be Told* quickly became a UNN 'best-seller', prompting many more countries to come forward with their stories. This second edition is structured according to four themes: (1) UNN people, including UNRCs and their stake in the national nutrition agenda; (2) UNN capacity strengthening; (3) UNN programming and partnerships; and (4) UNN analytics. It is particularly rewarding to see how investments in joint planning/frameworks and sensitization of UN leadership in recent years have materialized in integrated programming. COVID-19 is inevitably a common thread, given the large mark it has made worldwide over the last year. While the 'tales' are presented here as a complete set, they can also be read on an individual basis, depending upon the areas that interest readers most.

The aim is not just to share experiences, but also to learn from and inspire one another so that singular contributions go farther; so that inequities underpinning undernutrition, overweight and obesity are progressively eroded. Nutrition is the foundation for good health and prosperous nations. Likewise, it has always been an intersection of many disciplines. What's different today is that there is a push to come together, not only because it is slated into UN reform, but because it makes sense. Global pandemics, such as COVID-19 are making that more apparent.

Generous funding from the European Union, Irish Aid and the United Nations agencies has enabled the work highlighted in this publication, be it enhanced nutrition governance, joint programming or better data management. A special thanks goes to the World Food Programme, which has provided substantial financial backing and hosted the UN Network Secretariat since its inception.