

Global Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition: Launch Event
May 27, 2021 13:00 – 14:00 BST

Hosted by the London School of Tropical Hygiene & Medicine in partnership with
the United Nations World Food Programme and Dubai Cares

Key highlights from the Launch Event

Welcome and Keynote

Prof. Baron Peter Piot, Director, LSHTM

- The SHN Research Consortium is a unique global partnership of academic, scientific, technical institutions and individuals to promote quality research on health, nutrition, wellbeing of children and adolescents.
- The launch of the global SHN Consortium is taking place at a key turning point. Decision makers and governments are in need of solid evidence to help prioritize SHN. Equity should be at the top of their concerns.

Policy Panel: The Coalition for action and the Research Consortium

Chair: Prof Baron Peter Piot, Director, LSHTM

- **H.E. Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation, Finland**
 - The goal of the Global Coalition is that every child is able to access meals in schools by 2030. Tangible results will include pledges at the Food System Summit in September.
 - We need better and higher-quality evidence and analysis. The health and nutrition of school aged children will require coordinated efforts from academia, think tanks, and research partners.
 - The Research Consortium is a long-term project in order to achieve transformative change for school feeding and food systems.
- **H.E. Silvana Vargas Winstanley, Minister for Development and Social Inclusion, Peru**
 - Peru is committed to evidence generation as part of the policymaking cycle.
 - The Government of Peru has commissioned an impact evaluation of its school feeding programme, which provided tangible inputs to improve the quality of this programme.
 - The launch of the Global SHN Research Consortium is a great opportunity to promote research on common policy goals and better evidence for policymaking.
- **H.E. Céline Jurgensen, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations in Rome**
 - School feeding is a palpable proposal which has a high potential of systemic impact
 - France has pledged its support to the Global Coalition through a statement of President Macron
 - France is committed to supporting education, equality between girls and boys, and other key priorities making the launch of the Research Consortium necessary

- It is essential that research in school feeding is handled as a standalone subject, in an inter-disciplinary approach. This work will be key for the international community to support quality programmes.
- **H.E. Dr. Tariq Al Gurg, Chief Executive Officer, Dubai Cares**
 - Over the last 14 years, Dubai Cares has contributed to a massive change to how the world views education and the creation of human capital.
 - We believe that the collective intellectual capacity we have today will significantly advance the school health and nutrition agenda. The Research Consortium will help promote lessons learned and best practices on what works to support the effectiveness of recovery efforts and beyond.
- **Carmen Burbano, Director of School-Based Programmes, WFP**
 - This journey started 15 years ago with a collective effort to strengthen the evidence base with the World Bank, the World Food Programme, and other stakeholders.
 - The evidence is now strong and school feeding programmes is known to benefit at least five sectors.
 - The Research Consortium is a 10-year effort to make school health and nutrition prominent on a new development agenda.
- **Gordon Brown, Co-Chair of the Global Education Commission and ex-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom**
 - Every single child must have the opportunity to access one of the most important safety nets supporting children: healthy meals in schools.
 - The support of the Global Coalition is needed to nurture the potential of all children in all countries.

Presentation of the Global Research Consortium

- **Prof. Donald Bundy, LSHTM, Director of the Global Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition**
 - This Research Consortium will be independent, as requested by agencies and governments supporting it. This is why it is hosted by an academic institution.
 - This is a global effort involving the South. This is why the Research Consortium is comprised of Communities of Practice including academia from the Global South.
- **Dr. Bibi Giyose, Senior Advisor for Food and Nutrition Security, African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)**
 - Research is central to build the evidence that we need. School feeding is one of the most important and pivotal change makers, not only in terms of child development, but also for economic development.
 - How do we design research for the different regions and countries in the world so that we can serve the purpose of nourishing children and development?

Policy Presentation

- **David Nabarro, Senior Advisor, Food System Summit Dialogues and Special Envoy of WHO Director-General for COVID-19**

- There are lifelong benefits to individuals as well as to societies if good nutrition and health is experienced in the early years of life.
- It is essential that the coming generations are given the best possible opportunity to recover from COVID-19. This is why health and education are key to building more equitable societies.

Scientific and Technical Panel: The need for evidence-based programming to accelerate recovery and enhance development gains

Chair: Prof Anne Mills, LSHTM, Deputy Director & Provost

- **Dr. Roberta Gatti, Chief Economist, World Bank:** *“The importance of data quality in decision making”*
 - Measurement is essential to supporting policymaking. The creation of the Human Capital Index has brought along a change in perspective in the economic analysis of health and education programmes.
 - Measurement is essential to develop policies that are cost-effective and impactful. As policies are being implemented, measurement can also provide feedback to policymakers and is vital for accountability.
- **Dr. Jyotsna Puri, Director of the Environment, Climate Gender, Youth, Nutrition and Social Inclusion Division, International Fund for Agricultural Development:** *“The importance of a multi-sectoral approach to research”*
 - While the evidence on school feeding is abundant, key research gaps persist. The last systematic review was registered more than 10 years ago, leaving a gap especially in middle-income countries.
 - We also need to focus on implementation research. There is far greater research required to operationalize the linkages of school feeding with rural, small-scale producers while also working with other sectors.
 - Social Cost-Benefit Analysis can also help understand the trade-offs between various policy options.
- **Prof. Michael Kremer, Professor in Economics and Public Policy, University of Chicago, 2020 Nobel Laureate in Economics:** *“The role of school-based programmes”*
 - It is essential to develop experimental evidence demonstrating the impact of school health and nutrition interventions.
 - Economic evaluation should view these programmes as investments rather than consumption programmes. Research should help identify programmes yielding the highest returns.