

Summary Report: Scientific Workshop “Nutrition in Global Health Research”

The workshop took place at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Science and Humanities, Berlin, on 14th of October 2023, and was funded by the German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA).

Number of participants: 36 (incl. 6 speakers and 2 organizers)

Nutrition is an integral part of life and has fundamental implications on health at individual, community, population and planetary level. This makes nutrition a truly cross-sectoral and highly interdisciplinary field in global health research, which provides a high collaborative potential, but lacks visible networks due to the heterogenous research community. The aim of the scientific workshop on “Integration of Nutrition in Global Health Research” was to promote nutrition expertise in global health projects, to bring together relevant experts within the GLOHRA network and identify global challenges in the field of nutrition that need to be overcome within the upcoming decade. Within this workshop, we aimed to address the interdisciplinary aspect of nutrition research by inviting renowned experts from the field ranging from biomedical sciences (e.g., keynote lecture by Prof. Hannelore Daniel) to public health (e.g., keynote lecture by Prof. Ina Danquah), socio-economic dimensions (e.g., presentation by Prof. Tina Bartelmeß), and planetary health (e.g., presentation by Dr. Benjamin Bodirsky). Although acknowledging the potential problem of raising too many different perspectives on the same topic, we were aiming to synergize all different scientific approaches to nutrition in an open and interactive panel discussion. This resulted in a very interesting and broad discussion of the audience with panelists, emphasizing the importance of the Global South perspective on this topic. Overall, we have received very positive and motivating feedback from the workshop participants (recommendation score = 5, in post-event evaluation with a max. score = 5).

Highlights: Outcomes and Quotes

- Interdisciplinary approaches are crucial for the integration of nutrition in global health research → This also applies to the diversity within nutrition science (basic and clinical research) and closely related disciplines (e.g., public health)
- Approaches and solutions from the Global North are not transferable to the Global South → Importance of the Global South perspective on food culture, agriculture, dietary habits, food safety + responsibilities from the Global North needs to be clearly revealed
- Holistic approaches are required to solve the problems, involving the interdisciplinary scientific community, civil society, politics, regulatory administration, and food industry → All relevant stakeholders need to be invited to such workshops (food industry, in particular).

„Food choices in the Global North are not transferrable to the Global South.“ - Tina Bartelmeß

„Countries of the Global South teach the Global North a lot about nutrition.“ - Peter von Philipsborn

„Nutrition education is the additional pillar that needs to be added to bring it into practice in addition to policy changes.“ - Ina Danquah

„We find expensive foods with cheap ingredients – this is why we need to change the markets.“ - Benjamin Bodirsky

„We need to do more experiments in real life.“ - Hannelore Daniel (referring to the idea to introduce a sugar tax in Germany based on the positive experience in other countries)

„We need new visions for what food cultures can look like.“ - Hannelore Daniel

„Researchers and civil societies need to start working together to improve the work that is already being done.“ - Peter von Philipsborn

„We need an even more global perspective on food and food policies, and also keep our planet’s health in mind.“ - Hannelore Daniel