Addressing Workforce Nutrition Commitments

Guidance For Global Members of the SUN Business Network (SBN) 2019
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The SBN global team has developed this brief guidance note with the support of GAIN and Eat Well Global.
Workforce Nutrition defined

“Workforce nutrition programmes are a set of interventions that work through the existing structures of the workplace to address fundamental aspects of nutrition amongst employees and/or supply chain workers. Ideally, these programmes aim to create improved access to – and demand for – safe and nutritious food, with the aim of changing employees’ behaviours around food consumption, and to improve their health and wellbeing. Breastfeeding support programmes are included in this definition.” GAIN, 2019

Why workforce nutrition matters, GAIN, 2019

GAIN has reviewed evidence of the productivity impact of workforce nutrition programmes and identified 5 main benefits for companies:

- Reduced absenteeism
- Enhanced productivity
- Reduced medical costs from 25-30%
- Returns on investment of up to 6
- Significantly lowered rates of accidents and mistakes
Introduction

SUN Business Network (SBN)

In 2010, the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement was launched to support national leadership and collective action to scale up nutrition. The SUN Movement promotes a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder space to effectively work together to end malnutrition. As of July 2019, 61 countries have joined the SUN movement. SBN is the private sector branch of SUN.

SBN aims to increase the availability and affordability of safe nutritious foods to consumers, especially low-income consumers through activities at global and national levels. SBN supports:

- Businesses in growing the role they play in nutrition
- SUN countries in developing national business engagement strategies

SBN is convened by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

SBN gathers 23 global members (mostly multinational companies) and more than 500 members in 12 emerging economies in Africa and Asia.

Background on Workforce Nutrition Commitments

In July 2018, SBN introduced a new principle of engagement for its global members: *Businesses should support workforce nutrition commitments (including breastfeeding support)*.

This principle was adopted in order to strengthen private sector engagement around workforce nutrition. Recognizing SBN limited resources to monitor and assess a list of individual commitments on workforce nutrition, SBN’s revised approach to workforce nutrition promotion is articulated around two angles:

1. SBN requests its global members to have policies/actions in place to support workforce nutrition when joining the network.
2. SBN allocates its resources to support the increase of these policies and actions especially for offices and factories located in emerging economies.

SBN is promoting the design and implementation of workforce nutrition programmes among all its global members, including non-food producers. SBN is also committed to identifying and addressing barriers in government policies that hinder the implementation of workforce nutrition policies.

About this document

SBN has collected examples of workforce nutrition programmes from its global members (information publicly available and shared by the companies) in order to foster best practice exchange among its members and more largely multinational companies. During the past months, the SBN global team has been encouraging its members to:

- Share examples of workforce nutrition programmes which were successfully designed and implemented
- Share current needs and challenges regarding the design and implementation of workforce nutrition programmes, e.g. implementation of breastfeeding programmes in emerging economies.

This document – which aims to share a variety of policies and actions around workforce nutrition that SBN global members have designed and implemented – is a first step in SBN’s revised support to its global members in strengthening their workforce nutrition programmes.
What is workforce nutrition?

SBN uses GAIN’s definition of workforce nutrition (see box 1 of this report) which focuses on 4 types of interventions – nutrition-focused health checks, healthy food at work, breastfeeding support, nutrition education – additionally SBN considers physical activity interventions as they support the prevention of diet-related NCDs when coordinated with the other workforce nutrition interventions.

Workforce nutrition programmes aim to create improved access to – and demand for – safe and nutritious food resulting in better health and wellbeing of the employees and potentially their relatives.

We encourage SBN companies to adopt a comprehensive programme that addresses as many of these five areas as possible. Variation in commitments by SBN global members is expected.

Progress to date

In collaboration with the Global Nutrition Report, SBN has been looking at the implementation of workforce nutrition commitments by 42 companies. Between 2013-2017, almost 80% of these companies reported some progress on the implementation of their workforce nutrition commitments – reaching over 425,000 employees.

Progress in implementing breastfeeding support programmes is particularly low. Companies report that support on best practice exchange is required. In general, a lack of data collection prevents the scale up of workforce nutrition initiatives, particularly towards support for breastfeeding mothers in the workforce. There is also limited data on the return on investment of such interventions.

On 3-4 July 2019, several SBN global members (Ajinomoto, Bel group, DSM, Kellogg, Mars, Unilever) took part in a workforce nutrition workshop organised by GAIN providing input and showing their commitment to this issue. The outcomes of this meeting resulted in a multi-stakeholder alliance to promote workforce nutrition.
Health checks are effective because they provide each employee with customized data, which can be self-motivating. Nutrition focused health checks are designed to give employees a better understanding of their nutritional risk factors. When health check data are used to monitor the impact of workforce nutrition programmes, employers should consider that six to twelve months of intervention are needed to start seeing the benefits. It is critical to ensure the safe and appropriate management of the data collected.
Global initiatives

BASF provides health-checks to employees carried out by its medical department. The health checks offer voluntary and free of cost determination of Vitamin D and Omega 3 levels. Thanks to the health checks provided, BASF was able to diagnose among its workforce, lower levels of Vitamin D and Omega 3 than the official German nutritional recommendations.

BASF also offers an online portal where employees can check health information and find resources on nutrition, such as a BMI calculator, recipes, motivational videos, cookbooks, etc.

Unilever’s Lamplighter programme is a global initiative that provides health-checks to employees. It focuses on improving four modifiable risk factors: physical health, exercise, nutrition and mental resilience. Lamplighter can be customized at the local level and can be used by countries to promote good nutrition. Employees may be asked to fill out a questionnaire with nutrition related topics and receive assessments of BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol... Depending on the results employees can be directed to counselling or a practitioner. Unilever reports a €2.44 return on every €1.00 spent on their Lamplighter programme.

Voluntary self-health tracking

DSM has launched DSM Fit, the initiative links the 4 annual Health Checks (including cholesterol profile) to the employability scan for all DSM employees in the Netherlands, after which a coaching session is also facilitated to help employees with their sustainable employability. Additionally during its bi-annual executive inspections, DSM checks the Vitamin D and cholesterol levels of its executives employees in the Netherlands and results have shown high levels of vitamin D deficiencies.

In South Africa, DSM has an annual voluntary vitality health assessment to which – in the past years – 100% of the 135 employees have participated.

Medical Care

Each employee of Ajinomoto receives individual tutoring after an annual medical check up. Employees over 35 years old have the possibility to take an additional blood test to diagnose (potential) diabetes.

Weight screening and questionnaire

In the U.S.A. PepsiCo offers:
- a diabetes programme managed by Livongo;
- a weight management programme, “Kurbo,” focused on helping children maintain a healthy weight;
- incentives to encourage employees to participate in the “Wellness Screening” and “Wellness Questionnaire” programmes. In the U.S.A., 474 locations participated in the “Wellness Screening” programme during which 31% of employees and 19% of spouses completed both the “Wellness Screening” and “Wellness Questionnaire”.

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Healthy food at work

Employers have a real opportunity to impact the health and wellbeing of their employees by supporting access to nutritious food in the workplace, they can do that by providing food for free, food subsidies or at full cost to the employee. Research indicates that it is more efficient to provide food at the workplace, as opposed to an allowance for healthy food. To avoid unwanted consequences, access to nutritious food programmes should be well-thought notably to prevent increase of overweight/obesity when tackling undernutrition among the workforce.

In the United Kingdom, the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) has led one of the largest experiments and assessments on healthy diets in the workplace. Their report provides a set of key learnings to improve access to healthy nutritious food at work including:

- Altering the range and placement of products in vending machines can lead to healthier choices while keeping the profits level
- Skilfully increasing the proportion of healthier food and drink in workplace restaurants supports healthier eating
**Increased fruit and vegetable consumption**

Healthy eating is a key component of the “Be Well” pillar of PepsiCo’s well-being program. Many of PepsiCo’s larger markets worksites provide free fruit on-site or healthy food options in cafeterias (e.g., United States, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, South Africa, Ireland, Australia and India).

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**Healthier canteens**

**Gallup** provides financial incentives for its food service provider at headquarter level. The provider is required to always offer healthy meal options, all the meals are clearly labelled based on their nutritional values (colour code system). Gallup provides financial compensation to the provider for a higher rate of healthier meals sold.

In 2015, as part of its global health campaign **BASF** collaborated with the former chef of the German National Soccer Team, Holger Stromberg, for healthier canteen offerings. With the positive-minded strategic approach “More flavour. More enjoyment. Better health”. 35 healthy and flavourful meals were created for the canteens with a lower fat and sugar content and a higher density in essential nutrients. The recipes were also designed to be easy to cook at home by the employees. Additionally, nutritional indicators were included in food and canteen procurement schemes. This collaboration was complemented with a global knowledge portal medical consultation in case of different risk factors, the motivational campaign “1.0 through change” and an international cookbook from BASF employees. Finally BASF reformulated canteen means towards more Vitamin D and Omega 3 rich foods following results of employees’ health checks, recommends physical activity in sunlight and supplementation in case of nutrient deficiencies.

Members of SBN Indonesia such as **Indofood, Nutrifood, Kalbe, Otsuka, East West, BASF, Cargill, Panasonic** implemented healthier canteens.

At the Ajinomoto’s cafeteria, a healthy daily lunch menu, named “Healthy 500 GOLD”, is provided at a lower price than other menus. Servings are about 500 kcal and aim to reduce salt, sugar and fat intake.
Breastfeeding support

Enabling working mothers to exclusively breastfeed for 6 months and continually for up to 2 years, is an important contribution to the health of the mother and the child. WHO suggests putting practices in place that respect national laws on paid maternity leave, and providing a place and time to breastfeed/pump milk as well as offering on-site child care, flexible work schedules, teleworking, part-time work and letting mothers bring their babies to work.\(^{12}\)

By decreasing the risks of illness among the children through breastfeeding support, companies benefit from better attendance rate from their employees.

**Breastfeeding Support Resources**

The following toolkits provide support for businesses to implement effective breastfeeding programmes in the workplace:

- Nutrition security and maternity protection through exclusive and continued breastfeeding promotion in the workforce in the Philippines\(^ {13}\)
- Workforce lactation support programme\(^ {14}\)

The US Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention Worksite Health Scorecard includes six questions to help companies’ self-assess their lactation programme:\(^ {15}\) does your company have 1) a written policy on breastfeeding for employees; 2) private space (other than a restroom) that may be used by an employee to express breast milk; 3) access to a breast pump at the worksite; 4) flexible paid or unpaid break times to allow mothers to pump breast milk; 5) free or subsidized breastfeeding support groups or educational classes; and 6) paid maternity leave, separate from any accrued sick leave, annual leave, or vacation time.

Breastfeeding support programmes can be assessed by measuring:

- Increased availability of an adequate breastfeeding space and breaks
- Extended duration of breastfeeding among working mothers
- Increased rates of exclusive breastfeeding among working mothers (GAIN, Workforce Nutrition Programme, Evidence brief\(^ {16}\))

Existing impact studies show a high return on investment of breastfeeding support programmes, e.g. the US Breastfeeding Committee has reported a return on investment of 3 USD for each dollar invested in breastfeeding support by the employer.\(^ {17}\)
Members of SBN Indonesia e.g. Indofood, Nutrifood, Kalbe, Otsuka, East West, BASF, Cargill, Panasonic, endorsed workforce nutrition commitments and are providing lactating room for breastfeeding mothers. They improved their policies for maternal health, including the support for breastfeeding mothers.

**Gallup** has five designated mother’s rooms at its headquarter office for a population of 550 employees.

**Ajinomoto** headquarters have women’s resting rooms equipped with private booths which can be used as nursing rooms.

**Edesia** has an on-site dedicated ‘wellness room’ within its office. The space enables breastfeeding mothers to have a private space to breastfeed and pump. The room is equipped with a comfortable chair and table, small fridge, nursing pads and lanolin cream.

**Mars** offers dedicated, private, hygienic breastfeeding rooms which are assessed annually.

**PepsiCo** provides facilities for nursing mothers in a number of locations globally. More than half of PepsiCo locations worldwide with 500 or more employees have either dedicated mothers’ rooms, wellness rooms, or alternate space available for nursing mothers. PepsiCo is actively working to expand the number of locations with facilities for nursing mothers in the coming years.

PepsiCo offers on-site childcare at its New York headquarters and near-site childcare for employees at Frito-Lay North America headquarters - with care provided by highly-trained and reputable third-party providers. Back up child care services are available through third party providers when a regular care provider is unavailable. PepsiCo also offers access to on-site or near-site childcare at international locations, including Mexico, India, Egypt and Pakistan, and continues to evaluate opportunities globally.

In 2017, **Unilever** introduced a Global Maternal Well-being Standard, which among a range of principles makes sure new mothers receive at least 16 weeks paid maternity leave.
There are three essential components of effective nutrition education, beyond providing information:

- Motivational, which addresses attitudes and beliefs
- Action, which includes goal setting and cognitive self-regulation
- Environmental, which involves collaboration between educators, policymakers and others

When implemented effectively, nutrition education helps people build their capacity to feed themselves and their families well; afford and access the right food; prepare healthy food that they enjoy; recognize and resist poor food choices and share what they know with their children and others. Nutrition education programmes are especially effective when combined with the provision of healthy nutritious food at work and are key elements for sustainable behaviour change towards the consumption of healthy nutritious food.
SBN global members are supporting nutrition education through various programmes and initiatives, including:

In Brazil, “more than 400 Cargill employees have participated in a volunteer initiative that has adopted a “train-the-trainer” approach. Employee volunteers are given the necessary training to teach people from the local community about good nutrition and healthy lifestyles. It includes workshops on a well-balanced diet, how to plant vegetables at home and how to cook simple, healthy meals. The result is improved nutrition in their communities as well as within employees’ own homes”.21

Edesia offers annually a “Nutrition as the Greatest Act of Self-Care” seminar to its staff. Attendees have the opportunity to review their current eating patterns, and to consider a number of simple habits that could improve their wellbeing. Additionally monthly health related seminars share best practices around proper nutrition.

In the U.S.A., PepsiCo offers a variety of programmes including: a wellness questionnaire and biometric screening to gauge health status; telephonic wellness coaching; weight management programmes; and fitness and nutrition programmes. Through a digital well-being platform launched in January 2018, participants earn points through engagement in these programmes, which they can redeem for rewards such as gift cards, Health Savings Account contributions and sweepstakes entries. In 2018, over 50,000 members registered on the digital well-being platform. Of those registered, 74 percent completed a wellness questionnaire and 84 percent earned points by participating in programmes. The weight management programme drew 16,133 participants with more than 39,112 pounds having been lost since January 2018. PepsiCo offers monthly webinars featuring health and well-being topics designed to provide education and support and help employees mitigate health risks.

Gallup implements a variety of initiatives to educate its employees on nutrition. For example the company launched a nutritional pop quiz to assess and inform its employees on common nutritional misconceptions. Gallup has also organised a competition to promote the consumption of healthy food sharing benefits of several types of healthy food and ways to prepare them.

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DSM provides targeted nutritional advice to address deficiencies diagnosed during the employees’ health checks in a sustainable manner, e.g. through an executive health check employees are taught about extra sources of Vitamin D (diets, sunlight exposure, supplement) and reducing LDL cholesterol (diets, physical activity).

Ajinomoto created a healthcare app for employees to seek nutritional advice by recording daily meals, activities and sleep. Voluntary workshops on appropriate carb diets are held among employees at risk of diabetes. Participants receive individual tutoring by medical staff and are encouraged to monitor their diet using the smartphone app.

To offer balanced meals to employees, Bel Group organised a training by a local nutritionist in Morocco to train its catering staff on best practices when coming to nutrition and on how to build balanced diet.

Employees at Unilever can fill out a questionnaire on health, nutrition and exercise as part of the Lamplighter (health-check) programme. Employees then receive guidance on nutrition through counselling sessions or may be recommended to see a general practitioner or dietitian.22
The World Health Organisation defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure – including activities undertaken while working, playing, carrying out household chores, travelling and engaging in recreational pursuits.23

Physical activity interventions have the potential to increase positive health impact of the four areas of interventions listed above. Physical activity interventions alone are not considered sufficient to be a workforce nutrition policy, they need to be part of a comprehensive and coordinated policy to provide changes to the diet or education around it.

The Workplace Health Research Network has identified three key steps to develop and implement a successful physical activity program:24

1) Developing an overall company culture of health which requires company policies and supports designed to enable employees to get physically active.

2) Partnerships in the community and use of existing resources as building blocks for the physical activity program.

3) Programs tailored to employees’ needs and interests and which may use technology, such as wearables or apps, and encouraging active transportation.

4) It is important to keep reasonable goals in mind.
Edesia has company bicycles and helmets accessible to all staff members. Edesia has an outdoor garden managed by the company’s employees. In addition to providing a space for physical activity, the garden provides fresh fruits and vegetables shared among the staff.

DSM is supplying fortified rice to employees in Malaysia and in India (total reach of approximately 215 employees). DSM program in Malaysia started in March 2018 and targets all DSM production workers. This program benefits about 50 people every day (lunch). DSM Malaysia is using fortified rice kernels produced by DSM, manufactured in Thailand, for their unpaid samples. In India, fortified rice is currently provided in three sites to DSM employees: Vadodara, Mumbai and Pune. A total of approximately 165 people benefit from lunches with fortified rice in those three sites. In South Africa, DSM employees receive 20kg of instant porridge every second month. The porridge is produced by a local social business, Sizannani Mzanzi.

Amway created the Optimal You program to assist in employees’ health and nutrition, manage their weight, or improve their fitness level. Amway has on-site fitness centers and exercise facilities available for employees and their families, 24/7.

Building on the results of its employees’ health checks showing deficiencies in Vitamin D, BASF recommends physical activity in sunlight to its employees.

All large sites (>100 Associates) of Mars complete an annual site self-assessment based on 10 fundamentals of a healthy energising culture, worksite nutrition is one of these elements. The implementation of this fundamental results in better access to healthy balanced nutrition at all hours of operations. Mars highest achieving sites are recognized “Mars Certified Healthy Worksite” status for that year. Mars aims to increase the proportion of sites achieving the 10 fundamentals to at least 95% in 2023.

Bel Group has organized a worldwide walking challenge in its subsidiaries, through a dedicated app. The group also ran staff tournaments e.g. football in Morocco or table tennis in Egypt. Bel Group developed a global toolkit to educate and promote balanced snacking, deployed by Human Resources and health and safety coordinators: education sessions, improvement of the snack offer at workplace..... A similar toolkit is being developed for a balanced breakfast.
Conclusion & recommendations

Implementing workforce nutrition policies which address breastfeeding support, nutrition education, nutrition focused health checks, and/or access to nutritious food can make improvements to the wellbeing of workers. These policies can enable workers – notably low-income workers – to address part or all of their energy and nutrient needs.26

SBN encourages its global members to:

• Mobilize the management of their companies to publicly endorse workforce nutrition commitments.

• Increase the engagement of the leadership and of all the employees in the design of workforce nutrition programmes.

• Adopt and implement in all settings a commitment on breastfeeding support (parental leave, breastfeeding rooms...).

• Adopt SMART27 programs including monitoring, evaluation and learning.

• Provide precise and contextualized guidance to companies’ offices and factories in emerging economies to design and implement workforce nutrition policies.

In the upcoming months, the SBN global team will support its global members in identifying and implementing workforce nutrition commitments in emerging economies. The lessons-learned and best practices identified will be continuously shared among SBN global members.

SBN will also continue to identify existing tools and resources supporting businesses in implementing and improving workforce nutrition policies. SBN has noted the following general toolkits to support its global members in increasing the health and well-being of their workforce, with the last three providing specific guidance on workforce nutrition:

• GAIN evidence briefs on workforce nutrition28

• From evidence to practice: workforce wellness that works29

• Workforce wellness that works: 10 steps to infuse well-being and vitality into any organization30

• CDC worksite health scorecard31

• Physical Activity in the workplace32

• Creating a healthy workforce nutrition environment33

• Eat smart, worksite wellness toolkit34

• Workplace lactation support program toolkit, Vietnam35

SBN will inform its global members of GAIN’s handbook on providing healthy and nutritious foods in the workplace when it becomes available. The handbook, which will focus on emerging economies is being developed to support businesses in providing healthy food in the workplace.

SBN global team looks forward to cooperating with its global members to share more examples of impactful workforce nutrition commitments across various geographic settings and nutrition related areas.

SBN is also committed to supporting and joining the alliance co-led by GAIN and the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) to coordinate, mobilise and accelerate scalable action in nutrition programmes across the full spectrum of the workforce. This alliance will: share evidence and create a business case for action; advocate proactively; support benchmarking standards; and seek to improve the reach of workforce nutrition from companies and organisations of all sizes and to the workers from their supply chain.
References

17. Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Time-limited.
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