



1.09 Launch a Workforce Nutrition Alliance to reach food system workers

The Solution: This solution seeks to scale up the Workforce Nutrition Alliance (WNA) to expand access to and knowledge about good nutrition to hundreds of millions of individuals by using companies as a strategic lever to connect through the workplace to their employees and supply chain workers. This initiative will address the currently untapped potential of reaching and sustainably modifying the nutritional environment of millions of low-income food system workers, both directly employed by multinationals and in their supply chains, who may be otherwise difficult to reach through traditional public health interventions.

The workplace has huge potential as an intervention setting: it is a controlled environment in which most adults will spend at least one-third of their lives, making multiple choices throughout the day that affect their long-term nutritional health. But despite the prevalence of malnutrition and the losses in human capital it brings about, it is not yet at the forefront of employers' priorities. Showcasing WNA as a game-changer would bring visibility to this issue and catalyse systemic change by leveraging some of the biggest food system actors to raise industry standards in worker health and wellbeing.

This innovative solution not only engages with companies and their employees but provides the systemic framework and tools and resources necessary to achieve, scale-up, and sustain success. These include a self-assessment scorecard for a company to use to identify areas in which it can improve its workforce nutrition programme plus tools for target setting, plan development, implementation, monitoring and reporting, and maximising benefits.

The WNA was co-founded in 2019 by the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) and the GAIN. WNA brings together business associations and technical experts to support employers in adopting and expanding workforce nutrition programmes and impacting 30 million employees in their organisations and supply chains by 2030. Leveraging action platforms like UNFSS and Nutrition for Growth (N4G), the WNA will reach the most vulnerable workers in the food system with nutrition interventions proven to benefit both men and women's overall health and productivity. With its established framework, tools, and commitment from a growing number of companies, the WNA is poised to be a significant "game-changing systemic solution" within AT1 and with substantial complimentary benefits to AT4.

Source of the Solution: The workforce nutrition concept was piloted in 2014 and has been scaling up since 2015, with eight global tea companies now engaged, reaching 750,000 farmers and their families in India, Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi. The concept also has proven success in reducing anaemia in factory workplaces in Bangladesh. Due to these successes and growing demand, the WNA was established to bring together stakeholders to develop a strategic plan, framework, and the tools and resources necessary to ensure replication success. In order to improve access at scale to farmers in supply chains, the WNA was strengthened through a partnership with SourceUp, a pioneering platform with a landscape approach that brings together farmers, producers, government, and civil society working towards shared sustainability objectives and sourcing strategies. Workplace nutrition programmes will now feature in the SourceUp platform and directly reach farming communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This innovative approach will model how the systematic inclusion of workers' nutrition can be scaled and integrated in other landscaping approaches.

Problem addressed within food systems: An estimated USD 8–38 billion in annual business loss is due to underweight workers' reduced productivity and USD 4–27 billion is lost annually due to obesity. Only a proportion of those who work in corporate offices in high-income countries have access to healthy food options at work. Many supply chain employers who provide food to meet a regulatory requirement do



not offer nutritious foods. Meals supplied to low-income workers are often staple-heavy and lack important diversity from fruits, vegetables, and proteins. The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored healthy employees' importance in ensuring business productivity and continuity. The WNA addresses this burden of malnutrition by providing access to and information about good nutrition through four inflexion points: healthy food at work, nutrition education, nutrition-focused health checks, and breastfeeding support. Evidence from these programme areas has demonstrated dietary improvements, reduced anaemia, lower NCD risk, lower healthcare costs, and lower rates of absenteeism.

The solution reduces hunger by providing access to nutritional meals and clean drinking water in the workplace and improving rates of exclusive and continued breastfeeding, addressing inequities that specifically affect vulnerable communities and women. This solution provides increased access to and information on nutritious and safe foods. It also includes initiatives to increase access to affordable nutritious food options through employer subsidies.

How this solution will address that problem: The WNA uses the 'workplace' as a leverage point from which to reach millions of people systematically; it offers employers a systemic framework, tools, technical support and the business case to start or improve proven workplace nutrition programmes. This, in turn, allows employers, particularly large multinational companies relying on sizeable workforces, to implement ambitious workforce nutrition programmes that also reach supply chain workers, including targeting vulnerable communities and women. Other actors can enable ambitious workforce nutrition programmes through policies and TA, globally and nationally. This results in millions of workers benefitting from improved nutrition via effective workforce nutrition programmes.

Solution's alignment to the 'game changing and systemic solution' criteria: The WNA is feasible (piloted and proven), has a conceptual framework that would shift operational models, provides a systemic framework, engages various stakeholders across the food system, has a positive effect on equitable livelihoods, advances human health, is ambitious with concrete pathways for systemic change, mutually reinforces achievement of other ATs' goals, promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in food consumption systems, and is implementable at a sufficient scale to reach a large portion of the population with clear, timely and verifiable outcomes that produce significant impacts by 2030. The WNA can be sustainable as it leverages private-sector investment. Through a clear business case, it can become embedded in standard business practices, thereby catalysing lasting change. This solution aligns particularly well with AT4, supporting livelihoods: well-nourished workers are healthier and therefore have fewer sick days and increase their earnings and income.

Existing evidence: As highlighted previously, this solution has been successfully piloted by global companies and is meeting implementation goals. There is also a substantial and growing body of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness and potential of such interventions on workers' nutritional health and business-level outcomes. Indeed, the business case for employers is increasingly convincing, which will help sustain these company-funded programmes in the long term.

Current/likely political support: This solution has the full support of the GCF, one of the world's leading business organisations, with member companies that directly reach 10 million employees and an additional 90 million workers indirectly. The WNA also works with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the SUN Business Network, and other networks, activating hundreds of other large employers. Political support for existing workforce nutrition programmes is high in Bangladesh, Mozambique, India, and Kenya and growing in Tanzania, Nigeria, and Malawi; further member states will follow as the solution is scaled up. UNICEF, ILO, and other development partners have been involved in different aspects of this concept's technical development.



Contexts for which this is well suited: The solution may not be well-suited for conflict zones or other areas destabilised to the point of no regular employment infrastructure. However, one strength of this solution is that it can be implemented across geographies in high-income countries and LMICs in all work settings (government, civil society and industry). Wherever there is a “workplace”, this solution can bring healthy nutrition.