Letter to Editor

**IUNS Workshop on Capacity and Leadership Development in
Nutritional Sciences Held in Tokyo 2010**

Key Words capacity building, nutritional sciences, IUNS, Japan

Dear Editor:

In order to strength the basis for more integrated and qualified research, capacity building has been part of the prioritized agenda in the societies of nutritional sciences. The International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) and United Nations University (UNU) have conducted nutrition leadership training programs for several years. Following three IUNS Nutrition Leadership Training Programs held in Asian countries (China, Korea and Taiwan) (1), the IUNS Committee of the Science Council of Japan held the 4th Workshop on Capacity and Leadership Development in Nutritional Sciences in Tokyo, from 7 Sep to 9 Sep 2010. The workshop was hosted by the leading Japanese societies on nutrition: The Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics, The Japanese Society of Nutrition and Food Science, and the National Institute of Health and Nutrition, Japan.

A total of, 29 persons from Japan and 22 persons from other Asian countries applied to participate in the workshop in response to the announcements on the IUNS Website, and homepages of the three hosting bodies, as well as direct notices sent to the national contact points of IUNS or other relevant organizations in Asia. Among the 51 candidates, the organizing committee selected 36 participants from Japan (21 persons), Korea (3), Malaysia (3), Thailand (3), Singapore (2), Vietnam (1), Laos (1), Cambodia (1), and India (1). As faculty members, 14 scientists belonging to the three host organizations (Table 1) gave lectures, coordinated and facilitated three topics for group works.

There were (a) “*Shokuiku*” (nutrition education) at the national level: a focus on school meal programs and their related policies, (b) nutrition and community empowerment, and (c) functional foods. Further, they arranged field trips to (1) a primary school for observing the school meal program, (2) an NGO for a community-based food security program, and (3) a company in the food industry (Table 2). The 4th Asian Network Symposium on Nutrition (Theme—Nutrition Education Program for National Health Promotion in Asian Coun-

tries: A Focus on School-based Programs) hosted by the National Institute of Health and Nutrition was incorporated into the programs of the workshop in order to share the extensive information and in-depth discussions especially about the school lunch programs in Asian countries (Table 3).

All the participants completed the programs through their own presentations and enthusiastic discussions in the groups, and further personal communications in Japanese restaurants after the group work. During the final session, representatives from the three groups presented their learning through field trips and group discussions. Participants from both Japan and other Asian countries were fully satisfied with the overall outcome of the workshop, which could be linked to the development of further personal communication and collaborations to promote research activities in the Asian countries.

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(Received May 20, 2011)

Table 1. Organizers and sponsors.

1) Principal organizing members	
[Representative, IUNS Committee of the Science Council of Japan] Makoto Shimizu (Professor, Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, The University of Tokyo)	
[Chair of the Organizing Committee] Shigeru Yamamoto (Professor of International Nutrition, Ochanomizu University Graduate School)	
[Chair of the Executive Board] Shinkan Tokudome (Director-General, National Institute of Health and Nutrition)	
[Chief of the Secretariat] Nobuo Yoshiike (Professor, Department of Nutrition, Aomori University of Health and Welfare)	
2) Lectures, Faculties and Coordinators	
[The Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics]	
Yukari Takemi (Professor, Department of Nutrition Sciences, Kagawa Nutrition University)	
Nobuko Murayama (Professor, Public Nutrition & International Nutrition, Niigata University of Health and Welfare)	
Midori Ishikawa (Professor, Community Nutrition & International Nutrition, Nayoro City University)	
Kumi Eto (Lecturer, Laboratory of Nutrition Ecology, Kagawa Nutrition University)	
[The Japanese Society of Nutrition and Food Science]	
Kiyoshi Tanaka (Professor, Clinical Nutrition, Department of Food and Nutrition, Kyoto Women's University)	
Hisanori Kato (Project Professor, Food for Life, Organization of Interdisciplinary Research Projects, The University of Tokyo)	
Hitomi Kumagai (Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry and Life Science, Nihon University)	
Makoto Akao (Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry and Life Science, Nihon University)	
[The National Institute of Health and Nutrition, Japan]	
Nobuo Nishi (Director, Center for Collaboration and Partnership, National Institute of Health and Nutrition)	
Nobuyo Tsuboyama-Kasaoka (Project leader, Project for International Research and Development, National Institute of Health and Nutrition)	
3) Sponsors	
Ajinomoto Co., Ltd., Kikkoman Co., Ltd., House Foods Corporation, Kagome Co., Ltd., Kao Corporation, Fuji Oil Co., Ltd., Meiji Dairies Corporation, Morinaga Milk Industry Co., Ltd., Nisshin Seifun Group Inc., Nestlé Japan, Ltd., Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd., Megmilk Snowbrand Co., Ltd.	

Table 2. Selected topics for group work and field trips.

Topics	Objectives	Field trip	Group work
<i>Shokuiku</i> at the national level: A focus on school meal programs and related policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —To understand nutrition education methodology (in particular, the school lunch system) in each country —To understand the historical background of the Japanese school lunch system, as well as nutrition education methodology (including hygiene management) in Japan —To learn national legislation related to <i>Shokuiku</i>, and to understand the roles of registered dietitians/dietitians as key players in <i>Shokuiku</i>. 	Observation of school the lunch system and facilities at an elementary school, and its tasting in a classroom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A brief lecture on overviews of the school lunch system provided before the field trip 2) Overseas participants and Japanese participants work in pairs, and discuss the possible activity in this field in each country
Nutrition and Community Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —To propose a framework for the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of community-based activity towards nutritional improvement —To learn the process to formulate a framework by utilizing past experience (where assessment was incorporated) of each participant —To discuss important views at each level (community, country, regional, global) using the framework formulated 	Observation of a community assessment scheme at municipal health centers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Exchange information on an internationally used approach for assessment at the community level 2) Exchange opinions on important views for assessment at the community level 3) Incorporate findings of the field trip in 1 and 2 4) Formulate a framework with important views for assessment 5) Prepare a proposal to conduct assessment in the participant's country using the framework in 4
Functional Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> —To understand overviews of functional food and discuss "What is required in a functional food?" (e.g. type of function, safety of functional food) —To understand overviews of Food for Specified Health Uses (FOSHU) and the food labeling system in Japan, and discuss its significance, current problem and challenges —To understand the structure of functional components and their mechanisms 	Introduction and tour of a factory at a food technology development center	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduce the current situation of food research and related policies in each participant's country (including the FOSHU system in Japan) 2) Discuss the safety of functional food 3) Outline the type and structure of functional components and their mechanisms

Table 3. Timetable of the program.

September 7 (Tue)	September 8 (Wed)	September 9 (Thurs)
	8:00–8:30 LECTURE (1) Functional food—Concepts and present status in Japan (Prof. Makoto Shimizu, The University of Tokyo)	8:00–8:30 LECTURE (2) Assessing Food and Nutrition Needs in the Community (Kumi Eto, Kagawa Nutrition University)
9:30–10:30 Opening address (Prof. Makoto Shimizu, Representative, IUNS Committee of Science Council of Japan)	8:30–10:30 GROUP WORK (3)	8:30–15:30 GROUP WORK (5)
Lecture/Orientation: Towards more integrated researches on nutrition in Asian regions (Prof. Nobuo Yoshiike, Aomori University of Health and Welfare)		
10:30–11:30 GROUP WORK (1)	10:45–13:15 FIELD TRIP (2): Ochanomizu University Elementary School	
12:30–13:00 Orientation for field trip		
13:00–18:00 FIELD TRIP (1): i) Nutrition and Community Empowerment: Second Harvest Japan ii) Functional Food: Factories and the Food Development & Technology Center of Ajinomoto Co., Inc.	13:15–13:45 Introduction of NIHN 14:00–17:30 The 4th Asian Network Symposium on Nutrition (NIHN)*	16:00–18:00 GROUP PRESENTATION
18:00– GROUP WORK (2)	18:00– GROUP WORK (4)	18:00–19:00 Farewell party and closing Closing address (Prof. Chigusa Date, Director, The Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics)

*NIHN: National Institute of Health and Nutrition.