

Emergency
Nutrition Network
Annual Report
February 2003–February 2004



Introduction

The Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) aims to improve effectiveness of emergency food and nutrition interventions through identification and dissemination of lessons learnt in the course of operational practice and through research and evaluation.

ENN Services

Collecting information

- The ENN comprises a network of over 200 agencies world wide
- Agencies contribute programme experience, research and evaluation findings and news

Facilitating the identification of lessons and research needs and strengthening institutional memory

- The ENN team helps participating agencies draw out lessons and identify research needs based on programme experience – this process strengthens agency institutional memory.
- The write up of lessons, research and evaluation findings in Field Exchange serves as a resource to further strengthen agency institutional memory

Sharing information

- The ENN publishes articles and summaries of research and evaluation findings in Field Exchange
- The ENN collaborates with organisations in preparing and facilitating international meetings and is also involved in the preparation, production and dissemination of documents to improve food and nutrition humanitarian response

Institutional base

The Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) was established in November 1996, following a recommendation made at an inter-agency group meeting of food and nutrition professional in Addis Ababa (September 1995). The ENN was initially established as a self-financing activity in the department of Community Health and General Practice in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland and later incorporated as a limited company in Ireland, on the 30th April 2001. On 8th September 2003, the ENN registered as a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital in the UK, setting up office premises in Oxford, UK in February 2004. The institutional base is transferring from Dublin to Oxford in the first six months of 2004.

The ENN conducted an evaluation of Field Exchange in 2003, contacting 23 humanitarian agencies and 120 research/academic groups. Sixty two percent of respondents from humanitarian agencies believed that Field Exchange was appropriate for field staff, with 25% saying that some of it was appropriate. Eighty seven percent of respondents believed that Field Exchange improved practice in the field. Out of the research and academic cohort of respondents, over half felt that the publication was useful for keeping up to date with current nutritional issues in the field, and 25% said that it had indirectly influenced their research agenda. All respondents who answered the question used Field Exchange in training courses, drawing on case study field article material, in particular. The evaluation concluded that there is a need for greater promotion of Field Exchange at academic institutional level to ensure that the publication is more widely available.

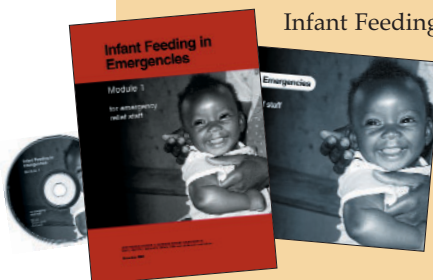
Output

Publications

Three editions of Field Exchange were produced during this project period. Field Exchange is produced in hard copy and distributed to approx. 2100 individuals, and including over 200 agencies. Field Exchange is also available on the web <http://www.ennonline.net>. Staff from ten INGO/NGOs, one UN agency, and four research groups, have written articles for Field Exchange over the reporting period. These articles have addressed emergency programme experiences in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Malawi, Gaza, Angola, Afghanistan, Burundi and Serbia, and have described many different types of emergency food and nutrition situation and response. Subjects have included the effect of border closures on nutrition in Gaza, experiences of home based care for people living with HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe, and response to a beri-beri outbreak in Angola. There are many examples where writing an article for Field Exchange has been a first step for agency staff in processing the experience, and identifying good and bad practices and lessons learnt. Field Exchange also publishes latest research and evaluation findings. Approximately one third of this material has been obtained from the 'grey literature', i.e. agency programme reports and internal evaluations. This information would not otherwise be easily accessible to those in the field.



Infant Feeding in Emergencies



Infant Feeding in Emergencies, Module 1 for emergency relief staff, was developed by a core group of agencies, including WHO, UNICEF, Linkages, IBFAN and the ENN. The purpose of this training pack is to prepare emergency relief staff to safeguard maternal and child health in emergencies, by ensuring appropriate infant feeding. Module 1 is available on the ENN website for download <http://www.ennonline.net/ife/module1/index.html>.

A second training pack, Infant Feeding in Emergencies, Module 2, for emergency health and nutrition staff, is being finalised. Also developed by the core group, the purpose of Module 2 is to provide health and nutrition workers with the practical knowledge and skills to support optimal infant feeding practices in times of crisis.

During 2003, the ENN completed a project, funded by IBFAN/GIFA, to evaluate of the utility of Module 1 and to collect case studies and programme experience on infant feeding in emergencies (IFE) to further develop both modules¹. The evaluation found the material was used quite extensively, in informal and formal training and also as resource material. Users included member agencies of the core group, individuals who downloaded the material from the ENN web site, training institutions involved in humanitarian training courses, and key organisations involved in emergency nutrition interventions. The evaluation also found that training of trainers and targeted distribution of the material was necessary to improve the impact of the module. Ongoing evaluation, distribution and targeting have been developed as a core ENN activity for phase 4.

A collection of case studies on infant feeding in emergencies identified gaps in technical knowledge and research needs in the IFE sector. This led to significant development of sections of Module 2 in the latter half of 2003, funded by ENN, to address artificial feeding in emergencies, complementary feeding, and managing severe malnutrition in infants under six months. Module 2 is now in final editorial/production stage and should be available via the ENN from the end of April 2004. Completion of Module 2 is being funded by ENN², IBFAN/GIFA and UNICEF.

¹ Infant feeding in emergencies, ENN/GIFA Final Report, <http://www.ennonline.net>

² During phase 4, half of ENN IFE activities are being supported by USAID.

Work continued on three special supplements in this reporting period³. The supplements aim to represent recent learning in key areas of the emergency food and nutrition sector and provide useful tools for operational practice. The subjects have been chosen on the basis that there have been substantial new developments/experiences and thinking in the selected areas, and that a special supplement offers the opportunity to collate, describe and analyse these experiences in one document. The supplement on targeting emergency food aid is completed and will be in print shortly. The supplements on community based therapeutic care and needs assessment methodologies will be completed in June and October 2004 respectively.

³ Watson, F: A best practice review of needs assessment methodologies in situations of food crises
 Taylor, A and Seaman, J: Methods of targeting emergency food aid
 Collins, S: The role of Community Based Therapeutic Feeding in humanitarian crises

International Meetings

The ENN takes part in international fora where there is an opportunity to distil lessons from field practice in emergencies as well as influence best practice. In April 2003, the findings of a joint ENN/GIFA project on infant feeding in emergencies were presented by the ENN to a meeting of a core group of agencies, held in Geneva 2003 (see Infant Feeding in Emergencies, above, for project findings and outcomes). In March 2003, the ENN facilitated a technical consultation on emergency needs assessment in WFP, Rome. The goal of the meeting was to strengthen partnerships in preparing emergency needs assessments and ensure relevance to food aid decision-making. The ENN also facilitated a subsequent 'expert' technical meeting in October 2003 hosted by WFP in Rome, on the role of emergency needs assessments in identifying non-food aid responses to emergencies. In November 2003, the ENN acted as rapporteur for the Concern/VALID International hosted meeting on community based approaches to managing severe malnutrition, held in Dublin. A report of the meeting was prepared by the ENN and was distributed with issue 21 of Field Exchange. The ENN will attend the 31st session of the SCN in New York, taking place between the 22nd and 26th of March 2004, and will make a presentation at the 'working group on emergencies'⁴.

⁴ See <http://www.enonline.net> for the update on infant feeding activities, presented at SCN, New York, 2004

In 2002/03, the ENN undertook a pilot study to look at the feasibility and appropriateness of an initiative to support information sharing and nutrition research in the emergency food and nutrition sector. Further to the findings and recommendations of the report, a small meeting was convened at Brookes University, Oxford on 8th December, 2003 between interested academics and NGO staff. A number of humanitarian agencies and academic bodies were represented at the meeting. The objectives of the meeting were two-fold. Firstly, to explore the opportunities, constraints and practicalities of nutrition research in emergencies, from planning to publishing, and secondly, to identify the type of steps or activities that would be necessary to strengthen nutritional research in emergencies. Further to this meeting, the ENN are now exploring working closer with the Partners in Research Emergency Nutrition group (PREN) at the University of Aberdeen, UK with a view to realising stronger links between academia and field practitioners.

Resource Database

The ENN maintains a database of references of all materials used in the preparation and publication of Field Exchange, as well as materials related to Nutrition in Emergencies in general. This database can be searched for full references on the ENN web site. Requests can be made through the web for individual papers. In 2003-04, 140 requests were made and resource material disseminated.

Participation

Approximately 50% of the field articles published over this period were unsolicited, while 65% of the research were obtained by ENN staff screening published literature. There is a continuing need for ENN staff to prompt and encourage submission for publication. The ENN are currently exploring ways to strengthen this process. Contributors represented INGOs, NGOs, UN agencies and research agencies. Field Exchange is seen by many as an essential resource for relief workers. Twenty-four agencies now subscribe for bulk copies, which they then re-distribute to country offices. In 2003/04, Field Exchange was distributed in over one hundred countries world wide. The Field Exchange mailing list contains 2,100 individuals from over 200 agencies.

Figure 1 Field Exchange distribution by institutional type

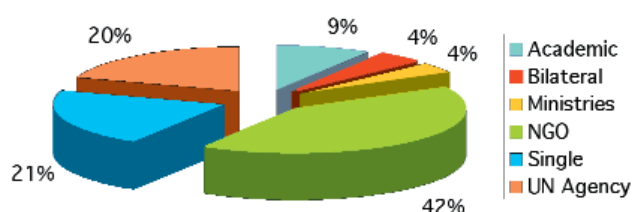
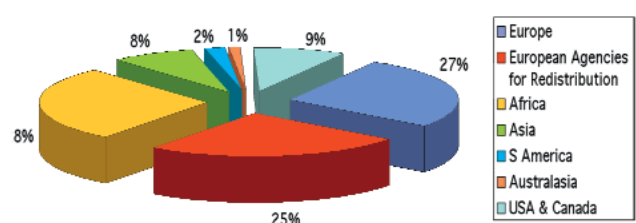


Figure 2 Geographical distribution



Agency Funding and Support

As a result of a strategy to widen the ENN funding base and include more agencies in the Network, 26 agencies (compared to 18 between 2002-3) supported the ENN during this period (see below). Funding is invariably linked to taking a more active role in identifying lessons for write up and publication in Field Exchange. Through participation in the ENN, agencies are showing their commitment to learning from experience, improving practice and transparency. During the reporting period funding has also been provided by four other agencies (Concern, Valid International, UNICEF, GIFA) for specific activities (i.e. development, production and dissemination of infant feeding material, and preparing the community based approaches to managing severe malnutrition meeting report).

Income	€
Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (Dutch)	63,529
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	23,840
Royal Danish Ministerie of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA)	26,740
Other	37,431
Deposit Interest Received	557
Total 2003 - 2004	152, 097

Expenditure	€
Wages and Salaries	27,954
Consultancy Fees	83,071
Postage, Stationery, Production and Distribution	26,925
Rent, Rates, Service charges and Light and Heat	7,948
Repairs and Renewals
Telephone and Fax	4,688
Travelling Expenses	2,056
Audit and Accountancy Fees	1,210
Bank Charges	74
General Expenses	635
Total 2003 -2004	154,561

Supporting agencies

Action Contre la Faim
 CAFOD
 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
 Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)
 Compact AS
 Concern Worldwide
 Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DANIDA)
 Fondation Terre des homes
 Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)
 Geneva Foundation
 Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA)
 GOAL
 HelpAge International
 IFPRI
 Merlin
 Médecins Sans Frontières
 Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (Dutch)
 Oxfam
 Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Save the Children UK
 Trocaire
 World Food Programme (WFP)
 UNHCR
 UNICEF
 Valid International
 World Health Organisation (WHO)

Material from Field Exchange and other ENN publications (e.g. IFE) are used in a number of international training courses, particularly to locate theory in current practice and experience. Courses which have regularly utilised ENN publications include; the Human Nutrition MSc at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, International Health Exchange/MERLIN Nutrition in emergencies course, Tufts MSc in Public Health and Nutrition, Trinity MSc in Community Health, UDC MA in Humanitarian Assistance, MSF PSP course, ACF internal training, and Nutrition Modules run at the Institute of Child Health in London, as well as APSO courses in Dublin.

Staff



Fiona O'Reilly (ENN director & company secretary) is the Field Exchange production editor. Fiona has been involved in the area of international health and nutrition for 14 years. She is also a part-time lecturer in Trinity College Dublin



Jeremy Shoham (ENN director) is the Field Exchange technical editor. Jeremy has been involved in the area of emergency food and nutrition for the past 20 years.



Marie McGrath is a dietician/nutritionist with emergency field work experience and is now a part of the Field Exchange editorial team.



Deirdre Connell is currently the ENN part time administrator.

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