

Summary of MUAC/WFH meeting feedback

A questionnaire was sent out to elicit feedback from participants attending the MUAC/WFH meeting in December 2012. Thirteen participants sent responses, with eleven of these responses collated and presented below. One participant responded in narrative form, so answers to the particular questions posed were not provided. Another participant expressed considerable displeasure with the format, structure, professionalism and outcomes of the meeting. Both responses have been well noted by the organisers, but have not been included in the summary presented below.

Of the 11 responses, a total of 7 participants (64%) felt that the meeting reached its objectives, 2 (18%) were not sure, 1 (9%) thought it partially reached them, while 1 (9%) gave no answer for this question. Regarding the time frame of the meeting (2 days), all 11 participants (100%) thought that it was “about right”; neither too long nor too short.

All 11 responders (100%) felt that a face-to-face meeting was necessary; the main reason given was that it provided an immediate response for a contentious issue and that it would not have been possible to have this discussion through email, due to strongly held opinions/views (8 responses). Other reasons given for the need for a face-to-face meeting was for networking opportunities (3) and for providing opportunities for experience exchange and linking operational staff with academics (2).

Participants were asked about their own objectives for attending the meeting. The main reason given was to hear or contribute to the evidence and to better understand the issues surrounding anthropometric criteria (11). Other objectives mentioned were networking opportunity (4), to clarify research issues (2), for academics – wanting to better understand field issues (3), for operational staff – wanting to inform academics of field issues (1), and for nutrition advisors - to be better able to provide guidance for field staff (2). Ten participants (91%) felt that their objectives were met, with one participant (9%) considering that they were partially met.

Participants were then asked whether they had any expectations (either positive or negative) coming into the meeting. Four replied that they had no expectations, 2 that they had negative expectations (these were not met – the meeting was more positive than they expected) and 5 replied that they had positive expectations. Of these 5 reported positive expectations, 3 were met, 1 was partially met and 1 was not met.

In response to the question of whether the discussion was useful – 9 participants (82%) thought that it was useful, 1 (9%) thought that it was partially useful, while 1 (9%) gave no answer to this question. Reasons given were: understanding the evidence better (3), networking (2), better able to provide guidance to field staff (2), informing the research agenda (2) and for agreeing mutual outcomes (1).

Regarding the meeting facilitation, 7 (64%) thought that it was good or very good, 2 (18%) thought that it needed stronger chairing to manage the outspoken characters better, and 2 (18%) provided no answer. Regarding administration, most had either no comment 6 (54%) or thought it was good or very good 3 (27%), while 2 (18%) thought that the meeting needed better preparation and structure.

Regarding their opinion of the professional behaviour at the meeting, 5 (45%) thought that some participants were not respectful, objective or professional enough, 3 (27%) had no comment, 1 (9%) thought the academics argued too much, 1 (9%) thought it was better than expected, while only 1 (9%) thought that all participants behaved in a professional manner.

In summary, overall the feedback was positive for this meeting, with all 11 responders thinking that 2 days was the 'right' time frame and that it was important to hold a face-to-face meeting for this subject matter. The majority of participants felt both that their objectives and any expectations they had were met (or that negative expectations were not met). Participants also felt that the discussion was useful and that both the facilitation and administration of the meeting was good. Almost half of the responders did, however, feel that the professional behaviour at the meeting was not sufficiently respectful or objective.