

Nutrition Exchange evaluation report

22 January 2013

Introduction

Issue 1 of Field Exchange Digest was launched in May 2011 in English; French and Arabic translations followed shortly after. In order to develop and refine contact networks and distribution mechanisms, five emergency prone and high burden countries were targeted (Bangladesh, Kenya, Ethiopia, North Sudan, and Niger). Over 1500 copies were printed and distributed in English, French and Arabic (English: 1051; French: 493; Arabic: 91).

Feedback, in the form of informal discussion and online survey responses, was very positive. It was evident in the feedback however, that readers were confused between Field Exchange Digest and Field Exchange and thus a new name, Nutrition Exchange (NEX) was embraced for Issue 2.

For Issue 2, targeted distribution was expanded into five additional countries (South Sudan, Chad, Haiti, Pakistan and Afghanistan) for a total of ten target countries. Issue 2 was also published in English, French and Arabic. Over 4000 copies of Issue 2 were distributed (English: 2900; French: 800; Arabic; 400).

To gather feedback from readers to help determine the future directions of the publication, an evaluation was conducted in November and December 2012. The evaluation collected feedback on the content, format, and scope of the publication in addition to insight into how best to engage and communicate with this audience in the future. It also aimed to identify readers that would be interested in writing new content for future issues.

Methodology

To ensure a breadth of feedback a two-pronged approach to accessing readers was developed. First, an on-line survey was developed and identified individuals already working in NEX target countries were specifically targeted to help us gather feedback for the evaluation.

The on-line survey (23 questions, both tick boxes and open ended) was emailed to all NEX registered readers with email addresses (1785).

Secondly, three individuals affiliated with ENN and working in Ethiopia, Chad and Niger were identified to gather specific feedback on NEX content and distribution in these countries. Individuals in Chad and Niger were tied up with the end of their data collection so it was not possible for them to provide feedback; however several interviews were held in Ethiopia.

Online survey results

There were 95 responses to the online survey from individuals working all over the world¹. The largest portion of respondents was from the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Uganda) while there were several from Asia (Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh).

Of those that responded, a majority (51%, 48/95) were local staff of international NGOs. This was followed by local staff with the United Nations (17%, 16/95), government employees (11%, 10/95), individuals working at academic institutions (9%, 9/95), local NGO staff (7%, 7/95), students (3%, 3/95), consultants (3%, 3/95) and one was a donor.

Access to NEX

Most readers, 81% (75/92), access NEX on-line. When asked what format of NEX was most desirable, 62% (52/85) reported a hard copy or a pdf emailed directly to them. An email with a link provided to the ENN webpage to download directly was the next most preferred option.

Use of social media

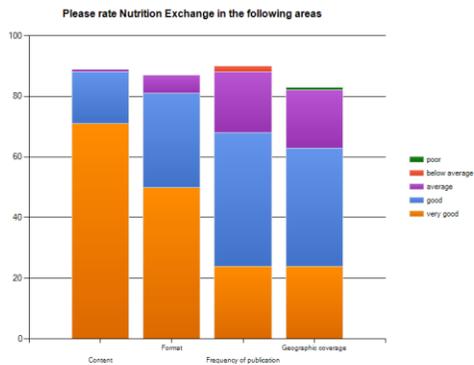
A high percentage of NEX readers engage with social media including Facebook, Twitter, online groups such as yahoo groups and Linked In which can be considered for the dissemination of future issues of NEX.

Facebook	92%
Twitter	22%
Online groups	45%
Linked in	38%

Feedback on NEX

Of those that responded, 98% reported that NEX was a worthwhile read. Respondents were asked to rate Nutrition Exchange based on content, format, frequency of distribution and geographic coverage. Both content and format were reportedly 'very good' by a majority of respondents while a majority of respondents scored frequency and geographic coverage as 'good' or 'average', suggesting room for improvement.

¹ A number of individuals skipped questions and so not all questions have a possible response rate of 95.



Specific suggestions for improvement on content, format, frequency and regional focus were requested. A summary of responses is outlined below.

Content

- Comprehensive nutrition package (move beyond CMAM), shift from treatment to prevention, integrated programming, lessons from developmental nutrition (5)
- Supplementary feeding- treatment of MAM (2)
- Increase focus on other nutrition sub-sectors: IYCF (3), wash and micronutrients (1)
- Increased individual experiences (with a focus on local staff), not just pooled agency or international staff experiences (2)
- New developments on guidelines and protocols (1)
- Nutrition-related diseases like celiac and lactose intolerance (1)
- Evidence for programmes with good intentions (1)
- Nutrition assessment tools (1)
- Interviews with key people in international nutrition (1)

Format

Out of 25 answers 75% suggested a smaller format (such as A4). Given that NEX is printed in an A4 format, this demonstrates some remaining confusion between the publications NEX with that of Field Exchange.

Frequency of publication

All respondents (16) requested more frequent publication ranging from every 2 weeks to twice a year.

generally more frequently	6%
every 2 weeks	13%
monthly	19%
every 2 months	19%
every 3 months (quarterly)	25%
every 4 months	6%
every 6 months (bi-annually)	13%

Regional content

Survey respondents reported that the publication was heavily focused on Africa and suggested that a more diverse content, highlighting experiences from Asia and the Middle East would be welcomed. Unique feedback included:

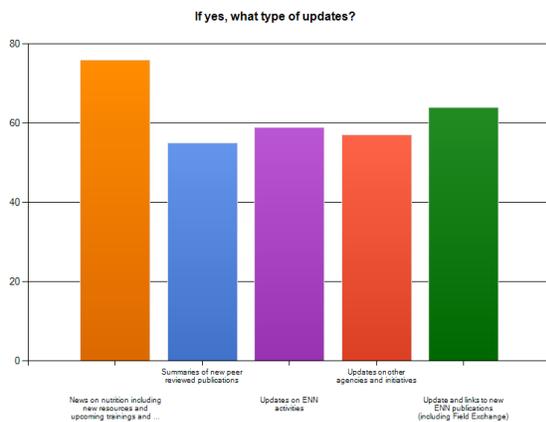
- Divide publication by region and provide equal weight to each.
- Actively seek out other organizations working in different countries and work with them to develop articles.

Contributions to future issues

A large majority of survey respondents (83%, 49/59) said they would be interested in submitting an article for a future issue.

Future communications with readers

Almost all readers (97%, 92/95) said reported that they would like more communications (updates) via email. Suggestions for what to include in the email updates are provided in the chart below.



Interview results

Interviews were conducted in Ethiopia with national and international staff from twelve organisations. Feedback on the content and suggestions of other networks to promote NEX were documented (see Annex 2).

Three of the organisations had received hard copies of NEX, one had requested but did not receive and seven were unaware of the publication but expressed their interest in registering for future issues. One individual/organisation gave conflicting responses.

Received hard copy of NEX from ENN	3	UNICEF, Concern, Irish Aid
Requested hard copy of NEX but did not receive	1	Dr. Ferew (Isaack Manyama)
Had not seen/heard of NEX but will register	7	JICA, FMOH, FANTA, WB, ECHO, WFP (Juta), WHO (Getahun)

All interviewees agreed to share the link and encourage other staff to subscribe.

Suggestions for further distribution within Ethiopia include:

- MANTAF members– Isaack Myanma will have the updated mailing list
- Nutrition Development Partners group (UNICEF has the list)
- Public Health Association –Lulseged said he will write to the secretariat and copy Mulu
- EHNRI (the food and nutrition research director there – Aregash Samuel)
- SNNPR and Tigray regional health bureau staff

One interviewee expressed interest in writing something for Nutrition Exchange (or Field Exchange).

Discussion

There are four themes that emerge from this evaluation.

- ***There is a high demand for increased information flow from ENN to readers.*** Readers have demonstrated (through the survey) that they are interested in receiving information on a range of topics, through a range of mechanisms, on a regular basis. ENN is aware of the need to diversify its communication mechanisms and information from this survey should feed into the wider communication strategy discussion.
- ***There is demand to expand the focus of NEX*** to include non-emergency/development nutrition issues (including prevention, nutrition sensitive interventions, integrated programming, etc.).
- ***There remains confusion by NEX readers between the publications NEX and FEX.*** The name was changed from Field Exchange Digest to Nutrition Exchange for Issue 2 to decrease confusion on the two publications. However, with confusion remaining, ENN will need to consider how to promote the publication as a related yet independent publication.
- ***Generating demand remains an on-going challenge.*** We have sent hundreds of copies to Ethiopia and felt that we had just about saturated the market, yet feedback suggests that many

people in Ethiopia are still unaware of NEX. More work needs to be done to (i) ensure that all our contacts are on both hard copy and electronic contact lists and (ii) to promote and increase awareness of the publication to national staff in all target countries.

- ***There is significantly limited French and Arabic readership and engagement with ENN.*** On both the pilot and current evaluations, ENN has received limited feedback from French and Arabic readers. Likewise, our distribution numbers to these audiences is significantly smaller than English.

It is recognized that the NEX team within ENN is primarily English-speaking and engaged in English-speaking nutrition networks at both global and field levels. While email communications have been translated by professional translators and sent out to both French and Arabic audiences, our personal networks do not extend greatly into the French or Arabic speaking nutrition world. At the same time, we have not spent time (or hired someone who is a native French or Arabic speaker) to actively cultivate a French or Arabic network. This has limited readership and distribution.

In moving forward, we will need to review our aim with regard to reaching out to non-English readers and determine, if we still should pursue a non-English audience, if so which language/s and how best to engage and develop communication and distribution networks within these audiences.