WN *The issue*

World Nutrition **Volume 6, Number 3, March 2015**

Journal of the World Public Health Nutrition Association
Published monthly at www.wphna.org/worldnutrition/

Visions of transformation
Power to the people



Our contributors this month. Above, top row, are Ilona Kickbusch, David Werner, Jonathan Gornall, Diana Parra, Wayne Roberts, Shannon Hayes, Seva Khambadkone, and Brooke Aksnes. In the middle row are Leonardo Mata, Amartya Sen, George Kent, Stefanie Vandevijvere, Gary Sacks, Hannah Brinsden, Tim Lobstein, Boyd Swinburn. Below are Geoffrey Cannon, Mark Lawrence, Mark Wahlqvist, Claudio Schuftan, David Picou, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Luci Morren, Maria Alvim

The Issue team reports: Our first editorial (page 126) is inspired by llona Kickbusch. David Werner foresees a Global Spring (page 129). In *Update* this month (page 131), Jonathan Gornall and Diana Parra fulminate on sugar, Wayne Roberts loves the Brazilian food guide, Shannon Hayes thrives on the land, and Seva Khambadkone envisions this century, with support from Brooke Aksnes. Leonardo Mata explains his grand idea (page 146), Amartya Sen insists on health for all (page 157) and George Kent knows how to end hunger (page 170). Stefanie Vandevijvere, Gary Sacks, Hannah Brinsden, Tim Lobstein and Boyd Swinburn celebrate Informas (page 184), Geoffrey Cannon's hero is Amartya Sen (page 202). Letters (page 215) include Mark Lawrence on the new nurition, Mark Wahlqvist on climate disruption, Claudio Schuftan on food wars, David Picou on Laonardo Mata, Sara Garduño-Diaz on Arab food culture under threat, and Luci Morren and Maria Alvim on nourishing impoverished communities.



WN *Guest Editorial*

Time for the Global Spring



The new generation. The WN picture above is of some of the students who have come to Haiti, organised by Partners in Health, inspired by the vision of a fair world and the Global Spring

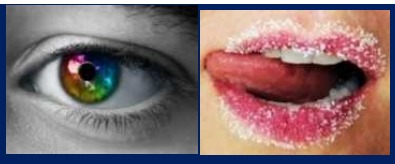
The editorial team writes: Our Guest *Editorial* in this issue is by one of our most distinguished contributors, David Werner (above, top) whose commentary on Health for All was published by *WN* in April 2014. In this issue he reflects on two contributions in this issue, by Amartya Sen on the need for and achievement of publicly funded primary health care, and by George Kent on the need for caring communities. Food and nutrition security especially in impoverished settings depends on adequate provision of reliable community-centred basic health care.

Box 1

David Werner

Taken from the April 2014 WN commentary. David Werner is, with Cicely Williams, David Morley, Derrick Jelliffe and Paul Farmer, among the most tenacious and courageous modern pioneers of people- and community-based health care, of which nutrition is central. He has worked for half a century in the global South, especially Mexico. For decades he was facilitator and advisor to *Project Piaxtla*, a Mexican villager-run programme that has helped in the conception and evolution of people-based primary health care. He has worked in more than 50 countries. He has been a consultant for the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization, the UN Development Programme, and various national and state governments, including India and Iran as well as Mexico. He has a 'genius award' from the MacArthur Foundation.

Access April 2014 David Werner with Halfdan Mahler on Health for All here
Access guest Editorial, David Werner on the coming Global Spring here



WN *Big Food Watch/Sugar*

Keeping sugar sweet





The WN Straight Thinking team reports. In the UK much now is being made of the already well-known fact that Susan Jebb (above left), chair of the government's food 'responsibility deal', and as such now the most influential nutrition scientist in the UK, has had a lot of her research funded by industry whose interests conflict with those of public health. So do a lot of other nutrition scientists who advise the UK government. But in any 'market economy', accusing the nutrition profession misses the point.

There is a context. Margaret Thatcher (above right) who as UK prime minister throughout the 1980s handed over political and economic power to corporations, also knew about the profitability of ultra-processing. Before politics she was an industrial chemist, and devised fillings for packaged cakes. It is said that she invented the 'Mr Whippy' ice-cream, making ingenious use of air as well as water. As prime minister one of her inner circle of strategic advisors was a biscuit tycoon. Ever since then all UK governments have been friends of ultra-processed product corporations.

Research scientists now are obliged to seek funds from the private sector. This is likely to mean corporations with interests in conflict with those of public health. Will this all be investigated by the world's most trusted broadcaster? The answer may be in the picture below. The woman in blue is Indra Nooyi, CEO of Pepsi-Co, with her directors including Rona Fairhead (far right) who, as well as being a Pepsi director, is now chair of the BBC governing board to whom the director-general reports.



Access Update on UK and world policy on sugar here



WN *Farming*

Feeding one another





Shannon Hayes is the author of Radical Homemakers (Left to Write Press). In Update this issue she objects to the idea that 'we should feed the world'. Here she says how her life on her farm began

Shannon Hayes writes: I grew up in the hills of West Fulton NY, which lie in the northern foothills of the Appalachian Mountain chain. I loved my life with my family, neighbours and farm, but no one thought that a young family could make a viable living here, as there were no economic opportunities. But I was so physically, spiritually and emotionally connected to this place that the idea of leaving left me in a state of distress. My husband had a job in a nearby town, so we thought we could live here and commute to outside jobs.

Thus, we bought our house while I was still in graduate school. I shared an apartment and came home on weekends. Two weeks into this arrangement, when the first mortgage bill came, my husband was fired. When I came home that weekend to talk about what we should do next, I saw that he had saved the chicken carcass from the bird we'd roasted the weekend before, and he'd boiled it and made a simple soup. He'd lit the fire, pulled a chair up close for me to warm up (it was a cold November night), and handed me a bowl of soup, saying nothing. I cried and cried, then realised that we'd manage.

We talked a long time, and came to the conclusion that we had been at our most economically vulnerable when we were counting on full-time jobs to pay for the roof over our heads. We were engaged and had been planning a wedding the next summer. We eloped instead, and used our savings to support ourselves and began working odd jobs and developing our homemaking skills. My parents gave us a wedding gift of $5,000 as well, which we figured we could rely on until we got back on our feet. I still have some of it sitting in an account. We lived frugally, our mortgage was paid off in three years, and we never looked back.

Access Shannon Hayes in Update here
Access her site here

WN *Development*

Health for all, now



Amartya Sen in sage mode (left) and in active mood (right). In the centre are pictures of what he saw in his country as a boy and remembers; the 1943 Bengal famine, the 1947 Punjab partition holocaust

From Amartya Sen's commentary: One of the oddities in the contemporary world is our astonishing failure to make adequate use of policy lessons that can be drawn from the diversity of experiences that the heterogeneous world already provides. There is much evidence of the big contributions that universal health care can make in advancing the lives of people, and also in enhancing economic and social opportunities… We have every reason to base public policy on proper understanding of the nature and reach of what is clearly a positive interdependence. There is no mystery in all this, given the centrality of health for better lives and for enhancing human capabilities.

Box 1

Rwanda, Recovery of health and well-being



Rwanda is an example of what Amartya Sen says above, with support from Partners in Health. Above: Daphroza Nyiranzoga and her daughters Solange and Angelique. Primary health care with nutrition advice enabled by Partners in Health has made her family food-secure. Below: Neza Guillaine, a computer expert and teacher supported by a Partners in Health associate, leads a session on programming at Camp TechKobwa, Gashora

Access Development. Amartya Sen on Health for all, now, here
Access What do You Think on Amartya Sen here



WN *Balance*

How to end hunger



Before the arrival of Europeans, a central achievement of Mayan (above left) and Hawaiian (right) civilisations was assurance of plenty of nourishing food from land and sea produced for all the people Traditional meals of Kerala, South India (below left), part of an age-old culture, are prepared always to be enjoyed in company. Rice on land cultivated for centuries (right) provides the staple food

George Kent writes: I begin my commentary this month, the first of two, by stating

> Many studies of hunger in the world have treated it as a technical problem arising from limits in the capacity to produce more food. Little attention has been given to the importance of human relationships. The likelihood of hunger occurring in any community depends on whether people care about one another, or are indifferent to one another, or else exploit one another. In any stable community, if people care about one another's well-being, they are not likely to go hungry. This is true even where people have little money.

Examples are in the pictures above. These illustrate the Mayan civilisation and that of Hawai'i (where I live) before the arrival of Europeans. A defining characteristic of those societies was assurance of adequate supplies of nourishing food in all foreseeable circumstances. The purpose of agriculture was to produce this food, for the people themselves. The same is seen today in societies like that of Kerala in India, in the pictures below, where both the farming system and food culture remain based on principles of sharing and caring, so as to nourish whole human well-being.

Access Balance. How to end hunger here

What Do You Think?
My heroes



Heroes. Top, Mary Midgley, Robert Skidelsky, Ross Hume Hall , Norman Cantor, Walter Yellowlees. Middle, Pablo Neruda, Mike Davis, Sigfried Giedion, Silvestre Silva, Edward Hall, Tony McMichael. Bottom, Karl Miller, John Waterlow, Leonardo Mata, and Amartya Sen

Geoffrey Cannon writes: Here are the 15 people I have celebrated in the *What Do You Think*? column, from the end of 2013, up to this issue. My heroes, if you like. They show what a broad topic public health and nutrition is, when the implications of 'public health' are discerned, when 'health' includes well-being, and 'nutrition' is seen in its larger sense of nourishment. Does this mean that every extraordinary and accomplished person may be a source of inspiration and enlightenment? Not quite!

But true, these 15 heroes range wide. The first is a philosopher of ethics (Mary Midgley). There are two historians, one of economics, the other mostly a mediaevalist (Robert Skidelsky and Norman Cantor). There is a biochemist (Ross Hume Hall), and a physician in general practice (Walter Yellowlees). Then a poet and politician (Pablo Neruda), a prophet (Mike Davis), a philosopher of technology (Sigfried Giedion), a photographer (Silvestre Silva), an anthropologist (Edward T Hall), two epidemiologists (Tony McMichael and Leonardo Mata, both so much more besides), an editor (Karl Miller), a professor of nutrition who for most of his life identified himself as a physiologist (John Waterlow), and an economist and philosopher (Amartya Sen) who also writes in this issue of *WN*. My column this month links to extracts from their work, so you can judge for yourself. Please enjoy!

Access What Do You Think? here