**YOUNG PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION NETWORK**

**What is the YPHN**
The Young Public Health Nutrition Network (YPHN) is a free web-based network for public health nutrition professionals at the start of their career, from a wide array of backgrounds, around the world. It utilises the internet tools of a website, blog and mailing list to provide relevant updates to members on important events, vacancies, publications, etc. The YPHN Network is open to all, regardless of experience, who are interested in the next generation of public health nutritionists.

**Why the YPHN**
Every year, hundreds of young and not-so-young people trained in public health nutrition graduate around the world. They wish to make a meaningful contribution to the international arena of public health and to successfully integrate into the global health workforce. Young public health nutritionists (PHNs), a large and motivated group of professionals, are highly underutilised in public health nutrition actions. And, as in many professions, the gap between inexperienced and experienced professionals can feel huge, and the options for career progression very unclear. The best and brightest graduates can be easily tempted towards more lucrative fields. In an effort to bring together and support these young professionals, a group of young PHNs founded the YPHN Network. The vision of the YPHN Network is to advance and promote international public health nutrition by uniting young public health nutritionists and facilitating collaboration and cooperation among them.

**WHO is the YPHN**
The YPHN is coordinated by a Steering Committee, composed so far by alumni and lecturers of the long-running summer school "EU Basics in Public Health Nutrition". More than 170 people have joined the network, the vast majority affiliated with higher education or health institutes. The members come from 50 countries, about half of which are low/middle-income countries, from all continents. Members have come in contact with the group via other networks, internet searches and word-of-mouth. Although the YPHN Network does not screen members, data is gathered on their qualifications and reasons for joining, and members are required to disclose any potential conflicts-of-interest.

**Is there a difference between YPHN and the WPHNA?**
Although the overarching aims of the two networks are obviously aligned, they differ. The YPHN has no membership fees, and does not require written recommendations before accepting a new member. These two features are not essential to the work of our network, and therefore the YPHN might seem like a more easily accessible option to young PHNs. Nothing prevents a PHN from joining both of course, and the YPHN could be considered a "training ground".

**Collaboration with the WPHNA**
By knowing and better understanding the needs of young professionals, the YPHN and the WPHNA could partner when relevant to respond more effectively to some of the needs expressed in order to jointly contribute to the advance of the global public health nutrition agenda.

1. **Dissemination and exchange of information**
   In a survey of YPHN members in 2009, two-thirds were interested in being able to find and contact other young PHNs by region or topic of expertise. Enhanced contact between PHNs of all levels of experiences is crucial to the success of both networks/associations. After job seeking, the next most important factor for professional development was more contact with seniors/mentors. Finally, only 20% knew of the WPHNA, so this provides a good vehicle for the WPHNA to reach more potential members.

2. **Building bridges between inexperienced and experienced professionals in the field of PHN**
The YPHN comprises a group of young and/or relatively inexperienced PHNs from around the world who use the network to share experiences and concerns, gain advice, and discuss topical issues in a non-judgemental environment. The WPHNA features seasoned academics that act as advocates to encourage policy-makers and decision takers to develop effective public health nutrition policies. A collaboration between the YPHN and WPHNA could both provide an opportunity for the views of a group of “lightweight” nutritionists to be heard amongst the “heavy weights” of the field, and provide an opportunity for experienced PHNs to disseminate key messages to be integrated in the future work of this new generation of PHNs.

3. **Bottom-up approach**
The YPHN reaches out to individuals at the grassroots of PHN action in the field. It offers a “the floor is yours” approach. It is very informal, open (and therefore also prone) to personal views and volatile contributions. The network offers a forum of various stakeholders to collect feedback concerns, aspirations, hopes and needs for public health professionals in the field. A partnership could provide the WPHNA with important access and insight into a group of on-the-ground nutritionists who are practicing in the field and starting to build their professional paths in public health nutrition.

**More information**
For further information, or if you wish to become a member of this network please contact us at yph.nutrition@gmail.com
More information is available here: [http://groups.google.com/group/yphnutrition/web/about-us](http://groups.google.com/group/yphnutrition/web/about-us)