

## ICONS Workshop report

### Nutrition information and support for overseas members

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The workshop was chaired by Barrie Margetts and attended by about twenty people. The purpose was to share information about the International Committee of The Nutrition Society (ICONS) and the progress of the Information Sheets, and to discuss other ways of supporting overseas members.

Barrie outlined the structure and role of ICONS which has taken over the functions of the Task Force on Overseas Members. The Chairman is Alan Jackson who sits on Council and who represents Council on the International Relations Committee of the Royal Society, the United Kingdom body on the International Union of Nutritional Sciences. The role of ICONS is to deal with the international affairs of The Nutrition Society and it has two main areas of responsibility, namely European Affairs and Developing Country Affairs. Under the latter, the following activities are taking place:

- (1) organizing workshops, symposia, etc. at Nutrition Society meetings; this is facilitated through the ICONS member on the Programmes Committee, Barrie Margetts.
- (2) exploring the feasibility of starting a Group on International Nutrition, for which Catherine Geissler has responsibility.
- (3) providing information for overseas members. At present this is being done through a series of Information Sheets which are coordinated by Ann Burgess.
- (4) welcoming overseas members at meetings.
- (5) making links with Nutrition Societies in 'developing' countries.

Ann Burgess summarized the progress of the Information Sheets. Information Sheet no. 1 (low-cost newsletters) was finalized and sent out in the October mailing; it was published in *SCN News* (1992), no. 8 (the newsletter of the United Nations subcommittee on Nutrition) and will soon be in *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* published by the United Nations University. Drafts of Information Sheets nos. 2 and 3 (training programmes) were distributed in the same mailing and have now been revised. The first draft of the Information Sheet on journals to which to submit scientific papers (requested at last year's workshop by overseas members) has been prepared by Nicola Ruck. Participants agreed that Information Sheet no. 1 should be updated and recirculated next year and that Information Sheets nos. 2 and 3 should be finalized and distributed as soon as possible. They examined the Information Sheet on journals and made suggestions for additional items. It was agreed that other useful Information Sheets would cover sources of nutrition training materials and United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland BSc nutrition programmes. Ann Burgess agreed to coordinate the former and Eleni Maunder the latter.

Barrie Margetts reported that Council had agreed in principle to the affiliation of overseas nutrition societies to The Nutrition Society and that, once the application form was

approved, the application from the Nutrition Association of Kenya would be processed quickly. Gambian participants said they expected the Gambian Food and Nutrition Society to apply for affiliation.

There was a lively discussion on the type of support that overseas/student/new members would like at meetings. Suggestions included: having a list of participants at meetings; asking a few people to 'befriend' new/overseas members; giving people the option of having a distinctive name tag so that other participants could make a point of talking with them; having a social event at which new members could meet other participants; holding the ICONS workshop early in the programme so people interested in international issues and new members would have time afterwards to meet and talk. It was also suggested that there be a list of members willing to give accommodation to overseas members for short periods.

The workshop then discussed plans for a symposium on 'The relevance of the nutrition profession to improving nutrition' which had been proposed by Catherine Geissler.