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Update Report

Period: May to November 2025

Contents

Introduction.....	3
MSc Scholarships.....	3
Completed student.....	3
Current students	3
New students	5
Support Program for PhD Students.....	7
African Nutrition Leadership Programme	9
Evaluation Report of the 10-day ANLP (November 2025 cohort)	9
Introduction	9
Participants' ANLP experience	9
Participants' learnings about themselves.....	9
What are participants going to implement after the 10-day programme?.....	10
Aspects of 10-day ANLP 2025 that participants enjoyed most.....	10
Participants' reported knowledge improvement.....	11
Additional comments from participants.....	11
ANLP November 2025 Declaration of Intent.....	13
Conclusion	13
IUNS Reflection – Bunoluwa Grace Ibidapo.....	14
Expenditure Overview	14
Conclusion.....	14
Appendix 1 – Master’s Thesis Abstract – Afia Asamoah-Duku	16
Appendix 2 – Reflection Reports	18
Afia Asamoah-Duku.....	18
Cheryl Isasabella Arbenser.....	20
Appendix 3 – Support Program for PhD Students – Face-to-Face Week Program	23
Appendix 4 – Support Program for PhD Students 2025 Participants.....	25
Appendix 5 – ANLP 11-21 November 2025 Programme.....	26
Appendix 6 – ANLP 11-21 November 2025 Participants	27
Appendix 7 – IUNS-ICN Paris Reflections.....	28

Introduction

We are pleased to present an update report for 2025 on the donor agreement between the Gioventú Foundation and the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN), North-West University (NWU). This report aims to provide an overview of the progress made on the various funding activities within this agreement.

MSc Scholarships

Completed student

Ms Afia Asamoah-Duku, scholarship recipient from Ghana, has successfully submitted and defended her Master's thesis – an important milestone marking the culmination of her academic journey. Her thesis abstract and reflection report is included in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively (her thesis will be send as a separate document).

Ghana		
University of Ghana (UoG)		
Ms Afia Asamoah-Duku		
	Research topic:	Association Between Food Security and Lipid Profile Among Urban-Informal Workers in a Selected Community in the Ashiaman Municipality.

Current students

Five students – from South Africa, Malawi, and Ghana – are currently in the second year of their master's degrees. The students continue to demonstrate commitment and diligence in their academic and research work. Each recipient has shown dedication to their studies, research, and professional growth in the field of Human Nutrition and Dietetics.

Table 1: Summary of the progress of the 2024/2025 Gioventú Foundation Scholarship recipients

Malawi		
Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)		
Ms Shamane Lole		
	Research topic:	Trends, spatial distribution, and determinants of child food poverty in Malawi.
	During the second semester of their master's programme, the student primarily focused on advancing their research project and has progressed through all major milestones required for completion. Key achievements included successfully defending their research proposal, obtaining ethics approval, conducting the study, and analysing and interpreting the data. The student is currently in the final stage of thesis writing and aims to submit the completed thesis by the end of the semester (May 2026).	

Ms Naomi Makande		
	Updated research topic:	Effectiveness of locally produced supplementary foods on the management of moderate wasting among children aged 6-59 months in Malawi.
	The student changed their research topic as this new study is linked to a UNICEF-funded project at LUANAR focused on developing and testing supplementary foods for children with moderate wasting. The student has completed all data collection tools and nutrition messages and is currently preparing to submit their ethics application to the LUANAR Research Ethics Committee. Data collection is planned for February 2026, and the students aim to submit their final thesis by April 2026.	

Ghana		
University of Ghana (UoG)		
Ms Cheryl Isabella Arbenser		
	Research topic:	Nutritional Status and Nutritional Support of Pediatric Cancer Patients at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.
	The student has completed the required two years of study and have written her end of year examinations. She has completed her data collection, analysis and thesis defense. She is planning on submitting her final thesis by January 2026. She has won the Professor Matilda Steiner-Asiedu Award for being the best graduating student in MSc Dietetics. Her reflection report can be found in Appendix 2.	

South Africa		
North-West University (NWU)		
Ms Rolivhuwa Matabi		
	Research topic:	Comparison of body image ideals between individuals aged 15 years and older from different South African population groups.
	The student has completed the full literature review and obtained all required approvals, including clearance from the CEN Scientific Review Committee and ethical approval from the NWU-HREC. She finalised her data analysis, reported the results, and completed their discussion. She submitted her final thesis on the 28 th of November 2025. A copy of the thesis, along with the student's reflection report, will be submitted to the Foundation in 2026.	

University of Limpopo	
Ms. Masodi Makhafola – University of Limpopo	
	<p>Research topic: Adherence to sports nutrition recommendations by netball athletes at the University of Limpopo, South Africa</p>
	<p>The student has completed her thesis and is currently awaiting the finalisation of the external examiner appointments by the university. Once the university completes the examination process, she will submit the final document.</p> <p>A copy of the thesis, along with the student's reflection report, will be submitted to the Foundation in 2026.</p>

New students

Three new students from Nigeria are currently in the first year of their master's degree at the University of Ibadan.

Table 2: Summary of the progress of the 2025/2026 Gioventú Foundation Scholarship recipients

Nigeria	
University of Ibadan	
Ms Anuoluwapo Olorunbunmi	
	<p>The student has completed her first semester examinations and will soon begin her second semester exams, marking the completion of her first academic session. Over the past session, she benefitted from several capacity building opportunities including training in spatial analysis using ArcMap, data analysis with R, and personal branding through participation in a TEDx event.</p> <p>During this period, she developed two concept notes for her master's dissertation and engaged in several rounds of review with her supervisor. A final topic has been agreed upon, and she is currently deepening her literature review.</p>
	<p>The student is currently in the second semester of the first academic session. She completed her first semester examinations in August, and the next set of exams is expected in January. For her dissertation, she is revising her concept note based on the feedback from her institutional supervisor. Her proposed study focuses on mapping the nutrition transition and the triple burden of malnutrition across five selected African countries.</p> <p>Her project proposal presentation is tentatively scheduled for January 2026. According to the programme structure, she anticipates completing one additional session after the current one.</p>
Ms Goodness Jesuyemi	
	

Ms Oyinkansola Ogundoyin



The student has completed her first semester examinations and is preparing for the next semester's exams. She has drafted two research concept notes aligned with her academic interests and has submitted them to her supervisor.

Throughout this past session, she reports meaningful learning gains, including strengthened research writing skills, improved multitasking abilities, and enhanced practical research skills.

The funding is greatly appreciated and clearly fulfilling its aim of supporting MSc students in full-time study. Our initial strategy of partnering with trusted colleagues who can reliably deliver has also proven effective. We are encouraged by the efficient use of funds. In countries with a lower cost of living, the Foundation's support is reaching more students. It is worth noting that postgraduate admissions timelines vary across institutions, which influences when students can benefit from the funding.

Support Program for PhD Students

The Program focused on critical elements of the research process, including protocol writing, analysis, and publication of results. Topics included protocol writing, research methodology, population and sampling, data capturing and analysis, presentation skills, and scientific writing.

The Program consisted of two parts:

1. **Online/distance learning:** Completion of modules took place from 14 July to 3 October 2025, following a fixed weekly schedule. Weekly virtual face-to-face sessions were also held with the participants.
2. **Face-to-face meeting:** A six-day, full-time, face-to-face meeting was held in Potchefstroom, South Africa, from 26 to 31 October 2025 (Appendix 1).

The Program (Appendix 3) was successfully completed by 19 PhD candidates from 8 different African countries (Appendix 4). Participants came from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Mozambique. Some of the words participants used to describe the Program included informative, insightful, supportive, educative, and fun (Figure 1). They were eager to return to their respective institutions to continue working on their research protocols. Some quotes from the participants included:

“Taking this course was good use of my time. I have learnt so much on my PhD and myself. The experience has been enriching and I have gotten lots of knowledge on the research process that will be of use not only for me, but also for my peers and students.”

“The program was well-structured, highly informative, and motivating, providing both practical skills and theoretical knowledge essential for the PhD journey.”

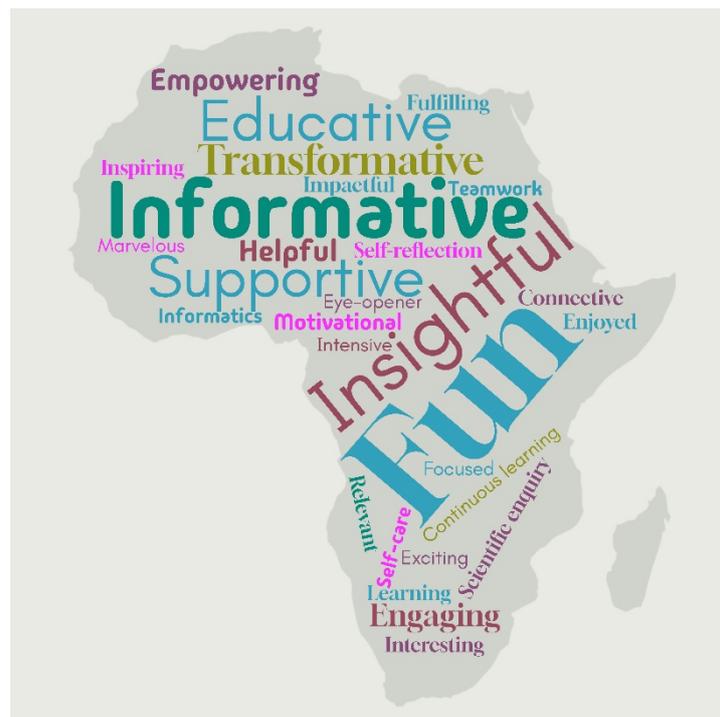


Figure 1: Word cloud describing participants' program experience.



Support Program for PhD Students: Participants and Support Team

African Nutrition Leadership Programme

Due to the overwhelming number of applications for the 2025 10-day ANLP, it was decided to host two programmes in 2025. The second of the 2025 edition (24th edition) of the ANLP commenced on the 11th of November and concluded on the 21st of November 2025.

The workshop was evaluated by participants, and the evaluation report follows.

Evaluation Report of the 10-day ANLP (November 2025 cohort)

Introduction

The purpose of the African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP) is to develop individual and institutional leadership capabilities in nutrition across the African continent.

The 24th edition of the ANLP took place from November 11th to 21st, 2025, at the Elgro River Lodge, located in South Africa's North West province. Nineteen individuals hailing from thirteen different African nations joined the programme. For detailed insights into the programme, refer to Appendix 5, which contains the ANLP November 2025 program, while Appendix 6 provides a list of the attendees along with their respective countries of origin.

Participants' ANLP experience

Participants were asked to describe their ANLP November 2025 experience in 3 words. The collective result is depicted in the word cloud.

Participants' learnings about themselves

This cohort's reflections reveal a powerful journey of self-discovery, personal growth, and leadership awareness. Participants uncovered deep insights into their strengths, blind spots, and internal drivers – recognising, for example, their tendency to overextend themselves, struggle with active listening, or default to managerial rather than leadership-oriented behaviour. Many participants mentioned developing a stronger growth mindset, strengthening their internal locus of control, and understanding the significant influence of self-talk on their performance.

A key theme was the importance of boundaries, self-care, and emotional regulation, with several participants acknowledging how sensitivity, stress triggers, or poor listening habits shaped their responses and relationships. Others recognised their capacity to overcome fears, use their voice with confidence, and lead from wherever they are, rather than waiting for positional authority.

The programme encouraged them to reflect consistently, welcome constructive feedback, strengthen communication skills, and shift from seeking followers to becoming the kind of person others naturally want to follow. Ultimately, they left with a renewed sense of agency, aware that leadership begins with self, enriched by self-awareness, nurtured through reflection, and sustained by intentional practices that support both personal well-being and professional growth.



What are participants going to implement after the 10-day programme?

Following the programme, participants expressed a strong commitment to putting their leadership insights into action through deliberate, daily practices. A recurring theme was the intention to strengthen communication, particularly through active listening, slowing down in conversations, resisting the urge to interrupt, and listening to genuinely understand rather than respond.

Many also committed to embracing feedback more intentionally, creating space for open dialogue within their teams, inviting constructive critique, and modelling healthy feedback behaviours for colleagues, friends, and family.

Self-care and self-awareness emerged as major areas of focus, with participants committing to clearer boundaries, emotional regulation, identifying personal triggers, journaling through structured reflection routines, and establishing practices such as early morning routines, breathing exercises, prayer, and mental health check-ins.

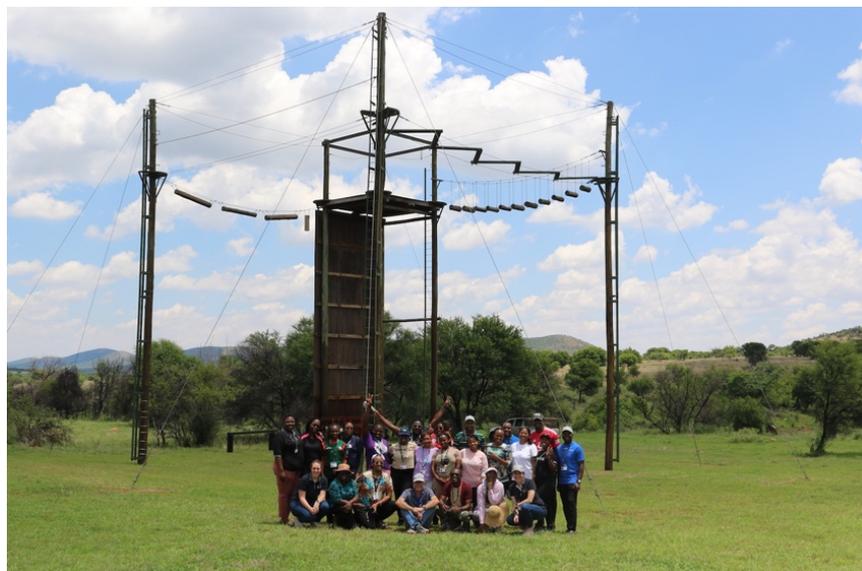
Several participants emphasised a desire to lead from where they stand, demonstrating confidence, punctuality, 360° leadership, and a growth mindset as they return to their organisations and communities. Others highlighted the importance of empowering their teams, sharing knowledge more intentionally, and creating environments that welcome feedback, learning, and failure as part of growth.

Collectively, their commitments reflect a deep desire to integrate the ANLP lessons into everyday behaviour, through reflection, discipline, self-compassion, and courageous leadership that begins with the self and radiated outwards.

Aspects of 10-day ANLP 2025 that participants enjoyed most

Participants reflected with great enthusiasm on the aspects of the November ANLP they enjoyed most, highlighting the programme's unique blend of challenge, connection, and practical learning.

The teambuilding activities were repeatedly mentioned as standout moments, particularly the high ropes and outdoor challenges, which pushed participants beyond their fears, strengthened trust, and encouraged collaboration. Many described these experiences as both exhilarating and transformative, offering unexpected moments of courage and growth.



The reflection session also left a deep impression, helping participants absorb each day's lessons and embark on meaningful journeys of introspection and self-discovery.

Participants valued the opportunity to explore leadership concepts through practical workshops, group discussions, and hands-on tools such as feedback sessions, leadership orientation exercises, and communication activities. The supportive environment created by the facilitators was especially appreciated; participants felt seen, heard, and encouraged, with many noting the warmth, intentionality, and structure that shaped the programme.

The diversity of activities – from teambuilding games, committee work, and storytelling to shared meals and surprise moments – added richness and energy to the experience, creating space for creativity, personal breakthroughs, and authentic connection. Networking and relationship-building were also cherished elements, as participants enjoyed engaging with peers from across the continent and learning from their unique journeys.

Collectively, these aspects made the ANLP not only impactful but deeply enjoyable, a well-paced and thoughtfully designed programme that blended challenge, learning, and joy in equal measures.

Participants' reported knowledge improvement

Several inquiries were made to gauge participants' perceptions of their knowledge enhancement across diverse subjects during the November ANLP 10-day program. They retrospectively evaluated their perception on a scale from "very low" to "very high," both pre- and post-program. The areas of inquiry included:

- The significance of applying leadership skills in change-requiring processes.
- The necessity of ongoing leadership competence development.
- The impact of self-awareness on personal leadership growth.
- The role of reflection in fostering growth.
- Utilising reflection as a growth mechanism.
- How one's locus of control affects leadership effectiveness.
- Understanding personal leadership styles.
- The way leadership skills can advance goal achievement.
- Gaining insights into personal leadership strengths and areas for improvement.
- Confidence in creating effective presentations with visual aids.
- The value of external feedback in self-discovery.
- The willingness to seek feedback.
- The connection between advocacy and leadership.
- The use of systems thinking in addressing food security.

Participants consistently reported significant enhancements in their knowledge across all topics addressed in the ANLP programme.

Additional comments from participants

In their final reflections, participants also shared additional comments that emphasised both the impact of the programme and opportunities for further enhancement. Many reiterated how deeply rewarding and transformative the 10-days have been, describing the ANLP as "*life-changing*", "*a centre of real change incubation*", and an experience that touched every dimension of the self – emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual. Several participants expressed profound gratitude for the opportunity to attend, noting that they left with renewed confidence, greater self-awareness, and a strengthened belief in their leadership potential.

The support team continued to receive heartfelt praise from participants, who described the facilitators as welcoming, present, and intentional in their approach. Their encouragement helped create a safe environment where participants felt empowered to be vulnerable, to reflect deeply, and to grow. Many highlighted that the programme's emphasis on self-leadership, often overlooked in conventional leadership training, was particularly powerful and meaningful.

Participants also celebrated the diversity of the cohort, sharing how meaningful it was to build connections across countries, disciplines, and backgrounds. Some described the friendships formed as one of the week's greatest gifts and expressed a desire to remain connected beyond the workshop. Others reflected on how the carefully curated activities, ranging from reflection sessions to team challenges, enabled them to learn, unlearn, and rediscover themselves in new ways.

A few suggestions were offered to strengthen the experience of future cohorts. These included providing slightly more free time on Sundays for participants who are balancing work commitments, ending the Sunday programme earlier, and exploring solutions to streamline payment processes, particularly for international participants who rely on Visa cards. Suggestions were also made to consider live translation during sessions to enhance inclusion and accessibility for all language groups.

Across the reflections, one message was consistent – the ANLP holds a unique and irreplaceable place in leadership development on the continent. Participants urged that the programme be sustained and expanded, describing it as a “*ministry*”, a “*paradigm shift*”, and a much-needed platform for nurturing honest, empathetic, and purpose driven African leaders. Some even expressed interests in returning for future sessions or refresher opportunities to continue their growth journey.

In conclusion, the additional comments echoed the sentiment that the ANLP is more than a workshop, it is a community, a catalyst, and a transformative space where leaders are shaped with intention and heart. Participants left feeling seen, supported, and empowered, carrying with them a commitment not only to lead, but to lead with humanity, courage, and purpose.



ANLP November 2025 Declaration of Intent

During the ANLP programme, a pivotal session was dedicated to the participants' creation of a personal declaration of intent. This declaration, known as the ANLP November 2025 Declaration of Intent, represents a collective commitment and a guiding statement articulating their aspirations and goals as leaders in the field of nutrition.

We, the 24th ANLPers, declare to make deliberate actions to become more self-aware through reflection, to remain being open to feedback, and strive for continuous growth to influence sustainable change.



Conclusion

The November 2025 ANLP cohort ends its journey with strengthened self-awareness, renewed purpose, and a deeper understanding of what it means to lead with intention. Participants consistently described the programme as transformative, blending reflection, experiential learning, and collaboration in a way that helped them grow both personally and professionally. The supportive environment, meaningful connections, and well-structured activities created space for genuine insight and lasting confidence. As participants return to their various countries and roles, they carry forward the lessons, relationships, and commitments shaped during the 10-days.

The ANLP continues to play a key role in nurturing empathetic, grounded, and impactful leaders in nutrition across Africa, and the 2025 cohort leaves ready to contribute to positive change in their communities and beyond.

IUNS Reflection – Bunoluwa Grace Ibidapo

The Foundation provided support to Ms Bunoluwa Grace Ibidapo, a PhD student from Nigeria, to attend the IUNS International Congress of Nutrition 2025 in Paris. The following presents a summary of her reflection. The full reflection report is included in Appendix 7.

During the congress, she presented findings from her PhD research on commercial complementary foods and received valuable feedback that will strengthen her work. The congress offered her significant opportunities for learning, networking, and professional visibility, exposing her to the latest global evidence in nutrition, public health, food systems, and research methodologies. She engaged in a wide range of technical sessions, gaining practical insights on complementary feeding, sustainable diets, and innovations shaping global nutrition action. Her participation expanded her international networks and opened potential avenues for future collaborations, training, and postdoctoral opportunities. Overall, the experience contributed meaningfully to her research capacity, confidence, and long-term professional development.



Ms Ibidapo, together with her supervisor, Prof Folake Samuel

Expenditure Overview

An amount of €60,000 was received. For 2025, a total of €60 000.00 was spent, and an overview of the expenditure can be found in Table 3.

Table 3: Expenditure overview 2025

Category	Income	Expenditure	Transaction date	Institution / Organisation / Person
MSc Scholarships	€36500.00	€4562.50	11/02/2025	North-West University
		€4562.50	26/03/2025	University of Limpopo
		€9125.00	27/03/2025	LUANAR Malawi
		€9125.00	27/03/2025	University of Ghana
		€9125.00	29/08/2025	Folake Samuel (University of Ibadan)
ANLP	€7500.00	€7500.00	12/08/2025	ANLP (NWU)
Conference Scholarships	€5000.00	€2000.00	12/08/2025	ANLP (NWU)
		€1000.00	28/08/2025	Bunoluwa Ibidapo (IUNS Travel Grant)
		€2000.00	TBD	South African Nutrition Congress 2026
Support Program for PhD Students	€7500.00	€7500.00	12/08/2025	Support Program for PhD Students
Grant Administration	€3500.00	€3500.00	12/08/2025	NWU
Total	€60 000.00	€60 000.00		

Conclusion

The donor agreement between the Gioventú Foundation and the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition has been highly successful. The distribution of support has been effective, allowing numerous students to gain valuable academic and professional experiences. We are pleased with the progress made, particularly in terms of scholarship support, the ANLP, PhD Support Program, and funding for congresses. This support has enabled students to make significant strides in their research and development, and we are confident that it will continue to have a lasting impact in the years to come. We look forward to further strengthening this partnership and supporting more students in their academic journeys.

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL AND ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF DIETETICS

FOOD SECURITY STATUS AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH LIPID PROFILES
AMONG URBAN INFORMAL WORKERS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF
THE ASHAIMAN MUNICIPALITY

BY

AFIA ASAMOAH-DUKU

(11365568)

THIS THESIS/DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DIETETICS DEGREE

OCTOBER, 2025

ABSTRACT

Background: Urban informal workers in low- and middle-income countries face significant vulnerabilities. Food insecurity and dyslipidemia are major public health concerns in Ghana, yet evidence linking them within this critical population is scarce. This study investigated the association between food security status and lipid profiles among urban informal workers in the Ashaiman Municipality, Ghana.

Methods: A community-based cross-sectional study was conducted among 309 urban informal workers. Participants were selected using a multi-stage sampling technique, culminating in systematic random sampling from seven communities in Ashaiman. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, including socio-demographic characteristics and the validated Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS). Fasting venous blood samples were collected and analyzed for total cholesterol, Low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C, High density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-Chol), and triglycerides using a Mindray BS-240 chemistry analyzer. Dyslipidemia was defined as the presence of at least one abnormal lipid parameter. Data was analyzed using Stata version 17; multivariable logistic regression models were employed to identify determinants of food insecurity and its association with dyslipidemia, controlling for confounders.

Results: The prevalence of household food insecurity was 47.9%. Multivariable analysis identified a monthly income of GHS 2000-4000 (Adjusted Odds Ratio [aOR] = 0.28; 95% CI: 0.09–0.88), illiteracy (aOR = 0.44; 95% CI: 0.24–0.84), occupational tenure of 6-10 years (aOR = 0.40; 95% CI: 0.20–0.80), and being widowed, divorced, or separated (aOR = 2.45; 95% CI: 1.05–5.72) as significant independent determinants. The prevalence of dyslipidemia was alarmingly high at 92.2%, characterized predominantly by low HDL-C (75.4%), with 68.3% of participants at high atherogenic risk. Crucially, no significant association was found between food insecurity and dyslipidemia (aOR = 0.88; 95% CI: 0.35–2.23) or any individual lipid parameter.

Conclusion: This study reveals a severe co-existence of food insecurity and dyslipidemia among urban informal workers. The findings establish a clear income threshold (GHS 2000) for protection against food insecurity, alongside the strong roles of literacy and occupational stability. The dissociation between food insecurity and dyslipidemia suggests the lipid crisis is a pervasive issue, driven by community-wide dietary patterns affecting all workers. Public health interventions must be integrated, combining initiatives to raise incomes above a livable wage, improve literacy, and ensure occupational stability with population-wide nutrition and cardiovascular health programs.

Appendix 2 – Reflection Reports

Afia Asamoah-Duku

My second year of this program began with the bustling intense work of my research coupled with academic work. My research work was community-based research done in the Ashaiman municipality of Ghana. The research topic was “Food Security Status and Its Association with Lipid Profiles Among Urban Informal Workers in Selected Communities of The Ashaiman Municipality”. The research revealed that approximately 90% of the participants had dyslipidaemia, with low HDL-C (“good cholesterol”) being the most prevalent abnormality and two-thirds of the cohort were classified as having a high atherogenic risk based on Castelli’s Risk Index. The study also found no association between household food insecurity and individual lipid parameters, dyslipidaemia or atherogenic risk. Targeted interventions were given in the recommendations in order to curb the high prevalence of dyslipidaemia in the population, extending beyond food security alone.

The schoolwork in the second year gave me the opportunity to write a newspaper article under the supervision of a senior lecturer in the faculty on the topic “Tapioca: Nutritional Advantage or Risk?”, which was later published in the Daily Newspaper in Ghana. Other pivotal moments in the second year were student mentorship program and the student leadership program. The student mentorship program allowed the final year students of the program to mentor the first-year students giving us an opportunity to lead and mentor. Also, I participated in the student leadership program where I was given the opportunity to handle the diet-therapy unit in a day under the supervision of the preceptor. The student leadership program proved instrumental in equipping me with the foundational skills and strategic vision needed to establish a diet therapy unit.

However, navigating the dual demands of intensive research work alongside rigorous academic coursework during my final year presented significant challenges that tested my time management abilities and resilience. The biggest challenge was the constant tension between meeting research deadlines—which often required long hours in the community and laboratory, meticulous data collection, and blood sample analysis while simultaneously preparing for examinations, completing assignments, and maintaining a good academic performance across multiple subjects. I frequently found myself sacrificing sleep and personal time, which initially led to burnout and declining productivity in both areas.

I overcame these challenges by implementing a structured scheduling system that allocated specific time for research and coursework. I also imbibed the art of prioritizing personal affairs and academic tasks based on urgency and impact rather than attempting to multitask ineffectively. I also developed the discipline to communicate proactively with both my research supervisor and lecturers, which allowed for some flexibility in deadlines when conflicts arose. Most importantly, I learned to view my research and academic work not as competing priorities but as complementary experiences—the theoretical knowledge from my courses enriched my research perspective, while my research deepened my understanding of classroom concepts. By maintaining this integrated mindset, seeking support from peers who faced similar pressures, and refusing to compromise on the quality of either pursuit, I successfully completed both my research project and final year academics on time, emerging with not only good results but also invaluable skills in perseverance and strategic time management.

In my management rotations during year two, I applied my first-year lessons about working in teams, and had hand-on experience in meeting people where they are by designing training programs that acknowledged workflow constraints and possible corrective suggestions.

As I reflect on my journey of this two years, my biggest takeaway will have to be the fundamental shaping of my mindset, clinical competence and expertise to help my practice as a registered dietitian. First, I have learned that effective nutrition care is patient-centered and priority must be given to understanding each individual's unique context, their culture, beliefs and socioeconomic status when offering any clinical recommendations. Third, I have come to appreciate that dietetics practice is widespread across various sectors; that is the community practice, clinical practice, relational practice, culinary practice and industrial practice. I have also come to appreciate that the career path of dietetics requires equal investment in technical competency and communication skills. Moving forward, I will apply these lessons by committing to lifelong learning through regular review of current literature, participation in continuous professional development opportunities, and active engagement with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics practice groups relevant to my specialty area.

Reflecting on the interdisciplinary engagement during the course of clinical training has also brought to perspective the need to prioritize building strong interdisciplinary relationships, advocating for the value of nutrition services while respecting the expertise of other healthcare professionals. Most importantly, I will approach every patient interaction with curiosity rather than assumption, asking questions before offering solutions and celebrating progress in all its forms. I plan to seek out a mentor within my first year of practice to help navigate the transition from student to professional, and I will maintain reflective practice through regular journaling to ensure I continue growing rather than becoming complacent. I am certain that the dietitian I am becoming is one who leads with empathy, practices with evidence, and always remains committed to making nutrition care accessible and genuinely helpful to every individual I serve.

My master's program in Dietetics has been an extraordinary journey of resilience, academic growth, and personal transformation. Reflecting on my second year, made possible through the support of the Gioventú Foundation, the Centre of Excellence for Nutrition (CEN), North-West University, and the University of Ghana scholarship fund, I am filled with gratitude. This experience has allowed me not only to learn and contribute but also to discover the depth of my potential in ways that will shape my career for years to come.

Foundation From Year One

The transition to master's level study demanded self-discipline, adaptability, and curiosity. Balancing coursework, independent study, and practical applications taught me to think critically and manage time effectively. Courses like Nutrition through the Life Cycle, Nutrition Communication as well as Diet therapy equipped me with skill sets that became essential as I moved into the more intensive, applied nature of Year Two.

Academic Growth in Year Two

Year Two comprised 12 courses including Pharmacology, Diet Therapy, Nutrigenetics, Food Resources, Nutrition and Diet-Related Diseases, Principles and Practice of Management, and Current Nutrition Topics/Seminar, each contributing uniquely to my academic maturity. The workload was demanding but deeply enriching, enabling me to view nutrition through biological, clinical, managerial, and policy-oriented lenses.

These courses strengthened my capacity for critical thinking, broadened my understanding of interdisciplinary healthcare systems, and trained me to make evidence-based clinical and managerial decisions. They also encouraged me to integrate public health nutrition principles with individual-level clinical practice, reflecting the dual lens necessary for dietitians in Ghana's evolving healthcare landscape.

Development of Clinical Competence

A significant highlight of the second year was the hands-on clinical attachment. Unlike the first year which focused on shadowing and exposure in both hospital and food service settings the second year immersed me fully in patient care.

Through rotations in outpatient and inpatient units, my competence in the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) and Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) improved. I conducted patient assessments, planned interventions, developed meal plans, and engaged in counselling that strengthened both my confidence and my communication skills.

An important observation during my rotations was the rise of hypertension, diabetes, and dyslipidaemia among young adults aged 25–35. This trend deepened my commitment to preventive nutrition and inspired me to advocate more intentionally for healthier lifestyles among Ghana's youth.

Leadership, Collaboration, and Professional Skills

Beyond clinical proficiency, the year helped shape my professional identity. I collaborated closely with multidisciplinary teams including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and social workers to ensure that patients' needs were met and intervention plans adhered to.

Through group projects, leadership seminars, and practical sessions, I developed vital skills in:

- teamwork
- professional communication
- conflict resolution
- decision-making
- coordination of patient care

These experiences prepared me for leadership roles within dietetics and boosted my confidence in functioning effectively within interdisciplinary health settings.

Research Experience and Insights Gained

A major academic milestone of the year was my thesis research titled “Nutritional Status and Nutritional Intervention Strategies for Paediatric Cancer Patients: The Case of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.”

This study exposed significant gaps in Ghana’s paediatric oncology nutrition landscape particularly the high prevalence of malnutrition and the absence of standardised care pathways. Although obtaining ethical clearance delayed my timeline by nearly three months, the process became rewarding. It opened opportunities for dialogue with the hospital’s research and quality control department, as well as with healthcare professionals directly involved in paediatric oncology care.

My thesis not only strengthened my research methodology and data interpretation skills but also deepened my appreciation of evidence-based, context-specific interventions. It also highlighted the urgent need for structured nutritional support systems for paediatric cancer patients in Ghana.

Public Engagement and Knowledge Translation

One of the most fulfilling aspects of the academic year was my involvement in research communication and public engagement. After presenting on *Folic Acid and Postpartum Depression* to the Department of Dietetics, I authored a policy letter and a newspaper article. This experience taught me how to translate scientific research into practical tools for public health advocacy.

Additionally, participating in a market survey on indigenous Ghanaian snacks in Dodowa broadened my appreciation for local food heritage, sustainability, and the role of traditional foods in nutrition innovation.

Personal Growth and Professional Milestones

This year marked a profound shift in my personal and professional development. I grew not only in competence but also in courage, self-assurance, and clarity about my purpose. Balancing academic demands, fieldwork, and research taught me perseverance and adaptability.

Receiving the Best Graduating Student Award was a deeply humbling affirmation of my hard work and the grace that carried me. Being inducted into the Allied Health Professions Council

further signified my transition from student to professional practitioner, prepared to uphold the standards and ethics of dietetics in Ghana.

Future Plans and Vision

Looking ahead, I am committed to contributing to national and international nutrition initiatives through research, policy advocacy, and capacity-building efforts that promote nutrition equity. I also plan to establish a private consulting firm grounded in clinical excellence and collaborative practice with other licensed dietitians.

Furthermore, I am deeply motivated to further my studies. Pursuing a PhD particularly in nutrition policy, public health nutrition, or food systems sustainability is a path I hope to embark on soon. As Maya Angelou said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better". My goal is to advance evidence-informed decision-making and create sustainable nutrition solutions in Ghana and beyond.

Conclusion

As I reflect on this transformative journey, I am filled with gratitude for the scholarship and support that made it possible. These two years have shaped me academically, professionally, and personally. They have strengthened my resolve to serve with excellence, empathy, and innovation. With renewed passion and a clearer sense of purpose, I look forward to the next chapter of my career in dietetics.

Thank you



PROFESSOR MATILDA STEINER-ASIEDU PRIZE

**for the Best Graduating Student in
MSc. Dietetics**

This Certificate is awarded to

Cheryl Isabella Arbenser

for being adjudged the

**Best Graduating Student in
MSc. Dietetics**

for the 2023/2024 Academic Year.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo
Vice-Chancellor

Date: April 4, 2025

Appendix 3 – Support Program for PhD Students – Face-to-Face Week Program

Sunday – 26 October 2025		
Venue: Sports Village		
TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
13:00 – 14:00	LUNCH	
14:00 – 14:15	Introduction and overview of programme	Prof Robin Macleod
14:15 – 15:30	Meet and Greet Expectations Contracting with each other	Dr Fré Pepping and Dr Frank Hayford
15:30 – 15:45	Official welcome	Prof Marlien Pieters
15:45 – 18:00	Team building	Mr Chris Conradie
18:00	Get together and braai	
Monday – 27 October 2025		
Venue: The Roots		
TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
08:00 – 10:00	Protocol presentations Group 1 (6)	Participants Facilitator – Dr Fré Pepping CEN facilitators
10:00 – 10:30	TEA BREAK	
10:30 – 12:30	Protocol presentations Group 2 (7)	Participants Facilitator – Dr Frank Hayford CEN facilitators
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 14:45	Protocol presentations Group 3 (6)	Participants Facilitator – Dr Fré Pepping CEN facilitators
14:45 – 15:00	General feedback on protocols	Dr Anneleen Kuijsten
15:00 – 15:30	TEA BREAK	
15:30 – 15:45	Feedback on presentation skills	Prof Robin Macleod
15:45 – 16:15	From theory to practice: CEN intervention studies	Prof Marius Smuts
16:15 – 17:00	Nutritional epidemiology	Dr Anneleen Kuijsten
17:00	Participants to work on their own protocols	
Tuesday – 28 October 2025		
Venue: The Roots		
TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
08:00 – 08:15	Reflection of the previous day	Prof Robin Macleod
08:15 – 10:30	Nutritional epidemiology	Dr Anneleen Kuijsten
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	
11:00 – 12:30	Nutritional epidemiology	Dr Anneleen Kuijsten
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 14:30	Data analysis plan	Dr Anneleen Kuijsten
14:30 – 15:30	Time to work on data analysis plan	Participants (some facilitators)
15:30 – 17:00	Dietary Assessment	Prof Tertia van Zyl
17:00	Participants to work on their own protocols	
Wednesday – 29 October 2025		
Venue: The Roots		
TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER

08:00 – 08:15	Reflection of the previous day	Prof Robin Macleod
08:15 – 09:30	Qualitative research methods	Prof Lize Havemann-Nel
09:30 – 10:30	Presentation of data analysis plan – only one objective	Participants Facilitators
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	
11:00 – 12:30	Presentation of data analysis plan – only one objective	Participants Facilitators
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 14:30	Feedback and questions	Dr Anneleen Kuijsten
14:30 – 15:15	Photos	
15:15	Travel to the university	
15:30 – 16:00	Tour of CEN	
16:00 – 17:00	CEN laboratory orientation session with Mrs Cecile Cooke (for participants doing lab work) / Practical and logistical issues around biological sample collection with Dr Lizelle Zandberg	
17:00	Return to Sports Village Participants to work on their own protocols	
Thursday – 30 October 2025		
Venue: The Roots		
TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
08:00 – 09:00	Reflection of the previous day	Prof Robin Macleod
09:00 – 10:30	Data management process	Prof Linda Malan
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	
11:00 – 12:30	Scientific writing How to write an abstract Publishing etiquette	Prof Marius Smuts Prof Marlien Pieters
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 15:00	Balancing innovation and integrity: Ethical AI use in doctoral research	Winsent Saunders
15:00 – 15:30	TEA BREAK	
15:30 – 17:00	Leadership	Prof Johann Jerling
17:00	Participants to work on their own protocols	
Friday – 31 October 2025		
Venue: The Roots		
TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
08:00 – 08:30	Reflection of the previous day	Prof Robin Macleod
08:30 – 10:30	Updated protocol presentations	Participants Facilitator – Dr Fré Pepping
10:30 – 11:00	TEA BREAK	
11:00 – 12:30	Updated protocol presentations	Participants Facilitator – Dr Frank Hayford
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH	
13:30 – 14:00	PhD journey – Personal experience	Miss Zoleka Zuma
14:00 – 14:30	Evaluation of the program	
14:30 – 15:00	Final discussions	
15:00 – 17:00	Mooi River Mall for shopping	
18:30 for 19:00 Evening	Gala dinner	Crista Galli

Appendix 4 – Support Program for PhD Students 2025 Participants

Participants			
Family name	First name	Country	Name of institution where registered
Magaia de Abreu	Alice	Mozambique	Eduardo Mondlane University
Ziyaaba	Alice	Ghana	University of Ghana
Sa'id	Amina	Nigeria	University of Ibadan
Masinga	Bakang	South Africa	North-West University
Wechessa	Cecillia	Kenya	The Open University, UK
Maluwa	Chikondi	Malawi	Chiang Mai University
Nanga	Doris	Malawi	North-West University
Hayfron	Elsie	Ghana	University of Cape Coast
Legesse	Hanna	Ethiopia	Addis Ababa University
Barnard	Jandri	South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Mhango	Khumbo	Malawi	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Technology
Darko	Nella	Ghana	University of Ghana
Roux	Odette	South Africa	North-West University
Gaa	Patience	Ghana	University of Ghana
Musungu	Rhoda	Kenya	Maseno University
Akanbonga	Samson	Ghana	University of Ghana
Nene	Sindisiwe	South Africa	Durban University of Technology
Munezero	Tresor	Rwanda	University of the Western Cape
Mulabisano	Tshavhuyo	South Africa	University of the Western Cape

Appendix 5 – ANLP 11-21 November 2025 Programme

Tuesday 11-Nov	Wednesday 12-Nov	Thursday 13-Nov	Friday 14-Nov	Saturday 15-Nov	Sunday 16-Nov	Monday 17-Nov	Tuesday 18-Nov	Wednesday 19-Nov	Thursday 20-Nov	Friday 21-Nov
Host: Support Team	Host: Support Team	Host: Lion	Host: Leopard	Host: Buffalo	Host: Rhino	Host: Elephant	Host: Lion	Host: Leopard	Host: Buffalo	Host: Buffalo
	07:00-07:30 Breakfast	07:00-08:00	07:00-08:00	07:00-08:00		07:00-07:30 Breakfast	07:00-08:00	07:00-08:00	07:00-08:00	07:00-08:00
	Leave for course	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast		07:30-09:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast & Departure
	Teambuilding adventure	08:00-09:30	08:00 - 10:00	08:00 - 10:30		8:00-09:00	08:00 - 10:30	08:00 - 10:30	08:00-08:30 Committee feedback	Support team debrief
		Growth mindset	Locus of control	Lead from where you stand		Breakfast	Advocacy	Systems thinking in Nutrition	08:30 - 10:30	
		09:30 - 11:30				Free time	09:00-10:00		Evaluation	
		Leadership orientation		The best leader I know			Communication			
		10:30-11:00 Break		10:30-11:00 Break			10:00-10:30 Break			
			11:00-12:30	10:30-11:00 Break		10:30-12:30	10:30-11:00 Break	10:30-11:00 Break	10:30-13:00	
			The best leader I know	11:00-12:30		Communication	11:00-12:30	11:00-12:30	ANLP Declaration	
			Teambuilding	Self-care		Presentations	Advocacy	Leadership in Hindsight		
12:30-14:00	Group photo A		12:30-14:00	12:30-14:00	12:30-14:00	12:30-13:00 Reflection	12:30-14:00	12:30-14:00		
Informal Lunch	13:00-14:00	13:00-14:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	13:00-13:30 CEN tour	Lunch	Lunch	13:00-14:00	
	Lunch	Lunch				13:30-17:30			Lunch	
14:00-16:00	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:30	14:00-15:00	Lunch & afternoon out	14:00-15:30	14:00-16:30	14:00-16:30	
Introduction, expectations	Self-awareness	Teambuilding	Communication	Network Café	Nutrition workshop	Moorivier Mall	Advocacy	Dealing with conflict	Celebration preparation	
Ground rules, teams & committees	Leading yourself	Competition			15:00-15:30 Break					
Housekeeping	15:30-16:00 Break	15:30-16:00 Break	15:30-16:00 Break		15:30-16:30		15:30-16:00 Break	15:30-16:00 Break		
16:00-16:30	16:00-17:30	16:00-17:00	16:00-17:30	16:00-19:00	Nutrition workshop		16:00-17:30			
16:30-18:00	Feedback as a tool for growth I	The best leader I know	Communication	Surprise trip	16:30-17:30		Advocacy	16:30-17:30	16:30-17:00 Group photo B	
Leadership introduction	Introduction to reflection				Feedback as a tool for growth II			Open discussion & feedback	17:00-19:00	
	17:30-18:00 Reflection	17:30-18:00 Reflection	17:30-18:00 Reflection	Reflection during trip	17:30-18:00 Reflection	17:30-late	17:30-18:00 Reflection	17:30-18:00 Final reflection	Closing session	
18:00-19:00	18:00-19:00	18:00-19:00	18:00-19:00		18:00-19:00	Dinner out	18:00-19:00	18:00-19:00	Declaration	
Teambuilding	Committee planning meetings	Free time	Free time		Free time		Free time	Free time		
19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30		19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30	19:00-20:30	
Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		Dinner	Dinner	ANLP Celebration	
		Lion debrief	Leopard debrief	Buffalo debrief	Rhino debrief	Elephant debrief	Lion debrief Lion, Rhino feedback	Leopard debrief Leopard, Buffalo, Elephant feedback		
Newsletter: Support Team	Newsletter: Elephant	Newsletter: Buffalo	Newsletter: Rhino	Newsletter: Elephant	Newsletter: Lion	Newsletter: Leopard	Newsletter: Buffalo	Newsletter: Rhino	Newsletter: Special Edition	

ANLP 2025

Appendix 6 – ANLP 11-21 November 2025 Participants

First Name	Family Name	Country
Ayomide	Ogundeji	Nigeria
Bongekile	Mabaso	South Africa
Borelle	Mafogang	Cameroon
Deborah	Ododo	Nigeria
Elieth	Rumanyika	Tanzania
Geofrey	Maila	Zambia
Gloria	Kisia	Kenya
Holy	Raobelina	Madagascar
Immaculate	Moruri	Kenya
Kennedy	Bomfeh	Ghana
Lantonirina	Ravaoarisoa	Madagascar
Martine	Bouda	Burundi
Naelijwa	Mshanga	Tanzania
Noel	Chikimbu	Malawi
Roland	Pognon	Benin
Safidi	Randriamitantsoa	Madagascar
Sirri	Ndi	Cameroon
Stephen	Mwangi	Kenya
SussyAnn	Miriti	Kenya

Appendix 7 – IUNS-ICN Paris Reflections

Report of Ms Bunoluwa Grace Ibidapo

The International Congress of Nutrition (IUNS-ICN 2025) held in Paris, France, from August 24–29, 2025 brought together researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders in nutrition and public health from across the globe to share emerging evidence and innovative solutions for improving nutrition and health outcomes. Remarkably, I had the opportunity to share with an international audience, findings from my PhD research on the contribution of commercial complementary foods (particularly commercial snack foods and sugar sweetened beverages) to the diets and nutrition of infants and young children in Ibadan, Nigeria; receiving constructive feedback that will enrich my research. This provided an excellent platform for academic exchange, visibility, recognition and international exposure. The congress was also of immense benefit to me in capacity strengthening as it enhanced my scientific knowledge and broadened my perspective on multidisciplinary approaches to tackling malnutrition. I also established new connections with researchers, institutions and organizations working on complementary foods, infant and young child nutrition, and sustainable food systems and these networks hold promises for future collaborations. I was also able to identify potential avenues for capacity development such as postdoctoral fellowships, joint research, publications, short-term trainings, and mentorship opportunities from senior scholars in the field.

Overall, the congress provided a deeper understanding of global nutrition challenges and exposure to the latest global evidence on nutrition science, public health nutrition interventions, food systems, and sustainable diets. It also gave insights into innovative methodologies for nutrition research and program evaluation including the role of technology in advancing nutrition interventions and translation of research findings into practice. Several educating and insightful plenaries, symposia and technical sessions which provided exposure to diverse themes across nutrition science, policy, and practice as well as rich learning opportunities, held simultaneously at strictly-timed intervals. Like every other participant, I could not attend all the sessions but could only attend one session per duration. Overall, the key learning points from some of the sessions I participated in are highlighted below:

1. **The Power of Nutrition in Bridging Science and Policy for Sustainable Food Systems Transformation**
This session emphasized the importance of linking nutrition research with policymaking to accelerate sustainable food system transformation and the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement in addressing complex nutrition challenges.
2. **Realizing the Potential of Healthy Diets – What’s Standing in Our Way?**
Barriers to adopting healthy diets include affordability, accessibility, cultural practices, and the marketing of unhealthy foods. Policy instruments such as subsidies, food environment regulations, and nutrition-sensitive agriculture are needed to overcome these barriers and promote healthy diets for all.
3. **Behaviour Change in Complementary Food Hygiene: A Missing Component for Optimal Nutrition to achieve ideal child growth and development**
Food hygiene is essential for maximizing the nutritional benefits of complementary foods. There is a critical link between food hygiene practices, child health, and nutrition outcomes. As such, nutritionally adequate complementary foods may fail to deliver benefits if food hygiene is compromised.

Addressing four main Critical Control Points (CCPs) plays a vital role in improving complementary food hygiene – Adequate Cooking (CCP 5); Room Temperature Storage (CCP 7); Reheating (particularly if stored at room temperature) (CCP 9) and Handling before serving and heating (CCP 10).

Behaviour-change communication is a key strategy to improve household food handling and hygiene practices.

4. **Innovations in One Health Research and Implications for Nutrition**
One Health provides a holistic framework linking human, animal, and environmental health with nutrition. Emerging tools and multi-sectorial strategies can strengthen resilience in food systems.
5. **Nutritional Life Cycle Assessment for Sustainable Food Systems – Evidence and Policy Insights from Africa and Asia**
Life cycle assessment is a useful tool for evaluating the environmental and nutritional sustainability of foods. Shared evidence from Africa and Asia demonstrated the potential for context-specific assessments to inform sustainable diets and policies.
6. **Getting Back on Track to Meet Global Anaemia Reduction Targets – Lancet Haematology Commission**
Progress in anaemia reduction has been slow, with major implications for maternal and child health. Integrated strategies including dietary diversification, supplementation, and addressing infections are critical to achieving global targets.
7. **Early Life Nutrition – The Basis for Healthy Life**
The importance of optimal maternal and child nutrition during the first 1,000 days. As well as the long-term benefits of good early-life nutrition on cognitive development and chronic disease prevention were reinforced. Innovative strategies focused on the production of plant-based milk were shared with emphasis on Human breast milk as being the GOLD standard.
8. **Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation for Pregnant Women in Low- and Middle-Income Countries**
Multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) were shown to be more effective than iron folate alone in improving birth outcomes. Scaling MMS will require careful planning, supply chain strengthening and policy integration.
9. **WHO Symposium – Advancing Complementary Feeding to Tackle Childhood Malnutrition**
The Complementary Feeding Implementation Guidance comprising ten (10) chapters was reviewed chapter-by-chapter. The aim of the guidance was geared towards identifying evidence-based actions that needs to be prioritized in complementary feeding.
The eighth chapter of the guidance focused on “Production and Access to Nutritious Complementary Foods poses a question for further research: “What does Food System mean for these very young children?”
The WHO Indicators for assessing complementary feeding practices was also reviewed with emphasis on healthy and unhealthy practices.
Findings from Data Collection on Local foods were shared. This was aimed at identifying nutrient-rich complementary foods for promotion. “Egg powder” was also identified as an emerging home fortification for complementary foods.
10. **What’s New in 2025 from EAT-Lancet 2.0?**

Presented the updated 2025 EAT-Lancet Commission for sustainable and healthy diets comprising five main themes including Healthy Diets; Food System Boundaries; Justice in Food Systems; Food System Modelling Ensemble and Food System Transformation.

11. Nigeria's Decade of Nutrition Transformation-Progress, Challenges & Vision for 2030
Reflections on Nigeria's achievements and challenges in addressing malnutrition over the years including the importance of political will, accountability, and multisectoral collaboration to achieve the 2030 Global Nutrition Targets.
The need to move beyond education/awareness to engaging target groups to clearly understand their key influencers, barriers and facilitators was emphasized.
12. Food as Medicine – Its Contribution to Global Nutrition
There is a growing evidence for using diet as a therapeutic intervention alongside conventional medicine. The session explored how food-based approaches can be integrated into healthcare systems to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases.
13. Food Systems Data for Decision-Making – The Global Diet Quality Project, Food Systems Countdown Initiative, and Food Systems Dashboard
An extensive exploration of the several features of the Food Systems Dashboard as well as key success stories from employing Country-specific Food Systems Dashboard in diverse contexts/countries including Nigeria, Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan and Mozambique.
14. Improving the Healthiness of Food Environments in Low- and Middle-Income Countries
The session provided evidence from Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, Vietnam, and the Philippines on diverse interventions employed to improve food environments and shape healthier food choices.

Altogether, these sessions deepened my knowledge of the complex, multisectoral nature of nutrition challenges, and provided me with practical frameworks, tools, and evidence-based strategies that can be applied in my research and professional practice.

I am sincerely grateful to Gioventú Foundation for the generous support received through the Travel Grant Award, which enabled my participation in the just-concluded International Congress of Nutrition (ICN). My participation in ICN 2025 was a highly rewarding experience that has significantly enhanced my professional visibility, collaborative networks and consequently my research capacity. The knowledge and networks gained will contribute meaningfully to the advancement of my PhD research, my professional development, and ultimately, to nutrition improvement efforts in Nigeria and globally. Thank you.