



## **Fed to Thrive: Accelerating Action on Nourishing Foods for Infants and Young Children**

**Board for International Food and Agricultural Development**

186<sup>th</sup> Public Meeting

October 19, 2022 ~ 7:00-8:45 am CDT

Iowa Event Center , Meeting Room 305/306

### **Meeting Overview**

The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) will convene a public meeting, *Fed to Thrive: Accelerating Action on Nourishing Foods for Infants and Young Children*, as a side event of the 2022 Borlaug Dialogue at the World Food Prize under the theme “Feeding a Fragile World.” The meeting will convene expert presenters and seek public input on evidence-based solutions for increasing the affordability, availability, and convenience of nutrient-dense foods for infants and children six months to two years of age, providing adequate safety nets for families most vulnerable to early childhood malnutrition, and engaging across systems to deliver on the global commitment to “feed a fragile world.”

The meeting will be held at the Iowa Event Center in Des Moines, Iowa on October 19, 2022 from 7:00–8:45 am Central Time. Members of the public are invited to join in person; the link to register to attend in person at the Iowa Event Center is: <https://bit.ly/BIFADWFP22-IP>. The meeting will also be live streamed via Zoom for virtual public participation; the link to register to participate virtually is: <https://bit.ly/BIFADWFP22-ON>.

Today, nearly two in three children ages six months to two years are not consuming nutritionally adequate diets critical to growth and development. Although 9.2 percent of the global population lives below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day, the average cost of a nutrient-adequate diet for one child in a low-income country is \$1–2 per day at six to eight months, \$1 per day at nine to 11 months, and above \$1 per day at one year and older. Simply put, families are struggling to afford safe and nutritious food for their young children, posing threats to child survival and irreversible consequences for child cognitive and physical growth. Sub-country-level data indicate early childhood malnutrition does not equally impact all families, socio-economic groups, communities, or regions, with the poor accessing and consuming too-few important sources of nutrition—including animal-source foods and nutrient-dense vegetables—during the complementary-feeding stage, a critical transition when an infant’s need for energy and nutrients starts to exceed what is provided by breast milk, and complementary foods are necessary to meet those needs.



Presentations and discussion will focus on the following questions: 1) What does a nutritionally balanced food basket for infants and young children look like, and what would it cost? 2) What are evidence-based priority actions to reduce the costs of balanced food baskets, improve nutrient content and safety, incentivize use by improving convenience and enabling caregivers, and provide financial means for the most vulnerable to access them through safety nets? 3) How do we achieve coordinated, gender-transformative change across the food, health, and social protection systems in both development and humanitarian (emergency) settings? Drawing from testimony by global experts and practitioners, BIFAD will advise the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) on recommended policy and program actions. The meeting will include a public comment period from 8:25 to 8:40 am Central Time.

BIFAD is a seven-member, presidentially appointed advisory board to USAID established in 1975 under Title XII of the Foreign Assistance Act, as amended, to ensure that USAID brings the assets of U.S. universities to bear on development challenges in agriculture and food security and supports their representation in USAID programming.

For questions about registration, please contact the BIFAD Support Team at: [bifadsupport@tetrattech.com](mailto:bifadsupport@tetrattech.com). For questions about BIFAD, or to submit written comments, evidence, or materials in advance or following the meeting, please contact Clara Cohen, Designated Federal Officer for BIFAD in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security at USAID. Interested persons may email her at [ccohen@usaid.gov](mailto:ccohen@usaid.gov) (Subject: Comment for 186<sup>th</sup> BIFAD Public Meeting) or telephone her at (202) 712-0119.

## Agenda

(All times in Central Daylight Time)

### **Meeting Opening**

7:00-7:05 am

**Laurence Alexander**

**BIFAD Chair and Chancellor, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff**

Laurence Alexander will open the public meeting with welcome remarks, an introduction to BIFAD members, and an explanation of participant engagement opportunities.

### **Are We Failing the World's Children?**

7:05-7:15 am

**Kathy Spahn**

**BIFAD Member and President and Chief Executive Officer, Helen Keller International**

This brief introduction will frame the need to ensure that nutritious foods and essential nutrition services are available and affordable for every child, with a particular focus on children six to 23 months old.

### **The Crisis of Young Children's Diets**

7:15-7:25 am

**Kathryn Dewey**

**Distinguished Professor Emerita, Department of Nutrition, University of California at Davis**

Building on the 2021 flagship UNICEF Report, [Fed to Fail?](#), this presentation will discuss the current crisis of young children's diets, barriers to nutritious diets for young children, and a summary of recommendations for government and key stakeholders, including USAID.

**A Healthy Food Basket for Young Children: What Would It Take?**

7:25-7:35 am

**William Masters**

**Professor, Friedman School of Nutrition and Policy, Tufts University**

This presentation will explore the composition and cost of nutritionally balanced and healthy foods worldwide and their implications for complementary feeding of children aged six to 23 months.

Discussion will include consideration of consumer demands, food preferences, and inequalities in affordability and availability of nutritionally balanced diets for young children.

**Panel Discussion:**

**Cross-Sectoral Solutions to Deliver on Nutrition Outcomes for Infants and Young Children**

7:35-8:05 am

**Moderated by: Kathy Spahn**

**BIFAD Member and President and Chief Executive Officer, Helen Keller International**

Panelists will discuss entry points and incentives for bringing down cost, improving nutrient content and safety, improving convenience, accessing safety nets, and engaging across systems to deliver outcomes for children six to 23 months. Discussion will address the following key themes:

1. Drivers of unaffordability and leverage points to reduce costs, including incentives for producers and enterprises to produce more nutritious agricultural products and to make their food products more nutritious.
2. Financing landscape for companies trying to make nutritious foods more affordable for local consumption, the viability of investments in these enterprises, and measures to de-risk investments in this space.
3. The role of social safety nets in making foods affordable and desirable, improving caregivers' knowledge about young child feeding, and empowering and enabling women to make pro-nutrition decisions.
4. Solutions to increase the desirability of nutritious foods and incentives to purchase these foods, particularly considering the important role of mothers in the household and the interrelated family dynamics around money and empowerment.
5. Necessary actions to achieve coordinated, gender-transformative change across the food, health, and social protection systems in both development and humanitarian (emergency) settings.

**Panelists:**

**Fallon Tefft Casper**

**Head of Debt, Agriculture and Food, Incofin Investment Management**

**Siny Samba**

**Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, Le Lionceau**

**Deanna Olney**

Senior Research Fellow, Division of Poverty, Health and Nutrition, International Food Policy  
Research Institute (IFPRI)

**Manisha Tharaney**

West Africa Director, Alive and Thrive

**Discussion and Questions with BIFAD Members**

8:05-8:20 am

**Moderated by: Kathy Spahn**

**BIFAD Member and President and Chief Executive Officer, Helen Keller International**

In discussion with presenters and panelists, BIFAD will identify points of consensus to inform recommendations to USAID around priority policy and program actions.

**Public Comment and Discussion**

8:20-8:35 am

**Moderated by: Saweda Liverpool-Tasie**

**BIFAD Member and MSU Foundation Professor Michigan State University**

BIFAD welcomes comments and questions aligned to the meeting objectives from participants attending in person and through the virtual platform. Reminder: public comment is welcome in writing before or after the meeting by contacting BIFAD Executive Director, Clara Cohen ([ccoehen@usaid.gov](mailto:ccoehen@usaid.gov)).

**Final Discussion and Takeaways**

8:35-8:43 am

**Shawn Baker**

**Chief Nutritionist, USAID**

Drawing on the speaker presentations, panelist discussion, and the deliberation among BIFAD members, speakers, and participants, these remarks will reflect on emerging findings around how to best leverage resources across food and health systems and to continue USAID's leadership to make real progress toward nutritious and affordable diets for young children around the world.

**Closing Remarks**

8:43-8:45 am

**Laurence Alexander**

**BIFAD Chair and Chancellor, University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff**

Closing remarks will acknowledge the speakers and participants and point to the next steps for BIFAD's work in the area of nutrition.

## Speaker Profiles



**Laurence B. Alexander, Ph.D.**  
**Chair, Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD)**  
**Chancellor, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff**

Dr. Laurence B. Alexander has served for eight years as Chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, a public historically black land-grant research university that offers degrees in more than 40 programs at the bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. levels, including extension services provided through a variety of programs in its School of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Human Sciences.

Prior to joining UAPB, Alexander had a distinguished 22-year career as a professor and administrator at the University of Florida (UF), the state's land-grant flagship research institution that is a member of the Association of American Universities. He joined the UF faculty in 1991 as an assistant professor and rose through the academic ranks to become a tenured full professor in the UF College of Journalism and Communications. While at UF, Alexander served as a Distinguished Teaching Scholar, Provost Administrative Fellow in the Office of Academic Affairs, Director of the Office of Graduate Minority Programs, Associate Dean of the 12,000-student Graduate School, and Chair of the Department of Journalism. He was selected as the 12<sup>th</sup> UF Distinguished Alumni Professor, was named a UF Research Foundation Professor, and was inducted into the UF Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars. His current community engagement includes service on the Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, the Board of Directors of Jefferson Regional Medical Center, and the Board of the Economic Development Alliance for Jefferson County, Arkansas. He also serves as Vice Chair of the NCAA Division I Presidential Forum and Chair of the Southwestern Athletic Conference Council of Presidents and Chancellors. A native of New Orleans, Alexander earned a bachelor's degree from the University of New Orleans, a master's degree in Journalism and Communications from the University of Florida, a Juris Doctor from Tulane University, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Florida State University.



**Kathy Spahn**  
**BIFAD Member**  
**President and Chief Executive Officer, Helen Keller International**

Kathy Spahn is President and CEO of Helen Keller International, a global health organization that partners with communities to overcome long standing cycles of poverty. By delivering the essential building blocks of good health, sound nutrition, and clear vision, Helen Keller International helps millions of people in more than 20 countries create lasting change in their own lives and reach their true potential. Prior to joining Helen Keller International in 2005, Spahn was President and Executive Director of Orbis, an international non-profit dedicated to the prevention and treatment of blindness, and was Executive Director of God's Love We Deliver, dedicated to combating

malnutrition and hunger among people living with HIV/AIDS. Spahn currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Access to Nutrition Initiative and previously served on the boards of InterAction, the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and the Bernadotte Foundation for Children's Eyecare. She also serves on the International Food Policy Research Institute's Leadership Council Compact of 2025 and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. She was a founding board member of the Association of Nutrition Services Agencies and a founding partner of the former Global Network for Neglected Tropical Disease Control.



**Kathryn G. Dewey, Ph.D.**  
**Distinguished Professor Emerita, Department of Nutrition, University of California at Davis**

Kathryn Dewey is Distinguished Professor Emerita of Nutrition at the University of California (UC) Davis. She was a co-founder of the UC Davis Program in International and Community Nutrition (now the Institute for Global Nutrition), serving as Director from 2007 to 2018. Dr. Dewey's research focuses on maternal and child nutrition in vulnerable populations, with an emphasis on interventions to prevent malnutrition during the first 1000 days. Her professional service includes extensive consultation for the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and other organizations. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors for the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition,

the U.S. Food and Nutrition Board, two WHO Guidelines Development Groups (on Complementary Feeding, and on Prevention and Treatment of Child Wasting), and several other advisory groups.



**William Masters, Ph.D.**  
**Professor, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy and Department of Economics, Tufts University**  
**Project Director, Food Prices for Nutrition**

William Masters is a Professor in the Friedman School of Nutrition, with a secondary appointment in Tufts University's Department of Economics. From 2011 to 2014, he served as chair of the Friedman School's Department of Food and Nutrition Policy, and before coming to Tufts was a faculty member in Agricultural Economics at Purdue University and at the University of Zimbabwe, Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and Columbia University. He is the co-author of an undergraduate textbook, *Economics of Agricultural Development: World Food Systems and Resource Use* (Routledge, 3rd

ed. 2014), and former editor of the journal *Agricultural Economics* (2006-2011). He was named an International Fellow of the African Association of Agricultural Economists (2010) and was awarded the Bruce Gardner Memorial Prize for Applied Policy Analysis, the Publication of Enduring Quality Award, and the Quality of Research Discovery Award all from the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA). He was elected Fellow of the AAEA in 2020.



**Manisha Tharaney**  
**Independent Consultant, Public Health**

Manisha Tharaney is a public health professional with 20 years of work experience in Asia and in Africa in technical areas such as nutrition, health systems strengthening, and gender. She started her work in primary health care in India and has continued to work at all levels of the health system, from community to district to national, on nutrition and maternal and child health issues. Most recently, Manisha worked as the West Africa Program Director at Alive & Thrive, where she supported countries with strengthening research and policy dialogue for breastfeeding and institutionalizing maternal and young child feeding programs at scale. Prior to joining A&T, Manisha worked with

Helen Keller International as the anemia team lead on the Strengthening Partnerships for Nutrition Innovations Globally (SPRING) project.



**Fallon Tefft Casper**  
**Head of Debt, Agriculture & Food, Incofin Investment Management**

Fallon Casper is Head of Debt Agriculture & Food at Incofin Investment Management, where she oversees the company's global debt investments in the agro and food sector. She has 14 years of experience in finance, investing, debt management, management consulting, and international development in Latin America and Africa having worked in over 20 countries and across a wide variety of agriculture and food segments. Fallon holds an MIA in Economic and Political development, with a specialization in Management from the School of International & Public Affairs at Columbia University and an undergraduate degree in International Business from New York University. She is fluent in Spanish and English and can express herself

in basic French and Hebrew. She is currently based out of Bogota, Colombia.



**Siny Samba**  
**Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer, LE LIONCEAU**

Siny Samba graduated as a food processing engineer from Montpellier SupAgro, a renowned French school in the field. Her choice of study allowed her to combine her passions and hobbies, among which are cooking and helping children from her native Senegal. After her studies, she began working at France's leading infant nutrition company, which gave her the opportunity to develop her expertise in this field. Her willingness and drive to contribute to her own country's development inspired her to make the brave move of setting up her own Senegal-based company, Le Lionceau, specializing in the production of food for babies. The company's policy is to improve the nutritional status of young children with natural and high quality nutritional products. The company enhances

the food value chain by collaborating with local farmers and women's groups. Convinced that health

comes from food, Siny conducts awareness and nutritional education campaigns on the importance of the first 1,000 days of a child and on infant and maternal nutrition.



**Deanna Olney, Ph.D.**

**Initiative Lead, Research Theme Leader, Senior Research Fellow (CGIAR)**

Deanna Olney has a Ph.D. in Nutritional Biology from the University of California Davis and is a Senior Research Fellow in the Poverty, Health, and Nutrition Division at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). In addition, she is the theme co-leader for Nutrition-Sensitive Programs at IFPRI and is also the Lead of a new One CGIAR Initiative on Fruit and Vegetables for Sustainable Healthy Diets (FRESH). Deanna has led several comprehensive evaluations of programs to examine what impacts multi-sectoral programs have on health, nutrition, and well-being outcomes; how impacts are achieved; and costs and benefits of these approaches. Building on this evaluation work, Deanna partners closely with implementing organizations such as the World Food Programme and Nutrition International and government stakeholders to design and implement program innovations, assess impacts and to support the development of evidence-based program guidance for multisectoral programs. These close collaborations and the evidence generated can be leveraged to fill local and global evidence gaps and to translate research into program and policy action.



**Saweda Liverpool-Tasie, Ph.D.**

**MSU Foundation Professor, Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics  
Michigan State University**

Dr. Saweda Liverpool-Tasie is a Foundation Professor in the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics at Michigan State University. She has lived in East Lansing, Michigan for over 10 years. Her research focuses on emergent issues related to smallholder productivity and welfare within dynamic and transforming food systems in sub Saharan Africa and alongside poorly functioning markets in the region. She has extensive experience with program evaluation in Africa using various quantitative methods. She has designed, implemented, and analyzed data from field surveys across the continent and has looked at gendered access to land and other inputs. Dr. Liverpool-Tasie's research work covers several countries on the continent including Nigeria, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Gambia, Niger, Malawi, and Zambia. She continues to lead efforts on designing and implementing capacity building projects in Africa. Currently, Dr. Liverpool-Tasie is the principal investigator of various research projects that strive to support policy processes with evidence based on scientific research. She is active in several multidisciplinary teams focused on issues of food security, food safety, and value chain transformation in developing countries.





**Shawn Baker**

**Chief Nutritionist, U.S. Agency for International Development**

Shawn K. Baker serves as the Chief Nutritionist for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In this position, he chairs the Agency's Nutrition Leadership Council, oversees the vision and strategy of the Agency's Center for Nutrition in the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, and coordinates related efforts across USAID. He also guides USAID's investments and engagement with partners to address malnutrition in developing countries. Prior to joining USAID, Mr. Baker was the first director of nutrition at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He has over 30 years' experience in global public health nutrition, including 25 years living in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Mr. Baker worked for Helen Keller International for 19 years, including 16 years as Vice President and Regional Director for Africa. He also served as country director for Helen Keller International in Niger and Bangladesh. He spent nine years with Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine working with the Niger Health Information System, Center for International Health and Development, Famine Early Warning System in Southern Africa and Niger, and Madagascar food and nutrition surveillance system. Mr. Baker started his career in international development as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

His service on committees and advisory groups includes the Technical Review Panel for The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which he chaired until November 2014. He was chair of the Executive Committee of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and now serves as special advisor. He was also on the board of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition from 2013-2016 and now serves on its Partnership Council. Mr. Baker has a master's of public health from Tulane University, with concentrations in international health and nutritional epidemiology. He earned his bachelor's of science degree in biology from the University of Miami.