

# CATEGORY REPORT

# WORKFORCE NUTRITION (5%)



Workforce nutrition programmes have been identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a key means of addressing malnutrition at scale, given that 58% of the global population spends at least one-third of their adult lives in the workplace.<sup>1</sup>

Studies have found returns on investment of 6:1 for workforce health programmes that incorporate nutrition - finding positive associations with productivity and cognitive ability, along with reduced absenteeism, medical costs, and rates of accidents/mistakes.<sup>2</sup>

Workforce nutrition programmes have also been shown to increase employee morale and motivation, improve employer/employee relations, and reduce staff turnover. In addition, such programmes can help facilitate a company culture with a greater focus on nutrition in its business practices.

The Workforce Nutrition Alliance, a partnership between the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), established in 2019, has identified four main types, or 'pillars', of effective workforce nutrition interventions for companies' employees:

## WHAT DOES GOOD PRACTICE IN WORKFORCE NUTRITION LOOK LIKE?

**The company has the following in place, across all its markets:**

### **WORKFORCE NUTRITION PROGRAMME:**

**That is available to all employees, including manufacturing workers, and includes outcome-focused targets or key performance indicators to measure progress covering the following elements:**

- **Healthy food at work**
- **Nutrition education**
- **Nutrition focused health checks.**

### **MATERNITY LEAVE OF AT LEAST SIX MONTHS**

**(as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO)), and paid secondary caregiver leave beyond legal requirements.**

### **BREASTFEEDING PROVISIONS IN**

**THE WORKPLACE** Such as private, hygienic, safe rooms; paid breaks to express breast milk; refrigerators to store breast milk; and other flexible working arrangements to support breastfeeding mothers.

### **PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE NUTRITIONAL OUTCOMES FOR WORKERS IN ITS SUPPLY CHAINS**

**that are at heightened risk of experiencing malnutrition, such as farmers in low- or middle income countries (including smallholders), across multiple supply chains.**



**Healthy food at work:** programmes that focus on increasing employees' access to healthy and safe foods at work – either through direct provision or subsidy, or by increasing the availability of healthy food options in the setting.

**Nutrition education:** programmes aiming to change the nutrition and/or lifestyle behaviours of employees by increasing their knowledge of healthy nutrition.

**Nutrition-focused health checks:** offer employees periodic, one-to-one meetings with a health or nutrition professional to assess, and usually discuss, the employee's nutritional health.

**Breastfeeding support:** programmes and company policies (such as paid caregiver leave and facilities in the workplace) that enable working mothers to breastfeed exclusively for six months and continually for up to two years.

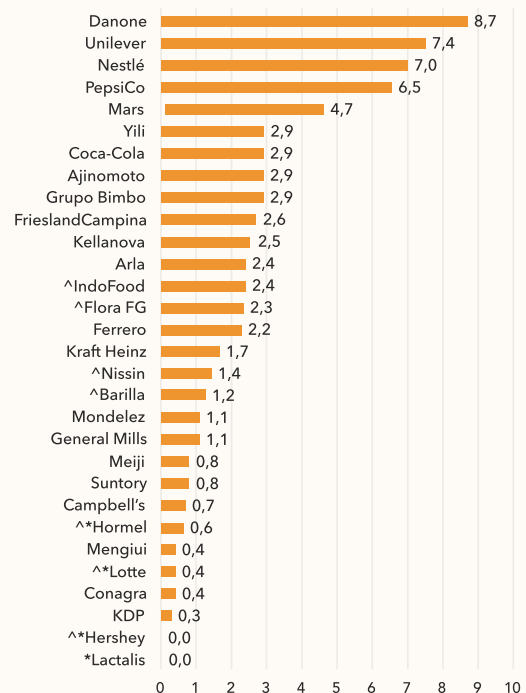
While breast milk is the ideal food for infants and one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival, breastfeeding is also associated with health benefits for the mother.<sup>3</sup> WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommend that children be exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life, after which they should receive complementary foods with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age or beyond.<sup>4</sup>

Given that longer maternity leave is associated with a longer duration of breastfeeding, it is crucial that employers play a supporting role.<sup>5</sup>

There is evidence that paternity leave indirectly supports extended breastfeeding: studies have found that fathers who take paternity leave are more involved in childcare and other unpaid labour at home, which supports mothers' breastfeeding and reduces their likelihood of post-partum depression, in turn benefitting infant health.<sup>6</sup>

This category assesses the extent to which companies offer these measures for their employees globally, beyond minimum legal requirements, as well as whether companies support the health and nutrition of workers in their supply chains.

## WORKFORCE NUTRITION SCORES PER COMPANY (/10)



\* Did not provide information to ATNI  
^ Not assessed in 2021

## MAIN FINDINGS

Fourteen of the 30 companies assessed shared evidence of having a formal programme or policy in place for at least one of the first three workforce nutrition pillars listed above, while a further 11 companies shared evidence of addressing these pillars in a more limited way (Table E.1.).

Whereas 60% were found to offer nutrition support to employees in the 2021 Global Index, this has increased to over 80% in this iteration, with at least 14 companies having improved their practices across one or more of these three pillars.

Meanwhile, 26 companies offer some form of support for breastfeeding mothers in their workforce beyond regulatory requirements – an increase from 72% to 87% since the 2021 Global Index.

However, only four companies (Ajinomoto, Danone, Nestlé, and Unilever) offer a clearly defined workforce nutrition programme or policy that covers all four workforce nutrition pillars, and also has targets or key performance indicators (KPIs) in place per pillar. Just one company, Danone, offers the full range of support measures to all its employees, across all markets. As indicated by the scores in this category, the majority of companies did not share evidence of consistently offering workforce nutrition benefits across all their markets and worksites (including manufacturing sites), nor do they comprehensively address all pillars. In most cases, companies' reporting on their progress on implementing these measures was also limited. Only four companies (Danone, Mars, PepsiCo, and Unilever) have taken the step to extend their workforce nutrition support to at-risk workers in their supply chains.

**Healthy food at work:** Nine of the 30 companies assessed shared clear evidence of systematically offering healthy food in the workplace across multiple markets, as part of a workforce nutrition programme, for example, by systematically offering healthy meal or snack options and/or fruits at subsidised prices or free-of-charge. Danone and Grupo Bimbo shared evidence of offering such benefits in nearly all their markets. Only Danone, Mars, Nestlé, and Unilever shared evidence of doing so for all employees, including manufacturing workers, in each market that their nutrition programme is offered.

**Nutrition education:** 11 companies shared evidence of offering nutrition education across multiple markets, as part of a workforce nutrition programme. For example, they offer e-learning modules on nutrition, seminars led by nutrition professionals, healthy cooking sessions, and lifestyle coaching. Of these, Coca-Cola, Danone, Nestlé, and PepsiCo shared evidence that this is offered to at least some employees in almost all their markets. Unilever also offers its programme to all employees where currently available, indicating it is in the process of scaling up the programme to all markets.

**Nutrition-focused health checks:** Nine companies shared evidence of systematically offering nutrition-focused health checks, beyond regulatory requirements, across multiple markets. These were usually integrated into more general health checkups offered by the company. Of these companies, eight offer checks to all employees, including manufacturing workers, in each

market this benefit is offered; with Coca-Cola, Danone, Mars, Nestlé, and PepsiCo doing so in almost all of their markets.

**Targets and KPIs:** 10 companies shared evidence of measuring and driving performance on at least one workforce nutrition pillar through the use of targets and/or KPIs, with Ajinomoto, Danone, Nestlé, and Unilever doing so for each pillar. In the majority of cases, targets and/or KPIs related to tracking the percentage of onsite locations and/or markets which provide the workforce nutrition benefits, or the percentage of employees who have access to or participate in these benefits.

Only a few companies (PepsiCo, for example) were found to measure the 'outcomes' of their programmes, such as health-related results (for example, changes in BMI and blood pressure), behavioural changes, benefits to the company (such as reduced absenteeism, healthcare costs, and increased productivity), or other indicators of impact. This is recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of their programmes, both for their employees and the company.

Only Danone and Nestlé publicly report on each of their workforce nutrition targets and KPIs. In the majority of cases, the specific targets and KPIs, and progress made against them, are kept internal.

**Paid maternity and secondary caregiver leave:** 12 companies offer at least 14 weeks of paid maternity (or primary caregiver) leave to their employees (the minimum length recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO)), in at least one market, beyond minimum regulatory requirements.

Of these, Kraft Heinz and PepsiCo are the only companies that voluntarily offer the WHO-recommended leave of 26 weeks in a select number of their markets. Seventeen companies offer paid secondary caregiver leave of 10 days or above (beyond minimum regulatory requirements)\* in at least one market, of which 11 offer four weeks or more. Five companies (Campbell's, Conagra, Ferrero, Kraft Heinz, and PepsiCo) were found to have improved their primary- and secondary caregiver leave policies since the 2021 Global Index.

Only six companies (Arla, Danone, Ferrero, Nestlé, PepsiCo, and Unilever) have set a minimum standard for maternity and secondary caregiver leave across all

their markets that exceeds 14 weeks of maternity and 10 days of secondary caregiver leave. In the majority of cases, companies were found to determine the length of maternity and secondary caregiver leave on a market-by-market basis. Without a consistent global minimum standard, they often only follow the regulatory minimum requirements, or have a minimum standard that is less than 14 weeks of maternity leave or 10 days of secondary caregiver leave.

### Measures to support breastfeeding in the workplace:

Four companies (Danone, Kellanova, Nestlé, and Unilever) state that they provide: 1) private, hygienic, safe rooms for breastfeeding; 2) paid breaks for the expressing of breast milk; 3) refrigerators to store breast milk; and 4) other flexible working arrangements to support breastfeeding mothers. Notably, all four companies provide all of these measures across all their markets, although only Danone shared evidence that these are applied in every worksite per market, including manufacturing sites. The other three companies either do not specify the extent to which they are offered in each market, or only provide physical measures (1 and 3) in sites with a minimum number of female employees.

While a further 21 companies shared evidence of providing at least one of these four measures (private and hygienic rooms being the most common), they mostly only shared evidence of doing so in specific markets (most commonly their home market), and rarely in all worksites per market. Eleven companies in total shared evidence of providing at least one of these measures in low- and middle-income countries.

That said, at least nine companies were found to have increased their support for breastfeeding mothers in the workplace since the 2021 Global Index. Conagra, Grupo Bimbo, Kellanova, Mondelez, and Yili have either introduced new practices or expanded the scope of existing measures across three of the four aforementioned measures.

\* Many countries have mandatory minimum parental or maternity leave requirements that exceed 14 weeks, for which ATNi assumes that companies comply. ATNi only assesses whether companies offer leave that goes beyond regulatory requirements in all markets in which the companies have employees.

TABLE E.1.  
**COMPANIES OFFERING HEALTHY FOOD AT WORK, NUTRITION EDUCATION, AND NUTRITION-FOCUSED HEALTH CHECKS**

Company	Healthy Food at Work	Nutrition Education	Nutrition Focused Health Checks
Ajinomoto	# /	# /	# /
Arla	*	*	
Barilla	#	#	
Campbell's	*	*	
Coca-Cola		• /	•
Conagra			
Danone	• /	• /	• /
Ferrero	*	*	*
Flora FG	*	*	*
FrieslandCampina	#	#	*
General Mills		*	
Grupo Bimbo	• /	# /	# /
Hershey			
Hormel		*	*
IndoFood	# /	# /	
KDP		*	
Kellanova	*	*	*
Kraft Heinz	*	#	*
Lactalis			
Lotte			*
Mars	# /	*	• /
Meiji	*	*	
Mengniu	*		
Mondelez	*	*	
Nestlé	# /	• /	• /
Nissin	*	*	
PepsiCo	*	• /	• /
Suntory	*		*
Unilever	# /	# /	# /
Yili	# /	*	# /

• Clear programme, globally  
# Clear programme, multiple markets  
/ With KPIs and/or targets  
\* Some evidence in at least one market, but not part of a clear programme

### **Supporting workforce nutrition in companies' supply**

**chains:** Of the 30 companies assessed, four shared evidence of having programmes or initiatives in place that include an explicit goal of improving the health and nutrition of workers in at least one of their supply chains.

For example, Unilever is implementing scaled-up programmes in its tea supply chain across India, Kenya, and Malawi, and its vanilla supply chain in Madagascar; PepsiCo has a large scale programme in place across its agricultural supply chains that includes a specific focus on increasing farmers' food security; Danone is supporting strawberry-producing smallholder farmers in Mexico and farmers' families in Bangladesh through nutrition education and provision of healthy food; and Mars and Danone co-fund (with other companies) a programme to improve the livelihoods of cocoa farmers in their supply chains, which includes a focus on developing kitchen gardens.

Although Nestlé was noted for having multiple pilot projects underway in different markets in 2021, as noted in ATNi's Action Research project, it did not share evidence that these have been continued or new projects developed.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SECTOR

It is encouraging that there has been progress in this area over the last three years. Of the companies assessed, 80% offer some form of workforce nutrition support to their employees, indicating that this practice is becoming more mainstream as companies realise the value of doing so. However, few companies offer the full range of measures available to them, and even fewer do so in all markets and for all their employees. These findings show there is a considerable need for the majority of companies to improve the comprehensiveness, scope, and consistency of their efforts.

To fully leverage the potential that workforce nutrition can offer, companies are recommended to:

### 1 Evaluate

- In each market in which they have operations, use the Workforce Nutrition Alliance self-assessment scorecards to assess what activities they currently have in place for each workforce nutrition pillar, including the length of paid maternity and secondary caregiver leave and measures to support breastfeeding mothers.
- Conduct needs assessments of the nutrition and health status of workers and smallholder farmers across their supply chains to identify those (at greatest risk of) experiencing malnutrition.

### 2 Transform

- Develop global workforce nutrition programmes to provide access to healthy food at work, nutrition education, nutrition-related health checks, and breastfeeding support, and make these available to all employees, including those at manufacturing sites. For each of the four pillars, establish measurable targets and/or KPIs to track and drive progress. Ideally, these programmes should become company policy as a minimum standard across all the companies' markets.
- Develop comprehensive global parental policies, offering a minimum standard of at least 18 weeks of paid maternity leave (ILO), and ideally 26 (WHO-recommended) across all markets.

**THE MAJORITY OF COMPANIES DID NOT SHARE EVIDENCE OF CONSISTENTLY OFFERING WORKFORCE NUTRITION BENEFITS ACROSS ALL THEIR MARKETS AND WORKSITES**

Further, the company is also encouraged to extend secondary caregiver leave that exceeds current national regulations.

- Engage and work with suppliers to develop multifaceted and tailored programmes to support the nutrition and health of supply chain workers at highest risk of experiencing malnutrition.

### 3 Disclose

- Annually publish details of their workforce nutrition programmes and the progress made in implementing each of the four pillars - including the percentage of workers reached and markets offering a defined minimum standard, as well as progress on any additional targets or KPIs that have been set.
- Publish information about their workforce nutrition programmes in their supply chains - in terms of overall progress and what went well and what went wrong - to promote cross-learning and inspire and inform other initiatives.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Nyhus Dhillon, C., and Orteni, F. (2023) 'Assessing the Impact of Workforce Nutrition Programmes on Nutrition, Health and Business Outcomes: A Review of the Global Evidence and Future Research Agenda', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 9. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37174251/> (Accessed: 29/10/2024).
- <sup>2</sup> Chapman, L.S. (2012) 'Meta-Evaluation of Worksite Health Promotion Economic Return Studies: 2012 Update', *American Journal of Health Promotion: AJHP* 26, no. 4: TAH1-12. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4278/ajhp.26.4.tahp> (Accessed: 29/10/2024); Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (2019) *The Evidence for Workforce Nutrition Programmes*, Geneva: Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. Available at: <https://www.gainhealth.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/evidence-for-workforce-nutrition-programmes-overview-2019.pdf> (Accessed: 29/10/2024); Berry, L.L., Mirabito, A.M., and Baun, W.B. (2010) 'What's the Hard Return on Employee Wellness Programs?', *Harvard Business Review*, December 2010. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2010/12/whats-the-hard-return-on-employee-wellness-programs> (Accessed: 29/10/2024).
- <sup>3</sup> World Health Organization (n.d.) Breastfeeding. Available at: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_1) (Accessed: 29/10/2024).
- <sup>4</sup> World Health Organization (n.d.) Breastfeeding. Available at: [https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_1) (Accessed: 29/10/2024).
- <sup>5</sup> Grandahl, M., Stern, J., and Funkquist, E-L. (2020) 'Longer Shared Parental Leave Is Associated with Longer Duration of Breastfeeding: A Cross-Sectional Study among Swedish Mothers and Their Partners', *BMC Pediatrics* 20, no. 1: 159. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12887-020-02065-1> (Accessed: 29/10/2024).
- <sup>6</sup> United Nations Children's Fund (2019) *Paid Parental Leave and Family-Friendly Policies: An Evidence Brief*, New York: United Nations Children's Fund. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2019-07/UNICEF-Parental-Leave-Family-Friendly-Policies-2019.pdf> (Accessed: 29/10/2024).