

Investing into credible, accessible, and interdisciplinary research and education for public good – A Concept Note

Nutrition is central to health and wellbeing. The relationship between diet, nutrition and health is well-recognised, yet the translation of evidence into policy and practice remains historically slow. Research is a cumulative process, and the open flow of information is key to the uptake of evidence into policy and practice. There is growing interest in online knowledge hubs that provide open access to information for public good, and in particular, platforms which facilitate that have the capability to foster collaboration between different stakeholders, such as content providers and users (e.g. health care professionals, researchers and policy makers), as collaborative efforts outweigh the sum of any individual efforts.

This concept note describes the current development and envisaged impact of an innovative, open access platform, the International Knowledge Application Network Hub in Nutrition 2025 (iKANN). Openness is a core value which underpins the iKANN initiative. Only by sharing research data and evidence can new knowledge be transformed into socially beneficial goods, services, policies and programmes. Investments into iKANN represent a commitment to credible, accessible and interdisciplinary research and education for public good.

DESCRIPTION

iKANN seeks to synthesise global evidence in food, nutrition and health, to improve the nutrition capacity of the workforce and to drive the implementation of evidence into policy and practice. The portal was launched on September 26th at the 6th NNEdPro International Summit and can be accessed at www.ikann.global.

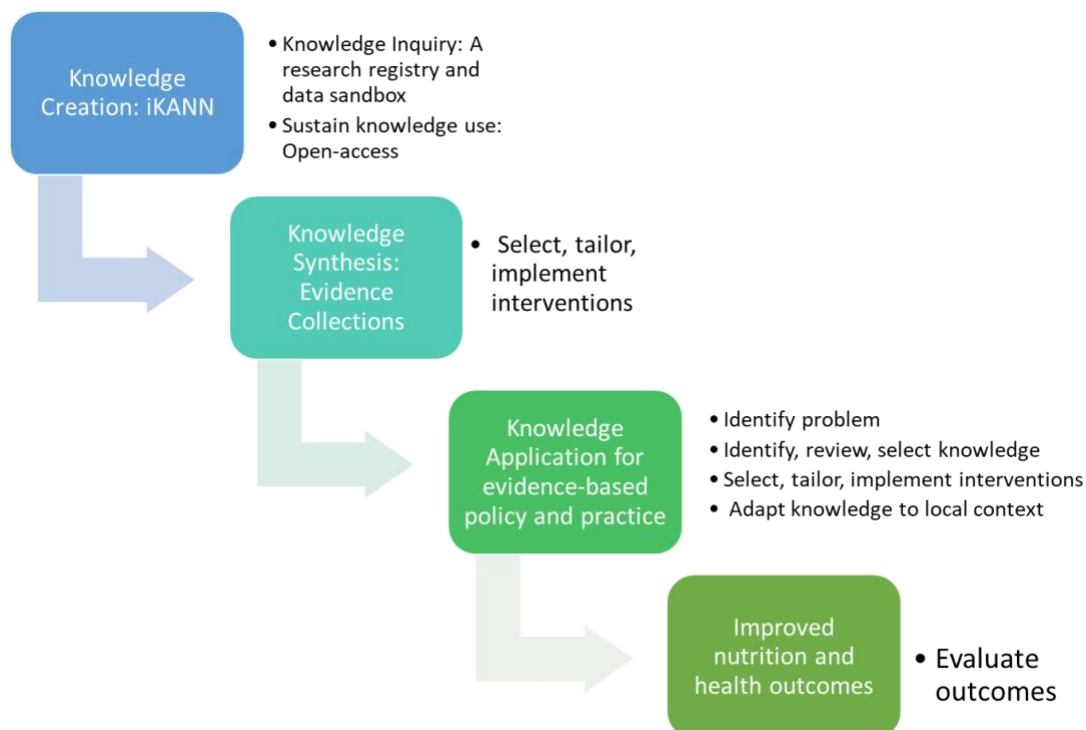
Key functions include:

- **Research Registry:** A registry for research protocols related to food, nutrition and health. To the best of our knowledge, this will be the first research registry for nutrition and health-related research. The registry will enable global standardising in format and promote quality standards in nutrition research. This function will be developed in partnership with BMJ Nutrition, Prevention and Health.
- **Data Sandbox:** New ideas build on earlier knowledge, and access to research data is vital to the advance of human knowledge. An open data sharing repository will be developed as part of the iKANN portal and will include population risk assessment data, signposting and commentary on regional surveillance data e.g. National Diet and National Survey (NDNS), National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). Upstream data from food production and the food environment will also be included.

- **Thematic Evidence Collections:** The synthesis of evidence takes time. iKANN attempts to tackle this problem by housing curated evidence collections across a range of thematic areas such as COVID-19, cardiometabolic disease and food security. The evidence collections provide timely access to a body of information that can be adapted and applied to a regional context in the development of evidence-based policies and programmes. The evidence collections also include a discussion forum, whereby users can contribute to discussion around the evidence and collaborate with and learn from others.

KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION: How iKANN drives knowledge translation and uptake

The process of knowledge translation is described as one that includes the synthesis, dissemination, exchange and ethical application to improve health and strengthen the health care system, a key aim of the iKANN initiative. iKANN provides timely synthesis of information and the tools to support knowledge inquiry and facilitate local adaptations of evidence-based policy and interventions. The training and commentary aim to support workforce capacity building in nutrition which we anticipate will have a downstream impact on nutrition and health-related policy and practice. The open-access element of the portal sustains knowledge use so that this cycle is able to be repeated and iteratively improved as users both contribute to and avail of the resources available. This process is described conceptually in the figure below.



A conceptual framework representing the vision and downstream impact of iKANN from Knowledge to Action

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OF iKANN

The measurable outcomes of this initiative will be improved translation of nutrition knowledge to action (as per the Knowledge-to-Action cycle) and enable people to interact with this cycle by providing knowledge and tools. Similarly, the ultimate outcome will be improved health outcomes for patients resulting in improved global health and improved economic outcomes for agriculturists.

WHY INVEST IN iKANN?

Openness is critical to the advancement of human knowledge. iKANN aims to provide open access to curated research and data for public good. As nutrition is lateral to social and economic development, investments into iKANN are a commitment to collaborative efforts to improve the health and well-being of populations. Funding is vital to ensure continued open access to iKANN and the further development of key features such as the research registry and data sandbox. With 137 members already, iKANN has the potential to drive collaborative change and enhance the uptake of evidence into policy and practice.

You can donate to iKANN at <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ikann>; If you would like to get in touch, please contact us at ikann@nnedpro.org.uk