

SUPPORTING NUTRITION TO FOSTER STAFF WELLBEING

WORKFORCE NUTRITION AT GRUPO BIMBO



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All photographs included in this document have been taken with consent for use in publications.

SUMMARY

Many adults spend most of their waking hours at the workplace, making the latter a strategic, yet underappreciated, environment for health and well-being interventions. In the context of food systems, an impactful change that can be fostered through workplaces is improved nutrition through workforce nutrition (WFN) programmes. However, the process of gaining support for such programmes and the potential for having employers lead their design and uptake remain underexamined.

This case study addresses the above gap by exploring the set-up, scope, drivers, and challenges of WFN at Grupo Bimbo, a global food producer and distributor headquartered in Mexico and operating in 39 countries. It also considers Bimbo's experience of integrating nutrition considerations into its Safety & Well-Being area – the company version of occupational safety and health (OSH).

Findings suggest that Grupo Bimbo has a world-leading Healthy Canteens programme and a comprehensive programme of nutrition communication and education. Data on its nutrition-focused health checks and breastfeeding support initiatives were more limited. Both WFN and its enabling structure – of expansive safety, health, and well-being-directed work – appear to have been driven primarily by a core company belief of 'We value the person'. Integration of nutrition into OSH can be considered a major driver of WFN in the company, though potentially as mediated through company culture. WFN work at Bimbo also progresses effectively and ambitiously because of high-level leadership support; relevant company policies, strategies, and models; and the company's capacity to navigate, with both business acumen and ethical integrity, the complex terrain of discordance between healthy eating advice and some foods within its portfolio. The key challenge faced by WFN initiatives appears to have been the need for a culture change in workers' food habits and expectations. Over 17 years after first grappling with workforce nutrition, Grupo Bimbo can share many lessons learnt with other global employers considering implementing such programmes.

KEY MESSAGES

- Workforce nutrition (WFN) offers a potentially powerful avenue for improving workers' nutrition, health, and well-being as well as an opportunity for engaging employers – an unusual type of actor – in the process of food system transformation.
- Grupo Bimbo is a global company that has instituted world-leading WFN practices.
- Factors facilitating the success of WFN at Bimbo include the company culture, high-level leadership support, and company policies. A major challenge has been the need for a culture change around food and eating among workers. The company's focus on food -- with a diverse portfolio of products -- has been both a facilitator and a challenge.
- The WFN experience of Bimbo offers transferable lessons for food system transformation (Annex 1), with the latter driven by a large food sector company using a variety of levers to change both employee and consumer food habits while simultaneously enhancing the nutritional profile of its portfolio.

BACKGROUND

Agreement on the need for transforming food systems to be more supporting of human and planetary health and well-being has grown in recent years, including through the 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). It is increasingly recognised that many different sectors and actors – from top-down government approaches to bottom-up community-led ones – have a role to play in this transformation (1–3). One set of actors that is often forgotten in these conversations, however, is employers. Adults can spend over two-thirds of their waking hours at work, making the workplace an important environment to influence health, well-being, knowledge, and choices, including as they relate to food. Investing in employee nutrition can also yield benefits for the employer in terms of motivation, performance, and reduced absenteeism. However, discussions of food system transformation to date have not focused much on the potential for workplaces and employers to help catalyse or advance much needed system-wide changes.

This case study addresses this gap by examining how workplaces and employers can serve to improve workforce nutrition (WFN). It describes the WFN approach at Grupo Bimbo – a multinational food-producing and -distributing company headquartered in Mexico and operating in 39 countries. This represents an employer-led approach. The case study complements a recently published sister case study of a government-led approach, that of the Government of Bangladesh. It also considers the benefits of integrating nutrition considerations into the occupational safety and health (OSH) policies, structures, and practices of a multinational company.

Prior analysis of nutrition in occupational safety and health (OSH) regulations at international and national levels found limited examples of it but suggested that policymakers can 'open a new dimension in worker wellbeing and employer performance' by incorporating nutrition considerations into OSH-relevant agreements, legislation, contracts, and guidelines (4). The present study builds on this by exploring how WFN at Grupo Bimbo is embedded in the company OSH infrastructure and how this integration compares to other key drivers of and challenges to the progress of WFN initiatives in the company so far.

The focus of the case study is on workers' nutrition and health, yet company actions in that direction also have wider consequences. Internal work on workers' nutrition may, in food sector companies like Grupo Bimbo, become closely intertwined with their primary business of food production and distribution. Multinational companies of this size can then play a major role in influencing consumer habits globally. As purchasers, large multinational companies can also transform supply chains. In addition, the habits workers acquire in the workplace are also likely to percolate into their lives outside of work, influencing their food purchasing practices and, in turn, their families' food choices and health.

Box 1 outlines the key concepts of the case study: workforce nutrition and occupational safety and health.

BOX 1. KEY CONCEPTS

WFN: 'A Workforce Nutrition programme is an employer-led set of interventions taken to improve worker's diets. They may create access to safe and nutritious foods within the work environs; generate demand for such foods through communication strategies; and (or) provide the opportunity to access nutrition-focused health checks and counselling where relevant. Promotion of breastfeeding at the workplace is included in this definition, as it allows working parents to provide adequate nutrition to their infants' (5). The Workforce Nutrition Alliance identifies four pillars of workforce nutrition: healthy food at work, nutrition education, nutrition-focused health checks, and breastfeeding support (6).

OSH: For the purposes of this case study, we did not align strongly with a particular definition of occupational safety and health. It was considered important to work with the understanding of OSH of interviewees and with the scope of OSH reflected in the policies and practices of Grupo Bimbo. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO): 'Occupational safety and health (OSH) brings together many disciplines to ensure safe workplaces, thereby preventing accidents and diseases. However, **OSH is about more than just avoiding injury**; it is also about actively promoting safety and health at work, and introducing a safety culture that cascades further than the workplace' (7).

'OSH involves:

- the prevention of harm and adverse effects on workers' health caused by their working conditions, whatever their employment sector, and regardless of their employment status, gender, racial or ethnic background;
- the adaptation of working environments so that they best suit the physical and mental needs of workers;
- the availability of adequate occupational safety and health services to promote and maintain the well-being of workers;
- the effective management of occupational safety and health by employers and workers, putting the subject on the same footing as other business requirements' (7).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CASE STUDY

The focus of this case study was on the integration of nutrition considerations into OSH, yet we also sought to provide a rich context for this focus. This was partly determined by the importance of exploring how an OSH approach to strengthening WFN compares to alternative approaches, especially ones relying on mechanisms shown to be effective by the experience so far. Substantial contextual detail is also provided because the groundbreaking work on WFN at Grupo Bimbo has not yet been described in an independent research case study, even though it has been presented widely through outreach activities and communication materials of Bimbo itself (e.g., the Grupo Bimbo Annual Report) and also featured in GAIN sources (8-11). This report thus complements the set of resources enabling other companies to learn from and replicate, with adaptations, the Grupo Bimbo WFN model.

BOX 2. THIS CASE AS AN 'EXEMPLAR' OF FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

As detailed in Annex 1, this case study, beyond its own merits, can be seen as one approach to trying to achieve two desired outcomes of food systems transformation—improved nutrition and health (primarily) and better livelihoods (secondarily)—through the actions of employers.

It thus offers some potentially generalisable insights about fostering transformative change. Specifically, it demonstrates how careful design of an intervention (including using an evidence-based approach, navigating existing norms and beliefs, identifying clear and feasible solutions, and including diverse voices in the design) can facilitate its uptake. It also highlights some of the challenges with intervention design, such as navigating diverse local food cultures. When it comes to intervention implementation, the case study shows the company's approach to ensuring sufficient institutional capacity and highlights the roles played by champions, coordination, and contextual conditions. See Table A1 for more details.

Generalisable lessons from this case, along with those from a wide set of case studies on different topics and in diverse settings, will be used to inform broader understanding of food system transformation as part of the 'Exemplars of Food System Transformation' initiative.

This case study thus had the following aims:

- To describe the nature, design and implementation trajectory, and impact of the WFN work at Grupo Bimbo, with a focus on current practices of and intentions for further integration of nutrition considerations into OSH work.
- To seek a variety of explanations for the major successes and challenges of the work on WFN at Grupo Bimbo.
- As data allows, develop hypotheses about the 'essential ingredients' for the successful integration of nutrition into OSH policy and practice.
- To represent the findings in a way that can be informative for managers, HR, and OSH staff in other companies interested in WFN, particularly large companies, multinationals, and/or food producers and distributors.

The case study was conducted as part of the 'Exemplars of Food System Transformation' project within the Nourishing Food Pathways programme. More information on this project and how this case fits within it can be found in Box 2 and Annex 1.

METHODS

The study combined key informant interviews with document analysis. We conducted 6 semi-structured remote interviews over Microsoft Teams, 4 in Spanish and 2 in English. The Spanish interviews were conducted by a native speaker researcher who is also a nutritionist (NAS); the English ones were conducted by the lead researcher (MP). All interviews were with members of staff who were actively involved in WFN, broader nutrition, or safety and well-being initiatives at Bimbo. Most interviewees had global

roles, though some were also intensely involved in on-the-ground implementation of programmes. Further detail on roles and location is not provided to preserve participants' anonymity.

Identification of and contact with the interviewees was enabled by Bimbo's Global Lead for Safety & Well-Being, with whom GAIN had collaborated previously. A brief version of the interview guide (core questions only, without sub-questions and probes) was shared in advance, again both in Spanish and English. Interviews lasted between 51 and 80 minutes (average 62 minutes). One interviewee offered to give a pre-existing presentation that covered some of the key questions in the interview guide; the respective interview was thus structured around the presentation. All interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews in Spanish were transcribed automatically, the transcripts were checked for errors and corrected by the interviewer, and automatically translated using DeepL (<https://www.deepl.com/en/translator>). The translations were then checked for errors and corrected by the interviewer to produce the final English-language transcripts. The interviews in English were transcribed verbatim.

To a limited degree, we also reviewed policies and related documents to triangulate and complement the interview data (for a list, see the section on ***Policies, strategies, standards and models enabling WFN implementation***).

Theoretically and methodologically, the work followed the seminal work on case studies of Yin (2018) (12). Principles of realist research were also incorporated (13, 14), with a rough programme theory and context-mechanism-outcomes configurations developed, although the current paper does not report findings in realist terms. The analysis of interviews was conducted in NVivo 14 by the lead researcher (MP), using principles of thematic analysis (15).

Ethics approval was obtained via the ***Health Media Lab IRB***, Study #2923, 28-Apr-2025. Data were collected in August 2025.

The remainder of the paper starts by describing the main types of WFN practices at Bimbo, focusing on the Healthy Canteens programme and nutrition education and communication activities – the two pillars of WFN that received the most attention in the interviews. It then discusses drivers of and challenges to WFN in the company, many of which were found to be shared with drivers and challenges to health and well-being work more generally. This is followed by a section on OSH (which is labelled Safety and Well-Being at Bimbo). The paper concludes with a higher-level perspective on the main drivers and challenges to WFN at Bimbo and reflections on next steps, study strengths and limitations, and recommendations for further research.

The representation of primary data and a critical analytic perspective are intertwined throughout. We have included multiple interview quotes to illustrate claims and add depth and nuance to them. In representing quotes, minimal edits have been made to

improve clarity.¹ Anonymous indicators of interviewees are not given due to the small number of interviewees (when claims can be combined, risks of identification increase).

ABOUT GRUPO BIMBO AND ITS CHOICE AS CASE STUDY

Grupo Bimbo is a multinational food producing and distributing company, established in 1945 in Mexico, where it continues to be headquartered. It operates in 39 countries on 4 continents, has over 100 brands, and employs over 152,000 'associates' (workers) (16, 17). It ranks amongst the World's Best Employers (17) and, as of 2025, has been amongst the World's Most Ethical Companies for the ninth year running, the only Mexican company to achieve such success (18).

GAIN has worked previously with Grupo Bimbo, both to offer technical support and to learn from their experience of implementing WFN programmes. Bimbo was approached as a potential case study because of the longevity, breadth, and successes of its efforts in WFN. It also offered an opportunity to document lessons applicable to some complex employer-led WFN initiatives. As a large multinational company, Bimbo must consider many different types of diets and cultural relationships to food when establishing WFN practices. It is also a company with a diverse portfolio of food products, not all of which are considered 'healthy' or 'nutritious' by standard healthy eating advice.

WORKFORCE NUTRITION AT GRUPO BIMBO

HEALTHY CANTEENS

What are they like?

The Grupo Bimbo Healthy Canteens programme, introduced in 2009, seeks to ensure that 'everybody has access to a balanced diet in their workplace'. Healthy menus are an optional alternative to the 'daily' (standard) menus. The former complies with general norms of a 'healthy eating plate' and Bimbo's own Global Healthy Canteen Checklist (19). Distinctive features of the healthy menu are that it consistently offers low-fat protein, vegetables, fruit, and legumes; limits fried, battered, or breaded food to only once a month; and provides access to plain or fruit water² and no syrups or juice concentrates. Food is prepared following strict guidelines for adding ingredients that should only be eaten in moderation. For example, fat is sprayed through a spray bottle as opposed to poured, and quantities of sugar per glass and salt per dish are specified. Portion sizes are estimated based on the general energy and macronutrient requirements of the workforce. There were some indications in the interviews that even if separate, the healthy menu has been affecting the standard menu. For instance, the protein in the latter may not be low in fat but is still accompanied by vegetables.

In Bimbo's Healthy Canteens, concerted efforts are made so that healthiness does not compromise taste. The drive towards 'healthy' does not become extreme either, approximating the parody and fear of 'healthy mean[ing] eating lettuce'. While global

¹ Some content-free aspects of oral communication (e.g., repetitions of words, stammers, and crutch words) have been edited out for clarity. In a small number of cases, we corrected grammatical issues. We indicate with ... omissions of parts of statements that were introduced to keep the focus on the issue illustrated with a quote or to go directly to the clearest expression of an idea.

² Fruit water can be fruit-infused (with fresh fruit slices added) or blended fresh fruit water prepared without adding sugar.

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Bimbo standards (the Global Healthy Canteen Standard and its four annexes) (20) need to be met, menus are adapted to reflect the local or regional food heritage. The global standards themselves have been developed so that they are inclusive of all types of regional variations in staple food. More rarely, interviewees mentioned that menus are adapted to the level of physical activity of employees and to the legal framework of the relevant jurisdiction.

The worker pays for the food. Costs vary per location and the menu options chosen on the day. The healthy menu is subsidised. Prices for workers were perceived by interviewees as 'very affordable', 'very cheap' or 'much cheaper' compared to prices for similar food bought outside of the canteen. Nonetheless, it was mentioned that there are companies where food is entirely free for workers, which is generally not the case at Bimbo. (There are exceptions. In some countries, like Brazil, meals are free of charge because of country-level arrangements and regulatory or programmatic requirements.) Some of the healthy menu items also end up costly in comparison to standard menu items.

Canteens are operated as concessions. The staff of the concessionaire are trained on the Bimbo guidelines. Menus are planned jointly by the concessionaire and Bimbo representatives, for instance a plant doctor, then verified against requirements at the regional level and further approved at the global level.

Reach and country variations

The Healthy Canteens programme is seen as 'a must' across the whole company, both at corporate and plant level, even if this is yet to be achieved. As of December 2025, 33 out of 64 company-operated canteens have been certified as healthy, with a further 11 in the process of certification. The programme is best established in Mexico and Latin America more broadly. Factors highlighted by the interviewees as affecting reach were the size of work centres, the local food culture, and government requirements. For instance, work centres in the US tend to be small, with around 50 associates per work site. The culture is also one of food being brought from home. In contrast, in Brazil, there is a legal provision for offering a canteen, regardless of the size of the workplace. Despite local and regional variation, the goal of Bimbo is that employees in each of its organisations worldwide are offered access to healthy menus.

Uptake and perceptions

While all interviewees were occasional users of the Healthy Canteens and were positive about them, their small number (six) and connections to the programme do not allow us to make reliable claims about uptake and workers' perceptions. Company-generated rigorous data on uptake and perceptions are not yet available.

Timelines and stepping stones in establishing the Healthy Canteens programme

Reaching the stage of development of the Healthy Canteens programme described above has been neither quick nor easy, taking over 17 years of concerted effort. This does not include the time when canteens were provided without a focused commitment to offering healthy food. The first Sustainability Strategy of Bimbo, published in 2008, was pointed to as the flagship document that first consolidated dispersed efforts at improving associates' health, including through improving the quality of food sold in canteens, defining relevant guidelines, setting up canteen audits, and communicating to associates how to create a varied diet.

The maturation of the Healthy Canteens programme at Bimbo has been gradual, not unlike putting a patient on a diet: 'it can't happen overnight'. Its beginnings were often hard: '[t]here is a certain period at the beginning that can be frustrating, where you don't see results, where you are questioned'. Some of the early training sessions had been 'quite challenging'. The initial version of the Global Healthy Canteen Checklist had to be scaled down, as it was perceived as 'very demanding'. One of the interviewees warned that it is important not to 'despair[] at the beginning, because this can take a long time'.

One of the first steps in introducing the Healthy Canteens across the company (starting with Mexico) had been engaging with pre-existing Canteen Committees at work sites. At the time, those committees included representatives from the trade union and the concessionaire (or canteen supplier), the doctor, and safety supervisor. Their role was to monitor the implementation of canteen standards, review feedback from workers, and liaise with the concessionaire to support continuous improvement. Both support and resistance were encountered.

The resistance could be visceral, both directly expressed and written on people's faces: 'this doesn't make sense to me', 'why are they going to take away our delicious food?!', or 'now they're going to give us vegetables?!'. Committees, and particularly concessionaires, were concerned about business sustainability: 'With what you're asking me to do, I'm not going to sell anything!'.

A 'lot of sensitising and explaining', training and evidencing were needed so that the Canteen Committee became instrumental in implementing the programme. Trade union representatives, even if initially resistant, were persuaded by hearing that looking after workers was not compatible with 'a menu that damages their health'. Reassurance needed to be provided that 'the healthy canteen programme doesn't mean we want them to lose weight ... [but is] about ensuring a complete, proper diet'. Training sessions were delivered to Committees with the expectation that they then pass on the learning to workers 'so that this change would make sense'. Such training sessions were often underpinned by worksite-level statistics on health indicators (**Data and evidence** discussed further under Drivers).

Some locations had a high baseline and were 'very close' to meeting the requirements for a healthy canteen. Many, however, needed to cross a distance that amounted to 'a culture change'. Nothing less would do amongst people who are 'very accustomed to menus that were very high in carbohydrates, very high in fat, [and] without vegetables' and who, on hearing the phrase 'healthy canteen', 'automatically assume that we are going to feed them lettuce and reduce their portions'. Box 3 gives an example of how workers can revolt in cases of insufficient preparation, abrupt change of menus, and healthy menus that are not respectful enough of the local cuisine and tastes.

The next two subsections examine specific components of the Bimbo WFN programme, aligning to the recommendations of the Workforce Nutrition Alliance, a global platform for information and advocacy on WFN led by GAIN and the Consumer Goods Forum (see Box 1).

BOX 3. HOW (NOT) TO TRIGGER A REVOLT ABOUT FOOD AT WORK

Note: The description follows the interview transcript, with minor edits made for ease of reading and clarity.

'[Workers] were coming from a canteen that gave them what they wanted. If they wanted tripe, if they wanted it every day, every day there was tripe and fried food ... Then this new concessionaire arrives and starts abruptly, wanting to change that. I remember very well that he brought that day ... sushi, surimi, or something like that. No one ate it. Everyone was shouting ... 'How are you going to give us sushi?!'

Besides, people identify the issue of quantity and not quality. For them, it's quantity [that matters], because 'I spend 8 hours here, doctor'. 'Yes, but your energy consumption, your movements, etc. go hand-in-hand with your diet', and that's where you have to explain. He wanted to give them sushi. Because he wanted to see ... I don't know what the supplier imagined, I still don't understand what the supplier imagined. And then, obviously, there was a revolt.

What did we say to him? 'We need to take you by the hand, we need to talk about the changes we're going to make first, we need to let people know what you're going to do first.' We can't just come in without warning, put out a tray of sushi. We can't do that because tastes vary. We all have different palates ...

We reorganised, talked to the supplier, explained locally ... in a meeting between the union, the commissioners, and the administration. They explained to the supplier what people liked. Based on what people liked, we added healthy options. Instead of giving me tripe ... every day, make me a vegetable soup or a consommé ... with vegetables, but add chicken. People don't like to eat dry food, add a little more soup, but accompany it with healthy ingredients. Find someone locally who knows how to cook, who has that special touch, but add healthy ingredients.

We're not fighting against the food culture of each area. We just want to complement it with healthy ingredients. If I really like tacos, let's make some **taquitos** with roast beef or roast chicken breast. And then you add your **pico de gallo** and your avocado and your beans and your soup.'

NUTRITION COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION, IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION ABOUT HEALTH MORE BROADLY

Nutrition contextualised; the many faces of eating well

Nutrition communication and education at Bimbo is one component of a multilayered strategy and practice of providing associates with knowledge and skills that empower them to take better care of and improve their health.

The descriptions of nutrition communication and education³ activities given by interviewees suggested that these were multidirectional and holistic. This appeared to stem from a recognition of the complexity of forces and meanings that shape people's diets and eating. Audiences (both workers and consumers, see below) are offered multiple entry points into the idea of 'eating well' – such as of physical benefits, emotional benefits, performance, taste, culture, environmental sustainability and responsible consumption, pleasant environments, cooking, and reading the body's signals. Last but not least, the perspective to eating well can be that of learning about Bimbo's own products and aligning with the company purpose to 'nourish a better world'.

It seems plausible that such a variety of perspectives towards food and eating broadens the resonance of messages and obviates the resistance that may be faced by messaging that leans too heavily in one direction, such as 'healthy eating' (which may trigger fears of forbidden favourite foods, a life of salads, and a pressure to lose weight) or even 'workforce nutrition' (which may be perceived as prioritising the business benefits, even if under the guise of worker care).

Main platforms, formats, and messengers for nutrition communication and education

The main virtual space for nutritional messaging in the company is a dedicated nutrition channel, BNutrition, within Engage, Bimbo's internal communication channel. In recent months, the membership of BNutrition has varied between approximately 9,000 and 11,000 associates. Information in it is provided in both Spanish and English. Two pieces of content are posted each week on the topic of the month. At the time of interviewing, this was 'the sustainable diet'. The information is presented in visually attractive ways, accompanied by vibrant, colourful, high-quality images.

Topics are pre-planned in the Editorial Calendar which, in turn, is aligned with the company's External Communication Strategy. There is thus a significant overlap between the nutritional communication that workers receive internally and that consumers receive from Bimbo on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and, more recently, TikTok. Work is underway, however, on a greater differentiation between the two types of content, with more of the internal content starting to be determined by internal needs and questions. At present, business considerations draw some of the lines of difference between the two types of nutritional messaging: 'Sometimes externally we can't say as much because of regulatory issues, because of confidentiality issues, but internally we are a little more explanatory'. Further below we discuss the particularities of WFN activities in a company whose business is nutrition-related and whose portfolio is inclusive of both healthy and 'indulgent' products.

To the extent possible, some of the information posted on BNutrition is adapted for use in physical spaces, as in bakeries, where Bimbo associates do not necessarily have access to computers. Examples of further contexts, types of events, and platforms used

³ The respective pillar of the Workforce Nutrition Alliance is 'nutrition education'. Here we use primarily 'nutrition communication and education'. The discourse at Bimbo appeared to lean towards 'communication', possibly because of an emphasis on offering information and choice, as opposed to instruction and prescriptiveness.

to provide nutritional information included: expert talks on nutrition topics, both from public and private health organisations and often as part of broader initiatives across the company, including the yearly Nutrition Week and Health Week; baking workshops and seminars on cooking; and monthly 'well-being capsules' (brief, structured well-being related messages delivered at the beginning of meetings). A free telephone nutritional counselling service, offered by an external provider, is available to associates in most⁴ of the 11 countries having 'associate support helplines'. Nutrition content is also available on the Group Bimbo University internal learning platform. It is accessible to all associates and is offered in four languages (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish). On-demand workshops to support business needs are also run by Bimbo nutritionists, for instance for sales teams interested in learning more about the different types of bread they are selling.

Formats and types of materials used are also varied, including online posts, videos, infographics, leaflets, recipe books, and a quarterly newsletter. In light of the nature of Bimbo's business and the overlap of information for associates and consumers, some of the nutritional information sent out intersects with paid advertising. The 'messengers' are also varied – from company leaders, through scientific experts, to peers.

Global-local interactions in generating nutritional messaging

Generally, nutrition communication and education content is developed at global (headquarters) level in both Spanish and English and cascaded to local organisations across the world. Local requests for content generation or support are welcomed by the relevant global teams (e.g., dealing with Nutrition or Communication). It is possible to run additional local campaigns. There are also mechanisms through which good local practices can be disseminated to other geographies of the company. In reality, most nutrition communication and education content is provided centrally, having become official company information.

Nutrition education as a multilayered business asset in a food producing company

According to the Workforce Nutrition Alliance narrative, business benefits of nutrition education arise because workers develop better eating habits, which lead to their improved health and well-being, which, in turn, are translated into less sickness and absence, greater productivity, and greater job satisfaction. In the context of a food-producing and -distributing company like Bimbo, however, business benefits of nutrition education for the workforce can come about in further ways: improved nutrition knowledge of the workforce also allows sales staff to sell Bimbo products more effectively, innovation staff to develop new products, and workers in general to be better ambassadors for the company:

'[I]n October we are going to talk about processed foods, so we are going to talk a lot, for example, about the bread-making process. And we do this to strengthen and empower our employees, firstly so that they can be spokespersons for our products and ingredients, and secondly, so that they can make better choices about their diet.'

⁴ Exact figure was not available at the time of writing.

'They [team within Bimbo] are the ones in charge of setting these goals for positive nutrition, fortification, portion control, and clean labelling. It's our job to inform them, just as we inform consumers and investors.'

Business considerations also determine which topics are prioritised or receive the most focused attention in nutrition communication and education activities:

'Generally, it is very closely related to topics of importance to the business. ... For example, if we're talking about a plant-based diet, which we know is very trendy, then yes, we like to explain what a plant-based diet is, that it's not radically vegan, so we try to explain it. But we do go directly to topics of interest to the business, yes.'

Challenges of nutrition communication and education

In discussing challenges to nutrition communication and education, interviewees primarily mentioned information overload and the need to be judicious with what information and how often is sent out. In many respects, company-level messaging on nutrition and, more broadly, wellness, is just another announcement:

'[T]here are so many announcements sent out that I think employees don't even see the wellness announcements anymore ... They send you an announcement about when it opens, when a new product is launched, about insurance, about how to record your expenses. The associate already has too much information, so we have to be very smart about what we send them.'

Earlier challenges of using communication and education approaches – to achieve the culture change needed to support the Healthy Canteens programme – were also noted: 'It hasn't been easy, has it? No, definitely not'.

COMPANY NUTRITIONISTS AND HEALTH CHECK CAMPAIGNS

In line with the third pillar of WFN, nutrition-related health checks and follow-up, Bimbo offers access to company nutritionists and regular laboratory test campaigns for employees, some of which cover nutrition-related indicators. Detail provided on company nutritionists by the interviewees was relatively limited. Associates at headquarters and some other settings have free on-site access to in-person, individual nutrition consultations. Most commonly, the service is delivered through third-party providers, although in some cases nutritionists are directly employed by Bimbo. In some settings, services extend to associates' families. As mentioned above, free nutritional counselling provided over the phone is available in most countries via associate support helplines.

Securing face-to-face and/or on-site access to a nutritionist is hindered by the structure of the company. One of the interviewees described having over 80 worksites in their region. Nevertheless, efforts are underway to increase levels of personal attention offered by nutritionists.

At least once a year, during Health Week, associates in Mexico and other Latin American countries can access laboratory tests at low cost, including for nutrition-related indicators, such as blood pressure or glucose levels.

BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Bimbo has a [Global Policy of Breastfeeding Support](#) (Oct 2022), applicable to 'all its Organizations, affiliates and subsidiaries'. Breastfeeding is referred to as a 'human right' in this policy. The People area of each Bimbo organisation is required, amongst other responsibilities, to promote support for breastfeeding, carry out information and awareness campaigns about the policy, carry out training and awareness activities on breastfeeding, and ensure all workplaces have a lactation room. The policy also specifies the requirements that a lactation room needs to meet. Contextually, the Global Policy for Breastfeeding Support is enabled by the company's maternity and paternity policies.

The line of responsibility for the breastfeeding policy reaches as high as the CEO and Presidents of Bimbo. On site, 'the doctors are responsible for checking that the room is always clean, that it has all the necessary equipment, that it is comfortable, that there is communication, we also have communication posted in the breastfeeding room, that there is a refrigerator, in other words, that it has all the conditions for women to be able to extract milk'.

One of the interviewees observed that, currently, at the global level, 'a lot of emphasis' is being placed on breastfeeding rooms. Another acknowledged it as an area of work where they 'have seen a lot of advances'. Company workshops for mothers on breastfeeding, often delivered online so that more people can connect, were mentioned. None of the interviewees reported personal experiences of the breastfeeding support provided at Bimbo or being closely involved in on-the-ground implementation of breastfeeding-related activities.

DRIVERS OF WORKFORCE NUTRITION AT GRUPO BIMBO

Overall, the drivers of WFN – mechanisms and contexts that make it possible, enable or facilitate it, speed it up, remove obstacles ahead of it, and similar – appeared to be shared with drivers of health and well-being initiatives more generally. Most drivers highlighted by the interviewees were illustrated with examples from both domains. The categories in which drivers are represented below are largely arranged by richness of detail concerning a topic.

PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES UNDERPINNING THE COMPANY CULTURE

Often, a thread in the interviews starting as a WFN-specific question or probe would reach fundamental and/or abstract ethical ideas, values, and principles. Whatever the pragmatic business goals of WFN at Bimbo, these walked hand-in-hand with a prominent ethical stance. At times, the guiding organisational values and principles appeared to converge into a multilayered philosophy of why and how things are done in the company.

'We Value the Person'

'We Value the Person' principle is foundational at Bimbo. This has been the case both historically, as part of the DNA of the company since its inception, and currently, as its principal 'core belief'. One of the linguistic markers of this attitude is the vocabulary of 'associates', as opposed to workers, employees, staff, or human resources. Unprompted, interviewees often commented on the deep anchoring of the principle as opposed to it having a tokenistic, legalistic, rhetorical, or fashionable presence:

'I really love these quotes from our founder, Don Lorenzo Servitje. He says that 'We are aware of the value of people. We do not consider our associates as work tools but as human beings'. Our associates must be treated with respect, fairness, trust and care, and this is our golden rule. Everybody in the company has to respect this golden rule, or it ... undermines your stay in the company.'

'Well-being at Bimbo was not born as a trend, or as a response to what other companies are doing. It was born from our core belief.'

'It's a conviction, and maybe it starts with something in a paper, like ... 'the person is the centre of everything we do', and the language that we use. But it goes beyond that. ... [T]hat's something we live as people that work here. In a lot of things, in all decisions, the person is always taken in deep consideration... [T]his goes beyond estimations of something legal.'

Importantly, the 'humanistic vision' of the company is part of a context that makes it (relatively) easy to implement well-being strategies and activities, including WFN ones, and to avoid resistance to them:

'It's really easy to implement a Well-Being Strategy at Grupo Bimbo because it's a really humane company'.

'Resistance [to the Healthy Canteens programme] as such? No. Telling us 'no, not this, not here, not me' – no. Why? Because we leverage ... the Grupo Bimbo philosophy.'

Overall, the interviews did not suggest that WFN had a special place as a form of care for Bimbo's associates. Rather, it was a form of care amongst many 'supporting the well-being of our associates ... so that they can fulfil their maximum potential'.

Similarly, the fact that Bimbo was a food-focused company, while perceived as likely to facilitate WFN initiatives, was seen as less influential than this broader people-centred philosophy:

'[B]eing a food industry that sells everything, sometimes it's like, 'Oh, yes, of course, so it's about putting nutrition at the centre', but I would say that it stems from their people-centred philosophy, which has made all this easier.'

While Bimbo associates are the ones the company can impact most directly, the principle of valuing the person extends along a continuum – from associates to their families, to customers and communities. Relative to a conceptualisation of WFN, this creates some blurry boundaries. For instance, as described above, nutritional communication and education activities for the workforce overlap significantly with those for customers and communities. The impact of WFN and other wellness-enhancing actions is seen as transcending both the individual and the business and as reaching into families and communities:

'[A]ll the health and wellness programmes you do for work transcend ... the lives you're touching are many families, and that's a beautiful thing, isn't?'

Caring for and nurturing Bimbo associates makes sense even relative to the risk of them leaving the company. When this happens, Bimbo is still contributing to the company purpose 'to nourish a better world':

'[I]n an interview, I was also asked, 'Hey, but why is your strategy to train people so much when you don't even know if they're going to stay with you? ... And then you say, 'they may not stay with me, but I know that when they leave and go somewhere else, they will take this essence with them. And they will share it. And that's how we are nurturing a better world.'

Relative to the people-focused orientation, the business bottom line did not surface as a leading driving force for WFN and other well-being initiatives. This does not mean that interviewees were oblivious to or naïve about the natural priorities of a business. A business must produce and must sell. Employees who are safe and healthy contribute to those goals better. Comments were also made, for instance, about involving families as a way of increasing an associate's connection with the company or about reminding associates that transformations they have experienced in their health and life have been started off by company benefits. Within the culture of Bimbo, however, business goals and people's well-being goals were perceived as inseparable and mutually reinforcing, not conflicting. Discursively, justifications almost always came from the direction of people's well-being, as opposed to business success.

A balance of (perceived) opposites – how a food company with a diverse portfolio manages potentially conflicting perspectives around healthy eating

The second intangible aspect of the company culture that defines Bimbo's approach to WFN concerns a refined organisational capacity to resolve (perceived) tensions between certain healthy eating perspectives and certain products from the company's diverse portfolio. Some of the foods produced by Bimbo are endorsed by most healthy eating advice (foods for 'daily consumption', in the company vocabulary). Other products, such as cakes, pastries, and chips, are variably excluded from a range of purportedly healthy eating diets or recommended to be consumed only in moderation, considering frequency and portion size. In Bimbo's vocabulary, such 'indulgent' products are part of its 'occasional consumption portfolio'.

Risks of conflicts of values or compromises of integrity are thus potentially high. It is conceivable that offering associates nutritious food and nutrition education may cast a shadow on some of what they are producing and selling. Restricting internal access to the indulgent products in whose production and distribution so many associates are involved may disconnect them from the fruits of their labour. Internal communication for associates and external communication for customers may begin to diverge. The company thus needs to find a way of 'having your cake and eating it'.

The interviews demonstrated that integrity and transparency are upheld vis-à-vis such tensions. Solutions are sought primarily through moderation, pragmatism, and foregrounding some (healthier) alternatives while still preserving access to others.

At the level of ***ideas***, integrity and transparency are enabled primarily by a healthy eating philosophy centred on building a balanced relationship with food, accounting for portion size, and context and frequency of eating. As per this philosophy, no food groups are to be eliminated from a healthy diet. Exclusionary and overly restrictive approaches may be counterproductive in terms of health and well-being outcomes, not least by contributing to unhealthy relationships with food. This perspective underpins both workforce nutrition initiatives and portfolio management at Bimbo.

At the level of ***structures and processes***, tensions between aspects of Bimbo's portfolio and certain nutritional recommendations are managed both by support for conscious

choices and by subconscious 'nudging'. Informed choice is supported, for example, by extensive nutritional communication and education provided across the company. A 'nudge' approach is used when facilitating or constraining access to certain types of food. For example, the healthy menu does not include desserts, and Bimbo's own products are not prominently positioned in the healthy canteens.

Still, individual choice in alternative directions to those 'nudges' continues to be enabled. For instance, as discussed, there is a conventional menu alongside the healthy menu. The indulgent Bimbo products continue to be offered as a company benefit for free or at significant discounts:

'[Y]ou see that their lunch is a packet of mantecadas [light, moist, spongy cakes] and a Coke, so we say, 'Hey, should we take it away?'. No, because it's a benefit. It's like in other companies where they give you, I don't know, beer? ... We regulate it through nutritional information, which, if we look at it, is considered precisely in the consumption within their menu, because we don't give desserts.'

'[W]e always have that shelf [with free indulgent Bimbo products] at the back of our dining room so that it's visible, but it's not the first thing you see'.

The nutritional quality of the company portfolio is also evolving. While many factors for this evolution are external, such as market demand or new regulations, preserving integrity and credibility relative to the nutrition education offered is also a driver of portfolio changes:

'[W]e cannot talk about nutrition with our associates if we do not make a good advice in our portfolio, and the way ... our portfolio can be part of a healthy diet. We need to work in different lines of actions to also be transparent and credible with our different audiences. And one of ... the most important are our associates.'

'[T]he portfolio has changed over time. In terms of clean labelling, in terms of ingredients that have been eliminated or added. And with this whole strategy behind all our products.'

There were examples of cases where tensions remained or were resolved in line with the profile of the business. For instance, Bimbo's Globo bakeries and cafés, including on company premises, continue to focus on bread and indulgent food. The approach of nutritionists hired by the company 'who put people on keto diets, where they couldn't eat bread' has not been embraced. They were 'coached', 'their narrative' was 'take[n] care of', or they were no longer welcomed. Nevertheless, the overall trend emerging from the interviews was of integrity and of skilful, thoughtful, business-savvy yet ethically respectable navigation of the complex terrain inhabited by a food company with indulgent aspects of its core portfolio, commitment to WFN, commitment to feeding a better world, and impressive ethical credentials.

Co-creation and collaboration grounded in understanding and acceptance of non-involvement

An orientation towards co-creation, collaboration, and involvement came through as a further principle driving WFN and broader well-being initiatives at Bimbo. Interviewees, particularly a key informant directly involved in implementing the Healthy Canteens programme on-the-ground, emphasised the need to engage, listen to, seek to

understand, know your people, and 'make as many allies as you can' as opposed to putting a programme in place from a position of expertise and responsibility to lead:

'[E]ven though you are the guide for the programmes, take off your expert hat and listen to people, listen to the leaders in the workplace, listen to the union, if applicable, listen to the associates and then adapt.'

Seeking to understand was seen as particularly important in contexts where the 'the daily tug-of-war is' and where the gap between goals and reality was too large:

'You can't talk about health in isolation. You have to understand your business perfectly, what your company does, how it works, and not just talk to the Human Resources teams, or people in this case. You have to talk to the operations teams, the sales teams, where the business is, where the daily tug-of-war is, because that's where the richness is, and that's where you build.'

'[T]here were others where we found, oh, dear, an impressive gap, so we said, 'I'm not going to ask you for all these changes, right? Let's see, what can you do?'... Many times, for example, we encountered issues ... [with] the contract with the supplier.'

Since understanding the contexts, experiences, and perspectives of others was perceived as fundamental to programme implementation, it seemed natural that those others may also choose not to participate in activities or take time to embrace the options given. Offering options, and constantly improving and expanding but not forcing them, was also entirely in tune with how Bimbo's business worked:

'I would tell my patients, 'Nutrition is something very broad ... It's not just about eating certain foods, but about being open to a range of options'. We do the same with Grupo Bimbo.'

'It's not about forcing people to have certain habits. Ultimately, our role will be to offer a range of wellness programmes, in terms of canteens, so that when you go to the canteen, you always find a range of options without any restrictions.'

Further guiding principles and values

A broad range of further guiding principles and values were mentioned by interviewees as advancing and ensuring the sustainability of WFN and broader well-being initiatives. Some related to the 'why' of such work, for instance a perception that a company, especially a food company, has unquestionable responsibility towards people's health. Other values and principles related to the 'how' of the work, for instance through building trust; exhibiting patience, discipline, and consistency; nurturing a tolerance for frustration; or accepting and working with complexity. Overall, the impression created was of WFN initiatives being advanced, just as other well-being initiatives, within the context of a solid system of humanist, stoic, and corporate social responsibility values.

COMPLEX SYSTEM STRUCTURES AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

Policies, strategies, standards, and models enabling WFN implementation

A range of global Bimbo policies and related documents (strategies, standards, models) were mentioned by interviewees (see Box 4) either as directly supporting WFN activities

or as structuring the broader safety, health, and well-being context within the company, which further facilitates WFN work.

BOX 4. KEY GRUPO BIMBO POLICIES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO WFN AND OSH

Note: Links are provided to policies posted online. An asterisk indicates that we have read a policy as part of the analysis for this report.

Key policies and related documents directly referring to WFN:

Global Healthy Canteen Standard*, with Annexes: Annex 1. Checklist; Annex 2. Training of healthy canteens; Annex 3. Recommendations for events, cafeteria and vending machines, Annex 4. Educational communication (first published Mar 2025, current)

Global Policy of Breastfeeding Support* (first published Oct 2022, current)

Global Nutrition Strategy (first published 2008, latest update 2020)

Global Nutrition Communication Strategy (BNutrition), divided into External Communication Strategy and Internal Communication Strategy (first published 2020)

Global Well-Being Policy* (first published May 2017, latest update Aug 2025)

Well-Being Model (2016)

Key health, safety and well-being policies and related documents more generally:

Global Safety Policy (2017)

Global Safety Strategy (2010)

Global Policy Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* (2022)

Key early documents paving the way for WFN:

Bimbo's first Sustainability Strategy (2008), aligned with WHO's Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health* (2004)

Other important documents in which WFN is considered:

Construction plans

None of the interviewees expressed familiar concerns that policies and other formal company documents remained words on paper, even if it was acknowledged that implementation was 'the hard part'. On the contrary, policies and associated documents were perceived as giving power, legitimacy, and reassurance that 'what we are doing is right'; as providing guidelines on how to proceed; and as enabling 'double' the impact that would have been achieved without them.

'How does having a policy help? It means that we know that all employees have that responsibility. The policy gives you that position and gives you the power to say, 'you have this responsibility,' it's enshrined in a policy. ... it is not

what Dr [name] or so-and-so says, but rather it is a policy that the company supports. So, it gives you the power to have that responsibility to care, and it has an impact that is doubled than if we did not have that policy.

... for us, as the ones who execute the programme, it tells us where to go. It gives us the guidelines and the fundamentals that we must comply with and helps us in that management ... [A]s leaders, it supports us. We know that what we are doing is right, it tells us how we can do it.'

'Policy is the easiest step. The hard part is implementing it, and that's where many strategies have emerged.'

Organisational structures enabling WFN

The team accountable for WFN at Bimbo is Safety & Well-Being – Bimbo's version of OSH **writ large** (see below on OSH at Bimbo) within the People area, the company version of HR. Several other departments ('areas' in Bimbo's nomenclature) are, however, supporting the work, including Nutrition, Communication, Talent & Development, Benefits & Compensation, and Diversity & Inclusion (the latter instrumental in breastfeeding-related activities in particular).

To an outsider, some of the distribution of WFN tasks and responsibilities at Bimbo may appear counterintuitive. For instance, there is a Nutrition team, yet WFN is not primarily their responsibility; communication about nutrition is handled primarily by the Nutrition team and not by the Communication team, etc. Those emerged, however, as well-thought-through decisions.

For instance, the localisation of nutrition communication and education in the R&D team allows close access to scientific knowledge and emerging innovation. It also enables both a team ethos and external perceptions of a greater objectivity. Similarly, while historically WFN had, indeed, been part of the Nutrition area, it was transferred to Safety & Well-Being (and People/ HR more broadly). This has contributed both to the person-centredness of the work and the leverage available for implementation, including because the People area has a counterpart in every Bimbo organisation. In contrast, the Nutrition area is primarily corporate, making access to most plants difficult.

Worksite-specific and/or cross-area structures also support WFN activities. Every Bimbo organisation has a Well-Being Committee, which is instrumental in the day-to-day implementation of WFN and broader health and well-being activities. Three times a year, Global Well-Being Committees take place – virtual fora dedicated to well-being, where good practices are shared, recent and ongoing work is reflected upon, and a way forward is charted.

In 2020, Bimbo created its Global Well-Being Observatory with the goal of measuring, in a more comprehensive, centralised way, the impact of organisational well-being activities, including WFN ones. At the time of interviewing, the capacity of the Observatory to share rigorous metrics on impact was limited, with extensive work on revising indicators underway. There are immense challenges in developing rigorous methods and indicators for measuring the impact of complex interventions delivered to very diverse groups of workers in multiple organisations across 39 countries. While it may take time for rigorous evidence to emerge from Bimbo's Global Well-Being Observatory, the latter has the potential to become a world-leading company-level 'laboratory' providing much needed evidence on WFN.

Data and evidence, audits and evaluations, research and science, and associated feedback loops

A further family of facilitators for WFN programmes at Bimbo discussed in the interviews was that of using data and evidence. This was variably in contexts of regular internal audits and monitoring of KPIs, project-specific evaluations, rigorous scientific research, or staff feedback mechanisms.

Most notably, an interviewee described using statistics to prepare 'situational diagnoses' of worksites and regions. This was done by combining physical health indicators, including ones that may suggest poor nutrition (cholesterol, triglycerides and glucose); psychological health indicators; business-relevant health outcomes, such as absenteeism; and reasons for telemedicine consultations. The situational diagnosis then feeds into planning location-specific programmes, which are tailored versions of the global or national well-being programme.

The approach of providing worksite-specific data was also described when paving the way for the Healthy Canteens programme in early stages of the work:

'[W]e rely heavily on statistics from doctors – show me the statistics for the plant. Then we started the training with that. 'Ah, well, look. It turns out that in this workplace we have so many people with diabetes, so many with high blood pressure, so many who are overweight or obese. What do we have to do?'

In the early stages of WFN programmes, the approach of ensuring progress had been 'more friendly'; for instance, by 'connect[ing] with the [canteen] committee and talk[ing] about it'. By now, the Healthy Canteens are audited (inspected for compliance), using a checklist of 35 mandatory and 5 desirable points. Breastfeeding rooms are also subject to inspections. Indeed, inspections are in place for the whole Well-being Strategy of the company: checklists are applied, ratings generated, and action plans produced, with high expectations that they are followed.

Brief comments were made about tracking KPIs for nutrition communication and education (e.g., number of views and contents of comments and questions) and about measuring uptake of health-related campaigns run by external providers, including campaigns with nutritional components.

The main mechanisms through which staff can provide feedback on WFN appear to be comments boxes in canteens, staff surveys, and direct engagement with medical, safety, and well-being teams. A 20-question Safety and Well-Being Pulse Survey is administered every two years (the frequency has been reduced from annual to address the growing burden on staff for feedback). The Work Climate Survey secures yearly formal feedback on well-being, though in more limited ways due to its broad coverage. Informally, the medical teams and safety and well-being teams were perceived as an ever-active line for feedback, as 'they are very much in contact with people ... [and] they [the people] are also giving feedback all the time, every day, on what is being done, what they like, what they don't like, what is needed, so let's say it's open feedback every day'.

As far as scientific research and evidence are concerned, these were mainly discussed as underpinning Bimbo's nutrition communication and education, as directed both at consumers and associates. One of the primary benefits of their use was counteracting

audiences' suspicion: 'Oh, they're saying that because they sell it.' So, what we try to do is just that, be objective with the information'.

PEOPLE AND ROLES

Roles with WFN remit; the people behind the roles

Key individuals with responsibilities for WFN at Bimbo are members of the executive management team (e.g., Global Director or Global Head; further detail is withheld to protect the anonymity). At worksites, diverse roles are responsible for driving the work forward, including doctors, safety supervisors, nutritionists, and well-being promoters (trained staff representatives at each site). Roles with a regional remit are also in place. At the interface between the internal and external, concessionaires and external providers of well-being services for Bimbo associates (such as health tests and check-ups) are contractually expected to contribute to advancing WFN.

It is important to add a caveat, even if self-evident, that roles do not, by themselves, get work of a high standard done. All interviewees came across as truly owning the work on WFN and broader health and well-being they were doing; advancing it with conviction, passion, and genuine care; and investing a lot of thought and creativity in it, in addition to effort and perseverance.

'Yeah, we are very convinced of what we are doing. It is not only a request from the top management, 'you need to do this'. We are very, very convinced of the impact that we can [achieve] and the things that we do, in all the actions that we define and perform.'

Leadership

The commitment of leaders, including the most senior amongst them, was perceived as crucial for advancing WFN and broader health and well-being initiatives at Bimbo. In the words of one interviewee, quoting a retired company doctor, '[s]tairs are not swept upwards'. The former company CEO (until November 2025), who first joined the company as its Chief Sustainability Officer in 2018, was experienced to have helped 'a lot to push these actions more, align them faster, with a very clear commitment'. According to one interviewee, improving the nutrition profile of Bimbo products and of nutrition within the company was one of three persistent points on his agenda. It remains to be seen if the change of CEO will affect Bimbo's commitment to WFN. More broadly, the Executive Chairman, Daniel Servitje, was described as 'always very focused on overall well-being'. Bimbo Vice-Presidents also take the role of well-being leaders. Support by high-level leaders was perceived as particularly important when the work on WFN experienced challenges.

Such a commitment on the part of leaders is, however, neither a given nor unmalleable. Interviewees observed that many leaders, particularly local leaders, need training, explaining, persuading, support, empowerment, and accountability demands placed on them to prioritise WFN and health and well-being more broadly. It is an assumption that 'because a leader is a leader, they will promote health and safety'" Leaders too face a learning curve. Notably, it appeared as if health and well-being staff can challenge leaders on progress in terms of health and well-being actions, even if they have no managerial relationship to or seniority over them. This may happen, for instance, at monthly 'accountability meetings'.

External partners

More rarely and briefly, interviewees mentioned contributions to WFN of external partners, including university professors and students, digital influencers with a background and credentials in nutrition, and health professionals. Institutionally, collaborations with the Mexican Social Security Institute (the main public social security and healthcare provider in Mexico, covering a large proportion of the formally employed population), and Danone Institute were mentioned.

INTEGRATION OF NUTRITION INTO OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

At Bimbo, occupational safety and health – Safety and Well-Being in the company nomenclature – is an expansive and ambitious area, central to the functioning of the company. As mentioned, its goal is as maximalist as 'supporting the well-being of our associates ... so that they can fulfil their maximum potential'. 'It's not just about eating well and exercising. It's about helping you be the best version of yourself so that you can connect with your purpose in life, so that you feel fulfilled and can develop in your work'.

At the core of OSH at Bimbo is the concept of 'well-being', which has gone through forensic articulation with the aim of having it standardised across the company. Complexity and irreducible individual differences in interpreting well-being are acknowledged. The standardisation is believed to offer an indispensable company-level understanding and direction of travel. There is 'a Bimbo well-being recipe', as per which every associate needs to feel that they **matter**, that they **belong**, that they **can**, that they **contribute**, and that they are **respected**. There are 'dimensions' arising from the core belief of **We value the person**: (1) **We promote healthy work environments**, (2) **We are a support network**, (3) **We boost associates' health, and (4) We reconcile life and work**. There are 'principles' through which well-being actions are put into place: **conviction, confidentiality, flexibility, and collaboration**.

Healthy diet are one of the 5 'pillars' of Bimbo's well-being model, alongside **Physical Activity** (Pillar 1), **Life balance** (Pillar 2), **Health** (Pillar 3) and **Work-life** (Pillar 5). Nutrition is thus fully integrated in Bimbo's OSH framework. It benefits from all safety and well-being structures and processes in the company. At the same time, nutrition-related activities compete for attention and resources with a broad range of other activities. There are also country, regional, and local differences in the prioritisation of nutrition as an aspect of safety and well-being, based on situational diagnoses, on a local leader's focus, and on multiple further contextual factors that determine the relative importance of nutrition in the big picture of safety, health, and well-being. **Box 5** gives examples of OSH actions mentioned by interviewees, by way of illustrating the scope and solidity of such work.

BOX 5. EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES UNDER BIMBO'S SAFETY & WELL-BEING UMBRELLA

These activities both provide an enabling context and compete for attention with nutrition activities:

Medical and health care and prevention in general

- health professionals on site (including nutritionists in some sites)
- access to telemedicine
- campaigns for laboratory tests and screening for common health issues
- vaccines and vaccination campaigns
- eye care at preferential rates
- dental care agreements
- 'stop smoking' support

Mental health

- emotional support helplines in 11 countries
- mental health awareness campaign
- flexible work programmes
- workshops on mental health and stress management

Physical activity

- Bimbo Race
- 10,000-step challenge
- active pauses
- Mexicano Activos certification
- preferential rate for gyms

Thematic weeks and fairs

- Health Week
- Nutrition Week
- Safety & well-being fairs

Employee group-specific activities

- Plus 40
- Newcomers

Workshops

- chronic disease workshops
- experiential workshops with people with lived experience
- mental health and stress management workshops

CHALLENGES TO WORKFORCE NUTRITION AT GRUPO BIMBO

As with drivers, challenges to WFN discussed by interviewees were almost always shared with those to health and well-being work more broadly. Attention given to challenges was far more limited than that given to drivers, with often a single interviewee mentioning a challenge briefly. This does not mean that challenges to

implementing WFN programmes have been few or minor. Rather, by the current stage of the work on WFN, many have been overcome.

BARRIERS SHARED WITH HEALTH AND WELL-BEING INITIATIVES

Five main types of barriers, shared between nutrition initiatives and health and well-being ones more generally, were identified.

First, nutrition, health, and well-being are often perceived as pertaining to the realm of the personal, which tends to be experienced as private, nobody else's business but yours, and/or well-entrenched:

'How you take care of yourself is something personal, what does the company have to do with it?'

'There are employees who say, 'Well, I've always been like this. And they're not going to change me'. You see it a lot, for example, in older age groups.'

Second, the importance of nutrition, health, and well-being may be acknowledged but not backed up by adequate action. Some of the reasons can be the urgency of other priorities, often combined with budget limitations; a tendency to take one's health for granted; and, in partial contrast, a fear of what a closer look into one's health may reveal:

'[M]any times what we were facing was, 'oh, dear, I do have to make my wellbeing plan, but right now, oh, dear, no, I don't have the budget, or I have other priorities, so I'll do it later'.

'We've seen that people don't go to the campaigns because they're afraid of being told they have a disease, so they prefer to live peacefully in ignorance. 'I'm going to go, and they're going to do an electrocardiogram on me. What if they find something wrong with my heart?' or 'They're going to do tests on me. What if they find I have cancer?'

Things often need to deteriorate significantly so that action is taken. And since many health and well-being programmes are aimed at prevention, such deterioration may not have yet happened:

'[M]any people take their health for granted. When do they worry? When do we go to the doctor? When we get sick. When do we go to the nutritionist? When my trousers no longer fit, or I'm tired of climbing the stairs, or I don't want to exercise anymore, or I can't anymore.'

Third, regardless of the hard work to bring nutrition, health, and well-being programmes about, and how exceptional they may be in comparison to what is available in many other companies, they are often taken for granted and insufficiently appreciated. One of the consequences of this lack of appreciation, potentially combined with general hedonic treadmill effects (i.e., the psychological reality that people quickly return to their happiness 'set point', despite major changes for the better or worse), is that staff well-being was not necessarily seen as rising, regardless of the 'incredible programmes' put in place:

'[W]ell-being is always at the very bottom, but we have a lot of initiatives and incredible programmes. And we were, 'OK, why do they feel that way if we are doing so much?'

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Fourth, information overload and lack of visibility could mean that what is on offer in terms of nutrition, health, and well-being, as well as communication aimed at informing and empowering associates to take better care of themselves, may fail to reach them.

Finally, since a broad range of initiatives on nutrition, health, and well-being are outsourced to external providers, there is uncertainty about the quality of their work. Individual workers' negative experiences with an external provider may then quickly affect uptake through word of mouth. Moreover, some providers do not offer sufficient flexibility in meeting workers' needs, as determined by the nature of the business.

"If the provider doesn't bring people, doesn't bring all the materials, and doesn't adapt to your schedule, participation varies greatly. What's more, if ... the person taking the blood, for some reason, missed the vein, couldn't find it, then people start to spread the word, 'Look, he missed the vein.' And then they don't participate anymore."

'There are providers who say, 'No, I'm not going to go [in the requested hours], I work from 10 to 12'. Well, from 10 to 12 you're not going to find anyone, are you? Or the sales centres that open at 6:30 in the morning and are only open from 6:30 to 7:30 or 8:00 at the latest, meaning that after 8:00, there is no one left in the sales centre.'

NUTRITION-SPECIFIC BARRIERS

In addition to the above barriers related to WFN pillar-specific programmes (e.g., Healthy Canteens or nutrition education) or health and well-being programmes more generally, only one further major barrier to implementing WFN programmes was identified. Namely, the nature of the work of some employee types, such as salespeople, seriously constrains opportunities for healthy eating, even if some of the constraints can be effectively addressed with a change of mindset:

'[W]hen I went to the sales centres, they would say to us, 'Don't tell us how to take care of ourselves because we eat street food or sometimes even Bimbo products that we bring with us. We have no choice but to eat some crisps' ... [M]aybe they are a little more closed-minded because they believe that their type of work prevents them from eating well'.

'[I]t is a very rigid profile, it is a profile that is very difficult to work with, it is a profile that is already very behind ... we are still trying.'

MAIN DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES FOR WORKFORCE NUTRITION AT GRUPO BIMBO

MAIN DRIVERS

To summarise, the main driver of WFN programmes at Bimbo directly identified by interviewees was the company belief of 'valuing the person'. This, in turn, gave rise to an expansive structure of safety, health, and well-being directed work, which comes under the umbrella of Bimbo's version of OSH – the Safety & Well-Being area. Integration of nutrition into OSH can thus be considered a major driver of WFN in the company. Leadership support and relevant company policies, strategies, and models were also identified as instrumental in advancing WFN initiatives. From an analytic point of view, the company's capacity to 'have one's cake and eat it' – i.e., to navigate, with both

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business acumen and ethical integrity, the complex terrain of discordance between some healthy eating advice and some Bimbo products – also allows WFN work to progress effectively and ambitiously.

Bimbo is also a global leader in WFN because of the sheer volume of work, creativity, and perseverance of many committed associates over 17 years by now (taking as a turning point the publication of the company's first Sustainability Strategy, with its commitment to associates' health). The variety, reach, and refinement of activities achieved has been neither quick nor easy.

MAIN CHALLENGES

Challenges to WFN were directly discussed far less than drivers. This may be because of the stage at which the case study was conducted: of WFN being well-established, after many challenges have been overcome. The need for a culture change in terms of how associates perceive healthy eating appears to have been the hardest of these. It has been handled primarily by strategically advanced nutritional communication activities and by radical respect for people's eating and diet decisions and starting points. The change in the Zeitgeist – the fact that attention to good nutrition in the broader cultural context has increased – has also supported the transformation.

Some of the 'live' challenges to WFN and broader health and well-being initiatives at Bimbo appear to be those associated with information overload and impact measurement. The latter arises partly because of the methodological complexity of impact measurement in the case of complex interventions in a company with over 150,000 employees across 39 countries and, potentially, because of the tendency of human beings to become quickly used to positive change and return to a set point for their well-being.

NEXT STEPS FOR WORKFORCE NUTRITION AT GRUPO BIMBO AND THE PLACE OF FURTHER INTEGRATION INTO OSH AMONGST THEM

In the words of one of the interviewees, 'you are going to hear a lot of us in the future ... We already have impressive things, but we are going to have more impressive things in the future'. In terms of reach, long-standing work on healthy canteens, breastfeeding support, and face-to-face access to a nutritionist seems likely to grow. From an outsider perspective, one of the most interesting developments would be the improved reporting of WFN indicators by Bimbo's Global Well-Being Observatory. This may also clarify the way forward in terms of immediate next steps and priorities. One of the concerns that may arise is whether, under the company's new CEO, WFN and broader health and well-being initiatives will advance as effectively as they have done under the last.

Relative to one of the main points of interest of this case study – the importance of integration of nutrition into OSH – 'more of the same' appears an effective and likely way forward. WFN is well integrated, arguably fully integrated, into the Safety & Well-Being structures of Grupo Bimbo. It remains to be seen if, as an unintended consequence, this is a level of integration that leads to WFN losing some of its prominence, by needing to compete for attention and budgets with numerous initiatives under the OSH umbrella.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS CASE STUDY

This case study was based on interviews with key informants who were deeply immersed in work on WFN at Bimbo. This generated an exceptionally rich and granular dataset for only six interviews (as an indication, over 750 'references' – segments of texts representing distinct ideas – were coded in the data analysis). At times, the level of articulation of an interviewee's approach and lessons learnt through experience and reflexivity was humbling. The conduct of some of the interviewees in Spanish by a nutritionist also contributed to a richness of data. The case study was conducted by researchers who are independent of both Grupo Bimbo and GAIN, enabling a better control of risks of bias arising from institutional belonging.

In terms of limitations, regardless of the richness of the data, this is a very small case study for a programme of work in a global company of the scale of Bimbo. Importantly, all interviewees have responsibilities for advancing aspects of WFN, sometimes at global levels. They are programme developers as opposed to programme users. It is the latter who can ultimately judge how actions put into place translate into personal experiences and impact. Due to the current stage of revisions of well-being indicators, as part of the process of configuring Bimbo's Global Well-Being Observatory, we were also unable to offer numerical company-level data on uptake and impact of WFN. Furthermore, two of the pillars of WFN – breastfeeding support and nutrition focused health checks and follow-up – were addressed to a very limited degree relative to the pillars of healthy food at work (Healthy Canteens) and nutrition education. Finally, because of the interviewees' roles, the nature of interviewers' probing for alternatives to the official Bimbo narrative, and social desirability bias, the case study may have missed opportunities to uncover more of the challenges experienced by WFN initiatives at Bimbo and of the complexity behind positive representations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As a priority, further research is needed with recipients, as opposed to developers, of WFN programmes at Bimbo, and with large samples of these people. As mentioned, the metrics of the Bimbo Global Well-Being Observatory will be of significant interest once available for sharing. Targeted interviews are needed with associates who are directly involved in developing and advancing work on breastfeeding support and with nutritionists who provide personal consultations to Bimbo staff. Research on WFN at Bimbo locations outside of Mexico, which benefits from proximity to headquarters, is also an important next step.

CONCLUSION

This case study explored practices, drivers, and challenges of WFN and its integration into OSH in a major global food producing and distributing company, Grupo Bimbo. It found that a company philosophy that prioritises valuing and caring for employees has been instrumental for both advancing WFN initiatives and instituting a comprehensive Safety & Well-Being infrastructure. This shared ethical core also contributes to a natural integration of WFN into OSH. The case study also identified effective solutions in navigating, with both business acumen and ethical integrity, conflicts and tensions of values arising when implementing WFN initiatives in a food company whose portfolio includes both healthy and indulgent food. Finally, a route to food system transformation was outlined, as driven by a large company from the food sector that applies a variety of

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levers to change both its employee and consumer food habits, while simultaneously enhancing the nutritional profile of its portfolio.

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ANNEX 1. THIS CASE AS AN 'EXEMPLAR' OF FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

THE EXEMPLARS OF FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

Addressing interlinked challenges related to food systems, such as malnutrition, climate change, and equity in food systems employment, requires integrated approaches that work across all aspects of food systems, as opposed to in sectoral silos. The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) crystallised widespread agreement on the need for this kind of “food system transformation” to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and other development goals. However, concrete examples of what food system transformation can look like in practice remain limited, and not much is known about the factors that can foster or inhibit these transformative steps or processes.

The ‘Exemplars of Food System Transformation’ initiative, part of a multi-donor programme led by GAIN called Nourishing Food Pathways, thus seeks to document case studies of food system transformation in action. By considering individual cases on their own, as well as viewing a diverse set of cases jointly, the initiative seeks to better understand the process of food system transformation, including facilitating factors and how they can be fostered and barriers and how they can be overcome. Through a compendium of examples, as well as generalisable lessons, the work seeks to inform and inspire others seeking to transform food systems.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The overarching research question for the ‘Exemplars’ is thus: How does food system transformation come about, and what fosters or hinders food system transformation? To answer this overarching question, the initiative is guided by a framework that divides the transformation process into five phases, based on the Kaleidoscope Model for policy change (4), and identifies factors that promote change within each phase (see Figure A1). These factors are primarily drawn from the Kaleidoscope Model, with additional factors drawn from the ‘Three I’s’ framework, social movement theory, the advocacy coalition framework, Baker al (2018), Cullerton et al (2016), and (on accountability) Garton et al (2022) (5–7).

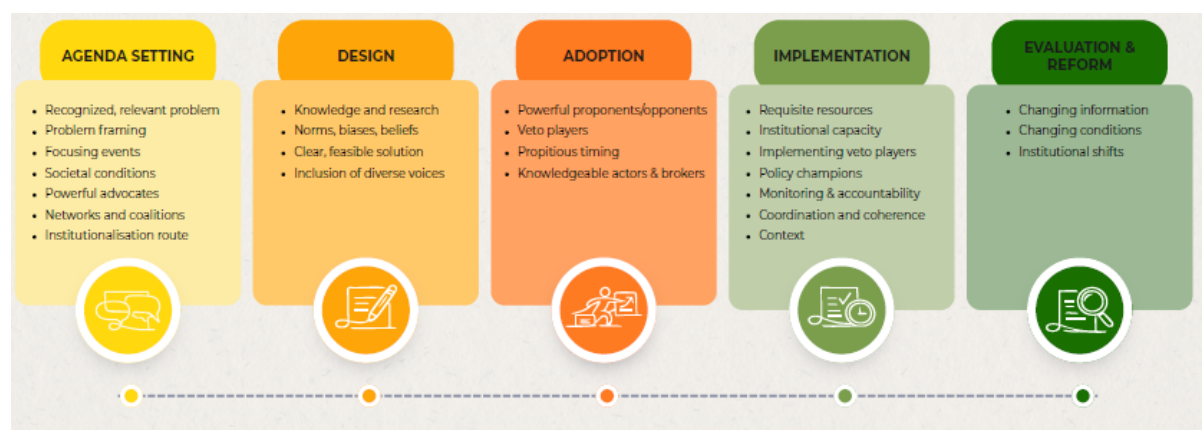


Figure A1. Exemplars Framework for Analysing Change Processes

The exemplars framework specifies a set of research questions that connect to each phase and can be applied to individual cases where relevant. The framework is meant to be a flexible tool, which can be adopted to context but should provide structure for viewing the cases jointly.

In addition, this process-focused framework can where helpful be embedded in a larger framework that considers not just the studied change or intervention but also the context in which it occurs, the stakeholders with which it interacts, and how it affects food system drivers, activities, and outcomes (Figure A2).

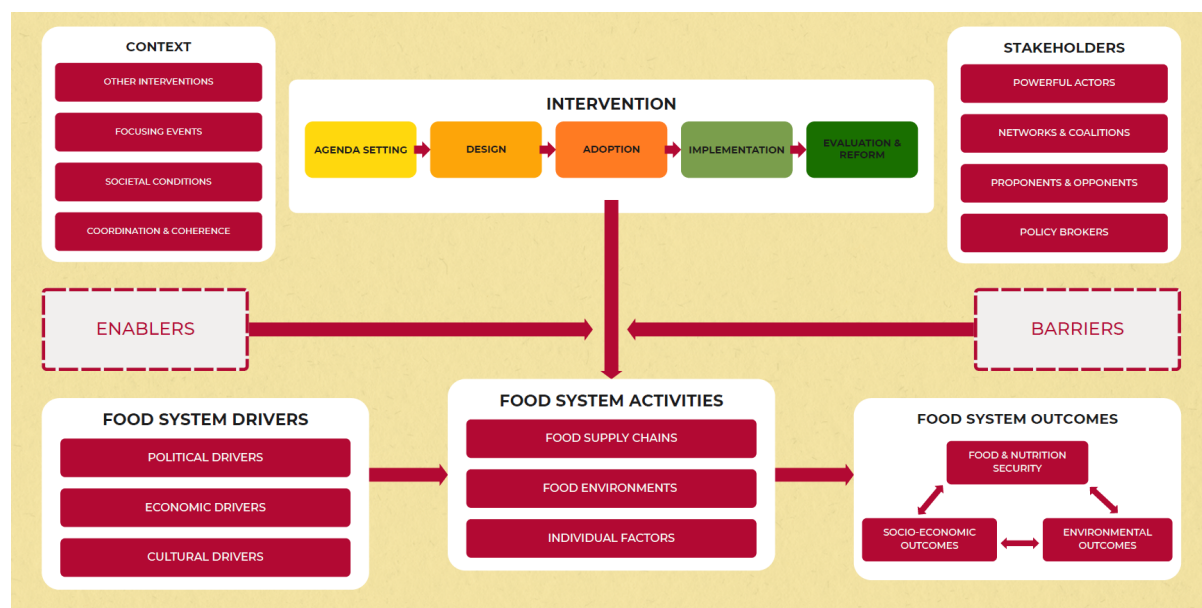


Figure A2. Exemplars Framework for Understand Change Processes within Context

This common framework for identifying research questions and focuses is used to facilitate synthesis and comparison across the studied cases.

How does this case fit within the Exemplars?

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This case focuses on two desired outcomes of food systems transformation: (primarily) improved nutrition and health and (secondarily) better livelihoods. It focuses on a type of actor (or 'change maker') that is not typically thought of as being central to food system transformation processes: employers, specifically considering their capacity to foster better diets and health for workers, as well as better livelihoods for them, through workforce nutrition programmes. To broaden the potential applicability of its insights, the case study looks specifically at the inclusion of WFN within Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) approaches.

Within the exemplars process framework (Figure A1), this case is primarily one about 'Design' and 'Implementation'; it demonstrates the importance of developing a clear, feasible solution and including diverse voices in the design process, as well as having appropriate resources and capacity, 'champions' for the approach, monitoring & accountability, and coordination and coherence, all within a company context that facilitated the desired change (though also made it more delicate or complex in some ways). Secondarily, the case speaks to 'Agenda Setting' – particularly framing the problem and having an institutionalisation route within the company.

The table on the next page maps some of the key results of the case study to the Exemplars framework.

Table A1. Mapping Case Study Results to Exemplars Framework

	Facilitating Factors & Strengths	Barriers & Challenges
Design Phase		
Knowledge and Research	<p>Following 'healthy eating plate' guidance to design evidence-based menus</p> <p>Developing Bimbo's own Global Healthy Canteen Checklist</p> <p>Worksite-level statistics on health indicators used to convince Canteen Committees</p> <p>Statistics-based situational diagnoses feed into planning location-specific programmes</p>	<p>Initial version of Global Healthy Canteen Checklist had to be scaled back, as it was too challenging to apply</p> <p>Some may see company-provided research and evidence as suspect due to the company's business interests</p>
Norms, biases, ideology, and beliefs	<p>Company has strong norms of 'valuing the person', with which the WFN programme aligned</p> <p>Design specifically aimed to ensure that healthiness does not compromise taste</p> <p>Avoidance of 'extreme' approaches to healthy eating to prevent worker backlash</p> <p>Making healthy menus optional</p> <p>Careful sensitisation of Canteen Committees</p> <p>Messaging used multiple entry points into the idea of 'eating well' to overcome resistance related to beliefs about 'healthy eating' or 'workforce nutrition'</p>	<p>Some workers did have pre-existing biases about healthy food, health, and nutrition that either entailed initial resistance or meant they did not fully participate in the programme (e.g., avoiding health checks)</p> <p>Some concessionaires saw healthy menus as not sustainable from a business perspective</p> <p>Some questioning of the approach in initial phases, when results were not apparent</p> <p>The attachment to local food traditions (e.g., menus high in fat or carbohydrates) necessitated a true 'culture change' among some employees</p> <p>Some staff perceive nutrition, health, and well-being as being 'personal', private, or well-entrenched, creating barriers to engagement</p>
Clear, feasible solution	<p>Bimbo's Global Healthy Canteen Checklist demonstrates feasible options for healthy meals</p>	<p>Solution must be implemented by concessionaires, which may be resistant to change</p>

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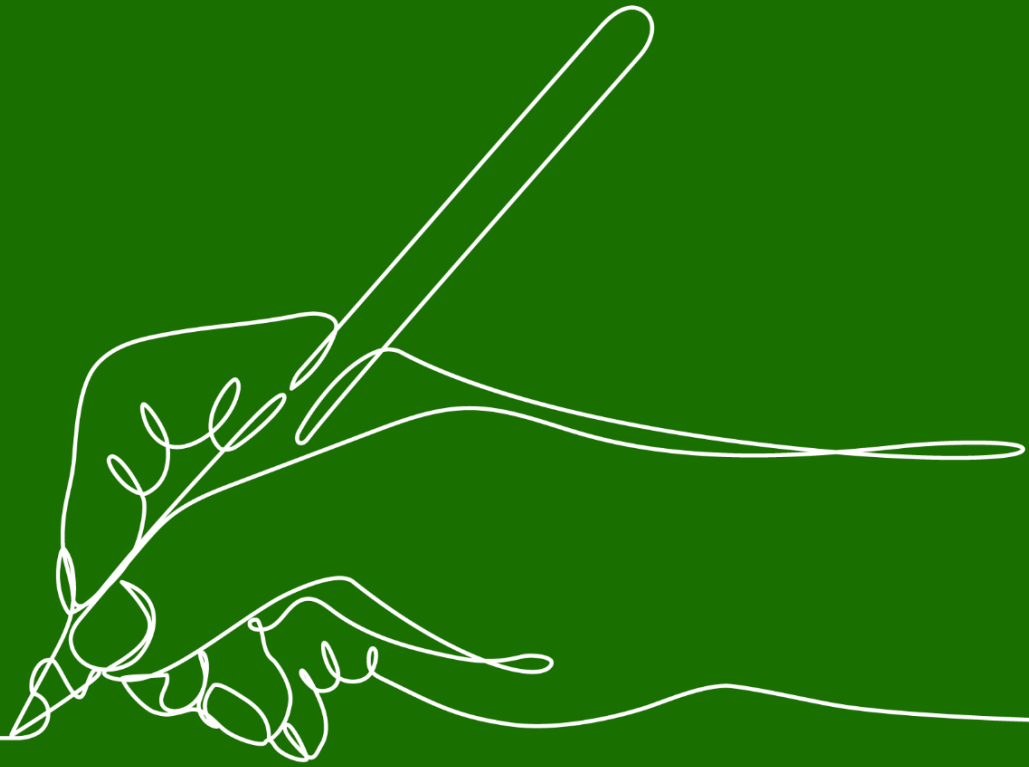
	<p>Healthy Canteens align clearly with mandates in countries where government regulations require employers to provide canteens (e.g., Brazil)</p>	<p>Implementation can be challenging at smaller workplaces or in countries where it is not a requirement or norm for employers to provide canteens</p> <p>Even if well implemented, cognitive biases such as the 'hedonic treadmill effect' may mean that the solution is not perceived to be working</p>
<p>Inclusion of diverse voices in the design process</p>	<p>Co-creation and collaborative approach to designing WFN initiatives</p> <p>Canteen Committees, including union representatives, concessionaires, doctors, and safety supervisors, involved in design and uptake</p> <p>Standards developed to be inclusive of regional variations in staple food, the physical activity of employees, and local legal frameworks</p> <p>Diverse channels for nutrition communication to reach different audiences, including those without computer access, and using diverse messengers</p> <p>Some interventions (e.g., nutritional advice) open to employees' families</p>	<p>Some food cultures (e.g., those which prioritise eating food brought from home) can make appropriate design more challenging</p> <p>Diversity and scale of company can make it difficult to ensure inclusive and diverse approaches that are also consistent across settings</p>
<p>Implementation Phase</p>		
<p>Requisite budget and resources</p>	<p>While workers pay for food, Bimbo subsidises it, with larger subsidies for healthy food to ensure worker budgets are not a barrier to their healthy eating</p> <p>Dedicated internal communication channel that could also be used for nutrition messaging</p> <p>Overlap between internal communications on nutrition and external communications on company products increases content available</p>	<p>Other companies make food entirely free to workers, which Bimbo does not do</p> <p>Reliance on external content can lead to messages that are more restricted or less well adapted to staff, or introduce bias in how 'indulgent' products are treated</p>

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<p>Institutional capacity</p>	<p>WFN at Bimbo integrated into company's well-being model, facilitating capacity, resourcing, and buy-in</p> <p>Numerous supporting policies, including the company's Sustainability Strategy (2008), and the Global Policy of Breastfeeding Support, enabled by maternity and paternity policies, provided an institutional foundation for the work and made all staff feel they had responsibility to act</p> <p>Allocation of tasks associated with WFN to different parts of the company (e.g., R&D, People/HR) helped to align role with capacity and ensure broader buy-in and leverage for the approach</p> <p>Existence in every Bimbo organisation of a Well-Being Committee, which was instrumental in implementing WFN and broader health and well-being activities</p>	<p>Scale of company makes it difficult to provide health checks / consultations with nutritionists to all staff</p> <p>Many functions are outsourced, and external providers may have variable capacity or quality</p>
<p>Implementing stage veto players</p>	<p>Canteen Committees would be veto players but generally were not, as they were involved in design</p> <p>Health and well-being staff have ability to challenge local leaders on progress in terms of health and well-being actions (e.g., through 'accountability meetings'), keeping their veto power in check</p>	<p>Some concessionaires have been reluctant to adopt</p> <p>Local leaders have needed training, convincing, and accountability demands placed on them to prioritise WFN and health and well-being more broadly; some have not prioritised it highly</p>
<p>Commitment of policy champions</p>	<p>High-level leadership committed to well-being of workers generally</p> <p>Staff responsible for WFN generally highly convinced by the potential impact of the work</p>	<p>Recent leadership transition makes it less certain whether commitment to WFN will continue to be as strong</p>
<p>Monitoring and Accountability</p>	<p>Checklists and inspections for canteens and breastfeeding rooms; culture of using results to product action plans, with high expectations that they are followed</p>	<p>No rigorous, quantitative data yet available on WFN in the company</p>

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	<p>Bimbo has a Global Well-Being Observatory with the goal of measuring, in a more comprehensive, centralised way, the impact of organisational well-being activities</p> <p>Option for staff to provide feedback through comment boxes, staff surveys</p>	
Coordination and coherence	<p>Vertical coherence and coordination from Bimbo HQ to other workplaces supports consistent approaches across the company, including through Canteen Guidelines and nutrition communication and education content</p> <p>Integration of nutrition into broader Safety & Wellbeing programmes helped to ensure coordination and coherence among these</p>	<p>Integration with broader Safety & Wellbeing programmes can mean WFN is competing for space / attention with these initiatives ('content overload')</p>
Contextual conditions that facilitated or prevented implementation	<p>The company being a food company created a natural 'in' for a WFN programme and increased company motivation, as workers with better nutrition knowledge can be more effective at certain functions, like sales and innovation</p> <p>Alignment of nutrition messaging with learning about Bimbo's own products and the company purpose</p> <p>Headquarters in Mexico, which has a relatively strong government approach to public health nutrition, may have facilitated acceptance of the approach</p> <p>General trends towards healthy eating supported WFN within the company</p>	<p>The company's portfolio containing 'indulgent' or unhealthy products made it delicate for the company to engage with employees on healthy eating and necessitated some actions that may weaken the WFN programme's overall effectiveness, such as providing free Bimbo products in canteens</p> <p>Alignment between business interest and topics chosen for nutrition education could introduce bias</p>



ABOUT GAIN

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the UN in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses and civil society, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all people, especially the most vulnerable.

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