PREFACE

Until now, courses in community nutrition taught at universities and colleges in developing countries have relied, in the main, on American or British textbooks. But the nutrition-related health challenges with which developing countries must grapple differ considerably from those found in highly industrialized Western nations, as do the community settings in which health services and nutrition programmes are delivered. The present book owes its existence to an earlier volume, *Community Nutrition Textbook for South Africa: A Rights-Based Approach* (2008), on which we also collaborated. As its title indicates, that book focused specifically on South Africa. We soon realized, however, that a pressing need existed for a similar book aimed at developing countries more broadly.

The overriding goal of this book is to enhance the health and well-being of low-income populations throughout the world by improving the quality of nutrition programming available in local communities. Well-educated nutrition professionals are, of course, essential to this goal. Community nutritionists work in diverse settings, including schools, hospitals, workplaces, and local clinics, as well as health departments. (The term *public health nutritionist* is to some extent synonymous, although that term often implies a somewhat narrower range of duties carried out in the context of a government department.) Nutrition professionals are charged with assessing the nutritional status and requirements of individuals and groups and with planning, implementing, and evaluating programmes designed to address those needs. This volume is for those studying to become such professionals, in hopes of working to better people’s lives.

Existing textbooks on community nutrition tend to be prohibitively expensive for most students in developing countries. As an open access publication, this book can be downloaded from the Internet by anyone, anywhere, at no cost from the AU Press website. This innovative approach to textbook publishing clearly holds great potential for overcoming a major barrier that separates students in developing countries from high-quality textbooks. We therefore applaud Pamela Holway—for her hard work and dedication to this volume—and Athabasca University Press, located in Edmonton, Canada, for seeing it through to publication. We also thank the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for allowing us to use material from our previous book.

Three dozen authors collaborated in the writing of this book. Their collective wealth of experience comes from having worked in diverse countries spread across Africa, Europe, Australia, and North America. Most of them now hold university positions, but some are employed in government departments or by research organizations. In assembling this multi-talented team, we have, we hope, created a rich mixture of knowledge, experience, and deep understanding.

Nutrition is very much a work in progress. We are confident that today’s generation of students and young researchers will build on the ideas of today, adapt to the new realities of change in developing countries, and help solve the many challenges that confront us.

*Norman J. Temple and Nelia Steyn*