# FOOD and NUTRITION EDUCATION for Healthy Diets

## WHY IS FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION NEEDED?

### MALNUTRITION is a global problem

**1.9 BILLION** adults are **overweight** or **obese**

**2 BILLION** people suffer from some form of **micronutrient deficiency**

**161 Million** children under the age 5 are **too short for their age**

**795 Million** people **do not get the food they need** to live a healthy life

### UNHEALTHY DIETS

are one of the leading causes of global **malnutrition**

### Diets and eating behaviours are influenced by many factors

**INDIVIDUAL**
- Food preferences & enjoyment
- Beliefs, attitudes, values, perceptions
- Knowledge, skills
- Empowerment

**FAMILY / GROUP**
- Cultural & social practices
- Social support
- Networks
- Peer influence

**COMMUNITY / INSTITUTIONAL**
- Rules, informal structures
- Child care organizations
- Workplaces, schools
- Neighborhoods, shops, restaurants
- Community organizations
- Information available
- Recreational facilities, parks

**NATIONAL**
- Health care system
- Food assistance programs
- Food industry
- Food & agricultural systems
- Policy
- Political & social structures
- Media
- Social & cultural norms

Food and Nutrition Education works at all these levels

### FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

consists of a variety of **educational strategies** that can be implemented at **different levels**, aimed at **helping people** to achieve **long-lasting improvements in their diets** and eating behaviours.

## FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION is not only about giving people information. IT IS ABOUT:

- Empowering people to take charge of their own diets and health
- Building on people's desires to be healthy, know more about diets, and eat good food
- Understanding people's needs and what influences their diets
- Carrying out realistic and participatory educational activities
- Aiming at small, appealing, do-able improvements in what people perceive and **do**
- Engaging all people who can help or hinder dietary changes
- Including all relevant sectors and strengthening their capacities
- Influencing decision makers to implement policies which promote healthy diets
- Advocating for improvements in the food environment to enable healthy food choices

## Some RESULTS of successful food and nutrition education initiatives:

**CONSUMERS**
understand their dietary needs, recognize popular misinformation and make healthier food choices

**FAMILIES**
prepare nutritious food safely and hygienically

Plan and shop for healthy meals that are within their budget

**GOVERNMENTS**
work to integrate food and nutrition education into national policies

**PARENTS**
gain new knowledge and skills to give their children a good start in life

**PEOPLE**
enjoy cooking and eating healthier foods

**COMMUNITIES**
make better use of their traditional and local foods

**SCHOOLS**
know how to provide healthier meals and snacks for their students

**FOOD PRODUCERS**
are supported to produce and market healthier foods

**POLICY MAKERS**
understand the need to regulate harmful food advertising to children



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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