What do we mean by

NUTRITION EDUCATION?
What is NOT nutrition education?

Assumption that nutrition activities are nutrition *education* – e.g.

- school meals
- school gardens
- growth monitoring
- dietary supplements
- providing more nutritious food
- instructing householders in growing vegetables
“Nutrition education”

Centres on two poles, from two different cultural sources:

- **KNOWLEDGE**, dominated by
  - nutrition science
  - food science
  - medicine
  - organized bodies of information

- **PRACTICE**, dominated by
  - systems of social practice and tradition
  - with own mechanisms for change and maintenance

- Educational activities of both kinds and all blends
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOME THINK NUTRITION EDUCATION IS ....</th>
<th>... AND THAT IT IS NOT THE SAME AS ...</th>
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<tr>
<td>what students of human nutrition do at university</td>
<td>dietary counselling</td>
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<td>what children get at school</td>
<td>national breastfeeding campaigns</td>
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<td>training for extension workers in nutrition</td>
<td>cookery classes and demonstrations</td>
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<td>food labelling?</td>
<td>behaviour change communication</td>
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<td>social marketing</td>
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<td>dietary guidelines</td>
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<td>health promotion</td>
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Effectiveness

Some NE activities are demonstrably more
• effective in affecting practice
• cost-effective
• sustainable
• “ecological”

So it matters where you fix the label...
The term “nutrition education” has been associated with:

- Traditional instructional approaches
- Formal learning in institutions

Learning only about nutrition rather than learning to act to improve nutrition

+ LOW IMPACT ON PRACTICE ....
TWO REASONS FOR USING THE TERM NUTRITION EDUCATION
It is the only umbrella term for all the ways people can learn to improve diet.

For example:

- Behaviour change
- Health promotion
- Counselling
- IEC
The most authoritative new definition firmly assumes action aims and outcomes:

“Nutrition education is any combination of educational strategies, accompanied by environmental supports, designed to facilitate voluntary adoption of food choices and other food- and nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being.”

Isabel Contento *Nutrition Education: Linking Theory, Research and Practice*. 2007
What we understand by NE

• Aims to affect dietary behaviour
• Includes many activities known by other names (e.g. counselling, promotion, demonstrations, campaigns, cooking classes, guidelines, manuals)
• Does not include
  – Actions purely to improve nutrition status
  – Study of nutrition science without application
• Mainly concerned with food and diet
• Depends on enabling environment (e.g. regulation, food security, infrastructure, institutionalization etc.)
And NE training? the same confusions

- Nutrition education training is taken to be
  - nutrition knowledge instead of
  - nutrition education + practice
  i.e.
  - learning about nutrition
  - transmitting knowledge
  - not learning how to improve dietary practices
This is our business

effective education for nutrition in action
A rose by any other name...?

The meaning is not in the words or the definitions but in how people use the words.
What’s under the NE umbrella?

**LEARNING AIMING TO IMPROVE DIET & DIETARY PRACTICES**

- Supporting and enabling environment
- Processes of developing & testing NE
- Advocacy
- BCC, IEC, Health promotion

**“NATURAL” NUTRITION EDUCATION**

- Practising, implementing & following up changes
- NE training
- Counselling. Demonstrations, Campaigns etc.

- Actions to improve nutrition status without learning

Formal study of nutrition science, not applied