



Education for Effective Nutrition in Action (ENACT)

Welcome to the first issue of the ENACT project newsletter. We aim to produce several issues to update you on the progress of the project

THE ENACT PROJECT¹ Nutrition education is known to be a key factor in preventing malnutrition and enhancing food security, yet training for effective nutrition education is almost non-existent in many parts of the world.

The NEAC analysis In 2010 FAO conducted an assessment of professional training in nutrition education in seven African countries which highlighted the need for capacity development in this field.²

The ENACT project Based on these findings, FAO started the ENACT project in January 2012 with funding from the German Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV). The project is developing, pre-testing and disseminating a basic certificate in nutrition education at undergraduate level, to be delivered both face-to-face and online.

FOR YOU, WHAT IS “NUTRITION EDUCATION”? Is it -

1. Activities designed to improve nutrition, e.g. schoolchildren help to grow vegetables in school gardens and eat them at school meals.
2. Studying nutrition, or learning about nutrition as a subject, e.g. taking a degree course in human nutrition or seeing a presentation about micronutrients.
3. Helping people with the information and skills they need to improve their diets, e.g. mothers in a community group discuss how to feed children better (and why) and take part in cooking demonstrations.

SEE LAST PAGE FOR THE ENACT IDEA OF NUTRITION EDUCATION



¹ GCP/INT/133/GER

² "The Need for Professional Training in Nutrition Education and Communication. Report on seven case studies carried out in Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, and Tanzania." <http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/29493-0f8152ac32d767bd34653bf0f3c4eb50b.pdf>



During the first half of 2012, principles and practices were defined, a module outline and sample unit were prepared and six African universities were selected as partners for piloting: the University of Botswana, Hawassa University in Ethiopia, the University of Ghana, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture in Nigeria, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and Makerere University in Uganda.

A curriculum development workshop was held with partners and others in July 2012 in Aburi, Ghana, to develop consensus on the contents and approach of the module.³

The module was then developed in line with the workshop's recommendations. A pre-piloting workshop was held in Makerere in April 2013 to familiarize tutors with the ENACT materials, discuss how the module should be implemented, agree on further revisions, and finalize arrangements for piloting the module. In addition, twelve students on the second-year undergraduate course in Nutrition at Makerere University tested two of the ENACT units during the workshop.

THE ENACT MODULE

The module is mainly designed for developing countries, in particular Africa. It is pitched at undergraduate level, but is aimed at all who have or will have the professional need to handle nutrition education in some form or another. The ENACT module consists of ten units:

1. The need for nutrition education
2. Explaining food, diet and healthy eating

³ "Report of the ENACT curriculum development workshop Aburi, Ghana 16-20 July 2012".
<http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/35313-0654afe67bcc744541cb39f0f6ec87.pdf>

3. Nutrition education actions
4. How good eating is learnt
5. How nutrition education is done
6. Analysing the situation
7. Objectives, messages, motivations
8. Implementation
9. Monitoring and Evaluation
10. The wider picture

Each unit consists of 3-4 hours of independent study and 1 or 2 tutorials.

Main features of the module:

- An emphasis on experience and practice.
- Making links with own experience and own country's problems.
- "Outside activities" which explore aspects of real life.
- The "nutrition education mini-project", which involves actually working through the process of an education intervention on a small scale.
- A large element of independent learning.
- Highly interactive follow-up tutorials.
- Becoming familiar with what already exists (or does not) in nutrition education.
- Becoming acquainted with useful reference sources and available learning materials.



Students act out a role play during the Unit 2 tutorial at the Makerere workshop.

Online version

In the final year of the project (2014) the online version will be developed, piloted and revised. Discussions are under way with Kenyatta University in Kenya, the University of South Africa (UNISA), and the People's Open Access Educational Initiative (People's University) regarding the piloting of the online course and it is hoped that a number of other organizations and aid agencies will delegate individual staff members to try out the online course and report on it to their organizations.

The EAT and ABC-N course

A training-of-trainers course named the EAT course, which covers the processes of formative enquiry (E), adaptation (A) and tutor training (T), is being developed as part of the project. This will provide training for tutors from institutes that wish to incorporate the ENACT module into their curricula in the future. The challenge remains to find a suitable regional partner for hosting the EAT course, in order to ensure its sustainability.

An optional preliminary course in basic nutrition (ABC-N course) for those who lack essential nutrition knowledge is also being developed, which will enable such students to obtain a basic knowledge of nutrition, in order to do the ENACT module. The ABC-N course has undergone several revisions and will be finalized soon.

Publicity

Publicity for the ENACT project has been limited but effective.

- Charles Nkwoala did a presentation titled "ENACT project background" to the Federation of Nigerian Nutrition Associations at the 42nd Annual General Meeting and Scientific Conference of the Nutrition Society of Nigeria, held from the 18th -22nd September, 2012.
- Members of the ENACT team took part in the meeting of ANEC (Africa Nutritional Epidemiology Conference) in Bloemfontein, South Africa in 2012. They organized a symposium dealing with the role of nutrition education and the work of the ENACT project, made presentations and held panel discussions together with project partners.
- An article on the WPHNA website⁴ ("The ENACT Project: Education for Effective Nutrition in Action").
- Participation in the Global forum on food security and nutrition.⁵

It is hoped that the online course will attract the interest of academic and training institutions, associations, development agencies and NGOs worldwide when it is launched in 2014. Partners are encouraged to promote the module in their own countries and elsewhere.

Expansion

A new project proposal has been formulated to extend the ENACT project to francophone Africa. This project known as ENAF (Le projet ENACT en Afrique Francophone) has received preliminary approval from the German Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV), and is likely to begin in November 2013.

⁴ <http://wphna.org/tag/enact/>

⁵ <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/forum/discussions/nutrition-enhancing-agriculture?page=2>



PILOTING OF THE ENACT MODULE IN AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

The piloting phase of the ENACT module has now begun and will continue until the end of 2013. Three universities have completed or started the piloting of the module: Uganda, Ghana and Botswana. Analysis of workbooks and reports is going ahead and the first revisions are being made.

Piloting Highlights

UGANDA

- Makerere University has just completed piloting the ENACT module. Piloting was done from June-August 2013 at Makerere University, within the School of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bio-Engineering, under the guidance of Prof. Archileo Kaaya and Dr Christine Magala-Nyago.
- Twenty four second-year Nutrition students participated in the piloting.
- The motivation and enthusiasm shown by the piloting students was very encouraging. They set up a Facebook page "Nutrition Education Students, Africa – NESA"¹, now being continued by other partner countries. Students are currently looking for funding to carry out a project which they have designed, which includes a strong nutrition education component.
- Tutors went beyond the call of duty to ensure that the piloting was successfully completed despite campus strikes and delays in funding. They were able to obtain special permission from the Vice Chancellor to allow their students to stay and finish off the programme.
- High quality feedback was provided to the ENACT team by the tutors and students. We are currently analysing this to help us revise the module.

GHANA

- The University of Ghana started the piloting on 15th August, and will be completing at the end of October.
- The module is being led by Dr Esi Colecraft and Dr Gloria Otoo from the Nutrition & Food Science Department. They also had a university shutdown due to strikes, but it did not diminish their enthusiasm!
- The ENACT module was advertised, and from 20 applicants, 12 students were selected for piloting. The majority of students have already completed their degree in nutrition.

BOTSWANA

- The University of Botswana started piloting at the beginning of September, and will be finishing in mid-November.
- The module is led by Prof. Maria Nnyepi and Dr Segametsi Maruapula from the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Despite postponements due to ill health, tutors have ensured that piloting started.
- 10 students, selected from 15 applicants, will be piloting the course. All are beginning the 4th year of the Family and Consumer Sciences degree, and have already done some study of nutrition.



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STUDENTS GO ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/NutritionEducationStudentsAfricaNesa>

NESA (Nutrition Education Students, Africa) is “a platform to unite nutrition education students in Africa with an aim of (reducing) malnutrition through effective Nutrition Education”. The website, originally started by the Ugandan students, is now being continued by students from the other piloting countries. NESA is proving to be a good platform for sharing ideas, voicing concerns, sharing photos and for obtaining quick answers to questions posed by the ENACT team. Tutors from Ghana have introduced a prize for the best Facebook contribution, as an incentive to get their students online and posting. Perhaps we need to introduce a prize for the most innovative tutors.

“ The most important thing I learnt in ENACT is that nutrition education is not about giving information, it's about addressing a variety of factors which influences people's dietary choices... ” (Uganda)

“ After going through Unit 1, I see the need for nutrition education in my country, Ghana. We have overlooked some things which are happening... The awareness needs to be created and made to stay. ” (Ghana)



A nutrition awareness survey carried out at the Kawala community, Uganda, by ENACTS students, during Unit 1. Uganda conducted some of the “outside activities” in a local community.



"A scene from the orientation or introduction class ... We held the meeting in the computer lab of our staff resource centre so the students could have access to computers and the internet... We also tried to make the day a bit special by having a nice tea break as a treat and also to have everyone mingle."

Esi Colecraft, Tutor, Ghana

FOCUS ON UGANDA

"Malnutrition problems cost Uganda over US \$899 million annually. Nutrition Education has been long overdue." Prof. Archileo Kaaya

"Piloting the Nutrition education module at Makerere University was very exciting, loaded with motivating experiential learning. To make communities change their behaviour, knowledge of nutrition science is not enough: we need to target the nutrition education according to their needs." Dr Christine Magala-Nyago

Feedback Thanks to Makerere tutors for the very high quality feedback produced on each of the units, and also for producing an easy-to-fill evaluation form filled in by students after completing each unit, with a summary compiled each week. This questionnaire has now been adapted and adopted for the other piloting partners.



What Ugandan students said...

“ Overall, it was important, necessary, full of interaction, learning and it will add value to the nutrition profession. ”

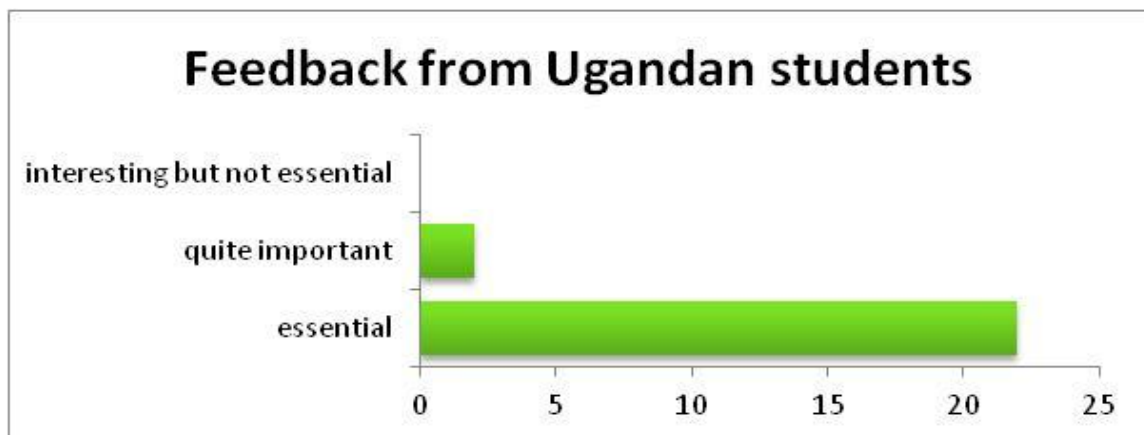


“ It was hectic but necessary to groom better nutrition educators in terms of relating with communities, identifying interventions that would actually work; and sustaining these interventions until the set goals are achieved ”

For a snapshot of the students project experience, please visit
<http://www.nutritionlearning.net/moodle2/mod/resource/view.php?id=317>

Responses to the final evaluation questionnaire

QUESTION: In your opinion, how valuable is this module for people planning to work in the field of nutrition education /public health /health promotion?



A memorable comment

“ENACT units are very interesting, I have actually realized the need for intensive nutrition education, the cultural practices. Gender factors, ignorance... etc. are actually in existence, we’ve done the outside activities and this is REAL. Nutrition education is a very important strategy to address most of these issues.”

Ugandan student

FUNDING FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL FORMULATED BY UGANDAN STUDENTS

Since completing the piloting, the Makerere students have put together a project proposal aimed at improving the nutrition status of people in their country, and are looking for funding. They say, *“...we felt obliged as nutrition students with some training on nutrition education to do something about the situation through holding a nutrition camp at the heart of the city.”* Any funding ideas will be greatly appreciated by them!

MUHUNSA (Makerere University Human Nutrition Students Association) MOBILE NUTRITION CLINICS (MUMONUC)

The project is aimed at assessing communities and individuals for nutrition needs, screening community members for nutrition related NCDs and offering nutrition education as a practical tool in reversing the high rates of malnutrition in Uganda. The project will be run in schools, public places, institutions both in rural and urban areas over a period of three years.



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The ENACT team and our partners

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Uganda (Makerere University)

Prof. Archileo Kaaya
Dr Christine Magala-Nyago

Dr. Paul Amuna from Greenwich University (UK) advises the ENACT team on curriculum development.

THE ENACT IDEA OF NUTRITION EDUCATION

For ENACT, nutrition education is (3): "*helping people with the information and skills they need to improve their diets*".

Some typical aims are learning to feed children better, avoiding sugary drinks, preparing healthy snacks, growing foods to diversify the diet. This definition covers many activities that are not usually called nutrition education, such as maternity counselling, behaviour change, cooking demonstrations, health promotion and dietary guidelines.

A well-known definition of nutrition

education: "*Nutrition Education is any combination of educational strategies, accompanied by environmental supports, designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of food choices and other food- and nutrition-related behaviours conducive to health and well-being....*" (Contento, I.R. 2007. *Nutrition Education: Linking theory, research, and practice*. Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett. 2007).

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