



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

Nutrition education needs and capacity analysis package

Tools for an enquiry into country needs
and capacity in nutrition education and
nutrition education training



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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
2016

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Cover photo: ©FAO/Riccardo Gangale

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Document 1. Guidelines for workshop facilitators, interviewers and survey teams

Purpose of the enquiry

The aim of the enquiry is to give a quick picture of country needs and capacity in nutrition education and professional training for nutrition educators. It consists mainly of a consultation with country experts, supported by insights into the nutrition and nutrition education situation, policy and institutions, consumer awareness and available nutrition-related local literature.

Format of the enquiry

The enquiry can be carried out in two ways:

- **A consultancy** The enquiry can be entrusted to a single consultant, who carries out all the researches and produces a final report. The expert consultation is conducted by individual interviews. The working time required is estimated at 40 days. This is probably the quickest, most efficient and most economical method of assembling the necessary information. However, given that nutrition education is poorly understood and the needs are not well perceived, this approach may not be sufficiently participatory to arouse professional or political interest. It needs to be accompanied by a strategy for dissemination, discussion and planned action.
- **A task force, with stakeholder participation** The enquiry is set in motion by an intersectoral steering committee and managed by a small intersectoral survey team. Some enquiries are first carried out by this team, and the expert consultation is then effected through a consultative workshop, which helps to draft the survey report and also produces recommendations and an advocacy strategy. This approach may be more time-consuming and expensive and possibly more open to political pressure, but it is better at raising awareness, reaching consensus, promoting ownership of the effort among stakeholders and giving impetus to action.

Main activities

The enquiry consists of five main activities which result in a final report. These are:

1. **Nutrition and nutrition education review** A brief review to identify the country's main nutrition issues and their determinants, and the historical pattern of nutrition and nutrition education interventions
2. **Local literature review** Assembling and reviewing local nutrition-related literature and IEC materials to establish what is available and how it is being used
3. **Policy review** A brief analysis of national policy, programs and action plans relating to nutrition education and nutrition education training, as an indication of the policy environment

4. **Media and advertising** A sampling of media coverage of nutrition issues and of food advertising, as indicators of public nutrition awareness and commercial influences
5. **Expert consultation** An expert consultation with key informants, to assemble the perceptions of the professional community on the current status of nutrition education and nutrition education training. This consultation can take the form of a series of individual interviews or of a workshop.
6. Production of final report

Contents of the survey

1. Brief review of nutrition and nutrition education situation

Short written descriptions are initially produced by the surveyor or survey team. They are then revised during the expert consultation before being included in the final report. The review should respond to the following questions:

a) NUTRITION ISSUES

- What are the main nutrition issues and their determinants?
- How are these reflected in dietary practices and attitudes?
- Which ministries are chiefly responsible for addressing nutrition issues?

b) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- What have been the significant nutrition-related interventions in your country over the last ten years (including food security interventions)?
- Has there been any clear progress in that time in improving national nutritional status?
- Have there been any important changes in policy or strategy regarding nutrition?
- What have been the main challenges?

c) HISTORY OF NUTRITION EDUCATION

In your country, in the last ten years,

- What significant developments have there been in nutrition education and in what sectors?
- Have there been any important changes in policy and strategy on nutrition education?
- What new approaches are there to nutrition education?
- Has there been any formative research into knowledge, attitudes and practices?
- Have there been any impact evaluations of nutrition education initiatives?
- If so, what did they find?

Output: Written descriptions (max 400 words each)

Examples: For examples of country descriptions see the [Country Case Studies](#) carried out for 7 individual countries.

Source material: In-country reports and surveys, annual health reviews, own experience

Also useful are FAO [nutrition country profiles](#) and [UNICEF country statistics](#).

2. Local literature review

An exhaustive review is not called for. The aim is to sample the extent, availability and accessibility of in-country literature related to nutrition education and nutrition education training and come to tentative conclusions about what is well covered and what is missing (e.g. what needs to be reprinted or brought into more active use). The activity is carried out by the surveyor or survey team, and the catalogue is expanded by interviewees or workshop participants from their own experience.

The literature review should respond briefly to these questions:

- a) **ARCHIVES** Are there national or institutional archives of documents related to nutrition and nutrition education documents and materials? If so -
 - what (broadly) do they contain?
 - who has access to them (e.g. researchers, NGOs, aid agencies, general public)?
- b) **OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS** What official documents are of importance to this survey? (e.g. nutrition assessments, government reports, policy/ program documents, school curricula)
- c) **IEC** What nutrition-related IEC materials/nutrition guidance are widely available or visible in schools, clinics, public places? (e.g. posters, leaflets, booklets, TV spots, DVDs, dietary guidelines)
- d) **LEARNING AIDS** What aids are available to professional nutrition educators? (e.g. manuals, flipcharts)
- e) **TRAINING MATERIALS** What materials are available for professional training in nutrition education? (e.g. training courses, teacher education curricula, university modules)

Output: Brief descriptions of assembled literature attached to the final report as an Annex, with conclusions and recommendations summarised in the final report.

3. Policy/program analysis

Policy has a variable relationship with implementation, but a policy environment which favours nutrition education and is backed by understanding and political will can make a great difference. Some aspects to look for are awareness of nutritional issues, interest in nutrition education as a strategy, cross-sectoral integration, nutrition education in food security initiatives, promotion of successful approaches/methodology, provision for in-service training and supportive regulation. Health, environment, agriculture and education sector policies should all be consulted.

Some relevant questions are given below. Surveyors may select aspects which are particularly relevant to the country.

NE = Nutrition Education

- a) Who has developed the policy/strategy? Is there any inter-sectoral integration?
- b) Is NE explicitly mentioned in policy/strategy documents (by any name)?
- c) Is NE embodied in food security policy?
- d) What institutions are responsible for implementing NE?
- e) What are the main food and nutrition issues tackled by the policy?
- f) What problems or obstacles are mentioned relating to NE?
- g) What are the main current contexts and settings for NE?
- h) Who are the main targets of NE policy components?
- i) Do NE objectives aim at knowledge, awareness or changes in behaviour?
- j) What are the main NE strategies proposed? Are they mostly information dissemination?
- k) Are NE strategies described in vague terms (e.g. *promotion, awareness, communication*)?
- l) What capacity building is there in NE? What training institutions deal with this?
- m) What specific norms or regulations have been introduced to promote healthy diets?
- n) Is NE routinely evaluated? Is impact assessment recommended?

Output: Brief analysis of policy documents (from all relevant sectors) focusing on NE and NE training, supplemented by comments from expert consultants, with tentative conclusions about coverage and content

Example: For an analysis of policies, see [Food and Nutrition Education in a sample of policies](#) in the Reference Documents.

4. Media and advertising reviews

- a) THE MEDIA REVIEW involves checking through the health features in the country's major daily papers and national TV programmes for a week to see
 - what proportion of programs deal with nutrition (e.g. 4 out of 54)
 - what the topics are.

This gives a simple index of national awareness of and interest in nutrition questions, and how closely they relate to the country's main nutrition issues, although only for the nation's media public.

b) THE ADVERTISING REVIEW aims to assess

- the level of commercial influence on the public (compared to other advertising)
- whether the nutritional messages are mostly positive or negative.

(NB In this crude snapshot many other interesting features such as labelling, advertising “angle” and target audience are not included.)

The review involves

- watching/listening to the main national TV and radio channels for an hour each at lunch time and at prime time in the evening
- walking around the centre of a city or major town for an hour
- counting all the adverts and noting what proportion deal with food
- calculating what proportion of the food adverts
 - show foods high in sugar/ fat/ salt
 - are selling sugary drinks
 - promote infant formula
- noting any other special food campaigns or products.

Output Conclusions drawn from the media and advertising surveys are included in the final report. Data can be given in an Annex.

5. Expert consultation

The expert consultation is the main survey activity. Key informants can be consulted

- A EITHER in individual interviews (about a dozen)
B OR by holding a two-day consultative workshop.

The questionnaire The questionnaire in the survey package is used to structure both the interviews and the workshop. It collects perceptions and information from participants and also provides the basis for discussion.

The questionnaire is complete except for the first three questions. Here three short texts (on the nutrition situation, the history of nutrition interventions and the history of nutrition education) are to be added by the surveyor(s) before the questionnaire is used. Expert respondents and participants will then comment on the texts and amend them so that a more rounded account can be included in the final report.

Participants/respondents Both interviewees and workshop participants should represent the full range of relative expertise in the country. They should as far as possible:

- be predominantly nationals of the country;
- have work experience from a range of settings—as many as possible should have some experience of “functional nutrition education” and/or of training of nutrition educators;
- include program officers from the ministries of Health (Nutrition), Agriculture (Extension) and Education (Health and Nutrition Curriculum/Teacher education, pre- and in-service), and possibly Environment;
- represent relevant professional associations and institutions;
- represent interested civil society associations;

- represent the main NGOs working with food security, nutrition and nutrition education;
- represent both academia and field programs;
- include two or three “key informants” with a good overview and long experience of nutrition or nutrition education interventions in the country (e.g. a university lecturer, the chairperson of a professional association or NGO group, a senior staff member in a national nutrition institute).

Some informants may of course have several roles.

Carrying out the interviews

Interviews can be carried out face-to-face or by telephone. Documents can be exchanged by e-mail but there should be some human interaction to clarify and expand answers. The pre-interview is important in both cases.

Pre-interview

- The interviewer goes through the leaflet [What is nutrition education?](#) with the interviewee to establish mutually agreed concepts (about 30 mins). **This preliminary interview is essential and should take as much time as is necessary to arrive at agreement.** It can be done face-to-face or by telephone but e-mail is not recommended for this part. It may be helpful to start by asking the interviewee for an example of nutrition education, and moving on from there.
- The interviewer talks through the [Briefing Sheet for Interviewees](#) and helps interviewees to describe their own experience on the table at the end of the sheet. **This is also essential** to consolidate mutual understanding and focus the interviewee’s attention on the interventions that they will be describing in detail in the questionnaire.
- A date is fixed for the main interview and a copy of the questionnaire (soft, hard or both) is left with the interviewee. The interviewee may complete the questionnaire in the interval, but there should always be a follow-up interview (about 30 minutes) to clarify and expand responses.

NB The pre-interview can also be used as an opportunity to extend the collection of nutrition-related local literature (Activity 2 above). Ask the respondent to describe briefly any literature/ booklets/ IEC/ manuals etc. which are important in this field and to say how they are used.

Main interview

Carry out the main interview face to face or by telephone. If the respondent has already completed the questionnaire, go through the answers to clarify and expand them with illustrative detail and direct quotations.

Organizing the workshop

(A possible workshop program is given in Annex1)

Activities before the workshop

Before the workshop the survey team should:

- carry out preliminary surveys and enquiries (Activities 1-4 above) and produce short reports and presentations on the nutrition and nutrition education situation, national policy, nutrition in the media and nutrition-related local literature. These will be presented and discussed at the workshop. Some will be included in the questionnaire;
- identify and invite outside speakers, especially on the nutrition situation and sectoral policies;
- prepare a display of literature relating to nutrition education;
- distribute the [briefing sheet for workshop participants](#).

NB The questionnaire is to be completed in the workshop and will contribute to the discussion. Do not circulate it before the workshop, as people typically have widely different ideas of nutrition education and nutrition education training.

Carrying out the workshop

The main activities of the workshop include:

- agreeing on the terms;
- establishing and sharing participants' experiences;
- discussing the need for nutrition education and professional nutrition education training;
- agreeing in principle on some best practices in both kinds of activity;
- looking at existing sectoral policies and how they could be strengthened;
- establishing priorities and making recommendations.

Documents required for the expert consultation

- Briefing sheet for interviewees
- Briefing sheet for workshop participants
- Leaflet What is nutrition education?
- Survey questionnaire, with texts for the first three questions filled in
- (for the workshop) National policy and program documents relating to nutrition and food security

6. Writing up the final report

The body of the final report can follow the outline of the questionnaire. It should:

- be introduced with a description of the methodology and its limitations;
- have extra sections on local literature and policy;
- have annexes on participants, programs mentioned/described and local literature.

A possible outline is given in [Annex 2](#).

Annex 1: Possible workshop program

The following outline program follows the outline described in (5) in the Guidelines and integrates the questionnaire throughout. An alternative is to do the questionnaire immediately after clarifying the terms and then refer back to it throughout the workshop.

Before the workshop

1. Establish survey team (and steering committee if necessary)
2. Carry out preliminary surveys and enquiries, produce reports and prepare workshop presentations on
 - nutrition issues and the nutrition education situation (activity 1) (the three report paragraphs are inserted into the questionnaire for comment by the workshop)
 - local literature (activity 2)
 - national policy (activity 3)
 - nutrition in the media and food advertising (activity 4)
3. Identify and invite outside speakers. According to the expertise available, outside speakers may deliver sessions on the country nutrition issues, the nutrition education situation, and sectoral policies, strategies and action plans for nutrition education in food security and agriculture, health and education. Representatives from ministries may be asked to lead the policy discussions in Session 10.

Immediately before

1. Organise rapporteurs (at least one for each session) to collect data from completed questionnaires and record conclusions from group and plenary discussions. The main points which come up should all be reflected in the final report.
2. Set up a display of
 - collected local literature
 - internationally available literature from FAO, WHO, UNICEF etc.
 - reference documents from this needs and capacity analysis package.
3. Establish a “sharing wall” for displaying participants’ posters, opinions, experience etc.
4. If possible, arrange for some inspirational element – for example, examples of best practices (or poor practices which demand attention), stories from the field, a charismatic speaker.
5. Ask participants to bring
 - a short bio with photo to display¹ (if they are not already known to each other)
 - useful learning materials or IEC relating to nutrition or nutrition education to contribute to the literature display.

¹ There are always some who forget to supply personal details. If possible, provide one team member with a camera and some time at the beginning of the meeting to ensure that everyone is represented in the display.

NB The questionnaire is to be completed in the workshop and will contribute to the discussion. Do not circulate it before the workshop, as the terminology can be confusing.

Workshop sessions: day 1

1. *Introductions* Participants introduce themselves and display their bios on the sharing wall. Invite them to add their contributions to the literature display. If anyone would like to recommend particular books or materials, they will be able to do so in Session 9.
2. *Terms* Participants look through the leaflet *What is nutrition education?* and agree on the terms of the discussion.
3. *Experience* Using the workshop briefing sheet, participants record their own experiences and share them in groups. They can also be displayed on the sharing wall. Facilitators take note of those with experience of professional training programs for nutrition educators and invite them to make informal presentations (responding to questions 3.2.1-3.2.6) in a panel discussion in Session 7 the following day.
4. The situation
 - a) Speakers present and discuss the nutrition situation and the historical and current role of nutrition education.
 - b) Participants in groups work together on questions 1.1-1.3 of the questionnaire, amending and extending the summaries prepared by the survey team, and report back. The texts are amended for the final report.

Lunch break

5. Public awareness and need for nutrition education
 - a) Participants respond in plenary to questions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 of the questionnaire (social awareness and popular perceptions) and discuss and exemplify public awareness of nutrition (or lack of it). Rapporteurs collect examples to illustrate the final report.
 - b) Presenters from the survey team give further evidence of influences on public awareness from their analyses of the media and commercial advertising.
 - c) Participants respond individually to questions (2.1.3 and 2.1.4) (need for NE), share their perceptions in groups, report to plenary and come to conclusions about where nutrition education is most needed.

Preparation for day two

In preparation for the following day, participants

- individually complete questions 2.3.1-2.3.6 (on specific NE programs)
- read the Questionnaire Annex of proposed course outlines and select the one of greatest interest to themselves or their institution.

Group leaders (if possible from the relevant ministries) are appointed for each sectoral group for session 10 on policy. They should look through the relevant policy and program documents and summarise any content on nutrition education and nutrition education training.

Day two

6. How nutrition education is done and how it could improve
 - a) Participants come together in groups (possibly sectoral groups) to share their comments on questions 2.3.1-2.3.6 (prepared the evening before).
 - b) As a group they complete questions 2.2.1-2.2.3 (general impressions on how NE is done).
 - c) Groups report back and draw conclusions about areas of improvement.
7. How nutrition education training is done and how it could improve
 - a) Those with experience of professional training in nutrition education (usually not many), form a panel. Each describes his/her own experience in response to questions 3.2.1-3.2.6 and responds to questions and comments from the floor.
 - b) The meeting in plenary discusses questions 3.1.1-3.1.3 (the general need for professional training in nutrition education) and comes to some conclusions.
8. *Curriculum* Participants, having read the course outlines in the Annex to the questionnaire, divide into groups according to which course they are most interested in. Groups work to answer the questions 3.3.1-3.3.3 about desirable curriculum content and approach, then report back briefly to explain and discuss their choices. They also come to a conclusion about which course(s) to prioritise for the country.

Lunch break

9. *Literature* The survey team present their findings about the available literature and ask for further recommendations or presentations from the floor. The workshop agrees on some suggestions (e.g. a particular reprint, a course, wider dissemination of some materials). Some participants may be asked to write short descriptions of materials they know to include in the final report.
10. *Policy* The aim of this session is to pinpoint improvements that could be made in national policy on nutrition education and nutrition education training.
 - a) Participants divide into sectoral groups. Group leaders summarise relevant parts of policy documents, responding to the questions about policy in Section 3.
 - b) The workshop discusses how the policy could be strengthened sector by sector and formulates some recommendations.
11. *Summing up* Rapporteurs sum up the workshop's responses and conclusions from each session.
12. Recommendations and advocacy strategy
 - a) Participants brainstorm suggestions for action and prioritise them. Possible actions are advocating for more attention in policy, improving professional training curricula, routine consultation with food security programs about the NE components, developing extension training courses, evaluating existing NE, reviewing school curricula, establishing further working groups etc.
 - b) In relation to identified action priorities, an advocacy strategy is developed which is economical, sustainable, motivating for the proponents, and likely to achieve results. First steps are suggested. A date is fixed for a follow-up meeting.

Follow-up to workshop

1. **Report** The workshop report is finalised and circulated.
2. **The steering committee** remains in place for further action and advice.
3. **Advocacy and action** Participants carry out proposed actions.
4. **A follow-up meeting** is held to discuss the report and further strategies.

Annex 2: Possible report framework

Title: Need for professional training for nutrition educators

Terms used

(Add a note on the terms used—see examples given below)

Nutrition education: “Functional nutrition education” has the purpose of getting people to improve their diets. It is also known by other names such as dietary promotion, awareness-raising, behaviour change, counselling, cookery demonstrations, social marketing. A well-known definition of 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, 2007)

This is what is meant by “nutrition education” in this report. It is not a direct nutrition intervention (such as school meals or vitamin supplements), or a course *about* nutrition (such as an undergraduate degree in nutrition).

Professional training in nutrition education

Bringing about changes in practice and maintaining them is a challenge. To “do nutrition education” requires special skills and conditions and a proper framework of preparation and evaluation. Without these, nutrition education is unlikely to have any effect on people’s diets. Some kind of training is therefore needed for all those who carry out nutrition education—for example, health promoters, national IEC specialists, curriculum developers, teachers, extension workers, district health managers. Students of community nutrition, dietetics, nursing and other health professions may also study how to do nutrition education professionally in their academic courses.

This is what is meant by “professional training in nutrition education” or “professional training for nutrition educators” in this report.

Introduction

(Briefly give the rationale for the enquiry and report the activities undertaken to carry it out, i.e. literature search, media review, policy analysis, interviews/workshop etc. Mention the limitations of the methodology. Refer to an annex of all those who participated in the survey, their roles and affiliations.)

Part 1: The situation: nutrition and nutrition education

Section 1.1 Country nutrition issues

(Give a brief overview of the main nutrition issues in the country, showing how these are reflected in dietary practices and attitudes, and indicate trends. Call on the texts written for the survey as amended by the experts consulted. Write about 300 words.)

Section 1.2 Historical background

(Describe any significant nutrition-related interventions in your country over the last ten years (including food security), bringing out progress made, changes in strategy and the main challenges.

Call on the original text written for the survey and the amendments made by interviewees or workshop participants. Write 300-400 words.)

Section 1.3 History of nutrition education

(Describe briefly any significant developments in nutrition education over the last ten years, and in what sectors, any changes in policy/strategy on NE, new approaches, impact evaluations and their findings. Briefly describe the main institutional presence of nutrition and nutrition education (e.g. institutions, associations, ministries responsible). Call on the original text written for the survey and the amendments made by interviewees or workshop participants. Come to some conclusions about trends and future possibilities. Write 300-400 words.)

Part 2: About nutrition education

(Specific nutrition education programs described should be listed in an Annex; so should data from the media and advertising surveys.)

Section 2.1 The need for nutrition education

(Draw conclusions about the need for nutrition education in the population at large and in specific groups, based on

- experts' responses to questions 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 on public awareness of nutrition issues
- the analysis of media coverage of nutrition items: extent and relevance
- the analysis of food advertising: extent, nature and likely effect
- groups in special need—responses to question 2.1.3
- existing nutrition education provision—responses to question 2.1.4.)

Section 2.2-2.3 how nutrition education is developed and carried out

(Note general impressions of the strength and coherence of the process framework and the prevailing pedagogical approaches, and summarise suggestions for improvement. Use informants' answers to questions 2.2.1. 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

Reinforce the above conclusions by summarising and commenting on information from experts under the headings

- Experience and training of nutrition educators (question 2.3.2)
- Development framework (question 2.3.3)
- Prevailing approaches (question 2.3.4)—note the level of active engagement suggested by the activity checklist
- Effects and lessons learned (questions 2.3.5 and 2.3.6)—strengths, weaknesses and scope for improvement.)

Part 3: Need for professional training for nutrition educators

(Specific programs described should be listed in an Annex.)

Section 3.1 The general need for professional training

(Summarise the opinions of informants about the general need for nutrition educators in the population (question 3.1.1), which sectors are in greatest need (question 3.1.2), and the average number of professional training programs known to the experts (question 3.1.3).)

Section 3.2 How nutrition education training is done

(Summarise respondents' information on specific cases of professional training of nutrition educators, with reference to

- professional experience and qualifications of the trainers (question 3.2.2)
- needs analysis (scope and relevance) (question 3.2.3)
- the assessment and evaluation framework (question 3.2.4)
- the balance of theory and practice (question 3.2.5)
- lessons learned and scope for improvement.)

(From both 3.1 and 3.2, draw tentative conclusions about national capacity and training needs and the particular strengths and challenges of current professional training.)

Section 3.3 Nutrition education training—content, approach and target

(Priority training First, indicate which kind of course is regarded by respondents as most useful (a) for the country and (b) for their own institutions (question 3.3.3).

Desirable content and approach Summarise respondents' ideas about desirable course contents and approaches in answer to questions 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

Draw conclusions about training priorities, content and approach.)

Part 4: Local literature

(Items of local literature should be listed and briefly described in an Annex.)

(Summarise findings on local literature related to nutrition education, noting valuable items, significant gaps and accessibility, and make some recommendations e.g. about wider dissemination, greater utilisation, reprinting, materials needed.)

Part 5: Policy

(List the policy, program and planning documents reviewed and present the policy analysis sector by sector, with reference to:

- specific norms or regulations introduced to promote healthy diets;
- the extent to which NE and professional training in NE are discussed (by any name);
- institutional responsibilities and staffing for NE and professional NE training;
- main contexts and settings for NE, the target groups and the nutrition issues tackled;
- mentions of effectiveness of NE (e.g. evaluations or impact assessments);
- NE strategies/ approaches recommended (if any);
- what capacity-building/professional training is routinely available.

Come to some tentative conclusions about priority actions.)

Conclusion

(Taking all findings and views into account, briefly summarise the main conclusions and recommendations about the actual and perceived needs for more, different or better professional training for nutrition educators.)

Report annexes

Annex 1	Those who participated in the survey, their roles and affiliations
Annex 2	Data from the media and advertising surveys
Annex 3	Nutrition education programs mentioned by all participants
Annex 4	Profession NE training programs mentioned by all participants
Annex 5	Local literature related to nutrition education.

Document 2. What is nutrition education?

There is a lot of misunderstanding when people talk about “nutrition education”. This leaflet explains what we mean by nutrition education in this project.

What is nutrition education?

Functional nutrition education In this project, we are dealing with “functional nutrition education”, which has the purpose of getting people to improve their diet: some typical aims are to learn to feed children better, to avoid sugary drinks, to prepare healthy snacks, to grow foods to diversify one’s diet. Functional nutrition education covers many activities that are not usually called nutrition education, such as maternity counselling, behaviour change, cooking demonstrations, health promotion and dietary guidelines.

Examples of functional nutrition education

- *Complementary feeding* Mothers attend regular meetings of a community group to help with demonstrations of good complementary feeding recipes and discuss how to improve children’s food. Between meetings they try out recipes and share experiences.
- *School meals* School cooks and meals organisers learn how to make school meals more nutritious. They also spread their learning through the school, so that children, parents and school staff realise that the meals have improved.

Of course, some functional nutrition education activities may not actually succeed in getting people to improve their diets! This project is about what makes this kind of nutrition education effective and successful.

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 2007)

What is NOT nutrition education?

Nutrition education is not an activity designed to improve nutrition, without any educational component.

Nutrition-related activities do not necessarily involve nutrition education, even if they introduce new practices. People may benefit nutritionally from taking micronutrient supplements, cooking with iodised salt or eating good school meals, but they will not learn anything about good eating unless they:

- a) know what they are doing, and why;
- b) choose, or contribute to, or appreciate what they are doing.

Examples of what is NOT nutrition education

- *School gardens* School children help to grow fruits and vegetables in school gardens, and eat this food in snacks or school meals. But if they are unaware of the nutritional value of what they are doing, there is no nutrition education.
- *Focus group discussions with young people* A research project explores the food choices of urban youth and publishes its findings. If the teenagers do not see the point of the questions, however, the discussions will have no effect on what they eat.
- *Deworming* Targeted deworming in school health and nutrition programs is important for nutrition because it can improve the body's capacity to use food. But it is not education in itself.

Studying nutrition

Studying nutrition, or learning *about* nutrition as a subject, aims mostly at knowledge and understanding of nutrition science. It does not have the immediate aim of improving the diet of the learners. Many regard this as “nutrition education” and it is prevalent in all contexts and at all levels. This is not what we mean by “nutrition education” in this project.

Examples of studying nutrition

- *Students of human nutrition* at university are definitely “studying nutrition”.
- *Teachers* who are responsible for nutrition education in schools but do not have much nutrition knowledge may need to learn *about* nutrition before learning *how to do* nutrition education.
- *Policy makers* have to understand nutrition issues, trends, strategies, costs, effects of regulation etc. This could also be called “studying nutrition”.

Often the techniques and approaches of “studying nutrition” are found in settings where functional nutrition education is more appropriate. For example, we may find health workers lecturing mothers' groups about micronutrients in unnecessary detail, or nutritionists describing 20 different kinds of bacteria to food vendors who only need to learn how to improve their food hygiene routines.

Professional training for nutrition educators

Bringing about changes in practice and maintaining them is a challenge. To “do nutrition education” (i.e. assess, plan, manage, conduct and evaluate it) requires special skills and conditions and a proper framework of preparation and evaluation. Some kind of training is needed for all those who carry out

nutrition education—for example, health promoters, national IEC specialists, curriculum developers, teachers, extension workers, district health managers. Students of community nutrition, dietetics, nursing and other health professions may also study how to do nutrition education professionally in their academic courses.

Examples of professional training for nutrition educators

- *Extension workers* from agriculture and health services are trained together. They prepare nutrition education sessions and programs to carry out in their work in the community.
- *MSc in Health Promotion* As one option in their MSc program, serving health professionals learn to organize, assess and manage nutrition education programs and train health workers in nutrition education.

More examples

Here are some more examples. Would you say they are:

- a. Activities designed purely to improve nutrition (with no educational dimension)
 - b. Studying nutrition, i.e. learning *about* nutrition
 - c. Functional nutrition education
 - d. Professional training for nutrition educators
-
1. *Legume crops* Small farmers are encouraged to grow more legumes, incorporate them in the diet and use them to restore soil fertility. Activities include help with marketing and sales, technical aid in selecting, growing and processing crops, cooking demonstrations, tasting sessions and discussions of the food value of legumes.
 2. *Advice at the hospital* Women giving birth at hospital learn about exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding; there are follow-ups at the local clinics.
 3. *Curriculum development* Curriculum developers are learning about nutrition and nutrition education in preparation for revising the primary school nutrition and health curriculum.
 4. *Animal source foods* The Ministry of Agriculture is promoting animal source foods by offering training in breeding and rearing rabbits, pigeons and guinea pigs.
 5. *NE in school* Lessons deal with meal planning and food safety.
 6. *Teacher training* Teachers do a short course in nutrition and nutrition issues as part of an in-service program.
 7. *Undergraduate module A:* medical students learn to recognise the symptoms of severe acute malnutrition.
 8. *Undergraduate module B:* Students of human nutrition learn how to do functional nutrition education.

For comments see next page.

Comments

- a. Activities designed purely to improve nutrition (with no educational dimension)
 - b. Studying nutrition, i.e. learning *about* nutrition
 - c. Functional nutrition education
 - d. Professional training in nutrition education
-
1. *Legume crops* (c) This is functional nutrition education, aimed at helping people to improve their diet, embedded in a food security project. It sounds as if it might work.
 2. *Advice at the hospital* (c) This is functional nutrition education. We do not know how effective it is—for example, just giving information briefly and impersonally would probably have little effect on practices.
 3. *Curriculum development* (d) This is basically nutrition education training: there is a lot to consider, for example, how to develop an action agenda in a scholastic context, and how to involve family and community.
 4. *Animal source foods* (a) There is no nutrition education here. If nutritional impact is a desired outcome, there is a need to include a nutrition education component to make sure that some of the produce is consumed and not all sold for cash.
 5. *NE in school* (c) The lessons are based on actions that people need to learn to do, so it is clearly aiming at functional nutrition education. However the lessons will probably only have an effect if the teaching really aims at changing behaviour (most school nutrition lessons do not).
 6. *Teacher training* (b) Although this is for teachers, it is not apparently about doing nutrition education but about improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of nutrition itself.
 7. *Undergraduate module A* (b) Although the students are learning a practical skill, this is not functional nutrition education in our definition, but studying nutrition science.
 8. *Undergraduate module B* (d) A module in an academic course where undergraduates can try their hand at functional nutrition education in real or realistic conditions.

Document 3. Briefing sheet for interviewees

Needs and capacity analysis

A needs and general capacity analysis is being conducted to establish the status of nutrition education and nutrition education training, to identify training needs and to lay the basis for advocacy and policy recommendations. It consists of:

1. an overview of the country nutrition situation to identify the main nutrition issues and the historical pattern of nutrition and nutrition education intervention;
2. a brief analysis of nutrition education and nutrition education training in policy and program documents, as an indication of the policy environment;
3. an examination of local literature and IEC materials, to establish what is available and how it is being used;
4. a sampling of media coverage on nutrition issues and of food advertising, as indicators of public nutrition awareness and the commercial influences acting on it;
5. an expert consultation with key informants, which assembles the perceptions of the professional community on the current status of nutrition education and nutrition education training. This consultation can take the form of a series of interviews or of a workshop.

Aims of the expert consultation

The main aims are:

- to gather facts, opinions, perceptions, illustrations and comments from a representative sample of the country's experts on the need for nutrition education and professional nutrition education training, both quantity and quality;
- to use this information to support the case for developing and institutionalizing professional nutrition education training and to identify specific national needs.

Expert consultation: interviews

The expert consultation can be carried out

- EITHER through a consultative workshop
- OR by interviews with individual experts.

In this case it is being carried out through individual interviews. Interviewees have been selected because they have a good overview and long experience of nutrition issues in this country, or a good understanding of what the job of nutrition education entails and the challenges it presents. Interview responses will be summarised in a general report.

Before the interview

You will have a pre-interview meeting with your interviewer to complete the following preliminaries.

1. **Literature and IEC materials** The interviewer will be compiling a report of available literature relevant to this enquiry. Please help by

- suggesting documents / publications / materials relevant to nutrition education, briefly describing their contents to the interviewer and saying how they are used;
 - producing copies or web addresses of this documentation if possible.
2. **The terms** To ensure agreement on the terms used in this enquiry, please study document 2 *What is nutrition education?* together with your interviewer.
 3. **Your experience** After this, list on the table below the nutrition education and nutrition education training programs and activities which you know of or have worked with. NB Some examples of settings, target groups, provider organizations and educators are given in the table 'Some examples of sectors and settings' at the end of this briefing sheet.
 4. **Reading through** Your interviewer will give you the interview questionnaire. Before the interview, glance through the questionnaire and the Annex FOUR COURSE OPTIONS. If you wish, you may complete the questionnaire before the interview, in which case the interview will be shorter and will consist mainly of discussing and amplifying your answers.

Personal experience of nutrition education

Name of activity & the program of which it is part	Setting	Target group	Provider organization	Educators	Main aims	Your role + how well known to you (1,2 or 3 stars ***)

Personal experience of professional training in nutrition education

Name of course & the program of which it is part	Setting & level	Target group (i.e. trainees)	Provider organization	Educators (trainers of trainers)	Main aims	Your role + how well known to you (1,2 or 3 stars ***)

Some examples of sectors, settings etc.²

Sectors	Settings	Target groups	Institutions & organizations	Nutrition educators	Trainers of nutrition educators
Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community programs Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IYCF programs MYC health PLWHA Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools School environment Curriculum Families Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FS programs Marketing Agricultural extension advice 	Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups, clubs etc. Markets & other food outlets Health facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternal and child health services Hospital counselling HIV/AIDS care programs Treatment of SAM Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary High school School food School gardens Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security programs Home gardening Agricultural extension counselling General public Regular media programs campaigns National dietary guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public Shoppers Teenagers Old people Mothers & young children PLWHA The overweight and obese Schoolchildren Farmers and gardeners Vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National nutr. institutes Professional associations NGOs Aid agencies Ministries Universities Technical colleges 	Training in doing functional NE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health profs. Teachers Extension workers NGO staff The media Training in other skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Govt. staff, central & local (adm./man., policy devt.) Cooks, vendors, food aid staff, school meals organizers Curriculum developers Health profs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University lecturers Health profs. Govt. staff Teacher trainers NGO staff

² IYCF: infant and young child feeding; MYC: maternal and young child; PLWHA: people living with HIV and Aids; MCH: maternal and child; SAM: Severe acute malnutrition; IEC: Information, education and communication; nutr. nutrition; profs: professionals; govt: government; adm./man.: administration/management; policy devt: policy development.

Document 4. Expert consultation: briefing for workshop participants

Needs and capacity analysis

A needs and general capacity analysis is being conducted to establish the status of nutrition education and nutrition education training, to identify training needs and to lay the basis for advocacy and policy recommendations. It consists of:

6. an overview of the country nutrition situation to identify the main nutrition issues and the historical pattern of nutrition and nutrition education intervention;
7. a brief analysis of nutrition education and nutrition education training in policy and program documents, as an indication of the policy environment;
8. an examination of local literature and IEC materials, to establish what is available and how it is being used;
9. a sampling of media coverage on nutrition issues and of food advertising, as indicators of public nutrition awareness and the commercial influences acting on it;
10. an expert consultation with key informants, which assembles the perceptions of the professional community on the current status of nutrition education and nutrition education training. This consultation can take the form of a series of interviews or of a workshop.

Aims of the expert consultation

The main aims of the expert consultation are:

- to gather facts, opinions, perceptions, illustrations and comments from a representative sample of the country's experts on the need for nutrition education and professional nutrition education training, both quantity and quality;
- to use this information to support the case for developing and institutionalizing professional nutrition education training and to identify specific national needs.

Workshop participants

The expert consultation can be carried out

- EITHER by interviews with individual experts
- OR through a consultative workshop

In this case it is being carried out through a consultative workshop. Further aims of the workshop will be to achieve consensus on priorities and to decide on advocacy strategies and further action.

Participants are invited to this workshop on the basis of their official links with nutrition and food security, their experience of nutrition interventions or work with nutrition education or nutrition education training, and their professional interest in this field. Some may of course have several roles.

Workshop activities

Before the workshop

The survey team will carry out enquiries and will prepare short reports and presentations on the nutrition and nutrition education situation, nutrition education policy, local literature related to nutrition education and nutrition issues in the media and food advertising. Their activities will culminate in the workshop, which will contribute extensively to the final survey report. In the course of the workshop, each participant also completes an individual questionnaire on all the above points. These are collected and further analysed before the report is finalised.

Participants are asked to bring to the workshop:

- a short bio with photo, to display at the meeting;
- any *local* literature related to nutrition education (e.g. education materials, reports, posters, curricula, manuals, guidelines, leaflets etc.) or at least a reference or URL;
- the handout on the next page, which will be used in the workshop.

The workshop program

The workshop begins by discussing, defining and applying the terms “nutrition education” and “professional training of nutrition educators”. Participants then share their experience in these two fields. There will be presentations on the nutrition situation, the history of nutrition interventions, and the role of nutrition education nationally, and participants will contribute their knowledge and experience on these topics for inclusion in the final survey report. They will also discuss public awareness of nutrition issues (the starting point of nutrition education), and will hear reports on how nutrition issues are represented in the media and in food advertising.

These introductory sessions are followed by a detailed look at the current implementation of nutrition education and the training of nutrition educators—how much, where, how they are being carried out and what the priority needs are in provision, curriculum and approach. Sessions on nutrition education policy and local literature relating to nutrition education raise further ideas about needs and strategies for action.

There is a final summing up and discussion of recommendations for action and advocacy strategies.

Please bring this handout to the workshop

Personal experience of nutrition education

Name of activity & the program of which it is part	Setting	Target group	Provider organization	Educators	Main aims	Your role + how well known to you (1,2 or 3 stars ***)

Personal experience of professional training in nutrition education

Name of course & the program of which it is part	Setting & level	Target group (i.e. trainees)	Provider organization	Educators (trainers of trainers)	Main aims	Your role + how well known to you (1,2 or 3 stars ***)

Some examples of sectors, settings etc.³

Sectors	Settings	Target groups	Institutions & organizations	Nutrition educators	Trainers of nutrition educators
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³ IYCF: infant and young child feeding; MYC: maternal and young child; PLWHA: people living with HIV and Aids; MCH: maternal and child; SAM: Severe acute malnutrition; IEC: Information, education and communication; nutr. nutrition; profs: professionals; govt: government; adm./man.: administration/management; policy devt: policy development.

