PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN NUTRITION EDUCATION
Education for Effective Nutrition in Action (ENACT)\(^1\)

**Background**

Promoting healthy and sustainable diets for all is one of the first aims of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Knowing how to promote healthy diets and good dietary practices is a competency that all nutritionists and professionals in the health and food sectors should acquire. Although a rewarding task, it is not an obvious or easy one, and it requires training.

Unfortunately, professional training for effective nutrition education is almost non-existent in many parts of the world. In 2010, FAO’s needs assessment in seven African countries showed that suitable approaches and relevant training were lacking or irregularly available in most sectors and settings.

**FAO ENACT project**

FAO has therefore developed the 11-week ENACT training course in nutrition education to start building this essential capacity.

The course aims at promoting long-term improvements in diet through an active approach based on identified needs, with attention to social and environmental contexts, all relevant sectors and the whole food cycle (production, processing, marketing, consumption).

**What have we achieved?**

The ENACT module has now been successfully piloted face-to-face in seven African countries, and revised in line with the feedback received. It is now available for the public in the FAO Nutrition Education website: [http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/professional-training/enact/en/](http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/professional-training/enact/en/)

The extensive feedback shows that the course has been a success at increasing professional capacity. Three partners: Nigeria, Ghana and Zimbabwe, have already adopted the course.

Two regional workshops held in Ghana and Kenya in 2015 saw 40 tutors from 27 universities in nine countries introduced to the ENACT course and methodology. Most of the 27 new universities/institutions that attended the workshops expressed interest and plans for using the course.

The course has also been adapted to fit an online format for use by academic and training institutions, development agencies and NGOs worldwide to strengthen their staff’s capacities in nutrition education and promotion of healthy diets. It is currently being revised and will be available by the end of December 2015.
The French version of the course is being piloted by universities in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon and Niger, under the FAO ENAF project. The contents and methodology of the ENACT module have also been adapted for medical students in Sri Lanka and for health and community workers in Honduras.

Why ENACT is popular

- **Timely:** Now that nutrition education is recognized as an essential component in nutrition training, there is a new interest in capacity building.

- **Bottom-up approach:** Students are actively engaged at all stages and organize their own learning and practice.

- **Tailor made:** ENACT addresses identified needs in nutrition education training and applies the best practices of professional development.

- **Course approach:** The course offers direct experience and practice; a large element of independent learning; highly interactive tutorials; and application to local nutrition needs and activities.

What's next?

- The ENACT online course will be piloted with international learning institutions in early 2016, with funding support from FAO.

- In November 2015, FAO will hold a special session on professional training in nutrition education, at the Latin American Congress of Nutrition in the Dominican Republic. FAO will present the course content and approach, the ENACT experience in African countries and the Honduran experience, to promote adaptation of the course in the region.

- Due to high interest expressed for in-service training of agriculture extension workers, other versions of ENACT will be pursued.

- The French version of the online course will be developed and tested during the first semester of 2016.

ENACT partners

University of Botswana; Hawassa University, Ethiopia; University of Ghana; Kenyatta University, Kenya; Michael Okpara University, Nigeria; Sokoine University, Tanzania; Makerere University, Uganda.

ENAF partners

University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin; University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; University of Ngozi, Burundi; University of Dschang, Cameroon; Centre Régional Spécialisé en Agriculture (CRESA), University Abdou Moumouni, Niger; IDR and Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso.

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Nutrition Education and Consumer Awareness Group
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/professional-training/en/

For comments, photos and videos from the piloting, see:
https://www.facebook.com/NutritionEducationStudentsAfricaNesa