

Dissemination, sustainability and evaluation of the national nutrition education in schools project - phase 2

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The National Nutrition Education in Schools Project was established in 1993 by the now Commonwealth Department of Health and Human Services with the overall aim of making healthy food choices easy choices for Australian children. The result of Phase 1 of the project was the production of a resource, *Food and Nutrition in Action*, which is a professional development program which utilises a health promoting approach for teachers and those associated with nutrition education in Australian schools. Phase 2 of the project focuses on the dissemination and sustainability of the approach with evaluation of process and impact and with some evaluation of self reported food behaviour change in children.

The dissemination phase of the project has included the establishment of national co-ordination in each State and Territory across Australia which will primarily co-ordinate training programs. Training is being undertaken for primary and secondary teachers, community health professionals and pre-service tertiary education educators. Process evaluation includes perceptions of training programs and impact assessment of the numbers who actually introduce the approach into their programs. Sustainability is being addressed through a number of avenues which include a workshop for the Directors General of Education in each of the States and Territories, establishment of a newsletter and the inaugural National Nutrition Education conference.

Results on dissemination have indicated that for the co-ordinators, the enhancers and barriers to teachers introducing concepts to the classroom are State specific. In many states the principal barrier is establishing contact with the primary teachers in the first instance as there are few professional organisations to which these teachers belong. Training programs for secondary teachers have been established through professional organisations and through subject specialist advisers. A second barrier to implementation is the lack of experience of teachers in using a decision-making approach in the classroom accompanied by the challenge of developing lesson plans within the secondary classroom. These problems will be addressed to some degree by the imminent production of the Resource Developers' Guide by the Home Economics Institute of Australia which details specific guidelines for resources which can be translated for use in the classroom. In addition to this, the national conference will provide numerous opportunities for those attending to workshop all phases of the approach with nutrition educators and teachers who have used the approach successfully. A major positive factor has been the applicability of the approach to other health curriculum areas eg drug education.

The framework for the extension of the training program to community health professionals and pre-service education educators as well as wider dissemination to classroom teachers has now been established with a significant number of follow-up programs. Evaluation of the impact and outcome of these will occur in the second half of 1998.