5.2 Education for Sustainable Development: An Open Access On-line Course to Improve Community Wellbeing and Inform Policy-makers.

Despite India’s rapid socio-economic growth, large numbers of Indians continue to experience food insecurity and nutritional vulnerability. This problem is compounded at policy level by poor understanding of contextual constraints and local nutritional know-how, as well as the inability to communicate in ways responsive to local needs, aspirations and cultures.

Two-way knowledge-exchange between government and local communities is needed so that both policymakers and local people can make better informed choices, improving health outcomes and the sustainability of diets.

To facilitate this, TIGR2ESS and related GRTA project partners in India and the UK created a free Massive Open Online Course, called ‘Communication and extension for sustainable development’ for Indira Gandhi National Open University the world’s largest university. Hosted by the Swayam platform of the Indian government’s Ministry of Human Resources Development, the course launched in September 2021.

Aimed at a broad range of learners, from postgraduate students to frontline workers in NGOs and government organisations, the 15-week course uses contextual examples from recent TIGR2ESS research to explain key theoretical concepts in simple language.

Through 20 hours of video material, case studies, and written text, the aim is to empower and improve the wellbeing of rural (and urban) communities, especially indigenous groups, women and children.

Organised in four blocks, the course seeks to educate participants in the latest creative tools in extension, communication for development, training and advocacy, and key elements of creating and nurturing sustainable food systems and community resources.

At its launch in English over 500 learners enrolled. To reach a larger audience, especially frontline and extension workers, a Hindi version of the course launched in July 2022. The course can be accessed at: https://onlinecourses.swayam2.ac.in/nou21_ge38/preview

‘What is unique about the course is the ability to bring together theoretical frameworks on various topics of communication and collaboration, with practical approaches/solutions for sustainable development.’

Ayesha Pattnaik, current student.

‘The Course is already benefitting online students, including community health workers, social change makers, teachers and those interested in welfare and development. Efforts to develop the Course in Hindi are under-way and after its launch, frontline health workers in the communities who are well versed in Hindi will be hugely benefitted.’

Dr Umesh Pandey, IGNOU Regional Director, Bhopal

FUNDING CALL: Growing Research Capacity: UKRI GCRF
COUNTRY: India
TITLE: Transforming India’s Green Revolution by Research and Empowerment for Sustainable Food Supplies (TIGR2ESS)
GRANT NO: BB/P027970/1

UEA, PRADAN, ICRISAT, MSSRF, IGNOU, KISS, PU, NnedPro, Lok Chetna Manch

https://tigr2ess.globalfood.cam.ac.uk/