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The NNEdPro MTKi Initiative in the United States

Empowering Food Education and Addressing Food Insecurity in the United States

In recent years, the NNEdPro and its MTKi (Mobile Teaching Kitchen International Initiative) have garnered recognition for the successful implementation of the Initiative in India and Mexico. This accomplishment was underscored by the 2022 Program Impact Award received from the Society of Nutrition Education and Behaviour in the USA. Buoyed by this achievement and with generous support from the Jampolis Family, the initiative has set its sights on expanding its efforts to combat food and nutrition insecurity in the United States, aligning with the 2022 White House initiative. Two micro-pilots are in progress in Washington, DC and New York City.

Washington, DC Micro Pilot

A unique intercollegiate model has been proposed to adapt the MTK in Washington, DC. This model envisions collaboration between medical students and culinary professionals, creating a team of preceptors. They aim to recruit at least ten champions from diverse college communities in Washington, DC. These champions, chosen from students with firsthand insights into college hunger, will undergo training facilitated by medical student preceptors. The goal is to transform these students into MTK champions who, in the coming months, will organise pop-up events focused on micro-enterprise which in turn will support culinary experience and nutrition education sessions for those experiencing food and nutrition security.

These food-based micro-enterprise pop-up events will offer affordable, nutritious and delicious meals alongside health education, serve as a platform to demonstrate the potential of culinary health education and micro-enterprise. Utilising a 'See One, Do One, Teach One' model, the training of champions and the impact of pop-up events will be evaluated through knowledge, attitudes, practices and cognitive metrics measurements. Early insights from this process were presented at the Society for Nutrition Education and Behaviour's annual Washington, DC, conference on July 20th, 2023.

New York City Micro Pilot

The initiative's expansion into New York City involved a conceptual workshop on the potential of the MTK in the US context. Breakout groups during the workshop laid the groundwork for preceptorship and champion training and the identification of potential champion recruits from the Brooklyn community. A culinary demonstration by Veronica Flores Bello, a leading figure in the Mexico MTK initiative, showcased a vegan menu with dishes from the Mexico MTK cookbook. Potential champions undertook 'See One, Do One, Teach One' sessions, a highly successful approach.

A coordinator was recruited from the New York Healthcare Community to bolster the initiative. With the collaboration of culinary experts, professionals, and preceptors, further champion training is anticipated. The objective is to organise two ticketed pop-up culinary events by July 2023. One event targets the Brooklyn community, emphasising health messaging within the community. The other event targets a broader external audience, highlighting the potential of the New York MTK as a micro-enterprise while disseminating health education across socio-economic groups.



NNEdPro International Summit
www.nnedpro.org.uk/summit



NNEdPro Summer School
www.nnedpro.org.uk/summer-school



International Academy of Nutrition Educators <https://iane.online/>



COVID-19 resources
www.nnedpro.org.uk/coronavirus



Nutrition resources
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Culinary Training in Brooklyn

The initiative's US MTK training commenced in Brooklyn in June 2023. Replicating recipes from India and Mexico, the culinary training involved the participation of two Brooklyn champions, Colette and Verda. Dishes from both cuisines were recreated, including Chikki, Spinach Cutlet, Chana Sabzi, Pancake, Millet Upma, Vegetable Soup, Legume, Broccoli and String Bean Medley. Further training is planned, involving more recipes from Mexico and the US.

Learning Lab at the 2023 SNEB Conference

The MTKi Initiative was inaugurated in the US on July 20th through a Learning Lab at the 2023 Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) Conference. Aligned with the conference theme of 'Empowering Food Citizens', the initiative showcased its innovative approach to addressing food insecurity. Interactive demonstrations, discussions and practical insights equipped attendees with the tools to impact food education and behaviour positively.



The Q&A session highlighted attendees' curiosity about the initiative's reach, impact, adaptability to cultural differences and applicability in diverse communities. Thoughtful responses from the initiative's representatives piqued further interest in the initiative's endeavours.

Training of DC Champions and Preceptors

On July 22nd, the MTKi Initiative concluded training for dedicated champions and preceptors in Washington, DC. These individuals underwent extensive training to proficiently prepare and teach a range of nutritious recipes from various cultures. Classic dishes from the US, India, and Mexico demonstrated the initiative's commitment to promoting cultural diversity through food education. Champions received insights into the nutritional value of ingredients, enhancing their understanding of the nourishing aspects of the prepared dishes.

MTK Culinary Experience

The initiative organised its inaugural MTK Culinary Experience in the US on the same day. Attendees were treated to meals prepared by skilled DC champions and preceptors during their training sessions. The event facilitated interactions between attendees and initiative participants, who shared their experiences and insights. Leadership talks provided a broader perspective on the initiative's goals and achievements.



A week later, in New York City, our NY champions produced two culinary events, one for the local Brownsville community in Brooklyn and a second fundraiser event for the public. The community was treated to freshly prepared plant-based meals at no cost, and the overwhelming response was requested to learn more about preparing low-cost, nutrient-dense meals for their families. Our fundraising event was two days after the community event, where the NY champions presented their dishes for the second time, now for local nutrition and culinary enthusiasts.

Their efforts were again met with enthusiasm and awe, not only for the culinary skill they executed, but also for the positive influence the training experience had on their dietary choices at home.



In conclusion, the NNEdPro and MTK Initiative's expansion to the United States significantly addresses food and nutrition insecurity. The initiative's intercollegiate model, champion training, and pop-up events demonstrate its commitment to culinary health education and micro-enterprise. Through innovative approaches, partnerships, and outreach efforts, the initiative strives to empower individuals, promote health education, and foster positive change in food habits and behaviours.



To learn more about the MTKi Initiative in the US and for further individuals and groups acknowledgements in blogs, please visit: www.mtki.org/usa



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