THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEARNER AND THE EDUCATOR ABOUT A FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPED WITH WOMEN IN BRAZIL

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OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE: To analyze educators and learners’ perceptions about the process of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of a Community-Based Food and Nutrition Education Program developed with women in a low-income administrative region of the Federal District in Brazil.

The program was conducted by a multi-professional team using active and participatory methods, a holistic approach to food and nutrition and following the principles and recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for The Brazilianian Population and The Framework for Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) for Public Policies of Brazil.

METHODS: Case study with a qualitatively oriented approach carried out with 13 learners and 4 educators who participated in the Program. Semi-structured individual interviews were held, transcribed and analyzed using content analysis. The results were organized into categories, synthesized and interpreted.

RESULTS

The Program contributed to the awakening of a critical and holistic awareness in learners, enabling them to perceive themselves as protagonists of their reality and able to adopt a proactive attitude towards self-care (implementation of home gardens, fresh food and less processed food preferences, healthier cooking techniques) and transformation of the environment.

“Initiatives like this are important for awareness. Thus, people are aware of their rights and less susceptible to manipulation.” – JULIA

“I felt I always learned something else... It is a set of learning: about education, about life, about hygiene, about food and drink, about relationship, all of that.” – GEANI

“Now, at home, I’m always in control. I try to drink natural juices, eat natural foods, and avoid snacks and unhealthy things.” – DIANA

Educators emphasized the importance of working with local communities, specific diagnosis, sensitive listening, horizontal dialogue and of working in multi-professional team founded on collaboration, respect, trust, and ethics to develop successful nutrition education programs.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings reveal a great potential of the adopted teaching-learning process and the Program. Using active and participatory methods and a holistic approach to food may contribute to improving attitudes, self-efficacy and behaviors regarding eating habits, self-care and transformation of the environment.

SOME PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

| Diet is more than intake of nutrients | Use comprehensive approach to the food system |
| Always prefer natural or minimally processed foods and freshly made dishes and meals to ultra-processed foods | Appreciate local food culture and respect the diversity of views and perspectives, considering the legitimacy of different types of knowledge |
| Eat regularly and carefully in appropriate environments and in company | Valuing the culinary arts as an emancipatory process |
| Shop in places that offer a variety of natural or minimally processed foods | Promote self-care and autonomy |
| Develop, exercise and share cooking skills | Plan, monitor and evaluate actions |

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Knowing the concerns related to food and the expectations of the group
- Affective mapping – identifying the territory and the food social space
- Definition of individual and collective commitments
- Dialogue about origins and food culture
- Identifying patterns of food consumption
- Dialogue about sugar, fat and salt in processed foods
- Exchanging recipes
- Healthy Family Meal Planning
- Unraveling food labels
- Dialogue about healthy eating - what I do, what I can share what I can do
- Video and dialogue about the influence of other cultures in Brazilian cuisine
- Dialogue about challenges and solutions for food and nutrition

Photo 1 - Knowledge exchange
Photo 3 - Healthy Family Meal Planning
Photo 4 - Developing and sharing herbal salt
Fig. 1 - Book of the FNE program