

# The 6<sup>th</sup> African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP)

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Group of participants

The 6<sup>th</sup> African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP) was held on March 11–21, 2008, in Potchefstroom, South Africa. The 27 participants of the program included university lecturers, PhD students and nutrition researchers from government and industry from 14 African countries (Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Prof. Johan Jerling, from North-West University, and Dr Onno Korver, a retired employee from Unilever Netherlands, both pioneers of the ANLP, headed the team of organizers.

The African Nutrition Leadership Programme (ANLP) is a leadership development and networking seminar series aimed at assisting the development of future leaders in the field of human nutrition in Africa. It was

inaugurated in 2002 and has since been held annually, except in 2007. Characteristic of the seminar series is its highly varied and tailored content delivered by the speakers using the learning method known as Experiential

Learning. Activities are generally carried out in small groups in a very interactive fashion.

Patterned after the European Nutrition Leadership Programme (ENLP), the seminar emphasizes understanding the qualities and skills of leaders, team building, communication and nutrition information in a broader context, and understanding the role of nutrition science in the world. The ANLP has trained 132 participants from 28 African countries under the directorship of Prof. Jerling.

At this year's seminar, the following sessions were held:

- The Team Building training by Neels Lubbe taught important team building concepts through physical



Sunset on Potchefstroom, South Africa

activities that led to further discussion and reflection by the participants. Key messages imparted ideas on the importance of positive thinking, continuous learning and strategizing.

- In the Leadership and Management training, Leon Coetsee helped participants understand the place of learning, listening and commitment in effective leadership and management. Key messages were to allow adequate spacing between learning, repetition and commitment to avoid information overload, negative filtering and lack of follow-up.
- Paul Schutte led the training on Communication, explaining that effective presentations require a good understanding of the content and messages as well as knowledge of one’s audience. The importance of good preparation, non-verbal communication, visual aids and organizational structure were emphasized.
- The training on Project Management by Gerrit van der Waldt outlined and provided participants with the key steps in project management, which were further reinforced through group work on case studies and presentations.
- The training by Mpho and Thabo Putu on Advocacy and Lobbying made clear the distinction between advocacy and lobbying, specifically, that advocacy is a horizontal relationship between the nutritionist and the people, while lobbying is a vertical relationship between the nutritionist and the influential people that can assist in providing solutions to identified problems.

- Rosemary Ayah led the training on Science, Government and Industry, providing insight on the negotiations that take place between various stakeholders in education, NGOs, industry and government.
- For the training on Social Responsibility, Onno Kover divided participants into three groups, in which each group discussed a specific dilemma relating to social responsibility and then presented the outcome of their discussions.

Other highlights of ANLP 2008 included a symposium, a debate on political leadership in Africa that stimulated lively discussion on the political leadership styles that have been detrimental to progress in Africa;

**ANLP Declaration**

*“We, the participants of the African Nutrition Leadership Programme, with passion and one purpose, declare that it is our time to be positive change agents to ensure sustainable food and nutrition security in order to improve the quality of life in Africa through innovative research, training, and empowerment of all stakeholders, advocacy, and effective collaboration. Objectivity, integrity, excellence and selfless service are our shared values.”*

*Declaration 2008, Elgro River Lodge, South Africa*

“**Jacqueline Kung’u’s thoughts on the ANLP**  
*(See A Day in the Life of Jacqueline Kung’u, p38 )*

ANLP provided me with a platform to meet like-minded young nutrition leaders in Africa and to learn by interactive engagement.

Certain things about ANLP are novel. Firstly, it is rare to attend a meeting that is so well organized. Punctuality was emphasized, and every part of the program content and quality was so well organized that we were pleasantly surprised. Secondly, very few initiatives bring together people from such diverse cultures but with a similar purpose. This makes ANLP unique. And, lastly, the leadership team was so passionate about ANLP and how it could potentially transform nutrition in Africa that it was infectious. I truly commend their efforts and appreciate them.

No matter where we go or what we become, the participants of ANLP 2008 will always remember the event as the one important piece of the puzzle of our lives that shaped our destinies.”

a showcase of individual country cultures; dinner in a local restaurant; and, finally, an evening of music and dance, which participants wholeheartedly welcomed after 10 days of hard work. On the last day, participants drafted their common declaration (see inset) as well as an evaluation of ANLP 2008.

This year’s seminar provided further confirmation that the learning-by-doing approach can have great impact, and our ‘differences’ cannot prevent a shared understanding of common challenges and the necessity to act as change agents.

### Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to SIGHT AND LIFE and the ANLP grant committee, who made available to us all the resources necessary to participate in this valuable program. We should also like to thank the organizers as well as all the participants in ANLP 2008 with whom we have shared enriching and transformative experiences.



South African traditional dresses