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Union of
Nutritional Sciences
(IUNS)

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IUNS-Affiliated Scientists in a Multi-Centre Capacity Building Project to Improve Early Nutrition and Health in South Africa

Improving Early Nutrition and Health in South Africa (ImpENSA) is a three-year capacity-building project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The overall mission of this project is to focus on strengthening relations between higher education and the wider economic and social environment through exchange of state-of-the-art practices for co-creation of innovative Continued Professional Development (CPD) for Health Care Professionals (HCPs) in South Africa. The primary focus is on innovative CPD through substantial enhancement of knowledge and counselling skills of the HCPs in relation to the nutrition of mothers and their offspring during the first 1,000 days of life.

The project is a multi-centre collaboration that comprises a consortium of members from three European and three South African higher education institutions (HEIs), and two South African health professional organisations:

- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, Germany
- University of Southampton, United Kingdom
- Medical University of Warsaw, Poland
- North-West University, South Africa
- Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Association for Dietetics in South Africa
- Nutrition Society of South Africa

These partners bring expertise in the area of early nutrition and lifestyle, psychology and behaviour change, education, technology-enhanced/-enabled (e-) learning, and staff development. The ImpENSA project will build highly valuable skills and knowledge among all partners in SA and strengthen the collaboration with EU partners in the critical area of ICT in education. It will deliver a comprehensive, blended e-learning and training programme consisting of the following four modules:

1. Module 1 (e-learning): Optimising micronutrient nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life

**For a list of events and adhering/
affiliated bodies, please go to
www.iuns.org**

2. Module 2 (e-learning): Communication to support behaviour change
3. Module 3 (face-to-face): Healthy Conversation Skills to support behaviour change
4. Train-the-trainer module (face-to-face): Training of trainers to deliver the ImpENSA Training Programme.

Modules 3 and 4, which were originally planned to be face-to-face, will now be delivered through virtual means due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. ImpENSA will build capacity at SA HEIs, fostering their role as qualification providers and securing the foundations for the child's later health through improving nutrition and lifestyle during the critical early life-course phase, with lasting benefits for the next generation.

The project relates to IUNS activities including the Task Force: *IUNS Committee on Capacity Development in Nutrition* with online learning courses, as well as through various EU and SA consortium partners who are directly or indirectly contributing to the IUNS through their nutrition associations or societies.

The ImpENSA project is headed by Prof. Berthold Koletzko, who is Chair of the IUNS Task Force on *Dietary Fat Quality*. In South Africa, ImpENSA partners, ADSA and NSSA, are part of the SA National Committee that represents the South Africa Adhering Body to the IUNS. With most of the academics at the participating universities being ADSA or NSSA members, the IUNS link is a strong one.

For more details and information, see the ImpENSA project website:

<https://www.early-nutrition.org/impensa/>.

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<https://twitter.com/earlynutrition?lang=en>

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