



EIFLE/IEEF Guidelines

NFP Teacher Training Course Guidelines

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European Institute for Family Life Education (EIFLE/IEEF)
c/o Fondazione Camen
Via San Cristoforo 3
20144 Milano

Italy

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1 Intention of this document

These guidelines are based on the document issued by the CIC RNF Italy and were revised and adapted in the light of recommendations from IEEF member organisations. They define the criteria that need to be met to obtain IEEF accreditation for a Teacher's Training Programme.

2 What is a NFP teacher training course?

A **NFP** teacher training course is a multi-disciplinary formative course for teachers of natural methods on Natural Family Planning. It is based on the pedagogical principles of '*knowing*', '*knowing how to do*', and '*knowing how to be*', with the aim of acquiring knowledge and education skills in issues related to couples and women.

3 Aims of a training course

- To create awareness of *motivations* for participations in the course, guiding them not to become only 'experts' of fertility, but moreover that they unfold an educational task.
- *Make the fundamentals of the natural regulation of fertility known* (scientific, anthropological, ethical-moral and the applied aspects of NFP), within the chosen method ('*knowing*').
- *To bring out and deepen the values of the human person, of sexuality, of conjugal love and life* ('knowing how to be')¹.
- To mature one's disposition for self-examination and self-assessment².

4 Reaching the aims of the training course

- The established goals are reached by activating a creative didactic methodology³, to enhance full personal participation.
- The aim is *to ascertain the attitude of participants* towards teaching natural methods, or to increase their awareness.

5 Requirements for running a training course

5.1 Trainers' requirements

The group of trainers who run the teacher's training classes must qualify in the following 5 training areas.

- Scientific Area
- Natural Family Planning Method Area
- Anthropological, theological and ethical Area
- Sexuality and Psychological Area
- Pedagogical Area

¹ The term 'deepen the values' means that one strives in order that values are lived in one's life and to know how to be witness of them to couples and person who seek the services of learning natural methods.

² This improves one's ability to be of service to the couples and persons in the accompanying them along the course of learning the natural methods, trusting in the human possibilities of growth and internal improvement.

³ One may use teaching sessions, interactive approach, role plays, study groups, simulation etc.

Usually a minimum of 3-5 trainers are needed to cover these areas. The actual number of trainers required depends on the individual trainers' qualification. A *curriculum vitae* highlighting the area of teaching of each trainer is to be included when an organisation is applying for IEEF accreditation.

The application should also include information on the training schools such as:

- The foundation date of the school
- Number of active teachers
- Frequency of teacher training courses.

5.2 Participants' requirements

- Interview with an appointed official of the Training School.
- User of natural method chosen, for one year
- No particular professional preparation is needed.
- The *number* of participants is conditioned by the structural potential of the Training School⁴.
- *Attendance* is compulsory.

5.3 Organisational criteria

- Availability of a *Person Responsible* of the teaching and organization of the course⁵.
- Availability of tutors⁶ as described in 5.1.
- Chosen *external and internal lecturers* in the Training Schools, should be compatible with the goals and values previously described.
- Availability of an organizational *secretariat*.

5.4 Course structure

- ***Theoretical part***: To provide the course basis and to verify the aptitude to teach the chosen method;
- ***Practical part (apprenticeship)***: To practice and evaluate autonomy reached in teaching regarding the various phases of fertile life.

The duration of the *theoretical course* is to be spread over 7 months (with a variation of a minimum of 3 months and maximum of 12 months),
Course duration of *100 course hours*, with a minimum of 33% of the time allotted to *practical work, study groups* and eventual *one-to-one*.

5.5 Requirements for awarding a teaching certificate

Ascertain *minimal requirements before passing on to the apprenticeship* (usually at the end of the theoretical course), *by establishing*:

- Having *satisfactorily matured motivations* for choosing to offer services in NFP;
- Having *finished* the theoretical course within the stipulated time frame;
- Having *a good level of knowledge of the method chosen*: personal use and correct understanding of application of the method in the various physiological situations;
- Having acquired *good level of relationship and didactic capabilities*.

⁴ An adequate number of tutors is required. (Recommendation: 1 for every 7 participants).

⁵ The team, if present, must refer to the *Person in charge*.

⁶ The different Training Schools must be responsible also of the training of tutors in the accompaniment of future educators.

5.6 The apprenticeship should adhere to the following points:

Objectives:

- Ascertain the teaching abilities acquired by the trainee on the chosen natural method;
- Reaching autonomy in its application in all the situations of fertile life;
- Ascertain aptitude towards teaching.

Organisation:

- Support of trainee by one or more tutors by consultation and supervision;
- Typology of consultation required: a minimum of two initial meetings, the first as observer and the second undertaken by the trainee in the presence of the tutor. It is further requested that the trainee acquire the experience of the different phases of fertile life. It is also recommended that a minimum of two couples are followed from the first meeting through autonomy;
- Practical training in the presentation and awareness of natural methods.

If the apprenticeship cannot be performed in this way the procedure may be substituted by adequate role-play.

Didactic aids:

- Registration records of users;
- Personalised didactic material or material provided by the Training School.

6 Assessing the achievement of training objectives

Final Exam

- There is an *exam* at the end of the theoretical-practical course.

Modality of the final exam

- One accedes to the final exam through the recommendation of the *Person in charge*, or his delegate, with approval of *the training team*.
- The exam consists of a *written and oral test*.
- The *Person in charge* conducts the exam with the Examining Commission and draws up a *final judgement*⁷.

Acknowledgement of the teaching certificate

A teaching certificate is acknowledged by the Training School and signed by the Person in charge is awarded on successfully passing the exam, confirming the teacher training in the natural method chosen. It is valid for a period of at least two/three years, renewable by the Person in charge of the same Training School.

Teaching Certificate Renewal

- The participation in on-going training courses in accordance with the *requirements of the Training School is necessary to renew the teacher's training certificate*. Each Training School will identify the way in which teaching certificates are renewed. A renewal every two years is recommended.

⁷ The Training Schools are invited to provide Examining Commissions preferably made up of three *Persons in charge*.

7 Core contents of the training course

7.1 General training area

To provide the trainees with a historical-cultural framework of NFP and the sociological, anthropological, scientific and sexual motivations that lead to the choice of the method. To contribute towards the cultural and spiritual training background of participants, assisting them to understand the professionalism of the educational work that they are called to undertake.

- Presentation of the NFP training course, its pedagogical aims and didactic characteristics.
- Reflection on the personal motivations that spur participants to undertake NFP training.
- Role, work and responsibilities of the NFP teacher.
- Difficulties associated with NFP in the current historical, sociological and cultural context, present in the current multi-ethnic societies.
- Motivation for choosing natural methods.
- Organisation of branch consultation services
- Characteristics, motivations and promotion of NFP in the current historical-cultural context.
- Contents and didactic instruments in the promotion of NFP in the scientific (medical and humanistic), civil and ecclesiastic spheres.

7.2 Medical-scientific area

To help acquire a basic knowledge on anatomical-physiological aspects pertaining to human procreation and the biological functions pertaining to fertility rhythms. Highlight pathologies that may affect fertility and different methods that may interfere and manipulate the process of fertility.

- Individual and joint fertility.
- Signs and symptoms of fertility, their scientific basis, with special attention to the different mucus types as identified by Prof. Odeblad (Umea Universitet), as well as special physiological circumstances (e.g.: breastfeeding and pre-menopause etc.).
- General knowledge of male and female anatomy and physiology.
- Human procreation from conception to birth, with particular attention to the correct scientific terms and special care on the correct use of the language and its connotations⁸.
- Presentation of the pathological problems that may effect or change the observation of signs and symptoms of fertility, with particular attention to the knowledge and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and risk of cancer.
- Knowledge of various natural methods, other than the method chosen with particular attention given to high efficacy methods.
- Temporary and permanent methods for suppression of fertility including sound knowledge of all contraception methods, their functions and side effects.
- Abortive measures and prevention of abortion.
- Bio-technology in the field of ‘assisted reproductive technology’.
- NaPro Technology.

⁸ In linguistics, ‘connotation’ is the added meaning that resonances affective ‘denotations’, which otherwise is attributed to a conventional and neutral meaning, (e.g. Mother (denotative meaning) and Mum (connotative meaning)).

7.3 Anthropological Area and Sexuality

- The value and meaning of human sexuality in the personal dimension and in sexual dimorphism, in the light of the anthropological-person-centred meaning of mature love.
- Processes of sexuality.
- Human sexual desire, its characteristics and relationship with human behaviour.
- NFP and the quality of sexual relationship.
- Sexual aspects and the ‘ability to wait’. Good conducive communication between the couple.
- Critical knowledge of the different anthropologies in the current concept of the person, sexuality, human life, conjugal love and family.
- Anthropological view of the person and definition of the fundamental cultural concepts in order to understand who the human person is.
- Sexuality as a constitutional dimension of the person.
- The body as an expression of the human person.
- The sexual act as a language of expression particular to conjugal love.
- Fertility as an integral part of conjugal love.
- Natural methods: A unique and privileged tool that embraces all dimensions of the human person and conjugal love that permits the recapture of the joy of the sexual act.
- Natural methods and contraception: Two contrasting anthropological viewpoints.

7.4 Ethical, moral Issues and magisterium

This area’s aim is to give the moral and ethical aspects related to sexuality. It offers a clear position of the Church *magisterium* on the value of human life, its vision on sexuality and on responsible parenthood, highlighting the rationality of such teaching, which if followed may lead to the integral fulfilment of man.

- Relationship between ethics and personal conscience.
- Natural moral law: the moral aspect of behaviour does not depend solely on the honest intention and the evaluation of motives, but it is done through objective criteria engraved in proper nature of the human person and his actions.
- The ethical motivations that determine the choice for natural methods.
- Chastity of the couple: the meaning and value. Educating on truth and freedom.
- The concept of married life and responsible parenthood⁹.
- The principle of graduality and that of graduality of the law: two perspectives that are ethically and anthropologically opposite to each other; the first may lead the couple to live the Truth of the conjugal love, the second reduces its value to a distorted vision of reality that leads to a disarranged and reductive sexual behaviour.

⁹ Special attention is drawn to the documents of *Vatican Council II (Gaudium et Spes), Humanae Vitae, Familiaris Consortio, Theology of the Body, Veritatis Splendor, Evangelium Vitae, Donum Vitae*, and Letters to the family etc. to help deepen the knowledge of responsible parenthood.

7.5 Psycho-pedagogical area

This area should cover the pedagogical meaning and value of the natural methods in so far as they promote the harmonious development of all the dimensions of the person, within the context of mature love.

- The NFP teacher as an educator and not simply as an expert of fertility.
- Educational context of NFP:
 - a) The relationship between adults in so far as the person or user couple is a self-taught subject in a relationship of reciprocal trust with the teacher.
 - b) Empathy skills of the NFP teacher (acceptance, listening and abilities).
- The objective of the educational aspect in learning NFP within the spheres of knowledge, practice and value.
- The pedagogical course: knowledge – self knowledge – assuming of responsibility and autonomy in using NFP.
- Learning difficulties in NFP and possible learning alternatives.
- The NFP teacher in a confidential relationship with the couple clients.

7.6 Research Methodologies

Goal of this area is to understand the importance of the knowledge and critical evaluation of epidemiological literature on natural methods in view of their scientific value.

- Development of the critical skill to analyse statistical studies on natural methods in current literature.
- Sufficient information to answer questions on reliability and acceptability of NFP by users.
- Focusing on the importance of adhering to scientific methods by providing learning services that may facilitate credible data collection.

7.7 Didactic – pedagogical area

Goal of this area is to offer theoretical-practical knowledge on aspects related to the method chosen, through analysis of the various physiological situations pertaining to the fertility of the couple and the various interpretations associated with the signs of fertility. To explain the modality and use of the didactic instruments that aid awareness and are useful in consultations.

7.7.1 Training of future NFP teachers

- Evaluation and self-examination of the level of knowledge and comprehension reached after the training period, through critical evaluations applicable to every participant.
- Personal work intended to arouse the participants' creativity and ownership of the undertaken course.
- Analyse the lecturers' competences on the subject, clarity of delivery, personal commitment and interaction with the course participants.

7.7.2 Ongoing training

- Interaction with couples and/or persons interested in NFP (role plays and workshops etc.).
- Evaluation and self-examination of the participants' approach towards consultation during the training course and proposal of further personal development to guarantee a good level of teaching-relationship (supervised traineeship).
- Observation of the use of teaching material for the optimal transmission of information and methodology of the chosen method.
- Coaching (Mentor) and ongoing evaluation of teachers' personal attitudes on use and teaching.
- Retain a good relationship with the tutor.
- Presentation of administrative and record keeping strategies.
- Participation in group skills sessions.

7.8 Teaching of specific natural method area

Aim of this area is to offer all the knowledge of the basic scientific and theoretical-practical application of the method chosen in every situation of the fertile life of the couple.

- Biological bases of the method
- Observation, charting and interpretation of signs and symptoms of fertility in the method chosen.
- The rules of the chosen natural method, their motivation from the historic, scientific, epidemiologic and cultural point of view.
- The methodology of teaching and understanding, the time-frame and tools covered from the study phase until autonomy of the couple.
- Interpretation of difficult charts:
 - 1) Organic aspects (cervical-vaginal, unovulatory, irregular cycles – conditions or age).
 - 2) Psycho-relational aspects (personal and couple).
 - 3) Aspects of achieving a pregnancy.
 - 4) Multi-ethnic cultural aspects.

Particular attention and ample time during the course is to be given to chart interpretation.

It is requested that the Training School provides sound teaching of the natural method chosen according to the basics of the different NFP schools.