

# Rabies Educational Platform and Certificate Courses

Andre Coetzer<sup>1,2</sup>, Daniel Stewart<sup>1,3</sup>, Louis Nel<sup>1,2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC)  
<sup>2</sup> University of Pretoria, Viral Zoonoses Group (VZG)  
<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization of the United Nations (WHO)



## Abstract

The GARC Education Platform was developed to address the need for a coordinated approach to improve rabies education and awareness where it is most needed.

The Rabies Educator Certificate (REC) was the first course to be released on the freely accessible online platform, as a self-guided course designed to equip people with the knowledge and skills to effectively disseminate accurate, life-saving information regarding rabies and its prevention to at-risk communities throughout the world. Since the launch of the REC course in February 2015, the online REC course has been translated into three different languages (English, Spanish, and French) and more than 500 people from a variety of global settings have become certified.

A second course, the Animal Handler and Vaccinator Education Certificate (AHVEC), was launched in December 2015 after extensive beta testing by globally positioned expert networks. The AHVEC course has been designed as an introduction to dog handling and vaccination, which can precede a physical training program or alternatively be used by trained professionals who wish to refresh their knowledge and remain up-to-date regarding new techniques and tools on dog handling and vaccination.

The online GARC Education Platform, hosting the two existing courses will be expanded with other rabies-specific courses currently under development. It will continue to respond to and address the needs for enhanced public education and responsible pet ownership in an effort to prevent rabies.

**“Completing the REC course enabled me to simultaneously coordinate a rabies education and free vaccination outreach in three Nigerian locations.”**  
- Dr Victor Okorie (Nigeria)

## Introduction

The GARC Education Platform (GEP) was developed by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control's Partners for Rabies Prevention (PRP) after identifying the need for a coordinated approach to rabies education. The GEP is a web-based learning tool that caters for all internet connections and is free to access, with resources that can be freely downloaded by participants.

The GEP website currently hosts two courses:

- Rabies Educator Certificate
- Animal Handler and Vaccinator Educator Certificate

More courses are currently under development and will be launched in the near future.

**“These free online courses possess the perfect level of detail to inform users in a comprehensive and scientific way, but without annoying them with excessive and unnecessary technical information.”**

- Dr. Deborah Nadal (Spain)

## Rabies Educator Certificate

The REC disseminates accurate, life-saving information to at-risk communities throughout the world. The course is open to anyone but aimed specifically at people who work regularly in their communities, e.g. health/veterinary/community personnel who regularly visit communities, or community leaders who want to do something about rabies education.

The online REC course consists of five modules and each module contains specific and clear information that should be applicable to all situations, regardless of geographical location and circumstances. The five modules are as follows:

- What is rabies and how do people and animals get the disease?
- How to avoid dog bites and prevent rabies
- Caring for animals
- Understanding the role of a community educator in preventing dog bites and rabies
- Communicating the lifesaving information to people

There are 525 REC-certified participants globally since February 2015.

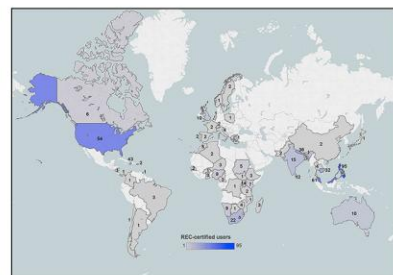


Figure 1. Global distribution and number of REC-certified users

**“The chapter explaining how to communicate with the community, and the role of the community educator, is very important in the fight against rabies.”**

- Dr. Fernando Rodriguez (Mozambique)

## Animal Handler and Vaccinator Educator Certificate (AHVEC)

Good animal handling and the proper administration of rabies vaccine, are essential techniques that need to be learned by all people actively involved with dog handling and vaccinating in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the handler and animal alike.

The AHVEC course has been designed as an introduction to dog handling and vaccination and can either precede an actual physical training program or be used as a refresher course by trained professionals.

The online AHVEC course consists of five modules and each module contains specific and clear information relating to the handling and vaccinating of dogs. The five modules are as follows:

- The role of the animal handler and vaccinator
- Understanding animal behaviour
- Effective ways to approach dogs
- Equipment needed to catch and handle dogs
- Effective vaccine administration techniques

The AHVEC was launched in December 2015 after extensive beta testing in globally positioned expert networks.



**“One participant recognized the symptoms of rabies as those that were seen in a young child in his village. This case would have gone unrecognized without the REC.”**

- Haitian veterinarian

