

# Sight and Life

Action in Brief

## Our Partnership with DSM and the World Food Programme

Working to eliminate malnutrition globally

Two billion people worldwide are deficient in one or more essential vitamins and minerals.<sup>1</sup> Often referred to as 'micronutrients' because they are needed only in minuscule amounts, these substances are described by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the 'magic wands' that enable the body to produce enzymes, hormones and other substances essential for proper growth and development. Eliminating micronutrient deficiencies, also known as 'hidden hunger', has been the focus of a partnership between DSM, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and *Sight and Life* (SAL) since 2007. DSM possesses advanced technical and financial resources, while WFP has extensive delivery mechanisms in countries where vitamin and mineral deficiencies are most prevalent. The third partner, *Sight and Life*, provides its expertise in research, advocacy, demand generation, and behavior change communication. Over the years, the partnership has shown itself to be a remarkably effective model for disseminating innovation and developing interventions to prevent and treat micronutrient deficiencies.



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### Evolution of the partnership

During the first eight years of its existence, which were structured in three phases between 2007 and 2015, the partnership made significant contributions to the fight against malnutrition. This included improved formulations for products such as Micronutrient Powders (MNPs), Ready-to-Use Supplemental Foods (RUSF), High-Energy Biscuits (HEBs), fortified date bars, and – perhaps most impactfully – Super Cereal (SC) & Super Cereal Plus (SC+). Many of these new and revised formulations are now industry standards for treating Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and preventing stunting in children aged 6–24 months. They are also given to malnourished pregnant and lactating women.

*Sight and Life's* association with WFP started in early 2005, prior to the establishment of the partnership between WFP and DSM, when *Sight and Life* provided support for WFP's Indian Ocean Tsunami relief operations. *Sight and Life* played a vital role in the partnership during the first three phases of its existence, and provided key input into the development of WFP's guidance

on behavior change communication (BCC) to facilitate the reconfiguration of WFP's improved and expanded food basket.

Under the fourth agreement (2016–18), the partners sought to broaden their scope, agreeing on four work streams to make the most effective use of their complementary competencies and capabilities. These included:

#### > **Product Innovation Use and Reach:**

Improvement of existing nutritional products, along with the development and testing of a specialized nutritious food for people living with HIV/AIDS.

#### > **Rice Fortification:**

The scale-up of rice fortification with the objective that fortified rice should become the standard for WFP and government social safety nets, and should be widely available in the open market.

<sup>1</sup> Eggersdorfer M, Kraemer K, Cordaro JB, Fanzo J, Gibney M, Kennedy E et al. Good Nutrition: Perspectives for the 21st century. Basel; New York: Karger, 2016.





Fortified biscuits are an important element in WFP's food basket.

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### > Demand Creation:

A dual-track approach to support the development of national Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Networks (SBNs) and also increase demand for healthy and nutritious diets.

### > Learning:

The establishment of WFP's Nutrition Learning Academy to enhance the nutrition knowledge, skills and capabilities needed by WFP staff and partners.

### Achievements of the partnership

By the end of 2017, the partnership had reached 39.4 million people with nutritionally improved products, rising from an initial 20.7 million individuals in 2013. Over the years, the partnership has shown itself to be a remarkably effective model for disseminating innovative and nutritious products, as exemplified by the rapid spread of Rice Fortification (RF). This model has also been applied to the development of national SBNs and, to a lesser extent, food-labelling programs. Meanwhile, the partnership's extensive joint advocacy and research efforts have helped advance global understanding of the scope and impact of micronutrient deficiencies, as well as awareness of interventions to prevent and treat them.

### Achievements by work stream

**1. Product Innovation:** WFP's food basket was transformed by means of diversification and improved formulations. Specifications were developed with a view to increasing nutrient bioavailability and product stability/shelf-life, taking into account the challenging environments and emergency settings in which they are distributed.

**2. Rice Fortification:** By the end of 2018, the partnership was supporting activities in 16 countries, laying the foundation for expanding the production and consumption of fortified rice. Activities have included conducting landscape analyses, trials and pilot programs; supporting the establishment of

national partnership platforms to facilitate collaboration; drafting relevant standards and policies; supporting the training of governmental and industry partners; exchange visits; and the adoption of RF by governments for their social safety net programs.

**3. Demand Creation:** The Demand Creation workstream supported the establishment of SBNs in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. It also supported the development of a national-level nutritious food labelling program in Zambia, and of a voucher program to promote sustainable, nutritious foods bearing the OBAASIMA quality logo in Ghana. In Latin America, this workstream supported activities to increase consumer awareness of, and knowledge about, food quality and nutrient requirements and helped create demand for fortified rice.

**4. Knowledge Management & Learning:** The partnership supported the building of WFP's 'Nutrition Academy', which includes e-learning and face-to-face platforms for both internal WFP personnel and external partners.

### Commitment and trust

Now in the fifth phase of its existence, the partnership owes its success to having a common goal and complementary capacities, resources and expertise. A driving force for the partnership's sustainability has been committed and engaged leadership and relationships of trust at every level.

### Further information

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