

Partnering to Prevent Micronutrient Malnutrition in Rural Nepal

Project Healthy Children (PHC) Helps Expand Innovative Small-Scale Flour Fortification Program to Prevent Anemia and Other Micronutrient Deficiencies.

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Project Healthy Children (PHC) and Micronutrient Initiative (MI) have signed an agreement to further expand an innovative small-scale flour fortification project in Nepal. This expansion will build on work done after MI won the World Bank Development Marketplace Award for the project last year. The project provides specially developed gravity driven flour fortification devices to small village mills in the Lalitpur district of Nepal. The device requires no electricity and little additional effort on the part of millers. It adds iron and other essential micronutrients to the locally grown grains milled in the villages and helps prevent iron deficiency anemia, which is a severe public health problem in Nepal. Prevalence of anemia among under-5 children is very high at 48%. Similarly, 42 % of pregnant women suffer from anemia.

PHC and MI have identified a total of 18 rural village development committees (VDCs) in Lalitpur district where there is potential to scale up this small-scale flour fortification (SSFF) approach. With the help from a grant from the Ansara Family Foundation, PHC is supporting the scale up in 13 VDCs. PHC will design economic models for sustainable funding of the capital and operating expense of SSFF and identify ways to reduce the capital cost of SSFF through various sourcing and manufacturing options.

MI will evaluate the project and document lessons learned and best practices, with a particular focus on what is required to move from project to program to sustainable business practice. The primary project aim is to create a program for large scale roll out of SSF technology within Nepal in order to reduce micronutrient deficiency among rural people who do not purchase and consume centrally processed and fortified foods. A secondary aim is to expand the universe of knowledge and disseminate that information about successes and failures so that PHC, MI and other organizations can expand SSFF efforts worldwide.

Project Healthy Children works with governments, technical organizations and private industry to establish food fortification and supplementation programs that improve the health of children around the world every time they eat a meal.



Project Healthy Children Chief Executive Officer David Dodson (right) and Micronutrient Initiative President Venkatesh Mannar sign an agreement to expand small-scale flour fortification efforts in Nepal.



A local woman uses the fortification device at a village mill in rural Nepal.

Micronutrient Initiative is dedicated to ensuring that the world's most vulnerable - especially women and children - in developing countries get the vitamins and minerals they need to survive and thrive. Its mission is to develop, implement and monitor innovative, cost effective and sustainable solutions for hidden hunger, in partnership with others.