

# LARGE-SCALE FOOD FORTIFICATION BUILDING NUTRITIOUS, RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

For decades, USAID has been a leader in addressing vitamin and mineral deficiencies through large-scale food fortification.



Photo: GAIN

## DELIVERING ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS FOR A HEALTHY DIET

Vitamins and minerals—often referred to as micronutrients—are vital to healthy development, disease prevention, and wellbeing. The majority of micronutrients are not produced in the body and must come from the diet.

Micronutrient deficiencies are the most widespread form of malnutrition. Countless individuals worldwide suffer from deficiencies in vitamins and minerals, often because they cannot access a healthy diet. The effects can be devastating, including birth defects, compromised cognitive and physical development for children, anemia, and weakened immune systems and child deaths.



Micronutrient deficiencies affect **MILLIONS OF PEOPLE** worldwide, including in industrialized countries.



Children, pregnant women and lactating women are **MOST AT RISK** of micronutrient deficiency.



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# HARNESSING THE POWER OF FOOD FORTIFICATION

Food fortification tackles micronutrient deficiencies head on by adding essential vitamins and minerals to household food products, increasing their nutritional value. Food fortification provides a safety net against vitamin and mineral inadequacies that often occur seasonally or during crises when food supply is low and access to a diverse diet is limited. The COVID-19 pandemic has further illustrated the importance of having a safety net and has re-energized USAID's focus on ensuring that food systems deliver safe

food that meets the nutritional needs of children and those in vulnerable contexts. Fortifying staple foods does not replace a diet rich in nutritious and diverse foods, including eggs, milk, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. But it is a must-have for food systems to ensure families can always receive the essential nutrients they need.

## Commonly Fortified Foods



Iodized Salt



Vitamin A Fortified Oil & Sugar



Flour Fortified with Iron, Zinc, and Several Vitamins

USAID supports **10 countries with large scale food fortification** and **59 countries with salt iodization**, in partnership with UNICEF.



Food fortification is a highly cost-effective intervention. For every **\$1 invested into salt iodization there is a \$30 return on investment**. Additionally, country-wide fortification can **save national economies an estimated 2-3 percent of GDP**.

## HOW USAID SUPPORTS FOOD FORTIFICATION



**Prioritizing food fortification in our food systems work and integrating food fortification** into a broader suite of dietary and nutrition activities to prevent micronutrient malnutrition and improve diets.



**Supporting local ownership and context-specific solutions** to help governments, the private sector, and local researchers identify appropriate food fortification vehicles and standards and sustainably build and maintain fortification programs.



**Emphasizing a whole-of-business approach with the food industry**, by supporting food processors in business planning, accessing finance, strengthening operational efficiencies and compliance, and marketing to make this sector more economically viable and resilient.



**Strengthening data collection and compliance monitoring** to enable country stakeholders to better measure progress and facilitate quality assurance and control and compliance with standards.



**Partnering with regional and country governing agencies** to support regional coordination and harmonization of food quality and safety legislation, standards, policies and regulatory control systems, including large-scale food fortification to ensure regional trade and fortification are synergistic.

► **Learn more at**  
**USAID.gov/nutrition**



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