

GRET - NUTRIFASO

Nutridev.org

Locally made fortified infant flours sold via retail and new channels in Burkina Faso



KEY MARKETING, SALES AND COMPLIANCE INNOVATIONS

- **Gret works through retail in both urban and rural areas but with different sachet sizes, and uses door to door in peri-urban zones.** *Retail in urban and rural areas:* Different sachet sizes enable to meet the needs of mothers from different economic strata: the middle class prefers 400g sachets (for a week) while in poorer area daily sachets (60g) are the best sellers. *Door to door in peri-urban areas:* Monthly subscription cards for home delivery of ready-to-eat porridge in informal settlement, show promising results: mothers find it easier to pay at once for 2 to 4 weeks rather than have to look for change every day.
- **Two marketing strategies have created high awareness of the product and generated first sales.**
 - » *In urban and rural areas:* Below-the-line marketing targeting all decision makers – health agents and mothers at health centers, all family members at community events (fathers, neighbors and mother-in-laws also play a role in choosing what the children eat) – allows to then sell via retail.
 - » *In urban areas:* Sales of ready-to-eat porridge under common brand “Laafi Benre” conducted by sales ladies going door-to-door with conspicuous carts and wearing uniforms creates strong brand awareness.
- **Gret leverages existing infrastructure as much as possible.** Gret trains existing local flour producers to improve the quality of their flour, and the program sells whenever possible via existing traditional retail channels.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

History of organization

Nutrition program Nutridev was founded in 1994 by Gret and IRD (Institut de Recherche pour le Développement). The goal of Nutridev is to define and launch pilot programs, then validate and scale up sustainable strategies to prevent malnutrition among underprivileged population and particularly children below 2 year-old.

In 2005, Nutrifaso, the Burkina Faso chapter of Nutridev, was launched. The aim was to support existing flour producers in 1) improving their products by modifying the recipe and adding mineral and vitamins, 2) extending their distribution networks to more shops (grocery stores, mom and pop shops and pharmacies) and health centers, 3) supporting them on advertising and communicating on their products (including name of product and packaging) and 4) simultaneously helping them increase their production capacity to serve the new demand. By 2013, Gret had supported over 20 local infant flour producers under 6 different brands in both urban and rural areas. These producers are either existing companies or women groups that Gret trained and equipped to produce a quality flour. Gret created a label regrouping the 6 brands, “Strong babies’ porridge”, and advertises them together. In addition to retail, Gret developed a new distribution channel of kiosks and mobile saleswomen (with carts) serving ready-made infant meals in urban areas, catering to women who feed their babies on their way to work or who stay at home. Finally, Gret-supported producers are also supplying donor-funded free distribution programs that today represent about half of the yearly production.

CASE STUDIES

Product/service offering and value proposition: The 6 different flours promoted by Gret mainly consist of local cereals fortified with a vitamin and mineral pre-mix to meet international infant nutrition standards, and are sold:

- In urban and rural areas, in packs of 60g (2 doses, complementing breastfeeding to reach 100% of recommended vitamins and minerals for one day) to 1kg. Unidoses did not take off, as mothers would usually cook enough porridge in the morning for the day and hence were not interested in buying food for only one meal. At consumer price, it costs between \$3 and \$10 (depending on the flour brand and packaging) to feed an infant for a month with the recommended amount of two porridge servings per day. Commercial distribution reaches a penetration between 5% and 20%, while institutional support (free distribution to the poorest) can push penetration up to 20-30% of 6-24 month infants in rural areas who are fed at least one bowl a day of fortified porridge.
- In peri-urban areas, ready-to-eat preparation “Laafi Benre” (1 portion of 100mL for FCFA 50-0.1\$ corresponding to half the recommended dose per day) is distributed door-to-door by a saleswoman 6 days a week. It is available for individual purchase as well as with 2- or 4-week consumption cards (respectively 13 or 26 days at FCFA 650 or 1300). This new system was only started in 2012 and represents less than 5% of sales today, but shows promising results for the future.

Promotion and compliance strategy

- **Above-the-line:** Gret has done one national TV campaign promoting 5 of the 6 brands under the common label “Strong babies’ porridge” (sales increased by 30% during the campaign which encouraged some wholesalers to start distributing the flours) and does local radio ads whenever possible to promote the local brands.
- **Below-the-line:** Promotion of infant flour is organized at retail sites and in crowded locations both in urban and rural areas (markets and health centers). Promotion activities include advertisements and displays explaining the product composition and their health benefits for children, free tastings, distribution of free samples, “buy one, get one or two free” offers, etc. The main partners involved in this strategy are the local enterprises that produce the flours and the retailers. In rural areas, product promotion by community workers and/or Gret’s or their partners’ “animateurs” is coupled with nutrition education activities.

Sales and distribution

- **Grocery stores:** Gret supports producers in expanding their retail network, as wholesalers might not be willing to take in local flours when they are used to only buying imported products (in urban areas) or not any infant specific products (in rural areas). Gret’s “animateurs” (and/or that of its local NGO partners) hence sometimes play a role of sales people promoting the product to local shops and making sure stocks are replenished regularly, a role that Gret encourages producers to take on internally. Products are available in 885 outlets throughout the country. In Ouagadougou alone, they are sold in 485 retail shops and 98 pharmacies.
- **Kiosk & Carts (door-to-door):** Ready-to-eat porridge is marketed door-to-door by four saleswomen and served in ladles with a volume of 100 mL (for one meal, made with ~30g of flour) to children in four suburbs of Ouagadougou. Each day, saleswomen sell ready-to-eat porridges made of two different fortified porridge brands to offer mothers more choice (and sell at the same time sachets of at least 5 brands for mothers who prefer to buy the flour).

Results

- **Scale:** Gret has supported over 20 producers, which together produce close to 15T of infant flours per month, corresponding to 500k meals per month, or over 16k meals per day, half of which is sold via commercial channels and half of which is distributed via institutional programs. It is difficult to estimate how many children ever consumed this flour as reliable, long term data on daily consumption is hard to obtain.
- **Social impact:** Mothers declare that their children grow better or gain weight (which can be their perception, or in some cases is measured in health centers during monthly visits), and that their children become more active and less often sick. The new monthly card system experimented in peri-urban areas of Ouagadougou holds good promises in triggering compliance and increasing impact. In addition, the women who work in the woman groups supported by Nutrifaso or as saleswomen in urban areas are given the opportunity to earn a minimum salary.
- **Financial sustainability:** Some of the local producers supported by Gret are fully financially sustainable (e.g., some in Ouagadougou barely receive support anymore, except for some promotion activities) while others still clearly need Gret’s assistance to make ends meet (such as women group who have been trained to produce the flour but are not selling enough yet to sustain their own salaries).

Future plans

- Extend activities in Burkina Faso:
 - » Reinforce existing producer network so that they can self-sustain once Gret involvement ends, increase their sales by 10% per year via additional promotion and marketing support to stabilize their production and sales throughout the year
 - » Continue to lobby the World Food Program and other NGO distribution campaigns to purchase fortified flours from local producers rather than imported products
 - » Expand “Laafi Benre” (door-to-door sales of ready-to-eat porridge) in urban areas
 - » Cover the rest of the territory with 1 production unit per province (preferably larger entrepreneurs who have better chances of becoming self-sustainable in the long term)
 - » Enter partnerships with more NGOs to pool resources and achieve greater impact
- Extend the strategy to other countries (Mali, Niger...) in the region.

Exchange rate for this case study: 1 USD = 500 Francs CFA

Nutritional information (provided by the manufacturer):

Céréalor

Ingredients:		
Corn, soy, groundnut, milk powder, sugar, iodized salt, minerals, vitamins and BAN enzyme		
Average composition for 100 g of flour:		
Energy and macronutrients:		
Energy	414.3	kcal
Crude proteins	15.0	g
Digestible proteins	12.0	g
Lipids	9.8	g
Minerals:		
Sodium	334.2	mg
Potassium	576.3	mg
Calcium	327.5	mg
Chlorine	529.8	mg
Phosphor	282.0	mg
Iron	26.2	mg
Magnesium	151.2	mg
Copper	691.9	µg
Iodine	212.9	µg
Zinc	11149.2	µg
Manganese	1553.3	µg
Selenium	34.1	µg

Vitamins:		
Vitamin A	607.7	µg éq. retinol
Vitamin C	25.8	mg
Vitamin D	107.4	UI
Thiamine	410.3	µg
Riboflavin	465.6	µg
Vitamin B6	652.0	µg
Nicotinamide	6027.2	µg
Vitamin B12	0.6	µg
Folic Acid	105.9	µg
Pantothenic acid	1129.2	µg
Vitamin E	19.1	UI
Vitamin K1	41.9	µg
Biotin	14.3	µg

CASE STUDIES

Natavie

Ingredients:

Millet, sorghum, groundnut, soy, monkey bread powder, sugar, iodized salt, minerals, vitamins and BAN enzyme

Average composition for 100 g of flour:

Energy and macronutrients:

Energy	401.1	kcal
Crude proteins	15.6	g
Digestible proteins	12.5	g
Lipids	9.4	g

Minerals:

Sodium	303.2	mg
Potassium	539.5	mg
Calcium	340.5	mg
Chlorine	458.0	mg
Phosphor	313.8	mg
Iron	30.0	mg
Magnesium	310.2	mg
Copper	779.3	µg
Iodine	209.7	µg
Zinc	10611.4	µg
Manganese	2684.7	µg
Selenium	30.2	µg

Vitamins:

Vitamin A	493.1	µg éq. retinol
Vitamin C	30.6	mg
Vitamin D	105.0	UI
Thiamine	369.5	µg
Riboflavin	359.7	µg
Vitamin B6	448.7	µg
Nicotinamide	6658.7	µg
Vitamin B12	48.1	µg
Folic Acid	89.0	µg
Pantothenic acid	617.1	µg
Vitamin E	17.5	UI
Vitamin K1	17.3	µg
Biotin	9.8	µg

Sources:

Field visit in Tapoa region, September 2-4, 2013. Interviews with Soma Adama, adjunct coordinator, in charge of information, education and communication for the Gnagna and Gourma regions, Sept 2-4. Interview with Mathieu Ouédraogo, in charge of food security at ACF in Diapaga, Sept 2, 2013. Interview with Diarratou Zeba, in charge of Promotion and compliance strategy and communication, and Azeto Ouadraogo, sales lady, Sept 4-6, 2013. Field visit in Ouagadougou peri-urban areas, Sept 5, 2013.

Bruyeron, Denizeau, Berger and Trèche: *Marketing Complementary Foods and Supplements in Burkina Faso, Madagascar and Vietnam: lessons learnt from the Nutridev program* (2010). Food and Nutrition Bulletin, 2010, 31(2), S154-S167

Website: www.nutridev.org/spip.php?rubrique31

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