FOOD FORTIFICATION INITIATIVE

The Food Fortification Initiative (FFI) champions effective grain fortification so people have the nutrition they need to be smarter, stronger, and healthier.

HOW WE WORK

We use unique expertise, rigor, and focus to help country leaders plan, implement, and monitor a sustainable, country-led fortification program. The only global group that focuses exclusively on the world’s most commonly consumed grains--industrially milled wheat flour, maize flour, and rice--our data-driven approach effectuates large-scale change. FFI is also the only organization that tracks country and global progress in grain fortification. Established in 2002, FFI is a public, private, and civic partnership based at Emory University’s Rollins School of Public Health.

WHY WE WORK

The global health burden of vitamin and mineral deficiencies is profound. Over 2 billion people lack the essential vitamins and minerals, or micronutrients, needed to live a healthy and productive life. Food fortification with micronutrients like iron and folic acid prevents severe anemia and birth defects of the brain and spine called neural tube defects (NTDs).

320,000 babies born with an NTD each year*
NTDs are debilitating and often fatal. Many affected pregnancies are terminated. Of live births, 75% of children die before their fifth birthday; survivors need life-long care.

801 MILLION women and children with anemia**
Iron-deficiency anemia contributes to the deaths of thousands of young women during pregnancy and childbirth, stunts children’s development, and reduces productivity.

ffinetwork.org

Photo: RTI
Fortification of flour with folic acid prevents debilitating birth defects for an average of 179 babies a day.

According to FFI estimates, only 20% of industrially milled cereal grain was fortified in 2020. This gap represents a tremendous opportunity for fortification to improve the lives of millions.

Top economists have declared fortification to be one of the most cost-effective development investments that exist today; for every $1 USD spent on fortification, there is a $27 USD return. When implemented and monitored well, fortification has the power to make large-scale impact on lives. An estimated 65,380 NTDs were prevented globally in 2019—an average of 179 a day—in countries where flour was fortified with folic acid.***

Reducing micronutrient deficiencies improves a country’s economic productivity, reduces healthcare expenditures, and builds food security. Furthermore, fortification can restore to diets the nutrients lost in crops as a result of climate change. FFI’s work addresses United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 1-5, 8, 10, 11, and 17.

WHERE WE WORK

FFI supported 21 countries 2020-2021, working to reach nearly 1 billion people—many of whom are the world’s most vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies.

**Lancet Global Health: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(13)70001-9/fulltext

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