

Reformulation Case-Study: Unilever

Challenge: Fortifying with Vitamins and Minerals

Unilever: Fortification to Drive Positive Nutrition

Article adapted from [Unilever](#)

It is alarming that micronutrient deficiencies are estimated to impact over 2 billion people, across developed, as well as developing countries.² Fifty-two million children are acutely malnourished, and 155 million (23%) of under-fives are stunted.³ Micronutrient deficiencies in iron, iodine, vitamin A and zinc are the most widespread forms of undernutrition. This can make people more vulnerable to disease, impair their growth and mental development, decrease their ability to earn a living, and even increase the risk of early death for young children.⁴

Overcoming Challenges

As part of its reformulation journey, Unilever builds in fortification to its product portfolio. For example, most of Unilever's spreads available globally are fortified with vitamin A and D, and in some cases with B vitamins.

Over one-third of Unilever's fortified products are sold in developing and emerging countries where malnutrition is most prevalent. It aims to offer fortified foods at an affordable price to bring them within the reach of as many people as possible. However, producing and distributing low-cost products and getting an economically sustainable margin can be challenging.

Achievements

India, is home to one-quarter of the world's undernourished people. Women of lower social status are most at risk which can lead to them giving birth to underweight babies. As such, fortified products like iodised salt are widely available and affordable. In 2017, more than 17 billion servings of *Annapurna/Captain Cook* iodised salt was sold in India. And in early 2018, *Annapurna Super Atta* was introduced, which is fortified with iron, folic acid and Vitamin B12.

Other country level fortification efforts include:

- **Vietnam:** Working with the National Institute of Nutrition and Ministry of Health on the National Strategies for Food Fortification project sponsored by GAIN, Unilever has offered Knorr fortified seasoning granules with added vitamin A.
- **Nigeria:** Approximately 7 billion servings of the Knorr/Royco iron-fortified bouillon cubes were sold in 2017. A study with Obafemi Awolowo University provide iron bioavailability from fortified Knorr cubes.

Next Steps

By 2022, Unilever will provide more than 200 billion servings with at least one of the five key micronutrients. It will particularly focus on addressing iron-deficiency anaemia, with anaemia affecting 30% of the world's population – mostly women and teenage girls. And by training entrepreneurs, its product range will reach remote communities.

Aside to that, Unilever has also funded programmes that raise awareness of the benefits of consuming fortified foods; exclusive breastfeeding; safe, timely and adequate complementary feeding and dietary supplementation for infants and young children; and the benefits of a diverse diet.

References:

¹ <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.wrapper.nutrition-2016?lang=en>

² Global Nutrition Report 2015

³ <http://www.who.int/gho/child-malnutrition/en>
<http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.wrapper.nutrition-2016?lang=en>

⁴ http://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/eb12/en

