

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

Food Systems: Building Bridges between Nutrition and Agriculture

Partnerships are important, but will be successful to the extent that the public policy goals are clear and are aligned with the CFS vision, are transparent, and open to scrutiny.

The best example of partnership in the food sector in the past decade is hiding in full sight: it is the thousands of companies, mainly local and national, which are adding essential vitamins and minerals to commonly consumed staples and condiments. Core to fortification and its partnership model is government leadership to set regulations and apply health and food standards of WHO, Codex etc.; facilitators such as MI, UNICEF and GAIN which have helped to provide guidance, training and consumer awareness to support the introduction of these fortified foods; and the companies themselves which have adapted – and sometimes voluntarily adopted – this approach because they see the importance of reducing VMDs for improving intelligence and educability among hundreds of millions of children, and tackling many disorders and diseases ranging from preventable birth defects and blindness, to weak immune systems leading to infections which kill millions of vulnerable children.

It was estimated that 35,500 birth defects were prevented last year due to flour fortification. However, this is only 13% of preventable birth defects which we could achieve if we scale up flour fortification. The good news is that the evidence of direct benefits to vulnerable people, women and children is strong and growing as new partnerships are formed and existing ones mature resulting in access to fortified foods increasing among rural communities. These partnerships took time, often 3 years+ to develop and put in place.

The models of reengineering the food system to expand access to safe, affordable and nutritious foods are market, product and value chain specific. But we know that SDG2 cannot be delivered unless we set the bar high in terms of harnessing the power and innovation of markets to build a human friendly and sustainable food system.