Unlocking the Power of One Billion Women and Girls

We live in a world where one billion women and girls are malnourished. This undermines progress towards ending global poverty and inequality.

In the family, in the community and at work, women are drivers of development. Malnutrition is a brake holding them back. Through focused and united action, we can begin to remove that brake.

Good nutrition can transform lives and our world.

Well-nourished girls are better able to go to school and get an education. Well-nourished women and girls are healthier, with stronger immune systems, making them more resistant to disease. Well-nourished women have safer pregnancies, healthier children and are more productive members of society and the workforce.

Why Nutrition Matters

Malnutrition is both a cause and a consequence of poverty and inequity and remains one of the most persistent barriers to improved human development. It limits the capacity of generation after generation of women and girls to grow, learn, earn and lead.

Why?

- The lack of access to good nutrition is compounded by gender discrimination that too often relegates women to the bottom rungs of the economic and social ladder. In many societies, women and girls eat last and least.

- Women affected by iron deficiency anemia may face constant, debilitating exhaustion. Anemia affects half a billion women of reproductive age and four out of ten pregnant women worldwide.

- Malnutrition kills. Almost half of all child deaths under five are nutrition-related.

Call to Action: Women’s Nutrition Now

Photo: Eric Lafforgue
Call to Action:

Global Leadership

Change at a global scale can only happen if women and girls receive the nutrition they need.

Good nutrition for women and girls is key to delivering on many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. From addressing global poverty and gender equality to health, education, economic growth and climate change, nutrition has a key role to play.

Global leadership is urgently needed to make nutrition a development priority. Action on nutrition for women and girls must be scaled up by governments, donors, international agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Nutrition receives less than one per cent of all development aid (ODA) and less than 1% of budget allocations in high-burden countries.

A recently conducted first-of-its-kind costing shows that $7 billion annually over the next ten years is needed to reduce stunting, anemia, wasting and increase breastfeeding. This investment would ensure 65 million fewer stunted children and save 3.7 million children’s lives.¹

The investment will not only save lives, it will pay off economically as well. Nutrition is one of the most cost-effective investments for a healthy world. Malnutrition costs the global economy $3.5 trillion every year.²

Empowering Women and Girls

Nutrition is a key building block for sustainable development and is a basic human right.

When women have the power to claim their rights, it leads to a better quality of life for them, their families and communities. But in order for women to be able to claim their rights, women need to be at the centre of their own health and nutrition solutions.

Specifically, the World Health Assembly and Sustainable Development Goals nutrition targets must be met. Investments in nutrition must empower women and girls to reach their full potential.

By investing in women’s and girls’ nutrition, societies become more sustainable and equal.

Be a Nutrition Champion

→ Shine a light on nutrition for one billion women and girls around the world

→ Join the call to action on social media for #WomensNutritionNow

To contact us:
180 Elgin Street, Suite 1000
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K2P 2K3
Tel: +1 613.782.6800
Fax: +1 613.782.6838
Email: mi@micronutrient.org

About the Micronutrient Initiative

MI is a global leader on nutrition. We deliver high impact interventions and drive new approaches that contribute to the global effort to scale up nutrition. Every year, working in collaboration with donors, governments and partners, we reach close to 500 million of the world’s most vulnerable, especially women and children, with critical nutrition interventions. www.micronutrient.org

---

¹ This conservative estimate is based on the global number of people with micronutrient malnutrition (2 billion). At least 1 billion, or one half, are women and girls. See World Health Organization (2015), BMJ (2015) and Food and Agriculture Organization (2012):
FAO: The State of Food Insecurity In the World (2012); BMJ: “Nutrition and health in women, children, and adolescent girls” (2015); 351 dos: (September 2015)
WHO: “Micronutrient Deficiencies”. (Accessed April 26, 2016)


⁴ FAO: Understanding the true cost of malnutrition (2014)

⁵ For World Health Assembly nutrition targets, see: World Health Organization, Global Nutrition Targets 2025: Policy Brief Series (2014) For Sustainable Development Goals nutrition targets, see: SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture (2014)