



# RIGHT START

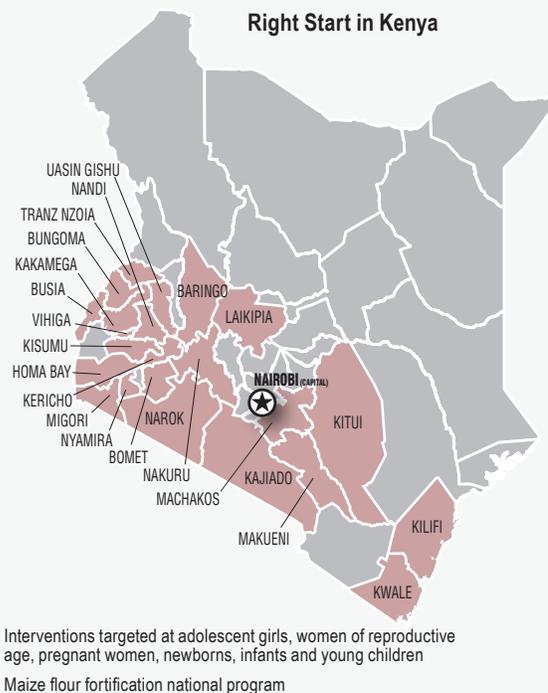
## Improving the quality of nutrition for women, adolescent girls and children (*Anzilisha*)

### Improving the quality of nutrition and healthcare for women, adolescent girls, newborns and young children in Kenya

The “Right Start Initiative” is a comprehensive program reaching nine countries in Asia and Africa, designed and run by the Nutrition International with the goal of improving the quality of nutrition for 100 million adolescent girls and women of reproductive age. In Kenya, Nutrition International will invest \$9.1M (CAD) over five years to 2020. The program has multiple parts. Through it, Nutrition International will: (1) work with the national government to put a plan in place to improve adolescent girls’ nutrition in nine counties through weekly iron and folic acid supplementation and nutrition education; (2) reach over one million pregnant women and newborns with evidence based high impact nutrition interventions; (3) increase the availability of commercial maize flour fortified with iron and folic acid throughout the country in order to reach nearly one million adolescent girls and women of reproductive age; (4) build the capacity of frontline health workers to provide quality antenatal, delivery and postnatal care, allowing for improved survival and health of pregnant women and newborns in 21 counties; (5) and improve the nutrition of over 600,000 children under two years old through a heightened focus on maternal infant and young child nutrition at the policy and community health levels.

### The Need

In Kenya, a quarter of all women, including adolescent girls, have anaemia, which can impact their physical well-being, their performance at work or school, and increase the possibility of complications and fetal development issues if they become pregnant. Maternal and infant and young child nutrition indicators are still sub-optimal: only about two-thirds of all newborns are exclusively breastfed, and less than a quarter of infants aged six to 23 months benefit from appropriate complimentary feeding. Over a quarter of all children under five are stunted, which can have long-term



effects on their cognitive development, school achievement, economic productivity in adulthood.

### Our Goal

The program aims to reduce anaemia, birth complications and maternal and newborn deaths, as well as to reduce the number of low birth weight newborns and protect pregnancies from neural tube defects such as spina bifida. It also seeks to reduce stunting in children under five years old. Well-nourished adolescent girls are better able to go to school and get an education. Well-nourished women have safer pregnancies, healthier

children and are more productive members of society and the workforce. Well-nourished infants and young children are more disease-resistant, and have a better chance of becoming contributing members of society. The program will have positive social and economic impacts by eliminating obstacles that malnutrition imposes on some of the most vulnerable populations, preventing them from reaching their full potential and that of the next generation.

## Interventions and impact by 2020

- ➔ **810,000 adolescent girls** living in the nine targeted counties will receive weekly iron and folic supplementation and nutrition education through multiple platforms (school, private health facilities and community) with the aim of reducing iron deficiency anaemia by 10% by 2020.
- ➔ **986,000 women of reproductive age and adolescent girls** nationally should have access to commercial maize flour fortified with iron and folic acid by 2020. Although maize flour fortification is mandatory in Kenya, it targets the large millers, which only produce 40% of all maize flour in the country, and small- and medium-scale millers lack the capacity to fortify. Nutrition International will target medium-scale maize flour millers and provide them with technical and financial support to enable them to fortify maize flour. As a result, the availability of adequately fortified maize flour will be increased.
- ➔ **710,000 pregnant women and 666,000 newborns** will receive better antenatal, delivery and postnatal care at community health facilities in 21 counties. This will include iron and folic acid supplementation during pregnancy to reduce the risk of low birth weight – and potentially deadly complications at birth for mothers – optimal cord clamping and cord care, and promotion of early initiation to breastfeeding and kangaroo mother care to improve the newborn's survival and health. Frontline health workers will receive training to improve their capacity to deliver these interventions, and community members will be sensitized to the importance of their adoption.
- ➔ **636,000 infants under two years old** in 16 counties will be reached with improved nutrition through the development of policies to scale up and extend the delivery of packages of interventions including optimal breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding, counseling and food supplementation with multiple micronutrient powders for infants and young children.

## Expectations from the project by 2020

**Avert at least 673,000 cases** of anaemia in women of reproductive age and adolescent girls.

**Avert 39,000 cases** of stunting in children under five.

**Avert 11,000 deaths.**

**Reduce the risk** of neural tube defects in 520,000 pregnancies..

**Reduce the number** of low birth weight newborns.

**Reach at least 1.3M** pregnant women, newborns, and children under two with evidence based high impact nutrition interventions.

## The Right Start Initiative: A catalytic platform for change

The Right Start Initiative is based on five pillars: high-impact programs, resource mobilization, new strategic partnerships, technical leadership, and advocacy. With \$75M (CAD) in anchor funding granted by the Canadian government, Nutrition International is launching programs in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Pakistan, Philippines, Senegal and Tanzania, aiming to reach 50 million women and adolescent girls by 2020. These programs include packages of interventions adapted to each country: weekly iron and folic acid supplementation for adolescent girls, food fortification, iron and folic acid supplementation for pregnant women, as well as solutions to improve nutrition for infants and young children. Building on the anchor funding, Nutrition International is reaching out to donors, foundations and the private sector working for global nutrition to leverage this investment with the objective of doubling its reach to 100 million women and girls.

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The Micronutrient Initiative has become Nutrition International. This change will be implemented in Kenya over the coming months.

## About Nutrition International

Founded in 1992, Nutrition International is a global organization dedicated to delivering proven nutrition interventions to those who need them most. Working in partnership with countries, donors and implementers, our experts conduct cutting-edge nutrition research, support critical policy formulation, and integrate nutrition into broader development programs. In more than 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Africa, Nutrition International nourishes people to nourish life. [www.NutritionIntl.org](http://www.NutritionIntl.org)