INDIA PROGRAMS
India is the second most populous country in the world. Despite the rapid economic growth, the country is faced with the biggest challenge of providing optimal nutrition to its 1.3 billion people. The NFHS-4 (2015-16) reports that nearly 36% Indian children under five are underweight, 21% are wasted and nearly 38% are stunted. Diarrhoeal diseases continue to be a significant cause of childhood morbidity and mortality. Annually, India loses over US$12 billion in Gross Domestic Product to vitamin and mineral deficiencies\textsuperscript{1,2}. There is a critical need to address the burden of malnutrition in the country by scaling up core nutrition interventions.

With the support of the Government of Canada, Nutrition International has been working in India for more than 20 years, alongside the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Women and Child Development and other relevant ministries. It also has MoUs with the National Health Mission and the Departments of Women and Child Development of state governments to strengthen and address the country’s nutrition challenges. The key interventions are aimed at improving the survival and health of the vulnerable, especially women, adolescent girls and young children. This is achieved through vitamin A supplementation, treatment of diarrhoea through zinc and oral rehydration salts for young children, ensuring adequate iodization of salt, promotion of double fortified salt as well as iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation for pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls.

Drawing on its regional and global experiences and expertise, Nutrition International has been able to bring innovative solutions to the Indian context by engaging in strategic partnerships; committing resources, strengthening planning and enhancing capacity of key stakeholders; integrating strong program monitoring and reporting mechanisms; improving supply chains; increasing understanding of nutrition in communities and informing government policies to make programs and services more effective and inclusive.

\textsuperscript{2} World Bank. 2009. World Development Indicators (Database).
Nutrition International India aims to achieve six key and complementary strategic objectives between 2019 and 2024:

- Increase bi-annual administration of vitamin A to children (9-59 months)
- Expand zinc supplementation along with low osmolarity Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) for the treatment of childhood diarrhoea
- Improve maternal and essential newborn care and infant and young child nutrition services
- Improve production, monitoring and consumption of iodized salt and provide technical support to salt processors
- Introduce and promote the use of Double Fortified Salt (DFS), fortified rice and wheat flour through the social safety program and commercial markets to reduce prevalence of anaemia
- Expand IFA programs for preschool children, adolescents and women of reproductive age

National programs, schemes and campaigns supported by Nutrition International:

- National Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Program
- Food-based Safety Net Programs - Public Distribution System
- Integrated Child Development Services
- India New Born Action Plan
- Home Based Care for New Born Care
- Home Based Care Young Child Care
- Facilities Based New Born Care
- Mother Absolute Affection program
- Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative
- Rashtiya Bal Swasthya Karyakram
- Intensive Diarrhoea Control Fortnight
- Navjat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram
- National Vitamin A supplementation
- Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram

List of states where Nutrition International is working in India:

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<th>Program</th>
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With an aim to combat iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) in India, Nutrition International has been supporting the government in achieving universal salt iodization since 2000. The support includes building capacity of the salt processors to produce adequately iodized salt and of the food safety officers to enforce iodized salt standards. Nutrition International also aids the national and state IDD Cells to implement the National Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Program, along with advocacy towards revision of salt iodization guidelines. In 2018, Nutrition International trained more than 700 salt processors and quality controllers on improving production, quality assurance and effective monitoring. Through Nutrition International’s support, salt processors collectively produce 3.1 million metric tonnes (MTs) of iodized salt annually, 40% of which is adequately iodized. Some of the innovations introduced by Nutrition International, such as the ‘pull-financing’ model, are helping in the consolidation of the salt industry.

DOUBLE FORTIFIED SALT

DFS (fortified with iron and iodine) is an innovative scientific breakthrough developed over 15 years ago by researchers at the University of Toronto in collaboration with Nutrition International. This was approved by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in 2014.
**CURRENT PROJECTS**

Nutrition International supports the Government of India’s Food Fortification initiative for improving nutrition through fortification of staple foods and introducing them in existing public sector programs like the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Midday Meal Scheme and Public Distribution System (PDS). In Madhya Pradesh, Nutrition International is supporting the state government for the introduction of DFS into the PDS in 89 tribal blocks, benefiting around 12 million people, including 3 million women of reproductive age. In Gujarat, Nutrition International is providing technical support for the introduction of DFS into the ICDS program across all 33 districts, which is expected to benefit 1.9 million people across the state.

**WHEAT FLOUR FORTIFICATION**

Nutrition International spearheads the initiative of wheat flour fortification (with iron and folic acid) in India. As part of the program, Nutrition International provides technical support to the Gujarat Roller Flour Millers Association for the introduction of fortified wheat flour in the commercial channel. In 2018, 83,000 MTs of fortified wheat flour were produced in the mills.

In partnership with the Food Fortification Initiative, NI is providing technical support to the Government of Haryana to implement the Wheat Flour Fortification Program through the PDS in two districts of the state. As part of the program NI is building capacity of government officials, providing IEC materials and monitoring implementation of the program, which will benefit 1.45 million individuals including 335,000 women of reproductive age.

**RICE FORTIFICATION**

NI has partnered with the Government of Tamil Nadu and Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab South Asia (J-PAL) to introduce fortified rice through 110 Fair Price Shops in the Cuddalore district, reaching 152,000 beneficiaries of the PDS. As part of this partnership, NI will provide technical assistance in blending operations (blending of fortified rice kernel with PDS rice), distribution of blended fortified rice, and building the capacity of relevant government officials and fair price shop owners to monitor the program at the community level and the warehouse level to ensure that adequate quantity and quality of fortified rice is produced and transported to targeted Fair Price Shops.
INDIA PROGRAMS

CURRENT PROJECTS

IRON AND FOLIC ACID SUPPLEMENTATION

In India, Nutrition International supports the national as well as state governments to improve the access, coverage and consumption of weekly iron and folic acid (WIFA) among adolescent girls. The program aims to address the bottlenecks in the ongoing IFA supplementation program by improving the quality and coverage of the program; effective planning, implementation and monitoring of the program and training health personnel for behavior change interventions.

Additionally, at the national level Nutrition International contributes to the development of operational guidelines for the Integrated National Iron Plus Initiative viz. Anaemia Mukt Bharat. In Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat, Nutrition International also supports the governments in strengthening the daily IFA and calcium consumption among pregnant and lactating women. The program aims to reach 6.1 million adolescent girls and 1.2 million pregnant and lactating women with IFA supplements.

VITAMIN A SUPPLEMENTATION

Nutrition International assists the governments of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in effectively planning and implementing bi-annual rounds of the vitamin A supplementation (VAS) by ensuring timely procurement of adequate quantities of supplies, program monitoring, building capacity of service providers and designing behaviour change interventions for awareness generation. In addition, Nutrition International actively engages in advocacy efforts to prioritize and allocate appropriate budgets for the VAS program in the states. Nutrition International’s significant contribution has led to the improvement of VAS coverage, reaching a total of 70 million children aged 9-59 months.
Nutrition International supports the entire package of newborn care under the India Newborn Action Plan, which includes antenatal and postnatal care, with emphasis on neonatal resuscitation, optimal timing of cord clamping, timely initiation of breastfeeding, prevention of hypothermia and Kangaroo Mother Care.

In addition, Nutrition International supports the state governments of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh in improving maternal and newborn health and nutrition (MNHN) and infant and young child nutrition (IYCN) services both in health facilities and community settings, focusing on “continuum of care” based on the 1,000 days approach. The main components of the MNHN program include gap identification through facility assessments, monitoring and mentoring of nurses, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) for improving service delivery and participating in review meetings to provide feedback for improvement.

Under IYCN, the areas of focus include promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding, monitoring of ICDS program, counseling of mothers and caregivers for checking children's growth stages and preventing conditions of mild, moderately acute or severely acute malnutrition and relapse of such cases.