

SAFO has reached more than 140 million people with fortified staple foods

We feel hungry when our body's intake of protein, fat or carbohydrate is inadequate but not when our intake of equally important vitamins and minerals is too low. However, for our health, these micronutrients are essential. Micronutrient deficiency is, therefore, often known as 'hidden hunger'. Worldwide, more than 2 billion people, almost one third of the world's population, suffer from hidden hunger.

"Vitamin A deficiency is one of the most frequently occurring forms of malnutrition in developing countries" said Sebastian Paust, member of the GIZ management board in his opening speech at the SAFO conference 'Hungry! - Food Fortification as a Malnutrition Intervention' in Berlin on May 10th 2012.

SAFO, the "Strategic Alliance for the Fortification of Oil and Other Staple Foods" has the objective to reduce micronutrient deficiency of low-income population groups in developing and countries that are suffering from or at risk of malnutrition. In order to achieve this objective, edible oil is fortified with vitamin A. SAFO is a development partnership of BASF and GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

In SAFO, BASF trains local food producers, especially oil mills, and provides them with the technical expertise they need to fortify staple foods with vitamin A. In addition, BASF and its local partners jointly develop sustainable business models to make sure the fortified staple foods reach those most in need. GIZ facilitates stakeholder dialogues of political actors, private sector and civil society and advises governments in introducing evidence-based standards and legislation

and the establishment of quality control systems to ensure compliance with fortification standards and legislation.

Success proved the SAFO approach right: “The initiative has enabled us to improve the nutrition situation of many millions of people” said Michael Heinz, member of the board of executive directors of BASF at the ‘Hungry!’ Conference. More than 140 million people at risk of or suffering from malnutrition now use fortified cooking oil. This means that 60.000 deaths of children under the age of five have been prevented and that sick days of students and workers could have been reduced by 270.000 million due to better health. Also staple food producers in developing countries take advantage from the health benefit added to their product that can imply a competitive advantage.

Dirk Niebel, Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development stressed in Berlin: “Without the close cooperation of public and private sector, this success would not have been possible”. Building on the achievements so far, political decision-makers and BASF are seeking agreement on continuation and intensification of SAFO.

The SAFO conference ‘Hungry! - Food Fortification as a Malnutrition Intervention’ hosted by GIZ and BASF in Berlin on May 10th discussed the benefits of cooperation with the private sector in combatting malnutrition and served as a platform for exchange of experience and initiation of new partnerships between different stakeholders. Speakers included Ertharin Cousin (Executive Director of the World Food Programme), Dirk Niebel (Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development) as well as members from the Boards of Executive Directors of BASF and GIZ.



From left to right: Sebastian Paust (GIZ board member), Ertharin Cousin (Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme), Dirk Niebel (Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development) and Michael Heinz (Member of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF) at the Hungry! Conference in Berlin.



A graphic facilitator captured the key topics of the Hungry! Conference.