
Reducing Chronic Malnutrition through the Use of Sprinkles in Guatemala
A Report Prepared for the Next Generation, August 2011

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The U.S. Fund for UNICEF would once again like to thank you, Next Generation, for your generous investment of \$175,000 in UNICEF's nutrition programs in Guatemala. One of the best and most efficient ways to reduce the number of children in Guatemala who fail to reach their full potential is through a strategic investment in the treatment and prevention of malnutrition. Chronic malnutrition must be addressed holistically, with monthly growth monitoring, micronutrient supplementation through Sprinkles, and counseling for mothers regarding small child feeding and care.

Next Generation's generous gift inspired our colleagues at the U.S. Fund for UNICEF to further promote the Sprinkles program in Guatemala. We are happy to report that with through the generosity of Next Generation and other donors, the UNICEF Guatemala Country Office has spent over \$323,000 on this innovative nutritional supplementation program to date.

Nutritional deficiencies have threatened Guatemalan children for decades. Today, chronic malnutrition affects 49.8 percent of Guatemala's children under the age of five. The situation gains a new layer of concern when one studies the differences between malnutrition rates in urban versus rural areas and indigenous versus non-indigenous populations. There are large gaps between urban (34.3 percent) and rural (58.6 percent) areas and between the indigenous (65.9 percent) and non-indigenous (36.2 percent). The hardest hit areas of Guatemala are those where there is poverty and extreme poverty, reaching percentages as high as 69.5 percent in the Department of Huehuetenango and 82.2 percent

Photo

Guatemala: A mother feeds her daughter a meal supplemented with Sprinkles. © Mia Baxter

Cover Photo: © Mia Baxter



in the Department of Totonicapán. This is why these areas have been given priority by UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare for nutrition interventions.

Improving the nutritional status of children between the ages of six months and three years through the strategy of micronutrient powder is considered a cost-effective strategy that can improve the quality of life of vulnerable children. By delivering essential nutrients in this manner, Sprinkles enhances children's cognitive development, decreases delays in physical growth, and reduces morbidity from infectious diseases.

This progress report looks at what has been achieved up until May 2011 in efforts to improve the nutritional status and reduce micronutrient deficiencies in children as part of the support process for reduction of chronic and acute malnutrition in children under the age of three in the Departments of Huehuetenango and Totonicapán.

Photo

Guatemala: Next Generation members visit a health center with a nutrition program.
© Jason Rotter and Danielle Abraham



UNICEF in Action

Thanks to the generosity of the Next Generation, UNICEF has worked to provide interventions that prevent anemia due to iron deficiencies, prevent growth retardation due to zinc deficiencies, prevent gastrointestinal infections related to deficiencies of vitamin A and other nutrients, and ensure growth monitoring.

In order to guarantee success, UNICEF is continuing to:

- Train health care providers to offer appropriate counseling related to Sprinkles as part of an integrated approach to health and nutrition;
- Improve recording of micronutrient supplementation in the Health Information System to obtain reliable reports of coverage with Sprinkles;
- Develop educational materials on the proper use of Sprinkles; and
- Maintain an inventory of the needs of Guatemala's regional health service networks, paying close attention to the availability of equipment such as scales, height boards, and arm circumference tapes.

Thanks to your support, in 2011 alone, 4,500,000 sprinkle sachets were purchased and 2,125,980 were already distributed. In Totonicapán, 9,003 children and 26,430 children in Huehuetenango received nutritional supplementation for the first quarter. An additional 39,567 children will be supplemented in 2011 thanks in part to your generous support.

On top of the number of children served, your generosity has allowed UNICEF to strengthen the micronutrient supplementation skills of health providers in 6 departments so that they can provide counseling to mothers. As a result, 233 trainings and 175 food preparation demonstrations were conducted, and 5,850 mothers participated in education activities.

Nutrition clinics were established as friendly places where measures to prevent malnutrition (i.e. growth monitoring, micronutrient supplementation, counseling on infant feeding, etc.) are implemented, with an emphasis on breastfeeding and the proper use of Sprinkles.

Tools for recording micronutrient supplementation, including child record cards maintained by the mothers, were improved upon and officially rolled out in 2011. These allow for accurate reporting of coverage rates. Educational materials on the proper use of Sprinkles were also reproduced and distributed throughout the health services.

UNICEF's Continuing Response

Despite the progress made, much more still needs to be done. Today, a combination of extreme poverty and soaring food and energy prices has left thousands of Guatemalan children in need of aid. UNICEF is currently doing whatever it takes to prevent the situation from worsening. But with the support of donors like you, UNICEF is also doing whatever it takes to reverse the situation.

In 2011, UNICEF plans to continue these interventions by working with the international community and donors to fully support the communities in the region to stabilize the situation and enable timely and effective responses.

The U.S. Fund for UNICEF is grateful for the generous support of Next Generation, which has helped enable the progress to date. Again, on behalf of the children of Guatemala, thank you for your ongoing commitment to our work, which helps to ensure UNICEF's continued fight for child survival in rural Guatemala.



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UNICEF has saved more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization in the world. Working in over 150 countries, UNICEF provides children with health care, clean water, nutrition, education, emergency relief, and more. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy, and education in the United States.

UNICEF is at the forefront of efforts to reduce child mortality worldwide. In just two decades, the number of children under

age five dying each day has been cut by one-third. But still, 22,000 children die each day from preventable causes. Our mission is to do whatever it takes to make that number zero by giving children the essentials for a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit www.unicefusa.org.

Believe in zero. | ~~22,000~~

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