

SCN 2003 Report from UNICEF Uzbekistan

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1. Advocacy

Activities contributing to enhancement of national commitment and capacities to address micronutrient deficiencies through formation of a Working Group on Micronutrients under the Deputy Prime Minister and development of a national strategy for Anemia Prevention and Control.

Advocacy with policy makers, including discussions on anaemia in working sessions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Karakalpakstan and the Khorezm Hokimiyat, with UNICEF distributing 40,000 posters on anaemia prevention.

2. Fortification

UNICEF has supported the government of Uzbekistan to prepare a proposal for flour fortification, which has been accepted. ADB is currently implementing a program on Flour Fortification in which UNICEF is also a partner; the target is 30% fortification by June 2003, via pilot mills. UNICEF will pick up after that to reach a level of 80% by the end of 2004.

3. Supplementation

In 2001-2002 in total 1,852,810 children between 6 and 24 months and fertile women. Have been supplemented in the oblasts Ferghana, Khorezm and Karakalpakstan with the help of our partner institute of Hematology.

4. Research

Sentinel study started December 2003 in Tashkent Oblast among 80 children from 40 families for ferritin, hemoglobin and folic acid. Research will be repeated after exactly 1 year to establish the effect of flour fortification.

5. Other

More than 1,800 health workers were trained in pilot oblasts and iron pills were supplied (as through Government support, as through donors), which allowed strengthening capacity of health workers in prevention and control of anemia. Beside this, a sustainable monitoring and assessment system was developed.

More than 700 representatives were trained on social mobilization, which allowed to increase capacity and awareness of the community in pilot regions on issues of anemia prevention and control and changing of eating habits. Women's Councils have organized several round tables and contests emphasizing iron deficiency and prevention.

Experiences or lessons learned:

In Uzbekistan, more than half of all women of child-bearing age suffer from mild to severe anemia, and an equal or greater number of children. A major problem was lack of knowledge and of ownership, especially at community level. In order to attack this problem, together with the Institute of Hematology event shows were organized in the oblast Khorezm and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, visited by approximately 200,000 people. 40,000 posters have been developed and distributed. They were also distributed in new target places, like centers for cotton pickers.

Awareness raising had been done via other media in the past years but this was the first time these kinds of events have been held on such a massive scale. The amount of participants was very big and the participants were very co-operative and enthusiastic.

In 2003, these events will be repeated in other areas of Uzbekistan. In order to reach sustainable elimination of anemia, however, apart from supplementation, attention will also need to be paid to flour fortification for all population of Uzbekistan.

What partners or organizations have helped make your projects successful?

Institute of Hematology (Ministry of Health) for implementation of Anemia Prevention and Control Programme. Partnership with Abt Associates for expansion of Anemia Prevention project to Khorezm and Ferghana Oblasts with focus on programme communication.

Partnership with major donors such as JICA, USAID and NGO “*Soglom Avlod Uchun*” in procurement and local distribution of iron supplements

Future plans and goals:

Supplementation in Andijon and Namangan oblasts.

Incorporation of Anemia Prevention Issues into school curriculum.

Establishing a micronutrient task force under Steering Committee

Prolong and increase flour fortification.

Revise clinical protocol on Anemia prevention.