



History of the Heinz Micronutrient Campaign

In the midst of the Great Depression, the H.J. Heinz Company boldly added a new category of products to its expanding pantry: baby food. Ever since that time Heinz has grown as a global leader in infant and child nutrition.

Retired Heinz nutritionist, Dr. David Yeung, who helped Heinz open an infant cereal factory in China in 1986, said this experience opened his eyes to the extent of vitamin and mineral deficiencies in the developing world.

Several years later, Dr. Yeung engaged in conversations with Dr. Stanley Zlotkin of the Sick Kids Hospital at the University of Toronto, who had been studying vitamin and mineral deficiencies in children. In 2001, Dr. Zlotkin, with support from the Heinz Company Foundation, began efficacy tests on a new platform for home food fortification. His solution was to deliver vitamins and minerals in powder form. Unlike liquid iron drops, the powders could be added to a child's customary food, such as rice or sorghum, and not affect the food's taste or texture. Dr. Zlotkin called the new product "Sprinkles."

When a devastating tsunami hit the South Pacific in 2004, Heinz quickly ramped up local production of the powders for distribution in the hard-hit Aceh province of Indonesia, together with its partner, Helen Keller International. The World Health Organization and the World Food Program subsequently issued a joint statement affirming the effectiveness of micronutrient powders in a natural disaster.

Following another successful demonstration study in the state of Maharashtra in India in 2007, the Heinz Foundation and the China Ministry of Health and Center for Disease Control agreed upon a three-year distribution to reach more than 500,000 children in four rural provinces. To meet the cultural preferences of the Chinese mother and child, a new product, Heinz NurtureMate, was developed that would be soluble in liquid and heat tolerant.

Based on the success of those early programs, the Foundation created a formal program called the Heinz Micronutrient Campaign. The HMC in recent years has formed new partnerships with government and NGO's for distribution projects in Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Tanzania, Haiti and Nigeria.

To help spread the word about the hidden hunger of micronutrient malnutrition, the HMC partnered with actress and humanitarian Lucy Liu in 2010. Ms. Liu, a UNICEF ambassador, visited an HMC project site in China in early 2011, and continues to advocate for the distribution of micronutrient powders.

The future holds tremendous promise for the HMC's mission to combat the hidden hunger of micronutrient malnutrition. New distribution programs are set to launch, new products are being developed to address different forms of malnutrition and new geographies are being explored.