

Food fortification could be the next global health success story – if countries close the gaps

Excerpted from a GFDx press release, February 2019.



Global Fortification DATA EXCHANGE

Two-thirds of the world's countries mandate food fortification, yet many of those countries are not translating policy into improved nutrition, according to new data from the Global Fortification Data Exchange (GFDx) – and may be missing an immense opportunity to support healthier children and mothers, bolster communities, and boost national economies.

The GFDx pools and visualizes data for 196 countries. In its latest iteration, released this week, GFDx allows users to track and map population coverage of food fortification, including iodization of household salt, a proxy measure for international progress toward the elimination of iodine deficiency. Despite the overwhelmingly positive reasons to fortify foods, the new GFDx data visualizations reveal notable disparity between policy and implementation.

"Look at the global map for policy and it's nearly solid," says Helena Pachón, Senior Nutrition Scientist at the Food Fortification Initiative, from the GFDx team. "But toggle over to the coverage map – how many people are actually accessing fortified foods – and it looks pretty sparse. Countries are on board with food fortification, but they're struggling to implement it, or at least not collecting the data on program performance."

Identifying those information gaps can be the first step toward impacting people affected by hidden hunger.

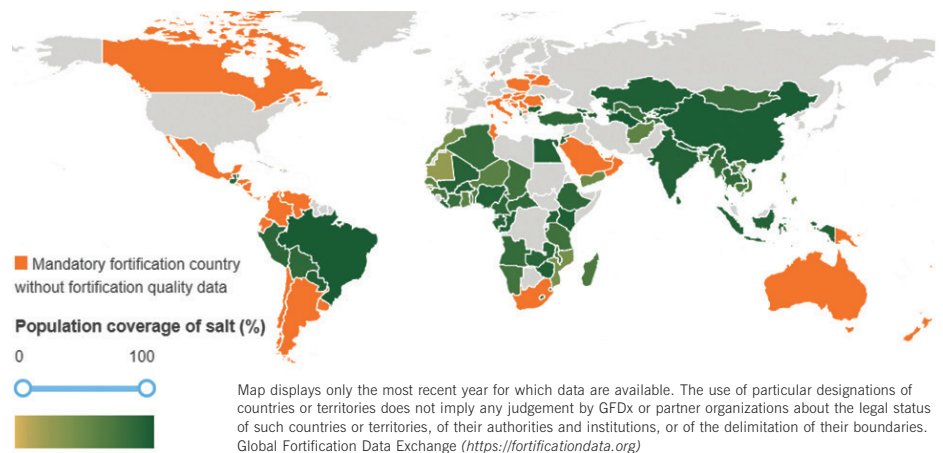
Patrizia Fracassi, Senior Nutrition Analyst and Strategy Advisor of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement describes GFDx as "an immense opportunity for country governments to inform interventions against micronutrient malnutrition. We're relying on GFDx to show us (...) concrete cases (...) to encourage countries to learn from each other."

Fracassi cites the GFDx as a model of SUN's own theory of change: that when

multiple stakeholders from multiple sectors and at multiple levels work together, collective action can help end suffering due to malnutrition. "GFDx could be a great model for other areas of nutrition."

About the GFDx

GFDx is led by a nutrition coalition comprised of the *Food Fortification Initiative*, *Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition*, *Iodine Global Network*, and *Micronutrient Forum*, and supported by the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*.



Introducing global #DataMaps on coverage of fortified foods like salt, as well as maize flour, wheat flour, and oil.