



SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PRESS ON SPRINKLES (2007-2008)

“Exciting opportunity to save children’s live with Sprinkles.”

“Sprinkles are one of the most promising innovations in nutrition today.”

“Sprinkles are an effective and practical tool in reducing anemia among children... When combined with other food aid initiatives, the potential impact is huge.”

The above statements highlight the public’s interest in Sprinkles, as evidenced by mentions in over 100 counts of books, journals, documents, statements, press releases, magazines, news articles, fact sheets, posters, seminars, conferences, podcasts, blogs, online giving opportunities, and websites. The international community has directed much attention towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and many believe that nutritional interventions are necessary for moving forward and reaching the MDGs. A press clipping from Save the Children called global leaders to pursue the MDGs and suggested sprinkles as an “exciting opportunity to save children’s lives.” Moreover, *Nutrition and Health in Developing Countries*, a book written by Richard Semba (from the John Hopkins School of Medicine) and Michael Bloem (from Helen Keller International), was based on the “underlying conviction that nutrition is the main cornerstone of health in developing countries.” They highlight some recent sprinkles programs as effective methods, which combat micronutrient deficiencies and which must be scaled-up to reach more vulnerable populations.

A number of nutrition conferences have been held over the last two years, focusing on addressing micronutrient deficiencies and improving the food aid basket. Examples include the *Micronutrient Forum*, *Columbia University and MSF’s meeting on Moderate Malnutrition*, the recent *WHO informal consultation on moderate malnutrition* and *SUSTAIN’s Roundtable on Food Aid Product Optimization for Improving Nutrition in Vulnerable Groups*. In all cases, there was much discussion of ‘home-fortification’ with Sprinkles or powdered multi-micronutrients and it was affirmed as a major example of a successful intervention.

In 2007, sprinkles gained widespread media attention through a key press release from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Cornell University. The press release summarized the study “*Micronutrient Sprinkles Reduce Anemia among 9- to 24-Mo-Old Children When Delivered through an Integrated Health and Nutrition Program in Rural Haiti*,” which had been recently published in *The Journal of Nutrition*. The research proved that fortified food aid rations alone were insufficient in addressing the high rates of anemia, and that anemia prevalence only decreased when rations were given along with sprinkles. Purnima Menon, the lead author from Cornell University was quoted to say:



Cornelia Loechl

Figure 1. Haitian women with Sprinkles.



“Sprinkles are one of the most promising innovations in nutrition today.”

Marie Ruel, a co-author to the study from IFPRI, echoed Menon’s praise by stating:

“Sprinkles are an effective and practical tool in reducing anemia among children... When combined with other food aid initiatives, the potential impact is huge.”

Numerous articles were released shortly after through such media as the *International Herald Tribune*, with titles like *“Aid Experts Say New Anti-Anemia Powder Shows Great Promise for Children in Poor Countries”* and *“Nutritional Supplement Cuts Anemia in Poor Children by Half.”*



Cornelia Loechl



Figures 2 and 3. (2) Haitian child eats food fortified with Sprinkles. (3) Magazine article written in response to a journal publication on Sprinkles.

The problem of hidden hunger and its consequences is now very well recognized by researchers, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations. Proven to decrease micronutrient deficiencies, sprinkles are now frequently incorporated into the food aid basket. UNICEF is a key distributor of sprinkles, as their activities aim to address the child related MDGs. In their 2008 *‘Annual Report of the Executive Director’*, UNICEF discusses the scale-up of high-impact health and nutrition interventions and the use of improved family and community care practices, including



Figure 4. Chispitas Sprinkles.

the distribution of sprinkles to address anemia. A noteworthy example is the distribution of ‘Chispitas’ Sprinkles in Bolivia. Through the cooperation of a number of actors, including WFP, UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization, and the Bolivian Ministry of Health, it is estimated that 100% of Bolivian children have been reached. Sprinkles have also been used in emergency situations, where micronutrient deficiency and anemia rates are noticeably higher. With increased use of vitamin and mineral supplementation during emergencies, WHO, WFP, and UNICEF released a joint statement in 2007 titled *‘Preventing and Controlling Micronutrient Deficiencies in Populations Affected by an Emergency’* detailing the requirement to include micronutrients (including powdered multi-micronutrients) in relief diets for children and women.

At the Micronutrient Forum in 2007, lessons learned from the distribution of Vitalita sprinkles during the 2004-05 earthquake/ tsunami that hit Indonesia were discussed.

Sprinkles Global Health Initiative



Since then, sprinkles have been used in a number of natural disaster emergencies including Haiti, Bangladesh, Peru, Niger, Nepal and others. *Action by Churches Together* appealed for funding for continued assistance to earthquake victims in Java, Indonesia; one of their programs included the provision of Vitalita Sprinkles for children under five years in a partnership with HKI. Similarly, UNICEF appealed for funding for the Solomon Islands, which were hit by the South Pacific tsunami; multi-micronutrient sprinkles distributed to children 6-59 months old were an important part of their emergency response. A report from 'UN Conference on Trade and Development' noted the distribution of Sprinkles to infants 6-24 months old for the Peru earthquake. Bangladesh also experienced severe and extreme weather, as well as a plague of rats, which devastated their crop yields, and sprinkles was recommended by FAO, WFP, and UNICEF for children under five, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women.

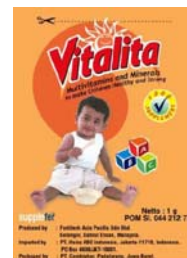


Figure 5.

Vitalita Sprinkles

In addition to natural disasters, sprinkles are being used for populations affected by conflict. Micronutrient deficiencies and anemia rates are particularly high in IDP and refugee camps; individuals are restricted from participating in farming and employment and have limited coping strategies for meeting nutritional needs. A WFP report described the pilot distribution of sprinkles in the general ration for refugee camps in Ethiopia to improve nutritional status and decrease vulnerability to diseases. If the pilot is successful, sprinkles will be distributed in other camps as well. A magazine article from the CDC (Centre of Disease and Control, Atlanta, USA) also described the high rates of anemia in the Bhutanese refugee population and the use of Sprinkles. Similarly, a news article from the UNHCR and WFP mentioned the use of sprinkles to combat high rates of anemia in a northern Kenya refugee camp. Sprinkles are also distributed to areas with high insecurity or in post-conflict transitions. Another WFP report on Afghanistan's post-conflict and rehabilitation efforts noted the use of sprinkles in selected schools. The '*UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2008*' further highlighted sprinkles distribution to various conflict areas including the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Central African Republic, and Niger.



<http://one.wfp.org/bangladesh/?m=184&k=84>
Figure 6. Sprinkles in Bangladesh.

It has not only been the high frequency of emergency situations that has threatened the nutritional status of many populations, but the past two years have also witnessed soaring food prices. The FAO and WFP recognized in their '*Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Bangladesh*' that high food prices have increased the difficulty of poor populations' access to foods and have decreased purchases of more nutritious foods. In a news article released through Relief Web, the UN Social and Economic Council described sprinkles as an innovative and creative solution, which would be able to raise the nutritional value of food, in light of the food crisis.



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