

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS PERU

Three pilot regions were identified - Apurimac, Ayacucho and Huancavelica – for the implementation of a **multiple micronutrient (MNP) supplementation program** with the objective of preventing stunted growth and stunted mental development

- Program specifics: The 18-month supplementation program included two supplementation phases of six months and one rest period of six months in between. During the supplementation phase each child received 90 sachets containing MNP “sprinkles” including iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, folic acid and zinc.
- 101,000 children under the age of three years participated in the supplementation program
- 75% of children who participated in this program completed the 18 month supplementation cycle.
- Training of more than 200 health professionals
- Outcome: Stunting which is a proxy indicator of zinc deficiency dropped by an average of 1.8% per year. between 2007-2011 This is a significant achievement compared to an average annual reduction rate of 0.4% in previous years.
- Based on the positive outcome the supplementation program has been expanded to 16 of the 24 regions of Peru covering a total of 424,665 children.
- The national team of monitors including physicians, nutritionists and nurses has been strengthened as part of the program expansion.

Following substantial advocacy the Ministry of Health could be convinced to **incorporate zinc supplementation as part of the treatment of diarrhea** and included zinc supplementation in the clinical guidelines for child healthcare. Nationwide the zinc tablet was included in the National Register of Medicine.

- As a result the administration of zinc supplementation for the treatment of diarrhea was introduced in Ayacucho and Ventanilla.
- 50% of the total number of children who sought diarrhea treatment in health establishments in these two areas received the combined therapy of zinc and oral rehydration salts. All children who received the combined ORS and zinc therapy survived. This is a major success since the program began only recently and many health professionals were reluctant to administer zinc for diarrhea treatment in the beginning.
- 200,000 zinc sulphate tablets were procured.

In 2011 the Government of Peru changed. Following advocacy the new government decided to keep MNP supplementation and zinc treatment for diarrhea as priorities on the national and regional health agendas and make **‘zero chronic child malnutrition in 2016 an achievable goal’**.