

6 Conclusion



Nepali community health volunteer Uma Kumari Adhikri has a son who is blind. "I know that vitamin A helps a child's eyesight so I make sure all caregivers know when the vitamin A campaign is on." © MI

IN NO SMALL WAY, the quality of every human life is determined very early on by nutrition. Without access to simple but vital micronutrients, either through diet, fortification or supplementation, an individual can suffer tremendous – otherwise avoidable – lifelong hardship.

Families, communities, societies, nations and ultimately the world all lose whenever human capital's potential is cut short. There is simply no avoiding our need for vitamins and minerals. Human capacity is built on them. As this report has documented, the good news is that despite the many causes of deficiencies and great challenges posed by the sheer numbers of people, proven, cost-effective solutions exist.

The scientific evidence is indisputable. The models for strong partnerships are here. Many challenges have already been surmounted, with effective programmes in place that warrant greater investment. Innovative research continues to create new options for micronutrient delivery. And the economic argument is authoritative.

With upwards of two billion people deficient in micronutrients, the need is great. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 will require strategic vision on the part of those with resources to invest. Commitment and funds, supported by strong partnerships, will extend the reach of powerful micronutrient interventions and leave no one behind.