

Outlook Newsletter, Volume 2, April-June 2006



© UNICEF Iran/2004/Noorani
Mothers and their children at a UNICEF supported Rural Health House in Western Azerbaijan, Iran

Issue in Focus: The right to proper nutrition

Improving nutrition, particularly in the early years of a child's life, is a crucial step in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Good nutrition has strong economic implications too. When populations are well nourished, higher individual productivity, lower health care costs and greater economic output will ensue.

Nutrition is one of the most important development challenges of our time and constitutes a crisis that receives neither the attention nor the resources it deserves. Every year, it is estimated that almost six million children under the age of five around the world die of causes related to poor nutrition. In addition, one out of every four children under five – or 146 million children in the developing world – is underweight for his or her age and at increased risk of an early death.

In Iran, the latest statistics show that 11 percent of children under 5 in Kerman are underweight, rising to 16 percent Sistan and Baluchistan¹. In Sarbaz district of Sistan and Baluchistan, nearly one-quarter of families do not use iodized salt². An iodine deficient diet prevents normal growth in the brain and nervous system and leads to poor school performance.

Poor nutrition, particularly in children, is a challenge to humanity, preventing individuals and even whole societies from achieving their full potential. Children who are undernourished have lower resistance to infection and are more likely to die from common childhood ailments such as diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections.

Well-nourished women face fewer risks during pregnancy and childbirth, and their children set off on a firmer developmental path, both physically and

mentally. Well-nourished children perform better in school, grow into healthier adults and are able to give their own children a better start in life.

UNICEF Iran has developed a model for community-based nutrition involving Nutritional Counselling Centres. These centres provide training, facilities and education materials for rural mothers, health workers and volunteers. UNICEF has also initiated a nutrition education project in primary schools in Bam and has provided micro-feeders for flour fortification in Kerman province, together with a year's supply of iron and folic acid supplements.

UNICEF helps Iran prevent Bird Flu

Following a request from the Ministry of Health, UNICEF has developed a communication strategy to help prevent the spread of bird flu. Based on materials from UNICEF offices in Asia, three posters on bird flu prevention were modified to suit the Iranian context and will be printed and distributed nationally. UNICEF has also adapted three TV and radio spots, additional posters and three information leaflets, all of which are ready for production.

Training the police on children's rights

The first training of trainers (TOT) workshop in 2006 on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and juvenile justice took place in March in Mashhad, attended by 46 police station heads, the deputy commander of Mashhad Police and the Head of Mashhad Juvenile Correction and Rehabilitation Centre. For the first time in the provincial police training workshops, two female police officers actively participated in the programme.

This was a continuation of workshops that began last year as part of the UNICEF 2005-2009 Country Programme. Participants who were trained in the TOT workshops became the trainers in the provincial sessions.

The workshops aim to promote as widely as possible the CRC and best practices in the area of juvenile justice. They include briefings on internationally recognized standards such as the 'Beijing Rules' in the administration of juvenile justice and the 'Riyadh Guidelines' in the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Similar training workshops for the police are scheduled to take place this year in seven other provinces including Fars, Esfahan, Khuzestan, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Ilam and Kermanshah.

¹ Ministry of Health and Medical Education- Nutrition Department, 2005

² UNICEF 2005 Baseline Survey, conducted by Iran Statistical Centre

Study trip to Malaysia on women's rights

UNICEF supported six Iranian officials to go on a study trip to Malaysia recently to learn about the country's experience in ratifying the Convention to End all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Malaysia, also an Islamic Republic, ratified CEDAW in 1995.

The aim of the trip was to expose key partners to innovative methods that can be adapted and implemented in the Iranian context and to foster debate on the compatibility of Islam and women's rights. The group included a Member of Parliament, a journalist, a university professor, two NGO activists and an official from the Ministry of Interior.

Corporate Partnership kicks off Iranian New Year

In time for the start of the new Persian year, UNICEF announced its first corporate partnership with an Iranian company. The generous gift of US \$50,000 donated by Behrouz Nik Food Industries will support rural child care centres and promote birth registration and better nutrition in Sistan and Baluchistan, Hormozgan and West Azerbaijan provinces.



© UNICEF Iran/2006/Ghobadzadeh
UNICEF Representative Christian Salazar Volkman (left) and Behrouz Foroutan, President of Behrouz Nik Food Industries, announcing their new partnership.

"Thanks to this generous donation from Behrouz Nik Food Industries, hundreds of Iranian children will receive better services in early childhood care and development," said Christian Salazar Volkman, Representative of UNICEF in Iran. "This gift is a good example of how corporate sponsors can use their resources to improve the lives of children so that they can reach their full potential from an early age."

The partnership also highlights Behrouz Nik's own commitment to social responsibility. "We are committed to giving back to society, starting with children, who are our hope for the future," said

Behrouz Foroutan, CEO of Behrouz Nik. "By forming a partnership with UNICEF, we can reach out and support a greater number of Iranian children."

This new deal is an exciting development in Iran – a country that has substantial natural and human resources – as it illustrates how businesses and corporations can play a socially responsible role.

"Companies such as Behrouz Nik can also help in our advocacy work by disseminating positive messages on hygiene, education, health and nutrition through their own established channels of communication," added Mr. Salazar Volkman.

New products for spring and summer

UNICEF has received new products in time for the start of the New Year and spring and summer seasons. Stop by our showroom in Tehran to see the new items or give us a call to find out more. A list of stores where UNICEF products are sold is available on our website, www.unicef.org/iran.

Log on and help build our website

The UNICEF Iran website continues to grow in both English and Farsi, but we need your help! We welcome your comments, suggestions and advice to help us make the site as useful and appealing as possible. Log on, have a look and tell us what you think at tehran@unicef.org – we look forward to hearing from you!

Information Resource Centre News

Progress for Children: A Report card on Nutrition

UNICEF's upcoming edition of the Progress for Children Report focuses on the importance of nutrition towards survival and development. It reports on worldwide indicators such as exclusive breastfeeding, low birth weight, household consumption of iodized salt and Vitamin A supplementation. There is also a section on nutrition in emergencies. The Report will be launched in May, and copies will be available in UNICEF's Information Resource Centre (see details below).

Monthly lectures

Over the next three months, UNICEF plans to continue holding monthly lectures in the IRC. These will focus on the following subjects:

- Children Deprived of Education
- Women's Employment in Iran
- Adolescent Girls in Iranian Society

To find out more information and/or the exact dates and time, please contact Naser Ghobadzadeh at the number below:

Information Resource Centre (021) 2259-4994 ext 106