



Disease and malnutrition have a devastating impact on economic development. Each year, malaria costs Africa \$12 billion and inhibits economic growth by as much as 1.3%. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has removed millions of productive family members from households and the workplace and strained entire communities beyond their limit. Chronic malnutrition impairs an individual's mental capacity and ability to work, perpetuating a nation's poverty for generations. Iron deficiency alone results in an estimated 2-8% annual loss in GDP.

The AED Global Health, Population, and Nutrition Group has proven that these losses are far from inevitable. Working with policymakers, health providers, community organizations, and vulnerable populations, AED has demonstrated that investments in improving health and nutrition can make a big difference, in economic as well as personal well-being.

Improving Health and

Documenting the impact of nutrition investments in Russia

Although the human body's need for iodine is small, a deficiency during a woman's pregnancy can cause lifelong brain damage and mental retardation in her child. AED's **PROFILES** computer-based simulation software for nutrition policy analysis and advocacy put the Russian Federation's iodine deficiency problem into stark focus.

PROFILES showed that 95% of Russia's population is at risk of iodine deficiency disorder, potentially costing the country over \$1.5 billion worth of lost productivity in the next five years. Given that the cost of preventing iodine deficiency disorders through salt iodization is just .05 U.S. cents per capita per year, mandatory salt iodization would yield economic benefits far greater than its expense. Funded by UNICEF, AED took PROFILES's dramatic evidence and built a powerful policy awareness campaign around it.

The cost of preventing iodine deficiency disorders through salt iodization is just .05 U.S. cents per capita per year.



Nutrition for Economic Progress



Enlisting a national champion for salt iodization

The PROFILES computer-based process for estimating the costs of poor nutrition and the benefits of improved nutrition has been in use for over a decade in more than 50 countries. In Russia, PROFILES moved beyond its standard workshop application to become the core of a full-fledged awareness campaign geared toward affecting policy and that later influenced consumers.

It began with UNICEF enrolling world-renowned chess champion and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Anatoly Karpov to speak on behalf of universal salt iodization. Mr. Karpov enthusiastically represented the cause, saying, “The world simply cannot afford to keep losing so much of its intellectual capacity. What is more, it is completely preventable.”



As part of the campaign, AED also strengthened the Public Coordination Council (PCC), initially set up by UNICEF, into a salt iodization coalition comprised of Russian community and professional organizations. AED worked with PCC to develop communications materials and strategies for reaching members of the Duma, Russia’s parliament. PCC disseminated diverse communications tools and examples of salt iodization legislation in other countries. The coalition also has started to rally public opinion with advocacy activities, such as press events and information disseminated in schools.

Moving toward legislative action

The information campaign has been effective. Duma members credited PROFILES data with helping them understand the issue. A large segment of the Russian population has become aware of iodine deficiency disease as a result of the campaign and other initiatives previously undertaken by UNICEF and partners. Meanwhile, several regions passed salt iodization bylaws that can serve as a model for future national legislation. The PROFILES campaign now is being replicated in Ukraine, which faces similar iodine deficiency risks to public health and the economy.