



**Delivering
science-based
solutions to close
the nutrition gap**

2023 Annual Report

EDITORIAL



Dear Friends & Colleagues,

Last year we shared our new strategy of an evolving *Sight and Life* that builds on its 35 years of work on research, knowledge management and innovation, to also innovate around the science of delivery and ensure direct impact on the ground. Our strategy is built on the model of helping people help themselves and cultivating an entrepreneurial approach to solving food and nutrition problems. A year later, I am very convinced that our strategy is more relevant than ever, and that progress is possible. I share some of these updates in this report.

I am proud to also share that we have expanded our thought leadership in adolescent health, climate smart nutrition and agroecology, and diverse proteins. As a Swiss-based foundation, we have earned huge credibility for our work in research and publication, and we continue to take up areas where we feel innovation and research can make a difference.

Sustainability is key to our strategy. We believe that when we bring lives and livelihood together, sustainable change happens. Our work with private sector, entrepreneurs and local governments ensures we drive sustainable change in countries. We firmly believe in partnerships to scale solutions and I am thrilled to see this year we are seeing programs reaching scale.

What also pleases me is that we achieved these results with a small and agile team keeping our operating costs low. The delivery of our strategy required new capabilities and to ensure we have people on the ground. We made these changes to the organization, making it fit for purpose and local. We onboarded a CFO and it is my pleasure to welcome Walter Hausermann to the team. He will bring greater financial transparency and accountability to SAL. As the Board Chair, I have overseen and supported these transitions, and this has led to greater accountability to our funders who have trusted us. I am thankful to our existing funders and happy to share that we are seeing new funders showing trust in our ability to deliver.

We are well poised to reach more vulnerable populations with cutting-edge research and local interventions, and look forward to generous support from our funding partners and build new partnerships in countries to do more.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, reading "Christoph Goppelsroeder".

Christoph Goppelsroeder
Chair of the Board

Progress on our Strategy

A Swiss-based foundation, *Sight and Life* (SAL) has been working to bring new research and innovation on maternal and child health, and nutrition, for over 35 years. We have been at the forefront of finding solutions to the problems faced in LMICs. In the last four decades, we have established ourselves as a leading research organization – and as we grew in terms of numbers and geography, with over 70% of our staff living and working in LMICs, our ambition has grown, too. In last year’s report, we shared our new strategy, which was in response to a world that has changed due to COVID, climate change and war. Our teams in Rwanda, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Nepal, Bangladesh, India and of course Switzerland, have been working to deliver that strategy and ambition of bringing solutions to the ground and helping people help themselves.

In this report, you will find the progress and updates on our work in the year 2023. We focused on having few strategic partnerships, supporting local entrepreneurs, and reaching out to a more mass audience by expanding our outreach and messaging on behavior change via mainstream media in the countries where we work. We convened meetings and panels of key stakeholders to further and enable our work. At SAL, we want to impact both lives and livelihoods, and to bring the two

together, an entrepreneurial approach of sustainability and scalability is required. We are investing in the right infrastructure and capabilities to be able to deliver this work, and we are looking forward to investment support across board. While scientific research remains our strength, we have our local teams deliver solutions on the ground, partnering with the right people at the right places for direct and lasting impact.

The 3-stage testing of solutions

For making direct impact on the ground, 3 stages are required:

Stage 1: From science to solution

Generating scientific knowledge and converting that into solutions for what needs to be done; providing evidence-based solutions, which is a think tank’s core area of work.

Stage 2: From solution to sustainable business model

The knowledge of how to deliver the stage 1 solutions in a sustainable, locally led, efficient way; following the ‘helping people to help themselves’ model.

Stage 3: From sustainable business model to scale

Amplify stage 2 to achieve high levels of coverage; impact lives and end public health problems.

Our Mission

To close the micronutrient, lipid, and protein gap in low- and middle-income countries, especially in women of reproductive age, adolescents, and children.

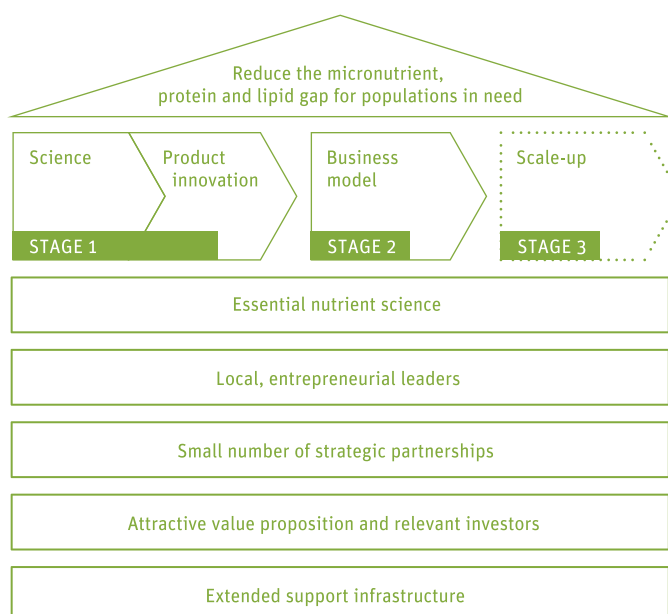
Ambition



Pillars



Enablers





SAL Rwanda works on climate-friendly nutrition interventions and is co-convenor of the SUN Business Network in Rwanda alongside WFP

SAL Rwanda is co-convenor of the SUN Business Network in Rwanda

- In 2023, SUN Business Network (SBN) finalised the drafting of a 5-year strategic plan that is under validation of all members.
- More than 10 awareness campaigns and workshops were conducted in Western (Rusizi, Rubavu, Karongi) and Northern provinces (Musanze, Gicumbi and Rulindo), where 250 women and youth entrepreneurs in the food sector were trained in product development of nutritious foods.
- 15 new SBN members were registered during the awareness campaigns.

Sight and Life Foundation opened its first field office in Rwanda in 2018 and is legally registered in Rwanda as Sight and Life Rwanda. It has grown from 1 staff to 14 since then and today reaches nearly 5 million Rwandans through our projects. SAL Rwanda is implementing the Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project, funded by the Swiss government (SDC); the project to increase maize value chain efficiency in Rwanda under the Sustainable Development Goals Partnership program (SDGP Maize), funded by the Dutch government through RVO; and the project to control and reduce aflatoxin contamination under the Product Innovations in Nutrition (PIN) initiative, funded by CIFF. SAL Rwanda is also the co-convenor of the SBN. We are proud of our local Rwanda team led by the Country Director Rwanda as they continue to play a vital role in supporting the Rwandan people in fighting malnutrition through building resilient food systems.

Climate-Smart Urban Nutrition

According to the United Nations, 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas by 2025. Secondary cities in LMIC remain an untapped potential to change urban food systems to produce and consume nutritious food sustainably. The Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) project – in partnership with the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, ETH Zürich World Food System Center, Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, with the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation –, works to improve nutrition and reduce poverty by increasing the supply of and demand for nutritious foods produced using agroecological practices in six secondary cities: Dinajpur and Rangpur in Bangladesh, Bungoma and Busia in Kenya and Rubavu in Rwanda.

SAL leads the demand creation efforts by using consumer insights, social marketing, and behaviour change communication to influence both demand and supply for nutritious and safely produced foods, through activities such as marketing campaigns, training, and cooking classes.



Photo: Alice Kabanda/ Swiss TPH/ FairPicture

Improving Food Value Chains

Food systems work will require integration with climate work for any real impact, and our nutrition solutions projects in Rwanda have a significant climate component in them. From improving the efficiency of the maize value chain, an (the SDGP Maize Project in partnership with Agrittera and Africa Improved Foods), to the NICE project (detailed in Stage 1 section below) that aims to train farmers in agroecological principles, more and more of our work is moving towards integration with climate adaptive and climate friendly segments.



Photo: Alice Kabanda/FairPicture/Swiss TPH

Key Achievements 2023:

- In all three countries, the findings from the formative research have been turned into demand generation activities, including Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) campaigns. For consumers, the campaigns highlighted that better choices can be made regarding the purchase, preparation, and consumption of foods. For farmers, it encouraged the adoption of agroecological farming methods to have a positive impact on production, their family's health and the environment.
- Overall, the social marketing campaigns reached more than 43,000 farmers and consumers, including youth aged between 13-18 years (9,475 in Rwanda, 13,750 in Kenya, and 21,845 in Bangladesh).

- Food systems platforms (FSPs) were established and operational in each city with aim to foster the participatory processes for strengthening local food systems.
- There is wider engagement with a cross-section of city stakeholders to plan activities each year, with a focus on food systems governance, ensuring NICE remains targeted to more vulnerable city populations, and for making the links between production and demand side activities along the selected value chains.
- In close collaboration with the respective local government, several national and international nutrition moments have been celebrated and promoted in all NICE cities. We are now focusing on fostering interlinkages between the work areas as much as possible.
- In terms of partnerships, a purpose approach is being implemented across the consortium and is reviewed at regular intervals as new opportunities arise. In particular, there is a positive collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome and all three NICE countries.



Niyonsenga Jean Pierre and Habimana Juvenal, members of Twisunganemako-operative, washing carrots at the washing station provided by the NICE Project at Bazirete in Rubavu.

Photo: Alice Kayibanda/Swiss TPH/Fairpicture

Apart from events and publications outlined in the sections below, we presented the following posters this year:

- Farmers and smallholders in the foodsheds of Rwandan secondary cities: Understanding beliefs and practices to bolster agricultural interventions for increased production and consumption of nutritious and agroecologically produced foods. (8th Annual Agriculture, Nutrition, and health Academy Week, online and in Malawi, June 2023)
- Youth pioneering food system transformation in Bangladesh (ETH Food Day 2023, Nov 2, 2023)
- Multisectoral Steering of (Child) Nutrition and Resilience Improvement in the City Food Systems of Rubavu and Rusizi, Western Province, Rwanda (Micronutrient Forum, Oct 2023)
- Motivations and Challenges for the Production, Purchase, and Consumption of Nutritious and Agroecology Produced-foods: Nutrition In City Ecosystems (NICE) Project, in Kenya, Rwanda, and Bangladesh. (Micronutrient Forum)



Photo: Alice Kayibanda/Swiss TPH/Fairpicture

Interpreting Science to Solve Critical Health Issues

Our research work generates scientific knowledge, which we convert into evidence-based solutions ready for proofs-of-concept for sustainable, locally-led business models.

Over the last three decades, SAL has established its place in the nutrition science community and is well respected for both knowledge generation and knowledge sharing in this aspect. In 2023, we focused our work on the projects outlined below.

Adolescent Nutrition



Africa will have 42% of the world's youth by 2030

Hope is 13 and lives in Madalitso, a small village in rural Malawi. She faces two distinct futures. One, where she falls victim to the challenges and limitations of growing up in poverty, missing school days until she drops out altogether, gets married and becomes an adolescent mother like her two elder sisters. The other, a brighter path, where, despite the challenges, she gets a chance to be empowered through education, better health and nourishment. She attends school daily, gets school meals and psycho-social stimulation. Hope thrives both physically and academically. She reaches her full potential and also breaks the intergenerational cycle of poverty and malnutrition for the next generations. *Which way does Hope's future lie?*

The world is home to 1.2 billion adolescents. Ninety percent of them live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and, according to the World Economic Forum, by 2030 Africa will have 42% of the world's youth. The future of the next generation is in the hands of adolescents, but in the last 50 years, their health and well-being has seen far less improvement as compared to that of younger children. In terms of investments, data shows that only 2% of global health funding is dedicated to adolescent health and development. This lack of attention and investment in adolescent health has led to them being referred to as the “forgotten generation”. There is compelling evidence that investing in adolescents and their wellbeing strengthens the human capital (accumulated knowledge, skills, and health) of a country. Improved adolescent health can help the world achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has the potential to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and malnutrition, and create inclusive societies. Background papers commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO) suggest economic returns of \$5-10 for every dollar invested in adolescents.

In 2023, we continued our work toward **anemia reduction** amongst adolescents in LMICs with a number of clinical research studies and strategic partnerships.

- Ethical approval from COMREC (Malawi) and ETH (Switzerland) as well as additional funding from the Waterloo Foundation was secured for the SPIRIT study. New pilot study started to develop a simplified version of the Alkaline Hematin Method that can be used in LMIC.

- Exploratory study investigating iron absorption and variations of iron status parameters, hepcidin, inflammatory markers and sex hormones during the menstrual cycle among Swiss women, was completed. We also completed a second pilot on measuring menstrual iron loss during the menstrual cycle using the iron isotope dilution method. Both studies were conducted at ETH Zurich.



SAL's Director – Science leads our research work

Key Achievements 2023:

- Presentation at the D-HEST Research Day ETH on September 7, “Limiting iron loss in young women to prevent IDA” on behalf of the Laboratory of Nutrition and Metabolic Epigenetics, ETH Zurich.
- Spotlight on Sight and Life: Nourishing Minds for a Brighter Future on the Partnership for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health for SAL’s alignment with one of the five domains of adolescent well-being (Domain 4: Learning, competence, education, skills, and employability in), lead up to the Global Forum for Adolescence.
- Blog: Leveraging school meals and the school environment to accelerate efforts toward anemia reduction.

- SAL became a partner organization of the School Meals Coalition, a Member State effort driving actions to improve and scale up school meal programmes globally.
- Invited to contribute to the white paper titled, “School Meals and Food Systems: Rethinking the consequences for climate, environment, biodiversity and food sovereignty”, prepared by the Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition, an initiative of the School Meals Coalition, with three articles on aflatoxin reduction, phytase and fermentation for school meals, which was shared at COP28 Climate Conference in Dubai.
- SAL became a member of the Global Adolescent Nutrition Network (GANN) and was invited to become a member of the smaller core working group – attending an in-person meeting regarding a new conceptual framework for adolescent nutrition at the ENN Meeting in London on Adolescent Nutrition in December 2023.

SAL contributed to the Lancet Series on #SmallVulnerableNewborns that calls for the scale-up of low-cost antenatal interventions to enable a healthier start for all women everywhere.

Read the whole series at <https://www.thelancet.com/series/small-vulnerable-newborns>



What was on our Podcast in 2023?

Plant-Based Meat in LMICs

The BrainFood podcast's first series focused on alternative proteins. Each podcast episode was accompanied by a blog post. The fourth and final episode was published at the beginning of the year:

Plant-based meat: What is the role of alternative proteins in LMIC? This episode unpacks the critical considerations for developing plant-based and other diverse alternative protein solutions for LMICs with SAL's in-house experts weighing in on the topic.

This podcast was accompanied by a blog titled: **The Role of Alternative Proteins for Low- and Middle-Income Countries.**

Later in the year, we rolled out our second series titled Extraordinary Eggs on World Egg Day 2023. In this series, we crack open a topic that's as nutritious as it is controversial: hear what's cooking on... eggs!

Extraordinary Eggs: Shelling Out the Science (1/2): delves into the nutrition science and unravels the egg-citing debates surrounding this versatile food. From cholesterol conundrums to protein-packed goodness, we break down the facts, myths, and nutritional benefits of the egg.

Extraordinary Eggs: Shelling Out the Science (2/2): scrambles the fascinating potential of eggs to come up with solutions on tackling malnutrition in LMICs.

These two episodes were accompanied by a blog titled: **The non-expiring nutritional benefits of eggs,** which includes a detailed infographic explaining what exactly is in an egg.



We thank our new UK-based funder for supporting our work on adolescent anemia. Like pregnancy is the biggest cause of anemia among women of reproductive age, menstruation is the biggest cause of anemia among adolescents. SAL has identified adolescent health as a key area of work.

Egg Powder

Environmental enteric dysfunction (EED), stunting, and moderate wasting co-occur in millions of children worldwide, increasing their immediate risks for serious illness and death as well as altering their life trajectories through cyclic illnesses and impaired neurocognitive development. Moderate wasting has a prevalence of 30 million and stunting 140 million; EED's prevalence is unknown but approaches 75% among children with moderate wasting in Sierra Leone.

Key Achievements 2023:

- We received funding from the Thrasher Research Fund to conduct a randomized, partially blinded, controlled trial in moderately wasted children aged 6-30 months in rural Sierra Leone, testing 15 grams of daily egg powder supplementation + micronutrients vs 15 grams corn/soy powder + micronutrients for 24 weeks.
- If egg powder improves intestinal integrity and reduces linear growth faltering, these findings would serve as the needed evidence base for product optimization for malnourished children and would inform guidelines, policies, and programs for complementary feeding.
- This trial is conducted in partnership with the Government of Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Washington University School of Medicine, and Project Peanut Butter.

Social entrepreneurship for direct impact on the ground

We partner with local agencies and entrepreneurs to pilot projects based on the evidence and scientific knowledge generated in Stage 1.

Over the last decade, we have expanded the scope of our work from research to piloting solutions based on the evidence generated. These solutions are in the form of self-sustaining social business models in keeping with our ultimate goal of helping people help themselves. Here are the latest updates on our projects that have a direct impact on vulnerable populations.

Expanding MMS Regional Production Capacity

MMS is an evidence-based product that improves the health outcomes of pregnancy for both mothers and children. As countries transition towards MMS, there is a need to expand MMS production to meet the demand. Funded by CIFF, SAL in partnership with D-F is working on MMS regional production hubs in South Africa, Indonesia and in Nigeria. SAL has worked closely with its partners in Bangladesh to deliver MMS in the country, a project that has reached a significant scale in three years, and has now extended its MMS supply expertise to support MMS transition in Nepal.

South Africa: South Africa has a vibrant pharma industry and hence the first country in Africa where product development started. We are pleased to share that the product in South Africa has completed 30-month stability data – a requirement for UNICEF registration of the product. This is the first MMS produced in Africa and ready for registration in the country as well as to be exported to others.

Nigeria: Nigeria has 7.6 million pregnancies, and at the same time, 28.5% of global maternal deaths happen in Nigeria. There is an urgent need for maternal health intervention and the government of Nigeria has a huge preference for local production of commodities. With over 7.5mn pregnancies, this is also a huge local market for MMS. In partnership with D-F, we are working on

producing MMS in the country and a production trial was completed with a shortlisted local manufacturer.



SAL's Senior Manager – Nutrition Commodities on a field visit of the first manufacturing hub for MMS in Africa

Indonesia: In Indonesia, a 6-month accelerated stability study was successfully completed at the local facility. This will enable the manufacturing partner (D-F) to register the product locally while the full 30/36-month stability studies continue alongside. Consumer research was initiated towards the end of the year to collect data on pregnant women and health workers' preferences on the MMS product attributes. This would inform product packaging, pack size, and so on for launch in private/public channels.

Facilitating MMS Transition Across LMICs

In addition to our work on the manufacturing hubs, we have been strengthening and supporting efforts towards MMS transition in several countries.

Progress from the Philippines

The MMS pilot design was completed and socialized with the local government authorities and other local development partners. A social marketing design workshop was organized for all the partners, and ideas were pre-tested with pregnant women and health providers. The pilot is scheduled to launch in mid-2024, and SAL will initiate M&E of the pilot and social marketing campaign.



More from Nigeria

The MNP and IFA/MMS implementation research in Nigeria was completed and a no-cost extension proposed till June 30, 2024. This will allow local partners to write and publish the findings, and disseminate them through multiple workshops at federal and state levels.

Our comms and MMS project team socialized the market-readiness of South Africa's MMS manufacturing hub, the first in Africa, at key regional conferences, including ECOWAS Nutrition Forum Nigeria, HMHB Ethiopia regional meeting, and IMNHC South Africa.

SAL conducted a desk review of IFA guidelines, supply, procurement and financing in six countries – Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal and Senegal. The study was successfully completed in April 2023. It provided insights into key supply, policy and financing considerations when exploring the transition to MMS.

News from Nepal

In partnership with Helen Keller International and with support from ECF, SAL is conducting a study to assess planning, procurement, financing and logistics of IFA procurement and delivery, as well as identify the most cost-effective MMS sourcing options. Lastly, a demand forecasting and budget-gap analysis will be conducted to inform decisions around MMS procurement and financing.



Phytase: Fighting Antinutrients

In 2023, we initiated an innovation and product development process aimed at bringing two phytase-based market-driven food products each to India and Nigeria – the largest consumer markets in South Asia and Africa, respectively. The process steered a multistakeholder collaboration between SAL, two phytase manufacturers, and eight food companies to successfully degrade at least 60% phytic acid in the products. The capability of food testing labs was built through virtual training sessions and knowledge sharing. The regulators were sensitized about the challenges of phytic acid.



- The product trial involved phytase dosage optimization and efficacy studies. The samples across various conditions (time, temperature, and dosage) were collected, tested, and analyzed for phytic acid content, mineral loss, and phytase activity. A phytic acid degradation of more than 60% was achieved through the trials.
- Regulators were sensitized about phytic acid challenges and phytase functions. A video for regulatory authorities aimed at creating awareness was developed. It received positive feedback about phytase as a malnutrition solution.
- A business case framework was developed to understand the cost implications of phytase addition in food products against various scenarios of dosage and phytase cost. Premix addition cost was analyzed in fortified food products to identify the mineral contributing the most. Iron is the biggest contributor to premix cost and the most difficult/last mineral to become bioavailable. A sensitivity analysis was conducted to understand cost savings at different phytase dosages and costs in fortified food products. The final business case for four products is underway.



SAL and phytase manufacturer are conducting a field visit at food companies, to understand the processing condition of different products

A roundup of our work in 2023:

- Six product formats – processed flour, baked goods, breakfast mix, porridges, plant-based protein, and soya-based beverage powder were selected. Collaboration with two phytase manufacturers and eight food companies in India and Nigeria was completed. The products of food companies were studied and shortlisted based on their composition, phytic acid content, and processing condition.
- Virtual training sessions were conducted, and knowledge on testing antinutrient content and enzyme activity, handling phytase, and sampling methodology was shared with the labs in India and Nigeria. This helped build the capabilities of the labs.



Entrepreneurship Training for Sustainable Local Solutions

WINNER

Caroline Pomeyie
from Ghana

For providing the all-important missing cold storage link to local fishermen so there is less food wastage and they can reach bigger markets who are in constant short supply of fresh seafood. A win-win for all!

Local problems need local solutions and to fix food systems in LMICs innovation has to come from emerging markets. Through our Entrepreneurship Training program, we aim to support next-generation entrepreneurs to fill the gaps in food systems in their markets and solve problems faced in bringing good quality nutrition to those who need it most. In 2023, we partnered with Harvard University to design a special course that saw 385 enrolments from 61 countries.

Food Systems Live!
Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies

Sight and Life Entrepreneurship Training

Private Listed

Earn an Active Group badge

The participants remain connected after the course over the LinkedIn Group facilitated by SAL team

Some highlights:

- The content of our course, Food Systems Live (FSL), was compared to a “mini-MBA” by participants due to its comprehensive structure that begins with identifying opportunities in emerging economies to leveraging platforms and finally launching a venture.
- The FSL 2023 course was led by reputed members of Harvard Business School faculty Tarun Khanna, Caroline Elkins and Karim Lakhani. Live sessions every weekend with these professors were a huge hit with the cohort and one of the biggest USPs of this online course versus others.



SAL's Director – Business Solutions, Global Director – Communications and Senior Associate Government and Stakeholder Engagement helped the contestants pitch better to the external jury

- SAL team supported the FSL course with special group discussions, interactive Q&As and mini-events on social platform Slack, where over 300 participants joined and interacted with each other.
- SAL added extra value-adds by facilitating live interactions with industry experts and case study protagonists, who shared real world and on-ground information and wisdom with the cohort. There was high positive feedback for this by the cohort.
- A three-member SAL team comprising business, economics, market and communications expertise, helped the finalists in their business competition pitch that helped them secure small grants.

Pitch Contest: The grand finale of the course was a pitch competition to an external jury of experts that presented an opportunity for the participants to present their business plans and stand a chance of winning a seed grant.

Aniefiok Sunny UDOH 10:24 AM
 Live Session 1 was most educative and rewarding. Time well spent. My takeaways: 1) Largescale viable agribusiness is possible in Nigeria. Babban Gona in Kaduna State, Nigeria is a good and encouraging example. 2) In "any humanly possible way, economic activity should be captured by community." 3) "If you want money, ask for advice. If you want advice, ask for money. 4) "Good intentions help. Good institutions survive." I'm looking forward for the next session.

- Clotilde Monguya** 9:33 PM
Just insightful
- Bankole Joseph** 9:34 PM
Absolutely brilliant!!!
- Nanfada Keita** 9:35 PM
Great session
- Sexyfarmer Rita** 9:35 PM
Great Session
- Blessing Paul Ochanya** 9:36 PM
Wonderful Session!
- Samuel Sogbola** 9:39 PM
It was an interesting session, so many important things to learn.
- Keith lamizana** 9:39 PM
Great session, thanks!
- Nelson Nwachukwu** 10:31 PM
Wonderful session today. We keep pushing

Chimika Lungu
 Good afternoon everyone,
 Hope you're all doing well and enjoying the course like I am. I'm so glad I applied for the Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies course. The sessions are so enlightening. I am learning so much. The sessions and discussions are stirring so much thoughts even as I try to find a direction and model for my farm enterprise. I thought the first live session was interesting. But the second live session was even more interesting because the actual founders/business owners from the case study were there to give first hand information on their experience. I have learnt so much. And I'm still learning. And looking forward to the next sessions. 😊

Ethel OphirGold 5:38 PM
 Hello guys
 You should check out week 1, business plan session 1(supplemental material-sight and life nutrition notes. There are lots of information to help the business plan. Resources from the elevator pitch contest by sight and life is very helpful.

David Ejalu - Uganda:

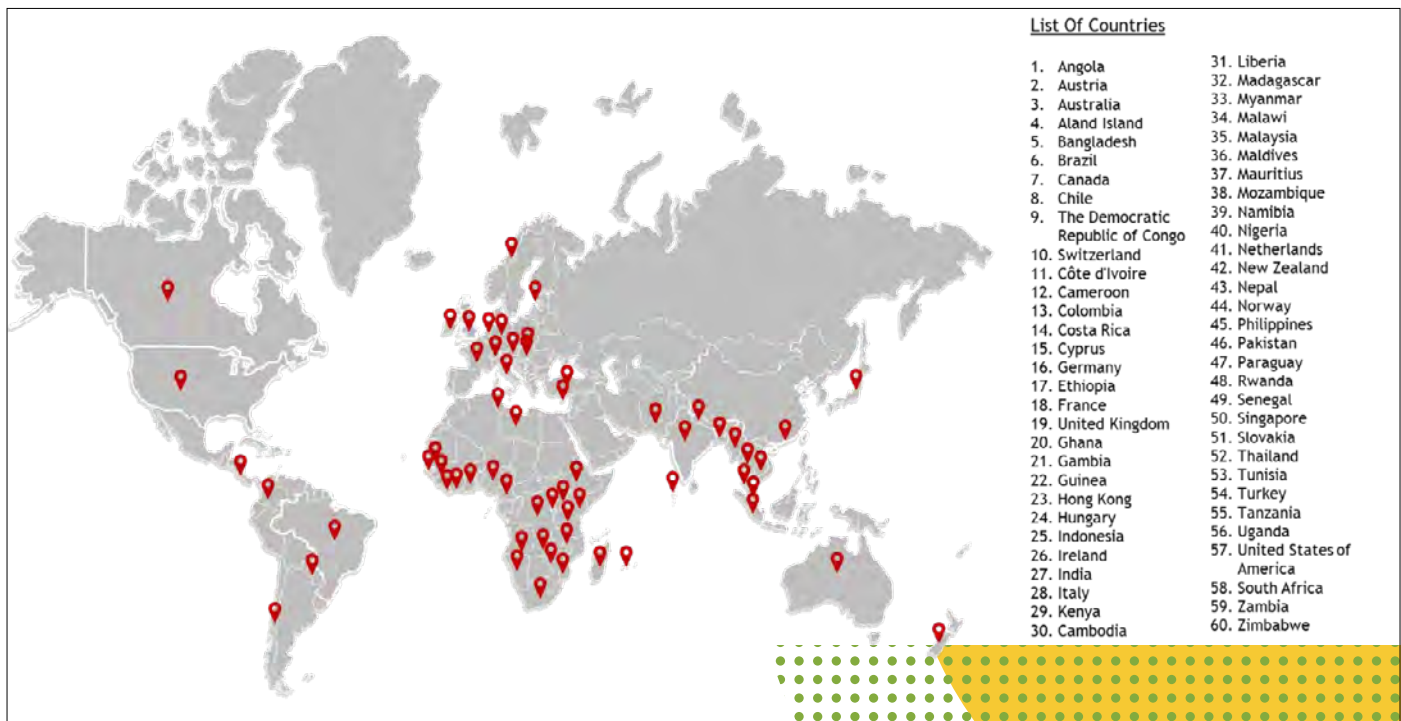
"I'm inspired every time I join these calls and listen!! Thank you, all!!!"

Manian Csb, Chapel Hill, NC:

"Excellent session sharing knowledge and entrepreneur experiences learning with founders panelist. Thank you!"



Some testimonials by the cohort



The number and geography of the participants for the 2023 course



The winners of our first training program are working on climate-adaptive nutrition solutions such as fermented proteins to fill the protein gap in East Africa that are manufactured in bioreactors inside a factory set-up. This could ease food insecurity in LMICs that face major challenges that climate change poses to traditional agriculture. Programs like these will create a pipeline of food system changemakers, specifically in African nations and India, who are locally rooted and empowered to challenge the status quo of their communities.



Out of the 385 enrolments, CIFF's support to this program enabled us to offer 136 participants full scholarships and 62 participants received part scholarship (10-30%). The scholarships were given after a vetting process led by SAL business solutions team.

Aflatoxins Solutions for Safer Food

In 2023, *Sight and Life* initiated a pilot project in Rwanda aimed at implementing a dryer model to address aflatoxins contamination. The aflatoxins project was initiated in 2022. This pilot program was instrumental in testing the viability of the proposed model under real-world conditions. Successful collaborations with Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and Rwanda Inspectorate, Competition and Consumer Protection Authority (RICA) led to the completion of field sampling, testing, and analysis of aflatoxins levels.

A round-up of our work in 2023:

- Best practice solutions workshops conducted, reaching 10,235 stakeholders across five districts, and a comprehensive training manual made available to key players in the value chain. More than a thousand posters were also placed at strategic points within the districts.
- Diagnostic kits were tested in two models at the aggregator and processor/retail levels. SAL trained 35 regulatory officials on the usage of moisture meters and aflatoxins test kits. Collaborating with Rwanda FDA and RICA, maize samples were collected and tested using diagnostic kits, with results matching those obtained through HPLC testing. Analysis revealed high levels of aflatoxins contamination in both grain and flour samples.
- A significant milestone was achieved with the launch of drying model pilots. Recognizing the importance of maintaining maize dryness throughout the value chain, SAL designed and

tested a small batch solar dryers, the first of their kind in Rwanda. Two dryers were fabricated and piloted on a 'rent per use' basis during post-harvest seasons, providing valuable insights into scalability, affordability, and accessibility. However, challenges such as high upfront and operational costs hindered the scalability of the dryer model.

CIFF Ethiopia, our funding partner, SNV Ethiopia's support with implementation, and invaluable assistance from the Government of Ethiopia.

Poultry Research

Late in 2023, we opened doors to a new facility in Bishoftu that will test and evaluate poultry feed for quality control, research on better feed composition, and help detect and prevent disease outbreak in birds. We partnered with ALEMA Ethiopia for the SAL-ALEMA Poultry Research Center, which aims to support the Egg Hub farmers by reducing bird mortality, improving egg quality and increasing farmer productivity and incomes.



SAL Ethiopia team with Egg Hub farmers

Launch of the Year

Egg Hub Ethiopia

Our newest Egg Hub was made fully operational in Ethiopia by mid-2023 and our partner farms in Ada'a and Lome woredas were already seeing fresh and quality eggs being produced by August.

Egg Hubs have the potential to change lives by producing more, and better quality, eggs available to the rural communities in Ethiopia, a country marred by undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and child deaths. While the community, and farmers themselves, benefit nutritionally, this also generates higher and steadier incomes for farmers. The whole community thrives and grows together.

Converting science to solution, *Sight and Life's* Egg Hub model is a holistic approach to break the vicious cycle of malnutrition and poverty. In each country, we team up with local partners to implement this win-win model on the ground. The Egg Hub Ethiopia was made possible by



Launch of the SAL-ALEMA Poultry Research Center

New Research Center in Ethiopia

SAL x FAO

The SAL- FAO partnership in Ethiopia will strengthen the existing Egghub model in Ethiopia by upskilling partners, improving supply, and strengthening demand creation. In India, the partnership will adapt the learning and contextualize the EggHub to the Indian context.

While the community, and farmers themselves, benefit nutritionally with the Egg Hub, this model also generates higher and steadier incomes for farmers. The whole community thrives and grows together.

Partnering for Scale-up

For real impact, we need to scale up the solutions and for this we tie up with partners who have the right capacities and capabilities.



SAL Manager – Nutrition Commodities with partners in Bangladesh

Millions of MMS

The market-based MMS delivery in Bangladesh has been hugely successful. Our technical support to partners SMC, GAIN and CIFF has resulted in improved data gathering and aided the scale up.

Some highlights of 2023:

- 27 million tablets sold, equivalent of reaching over ~35,0000 pregnant women.
- 18,000 outlets were selling FullCare, the MMS product, across Bangladesh.
- The overall sales figure from 2021 reached 48 million and went past the 50 million mark early in 2024.
- Pregnant women group counselling meeting scaled up to 1,500 meetings with over 20,000 in attendance.
- Paramedics were recruited in 90 upazilas (administrative unit) to provide ANC services during the group meetings.
- SAL conducted a diagnostic of the digital dashboard (a telephonic counselling tool SMC uses). The improvement lead to an expanded number of counselling calls from 1,500 per month to 2,300. More efficient logging of data was made possible.
- Bangladesh National Nutrition Service Operational plan (2024-29) included MMS and set a target to develop a procurement plan.

Eggciting Updates from Malawi

Although eggs have proven nutrition benefits, they continue to be scarce and costly in Malawi – the average per capita annual consumption is only 27 eggs compared to 180 globally. This is due to multiple demand-and-supply-side challenges, notably high disease and mortality among chicken, cost and quality of production inputs, and access to credit and markets. The SAL Egg Hub project was piloted in 12 villages in central Malawi to set up and develop poultry farms.

- In 2023, the Egg Hub expanded from 18,000 to 28,000 birds and reached 180,000 consumers, producing 8.6 million eggs each year.
- Our partners have consistently managed to keep the eggs affordable, 40% cheaper than backyard eggs.
- Positive ripple effects seen throughout the value chain. Every 1,000 birds support the livelihoods of 34 other smallholder farmers.
- 95% of our farmers have paid back loans on time, showcasing excellent trust among our farmer partners in the Egg Hub model.

Project AFIKEPO

AFIKEPO is a European Union-funded Nutrition Programme that aims to reduce stunting in children under five through Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture. The campaign, spearheaded by UNICEF in collaboration with *Sight and Life* and Peloton, aimed to promote the consumption of animal-source foods, eggs, small fish, and biofortified foods through a social marketing strategy. The focus was on improving dietary diversity and nutrition among vulnerable populations in Malawi. We collaborated for launching the social marketing campaign in 2023 that highlights the importance of consuming nutritious foods such as eggs. This collaboration was following the extension of the results we achieved through our Zonse Momo social marketing campaign from 2021-22 in 10 districts of Malawi.

We have had our first smallholder farmer turn into a self-made entrepreneur. Fanny Mtoso secured a grant from the Malawi government to expand her small farm tenfold—a remarkable feat of self-reliance and ambition.

AFIKEPO interventions include:

- **Care groups** to provide awareness on the benefit of these nutritional foods and undertake cooking demo on how to prepare economical and easily available foods such as eggs.
- **Soccer bonanzas** to encourage participation of men and the youth.
- **Our reach** was over 2 million on radio and over 6,000 on interpersonal communication (care groups and soccer bonanzas).



SAL in SOFI report



FAO featured of the Egg Hub as an innovative business model in the state of food security (SOFI) report 2023.

UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia – Nepal & Bangladesh

UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) and *Sight and Life* aim to harness market-based nutrition entrepreneurship. In 2023, SAL supported UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA) in identifying value propositions of food-based nutrition enterprises to improve maternal and child diets during the first 1,000 days in South Asia - Bangladesh and Nepal Landscape Shockingly, only 20% of these children consume the recommended food groups daily. For pregnant women, micronutrient gaps are prevalent, with every second woman entering pregnancy with anemia. Additionally, one in five women is either underweight or obese.



Sight and Life and UNICEF ROSA at a conference in India

The focus is on scalable interventions—whether via public-private partnerships, women’s self-help groups, or social/nutrition entrepreneurship—targeting the ‘missing’ micronutrient and macronutrient gaps. A scoping review identified suitable products, assess scalability, and evaluate acceptability within rural communities, in Bangladesh and Nepal. This blueprint for action seeks to transform nutrition outcomes for the most vulnerable populations in South Asia.



IMPAct4Nutrition Partnership with UNICEF

In India, we have worked since 2019 to establish a platform to improve nutrition literacy in support of the National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan) and the private sector for workforce nutrition. In 2023, with over 505 companies as pledged partners, engaging over 4.9 million employees, I4N reached over 190 million citizens. Further, through corporate social responsibility, USD 3.2 million was mobilized to advance nutrition outcomes. Localization efforts are underway with I4N secretariats being established in five states. SAL is deeply involved in the setup of a one-stop resource center on nutrition knowledge in 2023.



I4Ns National Advisory Board Meeting at UNICEF, New Delhi

Coming Together for Greater Impact

SAL believes collaborative efforts and complimentary skills are the only way to find sustainable solutions. We do not want to replicate work that others are doing well and at the same time we are keen to offer our unique skills to partners in all three stages. We held small strategic events to bring partners together as well as attended key conferences and events to move our mission forward.

MMS Africa Regional Meeting, Addis Ababa

We launched our newest Special Report on MMS, “Focusing on Multiple Micronutrient Supplements in Pregnancy: Second Edition” with key stakeholders and partners at Addis Ababa during the regional MMS meet organized by HMHB. Among the gathering were consortium members and partners, and over 120 representatives from 13 African nations, the African Union Commission, national governments, who came together to elevate critical maternal nutrition issues including cost-effective interventions such as MMS to address them. We also presented on our local supply readiness assessment in Ethiopia, Africa and beyond.



International Maternal Newborn Health Conference, Cape Town

More than 1,700 stakeholders from around the world came together to accelerate solutions to improve maternal and newborn survival and prevent stillbirths – and SAL took an active part in this much-talked about event. We provided the official notebook to the event, and in that simple way reached a 1,700+ fully engaged audience with our work. We also held a panel discussion on MMS titled Revitalizing Maternal Nutrition Globally where key stakeholders such as Maternal health lead from Ministry of Health Ethiopia and Chief of Nutrition from UNICEF Nigeria took part in an active discussion on enabling transition from IFA to MMS in LMICs.



Women Deliver, Kigali

The Women Deliver 2023 Conference and Global Dialogue was co-created by grassroots advocates, multilateral governments, the private sector, philanthropies, and youth, including from and representing communities facing systemic discrimination. SAL organized multiple side events at the conference including on MMS, local entrepreneurship and the NICE project that is currently ongoing in Bangladesh, Kenya and Rwanda.



Food Day @ ETH, Zurich

We participated in this yearly public event that brings together a diverse audience from academia, industry, government and international organizations for interactive discussions and workshops on food systems innovation and research. SAL presented on precision nutrition in an LMIC context during the afternoon workshop “Unlocking the Potential of Precision Nutrition”.



American Society of Nutrition Congress, Boston

The American Society for Nutrition is an annual flagship meeting in USA. This meeting aims to connect, expand the network and share the latest nutrition science. We organized the symposium: What is the role of alternative proteins in safely, equitably, and sustainably nourishing 9 billion people by 2050?





International Congress Hidden Hunger, virtual

The 5th International Congress Hidden Hunger, whose theme was “Improving Food and Nutrition Security through School Feeding,” served as an excellent platform to engage with multi-disciplinary researchers, health practitioners and NGOs to share successful strategies and to develop actionable plans to enhance school feeding programs as a vital tool in the battle against malnutrition, specifically anemia. The main aim of the conference was to explore how to make school meals accessible and affordable to all children and adolescents. We held a side event on realizing the potential of the school environment to close the micronutrient gap and address iron deficiency anemia in adolescents in low-and-middle-income countries.

Global Forum for Adolescents, virtual

The GFA is the world’s largest and first-ever gathering for adolescent well-being organized by the PMNCH, the largest global alliance advocating for women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health, hosted by WHO. Through national events and a two-day virtual mainstage, the GFA promoted political and financial commitments towards improved adolescent health and well-being. We made two presentations “Nutrition needs and challenges in Adolescents”, and “Breakfast: a crucial meal for adolescents in LMICs”.

Nutrition for Resilience, the Hague

The Micronutrient Forum’s global conference was an important gathering of the nutrition community. It serves as a platform for sharing expertise, insights and experience relevant to micronutrients in all aspects of nutrition and health. SAL held three sessions at the event focussing on our projects NICE, Egg Hub and MMS.

SAL was awarded the Swiss Food and Nutrition Valley (SFNV) Mountain Climber Award. This award signifies our collaborative mindset, constant commitment, courage to break new ground for LMIC, and impact as we aim to make the use of precision nutrition more accessible, affordable, and desirable to LMIC. The award follows our efforts in conducting a needs assessment to survey the relevance of precision nutrition for LMIC. We discussed these findings and opportunities with key stakeholders living and working in low-resource settings worldwide.

Local outreach through local voices

In 2023, we extended our outreach and messaging to complement our engagement via conferences and academia to include mass messaging via mainstream media. We focused on the main media publications in the country we work in such as New Times, Rwanda and the prestigious Ethiopian Business Review, making a case for MMS and investment in women's health and nutrition. We believe that mainstream media will help us reach a wider target consumer through a channel they subscribe to by choice, which helps in greater awareness and empowerment of the consumer. We have invested in a strong communications and stakeholder engagement team and are actively looking for investment support to strengthen and further our work in this area.

April 2023

Media article: [The route to market for nutrition commodities](#), Devex

July 2023

Media article: [Micronutrient deficiencies in pregnant women](#), The New Times Rwanda

September 2023

Media article: [How mobile technology is revolutionizing maternal health in India](#), NDTV.

October 2023

Media article: [Investing in Nutrition](#), Ethiopian Business Review



SOCIETY

Investing in Nutrition

Tackling New Challenges, Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Good nutrition is essential for everyone's health and well-being. It is crucial for children, as malnutrition can lead to stunted growth, cognitive impairment, and reduced productivity in adulthood. Ethiopia has made significant progress in reducing malnutrition in recent years, but more work still needs to be done. Investing in nutrition is good for the economy. However, Ethiopia's malnutrition problem has been exacerbated by conflict and climate shocks. These factors have led to food inflation and population displacement. Despite the growing challenges to the fight against malnutrition, the country still has a long way to go to reach its target of 25% stunting by 2025.

Investing in the Right Team in the Right Places

The small SAL team represents over 10 nationalities. 74% of our team members are from and work in LMICs with 63% representation of women across board, including both our Managing Directors. Local team representation in stakeholder engagement and local events and projects is a key value proposition. Our office in Rwanda has 10+ staff working on on-ground climate-friendly nutrition solutions. We also have a four-member team in Ethiopia and some members of staff working across LMICs in Asia and Africa such as Nigeria, South Africa, Nepal, India and





The Nutrition Post



Dear Reader,

Thank you for subscribing to the Sight and Life (SAL) newsletter.

With the first dispatch of 2023, we present big and small news from Team SAL in the first half of the year.

We hope you enjoy the new look newsletter. We will keep evolving it, so please let us know what else would you would like to read here as we work to make it more frequent, more newsy, and more useful for the community.

Thanks for reading!
SAL Communications

Project Launch

BETTER NUTRITION AND LIVELIHOODS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA

Our new Egg Hub is already in the launch phase, with the first eggs ready to go out into the communities. Egg Hub Ethiopia will have multiple beneficiaries: access to more eggs will address micronutrient deficiencies in pregnant women and children under 5 and smallholder poultry farmers will have more and steadier incomes. [Read more](#)



New launch!

A completely redesigned and reconceptualised newsletter was launched to keep stakeholders abreast of our work. We plan to expand the scope of this newsletter to include nutrition news and share knowledge with the community.

Scientific Research & Papers

- Impact of market-based home fortification with micronutrient powder on childhood anemia in Bangladesh: a modified stepped wedge design
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2023.1271931>
- A Comparative Analysis of Maternal Nutrition Decision-Making Autonomy During Pregnancy in Burkina Faso and Madagascar – An Application of the Food Choice Process Model
<https://doi.org/10.1177/03795721231217554>
- School meals and food systems: Rethinking the consequences for climate, environment, biodiversity, and food sovereignty
<https://doi.org/10.17037/PUBS.04671492>
- Nutrition transition, double burden of malnutrition, and urbanization patterns in secondary cities of Bangladesh, Kenya and Rwanda
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s40795-023-00782-1>
- Editorial: An Introduction to Traditional and Novel Alternative Proteins for Low- and Middle-Income Countries
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cdnut.2023.102014>
- Precision Nutrition Opportunities to Help Mitigate Nutrition and Health Challenges in Low- and Middle-Income Countries: An Expert Opinion Survey
<https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15143247>
- Innovative Research for Nutrition- and Climate-Smart Food Systems in Low- and Middle-Income Countries
<https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15133020>
- The ethical, economic, and developmental imperative to prevent small vulnerable newborns and stillbirths: essential actions to improve the country and global response
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)00721-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00721-3)
- Small vulnerable newborns—big potential for impact
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(23\)00354-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(23)00354-9)
- Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Pregnant Women and Healthcare Providers in Bangladesh regarding Multivitamin Supplements during Pregnancy
<https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare11050713>
- Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE): Protocol of a multi-sectoral development project to improve food and nutrition security of secondary city populations in Bangladesh, Kenya and Rwanda
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1081535>
- Food Systems Innovation Hubs in Low- and Middle-Income Countries
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15703-5_24
- Secondary Cities as Catalysts for Nutritious Diets in Low- and Middle-Income Countries
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15703-5_16

Publication

- **May 2023**

SAL Special Report: Focusing on Multiple Micronutrient Supplements in Pregnancy: Second Edition

- **September 2023**

SAL Special Report: The Promise and Progress of Maternal Nutrition in India

Blogs

- **March 2023**

Felicitating the Nutrition Leaders of Tomorrow

- **April 2023**

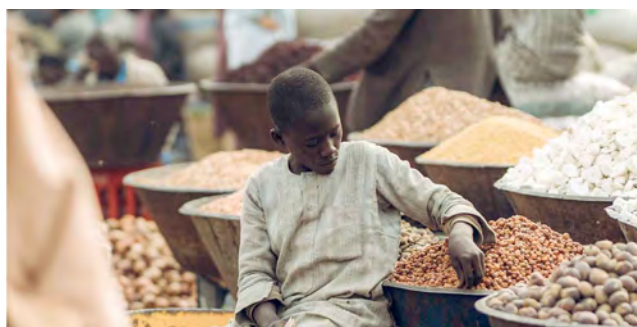
The Role of Alternative Proteins for Low- and Middle-Income Countries

- **October 2023**

Leveraging school meals and the school environment to accelerate efforts toward anemia reduction

- **November 2023**


The non-expiring nutritional benefits of eggs



12 April 2023



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Delivering science-based solutions to close the nutrition gap.

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