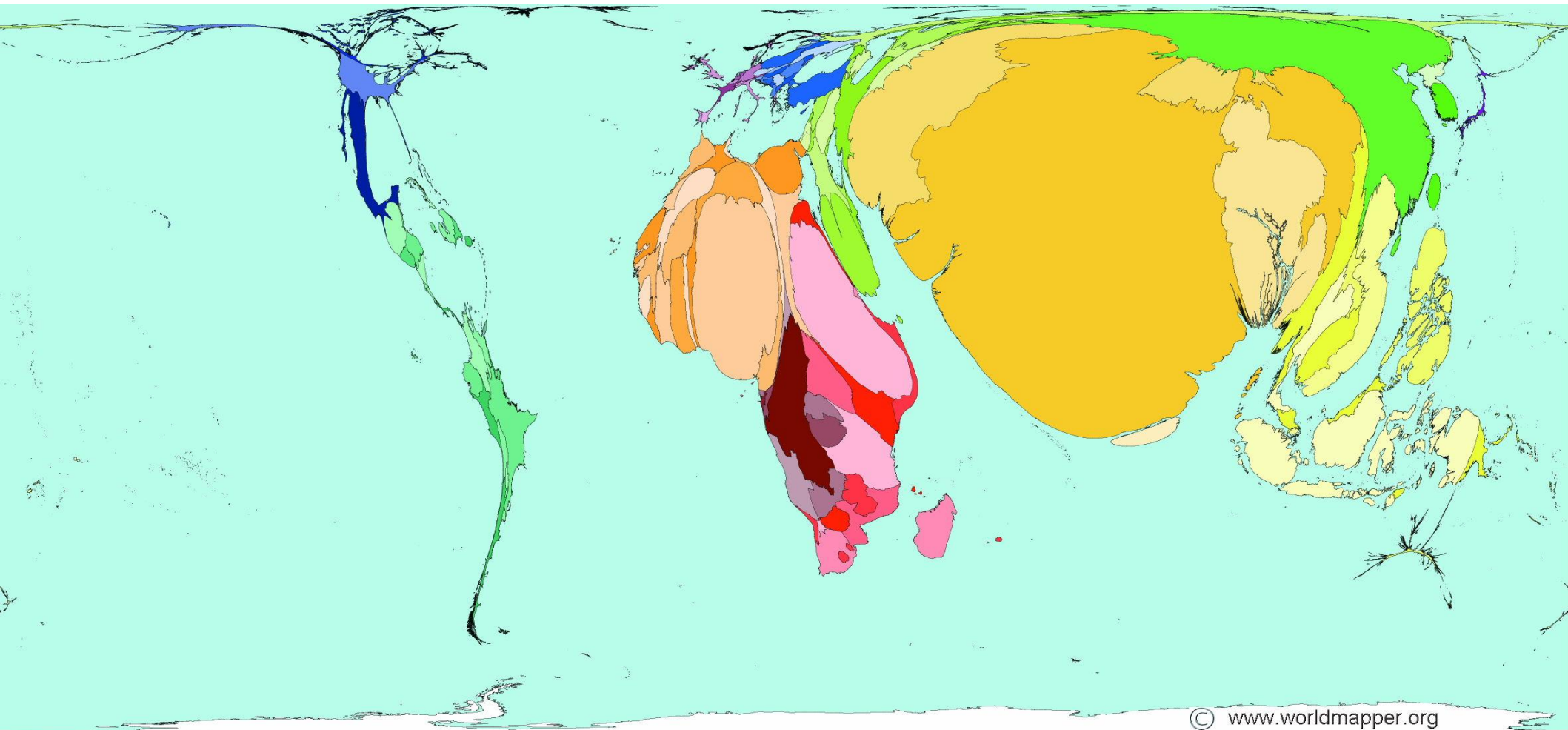


Between a Rock and a Hard Place Resisting Commercial Interests in Malnutrition



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Malnutrition in Children: A Severe Problem in India



160 million children under six, about half malnourished. 70% children age 6-59 months in India are anaemic. 3% are severely anaemic, 40% are moderately anaemic, and 26% percent are mildly anaemic.

Huge problem – huge market

Fundamental Reasons

Pervasive poverty: over 75% under 1 \$

Massive and growing inequity

Poor status of women

Sky rocketing food prices

Unsafe water and lack of sanitation

No support for child care

Very poor diets: per capita consumption of pulses falling constantly, very poor p/c intake of animal sources of proteins

	India	China	US	World
Meat	5.3	56.8	126.6	40,2
Eggs	1.8	21.6	15.2	9.7

Source: FAO, *World Agriculture: Towards 2030/2050*, 2009

Response; Govt., Technocracy

- Play down poverty: the Below Poverty Line drama: keep under 45%
- Lip service to comprehensive food security: NFSB
- No investments in adequate good quality diverse food for all children; *'We are all vegetarians in India'*
- Hypo investments in systems: ICDS
- No take-up for care systems such as creches
- No support for exclusive breastfeeding though a recent pilot to 'incentivise' good child care practices
- Constant push for single-component technical solutions: 'nutraceutical products'

The 'Products': Nutraceuticals and RTEs

- Biscuits (2008 BMA, 2012 Brit-GAIN-NF) and RTEs vs Hot Cooked Meals in SNP for kids (CFI in Karnataka 2007-ongoing court battle)
- RUTF for SAM: Patented, MNC produced (imported) vs community produced using local foods; Plumpy Nut analogs vs eggs and local mixes
- Wheat fortification for anemia vs standard supplements via syrups and sprinkles (Gujarat 2007)
- Double Fortification of salt for anemia
- Most are being contested, many litigations by campaign and commissioners' office

Common Strategies; Creating the Food-Drug Confusion

- **Medicalisation** of malnutrition: food → nutrition → micronutrition
- Centralised means of production; **production as drug**
Based on stringent application of standards to food product / production and requirement of labelling
- Overplay on certain characteristics favouring centralised production but irrelevant to use in community settings such as sterility; **'untouched by human hands'** (SC, 2011).
- Universalised distribution (horizontal and vertical expansion). PN leads to P'Doz for mild, moderate and normal = ALL kids (Somalia, via UNICEF, WFP, MSF): **distribution as food**
- Stand-alone product distribution without process or strategy: no monitoring.
- Lack of adequate research on impact, context-specificity, alternatives (single product advocacy): **seduction...**
- Conflicts of Interest in recommending bodies – partnering with Nestle, Pepsico, Kraft, Horlicks for nutrition related work: **inducement...**

Common Consequences

- Opportunity costs: no money for promotion (food, BCC etc); Afghanistan and PN, studies in SSAfrica, nor for prevention (agricultural reform, livelihoods)
- Direct impact on local food produce (millets), local livelihoods (milling, salt production), food culture, household expenditures, levels of dependence upon alien supplies, community control over resources

Perennial Food Aid vs Food Sovereignty

Protective Policies

SC Case (Rt2Fd) and Judgements, 2001- ongoing
Universalisation, hot cooked meals, ban contractors
11th and 12th Five Year Plans
Proposed NFSB ?
Proposed ICDS reforms, IYCF policy
Some gains for Maternity Entitlements

Dangerous Policies

Overall environment of promoting corporate profits: PPPs
Finance crackdown
SC Judgements, 2011- ongoing; 'no hands', standards,
specifying minimum turnovers
Absence of national nutrition policy (1993) for current issues
State-level donor agency led action: uncoordinated, non
transparent

We have been learning from parallels in history and geography....

The breast milk substitutes experience

The ORS saga

The pharma / vaccines mess

" There is a race to the middle between pharma and food. The opportunity is big. The risk is big. The reward is big." LUIS CANTRELL, head of business at Nestle SA

The Thailand experience

The African experience: poor impact of food aid and vital differences with India

- Democracy and governance
- Vibrant civil society presence
- Potentially food secure and sovereign
- Health infrastructure
- Specifics: ? Mortality is different in SAM?

The Plumpy Nut Saga

First attempt, PN 2009, UNICEF shipment of \$2.4 million

Refused by Government and Civil Society.

Policy paralysis 2009 – 2011

Many re attempts PN analogs (MP 2011)

Some state and sub state level action on local

RUTF: Orissa, MP districts 2012-

Civil society direct action 2011 on local,

comprehensive solutions- : Andhra (Velagu),

PHRN-Ekjut-CINI-JSS-Chaupal-Idea (4 states)

Impact on Bangladesh (2012), Pakistan (IBFAN)

The Struggle for Patents and Markets

Unicef buys 70% of all RUTFs globally each year, typically more than two-thirds from companies in Europe and the US, not least Nutriset. Meanwhile, USAid announced, along with the American Peanut Council, that a trio of US companies – Edesia, Tabatchnick Fine Foods, and MANA Nutrition – would produce \$4.4m of RUTFs for East Africa.

However, the push to accept local producers / public sector units and cooperatives is growing (Amul, MP Agro. etc).

Our thrust is more radical: remaining with centre-based / village based SHG level production which can only be done by keeping FOOD divorced from the DRUG component: the micronutrients should largely be derived from quality food and added through drugs when necessary. Supplementation should not become an inherent part of the food because of its obvious impact on control over means of production

Main Issues in GH Governance: A Health Activist's Perspective

Funding of and Conflicts of Interest in Multilateral Bodies and INGOs which provide technical support as well as fund country level programmes (Vitamin A and Pulse Polio Case Studies, GAIN-like front organisations, SCF and Pepsico, Kraft)

Top-down decision making rather than consultative: should push due process, not peddle products

SAY "NO" TO BRANDED INTERVENTIONS IN FOOD

