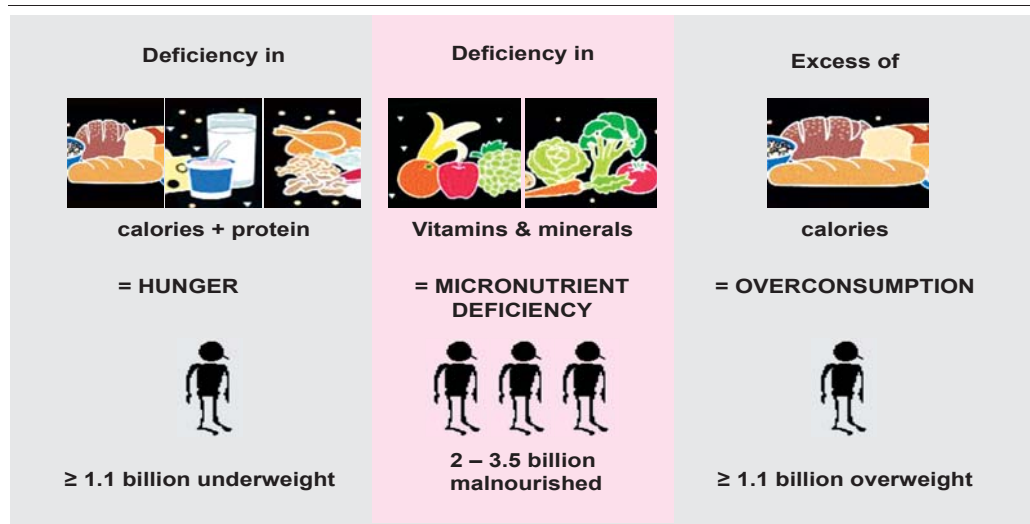


# Development through Vegetables



Millennium Development Goal 4: Reduce child mortality  
 Millennium Development Goal 5: Improve maternal health

## Closing the micronutrient gap

Malnutrition is one of the major contributing factors to child mortality in developing countries, and a major cause of this is a lack of micronutrient intake. Over two billion people, mostly women and children, suffer from micronutrient deficiencies in their diets. The most appropriate source of micronutrients are vegetables.

It directly impacts their health during pregnancy and childbirth. The majority of pregnant women in developing countries suffers from anemia and other micronutrient deficiencies. This affects both their productivity during pregnancy and can lead to complications for the fetus during and after childbirth.

### Vitamin A deficiency

Vitamin A deficiency alone weakens the immune system of 40% of children in developing countries, increasing their risk of death from infectious diseases. Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness and contributes to higher rates of anemia, respiratory diseases, diarrhea, measles, and malaria.

### Quantity as well as quality

Producing more food, by itself, is not the solution to the crisis. The quality of food, and especially, the nutrient content of the food is just as important. However, staple grains such as rice or wheat cannot provide for a healthy diet by themselves. A basic component of a healthy nutrition are vegetables. Vegetables can benefit infant and maternal health directly by improving the quality of the diet.

### Lack of micronutrients

More than half a million women die in pregnancy and childbirth every year - that's one death every minute. Of these deaths, 99 per cent are in developing countries. In parts of Africa, maternal mortality rates are 1 in 16 (UNFPA).

Solving the global micronutrient crisis is strongly linked with a vital vegetable sector, that delivers vegetables in sufficient quantity and quality, and that at prices that the poorest can afford.

Maternal health depends on having achieved food security during childhood as well as a diet rich in micronutrients during conception, pregnancy and the first few months after childbirth. The health of women before conception di-

AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center is the principal international center for vegetable research and development in the world. As a not-for profit institute, research activities at AVRDC aim to alleviate poverty and malnutrition in developing countries through improved production and consumption of vegetables.

AVRDC- The World Vegetable Center  
 P.O. Box 42  
 Shanhua, Tainan,  
 Taiwan 74199, ROC

[www.avrdc.org](http://www.avrdc.org)