



LIFT and 3MDG First 1000 Days Nutrition Event

In August 19, 2017, Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT) and Three Millennium Development Goal Fund (3MDG Fund)¹ have joined together in organizing an event in Yangon, Myanmar. The event emphasized the importance of nutrition for the mother and baby in the first 1000 days of life (pregnancy to 2 years of age). The event was attended by mother and their families including staff from non-government organizations and civil society groups in the country.

The event showcased portraits of mother with their children in the rural and urban communities in Myanmar. Aside from that, panel discussions were held with nutrition experts relating to infant and young child feeding practices, pregnancy and lactation, followed by nutrition games and puppet shows centered on nutrition.

The event is one of the many efforts of LIFT and 3MDG to raise awareness on the detrimental effects of undernutrition to children. It was reported that in Myanmar, one in three of <5 year old children are stunted, and one out of five <5 year old children are underweight², minimizing the growth and cognitive potential of children leading to reduced opportunities in adult life.



Daw Thelma Htun Thein emphasized about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding

Fish paste (ngapi) a source of calcium for some people in Myanmar

In Myanmar, fish paste is called “ngapi” which literally means pressed fish. Fish paste is composed of commonly consumed fish, which is processed along with fish sauce, shrimp paste, and dried fish in Myanmar³. Few households in the Ayeyawaddy delta do their own processing of ngapi while others buy ngapi at the local markets.

Not known to many, a study⁴ conducted in Bago, Kayin and Yangon in 2010 concluded that fish paste is a major source of calcium to the study population. However, it is noted that it has a high salt concentration and some products are not processed according to safety standards which could be harmful to the health of consumers. Previously, The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducted a spot check in the local markets in Yangon and found that pesticide residue and antibiotics are found in ngapi, laphet (pickled tea), jelly, and juices and other food commodities that are commonly consumed at home⁵. Hence, when considering fish paste for its nutrient contribution in terms of calcium, an intensive research and product development is needed.



A type of ngapi that is eaten together with fresh vegetables

¹ LIFT and 3MDG (2017), *Good nutrition in the first 1000 days*, LIFT and 3MDG, available at: <https://www.lift-fund.org/event/good-nutrition-first-1000-days>, (accessed: 4/9/2017)

² Ministry of Health and Sports, (2017) *Myanmar Demographic and Health Survey 2015-2016*, Nay Pyi Taw, Republic Union of Myanmar

³ Needham, S. & S. Funge-Smith, (2014) *The consumption of fish and fish products in the Asia-Pacific Region based on household surveys*, Bangkok, Thailand Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5151e.pdf>, (accessed: 1/9/2017)

⁴ Aung P., M. Ohnmar, M. Hlaing, M. Kyaw, A. Than, T. Thwin, & T. Myint, (2010) “Calcium Intake among Myanmar residing in Bago, Kayin, and Yangon areas”, *Malaysian Journal of Nutrition*, pp. 91-100, 16 (1), Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22691856>, (accessed: 31/8/2017)

⁵ Myanmar Times, (2017), Spot Checks by FDA to ensure safe products, Available at: <https://www.mmtimes.com/national-news/26033-spot-checks-by-fda-to-ensure-safe-products.html> (accessed: 30/8/2017)