



*“Implemented on a large scale, community-based management of severe acute malnutrition could prevent the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children.”*

A JOINT STATEMENT BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STANDING COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION AND THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND.

Valid International (VI), Valid Nutrition's (VN) sister company, in collaboration with Concern Worldwide and funded by Irish Aid, developed the Community-based Therapeutic Care (CTC) approach for treating severe acute malnutrition, now known as Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM). This approach uses ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF) to treat people close to the point of death from acute starvation. In 2003, the Directors of VI identified that the lack of availability of high quality, affordable RUTF would be the limiting factor in achieving scale implementation of CMAM. To address this, they founded VN, to produce RUTF in the countries where it is needed. As they predicted, currently worldwide capacity for the production of RUTF cannot keep up with the dramatic increase in demand as a result of the roll out of CMAM following the joint statement.

However, VN's capacity for production of these foods in 2009 is now on course to increase tenfold. Welcome to the second VN newsletter aimed at providing our supporters and funders with an update on developments within VN in the last six months and our plans going forward.

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## Major Collaboration between Gorta and VN in Malawi

We are delighted to announce VN's collaboration with Gorta, an Irish NGO focussing on empowering communities in sub-Saharan Africa to eradicate hunger. The organisation which has a particular focus on food and water security is generously funding a major investment in the capacity expansion of VN Malawi (see below). Gorta will also be supporting VN's aim to source RUTF components from within Malawi by encouraging its partner farmer groups to produce the ingredients. This will give small plot farmers access to a stable and fair market, thereby improving their livelihoods whilst supporting VN's aims.



## Research and Development

Our Research and Development programme, funded by Irish Aid, is well underway with current research focusing on developing a range of ready-to-use food products formulated to meet the specific requirements of the various forms of malnutrition. Acceptability trials have now been completed on these products and all have proved to be highly acceptable to the target populations. Efficacy trials will commence shortly.

## Progress Reports: Malawi

VN's Malawi manufacturing facility has been awarded UNICEF certification within Malawi; this is a major achievement and means that VN Malawi is an accredited supplier of RUTF to UNICEF and other NGO's within Malawi. However, VN is seeking international UNICEF certification so as to be able to supply UNICEF outside Malawi, and this is expected within the next three months, following a planned increase in capacity and the successful transition from production in pots to sachets.

Plans to increase capacity in two phases are already underway, kindly funded by Gorta; the first phase to increase our existing capacity by mid February 2009, and in the second to double annual capacity by mid 2009. Of this capacity about a third will be for Malawi, and the remainder for export.

Ireland's Hunger Task Force, set up as part of Ireland's efforts to achieve the first Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty and hunger by 2015, as mentioned in the previous VN newsletter, visited CTC programmes and VN's RUTF factory. The report to the Irish government, following the visit, clearly recommended the continuation of support and encouragement for the development and scaling up of CMAM as an effective means of addressing acute malnutrition, and encouragement to developing country partners to establish an enabling environment for the promotion of sustainable and equitable markets.







## Progress Report: Kenya

VN's collaborator in Kenya, Insta Products, are well advanced in plans to set up a new manufacturing facility for RUTF within the EPZ Duty Free Zone in Nairobi. Phase one is due to be operational in March 2009, and phase two, with increased capacity should be operational by mid 2009. The VN/Insta operations based in Nairobi will service requirements in the East Africa region.



## VN Logo

VN are in the process of changing the existing logo and you can expect to see a new VN look soon.

## Other Countries

Negotiations with a third party food manufacturer in **Ethiopia** are being completed and a new factory will be established in Addis Ababa in the first half of 2009 with an initial annual capacity to meet almost half of Ethiopia's current RUTF demand.

In **Zambia** VN have ceased local third party RUTF production and short-term local requirements are being sourced ex Malawi. A new Marketing Manager has been appointed recently in Zambia to develop the market.

## Transfer to Ireland

Following the establishment of VN as an Irish charity in 2008, the assets and liabilities of VN UK will shortly be transferred to the Irish charity and from April 2009 onwards, VN will be fully operational from its' Irish base. VN UK is being transformed into a charitable company.

## Legal Support

VN are very grateful for the excellent and continuing support from Advocates for International Development (A4ID), who have sourced pro bono legal advice on a range of projects including trademarks, patents, the transfer to Ireland, and the collaboration in Ethiopia.

## Appointments

VN are delighted to welcome David Morgan BTEC/OND, RIPHH, HND to the team as Food Technology Manager. David is a technical professional with over 20 years experience in the food sector. He is fully knowledgeable in HACCP food safety principles, the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety and the systems and procedures required for compliance. He also has a wealth of experience in creative new product development. David began with VN in July and his initial key focus has been the UNICEF certification process in Malawi. David will work closely with VN's Food Technology Adviser, Dr Peter Fellows.

VN are also pleased to announce the appointment of Olly Willans as a Director of VN Ireland. Olly is the founding Director of Torchbox, an independently owned web design and development company working for clients who come from the charity, NGO and public sector. Previously Olly developed the VI web site, on a pro bono basis and supported our research activities. His experience of running an ethical company providing services to the charity sector will be very useful in providing guidance and advice to VN. Olly joins Howard Dalzell, Steve Collins and Alistair Hallam on the VN Ireland Board.



## VN on TV!

To celebrate Concern's 40th Anniversary and also to mark the stunning success of the CTC approach, Concern and Irish Aid have funded a full length documentary about the development of CTC and the production of RUTF. This was first shown on Irish television on Sunday 11th January 2009 and has raised the profile of both VI and VN. The documentary is expected to be shown on European television channels in the coming months.

Based on extracts from the documentary a short (12 minute) DVD is in the process of being created to explain VN and its' activities and this is expected to be available by mid February and should be accessible on the VN website.

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## Funding

In the second half 2008, VN much appreciated the support received from donors including Irish Aid, the Matthew Orr Charitable Trust, Fyffes Ireland Ltd and others; these funds have helped our core funding and allowed us to make vital progress in the urgent and much needed expansion of RUTF production. Moving into 2009, VN's cash flow situation remains critical and support over the next two years would be very much appreciated. We plan to be self funding after this period. VN's website now has a facility to receive donations online – please visit [www.validnutrition.org](http://www.validnutrition.org)

