



Valid Nutrition Supporter Newsletter

Issue No: 4 February 2010



FAMINE

Twenty five years after the famine in Ethiopia that killed over a million people, there is once again a growing drought and conflict-related humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa. The UN estimates that over 15 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance across East Africa. The worst drought for a decade has parched large areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Eritrea and has increased acute malnutrition rates in children under five across the region. Ethiopia accounts for the highest proportion of the humanitarian caseload in the region, with over 6 million people needing emergency assistance until the end of 2009. In most areas of the country, food insecurity during the first half of 2010 is projected to be significantly worse than during the same period in 2009. USAID predicts that food security in eastern marginal cropping areas will likely deteriorate even further between July and September 2010. UNICEF estimates that there are currently over 500,000 acutely malnourished children in Ethiopia. Valid Nutrition will play its role in helping to address these developments through local production of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) from March 2010.

Welcome to the fourth edition of the VN newsletter aimed at providing our supporters and funders with an update on the progress and developments within VN during the last six months of 2009 and our plans to meet the challenges ahead.

IRISH AID

On 12th August, 2009, the Minister of State for Overseas Development, Peter Power, T.D., announced a grant of €250,000 to support Valid Nutrition in implementing its Business Plan aimed at significantly extending its innovative model to improve nutrition and improve agriculture in some of the poorest countries in Africa and beyond. This represents continued strong support from Irish Aid who are already funding Valid's three year program of Research and Development into new and cheaper products for use in the treatment and prevention of a broad range of malnutrition – the single most important cause of world poverty.



Minister of State for Overseas Development, Peter Power, T.D., flanked by Steve Collins (Left) and Derek Staveley (Right).

“One of the most important aspects of the Valid Nutrition approach is that it uses locally-sourced ingredients to produce its ready-to-use food; it employs local people and it expects the business to become self-financing within three years. This is an excellent model of the effective use of aid to promote lasting improvements to the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable families. Our support will allow this not-for-profit Irish company to extend their life-saving approach to children in the poorest areas of sub-Saharan Africa. Thousands of children will be helped to recover from the serious physical and mental effects of malnutrition. This is crucial for their long-term health and well-being.”

Statement from Peter Power TD, the Minister of State for Overseas Development – August 2009

MALAWI



gorta
make hunger history

The major capacity increase and upgrade of the VN factory in Malawi has now been completed; this increases RUTF capacity by over double and is intended to meet ongoing requirements both for the local market, for exports and in due course new products. The cost of the upgrade was generously funded by Gorta, the Irish Hunger Charity who have significant operations in Malawi.

Whilst the Factory is already a major supplier to UNICEF locally following UNICEF local supplier approval during 2009, the completion of international supplier status has been delayed pending completion of the recent major upgrade and is now planned for early 2010.

VN are currently exploring the possibility of establishing its own food chemistry, microbiology and physical testing laboratory at the VN factory in Malawi. There is currently no product testing facilities within the Malawi factory and it has been necessary in the past, to use expensive independent external laboratories, to ensure confidence in the reliability of local laboratories. Quality Assurance testing is particularly critical given the manufacture of RUTF which is used in the treatment of vulnerable children.

KENYA

The collaboration between Insta Products EPZ and Valid Nutrition in East Africa saw the commencement of local RUTF production in an impressive new plant based in Nairobi in July 2009; the factory received UNICEF international supplier status in 2009 and is now starting to supply RUTF to UNICEF and other local and export customers in the East African Region. It is planned to formally open the factory in April/May 2010.



On the 23rd February, the Ministry for Medical Services in Kenya will launch a National Reference Manual of Clinical Nutrition, Dietetics and RUTF. The launch will provide an excellent platform to raise awareness of CTC, RUTF and the Insta/VN collaboration together with the Valid vision creating 'farm' to 'mouth' longer term sustainable operations. The Conference attendees include 250 invited guests from Government and the Private Sector and it is planned that Valid will be represented by Steve, Derek, Theresa Banda (VI Malawi, Country Manager) and Victor Owino (VN's R&D Manager), together with senior management from the Insta business.

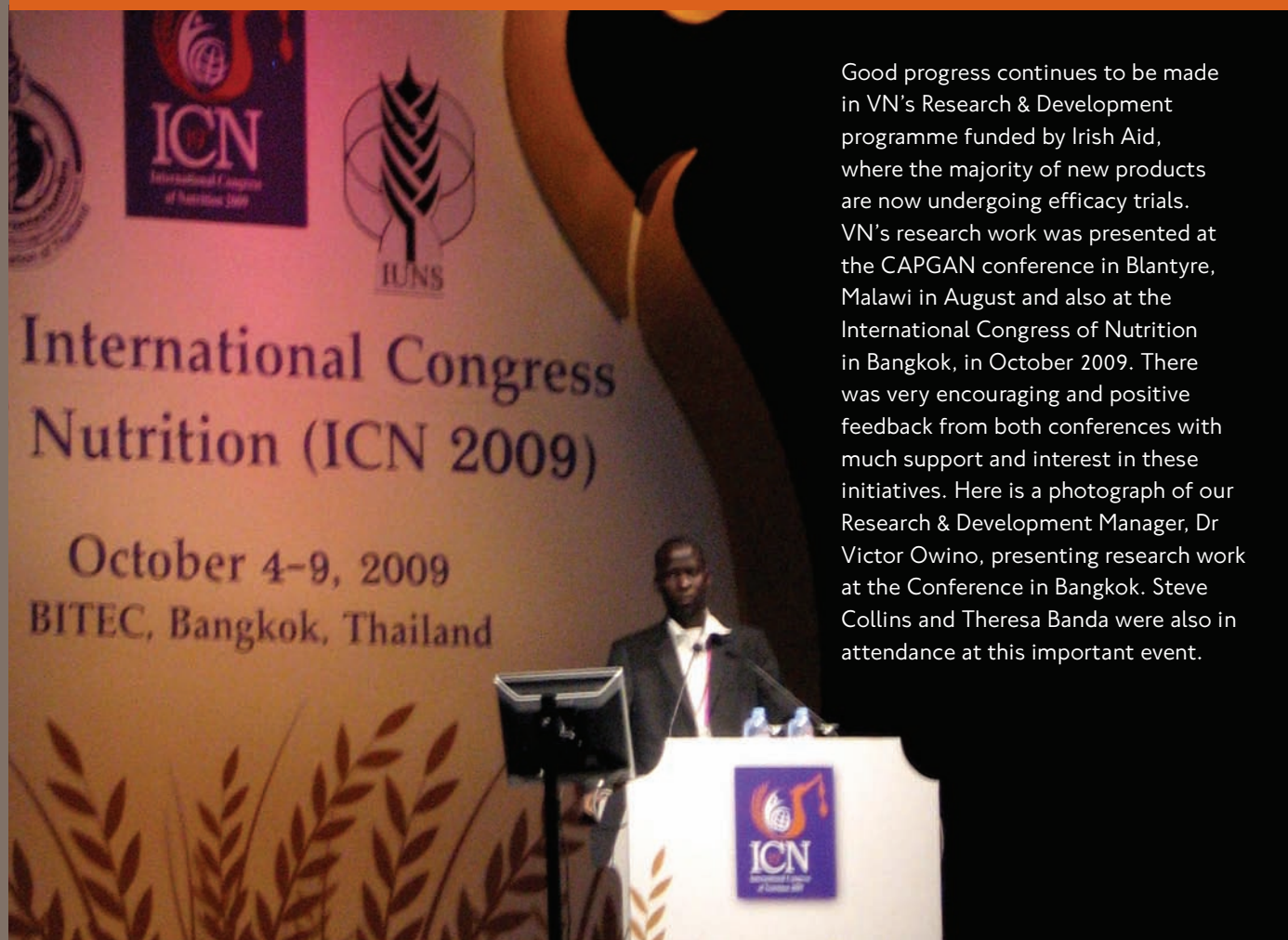
ETHIOPIA

The collaboration between Valid Nutrition, Insta and Valsek – a local food manufacturer – is progressing well and the new factory is scheduled to be operational and producing RUTF for the local market in February 2010.

OTHER TERRITORIES

Valid Nutrition are in discussions with a number of other potential collaborators. If these discussions progress as envisaged two further RUTF manufacturing facilities should be in place in the second half of 2010.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT



Good progress continues to be made in VN's Research & Development programme funded by Irish Aid, where the majority of new products are now undergoing efficacy trials. VN's research work was presented at the CAPGAN conference in Blantyre, Malawi in August and also at the International Congress of Nutrition in Bangkok, in October 2009. There was very encouraging and positive feedback from both conferences with much support and interest in these initiatives. Here is a photograph of our Research & Development Manager, Dr Victor Owino, presenting research work at the Conference in Bangkok. Steve Collins and Theresa Banda were also in attendance at this important event.

APPOINTMENTS

VN would like to welcome David Scott, who has joined the business as Finance and Accounting Manager; David is a qualified accountant and an MBA with extensive business experience. Welcome also to Theresa Newman, VN's Accounting Officer, who together with David now runs VN's back office operations from Dublin.

Following the recent capacity expansion at the Malawi Factory, VN would also like to extend a warm welcome to Wantwa Mwachimba, the new Factory Manager, Andrew Jamu (Stores Officer), Gibson Frazer (Production Shift Supervisor), Demster Kumvenji and John Mawenda (Quality Assurance Supervisors) and three new shift cleaners – Abel James, Beatrice Njaidi and Deliby Njiwa.



MEDIA AND AWARDS

The major social change organisation, Ashoka, have announced the appointment of Steve Collins as a Senior Fellow. This, the first appointment of a Senior Fellow in Ireland, was in recognition of the system changing impact that has been brought about by the development of CTC and Valid Nutrition's unique model to foster improved nutrition, agricultural productivity and economic development. Ashoka are not a household name throughout Europe, but they are at the centre of a network of global philanthropical organisations, including major foundations like Clinton and Gates, and their footprint is very influential. The Ashoka niche is the development of what they call "the citizen sector". They award fellowships annually to individuals who bring an innovative, entrepreneurial, and potentially game-changing approach to social challenges and related change. The position of Senior Fellow is reserved for those whose work has already achieved considerable social impact on several continents. Other Ashoka Fellows include Sir Ian Botham and Jimmy Wales (founder of Wikipedia). Worldwide there are some 200 Senior Ashoka Fellows, and some 3,000 Associate Fellows; Steve is the first Senior Ashoka Fellow to be admitted from Ireland. Selection of Fellows is through an extended and rigorous screening process that scrutinizes: the power of the new idea (in this case CTC); creativity; entrepreneurial quality; social impact; and ethical fibre. We are sure that you will all join in congratulating Steve on this fine achievement.

Both Valid International and Valid Nutrition had a stand at the ALNAP Innovations Fair in London in November 2009. At the end of the Fair, Valid were highlighted as one of the three outstanding innovations for its pioneering work in Community Based Therapeutic Care and its core strategy of 'farm' to 'mouth' in the manufacture and distribution of RUTF.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Claire and Steve on the birth of their son - Seán Collins.



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FUNDING

We are extremely grateful for the funding that we have so far received from donors. Many of the exciting developments referred to above would not have been possible without their support.

VN's unique approach is not only achieving spectacular and unprecedented results in treating malnutrition, but is also enabling sustainable local enterprise that harnesses the expertise, skills and knowledge of the respective communities.

Additional funding is now urgently required for the following:

- Further research and development to produce cheaper RUTF formulations and recipes suitable to treat different forms of malnutrition.
- To expand manufacturing capacity to meet demand and improve delivery techniques – so that our products are more easily and readily available wherever and whenever they are required.
- To cover some exceptional and future "once off" costs related to set up of new production facilities.
- To cover the core central costs related to driving the whole vision of VN forward.

VN remain at a critical stage of development. With CTC and RUTFs, we have a proven breakthrough in the treatment of malnutrition – and by expanding the sourcing and production of these innovative foods locally, we are building a sustainable model with powerful associated benefits to the local economies. We are very confident that with additional funding, we will realise our vision. Details of how to make credit card or cheque donations are available on VN's website - www.validnutrition.org – donations can also be made directly through the website.



FACEBOOK

VN has launched a Facebook page where we hope our supporters and funders will join up and become "fans". Please invite your fellow social networkers to look us up.