

# INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN ZINC ENRICHED WHEAT RELATED BUSINESSES CAN SCALE UP PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION: A CASE OF PAKISTAN

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**Background:** Women and women entrepreneurs play a key role in promoting nutrition outcomes. In the Commercialization of Biofortified Crops programme that aimed to scale up the production and consumption of nutrient-enriched zinc wheat in Pakistan, we aimed to empower both men and women to participate in various nodes of the value chain through awareness creation on the nutrition benefits of consuming zinc enriched wheat.

**Objectives:** We present a case study on how nutrition information awareness empowered women to run chakkis producing and packaging zinc wheat products in Pakistan

**Methods:** During programme implementation, both men and women farmers and entrepreneurs were selected and trained on the nutrition benefits of the zinc enriched wheat. They were also trained in various processing techniques to add value to the wheat.



**Results:** By the end of the implementation period (2020-2023), more women were involved in the zinc enriched wheat value chain including the establishment of women led chakkis that were processing and selling nutrient enriched wheat flour products. Majority of these chakkis were based in the zinc wheat production regions where the poor rural farming households were based, hence ensuring availability and accessibility of these products to the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children. As a result of the involvement of women and women champions for zinc enriched zinc wheat, more consumers were reached with zinc wheat through the markets.

**Conclusion:** Zinc enriched wheat, a cost-effective strategy aimed to reduce zinc deficiencies among vulnerable groups, can be scaled up through intentional inclusion of both men and women in entrepreneurial activities in biofortification interventions, by ensuring gendered information dissemination.