

Conquer Poverty & Malnutrition!

Conference in Brussels, 1st June 2006

Address by Sister Luci MORREN

Founder of the Nicaraguan Charity "SOYNICA"

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen

14.06.2006

I warmly thank the organisers of this conference for their invitation.

I want to share with you the enormous hope that Lucerne Leaf Concentrate (LLC) can bring to all the world's malnourished and starving.

I. FIRST: WHO ARE WE?

SOYNICA is a Nicaraguan non-profit association legally founded in 1979.

To start with, our aim was to promote the production and consumption of soybean and any other locally produced food that would improve home diets. This helped to prevent an increase in the number of children suffering malnutrition and to distribute soya-enriched foods to already malnourished children.

Then, progressively, we offered the mothers instruction in various aspects of their daily life, such as:

- primary care
- breast-feeding
- diet for the children and the family
- basic principles of nutrition
- the importance of early education

Now, SOYNICA has 71 employees with 20 professionals occupied directly with nutrition.

II. WHAT IS OUR NUTRITIONAL AIM NOW ?

Our principal objective is to prevent chronic malnutrition by providing a more balanced dietary complement.

The people in the disadvantaged quarters of Managua or the northern villages are poor, without work or regular or sufficient income.

There are serious deficiencies of protein, minerals, vitamins and lipids.

Childhood anaemia is common: on average 40% are affected and, among the poorest, as many as 70% in some areas.

Resistance to infectious sicknesses is low; disease is common and often fatal.

For years we looked at old traditional diets as well as modern solutions.

III. THIS IS HOW WE DISCOVERED THE VIRTUES OF LEAF CONCENTRATE!

At the start, we promoted the production and consumption of vegetables and fruit to complement the traditional diet of corn, rice and beans, and also introduced the soyabean, hitherto unknown in Nicaragua.

During these first years thousands of children survived and thousands of families began to find a solution to their situation of.

It was an important first step, but still not sufficient to balance the diet properly.

Then, one day, we discovered the principles of making Leaf Concentrate, (LC).

In 1989, the British NGO «Find Your Feet», with its programme «Leaf for Life», showed us how to obtain a green concentrate for human nutrition from the leaves of green vegetables growing in Nicaragua.

The richness of the concentrate in protein, vitamins, minerals and lipids made it possible at last to compensate for the absence of animal products (meat, milk and cheese), fruits and vegetables from the diet.

In 1991, SOYNICA installed a small “village unit” for local production. The effects on the development and health of the children were immediate and spectacular.

Nobody had ever seen such a rapid recovery.

When we added soya to a traditional diet, it had taken several months to achieve the same effect.

However, the yield of the LC was low and in our very impoverished circumstances the cost of production was an obstacle to the replication of the process.

In 1994, we asked the French Association APEF (Association for the Promotion of Leaf Concentrate in Nutrition) to send a tonne of lucerne leaf concentrate (LLC) produced industrially in Champagne Ardenne.

The effects on health and development of children were exactly the same as, or even superior to, those we had found with the extract we had made ourselves.

The product had additional advantages of quality and uniformity, of richness in protein and other nutritive elements, of stability, storage properties and ease of use.

Moreover, it was much cheaper!

SOYNICA had to make an objective test of the effects before going further.

Professor Henri Lestradet (nutritionist, member of the Academy of Medicine), advisor to APEF, suggested a simple study with the change in haemoglobin (Hb) levels as sole criterion.

In 1995 a joint study SOYNICA/APEF, was conducted on a group of anaemic subjects; 174 children and 15 pregnant or lactating women each received 10 g / day LLC.

Haemoglobin tests showed that after 3 months 86% of the children were no longer anaemic (149 out of 174) while of the 25 children who were still anaemic, 20 had not been regularly taking the LLC. As for the 15 anaemic women, 14 were cured; the other one had refused the treatment.

SOYNICA then organised the distribution of LLC to 2,000 three to six year-old children attending their nursery and pre-schools in community educational centres. Blood tests showed that one month of taking LLC regularly was sufficient to recover a healthy level of haemoglobin.

Children were having better results in their schoolwork and were less frequently absent from school thanks to fewer childhood diseases – reduced in both frequency and duration.

With LLC, SOYNICA had henceforth the means available to cure the anaemia of malnourished children and mothers rapidly.

At last we had a weapon against poverty.

IV. LUCERNE LEAF CONCENTRATE: A REMEDY FOR ANAEMIA AND POVERTY

Anaemia destroys lives. It prevents learning; it prevents mental concentration, analysis and reasoning; it makes of a person a living corpse.

Those children who take LLC regularly rapidly attain a proper level of Hb and stay there.

Certainly these children are poor but they are intelligent, with brains undamaged by bad and deficient diet. They are able to benefit fully from their education and vocational training.

They will no longer be "The Poor".

V. THE RESULTS OBSERVED

We therefore organised our fight against malnutrition by through blood tests, which we at SOYNICA conduct ourselves.

With 10 g a day (of LLC) anaemia generally disappears in 30 days; thereafter a "maintenance" ration of 5g suffices.

The immediately obvious effects are as follows:

- Lower maternal mortality rate
- Higher birth weight of babies
- Greater flow of breast milk
- Absence, at weaning, of interruption of growth due to imbalance of diet
- Better height and weight throughout growth
- Decrease of incidence, duration and intensity of illnesses – especially of respiratory infections and diarrhoea
- Better mental development and performance at school

We have never seen any adverse side-effects.

A well balanced diet restores the immune system and the body's resistance.

So SOYNICA gave LLC to children undergoing chemotherapy for leukaemia in Managua children's hospital (with the agreement, of course, of the head of department). The LLC let their natural defences strengthen, together with their Hb levels, their appetites and their resistance to infection.

LLC has been used in many pathologies with good results

All this at very low cost: about 3 euros a year for a child on the maintenance dose of 5g a day.

VI. THE POSSIBILITIES, UNRECOGNISED BY THE OFFICIAL AUTHORITIES, ARE THERE FOR FIGHTING BOTH MALNUTRITION AND POVERTY.

We have already used 132 tonnes of lucerne LC from France and thousands of mothers and children have seen their health and life benefit. Many deaths have been avoided.

Thanks to the consumption of leaf concentrate, many rural families have overcome the barriers of hunger and its accompanying inertia and have got out of the vicious circle of poverty.

The results obtained in Nicaragua are similar to those of our friends in Peru, Bolivia and several African countries.

This could be replicated all over the world.

Yet millions of children in the developing countries continue to grow up with injuries caused by anaemia, retarded growth and a deficient immune system.

Even though there could be a solution with LLC!

Now, nowhere in the world is this news made known.

Least of all at the heart of the great world organisations, those who are charged with finding a solution to the apparently insoluble problem of balancing diets.

How can they speak in elevated international circles of "development" when **40,000 children die every day from malnutrition and its associated disorders!**

Never, absolutely never, has SOYNICA been visited to assess the techniques we employ.

Never has leaf concentrate been the object of inspection, of investigation by any of the numerous experts responsible for the future food and health of the planet.

But SOYNICA is well known in Nicaragua, especially in its capital Managua.

Here there are representatives of these organisations. They hold their debates on hunger and nutrition.

I have never seen anyone!

I invite the officials of health and development to come and assess SOYNICA's work!

I accept that I may be blamed if what I say proves to be false

But if it's true then they must at last face up to their responsibilities.

VII. MY CONCLUSIONS

Green leaves are available almost everywhere. They represent the greatest mass of photosynthetic production on which all animal life depends. At last, mankind has direct access to this, thanks to the knowledge of the process of making leaf concentrate.

The seeds of suitable species of plant can be sown and after a few weeks their leaves can be harvested, processed and transformed into a food of high nutritive value.

Millions of mothers, the sick and the elderly could find their situation quickly improved.

The millions of children who suffer in body and spirit can at last imagine a brighter future.

I'd like to take advantage of this meeting to grab the attention of all women and men of good will.

Leaf concentrate represents a huge step forward in the fight against malnutrition and its corollary: poverty!

The solution proposed by SOYNICA could immediately help the 2 billion people who are suffering from malnutrition.

Do not do nothing! Help us to make it known!

Thank you for your attention.

Note from APEF

You can read "Luci's Plea" on APEF's website <http://www.nutrition-luzerne.org> where she explains her experiences and convictions in greater detail.

SOYNICA now has more than 15 years' experience of using Leaf Concentrate:

- from 1989 – 1993 with LC from local green leaves extracted by the English 'Village Unit' method.
- since 1994 with Lucerne Leaf Concentrate (LLC) produced in France.

APEF has worked with SOYNICA since 1994 to observe the effect of LLC on a large population:

142 tonnes have been sent from France to Nicaragua to date, representing more than 20 million daily portions