



NCO Orphanage Support, Nepal

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RMF nurses with children at the NCO orphanage

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Background

Nepal Children’s Organization (NCO) is a nonprofit organization that houses, educates, and shapes the future of hundreds of vulnerable children throughout Nepal, serving orphans, as well as deserted, conflict-affected, and dependent children of prisoners. The organization has a nationwide presence and is providing shelter to about 500 children in its ten children’s homes.

RMF’s Presence

Real Medicine Foundation (RMF) began supporting Nepal Children’s Organization (NCO) shortly after the devastating April 2015 earthquake, which damaged NCO’s main building, located in Naxal, Kathmandu. We initially provided support through emergency food supplies; hygiene, nutrition, sanitation, and basic health training; a two-day workshop with American psychologist, Dr. Ron Palomares; construction of toilets; development of a sick room; and provision of medicine.

Providing Health Care for NCO Children

Currently, RMF supports two NCO children’s homes in Kathmandu, located at Naxal and Sifal, with 2 nurses and 1 auxiliary nurse. RMF’s nurses provide 24-hour, daily care for the 118 children sheltered in these homes. RMF’s nurses are especially committed to providing care for the children with chronic diseases and special needs. There are currently 9 infants and 11 children with special needs in NCO, Kathmandu. These children are more vulnerable to infections and require special care.

Apart from providing nursing staff for these two NCO children’s homes, RMF also provides financial support for more extensive medical treatment. When a child has a serious illness, his or her case is taken over by RMF. The child is treated at the appropriate hospital in Kathmandu, and RMF bears all the cost of investigation, treatment, and hospitalization.

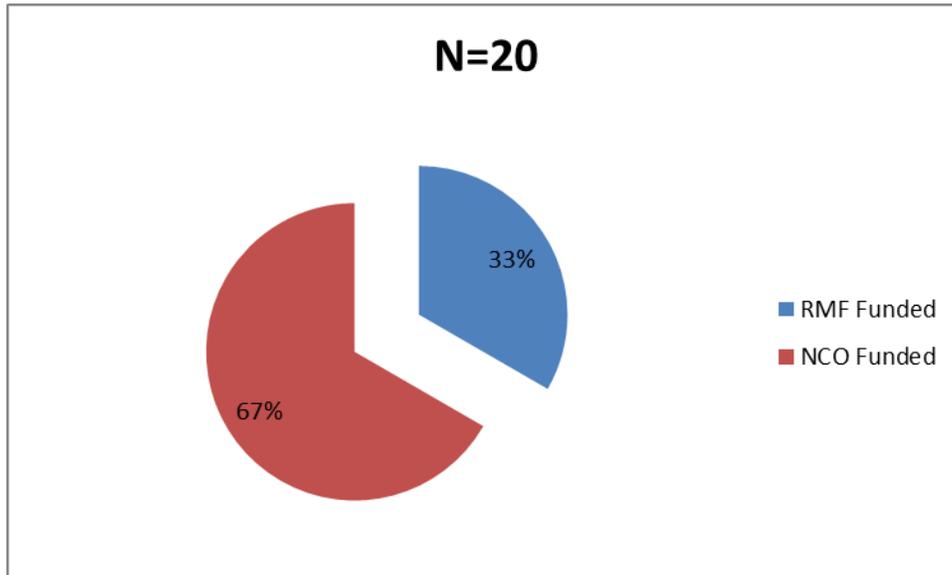
NCO Patient Numbers: January–March 2017

SN	Month	Patients Treated by RMF Nurses	Patients Referred to the Hospital		Total
			RMF-Funded	NCO-Funded	
1	January	72	2	4	78
2	February	66	4	8	78
3	March	63	0	2	65
Total		201	6	14	221

During the month of January, 78 children became ill at NCO Naxal and Sifal. 72 had minor ailments and were treated by RMF’s nurses. 6 children required treatment at different hospitals, and RMF funded the treatment of 2 of these children. Similarly, in the month of February, 78 children were sick, and 12 of them were treated at the hospital. RMF sponsored the treatment of 4 of these children. In March, 63 children were treated by RMF nurses, and only 2 children were sent to the hospital. The illnesses of these 2 children were not serious, and NCO itself bore the cost of treatment.

The children whose treatment costs were borne by RMF had serious illnesses and required costly diagnostic interventions. NCO was unable to afford the treatment of these children, so RMF’s nurses took over these cases and requested that RMF Nepal’s office provide the needed financial support. Although the number of children supported by RMF for treatment in the hospital (6) is lower than those whose treatment was sponsored by NCO (14), the financial weight was higher for those sponsored by RMF.

Support of NCO Children Treated at the Hospital



In order to improve the monitoring and reporting of our nurses' accomplishments at NCO, RMF Nepal's team has designed and implemented a recordkeeping format. The nurses are recording their activities and treatment of the children, medicines administered (including doses and times), and other nursing care provided. RMF's nurses not only provide basic treatment to the children, but they also treat the NCO staff for minor ailments, such as headaches and simple cuts.

A total of 221 cases were treated during the first three months of 2017: 78 in January, 78 in February, and 65 in March.

Patients Treated by RMF Staff at NCO

SN	Disease	January	February	March	Total
1	Respiratory System	9	21	11	41
2	Digestive System	20	11	16	47
3	Fever	8	8	5	21
4	Headache	2	2	0	4
5	Musculoskeletal System	2	0	1	3
6	ENT and Dental Diseases	3	3	3	9
7	Skin Infection	3	3	6	12
8	Cut Injury/Fall Injury	13	5	5	23
9	Allergy	2	3	1	6
10	Seizure	1	1	0	2
11	Eye Disorders	10	5	3	18
12	Other	5	16	14	35
Total		78	78	65	221

Success Stories

1. Happy Feet for Sapana Gole

Sapana Gole is a seven-year-old girl who lives at *Bal Mandir* (the NCO children's home in Naxal, Kathmandu). Her problem was an oversized second toe, which she had since birth. Sapana was uncomfortable, as the toe was visually odd and she could not wear a shoe on that foot. Moreover, people would stare and laugh at her foot. She felt ashamed.

At NCO, RMF nurses and NCO staff planned treatment for Sapana. They took her to Sushma Koirala Memorial Hospital in Sankhu, which is a specialized hospital for plastic surgery. At the hospital, doctors told us that she would have to undergo multiple stages of surgery until the size of the toe is decreased to near normal. Her first surgery was performed in July 2016, and the second stage surgery was performed in January 2017. RMF provided all the financial support for Sapana's surgery. This case was a huge success; Sapana had thought she could never feel happy because of her disfigurement, and she was very grateful to RMF. RMF Nurse Sanskriti provided meticulous care and emotional support to Sapana. Nurse Sanskriti is happy, but Sapana is happier. Now Sapana looks forward to wearing any footwear without embarrassment.



Sapana Gole with RMF Nurse Sanskriti



Before



After

2. Chronic Condition Diagnosed: Prapti Balika

NCO received young Prapti Balika on October 17th, 2016. Upon her arrival, routine blood tests including HIV, HBsAg, and VDRL were done, and the results were negative. However, day after day, Prapti struggled with health-related issues. Within five days of her admission to NCO, she started suffering from diarrhea and a cough. After a check-up and treatment of those symptoms, other difficulties immediately arose. A toddler should be active and playful, but Prapti slept frequently and was weak and frail. She would not play and or take part in other activities. She had subacute intestinal obstruction and underwent surgery for that. She then had a severe infection in her urinary tract, for which she was again hospitalized. She suffered from mumps, chickenpox, dysentery, and a respiratory tract infection. Gradually, her appetite worsened as well.



Prapti Balika



Prapti Balika

Despite all the care and treatment she received, Prapti was not recovering at all. She was grasped by disease after disease and lost more than 6 kg of body weight. Upon her 3rd hospitalization for a severe UTI, it was found that Prapti had enlarged lymph nodes all over her body. Doctors suggested a repeated test for HIV. The test was performed, and Prapti's results were positive. It was sad to witness the diagnosis of a 2-year-old with HIV. All the staff of NCO was heartbroken. Doctors did suggest, however, that Prapti's condition will improve once she is started on antiretroviral therapy (ARV).

As NCO cannot provide proper rehabilitation to HIV-positive children, Prapti's condition was communicated to another NGO, Maiti Nepal, where they provide care for children with HIV. Prapti is now under the care of Maiti Nepal and receiving ARV treatment. RMF nurses cared for Prapti both in the hospital and at NCO. It was sad when the RMF-supported case had to be transferred to another center. Nevertheless,

there was a satisfaction that RMF had financially and psychologically supported a child who would have died without proper treatment and rehabilitation.

3. Gaining Self-Confidence: Aasika Balika

Aasika Balika is an 8-year-old girl who was received by NCO in January 2016. Her mother had died in the megaquake of April 2015. Aasika always had discharge of pus from her right ear, which was foul-smelling and embarrassed her. The persistent discharge needed medical attention, hence she was taken to the otorhinolaryngology department of Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Maharajgunj. Upon examination, it was discovered that Aasika had moderate conductive hearing loss due to chronic infection of the middle ear. A CT scan was requested in order to obtain a detailed image of her ear canal. It revealed that she had cholesteatoma (a destructive, expanding skin growth in the middle ear). The condition required surgery.



Aasika Balika

Aasika received surgery: Right MRM with TORP replacement with conchal cartilage augmentation with mastoid fistula repair. After receiving meticulous care from RMF's nurses before and after the procedure, Aasika is now recovering. Her condition has improved significantly, and she has developed self-confidence, as she is no longer embarrassed by her foul-smelling ear discharge.



Aasika Balika

The investigations and the surgery, as well as the medical supplies for the surgery, were sponsored by RMF. RMF staff is satisfied to see the treated child with an ever-smiling face. NCO is grateful for the support of RMF.

4. Effective Treatment of Cerebral Palsy for Dipisha Oli

Dipisha Oli, a 3-year-old girl, was received at the NCO children's home in Sifal, Kathmandu in October 2016. She had been previously diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Shortly after Dipisha's arrival, abnormal jerky movements were noticed in her body. Because of suspected convulsions, she was immediately taken to Kathmandu Medical College Teaching Hospital for further treatment. Her poor health status was addressed through neurological, eye, ENT, and skin-related consultations and treatment. Cerebral palsy had a serious effect on Dipisha's overall systems, resulting in poor vision, moderate hearing loss, and of course convulsions. She was prescribed sodium valproate (Valparin syrup 100 mg) twice a day as lifelong treatment. She was also recommended for regular follow-ups and, as necessary, visits to the hospital.



Dipisha Oli

NCO did not have enough funds for Dipisha's treatment, hence RMF took over the financial responsibility for her treatment. Once the medication was started, no reports of convulsions have been received to date. RMF Nurse Pushpa Khadka takes care of Dipisha around the clock, along with other staff at the center. Dipisha's treatment and medicine are fully funded through RMF.

5. Rare Case of Open Lip Schizencephaly: Prem Balak

Prem Balak, a 12-year-old boy, was received in March 2016 at the NCO children's home in Sifal, Kathmandu. On February 3rd, he suffered multiple episodes of convulsions. The convulsions were alarming, and Prem was rushed to Kanti Children's Hospital for treatment. He was admitted immediately and stayed there for five days. Different diagnostic investigations were performed, including an MRI. The MRI clearly showed that Prem had open lip schizencephaly, a very rare birth defect that occurs in about 1 of 100,000 births in the USA. We learned that it is an incurable condition and only symptomatic treatment is possible through the use of antispastic drugs. He was prescribed baclofen tablets, 10 mg, twice daily.



Prem Balak

An MRI is a very expensive procedure and is not available at Kanti Children's Hospital. The MRI was performed in a private center, and all the investigations and medications were funded by RMF, as the child protection home where he lives is financially struggling. With timely medication, physiotherapy, and tender loving care from RMF Nurse Pushpa Khadka and other staff at NCO Sifal, Prem's condition has improved dramatically.