



NCO Orphanage Support, Nepal

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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.

NCO not only provides shelter for these children, but also all provisions necessary to ensure proper growth and development including formal school education, staff who care for children full time, an environment for physical activities, and psychological support. NCO also provides treatment and care to sick children at their homes and, if necessary, at various hospitals. This organization respects the rights of children and aims to help them grow to become responsible citizens.

However, NCO provides more than just shelter and medicine to the children; it provides a family environment where they can truly feel at home. For example, the children refer to the female staff who care for them as "Mamu," meaning mother, and RMF nurses as "Didi," meaning sister. This illustrates how NCO has brought together children without families and created an environment of nurturing, belonging, and support. This family environment is essential to the children's emotional development.

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, basic health training, provision of medicine, construction of toilets, development of a sick room, and a two-day workshop with American psychologist Dr. Ron Palomares.

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 children sheltered in these homes. Nurses provide both preventive and curative health services to all the children as well as staff of NCO. As a result of their continuous presence, they are able to diagnose children more efficiently, leading to earlier diagnosis and treatment. RMF's nurses are especially committed to providing care for the children with chronic diseases and special needs, as 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.

Impact of RMF Nurses at NCO

NCO director Mr. Bal Krishna Dangol has thanked RMF for providing unmatched support to the organization. Since the RMF nurses came to NCO homes, the children have fallen ill less often, and the number of hospital visits has decreased drastically. Mr. Dangol also said that high government officials were very pleased with the RMF nurses' work. He hopes that RMF will continue providing healthcare to the NCO children.

NCO Patient Numbers: October–December 2017

SN	Month	Patients Treated by RMF Nurses	Patients Treated at Hospital	Total
1	October	122	3	125
2	November	120	13	133
3	December	134	12	146
	Total	376	28	404

Patients Treated by RMF Staff at NCO

SN	Disease	October	November	December	Total
1	Respiratory System	23	13	24	60
2	Digestive System	16	20	22	58
3	Fever	9	7	8	24
4	Headache	6	6	7	19
5	Musculoskeletal System	7	12	6	25
6	ENT & Dental Diseases	10	7	8	25
7	Skin Infection	6	13	11	30
8	Cut Injury/Fall Injury	21	12	13	46
9	Allergy	12	10	16	38
10	Seizure	0	0	0	0
11	Eye Disorders	7	7	10	24
12	Others	8	26	21	55
	Total	125	133	146	404

Children at NCO are most vulnerable to respiratory illnesses due to congested living conditions and higher contact rates. Digestive issues and injuries resulting from accidents have next highest occurrence rates. These child-specific health problems are generally well-handled by RMF nurses at NCO.

Dental, Eye, and General Healthcare Camp at NCO Naxal And Sifal

Lions Club Tripureshwor conducted this camp with their health personnel. All the children from NCO Naxal and Sifal homes were examined for dental, eye, and other medical conditions. Children who were found to have health problems were counseled and basic medicines were provided while RMF nurses took notes on their condition and recommended treatments. The NCO “mothers” (caregivers) and other staff members were also examined during the camp. RMF nurses also volunteered to help run the camp’s activities.

In total, 180 children and 44 staff members were examined. The event was a success, and NCO’s administration thanked Lions Club Tripureshwor for their support as well as the RMF nurses for their efforts throughout the camp. The NCO Administration expects that similar events can be conducted on a regular basis, which will improve the preventive care and overall wellbeing of the children.



Dentists examining children's teeth and distributing a toothbrush and toothpaste to a child



RMF Nurses help the children line up for the check up

Deworming Day

RMF Nurses at both NCO homes organized deworming events on different dates. Because NCO home Naxal has younger children, the nurses administer deworming medication and vitamin A, as per the National Vitamin A Program, twice a year to all children 6–59 months of age. Because there are older children at NCO home Siphel, RMF Nurse Pushpa personally conducts the deworming program with the help of NCO authorities who acquire the medicines from the nearest community health center.



RMF Nurse Pushpa giving anthelmintic (deworming) medicine to a child

Christmas Celebration at NCO

Although Nepal is a culturally rich country with many traditional festivals throughout the year, many Hindus also celebrate Christmas simply because Nepalese people enjoy celebrations. The Nepalese government has even declared Christmas a public holiday in order to promote religious harmony. Santa Claus is a favorite mythical character among the children, who are always excited for him to bring them gifts. To celebrate Christmas at NCO this year, the children put on Christmas hats and sang and danced all day long.



An NCO mother enjoying Christmas with children



RMF Nurse Pushpa with children during Christmas

Nepalese schools have winter vacation, so NCO children are out of school during that time. RMF nurses fill this free time with fun educational and recreational activities. They work to make the sure that this leisure time productive and also helps the children cultivate their talents.



RMF Nurse Sanskriti with NCO Children during winter vacation

Success Stories

1. Lata Bhandari Improves Her Digestive Health

Lata Bhandari is a disabled girl who has been at NCO for a long time. Children with disabilities often present common motility problems such as constipation. When Lata began to suffer from constipation, RMF Nurse Pushpa recognized the symptoms quickly. Her abdomen was bloated, and upon examination, the nurse confirmed that Lata was suffering from severe constipation. Nurse Pushpa first gave her an enema to ease her constipation. She then gave her a laxative syrup and also assisted her with physiotherapy. A few days later, Lata was able to pass stool normally thanks to Nurse Pushpa's devoted care.



Lata Bhandari

2. Govinda Tamang Fights a Chronic Ear Infection

Govinda Tamang is a 15 year-old-boy who lives at NCO home Siphah. His right ear was emitting discharge and pus, and the condition was somewhat impacting Govinda's hearing. RMF nurse Pushpa took him to Bir Hospital for an ENT consultation.

He was diagnosed with a chronic middle ear infection with an infected sebaceous cyst. Doctors opted for surgery, but since Bir Hospital is a government hospital, the queue for surgery was very long. 5 months later, he was admitted to the hospital for surgery. RMF Nurse Pushpa arranged the food, caretaker, and even the budget for the operation. She also visited him daily at the hospital. He was discharged 4 days after surgery, and Nurse Pushpa removed his sutures and dressed the wound daily for a week. Govinda, who is now doing well, thanked Nurse Pushpa wholeheartedly for her efforts.



Govinda Tamang after surgery

3. Suraj Rai Treated for Dog Bite

Suraj Rai, an 8-year-old boy with Down Syndrome, resides at NCO home Siphah. He was playing on the NCO premises when he hit a stray dog and it bit his right leg. The attack left bite marks which were bleeding lightly. When she learned what had happened, Nurse Pushpa immediately took control of the situation. The boy was panic-stricken, so she consoled him as she washed the wound with soap and running water. She then took him immediately to Shukraraj Tropical and Communicable Disease Hospital in Teku where rabies vaccines are given to animal bite cases. He got the first dose of the vaccine as well as tetanus toxoid on the first day and then continued his rabies vaccinations for 4 more days.



Nurse Pushpa with Sujan after vaccination

4. Sumana Thapa Overcomes Serious Illness

Sumana Thapa was brought to NCO home Naxal long ago. She was a healthy girl who used to go to school with the other NCO children. Suddenly, Sumana started developing persistent swelling all over her body and experiencing problems with urination. She was rushed to Kanti Children's Hospital where she was diagnosed with Nephrotic syndrome, a kidney disorder. She remained in the hospital for some time until she was discharged with medications. After 8 months of treatment, repeated hospitalization, medication, and strict diet maintenance, Sumana has recovered and is no longer on medication. RMF Nurse Sanskriti monitored her constantly and carefully prepared food for her. She also counseled Sumana to provide emotional support. Sumana's recovery is a great achievement not only for herself, but also for the NCO staff and RMF nurses who cared for her throughout her illness.



Sumana Thapa before and after treatment