



## Mother and Child Health Project, Nepal

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Project title: Mother and Child Health Project

Project location: Tansen, Argali, and Darlamdanda, Palpa District, Nepal



*MCH clinic staff with Palpa Technical Institute students and their mentor after a health teaching session*

### July–September 2018

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## **Background**

Palpa District is located in western Nepal and has a population of more than 261,180. As of the 2011 census, female literacy remained very low at 57%, and due to lack of knowledge, home births and poor nutrition remain common. To increase preventive health measures and promote good health practices, the well-respected private hospital United Mission Hospital Tansen established a community health program in 1983, reimagined in 2002 as the Community Health Department (CHD). The CHD provides maternal and child health clinics, a safe motherhood program, a gender/disability/disaster rehabilitation program, an HIV awareness program, health service strengthening, and health promotion programs via mass media.

Since June 2016, RMF has partnered with United Mission Hospital Tansen's Community Health Department (CHD) in Palpa in increasing preventive health measures and promoting good health practices by supporting 3 essential programs for mothers and children under 5 years of age: the Mother & Child Health Clinic (town clinic), Satellite Mother & Child Health Clinic Program, and the Child Nutrition and Rehabilitation Center. RMF has supported the mother and child health (MCH) clinics with human resources and administrative expenses.

## **Services Provided**

The Mother & Child Health Clinic (town clinic) is located at the Palpa District Hospital in Tansen and is open from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, 6 days a week, Sunday through Friday. The clinic has established itself as an accessible, reliable service provider in terms of maternal and child health in Palpa and surrounding areas. The clinic charges a nominal registration fee, and all basic services, such as check-ups, immunizations, and counseling are free. More specialized procedures such as the insertion or removal of an implant or IUCD are provided at affordable rates. People visit the MCH clinic not only for the services it provides but also for the health education that is disseminated continuously, which helps prevent disease and promote good health for mothers and children. The town clinic also provides training and observation opportunities for nursing students from Tansen Nursing School and Palpa Technical Institute.

The satellite mother and child health clinics operate monthly in the village health posts of Argali and Darlamdanda, working to empower and strengthen these local government health posts by providing orientation and training to health posts' staff and also by providing much-needed medical equipment so that women and children in outlying areas can access health services that would usually be available only in cities.

The town and satellite MCH clinics are fully dedicated to providing antenatal and postnatal services, as well as growth monitoring of children under 5 years of age and treatment of their ailments according to community based integrated management of neonatal and childhood illnesses (CB-IMNCI) protocol. The clinic also provides immunization services for infants as per the National Immunization Program (NIP). In terms of reproductive health services, the MCH clinics provide short-term and long-term contraceptives, administered by trained service providers. Another essential service the clinics provide is counseling on the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS (PMTCT) to HIV-positive and vulnerable families.

## **Future Plans**

RMF supported the Maternal and Child Health program through July 2018, when it was decided that RMF will reallocate its support towards opening a new health center in Chyuripokhara, a village in Tansen municipality ward no. 8, Palpa district. After hearing about RMF's health centers in Gorkha and Kavre districts of Nepal, which are run in collaboration with local municipalities, the ward chairperson asked RMF to change its focus in Palpa to supporting the establishment of the new clinic. In response, the RMF Nepal team made monitoring visits to Chyuripokhara in order to assess the needs of the community, interact with the local people, and meet with the mayor of Tansen municipality as well as other community leaders. After the conclusion of the assessment and

meetings, the RMF Nepal team requested approval for a new clinic from RMF headquarters. Once Dr. Martina Fuchs, CEO of RMF, approved the proposal, the RMF Nepal team began the process of establishing the clinic.

### Summary of Activities

Between July and September 2018, RMF was involved in the following activities at The Mother & Child Health Clinic (town clinic) and the satellite clinics in Argali and Darlamdanda:

- 496 patients were provided antenatal care (ANC) services, including 151 newly registered cases and 345 continuing ANC patients who came for their regular visits.
- 828 children under 5 years of age received services, including well visits and checkups for common illnesses. 662 children received immunizations, and 98.3% of under-5 patients were in good nutritional health.
- Family planning services also continued, and 112 women received various contraceptive methods.
- 62 health sciences students visited the clinic for observation and to improve their immunization skills.

### Health Services for Under-5 Children

Children under 5 years of age constitute the highest number of visitors at MCH clinics. Out of 828 children who visited the clinic during this quarter, 79.47% were well and healthy. During each visit, the MCH clinic staff counsel mothers about health promotion of their children and the importance of growth monitoring, and this raised awareness prompts the mothers to continue bringing their children to the clinic. Other than growth monitoring visits, children come to the clinics for common illnesses and vaccinations. The most common diagnosis among sick children was skin disease (40) followed by upper respiratory tract infection (32).



*RMF Nurse Manalaxmi assessing a child at the MCH clinic*

**Table 1: New and Returning Patients: Under-5 Children**

Type of Visit	July	August	Total
New visit	109	123	232
Follow-up visit	276	320	596
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>828</b>

**Table 2: Well Visits and Common Illnesses: Under-5 Children**

Diagnosis	July	August	Total
Well visit	313	345	658
Lower respiratory tract infection	5	8	13
Diarrhea/vomiting	11	7	18
Upper respiratory tract infection	11	21	32
Skin diseases	19	21	40
Fever	5	9	14
Ear infection	0	3	3
Eye infection	0	0	0
Other	21	29	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>828</b>

**Table 3: Nutritional Status: Under-5 Children**

Nutritional Status	July	August	Total
Good nutritional status	377	437	814
Low nutritional status	7	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>828</b>

As the staff provides teaching sessions and personal counseling to all clients, who often implement the teachings at their homes, the overall nutritional status of under-5 children was good. 814 (98.3%) of the children were found to have a well-maintained nutritional status, while only 1.7% of children had low nutritional status.

**Table 4: Immunizations Provided: Under-5 Children**

Immunization	July	August	Total
BCG	32	29	61
HepB/Penta/OPV/PCV I	38	78	116
HepB/Penta/OPV/PCV II	46	56	102
HepB/Penta/OPV III	33	65	98
MMR/PCV III	45	68	113
MMR Booster	25	49	74
JE	40	58	98
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>662</b>

Child immunization is the one of the primary services provided at the MCH clinics, and a significant number of children are brought to the clinics for immunization. The immunization schedule, which includes 7 immunization appointments against 11 diseases during infancy, is based on the National Immunization Program (NIP). Each mother who brings her child in for immunization is educated about the importance and purpose of each vaccine and possible side effects as well as informed about the time of the child's next vaccination. Mothers generally follow the immunization instructions intently, which has led to good immunization coverage among patients.



*RMF Nurse Manalaxmi counsels a mother after her child's assessment*

### Maternal and Reproductive Health Services

Pregnant women are the second major clientele of MCH clinics. The Mother & Child Health Clinic (town clinic) provides antenatal care (ANC) services as well as referrals to higher treatment centers for certain cases. ANC services are also provided at the satellite clinics in Argali and Darlamdanda once a month to benefit pregnant women who live in those remote areas. 496 pregnant women were provided services during this reporting period. The quality of services available at the MCH clinics has led to a high number of patients coming in for ANC care and other pregnancy-related treatment such as vaccinations.

**Table 5: Antenatal Visits**

Antenatal Care	July	August	Total
New Visit	101	50	151
Follow-up visit	164	181	345
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>496</b>

**Table 6: Diphtheria and Tetanus Vaccinations for Pregnant Women**

DT Vaccination	July	August	Total
DT 1	19	18	37
DT 2	18	24	42
DT+2	20	19	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>118</b>

Pregnant women are given a shot of the tetanus and diphtheria vaccination twice during a pregnancy. This practice has been adopted by the government of Nepal to prevent neonatal tetanus, which can be deadly. During this

reporting period, 37 women were vaccinated for the first time (DT), 42 were vaccinated for the second time (DT 2), and 39 were vaccinated during a second or consecutive pregnancy (DT+2).

**Table 7: Family Planning**

Contraceptive Acceptor	July	August	Total
OCP new acceptor	3	3	6
OCP follow-up	5	2	7
Depo-Provera new acceptor	13	14	27
Depo-Provera follow-up	21	20	41
Implant new acceptor	4	1	5
Implant follow-up	0	0	0
Implant removal	8	1	9
IUCD new acceptor	3	3	6
IUCD removal	0	3	3
Condoms (100 per person)	6	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>112</b>

In Nepal, contraceptive measures are highly accepted by married couples, and the Nepal government governs contraceptive methods via a family planning program. The rise of health education in Nepal has made way for the increase in usage of both hormonal and barrier contraceptive methods. At the MCH clinics, temporary contraceptive services are provided, including oral contraceptive pills (OCP), depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA/Depo-Provera), progesterone implants, intrauterine contraceptive devices (IUCDs), and condoms. Due to its convenient use and considerable effect for 3 months, the most widely used contraceptive throughout Nepal and at MCH clinics is Depo-Provera, which is progesterone in its injectable form. Long-term contraception is provided through implants and IUCDs. Staff members, such as MCH manager Manalaxmi Hemchuri, are well-trained for invasive contraceptive procedures like implants and IUCDs. They also provide ample counseling so that women are well aware of the benefits and possible adverse effects of respective birth control methods.



*RMF Nurse Manalaxmi, a trained service provider for implant insertion, preparing a client for the procedure*

### **PMTCT Counseling and Health Education**

In addition to antenatal, postnatal, child health, and family planning services, the MCH clinics also provide counseling regarding the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) to HIV-positive and vulnerable families. This service is regarded one of the most vital of the MCH clinics, as it has been able to generate interest and address such a critical issue at the community level.

To render the health services complete, proper health education is also provided to all patients. The clinics regularly hold teaching sessions for patients regarding diverse, relevant health issues. Those regularly attending the health education sessions benefit greatly. This is reflected in the high number of patients seeking immunization and other preventive health services.

This quarter, 84 women received PMTCT counseling, and 1,287 people received health education on different topics. These health education sessions have been useful for the health promotion of the people in the community. As a result, 8 children were referred to higher center for proper diagnosis and treatment, and 11 pregnant women were also referred.

**Table 8: PMTCT Counseling and Health Education**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>	<b>Total</b>
PMTCT Counseling	45	39	84
Health Education	665	622	1,287