

PHASE Nepal provides essential healthcare services in the remote community of Maila, in north-western Nepal. PHASE healthworkers Deepa, Phelu and Ritu see between 30 and 60 patients a day, most of whom have walked many miles for treatment.



Life in a community as isolated as Maila is never easy, but it unfortunately became much more challenging in June when the World Food Programme withdrew their support of regular food aid that the community has depended on for the last decade. Previously, rice was flown in by helicopter twice a week, but due to funding constraints this support has now ceased.

*'Donor attention is shifting away from Nepal towards countries where relief and recovery assistance can meet needs that are less chronic in nature.'* (WFP Press release, May 2011). Click [here](#) for news reports on this issue.

Malnutrition rates are alarmingly high in Maila, only slightly lower than the Democratic Republic of Congo – the worst scoring country on the Global Hunger list. Nationally, 41% of children in Nepal are chronically malnourished. In 2008, when PHASE first started working in Maila, this figure stood at a staggering 84%. Many of the patients seen by our staff have health problems relating to malnutrition – especially children.



Sawni Sunar's (33), 2 year old daughter was suffering from earache and diarrhoea when she came to Maila Healthpost. Malnourished, the child weighed only 7kg – less than half the recommended weight for her age. Although Sawni had been breastfeeding, she could only do so once or twice a day because she spent most of the day in the field growing food for her family. Ritu and Deepa told Sawni to feed her child 4-5 times a day, and provided information on what foods are particularly nutritious. They also gave her

vitamins, iron and folic acid and told Sawni to return again with her daughter in a few weeks.

Nutritional awareness is extremely low in remote Nepal. In 2008 PHASE found that only 5.5% of the population of Maila understood the concept of malnutrition. A major role of the healthworkers has been to raise awareness in the community of child nutrition. One of the ways in which they have been doing that is to run demonstration sessions with mothers groups on how to make 'Sarbotam Pitho', or Super-flour, a highly nutritious weaning food.

*'It's very easy to make, with widely available ingredients,'* explains Ritu BC. *'You just take 1 cup each of 2 kinds of different grains, 1 cup of soya beans and a cup of another kind of bean, and grind it all together'.*

Two months later, a calmer and happier Sawni returned to the healthpost. She had fed her daughter frequently and had used the super-flour recipe. The child now weighed a much healthier 10kg and was no longer suffering from any health problems.

Providing health services to the people of Maila is an essential task. It will only become more so as food scarcity increases, so PHASE staff are further prioritising nutrition education activities.



The money we have raised so far will keep this healthpost open for the next few months, but we need to continue our fundraising efforts to secure the healthpost for the whole year.