

4. Urban Nutrition Project in Kathmandu

Starting date: November 2000
Implemented by: SAGUN from 2000 to 2004
CHHIMEKI since January 2005

Since January 2005 *Terre des hommes* has changed its nutritional programming approach by empowering the volunteers and beneficiaries of the urban nutrition project through the formation of a community-based organisation, called CHHIMEKI.

CHHIMEKI with its more than 500 project volunteers took over from *Terre des hommes'* previous partner SAGUN, and is implementing the project in seven wards of Kathmandu Metropolitan City – thus covering a total population of 109,735 people or 24,599 families



The local NGO SAGUN has implemented the Urban Nutrition project with active assistance, support and intervention of *Terre des hommes* in November 2000. SAGUN has been operational in Kathmandu city since 1997, mainly in the fields of action research on ecosystems' approach to health. SAGUN identified a relative high prevalence of malnutrition in children in the wards 19 and 20. Together with *Terre des hommes* SAGUN handed over the project to the volunteers and beneficiaries end of December 2004.

The nutrition project in Nepal is a new approach since it is going beyond conventional intervention strategies. It is focusing on the psychosocial well being of project clients and their families and trying to implement a holistic approach regarding the problems of malnutrition. This psychosocial approach, therefore, includes the philosophy for health workers to first listen to the mothers in order to gain an understanding of their situation before conveying messages.

The urban nutrition project in Kathmandu works through a system of neighborhood volunteers who are part of the community. The volunteers develop a close and trustful relationship with the families, mainly mothers and their children. They also provide the link between the Ward Clinics and the mothers/children in order to implement the nutrition protocols. The project creates a dynamic network where neighbourhood volunteers support the families to improve their health and nutrition patterns, and where the ward clinics provide guidance and supervision to the volunteers.

The project uses a process-oriented approach, starting from the experience and skills of the volunteers who are part of the target population. Behaviour of these volunteers is at the centre of training discussions, as the participants have to first understand their own actions before they can motivate others to change.

Similarly, *Home Visits* to promote the health of the malnourished children are carried out by one initial visit and a subsequent four meetings of malnourished children's mothers in small groups. If this process does not contribute to any improvement, then additional home visits by the urban nutrition team and community volunteers are conducted to further explore the underlying causes for not gaining weight.

CHHIMEKI is strictly applying the government protocols for every element of the program (Iron and Vitamin A Supplementation, Growth Monitoring, ANC/PNC).

Map: Project location

