

## Follow Up of Severely Malnourished Children FUSAM

## Research Project



## Effectiveness of a Combined Nutrition Psychosocial Intervention on Health and Development.

## ► Project Duration

24 months, from May 2013

► Intervention Zone

District de Saptari, Southern East Nepal.

## ► Project objectives

This project is expected to strengthen the treatment of malnutrition in Saptari and have an impact on child development. This research will contribute to the growing body of work on the importance of stimulation in addition to nutrition programmes for improving the well-being and development of children living in poverty in humanitarian settings.

## ► SITUATION ET CONTEXTE

Based on the ACF experience in Nepal, and due to the high level of malnutrition in the country (GAM has remained unchanged over the last decade: 11% in 2001 and in 2011) this project will take place in Saptari district in South East of Nepal where ACF has launched a CMAM programme in April 2012. According to a nutrition survey conducted by ACF in 2013, there is 21% of GAM which is much higher than the critical and emergency limit and the SAM prevalence is 2.9%. With this prevalence rate, it is highly recommended to have a holistic approach for better treatment of malnutrition that would participate in reducing the negative consequences of SAM on concurrent and later health and development of children.

These developmental risks associated with growing up in poor settings or areas of conflict are multifactorial and necessitate innovation in order to assess the effectiveness of any intervention that tackle malnutrition. One of the challenges is to ensure an efficient follow up during a one-year period. A second challenge is to integrate the proposed intervention into health care systems knowing that we have little knowledge about their physical and psychological health after discharge and therefore this project remains experimental.



## ► SUMMARY

This project will follow one cohort of wasted children and their primary caregivers to compare the effects of two months participation in either a psychosocial intervention added to standard nutritional treatment (according to international recommendations and national protocol) or a standard nutritional treatment alone, on child growth and development outcomes.

Tests will be administered to a randomly selected subsample of 200 children 6-18 months of age within each group. Measures will be taken at baseline and 4 times during the 12 months follow up period. Enrolment in the research starts when children are admitted in the nutrition programme; mothers and their children benefiting from psychosocial interventions participate in six weekly group sessions that promote education on feeding practices and childcare, emotional attachment, child development stages, parenting skills.

It will assess by comparing the two groups which perform better in reducing the negative consequences of SAM on concurrent and later health and development. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will allow better analysing and highlighting key results of the research in light of the context. The results from the two groups will be compared and all data will be analysed using statistical tools and qualitative methods. For an external overview of the project, an evaluation of the research process will be conducted at final stage.

## ► PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

The main objective is to assess the effectiveness of a psychosocial intervention combined with nutritional treatment on improving child nutritional status, survival, growth and development as well as care practices and maternal mental health.

## ► SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To assess the effect of a nutritional treatment programme on child's health and development after discharge.
- ◆ To develop a protocol of psychosocial interventions that could be replicated and integrated in CMAM programme in health services.

## ► EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- ◆ The influence of social and ecological factors on child outcomes will increase the capacity to identify treatment effects. The main outputs relate to child's health as well as health of the mother.
- ◆ Children participating in psychosocial interventions will have better growth outcomes (weight, height and mid-upper arm circumference, morbidity);
- ◆ Children participating in psychosocial interventions will have better psychomotor development (social behaviour, motor milestones, general development);
- ◆ Children participating in psychosocial interventions will benefit from improved care practices and level of stimulation for development (mother's knowledge, parental support for learning);
- ◆ Mothers of children participating in psychosocial interventions will have better results on maternal mental health (less depressive symptoms, anxiety, and psychosomatic complaints).
- ◆ A guideline will be produced.

### ► Implementing agency

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim - France

### ► Sponsor

- ◆ Action Contre la Faim – France
- ◆ R2HC-ELRHA
- ◆ NEEP

### ► Scientific partners

- ◆ ICDDR, Bangladesh

### ► For more details....:

Do not hesitate to contact:

**Karine Le Roch**

Coordinatrice du projet FUSAM  
klerocho@actioncontrelafaim.org