

Improving Nutrition for Children and Families

Malnutrition has long been a challenge in many rural communities, affecting children's growth, learning ability and overall health. With limited awareness about nutritious food, poor hygiene practices, and restricted access to balanced meals, many families struggle to provide the nutrition their children need. To address this, Child Development Nepal (CDN) implemented targeted nutrition interventions that have significantly improved the wellbeing of children and families in Sarlahi district. This success story highlights how community engagement, capacity building and practical support have transformed nutrition practices and strengthened healthier lifestyles.



Before the intervention, many parents lacked knowledge about the importance of a balanced diet. Children often relied on rice and potatoes with very little protein, fruits or vegetables. Mothers were unaware of the nutritional value of locally available foods. Many families practiced open defecation or used unsafe water, leading to frequent stomach infections, diarrhea and weakness among children. Teachers also noticed low energy levels and lack of concentration among students due to poor nutritional intake. These challenges made it clear that improving nutrition required both awareness and practical support.

To address these issues, CDN launched a comprehensive nutrition program focusing on three major areas: awareness, school nutrition activities and community-based support. Awareness campaigns were conducted through Mothers' Groups, parents' meetings and community gatherings. Simple, easy-to-understand sessions were organized on topics such as the importance of a balanced diet, breastfeeding practices, complementary feeding, safe drinking water, handwashing and kitchen hygiene. Mothers learned how to prepare nutritious meals using locally available vegetables, fruits, grains and lentils. Demonstration sessions showed the preparation of affordable, protein-rich foods for young children.

In schools, CDN supported the introduction of nutrition corners, kitchen gardens and hygiene promotion activities. Children learned how vegetables grow and actively participated in planting seasonal crops. Teachers used these gardens to teach nutrition lessons and encourage children to take vegetables home. Mid-day meals were improved with more diverse food items, and students practiced handwashing with soap before eating. Regular height and weight monitoring helped teachers identify children who needed additional support.



At the community level, CDN strengthened the role of health workers and Mothers' Groups by providing training on malnutrition screening and counseling. Pregnant and lactating mothers received special attention, learning about iron-rich foods, rest, hydration and early childhood feeding practices. Families were encouraged to use clean water, maintain kitchen hygiene and reduce junk food consumption. Through continuous home visits and follow-up sessions, community volunteers helped ensure that families practiced what they learned.

The impact of the nutrition intervention has been remarkable. Parents now prepare more balanced meals and include a variety of vegetables and protein sources in their daily diets. Children show improved energy, better concentration in school, and fewer illnesses. Kitchen gardens have become a regular feature in many households, providing fresh and affordable vegetables year-round. Mothers report feeling more confident in caring for their children's health and nutrition. Teachers also observe a noticeable improvement in student participation, attendance and learning ability.

Community members express deep gratitude to Child Development Nepal for bringing lasting change to their lives. The nutrition program has not only improved children's health but also strengthened family habits, household food security and community wellbeing. This success story demonstrates that when families receive knowledge, encouragement and practical support, nutrition can improve significantly leading to healthier, happier children and stronger communities.

