

VPI NUTRITION PROGRAM



Pilot Report
September 2019



BACKGROUND

During a public meeting in March 2017, the community of Mombin Crochu in North East Haiti issued a desperate plea for help to Village Partners International (VPI). Twenty-six children in the region had died within the year from severe malnutrition. Hurricane Matthew and chronic drought had severely reduced local agricultural food production putting hundreds more children at risk of starvation. No program existed in the region of more than 50,000 people to identify and rehabilitate children who were malnourished.

Through the generosity of private donors and a grant from Allegany Franciscan Ministries, VPI launched a nutrition program in partnership with Mombin Crochu Hospital in 2018.

This report summarizes program components and outcomes for its pilot year – July 2018 – July 2019.

OUR TEAM



Dr. Miles Cherenfant, Medical Director of Mombin Crochu Hospital



Ms. Dashna Pierre, Head Nurse of the Nutrition Program



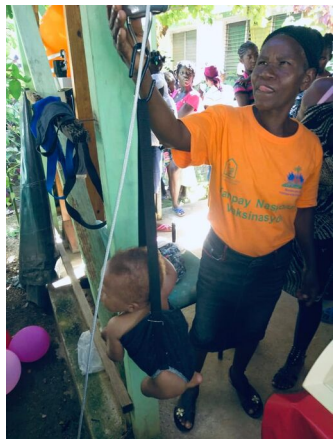
Ms. Dianise Bedson, Axillary Nurse for the Nutrition Program



Mr. Jude Lawe, Motorcycle Driver for the Nutrition Program

THE PROGRAM

The nutrition program has several components that work in harmony to achieve the program goals of identifying, treating, and preventing malnutrition in the Mombin Crochu Region.



Assessment

Nurses identify at-risk children during events hosted at the hospital and in 12 outlying areas. Program nurses assess children for malnutrition by comparing their age, weight, height, and arm measurements to World Health Organization (WHO) standards. During assessment, all children who need vaccines, vitamins, and deworming medication receive them. Children found to be undernourished are enter into one of three treatment programs, depending on the severity of their malnutrition.

Inpatient Treatment

Babies under 6 months and children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with medical complications (such as lack of appetite, dehydration, anemia, and vomiting) are at high risk of death. These children receive in-patient treatment and careful monitoring in Mombin Crochu Hospital until they are stabilized. Children usually stay in the hospital for 5 to 7 days before referral to VPI's outpatient treatment program.



Outpatient Treatment

Children over 6 months with severe acute malnutrition without medical complications are referred to an outpatient therapeutic program. The Outpatient Therapeutic Program is designed to support the at-home treatment of children. Children and their caregiver come to the hospital for a weekly appointment or are seen at-home by nutrition nurses, where they are given a weekly ration of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) and the child's progress is monitored along with health education. Children usually stay in the outpatient program for 1-3 months.

Community-Based Therapy

Children under five years of age with moderate acute malnutrition are referred to Community-based Supplementation. This program is designed to prevent severe acute malnutrition. Children in this program visit the hospital once-per-month and are visited by the program nurses once-per-month to monitor their progress, receive health education, and receive RUTF to supplement the diet of the malnourished child and their entire family. Children usually remain in this program 3-6 months but often re-enroll given extreme poverty, particularly in the outlying regions.



Family Education

At least once-per month, nutrition nurses conduct education sessions with mothers, grandmothers, pregnant women, and children. These sessions are essential to preventing malnutrition in Mombin and its surrounding areas.

Education combats harmful myths, such as that purchased/processed foods are better than farmed ones and formula is better than breastfeeding and teach healthy food preparation, good hygiene, and balanced nutrition.

Moringa

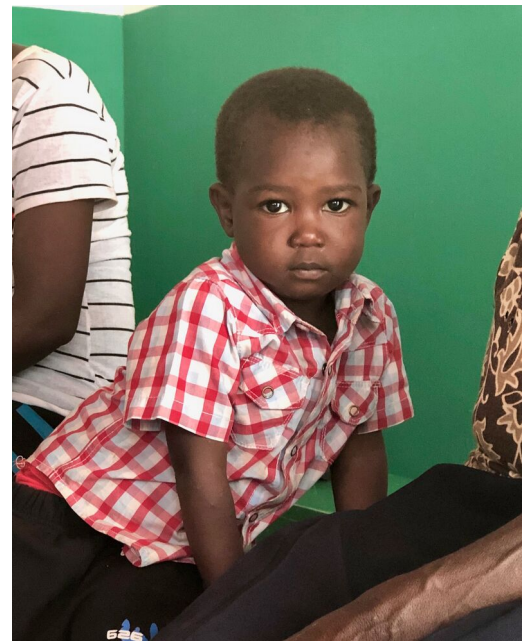
VPI launched a Moringa program in summer 2019 thanks to a generous gift from the Weeders, a Tampa-based gardening group. Mombin Crochu hospital purchased 5000 moringa plants that will be distributed to families enrolled in the nutrition program beginning in October 2019. The hospital is partnering with a Haitian agricultural NGO to educate community members about the importance of Moringa and how it can be farmed to provide income to needy families. Called the "miracle tree" in Haiti, Moringa is well-known for its nutritional benefits, including high-levels of protein and calcium.



RESULTS

Between July 2018 and July 2019, the VPI and Mombin Crochu Hospital Nutrition Program:

- Assessed **14,887 children** for malnutrition
- Treated **25 babies** for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) with complications in the Inpatient Program
- Treated **24 children** for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) without complications in the Outpatient Therapeutic Program
- Supported **83 children** with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and their families in the Community-based Supplementation program
- Conducted **12 community awareness and education events** in different locations



EVALUATION FINDINGS

Program Strengths

- 92% of children who complete in-patient or outpatient treatment improve; those who do not typically have an underlying condition such as HIV
- The program is managed by highly trained, motivated, and skilled staff
- There is strong support from Hospital Administration and the community
- There are sophisticated data collection processes in place, allowing for individual patient tracking and regular program evaluation

Areas for Improvement

- From July 2018 - July 2019, 2 children died in the Region from malnutrition who were identified too late to be treated
- 28% of children enrolled in outpatient and community stabilization programs are lost to follow-up, often due to family movement or inability to travel to appointments
- Several children discharged from community stabilization re-enter the program due to extreme poverty



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