

Strengthening Health Systems in the DRC

APPUI AU SYSTÈME DE SANTÉ EN RDC | ASSR

OVERCOMING MALNUTRITION: ANASTASIE'S ROAD TO RECOVERY

Anastasie was emaciated and had an arm circumference measurement of only 9 cm when she arrived at the health center for evaluation and treatment on June 30, 2021. A community health volunteer, Mama Lyly, had discovered her condition during an intensive systematic screening of children under 5 years of age in her community. She had immediately referred Anastasie and her mother to the health center so that Anastasie could be evaluated by a nurse.

Jean Pierre, the head nurse, found that Anastasie had a fever and she tested positive for malaria. She was treated for malaria and later given a deworming treatment. He reviewed her records and noted that Anastasie was completely vaccinated but had not been brought in regularly for quarterly preschool consultations at the health center and was not sleeping under a mosquito net.

Anastasie's mother, Mama Ndolo, had recently undergone surgery. Mama Ndolo was a housewife with 8 children and her husband was a day laborer. With limited means and a large family to care for, the surgery had destabilized their family. Anastasie had first fallen ill with a fever, followed by diarrhea that had contributed to her severe malnutrition. Her parents had given up hope that she would recover.

Mama Lyly was assigned to Anastasie's case to show the family how to make an enriched porridge. Local cornmeal and peanuts or caterpillar powder added protein. Using nutrient-rich water from cooked greens and red palm oil added essential vitamins and minerals.

Mama Lyly visited Anastasie's family 5 times over a two-month period to check on Anastasie, record her progress and share key nutrition messages with the family. She gave Mama Ndolo a measuring tape and taught her how to use it so she could track Anastasie's progress herself. During that period, Anastasie's arm circumference readings went from 9 cm to 13.20 cm and her weight increased from 6 kg to 13 kg.

Mama Dolo and her husband are extremely happy to see Anastasie regain her health. Mama Dolo is now in a child feeding support group. She has begun sharing with other mothers in the community how to prevent malnutrition and how to feed malnourished children with local foods. She has asked for photos of Anastasie before and after the intervention so that she can share her story with other households.

Through the FCDO-funded ASSR project, 96 percent of children under five are systematically screened for malnutrition. Through targeted intervention with families, the prevalence rate dropped from 24 percent in June of 2020 to 2.5 percent in June of 2021.



Anastasie after first home visit



Anastasie after fifth home visit

ABOUT THE ASSR PROJECT

Funded by the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through UK Aid, IMA World Health is part of a consortium that includes SANRU, Pathfinder International and BAO Systems that is improving access to critical, quality health services in 50 health zones in the DRC. In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the project reduces mortality and morbidity of women, adolescents, children and newborns and improves community resilience by strengthening health systems. In French, ASSR stands for Appui au Système de Santé en RDC, which translates to Health Systems Support in the DRC.



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