

Case Study Hunger

MARU AND MATHEOS'S STORY ETHIOPIA



Summary

Maru, age 3, is malnourished. Her family simply don't have enough to eat. Her father, Matheos, brought her to our health centre in Danama, along with hundreds of other parents and young children. Maru was given a weeks' supply of ready-to-use Plumpy'nut and told to return for screening again next week.

Matheos has a small landholding of just $\frac{1}{4}$ hectare where they grow maize, enset and sweet potato. Like others he relies on farming and casual labour to feed his family. Like many families here, Matheos usually harvests maize in October after the main rains. This normally feeds his family for 3-4 months. So just as stores runs out, the sweet potato harvest in March/April comes in to see them until next October harvest.

The escalating rise in global food prices, combined with prolonged drought, has left 4.6 million people in the poorest areas coping with malnutrition and all the health problems associated with it. Matheos and hundreds of thousands like him cut maize out of their diets months ago as its increasing market price is out of reach. Their own stocks were depleted by February or March. Now, without the sweet potato harvest to carry them over, they have nothing to eat.

We Save the Children  **Will you?**

Matheos's Story

“With the lack of rain, there was also a lack of grass, meaning many livestock died. With them I lost three major things: One: without my ox I cannot plough my land. Two: In previous disasters I could as a last resort sell my livestock to get some money to buy food that would feed my children. Three: milk. My children need milk and they are not getting any.

15 days ago my family received 50kg of maize from the government. That's not much for a family of six, we finished it after just 8 days.”



“We look for wild vegetables and fruits. There is a plant that grows around here called Chumele. We boil and eat the Chemele three times a day. The children are eating food they've never known before. They don't like it and so they eat only a little. And when they do it gives them diarrhoea. We were so hungry we decided to cut down an enset tree. The result was only an upset stomach. “

“Right now our biggest problem is an energy shortage. None of us has much energy. If I am hungry how can I work hard? The same goes for my wife and especially for our children. We used to send our oldest daughter to school, but due to our food shortages at home, she has dropped out. In the morning we usually have coffee and food. Now we don't have anything except Chumele for breakfast – which she doesn't eat - and doesn't have energy for school. She returns home looking for food. She's only six, how can she possibly understand this situation?”

“I have hope that the current rains will be good and will allow us to look after our land, plant more and eventually give us a good harvest. But that will all take time to grow.”

What we do in Ethiopia

We're giving food or cash transfers to 338,000 vulnerable people in Amhara area

We're providing free healthcare to more than 5,500 of the poorest children

We're helping more than 1,100 vulnerable children go to school

We're giving practical help to children affected by HIV and AIDS

Cost examples

£25 covers one child's expense a Therapeutic Centre for 15 days including medical treatment, food and accommodation expenses

£30 covers one month food expenses for a family of five

£200 could buy 30 goats and a cow to enable a destitute pastoral household to become economically self-sufficient

Matheos waits in line for his daughter, Maru to be screened for malnutrition



A MUAC band informs staff that Maru is severely malnourished



