

Luck knocked on my door when WALC started sponsoring my membership to International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)



My name is Josephine, I come from Uganda- the Pearl of Africa located in Eastern Africa. I am a mother of 2 beautiful breastfed daughters: Chantal lying under the table breastfeeding her baby, she is 5 years and 5 months and Charlene 2 years and 8 months seated breastfeeding her baby too. These two little angels have inspired me to support mothers in my area to breastfeed . I am so privileged to meet all the Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants (WALC) community.



5 Years ago, from my personal experience, I started my passionate journey to support mothers to breastfeed in my village located in central Uganda. To date, I have reached over 300 mothers and babies. 2 years back, luck knocked on my door when Wisconsin Association of Lactation Consultants (WALC) started sponsoring my membership to International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA).

Coming from a country where there are no lactation consultants with specialized services too, becoming an ILCA member has been so instrumental in my work because of the benefits it comes along with. My membership is of great transformation towards; breastfeeding, establishment of sustainable livelihoods through mother support groups and children's support to breastfeeding in my area. Most of the time I work with mothers support groups in less privileged communities who live under \$1 a day where 50 mother support groups have been established and sustained. In mother support groups we learn about the art of breastfeeding, peer counseling, home visits and this has registered tremendous success including reduced

A supportive father in the support groups shares his experience with the mothers at the breastfeeding training.



illnesses among mothers and babies. Arts and crafts making and practicing vegetable and fruit growing as a source of food and income supplements our livelihoods. We are currently harvesting moringa and the mothers who did not have it now grow it. This is a project which was reestablished after Becky Krumwiede of WALC gave me an update on the exhibitions at the 2009 WALC conference. From the individual incomes raised from the mother support group projects, we have started a revolving fund to boost the mother's incomes. We have also been able to link the mothers to ante and postnatal care to the local hospital.

However, we are constrained by the **limited personnel at the hospital** where the midwife sees about 30 mothers a day both at the out patient, labour ward and the maternity ward. **Action:** We are sometimes able to go and give a hand to the health worker to assist mothers on proper attachment. Health workers at the hospital lack training on breastfeeding. We have provided them with information on breastfeeding and done breastfeeding video shows for them to see how they can help mothers.

The hospital lacks a neonatal care unit so there are no specialized services even no incubators to keep the children at the required temperatures. A couple of babies die because of the limiting conditions. **Action:** We have encouraged mothers to use kangaroo mother care, express the breast milk and feed the baby other than using supplements.

Mothers walk long distances about 2-4 kilometers to access a health centre with maternity services under a qualified health worker. There are no appropriate means of transport except bicycles and motorcycles exposing expectant mothers and babies to high accident risks. **Action:** Mother support groups are an encouragement to mothers amidst the challenges. **Plan:** Fundraise for efficient means of transport – a community bus to ease the problem.

HIV/AIDS: With the existence of prevention of mother to Child transmission programme, Health workers do not give mothers to make the best option on how feed their babies. Mothers are finding it hard to cope with the do not breastfeed option because they cannot afford supplementing the babies with animal milk. **Action:** With my mother having 12 heads of cattle we have established a monthly supply milk scheme for 5 mothers of the 13 mothers to enable them have a constant supply of cow milk. We would love to give all but it's not possible. We plan to have each mother be able to have a head of cattle for milk production.

In our next issue you will be able to read more about our activities including the December 13 breastfeeding camp for working mothers to which we are registering participants, children's participation in breastfeeding, breastfeeding project for mothers with special needs (those with disabilities and others living with HIV/AIDS).

**Your Support Goes A Long Way In Supporting Mothers In My Community To Breastfeed,
Thank you!**