

“A small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



Josephine and some participants to the 2009 WBW exhibition supported by WALC. Baby wearing is key to promoting breastfeeding

Our New projects that were initiated with the 2009 WALC funding:

In May 2009 with endorsement from World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) we adapted a children's coloring book breastfeeding Nature's way. Our Second endorsement was from Children for Breastfeeding Inc. Philippines on using the seven acts of kindness. This project is intended is to foster children's participation in breastfeeding and promoting breastfeeding. This book was launched in a Kindergarten where my daughter Chantal attends school. 60 copies were reprinted, 25 children participated and 35 copies were sold during the 2009 world breastfeeding week events when we had exhibitions. The funds acquired were used to support mothers in the mother support groups. We would like to extend this project to other schools however, we are constrained with printing costs.



Above is Upper class - little cranes Montessori launched the children's colouring book.

Below are working mothers attending a breastfeeding session during the 2009 WBW



2. Establishment of mother support groups for working mothers especially in the urban areas:

As a mother living two back grounds both rural and urban and from my experience I am always thinking about creating sustainable projects. After establishing strong links with the mothers in less privileged communities (rural areas), I started finding a link that sustain the already established projects. To effect this I conducted a survey on

breastfeeding experiences with 50 working moms and I identified their experiences on Infant and young child feeding . Some of the key results from the survey indicated that:

1. Majority of the mothers have not exclusively breastfed their babies because they had to return to work with in a period of three to six weeks after birth.
2. Mixed and replacement feeding is the order of the day for a big number working moms because of the limited time with babies and many do not know what to do.
3. There are almost no babies at work place programmes (BAWPS). This is because only 2 of the 50 working mothers indicated that they had (BAWPS).
4. A couple of mothers had heard about expressing breastmilk however, did not have accurate information on breastmilk storage.
5. Some mothers lose their jobs because they fail to return to work when their bosses want them to.
6. There are no Mother support groups where mothers can access information on breastfeeding.
7. Overall there is lack of support to breastfeeding support right from pre and ante natal periods. Even when mothers want the best for their babies they do not receive appropriate support.

NB: In 2008, Maternity leave in Uganda for working women in both public and private sector was extended to sixty working days. However, this is not observed by majority of employers and many employees are unaware about its provisions.

Action: To address the above challenges using the funds received from WALC in July 2009:

1. I designed breastfeeding materials which I exhibited during the world breastfeeding week. Some of these materials were adapted from the ILCA WBW kit which was sent to me by the president of WALC.
2. We held a 2 hour session on best practices on breastfeeding using the updated written information and videos such as Breastfeeding: You can do it! Which we received from the WALC president and Visual Guide to breastfeeding with Dr. Newman and Edith Kernerman, IBCLC.
3. I was able to share my experience on how I have been successful with breastfeeding as a working mother and also being able to support other mothers.

Feedback from the 2009 WBW breastfeeding session:

Mothers noted it was a whole new experience, the first of its kind because they had not had such an opportunity

The evaluations indicated that time was not enough and mothers requested for more sessions.

Way forward:

- Formation of mother support groups for working moms to be able to learn more about breastfeeding.
- We have planned a breastfeeding camp for 13th December 2009 to which we need your support. In order to conduct this activity we need \$4000 and at the moment we have \$1340.

3. Infant feeding support to mothers with special needs. We have two categories; the mothers with disabilities and mothers living with HIV/AIDs.

- a) In the mother support groups we have 4 mothers with disabilities 2 with physical disability, 1 deaf and 1 blind of which 2 are single mothers abandoned by their spouses. Accessing written information is a challenge because they cannot read nor write and information is not in accessible format (Braille). I would like to note that the laptop has done a great deal in viewing the breastfeeding videos together with the mothers.
- b) We have 12 mothers living with HIV/AIDs. In the presence of the prevention of mother to child transmission, at the local hospital, discussions held with mothers by health workers do not leave room for mothers to take the best option on feeding their infants instead they are told not to breastfeed regardless whether the option given does not confirm to AFASS. Many mothers cannot afford to buy animal milk, or infant formula. Along the way they are torn whether to initiate breastfeeding but fear infecting their children or feed the baby hot water, sugar and tea.

Overall, there is insufficient Infant and Young Child feeding counseling for pregnant women and mothers of infants and inadequate follow up of mothers with infants on IYCF.

Action: We have discussed with the local hospital on adopting the AFASS however, it has been noted that there is a lack of follow up mechanism on the mothers since majority live about 2- 8 km from the hospital.

We have started sensitizing mothers to take the best option and providing them with best practices on animal milk preparations using the WHO standards on safe food preparation and storage.

I and my mother with the 12 heads of cattle she have launched an animal milk supply scheme for only 7 of the 12 mothers living with HIV/ AIDS and 2 mothers with disabilities. However, this is proving difficult because of the few heads of cattle we have.

Plans: More sensitization on choosing the best option. Strengthen the income generating component to enable mothers have a sustainable income. Increase on the number of heads of cattle we have or give 3 mothers a cow (\$ 340) for more milk production for the mothers and babies who choose not to breastfeed and also be able to get manure from the dung for the vegetables gardens and other grown foods to ensure food production and food security for their homes. This will enable us reduce on the prevalent levels of poverty.

4. Other projects include:

- Moringa growing.
- Fenugreek growing.

We have given out 10 seeds to each mother who has land where to grow moringa and 1 pilot garden for fenugreek. We shall give you the updates on the progress of these 2 projects.

2. Projects I have previously engaged in with the mothers in the mother support groups include: Vegetable growing, home visits, hospital breastfeeding support, Breastfeeding exhibitions and etc.



A Vegetable garden for one of the mother in the MSGs.



Above is one of the mothers picking Lettuce.



Josephine on a home visit breastfeeding support



Above is one of the young mothers in the MSGs



Josephine with a blind breastfeeding their babies



Above is my photo that won the 2008 WBW WABA contest.

Pictorial for the 2007 Breastfeeding exhibition with support from Ergo Baby Carrier USA



Explaining to a participant a good diet for an expectant and breastfeeding mom



Group photo with a team that I worked with for days.



Josephine in pink doing a breastfeeding chat with the working moms



Some of the participants at the exhibition.

Conclusion:

We know that increasing education, especially of women in their communities on breastfeeding in this perspective, also has a major impact on the use of health care and on health status. Mothers in the urban areas can help us raising funds through subsidized service of food purchase from the mothers in the less privileged communities' (rural areas). This will enable us sensitize mothers in the mothers in urban areas on the plight of mothers in the rural areas for their support. I know there will be more exchange services mothers in the urban areas buy food from the mothers from the rural areas and this will not only boost their income but also their friendship and awareness.

At this stage I have confirmed that mothers in the urban and rural areas have similar needs and we can only correct the problem with accurate information and service provision.

Completion of this report would almost be impossible without the laptop donated by the WALC and we would like to say thank you! Your continued support to any project in the activities above is highly appreciated.



We simply put it, without the generosity of WALC, we wouldn't be able to reach mothers who need our support to breastfeeding. Your support is essential to the work we do every day. Your gift to Children In Africa mother support group also benefits future generations through breastfeeding support and healthy nation.

By: Josephine

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Children In Africa Mother support group

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