

Children In Africa Quarterly report (August –December 2010)

Prepared by Josephine Nalugo.

1. Breastfeeding and social protection scheme:

Introducing Community Based Social Security Scheme.

Social Insecurity in Uganda as many other African countries is characterized by lack of access to health care, basic education, lack of access to income.....

In 2008, breastfeeding mothers domestically started to finance their social security scheme through a monthly savings scheme and this was developed by the Executive Director as an intervention to reduce on the economic crisis characterized by living below \$1 per day = Uganda Shs. 2280, lack of home utensils (cups and plates) and much more.

A group of 15 breastfeeding mothers started saving shs.100 each twice a month to buy stuff for their homes after 4 months. To date, each mother is able to save \$4.7 a month and 2mothers receive \$36 a month. This scheme is aimed at increasing the capacity of mothers to be able to take care of their families.

Six years ago when I started supporting mothers to breastfeed, I did not visualize that we could reach this far! With this growth rate, I have no doubt that mothers will be able to pay school fees for their breastfed children. Four of the children we breastfed six years ago have started going to school.

Breastfeeding is so rewarding and the mothers feel happy to have chosen to breastfeed their babies. One mother noted that *“through breastfeeding, I have been able to improve my family’s’ livelihood, my home is cleaner, we have enough food and my kids are healthier”*.

With such initiatives, we are optimistic that their expansion and continued support to breastfeeding such challenges can be overcome; however there is need for some additional help from the donor community to strengthen and sustain them.

2. Family and Community arrangements

This scheme provides mothers with support through exchange of labor by engaging in communal gardening for quick production. Mothers in different groups dig in each other garden without cash payments. Such arrangements are still pillars of African tradition social protection schemes.

Sustainability of these schemes is guaranteed because children too are part of it and are insurance to this cause.

3. Breastfeeding and mobile phone technology:

In July 2010 I visited the USA to attend the ILCA with support from WALC, I got the opportunity to visit different hospitals in both Texas and Colorado. It was such an experience. I learnt from the Lactation consultants I met by observing how they were speaking to the moms who were struggling to breastfeed through phone communications. Phone breastfeeding support is a concept that I strengthened when I returned to Uganda. Even when I had supported a few moms on phone before I traveled to the United States, I had no many encouraging words as I learnt from listening to the Lactation Consultant- breastfeeding Mom conversation. With the competition among mobile telephone companies in Uganda, we have one of the companies WARID telecom with a product called “pakalast” meaning talk for 24hours with people on the same network by loading almost half a dollar = Uganda Shs. 1,000. By taking advantage of this package, I have been able to support 7breastfeeding moms including one mother with twins (girls) and their breastfeeding is going on well.

4. Breastfeeding and Returning to work:

From the breastfeeding materials that I have gathered and learnt from during the years I have been an ILCA member, I have been able to support mother's to breastfeed when they return to work. Between August and December, I have supported 4 working Moms 2 of them are my colleagues at work to return to work with their babies. 1 of the four mums is a mother with special needs (Deaf) and she has found the breastfeeding DVDs and books very useful. Amazingly she now expresses 750mls of breast milk which she leaves with the baby, something she did not think she would do. This mom is so relieved now because she triples in her tasks as a mother , studying and working. We have discussed with moms on how to put to put the money they have saved while breastfeeding – not buying any milk substitutes to save this money for the kids as they grow up. Each baby has not less than \$200 saved!

Sunflower project:

When I attended Dr. Sears LEAN training, I learnt about sunflower as one of the best plants which produces very suitable cooking oil. When I returned, I planted sunflower on a 2 by 2 meter garden and at the moment its blossoming I hope to get the seeds and make sunflower oil or eat the seeds as nuts once it matures. It is such a very interesting project that people in the neighborhood come to see it. Children enjoy it more and they have discovered that it turns to the direction where the sun is. It has also added beauty to my home and I am the first person to grow it in the neighborhood and the first time in my whole life! I also grew cantaloupe, spinach and corn, and cucumber from the seeds that brought from USA.

My daughters Chantal and Charlene enjoy them more; they have also learnt how bees make honey from the flowers. Today they told me that one of the sunflowers' petals are falling off.



Josephine, Chantal and Charlene in front of the sunflower garden

**Your continued support has enabled us to reach this far and
you are changing lives!**