



Pilot Breastfeeding Support project – WBA’s Fieldworkers share their experiences

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Well Being Africa

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From Gloria

Help with exclusive breastfeeding, expressing breastmilk, and cup feeding: Most of the time, we found out that new moms need more assistance when it comes to breastfeeding. For example, MK; a new mom who needed to know more about exclusive breastfeeding. Because she was studying and working, she was asking the question of how she could successfully do exclusive breastfeeding since she spends more time at work? I told her that many moms who are doing exclusive breastfeeding are working. What they do is express their breastmilk and leave for the baby when they are off to work. I explained to her how to express breastmilk and how to feed the baby using a cup. She was able to do this and continued to exclusively breastfeed her baby.

Assistance for moms to relactate: Relactation is a process by which a mom re-establishes lactation after having stopped for some weeks or even months. During one of our door-to-door visits, I met BG, a mom with a 3 weeks old baby and not breastfeeding. However, she wanted to breastfeed her baby. Her reason for stopping was that she was not making enough milk. I explained everything about breastfeeding to her and showed her how to do it, so she could breastfeed again. She did as I told her and after 2 weeks when my supervisor and I did a follow-up, we found that she has fully re-established breastfeeding. Also, MM, a new mom with a baby of 4 weeks who was not breastfeeding was assisted to relactate. We took time to explain to her the numerous benefits of breastfeeding for her and the baby. We also helped her to see how she could overcome her other concerns about breastfeeding.

Assistance on complementary feeding: We help moms who need more understanding about feeding their babies after 6 months. For example, RS chatted with me on WhatsApp that she has been doing exclusive breastfeeding and now her baby turned 6 months. She was aware that she needed to add more food for her baby, but she was not sure how to go about it and what kind of food to introduce to her baby. Moreover, she said her baby does not seem to want other foods aside from breastmilk. I told her that any food other than milk is something new to a 6-month-old baby. Therefore, the ideal thing is to start with soft foods like soft porridge, pureed vegetables, and in small portions. At first, she should give 2 or 3 teaspoons and gradually increase over the next few days. She should only increase as the baby **can tolerate. I told her to continue to**

breastfeed her baby for up to 2 years while giving complementary food. She was able to pull through the process successfully and the baby was enjoying the complementary foods and continued to breastfeed.

Well Being Africa has been a great help to many moms. We support moms to do exclusive breastfeeding, and we also support them to do appropriate complementary feeding with continued breastfeeding when the baby is 6 months. The moms we see confirm that WBA has been a great help to them and their babies.

From Tanja

Mom 1: This new mom was worried that she was not producing enough milk for her 3 days old baby. I took time to explain to her that first few days, her breasts will make colostrum and a little amount of milk for her baby. The first milk is thick and sticky but very nutritious and important for the baby's immune system. I made her understand that in those early days, her baby only needs a small amount of feed and therefore will likely feed often. This frequent feeding will help to signal her breasts to make plenty of milk for her baby. With frequent nursing over the first few days, her milk will change from super-rich colostrum to mature milk to match her baby's changing needs. We assisted her to achieve a good latch, the baby latched perfectly, milk was flowing well, and the baby nursed well. Thereafter, this mom was able to exclusively breastfeed her baby and she continued to receive support WBA breastfeeding support.

Mom 2: This mom stopped breastfeeding at 3 days of giving birth to her baby. During her 3 days check-up we encouraged her to resume breastfeeding her baby again, she started breastfeeding immediately after the consultation. The baby is almost 6 months as at the time of this report and the mom continued to breastfeed her baby. We assist moms with relevant breastfeeding information to help them sail through their breastfeeding journey successfully.

Mom 3: This mom came in with a 6 days old baby. She was mix-feeding her baby because she was afraid her baby would not get enough milk. We explained to her that baby was still small and her breastmilk is enough for the baby. She was assured and started giving her baby breast milk only. As of the time of this report, the baby is now 6 weeks and only

on breastmilk and no more doing mix-feeding. Thereafter, she got a lot of information on breastfeeding that she needed to go on breastfeeding successfully.

Mom 4: Mom decided not to breastfeed because of all the incorrect information she had received from various sources previously. We saw the mom while she was still pregnant and started the breastfeeding journey with her. She decided on breastfeeding her baby exclusively. When her baby was born, she started to do exclusive breastfeeding, and we continued to follow up with her through the WBA breastfeeding support.

Mom 5: This is a mom of 2 children, the second one still being a baby. The mom never breastfed her first child. When baby no 2 arrived, she tried to breastfeed but failed because of a lack of information and support. Then I met her, this time her baby was 6 weeks, and she was formula feeding. I discussed breastfeeding with her, and she became interested and wanted to breastfeed her baby fully. I assisted her to latch her baby and she breastfed perfectly. Thereafter, she continued to breastfeed and was enjoying the experience. To help her baby to receive breastmilk when she was away, she pumps as often as she could and stored them appropriately.

Mom 6: I met this mom when she brought her baby for a check-up at 9 weeks old. The mom was super proud she was still breastfeeding exclusively. She did not think she could do it, but she did. According to her, she wanted to quit every day, but after 2 weeks with the breastfeeding support from WBA, the experience got better. Mom and baby were happy, and breastfeeding continued.

Mom 7: Mom started her breastfeeding journey with us during her pregnancy. Her paediatrician advised on formula feeding because the baby was not growing well. Then she came to us for a second opinion. We educated her on breastfeeding, and she decided to breastfeed exclusively. With growth monitoring and follow up on her breastfeeding, her baby started gaining weight gradually. 3 months into the journey, the mom continued with breastfeeding her baby exclusively and happily.

Mom 8: This is a mom of a 3-month-old baby. She has successfully breastfed her baby exclusively for 3 months and was still breastfeeding. She came in for counselling on how to continue to breastfeed her baby exclusively as she was going back to work in a few weeks. We encouraged her to express milk for feeding her baby during the day when

she would be away at work and to continue to breastfeed her baby when she comes back from work. Though the mom was a little disappointed that she could not be with her baby for some hours of the day. However, the baby was able to continue to feed on breastmilk only. At the time of this report, the breastfeeding journey continued, and we follow up weekly through the WBA breastfeeding support.

My personal breastfeeding experience: I started my breastfeeding journey by joining groups, reading books, and going to classes to acquire breastfeeding knowledge. The day my beautiful little girl was born all the information I had acquired was gone, and I found myself struggling to breastfeed. I was afraid my baby was not getting enough milk, so I wanted to quit and started formula feeding or at least mix feed. My husband was very supportive, he told me no, we are not getting any formula, you had wanted to breastfeed so now you have to do it. My dietitian assured me that I have sufficient knowledge of breastfeeding and that all my baby needs was my breastmilk. I was encouraged. Though the first week was a challenge, I ended up breastfeeding my baby exclusively for 6 months. I have the privilege of being able to take my baby with me to work. I am still breastfeeding my little girl who is now one year and two months.