

Concept Note

Partnership for Blended Breastfeeding Training for CHWs

Background

Well Being Africa (WBA), an NGO dedicated to maternal and child health, has successfully trained over 600 Community Health Workers (CHWs) in breastfeeding support and Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) support in South Africa.

Poor IYCF practices, limited breastfeeding support, and inadequate training in IYCF for CHW contribute to hindering optimal maternal and child health outcomes in Africa. Building on its successful breastfeeding support training initiatives in South Africa, WBA now seeks to expand its impact through blended training sessions to equip CHWs in African countries with essential IYCF support skills.

Goal of the initiative

To establish and strengthen strategic partnerships with local organisations to co-implement and sustain community-based IYCF support initiatives.

Partner eligibility

- Legally registered and operating in an English-speaking country in Africa
- Actively engaged in maternal, newborn, and child health initiatives within their communities.
- Experience in engaging with community health workers, women, or youth leaders for health-related activities.
- Established community networks that engage directly with mothers, pregnant women, and caregivers.

Why train CHWs in breastfeeding support

The need to train Community Health Workers (CHWs) in breastfeeding support is crucial because they serve as an essential link between primary healthcare and the community, often providing education and practical support directly to new mothers. Studies have shown that targeted breastfeeding training is the strongest predictor of CHWs providing effective breastfeeding support and possessing sufficient breastfeeding knowledge and skills. Furthermore, interventions that include support from trained lay workers, such as CHWs, have been associated with increased rates of exclusive breastfeeding, demonstrating that IYCF training enhances their ability to help mothers overcome challenges and establish successful feeding practices

Training objectives

1. To enable CHWs to increase knowledge on breastfeeding essentials, including the recommendations, special circumstances and support.

2. To enable CHWs to develop the technical and counselling skills needed to promote, protect and support optimal breastfeeding and young child feeding practices.

Training content and duration

The training content is adapted from the toolkit developed by WHO/UNICEF and aligned with the BHFI 2020, designed to support breastfeeding training for healthcare providers. The training is an 18-hour, 3-day training, comprising 7 modules.

Module No.	Module Title
Module 1	Breastfeeding as a key child health, development and survival strategy
Module 2	Motivating Change: Counselling and Communication Skills
Module 3	The Anatomy and Physiology of Breastfeeding
Module 4	Early initiation of breastfeeding
Module 5	Supporting Continued breastfeeding
Module 6	Special circumstances
Module 7	Creating a culture for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

Training audience

The training audience includes CHWs employed by government or civil society organisations (CSOs), youth leaders, women leaders, community-based healthcare volunteers, and maternal and child health advocates. The training beneficiaries must have evidence of an ongoing engagement with mothers and their children, and pregnant women.

Partner roles

- Secure the training facility; a suitable venue equipped with projection equipment
- Mobilise participants to attend the training
- Coordinate on the ground logistics and in-person training
- Monitor and evaluate the on-the-ground training as outlined in the Monitoring and Evaluation section, support post-training activities, and subsequently submit a report using the WBA reporting template.

WBA's roles

- Provide virtual facilitation
- Provide training materials and certificates of participation
- Offer financial support for lunch and transport for the training
- Monitor and evaluate the project implementation.

Expected outcomes and impact

- Improved CHW capacity in comprehensive IYCF knowledge and skills to provide breastfeeding and young child-feeding support in their communities.
- Strengthened community engagement through empowered youth and women leaders actively promoting IYCF practices.

- A replicable virtual training model enabling broader implementation across African countries, fostering sustainable improvements in IYCF practices.

Expected Long-term impact

Enhanced maternal and child health, resulting from anticipated increased rates of exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding, which contributes to reducing malnutrition and related health issues.

Monitoring and evaluation

Participants’ knowledge gained and skills developed will be evaluated through pre- and post-training assessments, competency assessment, participants’ feedback, and on-site coordination reports. Evaluation of the participants’ application of IYCF skills in communities through storytelling to evaluate the real-life impact of the training.

Timelines

Dates	Activities
April 6, 2026	Application closes
April 6 to 30, 2026	Partners selection, planning meetings, and participants mobilisation.
May 4 to June 4, 2026	Finalisation of training logistics, venue, participant confirmations, and other logistics.
June 15 to 17, 2026	Implementation of the 3-day blended training sessions.
June 18 to July 30, 2026	Post-training evaluations, impact assessments, storytelling and submission of report.