



# WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK 2020

## INTRODUCTION

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is a global campaign to raise awareness and galvanize action on themes related to breastfeeding. It is celebrated every 1-7 August in commemoration of the 1990 Innocenti Declaration. Since 2016, WBW is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2018, a World Health Assembly resolution endorsed WBW as an important breastfeeding promotion strategy.

WBW 2020 focuses on the impact of infant feeding on the environment/climate change and the imperative to protect, promote and support breastfeeding for the health of the planet and its people. The theme is aligned with thematic area 3 in the WBW-SDG 2030 campaign which highlights the links between breastfeeding and the environment/climate change.

## OBJECTIVES OF WBW 2020

- Inform people about the links between breastfeeding and the environment/climate change.
- Anchor breastfeeding as a climate-smart decision.
- Engage with individuals and organizations for greater impact.
- Galvanize action on improving the health of the planet and people through breastfeeding.

WBW2020 focused on the impact of infant feeding on the environment/climate change and the imperative to protect, promote and support breastfeeding for the health of the planet and its people. Breastfeeding provides every child with the best possible start in life. It delivers health, nutritional and emotional benefits to both children and mothers. And it forms part of a sustainable food system. But while breastfeeding is a natural process, it is not always easy. Mothers need support and an enabling environment at structural, settings and individual levels both to get started and to sustain breastfeeding.

In view of this the IRC conducted various activities across MMC, Jere, Konduga, Monguno, Gworza and Magumeri LGAs in other to help promote easy and safe breastfeeding practices.

### **TRAINING OF MTMSG AND MTMCG ON THE THEME OF WBW 2020**

70 female CNMS/Mother leads and 34 Men to men group members were trained between 20<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 on the theme of WBW 2020. The objectives of this training was to enlighten them on the theme of world breastfeeding week for the year 2020, to understand the objectives of world breast feeding week and clearly understand the benefits of breastfeeding and clear all myths and misconception of breastfeeding. They were also made to understand their role in promoting and supporting breastfeeding before creating awareness and engaging community members during the WBW 2020. The training also served as an opportunity to build the capacity of the participants on Infant and Young Child Feeding in the context of COVID 19 pandemic.



**TRAINING SESSIONS FOR MTMSG AND MTM IN GWORZA LGA**

### **COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND SENSITIZATION ON WBW 2020**

The CNMS, lead mothers and Men's group conducted awareness on WBW 2020 objectives between 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and educated community members on the theme of the year 2020. Information was disseminated to women/parents with young children centered on where benefits of breastfeeding and where caregivers can have access to skilled breastfeeding counselling from health facilities and in their communities. A total of 601 and women were reached across the IRC program sites.



**AWARENESS SESSION ON WBW 2020 IN MMC LGA.**

## **ENGAGEMENT OF MTMSG AND MTMC MEMBERS**

### **MTMSG**

Mothers play a vital role in wellbeing and upkeep of the child. Mothers were encouraged and praised for the good job of caring for their children and family. Breast feeding (BF) difficulties was also discussed. Experienced mothers were allowed to share their experiences so that first time mother will benefit. Importance of BF was also discussed. Mother was made to see the dangers of infant formula and how it has much effect in our economy and environment, they were also made to understand that when they practice the optimal BF that the economy benefit and it will make Government put more money into education and better the health care system. 364 mother was counseled in 37 session by lead mothers.



**IYCF COUNSELING SESSION AT STADIUM IDP CAMP MMC LGA**

## **MEN TO MEN COMMUNICATION GROUP**

Men's group were engaged on the importance of optimal breastfeeding, and fathers were asked to encourage their wife to invest more on breastfeeding than infant formula because of the benefit of breastfeeding to the community and its environment. Fathers were made to understand that if each of their wives were to practice optimal breastfeeding that it will not only better the child's life but the community as a whole. Fathers were encouraged to support and provide for their wives who are pregnant & breastfeeding, and also allow them to attend the MTMSG and IYCF corner in case they encounter any breastfeeding difficulty. 335 men were counselled in 33 sessions, this was achieved with the help of lead fathers across all IRC program sites in Borno state.



**MEN TO MEN GROUP ENGAGEMENT IN GWORZA LGA**

## **TRAINING OF FINAL NURSING STUDENTS**

Breastfeeding is an unequalled way of providing ideal food for the healthy growth and development of infants and has a unique biological and emotional effect on the health of both mother and child. Health care practices as related to the care of mothers and newborn infants contributes either positively or otherwise to the prevalence and duration of breastfeeding. The relatively brief period of prenatal, delivery and perinatal care provided in the maternity wards and clinics is critical for successful initiation and maintenance of breastfeeding. It is also the period when interaction between mothers and health personnel is closest and when health care routines have the greatest influence

on mothers' attitude towards breastfeeding and perceptions about their ability to breastfeed.

When health services through policies, procedures and practices enhances early initiation and duration of breastfeeding, it provides a strong support for mothers to breastfeed their children exclusively. In view of these the IRC engaged 30 final year nursing students in a two day training session on the role of health workers in supporting breastfeeding for a



healthier planet. The training was held on 4th and 5th of August 2020. The training participants were introduced to the theme of WBW 2020 and given a brief overview of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF). They were also taken through various sessions such as benefits of breastfeeding, myths and misconception about breastfeeding, breastfeeding difficulties, IYCF in the context of COVID 19, breastfeeding, infant formula and effects on climate change, why Nurses and Midwife need

to support in improving breastfeeding practices and Interventions to improve breastfeeding practices in the health systems .i.e. the revised Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative(BHFI). A practical session on early initiation of breastfeeding during delivery of babies also held through a video presentation by the Global Media Health Project was also conducted for the training participants. The facilitators also allowed a question and answer session where the participants asked questions on the training content and practical challenges, they face in the course supporting women in breastfeeding and sought for ways to resolve them. A mini debate session also held in which the facilitators asked the participants questions on the training they received. Many participants went home with a lot of gifts. At the end of the training the participants expressed their appreciation of the training and perceived it as a good motivation for them to promote and support mothers to breastfeed their babies.

## ENGAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY LEADERS AND HEALTH WORKERS

The support that mothers receive in their families and communities greatly influences their ability to adequately feed their infants and young children. When mothers live in an environment in which exclusive breastfeeding is the norm, they will be less likely to introduce other foods or fluids too early. Activities to create a breastfeeding culture and ensure that mothers, other caregivers and the wider community have knowledge and skills about appropriate infant and young child feeding practices is therefore essential as a complement to a supportive health system. Community leaders have the opportunity



to support good breastfeeding practices and challenge inappropriate traditions. Health system and community interventions have been shown to increase exclusive breastfeeding practices. The WBW 2020 provided the IRC the opportunity to engage 10 community leaders and 6 Matron in charge of Health Facilities in MMC and Jere LGAs on the 6th of August 2020. The aim of this combined training was to;

introduce the community leaders and health workers to the theme of WBW 2020 and familiarize them with their roles in promoting and supporting breastfeeding for a healthier planet. The participants were made to understand that when a woman breastfeeds, the benefits is not only to her family, but to her community and Nation. The facilitators also explained the immense benefit of breastfeeding to climate change, importance of exclusive breastfeeding and common myths and misconception about breastfeeding. This was followed by an interactive session. During the session, the health workers present highlighted the major challenges they face in supporting women with early initiation of breastfeeding when they come to the health facilities for delivery of their babies. They made the community leaders to understand that the source of these challenges was from some harmful traditional practices ingrained in the mothers from their various communities. They appealed to the community leaders to support them in championing the course of exclusive breastfeeding in their communities as this will help to remove the barriers, they are facing in promoting and supporting the mothers on exclusive breastfeeding. The community leaders agreed with the matrons and resolved to continue to talk to their community

## COMMUNITY HEALTH COMMITTEE

At the community level the IRC further engaged Community health committee (CHC) on the theme of WBW 2020. These CHCs consist of women leaders, youth leaders,



religious leaders and community leaders. They enhance community participation in delivery of, promote social accountability and mobilize resources for community health in IRC supported sites. Based on their roles they were familiarized with the benefits of breastfeeding

to their community and the positive effects it has on climate change. Their roles as IYCF advocates in their community was emphasized and based on their influence in the communities they were engaged to motivate and empower their communities and networks to influence social norms and cultural practices that supports and creates an enabling environment for exclusive breastfeeding practices. A total of 17 CHCs were engaged between 3rd and 4th of August 2020 in Gworza LGA.

## BREASTFEEDING COUNSELING AND SUPPORT AT THE IYCF CORNERS

The IYCF corner serves as a place for promotion and reinforcing care practices for the child by parents, caregivers, families and communities. Caregivers also receive breastfeeding counseling and support at these corners.

Women who attended the IYCF corners were offered information on optimal BF practice, also discussion held on how BF has improved the health status of their children and how it has



**GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS AT THE IYCF CORNER IN KONDUKA LGA**

help them improve on child spacing. The lead mothers emphasized why they should share their experience with other mothers and talked to them about promoting BF messages across their communities. A total of 237 women were reached in the different locations of IRC supported sites.

### **AWARENESS RAISING SESSIONS AT THE IRC RH AND WPE COMPREHENSIVE WOMEN CENTER IN GWORZA LGA**

Women empowerment improves their understanding to right to access quality services, promotion of their own wellbeing, better decision making on the wellbeing of their households especially better feeding patterns for their children and better child nutrition. Research has shown that fewer pregnancy related problems were associated with higher maternal empowerment. The IRC nutrition sector collaborated with the IRC Reproductive Health (RH) and Women Protection and Empowerment (WPE) Sectors at the Comprehensive Women Center (CWC) in Gworza LGA during the WBW 2020 between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020. At the CWC the women are offered services such as



Post-natal care, Antenatal care, family planning, delivery, treatment of Sexually transmitted infection, clinical care for sexually assaulted survivor, psychosocial support and sensitization/awareness raising session. Awareness raising sessions was held for 60 women at the CWC on the benefits of breastfeeding to them, their children their community and nation. The health workers at the CWC were also engaged on supporting their clients on early

initiation of breastfeeding upon delivery and sustained breastfeeding through breastfeeding counseling and support for the women. The importance of their role as health workers in supporting women to breastfeed was also emphasized.

### **CHALLENGES**

The WBW 2020 could not hold in Magumeri LGA due to security challenges.

