

# Mother to Mother Support Groups

## *Improving IYCF Practices in the Community*

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# What are Mother to Mother Support Groups (MtMSGs)?

- Groups of women, either pregnant or with children under 5 yrs
- Learn about IYCF issues via education, activities, demonstration & discussion
- Support each other & share experiences
- Linked closely with health facility for greatest impact



# Background

- Initiated MtMSG program in Western Province in late 2008 (40 grps)
- Conducted feedback meeting in late April on progress
- Making revisions/improvements to program & tools
- Mobilizing 20 new groups this month, as continue to support existing 40 groups



# Formation of MtMSGs



- 8-15 pax per group
- Audience: pregnant & lactating women; caretakers/parents of children under 5 yrs
- Existing community group that meets regularly
- Grandmothers, mother-in-laws, partners invited to attend sessions quarterly



# Facilitation

- 1-2 facilitators per group
- Trained in 4-5 days by MOH staff
  - ✓ Review technical knowledge, practical demonstrations, reporting & expectations
  - ✓ Training includes HWs from nearest facility
  - ✓ Training also includes field supervisors of MtMSGs
  - ✓ Create workplans



# Topics: MtMSG Trainer's Guide & Participant Manual

- Advantages of BF
- Initiation BF w/in 30 min of birth
- Positioning & attachment
- EBF
- BF difficulties
- Expressing breastmilk
- How to feed a baby by the cup
- Infant feeding & HIV
- Feeding 6-24 months
- Preparing & storing foods safely



# Expectations of Facilitators

- Engage group members in monthly discussion about IYCN in interactive, participatory manner
- Conduct health talks at HF & other public forums
- Attend quarterly update meetings
- Household visits to members
- Referrals to health facilities





# Strengths of the Program

- Mothers generally eager & open to information
- Sharing experiences & demonstrations had strong impact on mothers' attitudes
- Linkages with HF, where done, was highly effective





# Areas for Improvement

- Better supervision & feedback mechanisms required
- More training on facilitation techniques
- Continued resistance from cultural myths & misconceptions
- Lack of support from men
- Competing priorities of mothers
- Lack of motivation / incentives



# Butere District: A Success Story

- 5 MtMSG facilitators liaised with HWs of Butere District Hospital
- Set up system of health education talks at HF & outreaches



# Visible results

- Increase # of sessions
- # women attending clinic has increased
- HF sees less sick children; more focus on immunization & GM
- More men accompanying wives
- Decrease stigma; more couples for C&T
- Tracing defaulters from grps





**Thank you!**



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