



Corridors

*Special focus
on Sweet
Mother Hospital
based program*

A NEWSLETTER OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES (HEDEN). JUNE 2007

Over the past 25 years the global death rate for children under five years has skyrocketed. New born death rate remains unacceptably high in the developing world - but saving mothers can help save the children.

Immunization, Oral rehydration and antibiotics have slashed deaths among infants and children over one month old. Where sanitation, better nutrition and medical care that includes family planning and maternity care are available for mothers, newborns also get a healthy start in life.

Unfortunately the needed care is not widely available in developing countries for either mothers or their babies. Strategies to reduce child and maternal deaths must ensure appropriate care during pregnancy and after childbirth. More often

*... Saving mothers
can help save
the children*

reducing the many unnecessary death in order to meet the millennium development goals.



Mothers Listening to Lecture on basic child care

than not, these deaths can be prevented through simple but cost effective methods, through Information, Education, Communication and distribution of intervention strategies.

It all start with the mothers and improving their health and knowledge. Health Education and Empowerment Initiatives (HEDEN) through her effort in the communities is bridging the gap and



Distributing anti Malarial Drugs.



Through the activities of the sweet mother program, large turnout of mothers have been witnessed at community health centres; thus advancing women and Children's health making motherhood safer.

Saving womens lives, saving children lives

Reaching out to Mothers and Children.

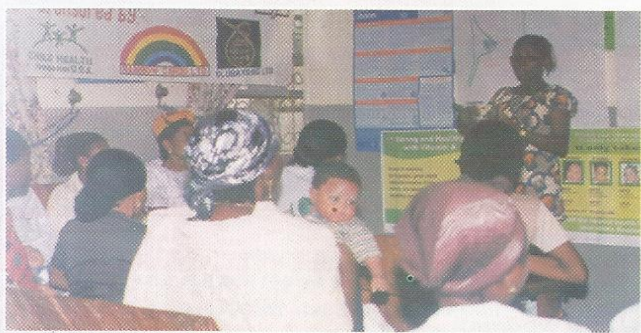
As part of her effort at promoting child and maternal health, Health Education and Empowerment Initiatives (HEDEN) is carrying out communication campaign programs in community health centres at the grassroots. The program is tagged “**Sweet Mother**”. According to the Executive Director of HEDEN Mrs. Folasade Ofurune, the hospital based program is designed to address the needs of mothers and their children as they seek health care services.

The Sweet Mother Program includes



Demostration of Mosquito Net Usage

lectures, video sessions on childcare, pregnancy care and exercise sessions. It also includes counselling sessions for mothers. The program is facilitated in some of the health centers in yoruba language due to the level of literacy in these



Facilitating a session on family planning

communities.

The question and answer session paves way for mothers to ask any question that bothers on their health and children's health. The participatory nature of the program is such that the mothers choose the topics they want and that is burning in their hearts such as breastfeeding, family planning, childcare and a host of others. To add momentum to the program, songs, demonstrations, role play and visual aids are included in the program in order to get the impact to these mothers.

As part of her intervention strategies HEDEN has distributed anti malarial drugs, vitamin C, fruits in season to mothers and children, including mosquito insecticide treated nets in some of the health centers in Lagos and Ogun states. The program is a sponsored project of Child Health Foundation(CHF) USA, Olubayo Nigeria Ltd and Rainbow Cards Ltd. The Sweet Mother Program has reached over 600 beneficiaries.



Timely care can save the lives of many women and their infants

Better Breastfeeding, Healthier lives.

Breastfeeding saves infants' lives, provides the best nutrition for infants and young children and benefits mothers health. Breastfeeding provides the best health benefits when started immediately after an infants birth, continued exclusively (without introducing other foods, liquids or water) for the first six months of life, and then continue along with suitable complimentary feeding through age one or longer.

Only breast-milk offers infants and young children complete nutrition, early protection against illness, and safe, healthy food- all at once.

As more women breastfeed, more children survive their first year and grow up healthy.

Gains in the practice of breastfeeding reduce levels of malnutrition and prevent child death from diarrhoea and pneumonia. Breastfeeding practices reduce risks of illness, malnutrition and early deaths the most.

Findings from the Sweet Mother Program shows that extending health services and programs into communities helps more women breastfeed exclusively and for longer durations.

Breastfeeding also improves women's health. Research indicates that breastfeeding reduces a mothers risk of ovarian and breast cancer. Breastfeeding also can improve a woman's ability to space her births.

Promoting breastfeeding is one of the most cost effective interventions to improve infant and child health. Breast-milk is the best and least expensive infant food. By preventing infant and child illnesses and deaths and by enabling women to space their births, breast-feeding reduces health costs.

Some comments from participants in the Sweet Mother program.

"This program has informed me on things I do not know. For example, I don't know that exercise is good during pregnancy."

-Rebecca Adeleke (expectant Mother)

"I have never had any opportunity like this before. It makes me happy anytime I recollect what I am learning from this program."

-Deborah Olagoke (pregnant mother)

"I have gained lots of experience from this program and have even taught others at home. My neighbor at home has shown interest and says she will be following me to the clinic."

-Monsurat Oyelumade (Nursing mother)

"I thank you for this program. It has really enlightened us. We are not the only one that needs this type of program. Even the nurses should be trained so that they can change their attitude with the way they treat us anyhow as if you are not human being."

-Sarah Akinwande (pregnant mother)



Breastfeeding saves children's lives

MANY OBSTACLES TO RECEIVING CARE

- Research Briefs and Findings

Why Do Women NOT seek services?

** The high rate of child mortality occur either during pregnancy or shortly after birth. Yet many mothers and women do not seek the essential health care they need during these periods.*

The factors that prevent women in our target communities and intervention sites from getting the life-saving health care they need include

- **Limited exposure to information and new ideas:** In many communities pregnancy is not seen as requiring special care and women do not recognize danger signs during pregnancy and therefore do not seek medical care.
- **The poor quality services including the negative attitude and poor treatment by nurses in the healthcare facilities** also make some women reluctant to seek such services.
- **Time wastage.** The time wasted in these healthcare facilities keeps women away from using them.
- **Many myths in the communities** also inhibits the women from seeking care. For instance there is the myth that ultra sound scan will kill a baby in the womb. Hence they do not seek ante natal care.
- **Fear of speaking out** about their health needs and concerns as some healthcare providers and nurses are not receptive and empathetic.
- **Illiteracy**- 75% of women age 25 and over are illiterate



Exercise Session for Pregnant women.



Nursing mothers listening to lectures on basic child care

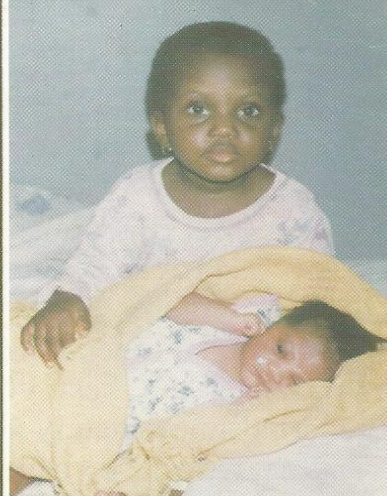
ABOUT SWEET MOTHER PROGRAM

The Sweet Mother hospital based program (a communication campaign project) is an initiative of **HEALTH EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVES (HEDEN)**. It is aimed at empowering parents and families with knowledge, resources, skills and behavior to ensure safe motherhood, healthy children and a good start in life for newborns.

Implementing Partners:



OLUBAYO NIG. LTD.



SPONSORSHIP AND COLLABORATION

For sponsorship and collaboration on the Sweet Mother Program,

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OR

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This special edition of Corridors newsletter highlights program activities being implemented by HEDEN in community health centres in rural communities in Lagos and Ogun States and funded by

- Child Health Foundation, USA
- Rainbow Cards Ltd.
- Olubayo Nig. Ltd.

Saving womens lives, saving children lives