

# Baby Friendly Community Initiative in Bondo District, Nyanza Province, Kenya

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## Introduction

- The Baby Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI) is a Seven Point Plan that focuses on the community level to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.
- In 2012, 53% of deliveries in Bondo District took place at home.
- Feeding practices were influenced by traditional beliefs, which included feeding infants liquids other than breastmilk within the first six months.
- From the baseline assessment it was clear that community involvement was critical to improving infant feeding practices.

## Objectives

- To protect, promote and support maternal, infant and young child feeding practices at the community level.

## Methods

- The BFCI package is being piloted in Bondo District.
- Health workers and Community Health Workers (CHWs) from four facilities of Bondo District were trained on BFCI using an orientation package developed in collaboration with Ministry of Health (MOH).
- The CHWs included Maternal, Infant, and Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) messages within routine community outreach activities and health providers offered facility based BFCI services.

## Methods continued

- CHW competencies were reinforced through supportive supervision.
- Formative assessment data results were compared at three different time points:
  - June/July 2011 (pre-intervention),
  - June 2012 (immediately after the training), and
  - September 2012 (after 3 months of intervention).

## Results

During the period between June 2012 and September 2012:

- Mother Support Group formation increased from 25% to 100%
- MIYCN policy statement translated into local language and strategically placed in all four facilities (no facility had the statement prior to the intervention)
- Decrease in the proportion of mothers interviewed who reported introducing prelacteal feeds after birth from 20% to 0%
- Increase in mothers interviewed who could name at least four benefits of breastfeeding from 20% to 80%
- Increase in number of facilities with a breastfeeding corner from 0% to 100%

## Conclusions

- Implementing the BFCI best practice standards at the community level is a proven way of increasing breastfeeding rates.
- By adopting the Baby Friendly Community Initiative, health workers and community health workers can give mothers the support, information and encouragement to continue breastfeeding for as long as they wish.



A CHW takes a couple through the MIYCN practices in Bondo District. Male support is a key component of BFCI.

Credit: Evelyn Matiri

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