



Ministry of Health



# **Maternity/Paternity protection and Workplace support for breastfeeding in Kenya**

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# Policy Environment

- Women represent 47% of the Kenya workforce - both formal and informal (World Bank, 2011)
- Kenya allows 90 days paid maternity leave and two weeks paternity leave plus annual leave (Kenya Employment Act 2007).
- The act recommends breastfeeding breaks - One or two breaks daily or a reduction in work hours in order for women to breastfeed their children up to 9 months of age
- The act is meant to facilitate working women to exclusively breastfeed their infants' for the first 6 months of life



## Compliance to the act – Formal sector

- A number of organization do provide the 90 days paid maternity leave and 14 days paternity leave.
- There is collective commitment by the private sector , Ministry of health (MOH) and UNICEF to strengthen workplace support for breastfeeding mothers after maternity leave.
- Many private and public sector partners have committed to the initiative branded “Better Business Practices for Children” – supported by UNICEF advocacy events



## Compliance to the act - informal sector

- Most employees in the informal sector are casual laborers and lack entitlement to paid maternity/paternity leave. Such mothers generally report back to work earlier than the 14 weeks as employment provides their only source of income.
- In the Act, breast feeding places are meant to be adopted **voluntarily** through the provision of facilities for nursing under adequate, hygienic conditions at or near the workplace
- To address challenges faced by women in this sector, emphasis has been on the workplace support for breastfeeding through advocacy and capacity enhancement of this sector in small changes that can make a difference.



# Actualization of Maternity protection and Workplace Breastfeeding Support

- UNICEF Kenya has been supporting the Ministry of Health in championing '*Better Business Practices for Children*' as part of an advocacy and partnerships strategy
- Advocacy with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) – an umbrella body for all private sector entities in Kenya and the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) has been a major breakthrough for Kenya.
- Through the partnership (MOH, KEPSA, and UNICEF), over **200** Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and heads of Human Resource in different organizations have signed a Statement of Commitment for **Better Business Practices for Children**.



# Strategic Partnerships



## KEPSA

- Created a formal and influential link to the private sector
- Conducted capacity assessment followed by enhancement
- Received financial support from UNICEF to sensitize the private sector
- Spearheaded the development a minimum package for the promotion of workplace support for Breastfeeding



## Concern Worldwide

- Received financial support from UNICEF to enhance capacity of the health care workers, communities and households on appropriate MIYCN including workplace support for Breast Feeding.
- Continues to advocate for workplace support for breastfeeding in the informal settlement in two major cities.



# Outcome

Some organizations have provided breastfeeding facilities and even childcare spaces:

**Examples** -Safaricom Kenya, Kenya Red Cross Society, International Medical Corps, Finlay Tea Farm, Oserian Flower Farm, Karen Roses Flower Farm, National Bank, Kenya Women Finance Trust, Red land roses.

- This has lead to improved retention of female employees - retention of valuable skills and experience, reducing recruitment and retraining costs
- Some organizations however are still weighing the option - need for continued advocacy and for them to recognize the mutual benefit of this investment

# Flower Farm Industry Example



- The centre can accommodate up to 70 children from 3 months to 3 years old
- Exclusive breastfeeding for six months is promoted – fridges, baby cots available
- After six months the children are fed a balanced diet – promoting good nutrition
- Employees at the centre - Nannies, a nurse & Early Childhood Development
- The concerned employees contribute for only \$7 per month, represents 10% of the real cost.





# Reported Benefits

## Clients

- Easier transition back to work after maternity leave
- Improved retention of female employees
- Lower employee absenteeism rates on account of improved child health

## Employers

- Improved employer /employee relations and greater loyalty
- Improved employer image
- Higher job productivity, employee satisfaction and morale
- Added recruitment incentives for women



# Way forward

## **Gates - UNICEF partnership:**

- Develop guidelines, M&E tools and an advocacy pack for work place support for Breast Feeding in the rural agricultural sector
- Model Workplace support in a tea estate in Western Kenya to develop evidence for policy makers (2yr programme just starting)
- Continued advocacy in the private sector through KEPSA

## **With EU- UNICEF partnership:**

- Continue with MoH support for MIYCN promotion in the informal sector