Ms Ester Mulenga
Namibia

Empowering mothers and caregivers on feeding practices for children under five
Empowering mothers and caregivers on feeding practices of children under 5 years in Oshikoto region, Namibia

Ester Mulenga (UNAM)& (NNA)
“Childhood nutrition and healthy eating is a cause that is extremely close to my heart” (Marcus Samuelsson)
The programme was necessitated by poor feeding practices:

- Exclusively breastfeed – 49%
- Breastfed till 2 years – 28%
- Bottle fed 2–3 months– 26%
- Complementary feeding start early
- Unsafe and inadequate nutrients
Poor feeding practices contribute to undernutrition in Namibia
Poor feeding practices contribute to undernutrition in Oshikoto region
Mothers and caregivers experience challenges which result in undernutrition of children under 5 years

Challenges experienced by mothers and caregivers

- Lack of information on nutrition and feeding practice
- Factors influenced feeding practices
- Limited resources
Shortage of information result in suboptimal feeding practices

Lack of information on nutrition and feeding practices

- Early breastfeed cessation
- Bottle feeding
- Early complementary feeding
- Non-responsive feeding
- Less feeding frequency
- Poor dietary diversity
Factors impacted feeding practices

- Food refusal and picky eating
- Child neglect and abandonment
- Alcohol abuse
- Unhygienic food practices
Limited resources hinder feeding practices

Inadequate resources

Household food insecurity

Financial challenges
Conceptual framework formed the basis of educational programme

Agent: researcher, nurses and midwives

Recipient: mothers and caregivers

Context: health facilities

Dynamics: challenges

Procedure: Programme

Terminus: Knowledgeable mothers/caregivers
An educational programme was developed according to Nicholls’s curriculum development model.

- **Situational analysis**
- **Selection of objectives**
- **Selection of content**
- **Selection of methods**
- **Evaluation of learning**
1. Title of the programme:
An educational programme to empower mothers and caregivers on feeding practices of children under the age of 5 years in Oshikoto region, Namibia

2. Purpose of the programme:
To empower mothers and caregivers with knowledge on feeding practice of children under the age of 5 years.

3. Objectives and content
Objectives and content are as follow
Objectives and content

Objective 1: To empower mothers and caregivers to utilise optimal feeding practices:

- Types of feeding: advantages and disadvantages
- Relationship between feeding practices and child’s health
- Conditions resulting from poor/sub-optimal feeding practices including signs and symptoms, prevention.
- Optimal feeding practices: breastfeeding, complimentary feeding, responsive feeding, feeding frequency
- Risk of inappropriate feeding practices
Objective 2. To empower mothers and caregivers to address different factors influencing feeding practices negatively:

Factors influencing feeding practices and prevention
- unhygienic food practices,
- food refusal and picky eating behaviours,
- alcohol abuse and
- child neglect and abandonment
Objective 3. To empower mothers and caregivers to gain nutritional and feeding practices information:

- Different types of food suitable for children under 5 years (local available).
- Food groups and their nutritional values

Objective 4. To empower mothers and caregivers to source out resources needed to facilitate feeding practices:

Resources needed to facilitate feeding practices:

- Promotion of household food security, homestead food production, food storage, food preparation)
- Tips how to overcome financial difficulties (income generating project)
Programme implementation phase

- Programme was piloted to mothers and caregivers in Oshikoto region
- Two days workshop was conducted

Different facilitating strategies were used.
- Group discussions (small and large)
- Lectures
- Role play
- Debate and ice breakers
Programme was evaluated by

- Experts - evaluated the training guide
- Participants: find it worthwhile
  - Daily evaluation - during programme implementation
  - At the end of the workshop
  - Pre and post tests
Conclusion

- The programme addressed the challenges in the pilot group.
- Mothers and caregivers` knowledge has improved.
- Fact sheets and posters are to be developed.
Acknowledgement

Dr. HJ Amukugo
Dr. SA. David

Eben–Ezer Branch

emulenga@unam.na