



The Governor of the Western Province, Lambert Dushimimana, reminded residents of Nyabihu District, especially male parents and all family members, to play an important role in helping mothers breastfeed their children properly. He made this announcement on Wednesday, August 7th, when the national breastfeeding week was officially launched in Kabatwa sector of the Nyabihu district in the Western province.



Dushimimana Lambert, Governor of Western Province

To continue improving child health and combating malnutrition and obesity in children under the age of five, the National Child Development and Protection Agency (NCDA), Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), and other partners have launched Breastfeeding Awareness Week, which started on August 1st and will end on August 30th. The theme is “A well-breasted child is our Pride.”

Some of the breastfeeding women who participated in this event said that it greatly helped them to understand the importance of breastfeeding their babies from birth without interruption for six months and providing them with a nutritious diet for proper growth and development.



Uwimana Marie Rosa, a mother of three, with the youngest being two months old, is from Gihogwe cell. She said that various programs helped her and her husband understand the importance of breastfeeding a child within the first hour after birth, breastfeeding for six months without interruption, and preparing a healthy diet for her family.

She said: “ My husband was supportive of me during my pregnancy periods and even when I gave birth to our children, he was around comforting me all the time and helped me do other house work even when we had a maid around, my first child grew up well and it helped me not to have miscarriages because I understood the importance of breastfeeding a child for at least 2 years.”

Governor Dushimimana said that there are men who still have an old outdated mentality of thinking that women have to carry all the burden of breastfeeding and doing house chores and therefore no need for them to be supportive of their women

during the transition period.

He said, "Some men still have the old tradition thinking that taking more care for women after she has given birth is not of their necessity, I call upon all men and especially in this district to tend to their women and help them in one way or the other for it leads to a good growth and development of a child."

Dushimimana thanked the partners involved in taking care of the health of the child and the mother.

Ingabire Assumpta, the Director General of the National Center for Child Development Agency(NCDA), reminded the people that breastfeeding a baby in the first hour after birth and if done properly, there is no harm to babies, she reminded men that they should help their wives during breastfeeding because one of the reasons why women don't breastfeed well is that they do not help them with housework after giving birth which causes conflicts in families.



Ingabire Assumpta, the Director General of the National Center for Child Development Agency(NCDA)

She said: " breastfeeding the baby in the first hour of birth and done properly is very important, this should be done with care and love men have to contribute as helping women with household chores."

Dr. Aline Uwimana, Director of the Department of Maternal and Child Health at RBC said that a child who is not taken care of properly may suffer from malnutrition and stunting.

She said: "Together with the health advisors, we continue to encourage mothers to breastfeed their babies well, especially in the first six months without breaking the cycle to protect her from cancer. When it comes to breastfeeding, we have reached an average of over 85%, but the goal is to reach 100%, having plans to collaborate with other agencies we hope to achieve the target."



Dr. Aline Uwimana, Director of the Department of Maternal and Child Health at RBC

Musoline Rwivanga 42 years and a father to four children in Kabatwa Sector in Gihorwe Kagari, says he did not know the importance of helping his wife during her

pregnancy and breastfeeding period for he concentrated much to his work and time with his friends.

“At first I didn’t know how importance of being there for my wife as I could leave her to tend to herself and the child,while I went to work and join my friends in the bar for a drink,however when she got pregnant for the second child, a health counselor visited our home and talked to us about the value of tending together the child and endeavor to leave some money for her necessities at home.” Said Rwivanga.

A study conducted on the health and well-being of households in 2015 (DHS 2015), showed that Rwanda had 87.3% of women who breastfed their children for six months without breaking the cycle and after five years, (in 2020) the number decreased to 80.9%. Those who were breastfeeding between four and five months were 80.8% in 2015, while in 2020 they decreased to 68.1%.



Child mortality rate among children under two years old in Rwanda was 20.4% and in Nyabihu District it was 31.6% from 35.3% in 2020.

Key partners in this campaign including “Health for All” from USAID, CRS, Caritas Rwanda contributed cheque worthy 8,100,000 million that was handed over to representatives of 36 villages of Kabatwa sector to enhance their implementation of child development programs.