

The Sub-saharan effect; COVID-19, maternal and neonatal health and community-centred approaches to building back better

Her Excellency Toyin Saraki
The Wellbeing Foundation Africa

This presentation which analyses the factors contributing to Nigeria's existing low rates of exclusive breastfeeding and explores how investments made in creating and strengthening the continuum of care have stood the test of resilience during COVID-19, and proved to be the enabler for a strong start to building back better.

Beginning with a situational analysis that explores key indicators and health trends in Nigeria since 2014, Her Excellency Toyin Saraki walks us through the historical interventions of her pioneering philanthropic foundation - The Wellbeing Foundation Africa - chronologically detailing strategic actions and collaborations successfully taken over the last decade through its flagship Mamacare360 Antenatal and Postnatal Education program alongside other collaborative programs implemented with global partners including UNFPA, Nutrition International, supported by Global Affairs Canada amongst others. The presentation progresses by shedding light on “Midwives at the Frontline of Promoting and Protecting Breastfeeding as a Shared Responsibility” exploring the instrumental role of health and care workers in advancing the continuum of care throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Lactation specific upskilling is given further inspection as a demonstration of progress, a reinvigoration of existing knowledge and a path to solidarity and restoration of autonomy before the presentation going on to explore the demand and respect on environment and infrastructural WASH for infection prevention and control.

A robust and holistic presentation, Her Excellency goes on to explore the ancillary role of women in leadership, donorship and the power of philanthropy, concluding with a strong call to action to mobilise for healthcare resilience, and leveraging the collaborative role of leaders, advocates and citizens in building back better.