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**Topic:** The first 1000 days, infant feeding, and early childhood development

**Title:** Accelerated efforts to improve breastfeeding rates in South Africa - Civil Society take Action South African Civil Society for Women, Adolescent and Child Health

**Presentation Type:** Workshop

**Purpose:** To develop a co-ordinated civil society-led breastfeeding advocacy implementation plan linked with the National Department of Health (NDOH) Breastfeeding Strategy

The technical content: Despite strong scientific evidence and the global and national calls to action, breastfeeding has not been embraced and supported by the general public in South Africa. Experts agree that while breastfeeding policies are sound and in place, the translation and implementation of these policies are weak across the health system including NGOs and CBOs engaged in child health and development. South Africa has a very strong history of civil action in health with victories in ARV treatment and most recently the legislation of reduction of salt and the taxation of sugar sweetened beverages. With the newly formed coalition, the South African Civil Society for Women, Adolescent and Child Health (SACSoWACH), lessons from these civil society actions can be applied to the improvement of breastfeeding practices in South Africa.

The workshop will be an opportunity to share the NDoH Breastfeeding Communication Strategy and align NGO/CBO on-going programmes to include breastfeeding promotion and support in all activities reaching mothers and infants. This will give SACSoWACH an opportunity to engage local NGOs/CBOs in an effort to develop an agreed reporting format on civil society activities conducted on BF promotion and support for progress monitoring and to plan and prepare for the civil society show-case at the World Breastfeeding Conference to be hosted in South Africa in December 2016

**Target audience:** civil society organizations engaged in women, maternal and child health and development programmes in South Africa

**Means of engagement:** Interactive presentations to stimulate discussion and debate. Participants will be engaged in group work to complete breastfeeding promotion advocacy strategies and promotion activities. Groups will provide feedback in using a variety of formats like role-play, flipchart, and presentations.

