SESSION 10: Case scenario

Credit: Save the Children / Nigeria[[1]](#footnote-1).

**Please see Presentation for instructions related to this handout.**

# The Grandmother’s Story – Volunteer 1

My daughter died forty days after giving birth to Aisha.

She had named the baby Aisha after me.

Soon after my daughter died, our village was attacked by insurgents and Aisha’s father went missing. Sometimes the insurgents take the men and train them to take up arms against their own people.

They attacked the village at 10pm. I was sleeping at the time but a neighbor woke me up and told me to take what I could and run. I ran with Aisha to the next village but at midnight the insurgents attacked that village too. The bullets were the size of my finger and they were firing them everywhere. Once it was over, I was the only person left to care for Aisha.

I am old so I tried to run with a group of men but we were captured by the insurgents. One man was killed, one escaped and two were caught. The insurgents ransacked the villages. They kill what they can, destroy the shops, take all the food. They abduct the wives and doctors and take all the drugs and equipment.

As soon as my daughter died, I washed myself and started breastfeeding Aisha. I had no money so I could only eat corn and I was told to buy milk but I couldn’t afford it. I eventually came to a Save the Children clinic.

# The Stabilisation Centre Physician’s Story – Volunteer 2

Aisha came in with her granddaughter and was very anxious about where she was. Being from such a remote part of the country, she is not familiar with hospitals. She was jittery about the environment and was confused and apprehensive.

We talked to Aisha and explained that we were here to support her to take care of her baby. We asked her about the baby’s condition and we took down the family history.

That was when I started to learn about Aisha’s story. She told me that her only daughter – the baby’s mother – had died. I asked about the father and she told me that he had been abducted and that she does not know if he is alive or dead.

I asked if she was getting support from anywhere else and she said she had nobody. She broke down and cried when she told us this. It was very emotional. We told her that she still had her granddaughter and that could be her reason to keep going on. We explained that we were going to take care of her and her baby and that settled her.

The child came in at 1.9 kilograms. She was so small that you could hold her in one hand. Aisha was already trying to put her granddaughter to her breast but the fact that she had not breastfed in decades meant that the milk was slow to come. It was just beginning to flow but it was not yet sufficient.

We started a process called Supplementary Suckling Technique where we put a little tube from a cup of milk beside the nipple, so when the baby suckles it is rewarded with milk. This suckling also sends a message to Aisha’s brain to stimulate milk production.

There are actually many women in remote villages in Nigeria who breastfeed other women’s babies. Maternal mortality is quite high so we often see sisters breastfeeding the children of their deceased sisters. These support systems are very important.

Any woman can breastfeed even if she has never had a child or hasn’t breastfed in many years as long as she regularly puts the baby to the breast. This approach is free and anyone can do it, but sometimes skilled support is needed.

If Aisha hadn't received this support the baby would have had difficulties latching on to the nipple and suckling adequately, as she was weak and very small. This intervention was absolutely necessary and the baby could have died without it.

It gives us a lot of satisfaction to see Aisha smiling and breastfeeding her grandchild. You can only imagine how she would have felt if she had lost this baby. You try to picture the chain of events that would have followed. Now, she has a reason to remain hopeful and to keep going and that is a really big deal.

1. **These interviews are taken from a case study produced by Save the Children International.** When using this case study DO NOT change any of the details. For more information about Save the Children’s work in Nigeria, visit <http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.9086271/k.C5BA/Nigeria.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)