



WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

SUSTAINING BREASTFEEDING TOGETHER

1 - 7
August
2017

Objectives of WABA|World Breastfeeding Week 2017



INFORM

Understand the importance of working together across the four Thematic Areas



ANCHOR

Recognise your role and the difference you make within your area of work



ENGAGE

Reach out to others to establish areas of common interest



GALVANISE

Work together to achieve the SDGs by 2030

INTRODUCTION

WBW2017 celebrates working together for the common good, which produces sustainable results, greater than the sum of our individual efforts.

Evidence on the benefits of breastfeeding is already available to us. We know that breastfeeding aids the survival of infants and helps them thrive, has long-term health benefits for women, yields economic benefits and enhances the wellbeing of all. The challenge for champions of breastfeeding is to translate globally agreed policies to positive action in our communities.

We learnt in WBW2016 how the protection, promotion and support for breastfeeding are a key to sustainable development. We grouped the 17 SDGs into four Thematic Areas that relate to each other and to breastfeeding. These four groups help us to define our work in the context of the SDGs. From this year onwards, they will also help us find others to work with.

Many hands make light work and each of us has a part to play. Let us start!

SUSTAINING COLLABORATION

Starting with WBW 2017, WABA will create an online platform to enable celebrants to work with others to achieve long-term goals. The online platform can help with the following:

1. Identify gaps and actions

The Resources section will have relevant information that can help identify gaps and ideas on how to address them.

2. Find potential partners

Find partners who wish to collaborate on common goals and actions.

3. Share and learn

Manage your collaboration more effectively. Share your experiences of working together and learn from others!

4. Assess and plan

Review your experience and achievements and prepare for future actions.



NUTRITION, FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION

1 NO
POVERTY2 ZERO
HUNGER3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION

WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS SECTORS AND GENERATIONS

Breastfeeding is a vital part of sustainable development and a non-negotiable component of global action to end malnutrition. Increased rates of exclusive and continued breastfeeding can only be achieved by cooperating and collaborating across sectors and generations.

Fortunately, the importance of working in partnership is increasingly recognised as a critical factor and incorporated into many global initiatives. For example, Women Deliver's *Deliver for Good* campaign and Every Woman Every Child's *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health* recognise that cross-collaboration is fundamental in achieving the SDGs. The campaigns place access to good nutrition as a central recommendation. Breastfeeding is included as a target to ensure maternal and child survival, health and nutrition.

We must advocate that governments - in partnership with civil-society movements and others working for the common good - create environments that allow women and children to thrive. We must also focus on young people and vulnerable groups, such as adolescents, single mothers, and migrants.

Breastfeeding is not just a woman's issue or the sole responsibility of a woman - the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding is a collective societal responsibility shared by us all.



Harold Lubanga-Kiryowa © WABA 2008

ACTION POINTS

1. Advocate for breastfeeding to be positioned as a vital part of the Sustainable Development Goals by linking it to as many of the SDGs as possible
2. Adopt a multi-sectoral approach to breastfeeding advocacy and implementation of programmes by engaging nutrition, health, labour and finance advocates
3. Use the Return on Investment case as an advocacy tool targeting decision-makers
4. Work together to adopt and implement effective nutrition policies to position nutrition and breastfeeding as basic human rights
5. Ensure that breastfeeding is included in nutrition programmes in both urban and rural communities

SURVIVAL, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1 NO
POVERTY3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING4 QUALITY
EDUCATION10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES

CREATING A UNIFIED VOICE

Breastfeeding is a key contributor to the survival, health and wellbeing of infants and mothers. Put simply, it provides babies with the best possible start in life.

The 2016 Lancet Breastfeeding Series provides an up-to-date analysis of available research on breastfeeding. Improved breastfeeding practices have the potential to save the lives of 823,000 children and 20,000 women a year and contribute significantly to long-term health. Urgent steps are needed to coordinate global action to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

WHO, UNICEF and 20 other prominent international agencies and non-governmental organisations have formed the global *Breastfeeding Advocacy Initiative (BAI)*, to unify the voices of breastfeeding advocates. The aim of this is to increase awareness of the importance of breastfeeding as a foundation of child and maternal survival, health and wellbeing, which resonates with Every Woman Every Child's (EWEC) *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health*.

We know that when partners have a unified voice, political support is gained. Advocacy is our most effective tool to secure the political, financial and social support we need. Persuasive advocacy messages should be based on latest evidence of the benefits of breastfeeding.

There is an agreed goal for all governments to prioritise the World Health Assembly (WHA) global target for an increase in the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50% by the year 2025. Let's advocate together to transform evidence into action for breastfeeding.



Delly Mishu © WABA 2013

ACTION POINTS

1. Join forces with other global, regional or national initiatives for greater impact
2. Advocate to decision-makers for greater political, financial and social support
3. Align your strategies and workplans with those of allies and partners
4. Use latest evidence on the short- and long-term benefits of breastfeeding for your advocacy work
5. Advocate to your government to work towards the WHA global target

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



CONVERSATIONS BEYOND BREASTFEEDING

The health of our planet is affected by the way babies are fed. Breastmilk is a natural, renewable food that is produced and delivered without pollution, packaging or waste. The breastmilk substitute industry, on the other hand, carries a negative environmental impact that is not commonly recognised. Safeguarding breastfeeding links human life with the wellbeing of our planet in a powerful way. It is time for conversations about breastfeeding to go beyond nutrition and health.

The health of our future generations is affected by the health of our planet. Exposure to hazardous working conditions including pesticides impacts negatively on a woman's ability to breastfeed safely. Organisations such as the Pesticide Action Network work to highlight the dangers of working and breastfeeding in polluted environments.

To start, we must make common cause with groups working on environmental issues and make the link between breastfeeding and climate change. We must champion the message that breastfeeding contributes to reducing carbon footprint. Younger generations must be informed of the negative environmental impact of breastmilk substitutes.

Advocacy messages need to include environmental issues like curbing overuse of pesticides and fertilisers. Partnerships with grassroots organisations that work among poor and marginalised groups should be prioritised. Lastly, the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes is a framework to regulate the formula feeding industry. This Code helps to safeguard both the environment and the right to breastfeed. We must work to ensure that it is implemented and monitored effectively.



Gokul Pathak © WABA 2013

ACTION POINTS

1. Use links between breastfeeding and the environment as part of your advocacy
2. Normalise breastfeeding as a sustainable method of feeding infants
3. Raise awareness on how breastfeeding contributes to reducing carbon footprint
4. Talk to youth about the environmental impact of formula feeding
5. Ensure that the Code is fully implemented and monitored regularly

WOMEN'S PRODUCTIVITY AND EMPLOYMENT

1 NO
POVERTY4 QUALITY
EDUCATION5 GENDER
EQUALITY8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES

CHANGING ATTITUDES

When breastfeeding has to be combined with paid work, especially under precarious circumstances, the challenges may be overwhelming. Policies and legislation that protect a woman's right to breastfeed and work are thus essential.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) *Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)* calls for actions and laws in each country to improve maternity protection.

We must first see a change in attitudes. Breastfeeding and work must be understood as a matter of rights and gender equality. One example is WABA's *Empowering Parents Campaign (EPC)*, which seeks to champion the active involvement of both men and women by promoting gender equity in both paid and caregiving work.

We must also use data and evidence. In 2004, the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) launched the *World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)* to assess and monitor implementation of key breastfeeding policies and programmes at national level.

Unfortunately, millions of women remain unprotected. Breastfeeding is part of the reproductive cycle, and women should be able to combine breastfeeding and paid work without discrimination or disadvantage. Workplaces need to be more breastfeeding-friendly. We must work together to ensure that women in the formal and informal sectors have the parental social protection that they need.



John Musisi © WABA 2013

ACTION POINTS

1. Advocate for parental social protection for all women in both formal and informal sectors
2. Partner with Trade Unions and employers to ensure collective bargaining agreements that will support working parents
3. Work with employers to develop family-friendly workplace initiatives and creches at or nearby the workplace
4. Engage with universities to conduct multidisciplinary research to identify gaps and best practice models
5. Get involved in the WBTi process in your country
6. Develop awareness and attitudinal change campaigns e.g. normalising breastfeeding in public spaces

A WARM CHAIN OF SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING



Sustaining Breastfeeding-Together reminds us that we all have a part to play in creating an enabling environment for women to breastfeed successfully. We can achieve this by attracting political support, media attention and the participation of a range of actors, especially young people.

WABA calls on partners to work together to widen the pool of activism around the mother-baby dyad. Our *Warm Chain of Support for Breastfeeding* campaign strives to link different actors by coordinating efforts at all levels to provide a continuum of care for mothers and babies following the first 1,000 days timeline. Consistent messages and proper referral systems throughout the warm chain will ensure the mother-baby dyad benefits from ongoing support and skilled assistance.

A team effort is needed to make breastfeeding work. We need to link change-makers at community, country, regional and global levels to call for collective action and impact. All mothers will then be empowered with a satisfying and effective breastfeeding experience.

Optimal infant-feeding practices

Breastfeeding is vital to the healthy growth and development of infants. It also has important implications for the health of mothers.

WHO and UNICEF recommend:

- Initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of life
- Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months is the optimal way of feeding infants. Exclusive breastfeeding – the infant only receives breastmilk without any additional food or drink, not even water
- Breastfeeding on demand
- No use of bottles, teats or pacifiers
- After 6 months, infants should receive complementary foods with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond



Common Purpose for the Common Good

One important aspect of partnerships is the issue of conflicts of interest (CoI). In the context of infant and young child feeding, conflicts of interest do not only apply to health professionals. It may arise for anyone (including a non-professional health worker or health educator) or any organisation (e.g. hospitals, NGOs, or government agencies) responsible for promoting optimal infant and young child feeding when they accept gifts, sponsorship or any other source of funding from the baby food industry.

It is important to avoid conflicts of interest and choose partners carefully that are willing to defend the public interest rather than commercial interests. Safeguards need to be put in place to avoid or minimise the risk of CoI.

While forging partnerships, the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and all subsequent WHA Resolutions are essential safeguards that should be considered a priority.

ACTION POINTS

1. Train teams of midwives, nurses, physicians, nutritionists, public health advocates and community workers on breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding
2. Focus on supporting breastfeeding in vulnerable groups e.g. adolescent and single mothers
3. Adopt a gender lens to breastfeeding protection, promotion and support by working with organisations that champion women's issues and involved fatherhood
4. Involve all segments of the society in the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding e.g. celebrate World Breastfeeding Week in your community!

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SPONSORSHIP: WABA does not accept sponsorship of any kind from companies producing breastmilk substitutes, related equipment and/or complementary foods that displace breastfeeding. WABA encourages all participants of World Breastfeeding Week to respect and follow this ethical stance.

www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org
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World Breastfeeding Week is coordinated by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. WABA's core partners are the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM), International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), La Leche League International (LLL), and Wellstart International. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

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