



be spent on bottle feeding and on illnesses caused by bottle feeding.

Benefits for employers

- Employers who support their workers to meet both their family and work responsibilities benefit from less absenteeism, less staff turnover, and improved worker productivity and morale. Because breastfed babies are healthier, workers are less often absent; some programmes to support breastfeeding workers have had a two-fold return on money invested.



WABA

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- Companies who establish Mother-Friendly Workplaces will be viewed as good progressive employers, supportive of families.

Environmental benefits

- Breastfeeding is ecological in its production, consumption and disposal. It uses renewable resources and produces only biodegradable wastes.
- As more working women choose to breastfeed, employers will need to make workplaces safer and cleaner, and food producers will need to consider the toxic effects of pesticides.

Economic benefits

- The health sector saves money by not having to buy infant formula and feeding bottles. It also saves money indirectly because breastfed babies are less frequently and less severely ill.
- Countries save foreign exchange by not having to import breastmilk substitutes.

Build on successes

Working women can and do breastfeed!

MOTHERS everywhere struggle to balance child-care and their work responsibilities. Some workplaces make this integration easier:

- In Uruguay, the public sector allows women to work half-time in order to breastfeed during the baby's first six months. Mothers receive 100 per cent of their salary.
- Groups such as 'Maria Liberacion' in Central Mexico support domestic workers to negotiate better arrange-



ments during and after pregnancy, so that they can also breastfeed.

- In Mozambique, women from a cashew nut processing plant work near to a creche where they can breastfeed their babies twice a day. They work in pairs to offer mutual support. Their babies have been found to be far healthier than bottle-fed babies.
- Large corporations sometimes provide generous maternity benefits to women executives in order to retain these highly trained and valued employees. The Los Angeles Department of Power and Water, for instance, provides a breastfeeding support and consultation service for employees.
- Some construction sites in India and Thailand provide mobile creches for women working at the sites.
- In the Philippines, an alternative child-care service called 'Arugaan' organised by and for working women provides wet nursing. Breastfeeding mothers manage the child-care centre and breastfeed their own babies as well as other babies.
- Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok has a creche for infants up to 1 1/2 years old so that nursing staff and other employees can breastfeed their baby at their place of work.

Every mother is a working woman. It is a particular challenge to assist women to practise optimal breastfeeding.