



**Protect Breastfeeding
Promote Baby-Friendly Hospitals
Support Mother-Friendly Environments**

1993

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WABA

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of organizations and individuals, who believe breastfeeding to be the right of all children and mothers and who act to protect, promote and support this right. WABA works in close liaison with UNICEF.

BREASTFEEDING, WOMEN AND WORK

MOTHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE INITIATIVE (MFWI)



World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 1-7 August, 1993

WHY WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK?

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) organises World Breastfeeding Week as part of its global mobilization strategy to increase public awareness on the importance of breastfeeding. From 1-7 August every year, communities around the world campaign to revitalize and maintain a breastfeeding culture worldwide. Although WABA works on the promotion of breastfeeding all year round, it uses WBW as a particular time when attention of the wider public can be focused and activities can be concentrated. WBW also allows WABA to coordinate efforts to meet the targets of the Innocenti Declaration. This Declaration states that by 1995 all governments should have:

- a National Breastfeeding Coordinator and a multi-sectoral National Breastfeeding Committee;
- ensured that every facility providing maternity services practise all ten of the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* as outlined jointly by WHO and UNICEF;
- a National Breastfeeding Coordinator and a multi-sectoral National Breastfeeding Committee;
- ensured that the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes is implemented; and
- enacted imaginative legislation protecting the breastfeeding rights of working women and established means for its enforcement.

BABY-FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE (WBW 1992):

WABA launched the first WBW on the theme of the *Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative* (BFHI), on 1 August 1992. The aim of the BFHI is to encourage all institutions and facilities providing maternity services to practise the 10 Steps for Successful Breastfeeding as suggested in a WHO/UNICEF Joint Statement. This initiative has made almost 70 countries around the world recognize the importance of breastfeeding and encouraged them to initiate activities and programmes in support of breastfeeding. More and more hospitals are now converting their institutions into baby-friendly facilities. WABA's *Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative* Action Folder has been a key instrument in aiding groups promote the BFHI.

MOTHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE INITIATIVE (WBW 1993):

The challenge now for WABA is to take baby-friendliness outside the hospitals into other parts of society. For WBW 1993, WABA intends to highlight the situation of breastfeeding mothers in their workplace to create environments supportive of breastfeeding everywhere. The *Mother-Friendly Workplace Initiative* (MFWI) is WABA's theme for 1993. WABA hopes that through this initiative, the home, streets, markets, farms, offices, factories and other workplaces - both formal and informal - will become more mother-friendly work environments. We realize that although this is an enormous and difficult challenge, nevertheless, it is one which is vital. The initiative therefore needs concrete action to support the rights of women and children to breastfeed. Our common task is to ensure that women are able to successfully combine breastfeeding and work, be it work at home or in paid employment.

The goals of WBW 1993 are:

- To create public awareness of the rights of working women to breastfeed;
- To facilitate and protect cultural/traditional practices which are supportive to the breastfeeding mother working at or away from home;
- To involve community leaders and other popular groups (ecological, women and development groups) in developing the social support needed for women in the informal and agrarian sectors to combine breastfeeding and work;
- To have more trade unions demand maternity rights and provide a supportive work environment for all women workers who choose to breastfeed (eg. a creche, better transport, etc.);
- To ensure that national legislation to protect the breastfeeding rights of working women is implemented in as many countries as possible; and
- To make as many workplaces as possible become Mother-Friendly.

Suggestions for Action:

- discuss with co-workers and friends the importance of breastfeeding;
- set up a (mother) support group at your workplace to discuss how to make your work environment more suitable for breastfeeding; take these ideas to your employer;
- contact your union, if you have one, or the closest worker support group or community representative to discuss breastfeeding and the need for adequate maternity entitlements and a supportive work environment for breastfeeding;
- be more involved with union decision making and help get breastfeeding support mechanisms on the list of priority demands;
- find out about maternity legislation in your country and start to collaborate with your employer on implementing such legislation at your workplace;
- contact groups working on breastfeeding in your country/region and inform them about the MFWI to coordinate efforts;
- involve the media in publicising the initiative;
- if you're an employer, adopt measures necessary for a supportive work environment and be an example to other employers;

WABA plans to produce an Action Folder and a basic information kit for WBW 1993. WABA invites volunteers to help translate these materials into local languages for popular mobilization in your country.

If you need more information or have any interesting ideas for WBW 1993 in terms of publications, advocacy and display materials, activities/programmes, networking, etc, please contact either one of the following:

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WABA

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of organizations and individuals, who believe breastfeeding to be the right of all children and mothers, and who work to protect, promote and support this right. WABA acts on the Innocenti Declaration and works in close liaison with UNICEF.