

# Ideas for Action

## The Ecological Movement

This year environmentalists are our main partners. Find the groups that operate near you. Discuss with them the impact of the use of baby foods on the environment and invite them to join WBW.

### What you can do:

- ☼ “Environment Day”, 5 June, is a good opportunity for a public launch of the WBW theme. Join events that environmental groups organize on that day and talk about the impact of bottle feeding on the environment.
- ☼ Ask environmental groups to refuse any donations or support from infant food, bottle and teat manufacturers.
- ☼ Suggest that the issue of “Environmental impact of bottle feeding” be included on agendas of environmental groups.
- ☼ Hold a street demonstration and build a “mountain of waste” produced by artificial feeding: bottles, teats, milk cans, etc. To feed one baby for a year, 40 kilograms of powdered formula are needed: which is equivalent to 80 tins of 500 grams.
- ☼ Ecologists are a good source of information on the local situation: How much forest is destroyed to make room for cattle? How much processed milk is imported or exported? How many cans of baby food are sold each year in your country? etc.

## General Public

The general public should be involved in WBW.

### What you can do:

- ✎ Write to your government representatives, environmental activist groups, and anyone else working for a cleaner environment to tell them how important breastfeeding is to the health of the environment. Ask that they support breastfeeding in legislation and other appropriate activities.
- ✎ Contact political parties and politicians who sympathize with environmental issues to suggest that the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes be included in their political agenda.
- ✎ Contact government agencies responsible for environmental concerns and invite them to join WBW events.
- ✎ Ask government institutions that develop educational programmes for schools, natural history museums, etc. to talk about the WBW between 1 and 7 August. Suggest activities for children and youth.
- ✎ Contact retail merchants who sell environmentally sound merchandise. They may put a World Breastfeeding Week poster in their store window in August.
- ✎ If there are recycling stations in your town, put WBW posters up at the station near you.
- ✎ Put information about the ecological advantages of breastfeeding in your local religious newsletter, local newspaper and free grocery store handout newsletters.
- ✎ Wear a WBW T-shirt, button or sticker everywhere you go during the month of August.

## Children and Adolescents

The 1997 WBW theme, in particular, encourages the participation of children and young people and, therefore, teachers. It is an excellent opportunity to awaken interest in breastfeeding among future mothers and fathers.

### What you can do:

- ☺ Work with local environmental groups to develop activities, since many have experience in working with children and adolescents.
- ☺ Ask the educational authorities of your city, state or country to include WBW in the calendar of school events.
- ☺ Contact your local school board, elementary principal or your child’s individual teachers and ask if you can invite a pro-breastfeeding professional to give a presentation to the class about the ecological advantages of breastfeeding. Have a participatory activity to get the message across.
- ☺ Organize joint meetings with school teachers and staff, lecturers and administrators, to plan WBW activities, such as:
  1. Competitions and exhibits of paintings, drawings, photographs or essays on “Breastfeeding and Ecology”;
  2. Public meetings on protection of the environment and breastfeeding. Ask children to dress up for these events, or to wear masks of mammals;
  3. Dance, theater and music shows on the theme;
  4. Games and recreational activities on “Breastfeeding and Ecology” for schools;
  5. Looking at the WABA home page on the Internet with children and adolescents (<http://www.elogica.com.br/waba>);
  6. Observe different mammals and their habits. Point out that humans are the only mammals that give their offspring milk from a different species;
  7. Research on other mammals. What are their peculiarities? How long do they breastfeed? What does their milk look like?;
  8. Compare the composition of different kinds of milk. For instance, ask why does dolphin’s milk have so much fat? (To satisfy the needs of its offspring.) Point out that each species’ milk is made to match its needs.
  9. Contact your local youth groups to organize an ecology fair. Have a health booth on breastfeeding. Hold the event near a place where these groups can organize a “Clean City” event like picking up litter from the river or parks in their area.
  10. Advertise the events in newspapers and on radio and emphasize that it is being sponsored in honor of *World Breastfeeding Week*, publicizing this year’s theme.

**WBW material for children and adolescents:** WABA Brazil and Origem Group have produced a cartoon magazine and a multimedia educational software called “**Breastfeeding: Nature’s Way**” addressed mainly to young people. It is available from WBW International Coordinator in various languages.