

# Progress to Date and Ensuring the Future

For the past decade the BFHI has been an important catalyst for protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding globally. As of June 1999, a total of 14,637 facilities had been designated as baby-friendly, including 1,788 in Africa, 1,172 in Latin America/Caribbean, 10,428 in Asia, 780 in the Middle East, 230 in Eastern Europe, and 239 in other industrialized countries.

As of June 1999, the number of countries with at least one Baby-Friendly facility had risen to 132 and four countries each had over 1,000 hospitals designated as Baby Friendly: China (6312),



India (1250), Nigeria (1036) and the Philippines (1047). And by the same date seven other countries—Sweden (66), Comoros Islands (19), Eritrea (46), the Maldives (5), Namibia (35), Iraq (23), and

monitoring the BFHI, ensuring sustainability, and reinforcing the fact that the issues of HIV/AIDS and breastfeeding do not require a change in the BFHI.

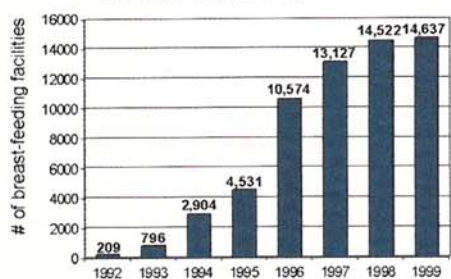
In **Nicaragua**, the National Plan for Breastfeeding and the Mother-Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (MBFHI) has creatively involved many sectors of the society including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and universities, as well as the health system.

Hospitals helped the NGOs establish mother-support groups, thus creating positive links between hospital and community. Early skin-to-skin contact (Step 4) has reduced abandonment of newborns in the hospital. The MBFHI has spawned several important related initiatives such as the Woman-Baby Friendly University Initiative, which fosters breastfeeding for faculty, students, university staff and the community at large, and the Mother-Baby Friendly Primary Health Care Center Initiative. SILAIS's (health district) with 100% of their health units certified as "mother-baby friendly" are then designated as "mother-baby friendly SILAIS's." National data as well as data from the first designated SILAIS (Boaco) shows the impact of the Initiative in terms of exclusive breastfeeding rates; sources of data are national surveys for Nicaragua and district surveys for Boaco. Unanticipated outcomes of the initiative have included: increased motivation on the part of all staff to reach a common goal, improved team work, and joint ownership of accomplishments and results by the health staff and the community.

Despite reduced health funding and increasing poverty in **Mongolia**, support for optimal practices has risen dramatically in one key area: breastfeeding. With 98% of mothers giving birth in health facilities, there has been a striking change in practices from separation at birth, restricted feeds, and widespread use of the bottle to a situation where the "10 Steps" are the norm and all 27 major facilities have achieved BFHI status.

While in 1992 only 48% of mothers breastfed their infants at all at four months, now 93% of babies are exclusively breastfed at this

**Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative Global Progress by Year**



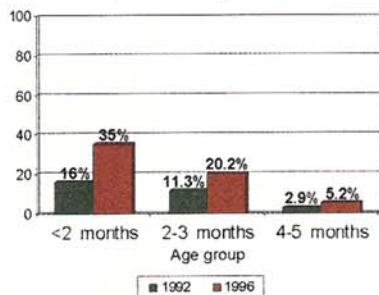
Source: UNICEF, Nutrition Section, June 2, 1999

Oman (51) – had achieved Baby-Friendly accreditation in 100% of their hospitals/maternity facilities.

This progress has been achieved through effective partnerships at all levels (governmental, community, institutional, and individual). It has demonstrated the commitment by national authorities to the Innocenti Declaration developed in 1990 at an international policy makers' meeting convened to focus on the need to promote, protect and support breastfeeding worldwide. In many countries, the BFHI has had far-reaching and sometimes unforeseen results. The following are selected examples of some of these accomplishments, lessons learned, and challenges that remain.

## Zambia

**Exclusive Breastfeeding Rates 1992 & 1996**



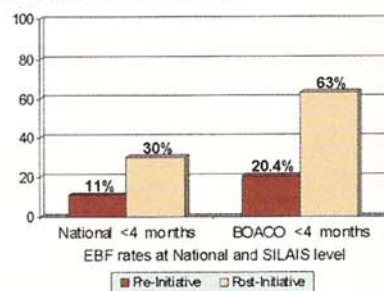
Source: Demographic Health Surveys

After the BFHI was launched in **Zambia** in 1992, a team-building approach to training of trainers, extending out to the district health management teams, helped ensure widespread commitment to BFHI and to contin-

ued support at the community level. By 1999, 47 hospitals were Baby-Friendly.

Challenges such as the traditional practice of giving other fluids and foods to breastfeeding infants are being addressed with the help of Zambia's system of mother support groups (Step 10). The results have been very encouraging, with rates of exclusive breastfeeding increasing dramatically from 1992 to 1996. The current focus is on

**Nicaragua Exclusive Breastfeeding Rates 1992 & 1998**



Source: Family Health Survey 1992-1993, DHS 1998, Project Hope reports 1995 & 1997