

# Breastfeeding in the Information Age

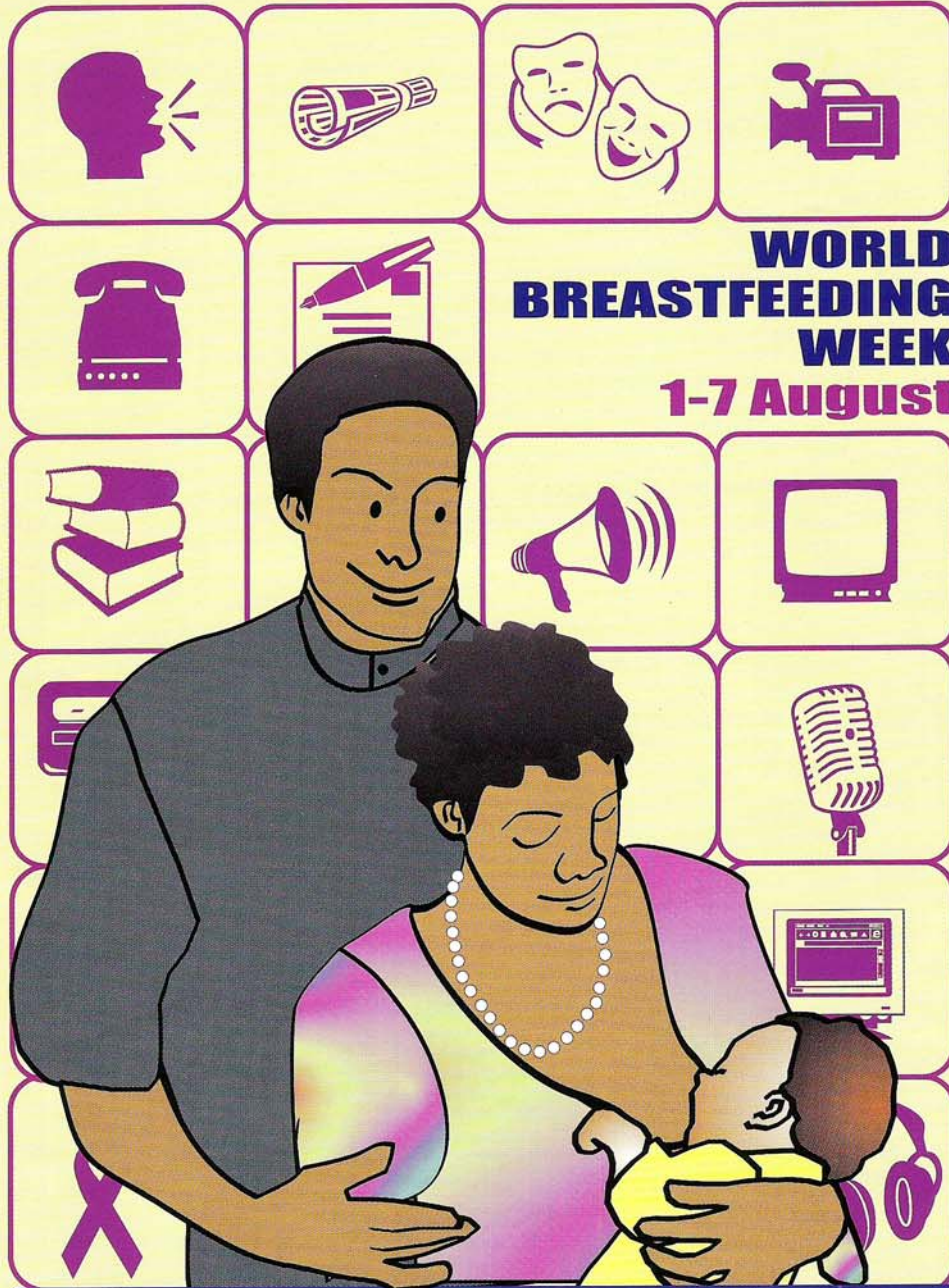
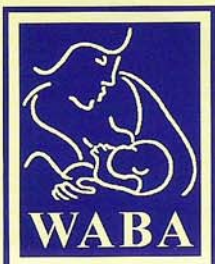


Illustration: Liborio & Paulo Santos

**WORLD  
BREASTFEEDING  
WEEK**  
1-7 August

**WABA 2001**



WORLD ALLIANCE FOR  
BREASTFEEDING ACTION

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of organisations and individuals who believe breastfeeding is the right of all children and mothers and who devote themselves to protect, promote and support that right. WABA acts to help implement the Innocenti Declaration and works in close liaison with UNICEF. World Breastfeeding Week is celebrated in over 120 countries every year: 2000 *Breastfeeding: It's Your Right!* • 1999 *Breastfeeding: Education For Life* • 1998 *Breastfeeding: The Best Investment* • 1997 *Breastfeeding: Nature's Way* • 1996 *Breastfeeding: A Community Responsibility* • 1995 *Breastfeeding: Empowering Women* • 1994 *Protect-Infant Health: Making the Code Work* • 1993 *Mother-Friendly Workplace Initiative* • 1992 *Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative* WABA, PO Box 1200, Penang 10850, Malaysia. Tel: 604-658 4816 Fax: 604-657 2655 Email: [secr@waba.po.my](mailto:secr@waba.po.my) Website: [www.waba.org.br](http://www.waba.org.br) • [www.waba.org.my](http://www.waba.org.my)

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# Breastfeeding in the Information Age

The ability to communicate is something we learn very early in life. For example, the gentle kick in a mother's belly is a baby's first contact with the outside world. During breastfeeding, a baby's eye contact with its mother helps induce the 'let-down' reflex and its suckling sends all kinds of information and signals to the right spots within the mother's body to produce more milk at the right time, right temperature and right amount for baby.

Each year new research reaffirms the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for about six months and continued breastfeeding while providing adequate complementary foods up to two years of life and beyond.

Breastmilk provides optimal nourishment for infants and reduces the risks of certain diseases, including diarrhoea, and respiratory tract (including pneumonia), ear, and urinary tract infections. The act of breastfeeding is an essential component of good child care, contributing to healthy growth and psychosocial development. Breastfeeding also reduces women's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, iron deficiency anemia, and hip fracture.

## Impact of new technologies

Interference with infant feeding occurs more and more often with the advent of new information and communication technologies and the exploitation by unethical business practices. While we recognise that such technologies can be exploited to negatively impact on lifestyles and consumption patterns undermining breastfeeding, we also acknowledge the great leaps they have made to facilitate speedier and more widespread distribution of information. Breastfeeding advocates must ensure that timely, accurate, relevant and culturally appropriate breastfeeding messages are conveyed.

This year's WBW theme, *Breastfeeding in the Information Age* underscores the importance of transforming and conveying the facts of breastfeeding via all the available forms of communication such as the internet, radio, TV, video, newspapers, cartoons, story telling, puppets, music, drama, role-play, flip charts and billboards.

## NETPOP Project

ORIGEM, a Brazilian breastfeeding and mother support group is working on a government-supported project which involves teaching computer skills and internet access to poor people for free. They are training 11,000 people in computer skills and have created four centers for free internet access in poor communities. Through Netpop, ORIGEM also conducts breastfeeding advocacy work, and promotes maternal nutrition.

## World Breastfeeding Week

1-7 August

### The goals are:

- to highlight the various forms and modes of communication and effective ways of using them
- to emphasise core breastfeeding information (eg. exclusive breastfeeding)
- to share ideas and experiences on communicating challenging issues and threats to breastfeeding
- to provide and stimulate more innovative and helpful approaches to support breastfeeding mothers

### Start acting now!

- Campaign at the national and international levels, using television, print and radio, including community radio stations
- Develop a global online network for a multi-cultural breastfeeding resource site
- Organise a workshop to help breastfeeding advocates and mothers overcome the fear of using new technologies
- Facilitate the creation of a network of kindred organisations and individuals from around the world to engage in cross-cultural exchange and education
- Identify new audiences and ways to reach them
- Use the WABA and other breastfeeding websites to share examples of how your group promotes breastfeeding

## WBW Coordinating and Distributing Centres

### OVERALL COORDINATION

- WABA Secretariat  
WABA, PO Box 1200, 10850 Penang, Malaysia  
Tel: 604-658 4816  
Fax: 604-657 2655  
Email: secr@waba.po.my

### SOUTH ASIA

- BPNI, PO Box 10551, BP-33, Pitampura, Delhi 110 034, India  
Fax: 91-11-721 9606  
Email: bpni@bpni.org

### AFRICA

- IBFAN Africa, PO Box 781, Mbabane, Swaziland  
Fax: 268-40 40546  
Email: ibfanswd@realnet.co.sz
- IBFAN Afrique Francophone  
01 BP 1776, Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso  
Fax: 226-303 888  
Email: ibfanfan@fasonet.bf

### MAPBIN/ICP

- MAPBIN/ICP  
PO Box 1134, Port Louis, Mauritius  
Fax: 230-211 4436

### EUROPE

- BMAC  
23 St Andrew's Street, Cambridge CB2 3AX, UK  
Fax: 44-1223-464417  
Email: baby milkacti@gn.apc.org
- GIFA  
CP 157, CH-1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland  
Fax: 41-22-798 4443  
Email: info@gifa.org
- Initiative Liuwensufank  
20, rue de Contern, L-5955 Contern, Luxembourg  
Fax: 352-366 134  
Email: maryse.lehners@ci.educ.lu

### LATIN AMERICA

- IBFAN Latin America  
Conaplam, 32 Calle 9-34, zona 11  
Colonia Las Charcas, CP 01011  
Guatemala City, Guatemala  
Fax: 502-476 7387  
Email: ruth.arango@starnet.net.gt
- Cefemina  
Apartado 5355, 1000 San Jose, Costa Rica  
Fax: 506-224 3986  
Email: cefemina@sol.racsa.co.cr
- CEPREN, Av Pardo 1335, Of 302, Lima 18, Peru  
Fax: 51-1-241 6205  
Email: cepren@amauta.rcp.net.pe

### Brazil & Lusophone countries

- Origem group/WABA Brazil  
Av. Beira Mar, 3661 Loja 18  
Casa Caiada, Olinda, PE 53130-540, Brazil  
Fax: 55-81-3472 7701  
Email: origem@elogica.com.br

### NORTH AMERICA

- NABA  
254 Conant Road, Weston, MA 02493-1756, USA  
Fax: 1-781-893 8608  
Email: marshalact@aol.com
- LLL International  
1400 N Meacham Road, Schaumburg  
IL 60173-4840, USA  
Fax: 1-847-519 0035  
Email: llhq@llli.org

### PACIFIC

- NMAA  
PO Box 4000, Glen Iris, VIC 3146, Australia  
Fax: 61-3-9885 0866  
Email: nursingm@vicnet.net.au
- PINDA  
c/o Christine Qusted, Nutrition Centre,  
Health Dept., Private Mail Bag, Apia,  
Western Samoa  
Fax: 685-21870  
Email: sio\_b@samoa.net



The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global people's initiative to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. WABA works on the Innocenti Declaration in close liaison with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). WABA, PO Box 1200, Penang 10850, Malaysia Tel: 604-658 4816 Fax: 604-657 2655 Email: secr@waba.po.my Website: www.waba.org.br • www.waba.org.my

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