



World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)

## **Press Statement**

### **“Feed the Future!”**

#### **First World Breastfeeding Week Flashmob in Malaysia!**

Flashmob at Gurney Plaza – 7 August, 2011

To commemorate the end of the international World Breastfeeding Week 2011 celebrations (held between 1-7 August in over 170 countries), more than 100 local Penangites convened at Gurney Plaza on Sunday afternoon, 7 August 2011 and surprised shoppers with a 3 minute flashmob led by youth.

The impromptu dance, titled “Feed the Future!”, was a fun and invigorating way to involve the entire community to support and normalize breastfeeding. Organized by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) and the local Penang Mother-to-Mother Peer Support Group, the flashmob sought to bring a clear message into a public arena – breastfeeding is natural and normal! The team collaborated with local musicians Dhanen Mahes (Ksatriya) and Samwise Wee Kee to create a hip and powerful original song called ‘Stand Up Everybody’ that calls on people to listen and take notice of how breastfeeding has been distorted by sexual connotations, and major milk powder and baby food companies unethically marketing their products to mothers. Choreographed by Aida Redza, the strong movements were symbolic gestures of shielding oneself from the dissuaders around us. The last line of the song “...time to take your breasts back!” is about reclaiming breasts for what they’re meant for - breastfeeding. It’s not just a woman’s responsibility, but her extended network that provides moral and physical support.

The mosaic of faces, ethnicities, ages, and genders in the flashmob reflected exactly what this year’s World Breastfeeding Week theme is all about. The theme, “Talk to Me! Breastfeeding – a 3D Experience” calls on people to reach out and bring the conversation into the open. As global exclusive breastfeeding rates continue to rise, we may wonder – why talk about breastfeeding? Isn’t it a normal, physiological process? The reality is that most talk is confined within the healthcare spheres.

In Malaysia the reality is that breastfeeding rates are much lower than the global average. Exclusive breastfeeding for the recommended period of 6 months is less than 15% in the country compared to the global average of over 30%. There is a lot more work to do to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in this country, and everyone has a role and responsibility, including young people. The World Breastfeeding Week events in Malaysia included a launch on 25 July with the Ministry of Health, a One Minute “Virtual” Simultaneous Breastfeed on 6 Aug which tallied over 200 women breastfeeding at the same time, and two flashmobs on, 7 Aug, one in Penang led by youth and another in KLCC led by Puan Ayuni Zainuddin and groups of breastfeeding mothers. WABA’s call to action is for celebrants to reach beyond the traditional spaces, in new ways, and include un-involved parties to join

in World Breastfeeding Week such as young people. We want to build a mother-baby friendly Penang! Join us to build a Breastfeeding Friendly World.

WABA also sends special thanks to all the women, men, and youth who participated, along with IPG College, AIESEC USM, Fairview International School, Han Chiang High School, Girl Guides of Penang, Intel, Down Syndrome Association of Penang, Zero Fitness Dance Studio, and Gurney Plaza for their enthusiasm and support in numbers!

Please check out the links on Youtube, **Penang Flashmob**:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM8MKVn2ANs> (firstround)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WgdQGUeE42g> (second round)

**KL Flashmob:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY2wqltqJll&feature=share>

World Breastfeeding Week is an annual global celebration organized by WABA ([www.waba.org.my](http://www.waba.org.my)) from 1-7 August taking place in over 170 countries. WABA is a global network of individuals and organizations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.

*For more information please visit:* [www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org](http://www.worldbreastfeedingweek.org)

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