

What is the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)?

In 2004–2005, the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) adapted the World Health Organisation (WHO) tool and WABA's philosophy to launch a new initiative, a tool for assessment and action – the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi). Having seen its success in South Asian countries it was then launched in other regions in 2008/09, and has now been introduced to 81 countries. Led by IBFAN Asia, the WBTi process documents a set of gaps in policy and tools for action to mobilise national action to bridge the gaps. IBFAN has mobilized more than 300 groups in the 40 countries, leading to strengthened relationships among civil society, governments and other key stakeholders. WBTi generated action in several countries, some have reported success e.g. Afghanistan and Bhutan created a database on practices; Gambia validated a new nutrition policy and included the issue of nutrition in emergency; Uganda finalised the national policy guidelines on IYCF; India made provisions for stronger and wider maternity protection, Philippines strengthened legal protection, while the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region put much emphasis on infant feeding during emergencies.

Ten Indicators of policy and programme

1. National Policy, Programme and Coordination
2. Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative
(Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding)
3. Implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
4. Maternity Protection
5. Health and Nutrition Care System
(in support of breastfeeding & IYCF)
6. Mother Support and Community Outreach- Community-based support for the pregnant and breastfeeding mother
7. Information Support
8. Infant Feeding and HIV
9. Infant Feeding during Emergencies
10. Mechanism of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Five indicators of practice

1. Percentage of babies breastfed within one hour of birth
2. Percentage of babies 0<6 months of age exclusively breastfed in the last 24 hours
3. Median duration of breastfeeding in months
4. Percentage of breastfed babies less than 6 months old receiving other foods or drinks from bottles
5. Percentage of breastfed babies receiving complementary foods at 6-9 months of age

Key Areas of Action

Currently 40 countries have completed their WBTi assessments, thus providing information on gaps in both policy and programmes; and how they individually fare on implementing indicators such as national policy, the Code, maternity protection, skilled counselling and so on. The 40 Country assessments and list of participating groups can be seen on the WBTi Website (See: <http://www.worldbreastfeedingtrends.org/>). We could all work around these above-mentioned indicators, either by beginning new action, or strengthening existing ones. The analysis will give us a fair idea of what we are looking for in each country, not only now but also to keep track of every 3-5 years. Many countries, which do not appear in the 40 Country report because they did not participate so far, could surely have significant achievements in any of these 10 areas. This is what we need to find out in all countries.

WHY SHOULD YOU ACT?

Because it leads to change!

Understanding the past and planning for the future envisages a series of actions. Some of this need to be carried out before the World Breastfeeding Week, some during the Week and some after the Week celebrations are over. Countries that have completed the assessment and found gaps, could work on the priority that they identified. And if you are interested in carrying out WBTi assessments, you can do the following:

How to do an assessment in your country?

While there may be several ways of doing an assessment on the progress of IYCF in your country, the WBTi is one way which is tried and tested, and has been found to be a useful model for country groups to use for both advocacy and for generating action. The following steps have been found to be the most helpful.

1. First form a core group of 4-5 persons, by bringing together stakeholders including government, professional bodies, civil society organisations and international organisations like WHO and UNICEF. Identify a coordinator to lead the process.
2. Second understand the indicators of the assessment and the questionnaires (available on WBTi website).
 - a) The Core group can study and assess each indicator, list findings and take note of gaps.
 - b) Share the findings in the country with the larger group and achieve consensus.
3. Develop a set of recommendations and build consensus around these.

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How do you join the global initiative?

Share your findings with the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) coordinating office (info@ibfanasia.org). They will be publishing a global report for all countries that complete the assessment in September 2012.

Advocacy Actions:

You can also consider following actions;

1. Developing a country report card and or a report. (Please refer to the examples from Zambia and Cameroon. <http://www.worldbreastfeedingtrends.org/reportcard/WBTi-Zambia-Reportcard-2008.pdf> <http://worldbreastfeedingtrends.org/report/WBTi-Cameroon-2009.pdf>)
2. Sharing the findings with your national media and other partners to call for change.
3. Plan reassessment periodically, to see changes in the results and to strengthen implementation.

ACTIONS DURING WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK (WBW) 2012

August 2012: If you are a group in a country that has participated in the WBTi and have done an assessment you can share the findings and the country report card with other peoples' groups and more widely. You could also draw the government's attention through media briefs or public rallies. There are several possible actions that both non-governmental organisations and governments can do during the World Breastfeeding Week. For those countries which are not part of the WBTi report you can still organise around gaps in IYCF policies that you are already aware of or even use the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding itself. Your actions could center on the assessment itself, or a specific gap found in the assessment. Some ideas include:

Public interest groups

Widely disseminate the findings of assessments by:

- Holding workshops or seminars nationally to share the findings with policy makers and other organisations.
- Calling for action on key indicators at local level, e.g. maternity entitlement and policy action on breastfeeding as part of sub-national actions.
- Holding media briefings.
- Informing your local and national representatives of the importance of breastfeeding and your country's performance on this.
- Organising public action like rallies and breastfeeding sit-ins to focus on the importance of the assessment.
- Holding public hearings and mock trials (against companies, businesses, professional associations or health care institutions that are violating the International Code and related national legislation).

Governments

- Conduct formal policy assessments every 3-5 years.
- Make public commitments to enhance breastfeeding rates.
- Hold inter-sectoral, and inter-ministerial meetings and workshops to devise creative ways to support women to breastfeed.
- Design and launch media campaigns on services provided as a response.
- Support family friendly policy changes that promote, support and protect women to breastfeed.
- Initiate a system of human milk banking to support women to initiate and/or maintain exclusive breastfeeding, and to support vulnerable infants, i.e. infants born to mothers who are HIV+.

Health professionals and their associations

- Follow the health sector recommendations on the BFHI, and the Code.
- Develop and practice policies free from conflicts of interest.
- Organise public lectures around gaps and create awareness.
- Work within your institutions to support BFHI standards of best practice and education.
- In Universities and Health Care education institutions strengthen pre-service education in human lactation and breastfeeding

Calls for Action Results in Change!

ACTIONS AFTER WBW

The World Breastfeeding Conference 2012 is being organised to build an international strategy for advocacy to further strengthen policy and programmes to support women. You could plan to be there and become a part of global solidarity! Link with the WBTi secretariat to share your action globally at: info@ibfanasia.org.



Participate in the World Breastfeeding Conference, in December 2012 and show what your country is doing. Prepare and fundraise NOW! Web link/email to register: <http://www.worldbreastfeedingconference.org/registration>



This insert is part of the materials for World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 2012, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year! WBW is an annual campaign coordinated by the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

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