

#WBW2021

PRESS RELEASE



The [World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action \(WABA\)](#) is a global network of individuals and organisations dedicated to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide. Every year, WABA coordinates the [World Breastfeeding Week \(WBW\)](#) - a global campaign that aims to inform, anchor, engage and galvanise action on breastfeeding and related issues. This year, we emphasise the importance of protecting and supporting breastfeeding, and how we all share this responsibility.

OBJECTIVES OF #WBW2021



Inform

people about the importance of protecting breastfeeding



Anchor

breastfeeding support as a vital public health responsibility



Engage

with individuals and organisations for greater impact



Galvanise

action on protecting breastfeeding to improve public health

This [World Breastfeeding Week](#) (#WBW2021), we are reminded that protecting breastfeeding is a shared responsibility. It is time for all of us to inform, anchor, engage and galvanise action to protect and support breastfeeding.

Ensuring survival, health and wellbeing for all is more important than ever. Appropriate changes to [policy and practice](#) can make a critical difference to the everyday lives of parents of breastfeeding children. To protect breastfeeding, we need to:

- invest in and implement evidence-based policy on what we know works to protect and support breastfeeding
- enact, monitor and enforce national legislation in line with the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions
- be vigilant against digital marketing strategies of breastmilk substitute (BMS) companies and to explore ways to curb these
- promote interprofessional teamwork within the health system and the linking of community health workers and groups
- create partnerships between governments, employers, trade unions, civil society organisations and communities
- foster cooperation among different community actors to help protect and support breastfeeding for all families

Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility

Breastfeeding contributes to [short- and long-term health, good nutrition and food security](#) in normal and emergency situations. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose enormous challenges for the global community, with breastfeeding being affected in [positive and negative](#) ways. By protecting breastfeeding, we are also protecting [human rights](#) and taking important steps towards achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), leaving no one behind. However, there are challenges to protecting and supporting breastfeeding, including at the national, health systems, workplace and community levels. These challenges include:

NATIONAL LEVEL



A lack of political will and long-term investment in breastfeeding protection and support at the national level lead to major barriers in creating a breastfeeding-friendly environment.

HEALTH SYSTEMS LEVEL



Many health systems are currently unable to provide effective information and support for breastfeeding along the continuum of care, leaving families with breastfeeding babies vulnerable to influence by the BMS industry.

WORKPLACE LEVEL



In many parts of the world, employed parents lack adequate [social protection](#), including public-funded leave, parent-friendly workplace policies, facilities, breaks and flexible working arrangements to support breastfeeding.

COMMUNITY LEVEL



[Social norms and traditional practices](#) in the community often [impede optimal breastfeeding](#). Furthermore, the [lack of breastfeeding support systems](#) at the community level makes breastfeeding protection, promotion and support interventions more challenging.

A [public health approach to breastfeeding](#), where governments and other stakeholders work together to create a breastfeeding-friendly environment, is a vital part of protecting and supporting breastfeeding.



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World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations dedicated to 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. WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). WABA coordinates the annual World Breastfeeding Week campaign.