



World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)

Report of First World Breastfeeding Trend Initiative (WBTi)

*Training Workshop held at
Bangkok (East Asia and Southeast) and Delhi (South Asia)*



August 16-18, 2008 (Bangkok) and August 22-23 (Delhi)

Organised by



The initiative is an integral part of the "Global Breastfeeding Initiative for Child Survival" (GB/CS), in partnership with the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and Global Proposal for Coordinated Action of IBFAN and WABA: Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding through Human Rights and Gender Equality" in partnership with Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)

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Objectives

1. To introduce the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)¹ to participants, and to seek their collaboration and support for initiating the process at national level.
2. To share IBFAN Asia² plan of work for 2008-2012 apprise the participants on new and emerging challenges: Conflicts of interests and PPPs.
3. To understand the “One Million Campaign”
4. To understand the concept of the conflict of interest and how to avoid at national level

Workshop Proceedings

Participation: Nineteen (19) countries from South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia took part in Bangkok, and 8 countries of South Asia took part in Delhi. (See Annex-1).

The team of IBFAN Asia (www.ibfanasia.org) supported by the regional representatives accomplished the objectives.

After having made specific PowerPoint presentations the group read about the WBTi from the green book and listed several questions to clarify their doubts. The questions included

¹ The WBTi is being implemented as an integral part of the project "Global Breastfeeding Initiative for Child Survival" (GBiCS), in partnership with Norad. Norway's flagship programme, the 'Global Campaign for the Health Millennium Development Goals' launched in September 2007, provides the opportunity for this action on breastfeeding. The WBTi will serve as a lens to find out gaps in policy and programmes at national level, and breastfeeding partners IBFAN and WABA will act to initiate action to bridge these gaps. Our work is also supported by Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) through a "Global Proposal for Coordinated Action of IBFAN and WABA: Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding through Human Rights and Gender Equality".

² About IBFAN Asia

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) www.ibfan.org is the 1998 Right Livelihood Award Recipient. It consists of more than 200 public interest groups working around the world to save lives of infants and young children by working together to bring lasting changes in infant feeding practices at all levels. IBFAN aims to promote the health and well being of infants and young children and their mothers through protection, promotion and support of optimal infant and young child feeding practices. IBFAN works for the universal and full implementation of 'International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes' and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions.

IBFAN Asia (www.ibfanasia.org) consists of 25 countries with 3 sub regions, South Asia, East Asia and Southeast Asia; each sub region being coordinated by the sub regional representative and overall coordination is done regional coordinating office in Delhi.

IBFAN Asia 2008-2012 plan includes two major projects: World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) www.worldbreastfeedingtrends.org and World Breastfeeding Movement (WBM) www.worldbreastfeedingmovement.org

what is the sources of data collection, on how definitions were chosen, financial resources for this and follow up work, whom to partners with at national level, how to avoid conflicts of interests, how to bridge the gap that exists between civil society and governments on the breastfeeding issues, how to use WBTi online tool to generate reports. These questions were answered using the background and other WBTi documents and online www.worldbreastfeedingtrends.org demo. Most of these were in any case a part of discussion that followed this exercise of questions and answers.

Workshop led to detailed understanding of indicators and their sources. It became amply clear that for Part I indicators we are looking for secondary national data that should be a national scope to the study. And for Part II we would need a set of information from interviews, research publications, observations desk study of websites etc. This session proved to be fruitful for enhancing feasibility of work at national level.

How to go about work, process of country assessments was also discussed in detail. Many of the participants were now thinking that this all is not a difficult and is doable. However, 2 out of 19 countries thought that time to conduct assessments should be more than provided. It was, however, agreed that we should go ahead with national processes and difficulties.

Outcome

These two training workshops apart from providing a platform for Asian countries to interact with each other led to significant intra-governmental and civil society -government discussion to find solutions together. What was apparent and hugely important was beginning of thinking and setting their minds on the gaps. Focus has already begun towards this and it rather generated an enthusiasm to bridge the gaps. We could see enough motivation within the groups almost half being governments. Tool was viewed as a friendly means of bringing various sections of society to look into the issues of breastfeeding support. As many ideas for action were already on the floor and report, it is hoped that the exercise would result in action at both government and outside the government as more than 50% action ideas were to advocate with the government. We found the governments immediately figuring out where the action lies and where to act as they could already see the specific gaps.

Problems and solutions

This was another important feature of the training workshop, where to find and how to find the data. What are the problems the groups perceived? Many listed problems found solutions within the room, e.g. clarification on the questions asked led to revision of some language of the questionnaire to be more specific and clear. Some participants did fear if there would be good working relationship with governments and civil society organisations. Other countries helped to provide solutions and this helped to grow confidence in how partnerships with governments and civil society could be strengthened by assisting governments and showcasing what we could do together to bridge the gaps.

Related Issues

Conflicts of Interests

A presentation was made to showcase current trends on the having more a more of PPPs and new way of working on philanthrocapitalism. Example of GAIN (www.gainhealth.org) and its relationship with UNICEF, renowned Nobel Laureates, and Infant formula companies like Danone. We sought participants to remain clear of conflicts of interests as well as get more information on this from countries. Immediately Malaysia shared how new information is being pushed to collect data on severe malnutrition. Mongolia shared how UNICEF is pushing the “sprinkles” since last one year and major funds are being spent on this project. The presentation and various documents that were shared evoked a huge response and it set an alert in the room, like how poor countries are subjected to introduce market products.

Join the “ONE million Campaign”

We introduced the One Million Campaign (www.worldbreastfeedingmovement.org) a new and innovative web based campaign to be launched soon. This campaign would focus in bring youth on board and seeking support of one million people across the world, by using web as a major vehicle. These people would sign petitions/ statements in favor of support to women, and will call upon people to raise there voice to demand support for women in order to make them successful in breastfeeding. The fact that more than 200 women need support at the time of birth somewhere in the world every minute drew quite and attention. Another set of numbers that are powerful is 133 million born, and 80 Million NOT exclusive breastfeeding. This meant that action required is large to make a dent towards positive change to adopt optimal breastfeeding practices.

Follow Up Action arising at the workshop

Finally the group decided that we need to build a networking group to support each other and for seeking support from the regional coordinating office. This has been done and working. Additionally, IBFAN Asia’s 3 sub-regions are now on a Google Group “One Asia” breastfeeding network, which began last year for South Asia and now added on East Asia contacts and SEA contacts/affiliates.

For the purpose of a **specific response on WBTi assessment**, we will develop another Google group called "**WBTi Coordinators**", in which we will add only emails of individuals who will stand responsible for liaison with IBFAN Asia and coordinate national work. The purpose of this Google group would be to provide online support to each other to facilitate WBTi assessment and slowly this will become a worldwide group, when we will add on **Africa, Latin America** and others.

Arun Gupta MD
Regional coordinator IBFAN Asia
August 2008

Photo Gallery South Asia Region



Participants working in South Asia



Group work in South Asia Training



Group of Participants in South Asia

Southeast Asia and East Asia Region



Participants working in Southeast Asia



Group work in Southeast Asia East



Group of Participants in Southeast and East



Some happy and moments of dance!

Annex – 1

Countries and participants from South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia that took part in Bangkok in Delhi.

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