



Tools for Action

Although the agenda for globalization may set economic goals above health, we can utilize its tools and structures to work toward peace and justice and a better world for all. In the last two decades, the global community has developed, ratified and/or adopted a variety of supportive legal instruments, technical documents, strategies, guidelines and global networks through which breastfeeding supporters can work. These instruments can offset the negative effects of globalization and provide tools to create breastfeeding cultures.

The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly (www.who.org)

restricts the marketing of artificial feeding products and sets out requirements for baby food companies, the health care system and governments to ensure that breastfeeding is not undermined.

ACTION: *Educate and train health care workers on the importance of, and how to implement, the International Code. Help monitor the advertising and promotion of infant foods. Lobby governments to regulate the marketing of these products.*

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (www.unicef.org/programme/breastfeeding/baby.htm) was designed to ensure that all maternities become centers of breastfeeding support. A hospital can be certified "baby-friendly" when it does not accept free or low-cost breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles or teats, and has implemented the ten steps to support successful breastfeeding.

ACTION: *Work with national breastfeeding coalitions and organizations to promote and educate local hospitals and birthing centres and encourage them to become certified "Baby-friendly."*

The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding (www.who.org) calls upon governments to uphold the International Code and seeks to increase breastfeeding rates to reduce malnutrition and death in developing countries, and to reduce the impact of childhood obesity in industrialized countries.

ACTION: *Write your local and federal governments to ensure that they implement the recommendations of the Global Strategy to protect breastfeeding.*

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (www.unicef.org) is the most universally accepted human rights instrument in history. Every country in the world - with the exception of the United States and Somalia - has ratified it.

ACTION: *Educate mothers and children about the rights of the child to be breastfed through schools, daycare and mother-to-mother support groups.*

The International Labour Organization's Maternity Protection Convention (www.ilo.org) contains specific recommendations for maternity protection and the support of breastfeeding mothers in the workplace as a minimum global standard.

ACTION: *Educate employers, union leaders, the health care system and mothers returning to work about the ILO's Convention through union and company newsletters.*

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination Against Women (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/) is the only human rights treaty that affirms the reproductive rights of women. As such, it is an important tool for protecting a woman's rights to breastfeed her baby.

ACTION: *Use the Convention as a tool to protect women who are discriminated against for breastfeeding.*



The Codex Alimentarius Commission (www.codexalimentarius.net) is a joint WHO/FAO program to set standards for foods, including baby foods. It intends to insure fair trade practices in food trade and protect the health of consumers but is strongly influenced by the food industry.

ACTION: *Work with governments and with non-governmental organizations who attend Codex meetings to ensure that the International Code and relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly are incorporated into the standard setting for infant formula and complementary foods.*

The Millennium Development Goals (www.undp.org/mdg) is an UNDP agenda for reducing poverty and improving lives.

ACTION: *Educate political leaders of the critical roles that breastfeeding can play in achieving many of the Goals by reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.*

Mother-to-Mother support (www.lalecheleague.org)

Mother to mother support groups are a universal means for mothers to join together for support as well as sharing of information and the responsibilities of child rearing. For the Global Initiative for Mother Support (GIMS) visit www.waba.org.br.

ACTION: *Organize support groups in your community for pregnant women and new mothers. Assist new mothers to get in touch with local mother-to-mother support groups.*

The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (www.unicef.org/programme/breastfeeding/baby.htm) was launched in 1991 by UNICEF and the World Health Organization to ensure that all maternities, whether free standing or in a hospital, become centers of breastfeeding support. A hospital can be certified "baby-friendly" when it does not accept free or low-cost breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles or teats, and has implemented 10 specific steps to support successful breastfeeding.

ACTION: *Work with your local hospital officials to ensure that it adopts the 10 steps to successful breastfeeding to ensure that it becomes a certified Baby-friendly hospital.*

GLOBAL NETWORKS

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) www.waba.org.br is a global network of over 500 indi-

viduals and organizations in 81 countries and individuals who believe that breastfeeding is the right of all children and mothers, and who dedicate themselves to protect, promote and support this right.

The International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) www.ibfan.org is a coalition of 150 voluntary organizations in over 90 developing and industrialized nations working to improve the health and well-being of babies and young children, their mothers and their families through the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and optimal infant feeding practices.

The Alliance for a Corporate-Free UN www.gifa.org includes a number of international organizations, including IBFAN. The goal of the Alliance is to ensure that UN agencies do not partner with corporations that violate the aims and principles of the UN, such as the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes.

The International Forum on Globalization www.ifg.org is an alliance of sixty leading activists, scholars, economists, researchers and writers formed to stimulate new thinking, joint activity, and public education in response to economic globalization.

The People's Health Movement/Assembly/Charter http://p_hmovement.org. believes that health is a social, economic and political issue and above all a fundamental human right. The PHM actively works to promote and implement initiatives that support breastfeeding cultures.

BOOKS/OTHER RESOURCES

Alternatives to Economic Globalization (A Better World is Possible), The International Forum on Globalization, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc, November 2002

Holding Corporations Accountable: Corporate Conduct, International Codes and Citizen Action, Judith Richter, Zed Books, 2001