



IN THIS ISSUE

Message from the Editor

1

1. Current News

2

- Mothers gather for global breastfeeding event
- 1,000 mums take part in breastfeeding event
- Flash mob bares mothers' dire need for more nursing rooms
- Breastfeeding in South Africa is dangerously low
- Breastfeeding can cut a woman's risk of breast cancer
- Breastfeeding protects baby against bite problems
- Increase in breastfeeding could save NHS £40m a year, according to report
- UNICEF gives Wishaw General a Baby Friendly Initiative for supporting breastfeeding mums
- Health department honours breastfeeding champs
- Mother and baby care in Cornwall wins UNICEF accreditation

2. News of Core Partners

6

- International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA) 13 Conference & Annual Meeting – Born to Breastfeed: A Global Public Health Imperative, July 25-28, 2013 in Melbourne, Australia

3. News of Task Forces, Regional Focal Points and Working Groups

6

- News from the Youth Initiative
- News from Research Task Force
- News from Mother Support Task Force

4. WABA Events

7

- Breastfeeding Advocacy and Practice (BAP) – A Regional Outreach Course

5. News from Secretariat

8

- World AIDS Day 2012
- Donations received for the period Aug to Nov 2012
- New Staff to the WABA Secretariat
- Staff leaving WABA
- Staff on sabbatical Leave
- Obituary: Andrew Chetley

Message from the Editor

What does the month of December remind you of? Surely, it must make you feel differently from all the other months! I know that there are many amongst us who will be eagerly waiting for the December celebrations heralding the New Year. Still others will breathe a sigh of relief that another year has finally come to an end, giving them an opportunity to start afresh. To all, the month of December is an 'all-emotion' month; joy for some, respite for others. Don't you agree?

Christmas is around the corner, and everyone is busy doing preparation for this special day e.g., buying gifts for their loved ones, preparing turkey dinner with friends and family and children start hanging colourful stockings above the fireplace mantle. In this special festival, you can contribute to the promotion, protection and support breastfeeding by excluding products from manufacturers or distributors of breastmilk substitute from your gifts list.

WBW is officially celebrated from 1-7 August annually, but there are still many countries that will be celebrating it from October up to December. We would like to thank all WBW celebrants from over 170 countries who celebrated WBW so successfully this year. We received 290 pledges for events taking place globally, involving more than 107,990 celebrants (to date). Congratulations to everyone involved! For the groups who have celebrations or events or activities coming up from August onwards, we heartily welcome you to share your information with us by sending in your WBW reports.

WABA wishes you a merry Christmas and a happy new year. May your Christmas be rich with family love, warm with friendship, happy with the joys of the season.

Happy Reading,

Pei Ching
Editor, e-WABALink



To keep abreast of events taking place throughout the year, WABA maintains a calendar of events on the WABA website <http://www.waba.org.my/events/calendarofevents.htm>

e-WABALink is a current awareness service with the mission of sharing news and useful key documents with its global network of supporters. The views expressed in the articles and news links however do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of WABA or its Core Partners

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I. Current News

1,000 mums take part in breastfeeding event

GEORGE TOWN: A total of 1,038 mothers across the country simultaneously breastfed their babies for a minute in an event that promoted the importance of breastfeeding.

Mothers from 50 hospitals and welfare homes took part in the "One-Minute Simultaneous Breastfeeding" event organised by the Mother-to-Mother-Peer-Support group (MMPS) in conjunction with World Breastfeeding Week 2012.

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action's Director Sarah Amin said the number of participants was confirmed via a live Internet feed with the hospitals and homes yesterday. State Youth and Sports, Women, Family and Community Development Committee Chairman Lydia Ong Kok Fooi said breastfeeding provided the best source of nutrition for a baby.



Raising awareness: Mothers gathering to take part in the 'One-Minute Simultaneous Breastfeeding' event at Queensbay Mall in Penang.

Source: The Star Online <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/9/10/nation/11998960&sec=nation>

Flash mob bares mothers' dire need for more nursing rooms



Mums unite: Dynas carrying her three-month old son Mohamed Haqish and chatting with other mothers after the five minute-breastfeeding flash mob at KLCC.

KUALA LUMPUR: It was just any other Sunday morning at Suria KLCC's Esplanade until hundreds of mothers, along with their husbands and children, joined in a breastfeeding flash mob.

They sat together and breastfed their babies for five minutes in conjunction with World Milk Sharing Week, which is being held from Sept 24 until Sept 30. It was also held in conjunction with the upcoming Malaysian Breastfeeding Charter Forum on Sept 29.

The Breastfeeding Advocate Network administrator Michelle Koh, 30, hoped that by conducting the mob, shopping malls and public areas would hear their plea for more nursing rooms and empathise with nursing mothers.

Actress Dynas Mokhtar said she joined in the event to create awareness among malls to have separate nursing rooms, and not just diaper changing rooms.

"These are two different things," she pointed out.

"It is not right for a mother to feed her child in the toilet while diapers are being changed too."

Koh said she was gathering signatures for a petition to urge shopping malls and public areas to have at least one nursing room with two cubicles at every floor.

Source: The Star Online <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/9/24/nation/12071137&sec=nation>

WBW 2013 theme: BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT: CLOSE TO MOTHERS

Greetings from the WABA Secretariat, WABA is now pleased to announce the theme/slogan for WBW 2013 – 'BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT: CLOSE TO MOTHERS' focusing on Peer Counselling which was discussed and decided at the WABA Global Breastfeeding Partners Meeting (GBPM) held in Delhi, 5-6 December 2012. The WABA Mother Support Task Force, led by Anne Batterjee, has been appointed Key Writer for the WBW 2013 Calendar Announcement and Action Folder, working with small team of WABA SC members, and Core Partner representatives. The Calendar Announcement is currently being developed and should be ready for distribution in January 2013. So do keep a lookout for it.

I. Current News

Mothers gather for global breastfeeding event

The Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge is an annual event that takes place in Canada, the United States and other countries. The goal is to have the most women breastfeeding their children in one place.

OTTAWA: A little bit of friendly competition and an urge to promote awareness brought mothers across Ottawa together for the 12th annual Global Breastfeeding Challenge Saturday. "The idea behind it is to promote and normalise breastfeeding," said organiser Nalini D'Souza of Ottawa Centre La Leche Canada. "It's often done in a public place, so that other people can see what is normal in the realm of breastfeeding."

Source: CTV News <http://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/mothers-gather-for-global-breastfeeding-event-1.976955>

VANCOUVER: The 11th annual breastfeeding awareness raising event in the province brought out more babes in arms than the last few years, organisers said. On the North Shore, 77 babies participated; 16 on Bowen Island; and 69 in Vancouver, said Trudi Beutel of Vancouver Coastal Health.

Source: Vancouver Sun <http://www.vancouversun.com/health/moms+observe+World+Breastfeeding+Week/7322351/story.html>

KELOWNA: This is the 12th year that Kelowna has taken part in the breastfeeding challenge and this was their biggest turnout ever. "Women and their children latch on at 11 a.m. and the goal is to bring awareness to breastfeeding and to support and promote it in our community," explained Lisa Ford who co-facilitates the Kelowna Breastfeeding Café along with Chantal Kozar. "We had 65 babies latched on -- there were 64 moms and one had twins," laughed Ford.

Source: Castanet.net <http://www.castanet.net/news/Kelowna/81168/Breastfeeding-reaches-new-heights>

KITCHENER: Among the many shoppers picking up groceries at the Kitchener Market Saturday, a group of mothers sat down to breastfeed their children. The local mothers were taking part in a nationwide breastfeeding challenge to promote the practice and their right to breastfeed in public. A total of 23 children were breastfed at the Kitchener event.

Source: The Record.com <http://www.therecord.com/news/local/article/809309--moms-promote-breastfeeding-at-kitchener-market>

TORONTO: On your mark, get latched, breastfeed! The sixth annual Breastfeeding Challenge took place at the East York Civic Centre as part of the global Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge, where mothers and babies worldwide briefly treat breastfeeding as a competition.

Source: Toronto Sun <http://www.torontosun.com/2012/09/29/toronto-moms-in-breastfeeding-challenge>



The 12th annual Global Breastfeeding Challenge also had events in countries such as China and Romania.



Mom Lindsay Bendickson holds ten day old son Liam during the 11th annual Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge at Creekside Community Centre in Vancouver, B.C., Sept 29, 2012. Photo: Arlen Redekop, PNG



Photo: Contributed by Ragnar Haagen



More than 20 children were breastfed as part of national challenge and awareness campaign at the Kitchener Market on Saturday, Sept. 29, 2012. Photo: Linda Givetash, Record staff



Alicia Viola, left, nurses eight-month-old Cameron and Louisa Nixon nurses Leah, 10 months, at the 2012 Breastfeeding Challenge at the East York Civic Centre. (Veronica Henri)

I. Current News

Breastfeeding in South Africa is dangerously low

The rate of exclusive breastfeeding up to six months of age for babies in South Africa is only 8% – one of the lowest in the world. Neighbouring Swaziland is 44% and Tanzania is 50%.

Save the Children is one of several organisations that have been working to spread awareness about the advantages of exclusive breastfeeding, for both mother and child. One of the main reasons why fewer women breastfeed their babies is that previously, mothers with HIV were under the misconception that breastfeeding may result in mother- to-child HIV transmission. (About one in ten people in this country are infected with HIV).

The government of South Africa only clarified its policy on breastfeeding in August last year, committing to discontinue the provision of free formula milk at hospitals and clinics and also to promote the exclusive breastfeeding strategy for all children from birth to six months, including for those living with HIV.

Save the Children has trained over 100 health workers and 200 home-based carers on the topic of breastfeeding and other skills in Limpopo, thereby increasing their capacity to provide quality infant healthcare and reducing mother-to-child-transmission (PMTCT).

Source: Health24

http://www.health24.com/news/Child_safety/1-943,76993.asp

Breastfeeding can cut a woman's risk of breast cancer

Breastfeeding can reduce a woman's risk of developing certain types of breast cancers, a new study has claimed.

Researchers from the Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health found that breastfeeding reduces the risk for estrogen receptor-negative and progesterone receptor-negative breast cancer.

The study examined the association between reproductive risk factors – such as the number of children a woman delivers, breastfeeding and oral contraceptive use - and found an increased risk for estrogen receptor – and progesterone receptor - (ER/PR) negative breast cancer in women who do not breastfeed.

The study included 4,011 women with breast cancer and 2,997 population-based controls.

"Women who had children but did not breastfeed had about 1.5 times the risk for ER/PR-negative breast cancer," said Meghan Work, first author. The paper was presented at the 11th Annual AACR International Conference on Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research.

Source: Business Standard

[http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/breastfeeding-can-cut-womans-risk-breast-cancer/70260/](http://www.business-standard.com/generalnews/news/breastfeeding-can-cut-womans-risk-breast-cancer/70260/Science-Codex)
Science Codex

http://www.sciencecodex.com/study_shows_breastfeeding_reduced_risk_for_erprnegative_breast_cancer-100440

Increase in breastfeeding could save NHS £40m a year, according to report



If half the women who currently do not breastfeed were to do so for up to 18 months, there would be 865 fewer cases of breast cancer, says Unicef. Photograph: Justin Paget/Corbis

The NHS could save at least £40m a year if more women were given help to breastfeed for longer, according to a new report.

Research by UNICEF UK for the first time calculates the cost to the health service of the UK's poor record on breastfeeding. Research has shown that breastfeeding lowers women's risk of breast cancer and protects babies against infections.

Professor Mary Renfrew, from Dundee University, who led the group, said: "This research shines a spotlight on the profound protective effects which breastfeeding has on both mother and child.

"It shows that the NHS could save money in different ways, both from the immediate costs of treating acute infant diseases, and longer term savings from reduced incidence of breast cancer. Larger scale savings from chronic diseases are also likely, although the evidence was not in form required for calculating costs. There would also be considerable health gains for both mothers and babies."

"It is clear that putting resources into supporting women to breastfeed successfully would be hugely cost effective to the NHS, as well as preventing the distress and pain felt by a mother who has a bad experience of breastfeeding."

Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter said: "I welcome the UNICEF report. Breastfeeding has huge health benefits, as well as benefits in helping to promote a strong bond between mum and baby. We recommend babies are breastfed for the first six months where possible. "Breastfeeding rates in England have steadily increased over recent years, and we are doing everything we can to support women who choose to breastfeed. "We have pledged to have an extra 4,200 health visitors by 2015. Health visitors support new mums and help them get through any problems they are having with breastfeeding."

Source: The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2012/oct/18/increase-breastfeeding-nhs-savings-unicef?newsfeed=true>

The Telegraph <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/healthnews/9614658/Boosting-breastfeeding-rates-saves-lives-and-money-Unicef.html>

I. Current News

UNICEF gives Wishaw General a Baby Friendly Initiative for supporting breastfeeding mums



The UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative presented the hospital with a prestigious 'full accreditation' award after assessing the care it provides to pregnant women and new mothers.

The award was presented to staff by Theresa McElhone, professional officer for Scotland for the Baby Friendly Initiative, who said: "I am delighted that NHS Lanarkshire has achieved the full Baby Friendly status. Surveys show us that most mothers want to breastfeed but don't always get the support they need. Women in Lanarkshire can be confident that their midwives will provide the highest standard of care."

Source: Wishaw Press

<http://www.wishawpress.co.uk/wishaw-news/local-wishaw-news/wishaw-news/2012/09/12/unicef-gives-wishaw-general-a-baby-friendly-initiative-for-supporting-breastfeeding-mums-76495-31813264/>

Mother and baby care in Cornwall wins UNICEF accreditation



A group shot of everyone at the event, including the three award winning organisations.

High quality care of mother and babies in Cornwall has led to three organisations being awarded the prestigious Baby Friendly Accreditation by UNICEF.

The Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust's maternity services, Cornwall Foundation Trust's health visiting services and Cornwall Council's Children's Centres received their awards at a ceremony at Heartlands in Pool.

Anne Woods, deputy programme director for UNICEF, presented the three organisations with plaques.

The awards, which include women's views on services, recognise the work of all three organisations in supporting families and promoting breastfeeding.

Source: The West Country

http://www.thisisthewestcountry.co.uk/news/cornwall_news/9969672.Mother_and_baby_care_in_Cornwall_wins_UNICEF_accreditation/

Health department honours breastfeeding champs

The Department of Health (DOH) recognised efforts and initiatives of various institutions in the country for supporting the infant and young child feeding (IYCF) programme and the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding from the first six months of life.

Awarded for Mother-Baby Friendly in the hospital category were Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center and Notre Dame de Chartres Hospital. The Municipality of Peñarrubia in Abra was also recognised as model of mother-baby friendly in the workplace category. Awarded for spearheading a mother-baby friendly in the community category were Barangay Bila, in Bauko, Mt. Province and the Municipality of Mankayan in Benguet. Benguet State University, on the other hand, was also recognised for not only as mother-baby friendly school but also for incorporating breastfeeding in the school's curriculum.

Health Secretary Enrique Ona lauded the efforts of each awardee for promoting mother and child health. He said this will encourage other institutions and organisations to support the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding as the only means to bring down infant deaths. Meanwhile, the Department of Health, in cooperation with other line agencies, will be keen in implementing the five-year Philippine IYCF strategic plan of action (2011-2016) as a means to ensure and accelerate the promotion, protection and support of good IYCF practices.

Source: Sun.Star Baguio

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/baguio/local-news/2012/10/19/health-department-honors-breastfeeding-champs-248888>

2. News from Core Partners

International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)

**2013 Conference & Annual Meeting –
Born to Breastfeed: A Global Public Health Imperative
July 25-28, 2013 in Melbourne, Australia**

ILCA 2013
Melbourne, Australia

**BORN TO
BREASTFEED:**
A Global Public Health Imperative

July 25-28, 2013 • Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre



The ILCA Annual Conference provides a rich learning environment for lactation professionals and others who assist mothers and babies with breastfeeding. It offers current and aspiring lactation consultants information on cutting-edge lactation practices and research to equip you in giving optimal breastfeeding care and support to mothers and babies. This four-day conference combines research and practice presentations with clinical and research skill development.

Help promote the 2013 ILCA Conference in your area! Please help promote the ILCA Conference in your area by sharing this promotional save-the-date with your employer and/or colleagues. We appreciate your support!

Registration information will be available in January! In the meantime, please visit the ILCA conference website at: <http://www.ilca.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=4104> for additional information. The success of ILCA's Annual Conference depends on lactation professionals like YOU! We hope to see you down under!

3. News of Task Forces, Regional Focal Points and Working Groups

News from the Youth Initiative

WABA Youth is proud to highlight the works of our young breastfeeding advocates who joined us at WABA as Youth Interns and Guest from May till August 2012. Tina Lutzen from Denmark, Sandrine Legal from France and Lena Barclay from United States. They are currently back in their University to complete their following Degrees.

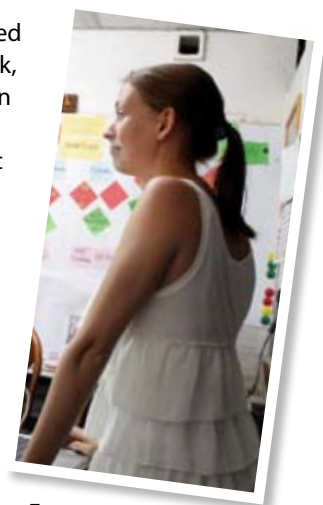
Tina who is pursuing her Bachelor in "Global Nutrition in Health" while specializing in Public Health Nutrition and Food Policy, VIA University College, Aarhus in Denmark, was researching on the implementation of the BFHI focusing on the 10 Steps of the Mother Support. She documented the community, mother support groups in Penang and Kuala Lumpur to see if they follow the WHO guidelines for successful breastfeeding, and to observe which steps are more difficult to implement and how they solve this. She also documented the work and the process of mother support groups and their efforts to make the state of Penang mother/baby friendly. With her research, she returned to Denmark to prepare her thesis on the status of BFHI in Denmark, and how this could trigger change in the Danish implementation of the BFHI.

Sandrine Legal who is also pursuing her Bachelor in Global Nutrition and Health but at Metropolitan University College, Copenhagen, Denmark did her internship on developing a short interview guide to find out about the potential activities, outcomes and impact of WBW 2009 theme on Emergency in three countries – Cameroon, Ghana and Mozambique.



Lena C Girerd-Barclay, who came to WABA to fulfil her Degree in Master of Science, at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. Her thesis is to explore the relative success of diverse communication strategies and methods employed by WABA and its partners throughout WBW in 2011, with a focus on activities in Malaysia, in promoting greater understanding of respect for and fulfilment of globally recommended breastfeeding practices. She reviewed experiences of agencies and individuals implementing communication strategies and tools during WBW, which received positive results, based on the outcomes of the study, to propose recommendations for future initiatives. The study will apply a variety of communication theories to WABA and its partners' efforts to communicate to different target groups on the topic of breastfeeding.

We wished all three of them success and hope that they will continue to promote, protect and support breastfeeding. And hope that their Internship work and study will inspire other youth to come join us, as young advocates for breastfeeding towards producing their research and have it disseminated globally. To read more about Tina Lutzen and updates on Sandrine and Lena's internship and Master thesis please refer to WABA Youth web section.



3. News of Task Forces, Regional Focal Points and Working Groups

News from the Research Task Force

The latest RTF e-newsletter issue September 2012 is now available for download at <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/hcp/pdf/rtnfl-sep12.pdf>

To subscribe, please complete the form at <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/research/rtnfl-form.htm>

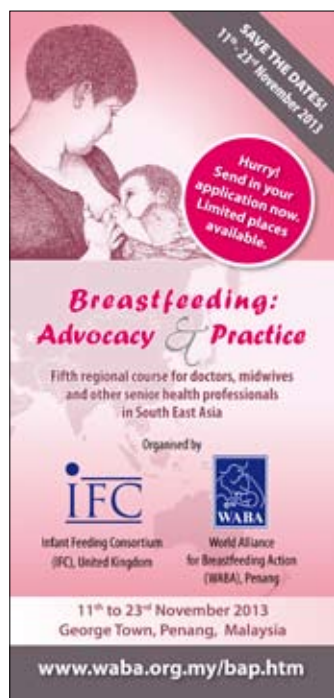


News from the Mother Support Task Force

The WABA Mother Support Task Force would like to announce that the WABA MSTF e-newsletter Volume 10 Number 2 October 2012 issue is now available on the WABA website: http://www.waba.org.my/pdf/mstfnl-v10n2_eng.pdf

The WABA Mother Support Task Force (MSTF) e-newsletter is produced 2 times a year in 5 Languages, English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Portuguese. The new Arabic language section of the e-newsletter is now available at <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/gims/arabic.htm> for the latest Volume 10 Number 1 April 2012 issue.

To subscribe, send an email to gims_gifs@yahoo.com and state your language preference.



4. WABA Event

Breastfeeding Advocacy and Practice (BAP) – A Regional Outreach Course

Breastfeeding: Advocacy and Practice (BAP) courses are a key component of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) Strategy Plan for Action. The fourth eleven-day Regional Outreach BAP course for doctors and senior health professionals in South East Asia was held in Penang, Malaysia from 1st to 13th October 2012, conducted in collaboration with the Infant Feeding Consortium (IFC).

The course was facilitated by Felicity Savage, Sandra Lang and Amal Omer-Salim.

26 participants from 10 countries namely Hong Kong, Thailand, Brunei, New Zealand, Solomon Island, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Myanmar, Vietnam and Malaysia were trained as resource experts for infant feeding programmes in scientific, public health and clinical aspects of the subject. Overall the course was highly successful, and rated “very useful” in well over half of all participants’ evaluations. Clinical practice was considered particularly valuable.

Penang based artist had created a beautiful sculpture from rattan of a breastfeeding mother and child. He named this “mother’s love” and was very happy to lend the sculpture for the duration of BAP Course. Many participants chose to be photographed with the sculpture. When the artist heard about how well his work had been received, he offered to sell it to WABA for a nominal sum. The BAP Course participants undertook a collection and donated the sculpture to WABA to display at future BAP Course. WABA and IFC wish to record our sincere gratitude and thanks to all the participants for their contribution to get this BAP Course a mascot.





Among the feedback received from the participants: **NADRAH ARFIZAH ARIFIN** – Obstetrician & Gynecologist, Malaysia

This is a complementary class for those who attended WHO 20 hours and 40 hours courses before, and it is somehow an essential course for all lactation professionals which provides the evidence based facts and practices from the outstanding speakers who are known as expert in lactation field. Thank you for the whole BAP team for being tolerated with the presence of my 3.5 months infant. This course has given the opportunity to explore and understand the breastfeeding practice and culture in other respective countries, sharing tips to implement and making one breastfeeding friendly facilities and communities.

Please click on <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/hcp/training.htm#bap> to know more about previous BAP Course.

5. News from Secretariat

World AIDS Day 2012

We are pleased to share with you our statement for the World AIDS Day 2012 on the theme Getting to Zero: Health for all HIV-Positive mothers and Zero HIV-transmission to their babies.

In conjunction with World AIDS Day, WABA would like to launch a resource document on HIV and breastfeeding with the title of "Understanding International Policy on HIV and Breastfeeding: a comprehensive resource". This resource aims to clarify the confusion which has arisen during the last decade due to changing HIV and infant feeding guidance. The resource is intended for policy-makers, breastfeeding advocates, national breastfeeding committees, public health advocates, women's health activists and others working in the community.

The resource also summarises up-to-date scientific evidence as at the end of 2012. Research emerging between WHO's 2006 and 2010 guidance documents showed conclusively that maternal/infant ARV regimens during pregnancy and breastfeeding greatly reduce vertical transmission of HIV; and that exclusive and continued breastfeeding significantly improves overall HIV-free survival.

Please click on <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/hcp/pdf/s-wad-2012.pdf> for the statement

Please click on <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/hcp/ihiv.htm#kit> to access the full HIV Resource document.



Donations received for the period August to November 2012

WABA wishes to record our sincere appreciation and thanks to our kind donors as below:

1. BAP 2012 participants – USD207 (contribution to the rattan model of a breastfeeding mother and child)
2. USM, Penang – USD97 (contribution for hosting half day introduction to WABA's work to 16 students from the University of Florida, USA)
3. Elisabeth Helsing, IAC Co-chair, Norway – USD101.35 (being royalty from sales of her book "Understanding Breastfeeding" for Jan-Jun 2012)
4. Dr Anna Estel – USD80 (received via Paypal for contribution to WABA's work)
5. Gail Hertz, USA – USD50 (received via Paypal being her for contribution to ABA/Chris Mulford fund)

5. News from Secretariat

New Staff to the WABA Secretariat

Please join us in welcoming the following new staff at the WABA Secretariat.

JAY SHARMA: Jayashankar ("Jay") Sharma was born in Penang but lived in the UK for over 30 years before joining WABA as a Consultant in October 2012. Jay has worked as a lawyer and in management largely in the not-for-profit sector. His role at WABA will be to manage the WABA Secretariat and also its Information & Communication programmes.

NAWEED HAROONI: Naweed joined WABA in April 2012 as Programme Coordinator for the following areas: 'Gender', 'Women & Work' and 'Men'. In addition, Naweed also coordinates some advocacy and information activities. Naweed is an engineer and has many years of experience in social development, human and women rights and has worked with a number of NGOs including Action Aid, UK.

LOW TENG ON: Low Teng On joined WABA in July 2012 as Chief Financial Officer. Low has a degree in accountancy and has more than 35 years of work experience in handling all aspects of financial management, including accounting, budgeting, report preparation and other related administrative matters.

KAVITA SAMARAJOO: Kavita joined WABA in October 2012 as an Accounts/Administrative Assistant. Trained in Business Information and Technology, Kavita will be assisting the office in accounts, resource and administrative sections.

JENAN JOHNSON: Jenan joined WABA in June 2012 as a Youth Liaison person and works two days in a week only. As a seventeen year old, Jenan brings a youth perspective to assist the Advocacy Officer with the WABA Youth Initiative programme.

Staff leaving WABA

HARJEET KAUR who has served in WABA since August 2008 as an Administrative Assistant. She will be leaving WABA end of December 2012. We wish her all the best!

Staff on sabbatical Leave

SARAH AMIN, the Executive Director of WABA will be on a year's sabbatical from January 2013. In her absence, Anwar Fazal, who has been Chairman Emeritus since 2002, will be the interim Executive Director and in charge of the overall management of the WABA Secretariat.

On route to my sabbatical...

a personal reflection on our first food-earth's food experience!

As with the end of 2012 and the start of 2013 - a period of great change in the Earth's cycle - so too comes a time of significant change and transition for myself, both personally and at work. After over 20 years of service at WABA, I have decided to take a year sabbatical and look forward to the renewal and rebirth process. The past few years have been greatly challenging for myself yet with new strands of hope and light emerging, and it's the latter that I now seek to explore and immerse myself in. This message comes as a personal piece rather than an official announcement or a usual article as initially thought.

While I started out wanting to highlight some of the milestones at WABA this year, particularly the recent GBPM (Global Breastfeeding Partners Meeting) in Delhi, 5-6 Dec. 2012 that was such an important and incredible coming together of international core partner organisations for increased synergy in our breastfeeding global work, my heart, on the other hand, wants to "sing" about the recent short trip I took to the island of Palawan in the Philippines to a spiritual ecological community - ironically named the Maia Village - that has raw food as part of its fundamental practice. I will leave the spiritual descriptions to private conversations, but what enthralled me (and what I would like to share) is the story of Sinag, a little two and a half year old, who came to this earth through an amazing water birth experience and through the womb of a beautiful woman named Daniw. Daniw, also the director of Bahay Kalipay, a healing, raw food and spiritual centre for change in Puerto Princesa, has been on a raw food diet for 6 years! Needless to say, Sinag has been breastfed and is still breastfeeding! The little boy is an epitome of health, strength, love and confidence. I asked Daniw about the foods she fed Sinag and she spoke about the coconut as being a major staple! "Sinag eats whatever we eat. And I eat whatever he eats!" That makes it easy for food preparation and yet symbiotic for both mother and child. "We eat whatever is in our gardens, the fruits and vegetables. When Sinag first started eating food I would mesh the fruits or grind the vegetables to a paste ... then over time the texture of the food would be increasingly more solid." Mashed young coconut meat, bananas, papayas, etc. are great foods for infants, she explained. During my short visit, I saw Sinag grab raw carrots, nuts and fruits off the table whenever he was hungry and charmed his mother for a little "milky" every so often on demand:) Daniw practices natural parenting or what she calls "inner parenting" so Sinag's world is truly one of love and abundance every moment even if conditions may look simple. The picture would not be complete if I didn't also mention Sinag's father, Pi. A dream daddy who is totally dedicated to building a whole new world, a sustainable ecological lifepath for humanity, yet is still able to give the time, love and care to his son!

I am grateful to have been able to witness the life of this little boy even if just for a moment. He is indeed testimony to how well a child can thrive and be so joyful living as close to nature and spirit in every way as possible. Here, ANY MORE WOULD BE LESS!. This glimpse into the life of a Maia family has been richly rewarding also to know that my work with WABA continues to be immensely meaningful to bring about healthier children and happier families. This experience has opened my eyes (and heart) even more to how Mother Earth already provides us with everything we need. Nature's "rich" foods and the nurture of spirit is really all it takes to make us whole persons! We are already abundant! If only we choose to SEE and live more simply!

5. News from Secretariat



Andrew Chetley
– passionate
health activist,
brilliant writer
and a master
strategist – will
always be with us
through his many
books, works and
networks.

Obituary: Andrew Chetley (1950-2012)

ANDREW CHETLEY was a strategic thinker, a prolific communicator, and an international advocate for public health. He was the former Executive Director of Healthlink Worldwide and former Director of Exchange – a networking and learning programme to identify good practice in health communication. He spent several years working as a writer and editor at the Bernard van Leer Foundation which focuses on early childhood development.

While at War on Want, he campaigned on health and development issues and was instrumental in founding and guiding international networks including the International Baby Food Action Network and Health Action International. He was the first General Administrator of IBFAN.

In 1994, he helped WABA to develop a tool on systematic monitoring of the “State of Breastfeeding” country by country – GLOPAR. He subsequently gave the movement a kind of breastfeeding manifesto, an inspiring document called TEN LINKS FOR NURTURING THE FUTURE.

Reacting to the sad news, Anwar Fazal, Chairman Emeritus of WABA said: “Andy was just amazing. We worked together on very many “thinks and things!” Andy will live on through all the great materials and ideas that he left as a legacy and is unforgettable.”

Trained as a journalist in Canada, he had worked in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He was the author of nine major public health publications – *The Baby Killer Scandal*, *the Politics of Baby Foods* and *A Healthy Business: World Health and the Pharmaceutical Industry*; and countless reports on health, education, and development.

In 1986, the editor of one of his publications on infant feeding described him in the preface as: “an ordinary person whose commitment to the issue gradually turned him into an expert campaigner”. A few years later, Andrew wrote of people in impoverished communities in Colombia: “The people within the communities, when given the opportunity to do so, were the architects of their own development ... this, surely, is the key to sustaining development.” He continued to act as a catalyst for change, to stimulate community empowerment and the sharing of knowledge to improve the lives of children and the families and communities where they live. He was a board member of the Mother and Child Health and Education Trust which hosts the world best portal on the subject



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e-WABALink is produced and edited by the Secretariat of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). WABA is a global network of individuals and organisations 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. Its core partners are International Baby Action Food Network (IBFAN), La Leche League International (LLLI), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), Wellstart International, and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM). 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).