

Country Experiences of Engaging Fathers In Support For Breastfeeding

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Presentation Outline

- **Breastfeeding & Fathers in My Country**
- **Breastfeeding is Everyone's Business**
- **A Father's Perspective on Breastfeeding**
- **Breastfeeding in My Workplace**
- **More Engagement of Fathers for Breastfeeding in Future**
- **Key messages**

Breastfeeding & Fathers in My Country

- Traditionally believes “Fathers should not engage in childbirth” or “Breastfeeding in only women’s thing”
- There is a Strong Gender Line on “What men are supposed to do” and “What women are supposed to do.” It is very difficult to cross the gender lines.
- Men are normally not allowed to attend birth or take care of their wives and newborn babies at the hospitals, especially at public facilities.
- Culturally, women of the household take over – displace father. Their role to play in the first few days is very limited.



Breastfeeding is Everyone's Business

- Breastfeeding is **a right to Child, a right to mother**
- Breastfeeding is **Natural**
- Breastfeeding **Saves Lives**
- Breastfeeding needs **Promotion, Protection** and **Supporting**
- Breastfeeding is important for **achieving all SDGs**

 WABA | WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK
BREASTFEEDING
A Key to Sustainable Development

1  Breastfeeding is a natural and low-cost way of feeding babies and children. It is affordable for everyone and does not burden household budgets compared to artificial feeding. Breastfeeding contributes to poverty reduction.

2  Exclusive breastfeeding and continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond provides high quality nutrients and adequate energy and can help prevent hunger, undernutrition and obesity. Breastfeeding also means food security for infants.

3  Breastfeeding significantly improves the health, development and survival of infants and children. It also contributes to improved health and wellbeing of mothers, both in the short and long term.

4  Breastfeeding and adequate complementary feeding are fundamentals for readiness to learn. Breastfeeding and good quality complementary foods significantly contribute to mental and cognitive development and thus promote learning.

5  Breastfeeding is the great equalizer, giving every child a fair and best start in life. Breastfeeding is uniquely a right of women and they should be supported by society to breastfeed optimally. The breastfeeding experience can be satisfying and empowering for the mother as she is in control of how she feeds her baby.

6  Breastfeeding on demand provides all the water a baby needs, even in hot weather. On the other hand, formula feeding requires access to clean water, hygiene and sanitation.

7  Breastfeeding entails less energy when compared to formula production industries. It also reduces the need for water, firewood and fossil fuels in the home.

8  Breastfeeding women who are supported by their employers are more productive and loyal. Maternity protection and other workplace policies can enable women to combine breastfeeding and their other work or employment. Decent jobs should cater to the needs of breastfeeding women, especially those in precarious situations.

9  With industrialisation and urbanisation the time and space challenges become more prominent. Breastfeeding mothers who work outside the home need to manage these challenges and be supported by employers, their own families and communities. Crèches near the workplace, lactation rooms and breastfeeding breaks can make a big difference.

10  Breastfeeding practices differ across the globe. Breastfeeding needs to be protected, promoted and supported among all, but in particular among poor and vulnerable groups. This will help to reduce inequalities.

11  In the hustle of big cities, breastfeeding mothers and their babies need to feel safe and welcome in all public spaces. When disaster and humanitarian crises strike, women and children are affected disproportionately. Pregnant and lactating women need particular support during such times.

12  Breastfeeding provides a healthy, viable, non-polluting, non-resource intensive, sustainable and natural source of nutrition and sustenance.

13  Breastfeeding safeguards infant health and nutrition in times of adversity and weather-related disasters due to global warming.

14  Breastfeeding entails less waste compared to formula feeding. Industrial formula production and distribution lead to waste that pollutes the seas and affects marine life.

15  Breastfeeding is ecological compared to formula feeding. Formula production implies dairy farming that often puts pressure on natural resources and contributes to carbon emissions and climate change.

16  Breastfeeding is enshrined in many human rights frameworks and conventions. National legislation and policies to protect and support breastfeeding mothers and babies are needed to ensure that their rights are upheld.

17  The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding (GSIYCF) fosters multi-sectoral collaboration, and can build upon various partnerships for support of development through breastfeeding programs and initiatives.

A Father's Perspective on Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding is **not EASY!**
- Breastfeeding is **“the Best”** but **vulnerable.**
- Breastfeeding is **not only “Wife’s Business”**
- Breastfeeding is an **“Ideal Choice for Families”**
- Mother should be able to breastfeed their babies **whenever and wherever** they need.
- Fathers can stand-by their wives for providing support what they need.
- On the other hand, Fathers should not be **“Over-concerned.”**
- Fathers can be **“Best Breastfeeding Advocates”**



Breastfeeding in My Workplace

My Work Offers


- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Breastfeeding Room
- Flexible Working Hours
- Supportive Working Environment

Not All the Workplaces in Myanmar Are Like Mine!

- Unequal Maternity Leave Between Public and Private Sector
- No maternity protection for women in informal sector
- Most workplaces doesn't have proper breastfeeding room (mothers needs to go to places like latrine rooms to pump or express breastmilk)



More Engagement of Fathers for Breastfeeding in Future

- Make the health system more baby-friendly, breastfeeding-friendly and family-friendly
 - Remove cultural and systematic barriers for father's engagement in maternity care and childcare process
 - Help fathers to learn about breastfeeding and childcare, and house chores to be able to help their wives
 - Longer paternity leave will allow fathers to spend more time with their babies in early months of the babies' lives
 - Effectively adopt and implement WHO BMS Code and its relevant resolutions
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Key Messages

1

Create systems and environment that can accommodate “Father’s Involvement in Maternal and Child Care, including supporting Breastfeeding”

2

Encourage fathers to take more steps in supporting their wives with childcare and other house chores

3

Create opportunities for fathers to learn more about breastfeeding, child nutrition and other matters related to child development and positive parenting



Thank You Very Much!

Men and Women are equally responsible for raising the children – developing the family.

Men and Women should also be equally empowered for Child Care.