

Outcomes, outputs and indicators 2013- 2015.

Present programme

The overall

OBJECTIVE:

To protect breastfeeding and optimal feeding practices as a key natural resource for food security and safety and as a basic women's right

Programme Summary - Impact and Outcomes 2013-2015

g b i c s the global breastfeeding initiative for child survival

gBICS is supported by Norad

1. Decision-makers and public aware of and taking action on positive environmental impact of breastfeeding compared to negative impact of artificial/bottle-feeding - International and national policies adopted and implemented to reduce the rate of bottle-feeding

Climate change can be mitigated by increased awareness of decision-makers, parents, carers and media that breastfeeding is completely eco-friendly and contributes to a healthy and sustainable environment. Policy-makers must take adequate measures based on the negative impact on the environment of artificial feeding and the positive effect of breastfeeding.

Bottle feeding as an industrial based process is also related to contaminants such as dioxins that are a result of various industrial processes, and are highly toxic, are resistant to environmental degradation (POPs) and pollute and cause adverse effects on the environment and health. gBICS partners and allies (youth, women rights, environmental, consumer organizations), will do basic research and advocacy in favour of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and to counter industry misinformation with independent information on the value of breastfeeding in a contaminated world.

2. Governments translate into national measures the WHO and FAO Guidelines on safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula - implementation is monitored and mechanisms developed for full compliance of companies

gBICS warn of health consequences of climate change, for example how bacterial contamination is exacerbated by warmer ambient temperatures increasing mortality and morbidity in bottle-fed babies. Illness caused by such contamination can cause lasting neurological damage leading to life-long disability, with consequent costs in terms of human suffering and the strain on health care services. Policy-makers, mothers and families, environmentalists and media need evidence base information on the risks of increased bacterial contamination of formula feeding.

In 2010 Resolution WHA63.3 was adopted on Advancing Food Safety Initiatives. Appearance of pathogens in foods for infants and young children and its disastrous consequences has been well documented. To address the most serious cases, WHO and FAO issued Guidelines for safe preparation, storage and handling of powdered infant formula at both home and in care settings. IBFAN has been involved in the process of Codex Alimentarius Commission and WHO and development of the Guidelines and works on their adoption at national level and towards full compliance by the baby food industry of these Guidelines. But there is still a very long way to go as WHO does not monitor their national implementation and thus industry is not under any coordinated pressure to implement them fully into their manufacturing practice.

3. Improved Corporate Accountability and safeguarding of public interest - democratisation of global public health and nutrition

Corporate behaviour and lack of accountability is one of the key underlying determinants of the dominant patterns of production and consumption which are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, food and nutrition insecurity, ill health and an intensification of poverty. Moreover, trade related policies and marketing practices of food companies often undermine communities' capacity to sustain themselves with adequate local foods and to provide sustainable solutions to adequate complementary feeding.

gBICS partners advocate for legally-binding corporate accountability frameworks, particularly on the human rights responsibilities of companies. We support international treaty bodies and agencies that are responsible for developing these norms, and governments as duty bearers, responsible for implementing them. We denounce the negative impact of conflicts of interest on the integrity and coherence of policy-making. We call for clear identification of roles of private commercial actors in order to enable a correct and efficient dialogue with industry while safeguarding public interest.

We advocate for the democratisation of global public health and nutrition to ensure that the WHO fulfils its constitutional mandate. As a 'watchdog' organisation, gBICS partners network with other public-interest NGOs. This programme area has gained importance in view of a substantial reform of WHO which will have a profound impact on policy and programme environments in the area of IYCF, public health and nutrition more broadly.

4. Contribution to the realization of the right to health and adequate food of women and children worldwide through the promotion of democratic participation, rule of law and pro-active engagement of civil society

Protection and promotion of breastfeeding stands at the human rights intersection of, among others, the right of the child to the best start in life, survival, development, the right to health and adequate food of women and children, women's rights to decent work and to sexual and reproductive health, parents' right to correct and unbiased information regarding nutrition, as well as the right to sustainable development. A number of human rights instruments are particularly relevant such as CRC and CEDAW.

gBICS works to strengthen human rights based accountability through monitoring of performance of governments as duty bearers, promoting corporate accountability and empowerment of breastfeeding advocates to claim accountability. gBICS empowers Partners to take human rights actions at national and international level and claim accountability through capacity building on Human Rights.

Advocacy is needed for Human Rights Treaty Bodies (HRTB) to be sensitized on issues related to IYCF and emanate informed and adequate recommendations to governments. Participation in relevant human rights committees and networks is increasing.

5. Continued implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent WHA resolutions (the Code) by training, legal advice, advocacy, monitoring and reporting on non-compliance

Code implementation requires political will, careful drafting and persistent enforcement. Many UN documents are enthusiastically adopted but remain dead letters at the national level. If it had not been for IBFAN, the Code would have been forgotten. "Code Implementation is just as important today as it was when it was adopted back in 1981", said Ban Ki Moon, UN Secretary General in 2010. But it is a long and slow process. For example, it took 9 years, from 2003 to 2012, for South Africa to adopt a law reflecting all Code provisions. Support and follow-up is essential for such laws to yield results.

Advocacy for implementing the Code is the cornerstone of the gBICS programme because it is the most effective strategy to counter both aggressive and subtle marketing tactics of infant formula and other breastmilk substitutes by baby food companies. The fuller the Code is enforced at country level, the more mothers will be able to make sustainable infant feeding decisions free from commercial influence. Moreover, more governments will save on imports which require foreign exchange and save the earth in avoiding pollution as most breastmilk substitutes need to be transported across continents to reach consumers. Laws to protect the first food will make it more likely to also protect against non-communicable diseases, such as obesity and diabetes, rather than following unsustainable and risky consumption models from the West.

6. Improved health and safety standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to protect maternal and infant and young child health.

Standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission should protect consumer health and food safety as well as facilitate international trade. All Codex standards related to infant and young child feeding should conform to the International Code, WHO provisions and the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, European Union related resolutions, provisions on product labelling, product marketing and use, quality and safety, including information on the risks of artificial feeding.

gBICS advocates for a global policy through active participation in the UN Codex Alimentarius program to develop standards for the quality, labelling and marketing of infant formulas and foods for infants and young children; To increase the number of countries with national policies to restrict marketing of baby foods to protect breastfeeding and promote complementary feeding based on sustainable natural resources management; To ensure that the International Code and resolutions as well as the UN Global Strategy for IYCF



are the underlying principles in development of baby food standards and implemented at national level.

7. Advocacy efforts worldwide to scale up breastfeeding and IYCF Interventions through monitoring and evaluation of national policies and programmes

Implementing a comprehensive national policy on IYCF means that each country has a policy/legislation adopting the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and Maternity rights protected; a policy on implementation of Baby Friendly Hospitals; a component on infant feeding in emergencies and on HIV as part of the national policy, as well as strategies in place to raise awareness among communities, mothers and caretakers. It means that governments develop policy and action plans to scale up breastfeeding and infant feeding interventions through coordinated approaches and allocation of funds.

At the international and regional level, the gBICS partners call upon WHO or other UN agencies or multilateral partners towards reviewing progress in implementation of the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding and the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. At national level, gBICS through the World Breastfeeding Trends initiative-WBTi generates national processes to monitor and assess the implementation of the GSIYCF in a participatory process -including governments, civil society, academia and agencies. It identifies main gaps and plans of action to improve IYCF practices. WBTi also tracks and reviews this process every 3-5 years. WBTi assessments reports are used for advocacy at national, regional and global meetings. WBTi has been recently recognised

by WHO to be a source of information in the WHO's e-Global database on implementing the Nutrition action-GINA.

Monitoring and evaluation are important components both internally for keeping the gBICS partners on track and for the achievement of the programme's outcomes, outputs and indicators. The Second World Breastfeeding Conference, planned for 2016 in Africa, will offer a time for reflection and decision-making.

8. Improved protection of mothers' right and optimal policies and practices for infant feeding in Emergencies (IFE)

In 2010, WHA recognized and expressed concern that in emergencies infants and young children are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, illness and death. Breastfeeding can help provide safe and sustainable food for infants and young children in emergencies and natural disasters, and its high immunity capabilities provide further protection against diarrhoeal and respiratory infections as well as vector-borne malaria.

Many of the emergencies occur in countries not on track to attain MDG 4 and include situations created by the effects of climate change. The impacts of emergencies are greater for marginalized communities that do not have resources and capacity to face adequately the risks and the situations that evolve after an emergency. (Many communities are "forgotten" by authorities after the initial onslaught of an emergency). Also, the impact of such emergencies is socially different for women because of their gendered roles and because they are often among the most disadvantaged populations. Thus, protecting and supporting breastfeeding as a mother's right and developing actions to increase and strengthen women's participation in these contexts are highly important, not only for immediate survival, including water and food access, but for rebuilding the community, generating food security and safety, and for developing sustainability.

IBFAN works with key UN partners such as UNHCR, UNICEF and with international NGOs, specifically those in the inter-agency IFE Core Group that have developed important tools that comply with international emergency standards (including Code): Operational Guidance on IFE that has been adopted by the Global Nutrition Cluster of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, training modules for decision-makers and for humanitarian health and nutrition workers. The actual challenge, taken up by gBICS, lies in their translations, dissemination and implementation. The gBICS partners continue to play an important role at all these levels as well as in exchanging lessons learned from the various emergency situations.

9. Advocacy for the right of mothers and their children to optimal nutrition and health in difficult circumstances including HIV and AIDS

The revised WHO guidelines, issued in 2010, emphasize as the key

principle a focus on HIV-free survival, including strategies that both avert HIV transmission and also support maternal and child survival. Experience has shown that counselling and support offered to mothers is a key strategy. WBTi is an important tool that will be used to assist countries in assessing the status of national implementation of HIV and infant feeding policies and guidelines.

gBICS advocates for the right of mothers and their children to optimal nutrition and health through the development of comprehensive policies, implementation of global guidelines on HIV and Infant Feeding, conducting operational research and peer support, and supporting community networks including HIV positive women. Particularly in Africa, gBICS works to improve knowledge and support of religious actors with regard to sexual and reproductive rights for women.

The gBICS partners will continue working with governments and communities; HIV/Infant feeding is a crosscutting issue and as such, will be addressed in all other programme areas.

10. Improved Protection of Maternity Rights and working conditions of pregnant and breastfeeding working women in all economic sectors

The protection of maternity rights for all working women is of growing importance, as more women in reproductive age take up employment and very often face worsening work conditions and more precarious paid employment. Maternity protection means protecting the right of pregnant and lactating working women to work in decent and healthy conditions; it also means giving them the right to rest before and after giving birth, and guaranteeing that they may return to their job after the period of leave; it means the right to paid leave and to paid medical benefits before, during and after birth; as well as to paid breastfeeding breaks for those mothers who choose to both work and breastfeed their infant. Maternity protection also means non-discrimination measures at work in the face of maternity. These rights are the fundamental, collective, rights of all women workers, whatever their field of work, whatever their employment contract, be they working in the formal or informal economy, in the private or public sector, as domestic workers or as agricultural workers. Ensuring that these rights are fulfilled means moving towards gender equality.

gBICS partners need to strengthen their capacities and exchange national experiences to push for strong maternity protection policies and innovative practices in a varied range of alliances in the different countries. WBTi assessments are an important tool for action.

11. Improved implementation of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and social mobilization strategies

IEC strategies are critical aspects of a comprehensive programme to improve IYCF practices and women's fulfilment of rights. IEC approaches may include the use of print and electronic media-TV, radio, video; web and social networks; interpersonal (counselling, group education, support groups); thematic global groupings; community activities and public campaigns to disseminate important information, motivate and build in public opinion and action for change. Social mobilisation and IEC strategies are essential for gBICS partners work and for sharing widely messages, position papers,

declarations, informative sheets, reports and others, on topics of vital importance. Every year the World Breastfeeding Week - WBW organised by WABA and implemented by gBICS partners and multiple actors at international and country level- highlights the action needed for change related to a particular theme.

12. Enhanced capacity for planning, coordination, partner liaison, accountability and fundraising.

The gBICS programme cannot achieve its intended impact if each of its core partners and coordination does not follow good managerial practices and build up growing capacities at national and global levels. Having a programme implemented by ten independent partners from diverse regions of the world, with different cultural backgrounds and technical expertise, implies a permanent effort to work and develop action in a participatory manner towards a common impact and the same outcomes. This thrust has to be maintained by the gBICS Chairperson, Core Partners group and Coordinating Office (gCO) at the international level as well as by all the Technical Offices and Regional Coordinating Offices (RCO).



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