

Breastfeeding in a Globalised World

for Peace and Justice



“Breastfeeding is about peace and justice. It is the natural, universal and peaceful way of nurturing our children. In a world often wracked by injustice, violence and war, breastfeeding can be a sentinel of peace – inner peace, peace with other people and peace with the environment.”

Anwar Fazal, Co-founder of WABA and IBFAN,
Right Livelihood Award Recipient, 1982

WABA 2003

Globalisation...is a manifold and elusive concept for there is no single definition. (It has been) defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events many miles away and vice versa.

Judith Richter – Holding Corporations Accountable

Protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and optimal complementary feeding for infants and young children are the aims of the global breastfeeding movement. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week 2003 – *Breastfeeding in a Globalised World for Peace and Justice* – provides an opportunity to consider the obstacles as well as the benefits of globalisation in promoting breastfeeding as a symbol for peace and justice.

Globalisation is the term often used to describe the process taking place in recent years of imposing harmonised rules of free trade and free financial flows throughout the whole world. Powered by large corporations and financial markets, globalisation has become a tool to maximise profits. In such an environment, where trade agreements and economic interests of transnational corporations often take precedence over the sovereign rights of nations, the needs of mothers and children are easily jeopardized. Global deregulation and the spreading privatisation of health care put profits before people. In this environment, breastfeeding-friendly practices can be lost, while the use of breastmilk substitutes increasingly becomes the norm.

However, other aspects of globalisation can be used to strengthen breastfeeding cultures and to protect this fundamental and vital act of nurturing our children. Our work for breastfeeding aims to create a better world: for mothers and children, the environment, justice and peace with all people. Internet communications and email have helped connect the breastfeeding community globally by providing instant access to our action networks of associations, programmes, alliances and institutions. Through these networks, mothers, parents, women's groups, health care workers, institutions and environmental networks are finding new and creative ways to ensure that infant and child health is protected through breastfeeding.

This action folder contains information that can help you and the groups you work with to realise the goals for World Breastfeeding Week 2003. These are:

- To recognise the challenges and opportunities of globalisation for breastfeeding practices.
- To maximise the potential of global communications to educate people on the importance of breastfeeding, appropriate complementary feeding and the health risks of artificial feeding.
- To promote and act on the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.
- To support the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolutions and oppose any undermining of these instruments.
- To build alliances with public interest groups striving for global justice, peace and health for all
- To think globally and act locally with all sectors of our world-wide breastfeeding community in order to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

