

Foreword

This book is about the story of the first quarter century of the life of World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

Born 25 years ago in the basement of the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) headquarters in New York, USA, and encouraged by Jim Grant, UNICEF's most passionate advocate and the best ever to lead UNICEF, it has flowered all over the world in every continent, reaching millions of people over the last 25 years.

It is also the story of a remarkable social movement, a network of networks and a galaxy and dyad of individuals and organisations that made so much new happen and generated a major global wave of unprecedented attention, especially through its core programme, World Breastfeeding Week. It is also a story of meeting great challenges, being more than a hub but also an incubator for creative opportunities, catalysts, multipliers and accelerators as the movement for protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding. It was inspired by and designed to foster the historic Innocenti Declaration and to make things happen. And it did!

The life and health of social movements is never easy. I suggest there are five phases.

Firstly, social movements, like humans, have a first "dying" from even when they are born, shedding the old and renewing themselves as they grow learning to talk, to walk and to run. Change and adaptations are both constants. Some movements don't even survive this first life. WABA surged forward from its inception with synergy quite unprecedented in social movements.

The second "death" is when an organisation loses its vision, its passion and all that make it a joyful and purposeful force for happiness. WABA continues to a global force.

The third, fourth and fifth lives' ending are the ones we don't want.

The third life ends when the organisation is shut down legally and administratively.

But the fourth and fifth "deaths" are the greatest tragedies – when no one remembers the organisation, and the final blow, when no one even remembers the issues!

That is why this book is even more important, a building block for its continuing vitality through synergy.

WABA is at its prime – its journey has been full of soul and passion and driven by a vigorous flow of linkages nourished by an open light, participatory and, most of all, an action orientated framework. It also now has challenges like never before.

What makes WABA so vibrant? What does it have to do to keep so?

The cause of breastfeeding is an eternal one – the natural way, the panchasila of the power of medicine, nutrition, ecology, economy and the joy and beauty of love. We have been full of vitality and we will need to continue to be a lively and effective movement and to be everywhere