

and at anytime. The challenges are enormous but can be met if we care for three important attributes – competence, creativity and community.

Competence is critical – we must be the most and best informed about the issues we are addressing and in all its dimensions, the science and the art, the policy and the practice. The best people in the field must be us!

Creativity is essential as we challenge greedy corporations and unresponsive bureaucracies. Popular mobilisation and communications need a constant creative stream of ideas and methods that capture the imagination!

We must grow as a community our diverse network of “head”, “heart” and “hand” people, of “passionates” and practitioners, of men and women, of mothers and children, are held together by active trust-building, we must generate the kind of synergy based on caring and respect that transform missions into movements, that proliferate magnificently because the community cares and supports each other and moves forward together.

WABA and its core partners, Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM), International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), La Leche League International (LLLl), and Wellstart International are a family who are the core and soul of our work. Let us continue to be a wonderful and growing circle of competence, creativity and community. Let us be full of life, always, caring and sharing. Let us grow our partnerships and expand our operating circles even more. Our future depends on it.

And the future is going to be only more challenging. I wish to share with you a poem by a great SUFI scholar, Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882 – 1927) that powerfully and simply explains the journey we often have to take:

“ We asked for strength,
and we were given difficulties to make us strong.
We asked for wisdom,
and we were given problems to learn to solve.
We asked for prosperity,
and we were given brains and brawns to work.
We asked for courage,
and we were given dangers to overcome.
We asked for love,
and we were given people to help.
We asked for favours,
and we were given opportunities.
We received nothing we wanted,
but we received everything we needed. ”

The WABA story, in many ways, has been the message in the above poem, born out of great challenges, requiring deep responses. The results have been amazing and we have made a difference. Do read this book.

Our hope is that it will inspire a whole new generation of health activists as well as serve as a model of global mobilisation for change.

I wish to particularly thank Sarah-Joy Amin, the former Executive Director of WABA for her diligent and engaging work in getting this book done. I also wish to record my special thanks to Julianna Lim, a former Deputy Executive Director, who did what I would to call the “first edition”. It was entitled “Nurturing the Future – The Natural Way” and to mark 20 years of WABA. The core message of this foreword was originally written for that book and I chose to expand on it as I continue to be inspired, myself, by this continuing and fascinating journey.