



civil and economic rights included the right to the best start in life through breastfeeding, but only if women were fully enabled medically, socially and economically to decide to breastfeed and to succeed in that decision.

This was only the first of many WABA-related experiences that were to follow over the next two plus decades. The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched in 1990/91 in the US at my place of work, Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health, by James Grant, director of UNICEF following the Innocenti Declaration of 1990. The Declaration called for all maternity centers worldwide to practice a set of 10 specific practices– the Ten Steps– by 1995 in order to reduce barriers to breastfeeding initiation, and to enhance women's achievement of their breastfeeding goals. Today, more than 152 countries worldwide have Baby-friendly Hospitals, and, globally, 28% of hospitals have been designated as Baby-Friendly since 1991.

WABA has played an active role in creating and maintaining this global awareness towards the BFHI, and continues to support the vital changes called for at the Innocenti Centre in Florence, Italy, including the early, extensive, and continuing work to ensure that workplace accommodation and paid maternity leave stays on the global political agenda.

In many ways, I feel that the last two-plus decades of my life's work have paralleled that of WABA, trying to create a world in which the Innocenti goals are achieved. But what a personal pleasure it has been to work with and be a part of this global organisation, dedicated to enabling women everywhere to have the civil and economic, let alone social and medical support needed to be a breastfeeding mother in today's world. Thank you WABA for creating the atmosphere that has allowed me to work for all women in this manner. Happy 25th Anniversary! ”

– Miriam Labbok, WABA SC co-chair

A large part of WABA's on-going promotion of the BFHI and general breastfeeding advocacy among healthcare professionals has been to reach out to professional health and medical associations such as the International Paediatric Association (IPA), International Midwives Confederation (ICM) and many more. Dr Raj Anand, WABA's former SC co-chair has been one of those stalwarts constantly looking for opportunities to 'convert' healthcare professionals and healthcare workers into breastfeeding advocates.

Subsequently, WABA Steering Committee (SC) and various International Advisory Council (IAC) members have followed suit with varying degrees of success. The IPA for example has become more sensitive to ensuring that speakers and content of presentations at their global conferences are free of industry sponsorship and vested interest (albeit not always with success). Meanwhile the ICM has invited WABA to help review and develop their