



Breastfeeding: Just Ten Steps! The Baby-Friendly Way (WBW 2010)

In 2010, the Baby-Friendly theme was again revisited. It was a theme that was specifically selected to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the *Innocenti Declaration*. Since the first WBW in 1992, more than 20,000 maternity facilities which is about 28% of all maternities in 152 countries around the world, have fully implemented the Ten Steps, and have been certified by the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

During this time, increased rates of exclusive breastfeeding had contributed to the decline in child mortality from 13 million in 1990 to 8.8 million in 2009. Studies have also shown that when a greater number of the Ten Steps are practiced, more women are likely to achieve their breastfeeding intentions. However, reduced BFHI programming worldwide, inadequate training, and weakened compliance to the Ten Steps in accredited maternities have contributed to stagnant or declining exclusive breastfeeding rates in various settings.

There was therefore an urgent need to revitalise BFHI activities within the health systems, and to ensure that health workers who care for mothers and babies are adequately trained to counsel and support them in optimal infant feeding.

“A newborn baby has only three demands. They are warmth in the arms of its mother, food from her breasts, and security in the knowledge of her presence. Breastfeeding satisfies all three.”

– Grantly Dick-Read, British obstetrician

In early 1992, the Chairman of WABA, Anwar Fazal visited me with Sarah Amin who was the newly appointed WABA Coordinator. At this meeting, we started working on the WBW campaign. The launch of WBW in August 1992 gave us (PPPIM, the first Malaysian breastfeeding group) the initial boost to further national breastfeeding advocacy efforts. This provided a platform for PPPIM to organise more events and subsequently to involve the Ministry of Health in an active way. After the successful first year, the Ministry of Health asked PPPIM to organise the second WBW in order to launch the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative in a big way. The Queen was the Guest of Honour and she launched the BFHI in the country's busiest Maternity Hospital. This gave breastfeeding such high visibility and nationwide media attention in the country for the first time.