

WABA Gender Programme



Breastfeeding is an important part of women's reproduction and benefits women's health. As earlier highlighted, all women have the right to breastfeed as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As with other issues concerning women's health and sexuality, WABA recognises that breastfeeding takes place in a gendered world. Breastfeeding and child rearing are particularly difficult for the majority of the world's women, marginalised by poverty, violence, poor nutrition, job insecurities and gender inequalities.⁷ Thus gender issues need to be addressed in breastfeeding advocacy and promotional work. Since 2002, WABA has increasingly advocated for greater gender sensitivity in its breastfeeding promotional work through gender training workshops, producing gender sensitive materials, various mainstreaming efforts, and engaging its partners in supporting common positions on gender and breastfeeding.



WABA prioritised the Gender Programme for at least two project cycles from 1997 till 2007/2008 to give special impetus to gender sensitisation across the WABA network. After this period, the strategy shifted to greater gender mainstreaming in WABA's general programmes. The WABA Gender programme worked to situate breastfeeding issues within the broader women's agenda and in particular, the women's reproductive health and rights framework. Over the years, WABA has reached out to various feminists and women's groups, nationally and globally, particularly the women's health movement. WABA has participated in several significant women's events and conferences, and sought common positions and shared interest areas. Some of these linkages were successful while others offered milestones in learning more about diverse feminist positions, and how WABA could design campaigns to address issue areas.

7. Mainstreaming Gender in Breastfeeding Programmes.

What's breastfeeding got to do with gender issues? WABA