

A gender equality framework also requires fathers/partners to take responsibility for a larger share of other child care duties.^{9, 10}

Global Initiative for Father Support (GIFS) and the Men's Initiative



WABA Men's Initiative Working Group members presenting at the WABA- LLLI Mother Support Summit 2008.

WABA's Global Initiative for Father Support (GIFS) was formed following the very successful Global Initiative for Mother Support (GIMS) in 2002. The participating men, a few from fathers' groups, were so inspired by the Mother Support Group women that they also wanted to formalise their contribution to the breastfeeding movement in some form. The early initiators were from the Swedish Father's group, and brought their wisdom and experience to GIFS. (See: <http://www.waba.org.my/whatwedo/gims/gims+5.htm>)

However, as the group advanced, it recognised that it was not just fathers that had a role in IYCF, but all men who came into contact with a breastfeeding mother. With this shift in thinking and increased gender sensitisation, the group reconstituted itself. WABA's Men's Initiative was formed in its place in 2006, after a group of men and youth participants of WABA Gender Training decided that there should be an initiative, managed by the Men's Working Group. This group would advocate for an active role in which a father and other men in general can play in relation to infant feeding practices. The main mission of the Men's Initiative is to call for a shift in social roles imposed on women and men, with the goal of encouraging more equal sharing of family responsibilities between men and women.

More specific objectives have been:

- To include fathers in ante-natal, delivery and post natal services, interventions and parental education;
- To develop country profiles which will provide a global snapshot of men's participation in the feeding and care of infants and young children;
- To disseminate specific knowledge about the advantages of fathers' involvement to all parents;
- To improve linkages with related target groups, particularly men's groups, to promote father support;
- To advocate for legislation in support of maximum participation of men in childcare and parenting; and
- To act as a stimulus so that the establishment of Father-Support initiatives are increased globally.

9. WABA International Women's Day Press Release 2010.

10. Breastfeeding. A Feminist Issue. WABA Activity Sheet 4.