

Documentation Centre (ICDC), under the leadership of Annelies Allain, led the WABA Code Compliance Task Force to give impetus to global code awareness and implementation. WABA organised the WBW 1994 theme on the Code.

The WBW 1994 theme focused on and showcased the work of WABA's Core Partner, IBFAN, and set the stage to bring more organisational partners on board to take up code advocacy work. One of the major outcomes was to help La Leche League International (LLLI) – a very large international mother-to-mother support organisation – better understand the need for Code compliance, which then initiated a process for greater internal Code compliance.



*When WABA began, I thought our task was fairly simple: remind mothers and others that breastfeeding is the best way to feed an infant, and make visible some of the forces allied against it. I quickly learned that very little about breastfeeding advocacy is simple. We now face challenges in the form of aggressive marketing of new baby foods, attacks on groups accused of trying to force women to breastfeed against their will, and a virulent anti-science stance. Paradoxically, as new research reveals the mechanisms that make human milk critically important for infant development and the risks inherent in using substitutes, mothers who fail to meet their breastfeeding goals could feel even more devastated. Even as WABA meets its responsibility to make research findings available to their audiences, they remain sensitive to the needs of these women. Should WABA put its energy and resources in countering the misinformation about breastfeeding or building even broader coalitions committed to improving conditions for breastfeeding families? WABA continues to opt for the latter, as they have since that New York meeting 25 years ago.*

*– Penny van Esterik, Founding SC member and former Women and Work Task Force Coordinator*

*In Sweden today, the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding has decreased from 81% (1996) to 72%. Pressure from baby food industry increases; media encourages formula-feeding and polarizes the 'breastfeeding – not breastfeeding' issue; the authorities downplay the importance of breastfeeding; people who promote breastfeeding can be threatened; and breastfeeding has a low status. It is more important than ever to strengthen each level of work for breastfeeding, i.e.*