



Peer counsellors in action.

WBW 2013 shone the light on peer counselling as one of the most cost-effective and impactful means of increasing breastfeeding rates in countries. Advocating for scaling up peer counselling and for funding and support for the PC programme were key focus areas that year and in the following years.

WABA and Peer Counselling in Malaysia

In 2007 the first WABA-ILCA fellow, Sue Saunders, trained nine mothers in Penang as Peer Counsellors. The breastfeeding mothers successfully formed a group called Mother-to-Mother Peer Support in Penang that remains active to this day. This group, with the support of WABA, has successfully lobbied the Penang State Government to declare Penang as a Breastfeeding-Friendly State, and has organised numerous programmes promoting breastfeeding in Penang since then.

In 2010, with the support of UNICEF Malaysia, WABA facilitated the training of a breastfeeding peer counsellors and administrators course based on La Leche League International's Peer Counsellors training programme. WABA's Mother Support Task Force Coordinator, Pushpa Panadam and La Leche League's late Kathy Baker trained a core group of 19 Malaysian mothers as Peer Counsellor Programme Administrators and Peer Counsellors. This group later formed the Malaysian Breastfeeding Peer Counsellors (MBFPC).



2010 Peer Counselling Administrators and Peer Counselling training by Pushpa Panadam and Kathy Baker.

Like many other women, for me, breastfeeding was a natural choice, and a very personal one. However, not long after I started breastfeeding my first child, I realised that experiencing it all alone was not sufficient. I needed friends and peers to share all the ups and downs of my journey as a mother, especially in this sacred task of breastfeeding my child. I established Susulbu.com in 2004 as an online support centre, providing a platform for the Malay-speaking community to discuss breastfeeding. From this small establishment, I then realised that my personal experience alone was not sufficient to support other moms. I needed the appropriate skills and knowledge to be able to help more. This was the turning point where my hobby became a profession.