

Promotion and protection of breastfeeding:

*a key approach in the fight
against malnutrition*

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Wemos

Founded in 1981 by medical students



Mission

- Wemos advocates for the right to health of people in developing countries

Way of working

Contribute to an improvement of health of people in developing countries by:

- Advocacy towards Dutch and European government and towards international institutions (WHO, World Bank)
- Cooperation with partner organizations in Bolivia, Kenya, Zambia and Bangladesh
- Campaigns and communication

Malnutrition – worldwide figures



Amount of hungry people: almost 1 billion

Most vulnerable are ***children under 5:***

32% suffer from chronic malnutrition (stunting)

Malnutrition responsible for

- 3.5 million child deaths per year
- 35% of the disease burden of children 0-5y

Breastfeeding practices are suboptimal



- Worldwide less than 40% of infants under six months of age are exclusively breastfed
- Suboptimal breastfeeding responsible for 1.4 million child deaths

Health consequences:

- Poor nutrient intake
- Lower intake of antibodies from breast milk → increased risk of illness
- More likely to consume unsafe water

Breastfeeding promotion



- Breastfeeding is an important aspect in order to reduce malnutrition and child deaths:
 - Effective and Evidence-based
 - Promotion and protection are equally important
- WHO actively promotes breastfeeding as the best source of nourishment for infants and young children: “10 facts on breastfeeding”

Breastfeeding protection



Marketing of infant formula harms breastfeeding practices.

The International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes was adopted in 1981. It stipulates:

- no promotion of breast-milk substitutes, bottles and teats to the general public;
- health facilities and health professionals should **not** have a role in promoting breast-milk substitutes;
- free samples should not be provided to pregnant women, new mothers or families.

Breastfeeding protection



**A picture like
this is not
allowed**

Problems encountered



- The BMS Code is not legally binding; it has to be put into laws and regulations by individual countries
 - In many countries, these laws are weak and surveillance is lacking
 - Manufacturer's budget for advertising is much higher than government budget for breastfeeding education
- Manufacturers of infant formula are still blatantly violating the code
- children becoming sick and dying

Air Susu Ibu

makanan terbaik untuk bayi



Teruskan kebiasaan menyusui
bayi anda



Indonesian poster

“Breast is best for you
baby

Continue your baby’s
feeding habits”

Example of Code violations: Vietnam



Vietnamese government accepted laws based on the BMS Code in 1994, but:

- Exclusive breastfeeding rates have dropped from **34%** (1998) to **10 %** (2010)
- In 2008 sales figures of infant formula rose with 42%
- Manufacturers of infant formula are in Top 5 of advertisers

Example of Code violations: Vietnam



- ABC News (sept '09) and a Vietnamese newspaper (aug '10) published articles

Violations by Dutch enterprise FrieslandCampina:

- Decorates waiting room of a women's clinic and registration forms with its logo
- Pays commission to health workers to promote infant formula to pregnant women
- Director denies

Example of Code violations: CSR*



According to FrieslandCampina's own CSR report:

- FC 'gives free nutritional advice to mothers with infant children' in Indonesia
- In collaboration with the Indonesia Health Department
- A photo in the report shows FC logos on forms and health workers' uniforms
- Dutch Min. Econ. Affairs presents similar activities in Vietnam as a Good Example of CSR

** CSR = Corporate social responsibility*



Effect:

- Promotion of its brand
- Conflict of interest

Photo from FrieslandCampina CSR Report 2009

Example of Code violations: Emergencies



- Donations of infant formula trigger women to stop breastfeeding
- Yogyakarta (earthquake '06): products were distributed as incentive for mothers who brought their children for vaccination
- Research UNICEF Indonesia:
 - 43% of babies had received formula vs 32% before earthquake
 - Diarrhoea prevalence doubled

Example of Code violations: Emergencies



Example of Code violations: Emergencies



30 years later



- Various resolutions by the WHA urging countries to act
- Mainly IBFAN that has been active in collecting and publishing proof of violations
- But... still to many violations...

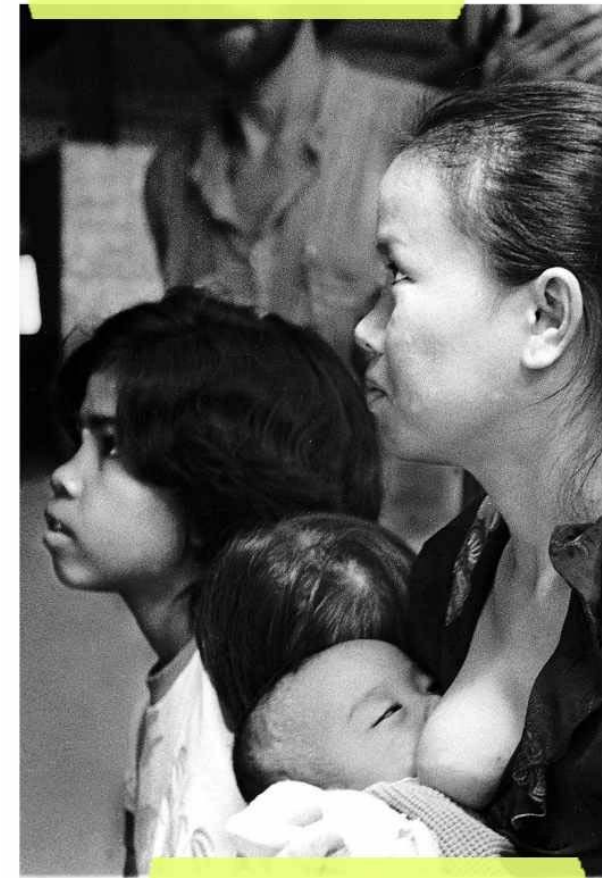
Wemos plans



- Wemos thinks it is unacceptable that children become malnourished as a result of unethical marketing practices from infant formula manufacturers

Wemos method

- Collect evidence
- Plan a method of working
- Raise awareness
- Advocate



Expected results



- EU puts into action its legislation to keep EU enterprises to BMS Code (export)
- ECHO (EU aid office) promotes compliance with BMS Code and promotes breastfeeding
- Manufacturers of infant formula (especially FrieslandCampina) will include BMS Code in its CSR policy and action
- BMS Code is included in other CSR guidelines (government, banks)



Thank you!
Merci beaucoup!
Vielen Dank!



www.wemos.nl