

Newsletter

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Editorial

India writes history in breastfeeding training



15th January 2007! Another landmark day in the history of India's breastfeeding movement, developing training for health workers. Second international training course, "Infant and Young Child Feeding Counseling: A Training Course, The 3 in 1 Course (Breastfeeding, Complementary Feeding and Infant Feeding & HIV)" was inaugurated in the rooms of GTB Hospital of University College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Led by the able course director Prof. MMA Faridi, this is such a course that will help the nations in Asia to take this forward by way of replication and adaptation to reach the most needed, the people, at the family level. The course is unique in a way that it helps to build the capacity of a State or a Nation to take forward the skills training right up to the family level

particularly through its new elements of developing 'middle level trainers' in places where needs are high. The training programme provides all that is needed for this purpose. Guides, manuals and visual aids for the trainers and participants, including the one for family level counseling is also a part of the training programme.

In the 3 in 1 Course first phase of T-O-T, six days are taken for preparing master trainers and one course director leads this effort in training of about 6 persons, who in turn train 24 "infant and young child feeding counseling specialists" over a period of another seven days under the supervision of course director. Thus in 13 days six master trainers of IYCF counseling and 24 IYCF counseling specialists are developed. The seven-day course has 43 sessions, and it includes 5 two-hour clinical sessions, which are practiced with the mothers and babies in a hospital setting. Two practice sessions are devoted for preparation of replacement feeds and proper complementary foods. Apart from this unique feature the course has several other elements of adult learning, including exercises, role-plays, demonstrations and group work.

Why I call it a history? The first breastfeeding counseling course developed by Helen Armstrong and Felicity Savage King was field tested in India in 1989, then retested in 1990. India then took charge and has set an example by taking lead in implementing the training programs not only in several Indian states but also in many Asian nations. Innovations have led to combining the three training courses provided by WHO and UNICEF on breastfeeding, complementary feeding and infant feeding & HIV counseling.

Only times to come will prove if it was worth a work that could be remembered in the history of breastfeeding movement. Because this kind of work has not been evolved any where in the world. After having the experience of several training courses the resource team in India who was already an experienced group for the last 15 years, led to the belief that three courses on different subjects could be combined and duplicities could be removed. More than that the rapid changes in HIV and infant feeding positions, as publications of new data and tools, also called for updating the critical part of the course. The training team that has prepared it worked for over 3 years in partnership with UNICEF and state governments and tested it more than four times and continued revisions of the course, which now we proudly call, 3-in-1, the USP of the course. The course is now available in its 3rd version of November 2006. It was officially released by the Secretary Women and Child Development on 5th August 2005 in the presence of high level gathering of UNICEF and government.

In the end I am proud for India, for having taken true lead. As I see this newsletter goes to print, India would have supported one more country Timor-Lesté in launching

the first ever 3-in-1 training course as part of the country program. In fact, the work had already begun when they translated the training materials into Tatum, local language, few months back. More countries are expected to follow. Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Bangladesh, Laos PDR, Maldives and Indonesia are among many other countries where teams have received the training. More and more action seems to emerge for protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding, from this training programme.

Friends, watch us over next 5-10 years!

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Report from the RCO

July-December 2006

Following is a brief summary of the activities of the RCO from July to December 2006:

July: Provided literature/protocols for running the Lactation Management Clinic to the IFP Nepal; 'Call for Action WHA 2006' developed, disseminated widely and uploaded on website; dates for South Asia Breastfeeding Partner's Forum-3 (SABPF-3) finalized; action folder for WBW shared with the network; Preparations for APN 7 started; format for E-bulletin developed and discussed with the editorial board members; preparation of the Sida report and IBFAN Asia Pacific annual report started; Vietnam and Cambodia contact list provided to Nestle Boycott Coordinator from INFACT Canada to monitor use of Nestlé's Bear Brand products to feed their babies; reminder sent to RRs to send report; website updated with the latest reports and articles; 2nd phase of global website of World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) started; funds transferred to RR Southeast Asia.

August: Upon invitation from MOH and UNICEF Maldives, RC participated and provided expert consultation to sensitize stakeholders and identified key issues on implementation of the policy document and helped in finalizing the Maldives Breastfeeding Protection and Promotion Regulation; four persons team from BPNI/IBFAN RCO met with His Excellency,



the President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam to brief him on infants' nutrition and survival issues; RCO sent a request to Regional Director UNAIDS and member of the independent commission on HIV in Asia Pacific to address gaps found in 5 country report on Rapid Assessment of HIV and Infant Feeding work to prevent HIV in infants; RC made 3 presentations 'The Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, Code in South Asia, and Breastfeeding: Challenges and opportunities' at the 2nd National Conference on Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding held at Dhaka, Bangladesh; theme for SABPF-3 'Breastmilk Saves Lives, Saves Money' finalized and invitations for participation sent to all concerned; design of WBTi website changed and updated the site with new documents; shared technical documents with the network; first issue of IBFAN South Asia E-newsletter uploaded on the website and shared with the entire network of South Asia; several advocacy and technical documents on child survival uploaded on the website.

September: RC made a presentation on strengthening the network at the IBCoCo meeting held at Malaysia; WBTi project was appreciated and included in the global projects for monitoring and evaluation of infant and young child feeding practices, policies and programs; RC made a