



**Global Congress on Implementation of
the Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes**
June 2023

Grassroots Monitoring :The Code/National Laws

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Promotion Network of India(BPNI), India.

 @moveribfan

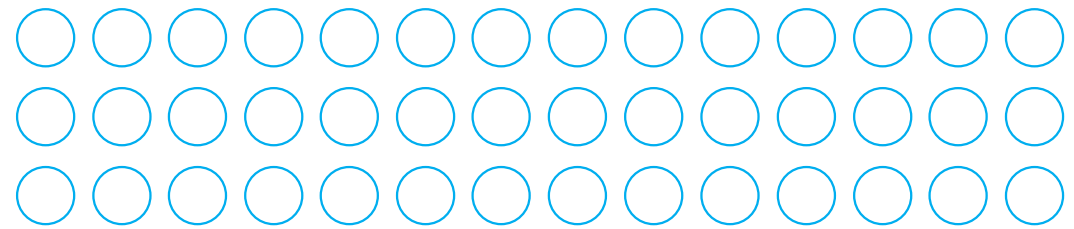




Overview

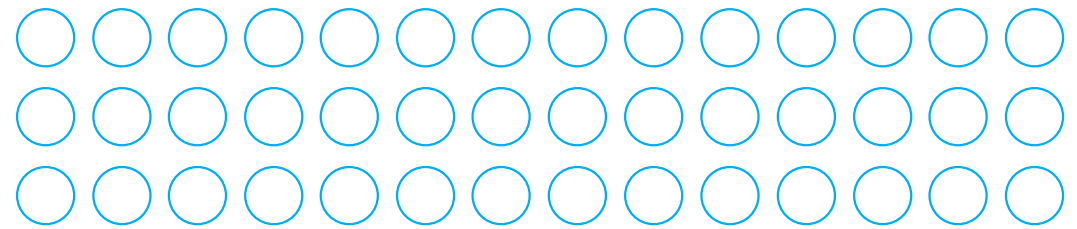
- What is Code Monitoring at the Grassroot level?
- Why Monitoring is essential?
- Who can monitor?
- What to monitor?
- Actions to be taken by the governments

What is Code Monitoring at the Grassroot level?



- Monitoring is carried out by the bottom-up approach to show what is happening on the ground
- Individuals and communities are involved.
- Governments leads.
- Civil society/academics/lactation professionals and other people monitor and report
- Independent (Without any conflicts of interest)

Why monitoring of the Code is essential?



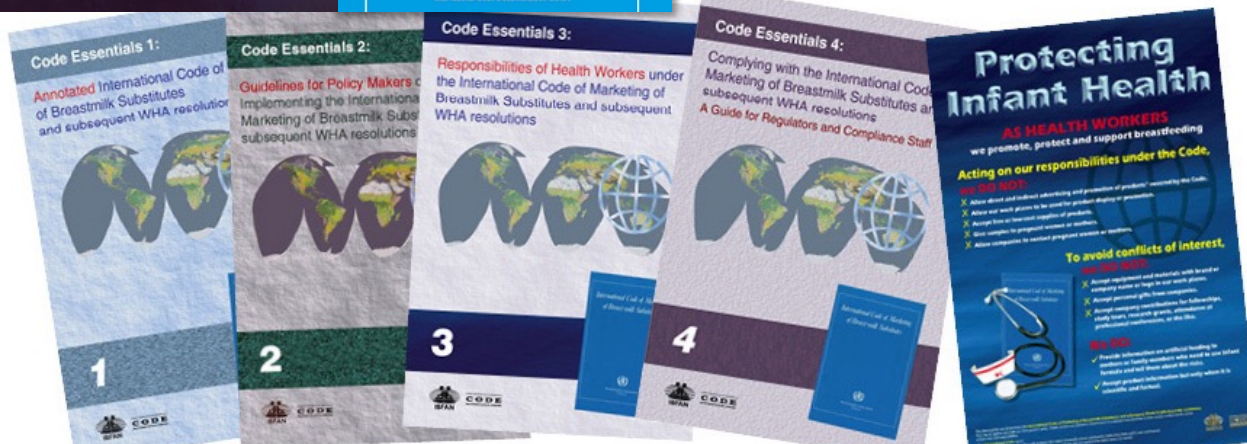
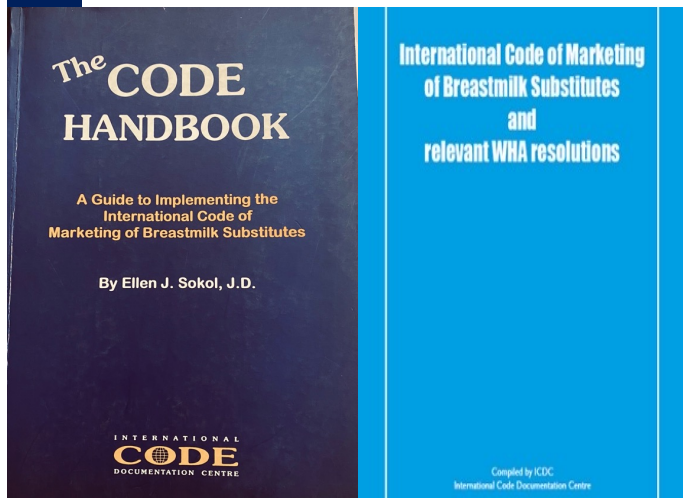
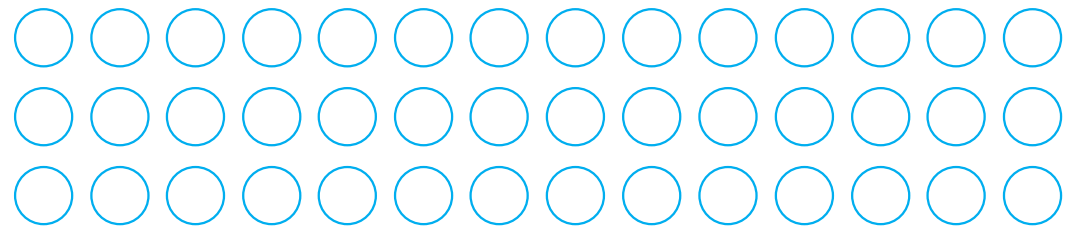
- To ensure protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding...3 pillars for success.



Added value of grassroots monitoring

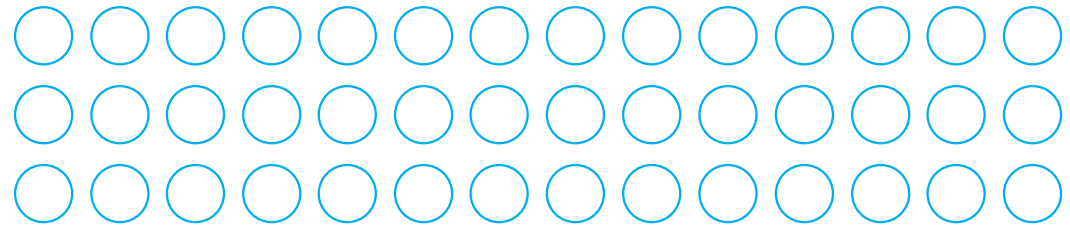
- A watchdog function
- Complimentary to government led monitoring
- Identifies loopholes, new and problematic areas of promotion.
- Creates an evidence base for action and programme planning
- Helpful in advocacy for framing new sections/ amendments to existing Code/laws.
- It helps holding the regulators and industry accountable.

Who can monitor ?



- **Monitors:** Need training to have through understanding of the Code and resolutions/National laws
- Solid foundation to identify violations.
- Establish plans to monitor and report.
- Governments should support such activity

What to Monitor ?



- **At Grassroot level:** Pharmacy, drug stores, grocery shops, maternity hospitals for posters, display, discounts.
- **Study of Labelling** for health claims, idealization of bottle-feeding, warnings.
- Watch the activity of health systems and professional organizations for **sponsorship**, gifts, free supplies, direct contact with mothers.
- Look at **E-commerce sites** for discounted sales
- While assessing **BFHI asking questions** from health workers (gift/sponsorship) and mothers(free supplies) is helpful too.

OPEN ACCESS

for updates

Health and nutrition claims for infant formula: international sectional survey

Ka Yan Cheung,¹ Loukia Petrou,¹ Bartosz Helfer,^{2,3,4} Erika Porubayeva,⁵ Elena Dolgikh,⁵ Insaf Ali,⁷ Lindsay Archibald-Durham,⁸ Meredith (Merilee) Brockway,⁹ Polina Bugaeva,⁹ Rishma Chooniedass,¹¹ Pasquale Comberiati,¹² Erika Cortés-Macías,¹³ Sofia D'Elios,¹² Gaviela Feketea,^{14,15} Peter Hsu,¹⁶ Musa Abubakar Kana,¹⁷ Tatiana Kriulina,¹⁸ Yuzuka K Comfort Madaki,²⁰ Rihab Omer,²¹ Diego Peroni,¹² Jana Prokofiev,²² Melanie Rae Simps Naoki Shimojo,¹⁹ Linda P Siziba,²¹ Jon Genuweit,²¹ Sohini Thakor,¹ Marium Waris,² Qua Sadia Zaman,¹ Bridget E Young,²⁵ Brighid Bugos,²⁵ Matthew Greenhawt,²⁶ Michael E Le Jonathan Zheng,²⁸ Robert J Boyle,² Daniel Munblit^{2,5}

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES

To review available health and nutrition claims for infant formula products in multiple countries and to evaluate the validity of the evidence used for substantiation of claims.

DESIGN

International cross sectional survey.

SETTING

Public facing and healthcare professional facing company owned or company managed formula industry websites providing information about products marketed for healthy infants delivered at full term in 15 countries: Australia, Canada, Germany,

brain and/or eyes and/or nervous system" (53%) products, 13 ingredients), "strength supports a healthy immune system" (239 (3 products, 12 ingredients), and "helps/supp growth and development" (224 (37%) products, 20 ingredients). 41 groups of ingredients were associated with ≥1 claims, but many claims without reference to a specific ingredient (3 products). The most common groups of ingredients cited in claims were long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (278 (46%) products, 9 different prebiotics, probiotics, or symbiotics (225 (3 products, 19 claims); and hydrolysed protein (20%) products, 9 claims). 161/608 (26%) with ≥1 claims provided a scientific referenc

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January 2023

Monitoring policy interference

PARTNERS

<http://diet4life.fssai.gov.in/partners.html>

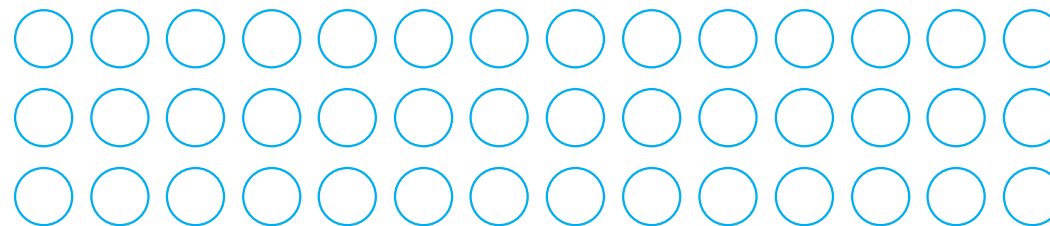
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Partners - diet4life



Is India's food safety authority above Parliament?

News > Is India's food safety authority above Parliament?



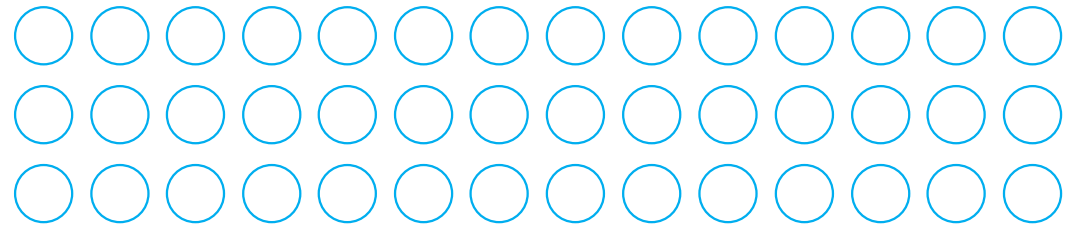
- In 2018 the food regulator of India partnered with Infant Young Child Nutrition Council of India (IYNCI), an NGO floated of the four big baby food multinationals Nestle, Danone, Abbott and Mead-Johnson.
- Came in the guise of importing special formula or IEMs. And led to getting exemption from existing law.

Sponsorships of conferences began to happen openly

It took BPNI 18 months to get it right.

Lesson is never partner with organisations having conflicts of interest.

Critical to monitor



Is ZeroSeparation Astroturfing? How business groups use babies to recruit allies



A new *Zero Separation* campaign was launched on 9th July by the *European Foundation for the Care of Newborn infants* (EFCNI) through an entity called *GLANCE – the Global Alliance for Newborn Care*. You can see the host on NGOs that have signed up to this call here: <https://we.tl/t-gby4wD2IUe>

It is important to know that the *EFCNI website* lists the US baby food company Abbott as its first funder in 2008 and later thanks the following *corporate partners* : The *Nestlé Nutrition Institute*. *Prolacta Bioscience® Inc.* *Royal DSM (manufacturer of formula ingredients)* and *Phillips (manufacturer of bottles and teats)*.

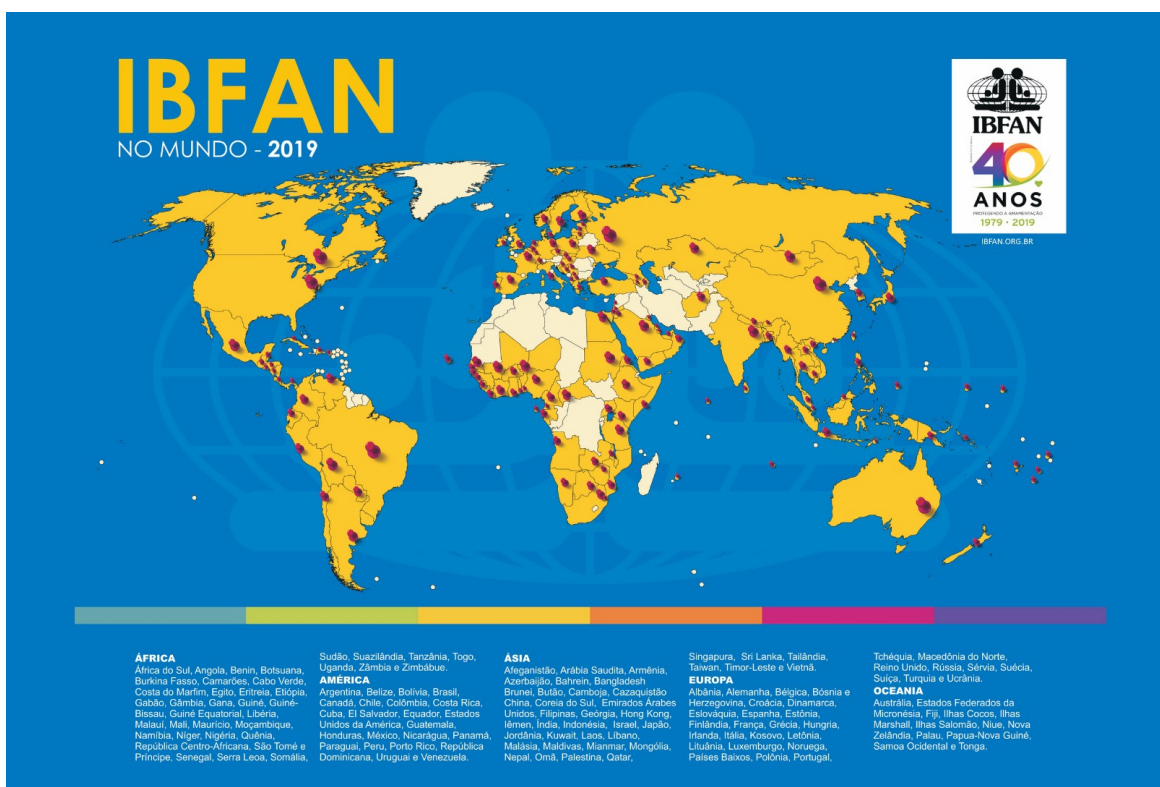
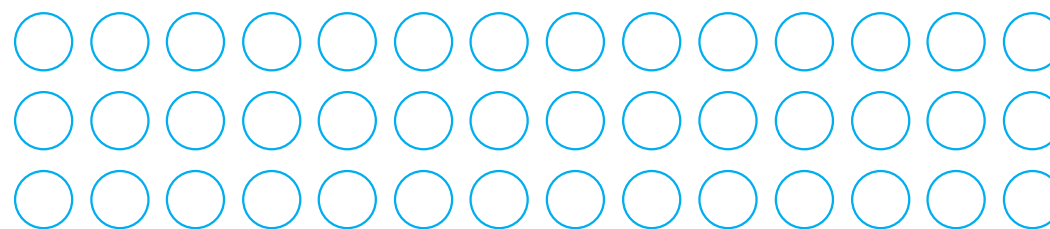
We are pleased that after being alerted about the conflicts of interest, UNICEF has decided not promote the Zero Separation in its World Breastfeeding Week materials.

The call to keep mothers and babies together is one we all support – especially now when so many are being separated – in some part because of industry promoted fears of COVID transmission – so its important to look closely at who is behind this.

The *EFCNI Transparency page* and its *Policy regarding cooperation, funding and donations of specific industries* – could be reassuring for those who do not know the Code well but it is very misleading about Conflict of Interest. For example it states: *"EFCNI is aware of the WHO's code in relation to marketing of infant formulas and will not enter into initiatives which contravene these. EFCNI accepts financial donations from milk manufacturers. EFCNI will not provide direct endorsement of infant milk products e.g. logo on packaging or promotions which promote infant formula instead of breastfeeding."*

- How industry use new techniques like **Astroturfing**- masking the sponsors and creating fake impressions of grassroots efforts.

IBFAN: Monitoring on the ground since 1981



- IBFAN -ICDC-Sharing of reports based on grassroots monitoring
- Training of the government or civil society staff for implementing
- Organising grassroots individuals, groups and networks
- National groups like BPNI reporting on regular basis
- Company campaigns : Hold companies accountable, analyses of company policies and alerting grassroot players for action.
- Inputs into international, regional and national policy development.

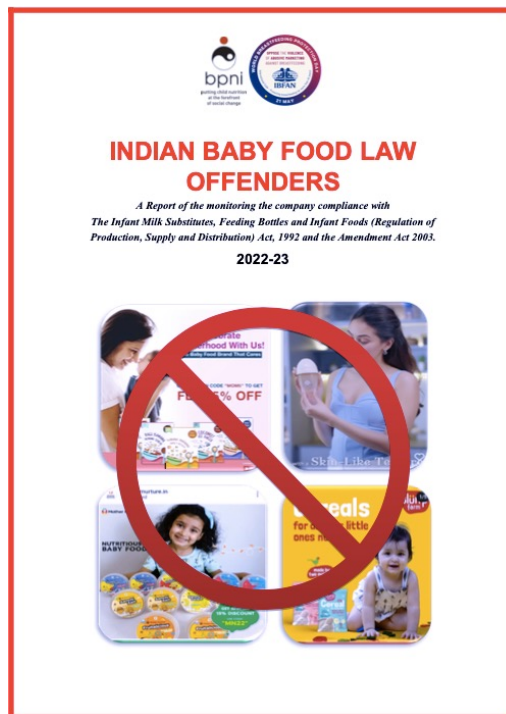
Monitoring reports



Figure 4. Early IBFAN Breaking the Rules Materials 1980-1988.



Reports and expose brings the issues upfront...so go on !!



'Baby food brand ads on social media violate law'

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

SEVERAL baby food brands are violating laws by using social media to advertise products like infant milk substitutes, according to the latest report released by the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI).

The report, which flags 15 top brands, was released on May 21, also World Breastfeeding Day. BPNI, which has been mandated by the government as a child welfare non-profit to flag such violations, said a new trend has emerged in promoting these products using social media, and unsuspecting influencers are becoming partners in crime. Moreover, some of these products are being promoted by celebrities like Bollywood actors Anushka Sharma and Mira Rajput Kapoor, wife of Shahid Kapoor.

"New tactics of involving celebrities, social media influencers, mothers and mother bloggers on Instagram and YouTube is certainly catching on," said the report adding that knowingly or unknowingly, they are also infringing the law and are liable to be penalised.

There is no system to monitor and investigate such violations, which have remained unchecked. The law prohibits any kind of "promotion" of food products or feeding bottles, including advertising, incentives



WHAT THE REPORT SAYS

Legal position

Law prohibits any kind of "promotion" of baby food products or feeding bottles, including advertising, incentives or directly reaching out to moms, for children under the age of 24 months.

Child welfare non-profit BPNI, which has been mandated by the government as organisation to flag such violations, says:

New trend emerged in promoting these products using social media

Some products are being promoted by celebrities like Bollywood actors

No system to monitor and investigate such violations, which have remained unchecked

Social media is the new promotion playground. It must be monitored and notified diligently. Digital technologies used for marketing breast milk substitutes are proven to be contributing to increasing sales and consumption of baby formula across the world. Our findings confirm WHO observations

Breastfeeding Promotion Network

or directly reaching out to moms, for children under the age of 24 months.

"Social media is the new-generation promotion playground;

therefore, it must be monitored and notified diligently. Digital technologies used for marketing breast milk substitutes are proven to be contributing to in-

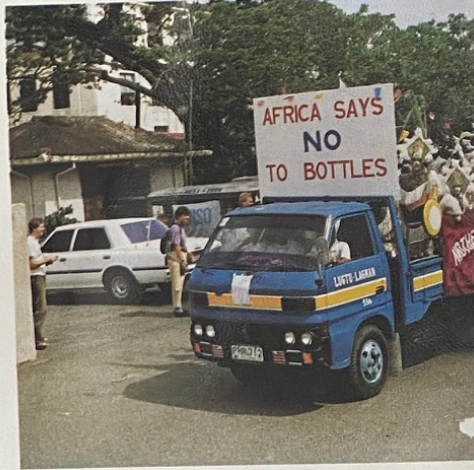
creasing sales and consumption of baby formula across the world. Our findings confirm World Health Organisation's observations," said the report titled "Indian Law Baby Food Offenders."

The Indian government enacted the Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003 (IMS Act) in order to control the marketing of the baby foods as a follow-up to the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions.

Speaking to this paper, Arun Gupta, one of the four founder paediatricians of BPNI said, undermining breastfeeding and complementary feeding through commercial influence also violates child's right to health and mother's right to breastfeed. Non-stop promotion continues even after 32 years of the established law.

He said they have flagged these 15 violations of the IMS Act by major companies and the platforms used by them with the union health ministry. BPNI has also written a letter to Health Secretary Rajesh Bhusan and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), chief Priyank Kanoongo flagging the violations.

Campaigns...1989



UPDAT

combined feeding

False claims stopped

NUK

NUK First Choice® Bottles & Teats
The natural choice for baby and you

NUK First Choice® teats are inspired by Mother Nature, the special shape of the teat is designed to mimic a mother's nipple during breastfeeding. It encourages latch-on and has been clinically tested and proven for comfortable feeding. The natural shape encourages healthy oral development and has been approved by the British Dental Health Foundation. Add into the mix an ultra-soft, soft silicone and you have a teat specifically designed to make life easier for both parent and child.

NUK. Understanding Life.

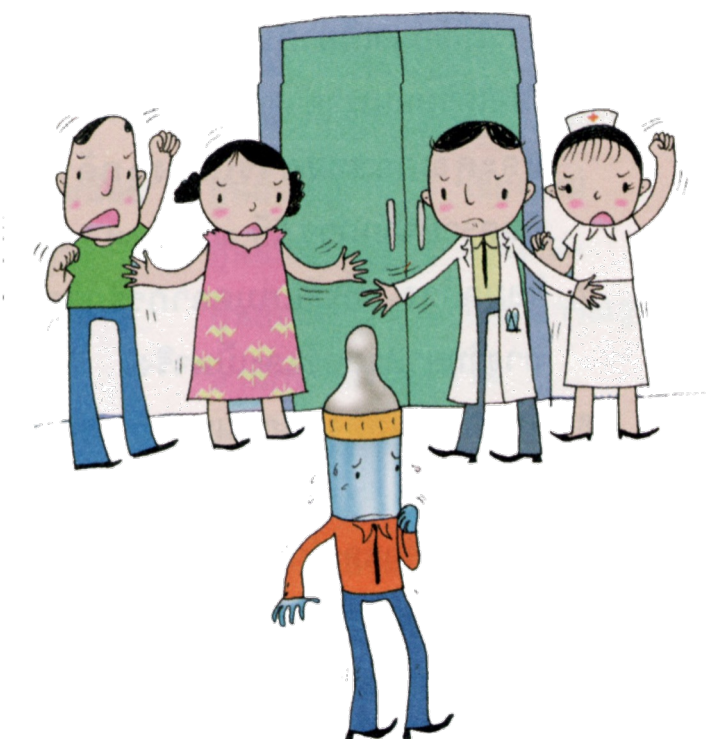
nuk.co.uk/first-choice-plus [NUK Babies UK](https://www.facebook.com/NUKBabiesUK)

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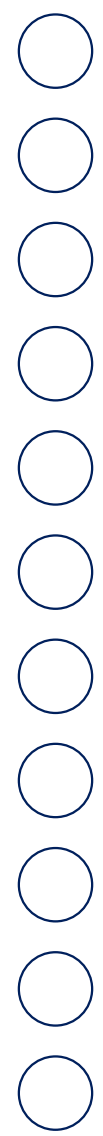
Actions to be taken

Governments can consider following actions to strengthen grassroots monitoring:

- Appointment of a point person to monitor Code/Law
- Preparation of individuals, teams and organisations to monitor and report
- Launch a mobile App for people to monitor and report
- Integrate monitoring with BFHI enquiry
- Building a database of reports
- Establish efficient enforcement mechanisms
- Initiate legal or other punitive action when necessary
- Allocation of funding for all of the above
- Reviewing annually



Picture courtesy of UNICEF/DOH Thailand



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June 2023



bpni
putting child nutrition at the forefront of social change



IBFAN
defending breastfeeding

Thank you!

