

Universal Periodic Review – Session 21

Breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding in Kyrgyzstan

Who we are?

IBFAN is a 35-old years coalition of more than 273 not-for-profit NGOs in more than 168 countries.

We work towards a just and healthy society free of commercial pressures, where every child enjoys the highest attainable standard of health, where breastfeeding is the norm for feeding infants and young children and where women and families are empowered to optimally care for their children.

We fight for the implementation, enforcement and monitoring of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent WHA resolutions.

We are also committed to advance a better maternity protection and we support the implementation of the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

What does the Convention on the Rights of the Child say about it

Article 24 CRC recognizes the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and urges States Parties to pursue full implementation of this right by taking appropriate measures to:

- diminish infant and child mortality
- combat disease and malnutrition through, inter alia, the provision of adequate nutritious food
- ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers
- ensure that all segments information, access to education and are support in the use of basic knowledge of, inter alia, child health and nutrition and the advantages of breastfeeding

Referring to the “Protect, Promote and Support” framework (Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding, 2002), the **CRC General Comment 15** on the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (article 24) urges States parties to:

- protect and promote exclusive breastfeeding up to 6 months of age
- protect and promote continued breastfeeding until 2 years of age
- introduce into national law, implement and enforce, inter alia, the International Code on Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
- promote community and workplace support to mothers in relation to pregnancy and lactation, and feasible and affordable child-care services
- comply with the ILO Convention No 183 (2000) on maternity protection

CRC Committee’s Review

During its latest review in 2014, the CRC Committee pointed out that despite the adoption of a law on the marketing of breastmilk substitutes in March 2009, **mothers are still not provided with adequate information on breastfeeding** and often received **free samples of infant formula**.

The CRC Committee also emphasized the **lack of monitoring mechanism of the law** as well as the **poor support to optimal breastfeeding practices**, and noted that only one third of the children were exclusively breastfed until 6 months of age.

To date, the CRC Committee has not issued its Concluding Observations on Kyrgyzstan.

Current situation of infant and young child feeding in Kyrgyzstan

The following obstacles/problems have been identified:

- High rates of **infant and neonatal mortality** coexisting with **inadequate infant feeding practices**, such as early introduction of complementary food, breastmilk substitutes and other liquids and early weaning
- Almost **2 children out of 3 are not breastfed until the age of 6 months**
- Almost **6 children out of 10 are breastfed until the age of 2 year**
- **Lack of adequate training** of health care workers and health professionals on optimal breastfeeding practices
- **No full implementation of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes** and subsequent WHA (the Code) and no independent monitoring
- Regional disparities concerning **knowledge of HIV/AIDS**
- No information on the total amount of maternity yards in the country and **no recent data on the amount of baby-friendly hospitals**
- **No emergency preparedness plan** to ensure protection and support of breastfeeding/ infant and young child feeding in case of emergencies

Our recommendations to the Universal Periodic Review

Kyrgyzstan should be urged to:

1. **Improve the knowledge of mothers/caregivers and health care professionals on adequate breastfeeding practices: early initiation of breastfeeding within one hour following delivery, exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age and continued breastfeeding until 2 years of age or beyond.**
2. **Implement all provisions of the Code through national legislation. Ensure effective implementation through independent monitoring and sanctions in cases of violations.**
3. **Strengthen BFHI implementation independently of any other national measure throughout the country and ensure effective monitoring of existing baby-friendly hospitals.**
4. **Ensure that all women working in both informal and formal sectors are entitled to maternity leave benefits. Ensure that all women are protected against dismissal during pregnancy and lactation and are entitled to paid nursing breaks.**
5. **Improve knowledge on HIV/AIDS and ensure that all HIV-positive mothers have access to antiretroviral therapy in order to prevent mother-to-child transmission.**
6. **Ensure integrated response to protect and support breastfeeding in case of emergencies.**