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TOOLKIT

WORKPLACE LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Creating breastfeeding friendly workplaces

"Babies of today are the workforce of tomorrow"

December 2014

Creating breastfeeding friendly workplaces

WORKPLACE LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

TOOLKIT

By Alive & Thrive and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor

December 2014

Alive & Thrive (A&T) is an initiative to improve infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices by increasing rates of exclusive breastfeeding and improving complementary feeding practices. A&T aims to reach more than 16 million children under two years old in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Viet Nam, and to create program models that can be replicated worldwide. In Viet Nam, Alive & Thrive is working with the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the Women's Union, the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL) and provincial authorities to double the rate of exclusive breastfeeding, improve the quality and quantity of complementary foods, and reduce stunting by two percentage points each year.

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About this toolkit

- This toolkit aims to provide information and guidance for institutions, companies, and other organizations interested in implementing policies and interventions to support lactation in the workplace
- It highlights the benefits of creating an enabling environment for breastfeeding women to express and store their breast milk while at work, and offers practical guidance on how to do so
- It is based on the best practices of a model piloted in Viet Nam by Alive & Thrive (A&T) and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL) from January 2012 to August 2014

Toolkit users

- **Employers** requesting a guide on how to establish and implement a workplace lactation support program, with the provision of adequate space for female employees to express and store breast milk onsite
- **Employees** who want to convince their companies to have a workplace lactation support program
- **Governments** interested in replicating the innovative approach piloted in Viet Nam by Alive & Thrive and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor
- **Donors** requiring technical and financial information on creating an enabling environment in the workplace for optimal breastfeeding
- **NGOs/local institutions** looking for a resource on how to set up a workplace lactation support program

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1. Background

Global

Breastfeeding is the normal way of providing infants with the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. Virtually all mothers can breastfeed, provided they have accurate information and the support of their family, the health care system, society at large, and their employers.[1]

To ensure the healthy growth and development of children and to enhance their capacity to resist disease, learn, and become economically productive members of society, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommend that mothers breastfeed their babies early and exclusively for the first 6 months, and continue to breastfeed along with appropriate complementary feeding up to two years of age or beyond.

The rates of infants exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life vary globally from 1% to 89%, with an estimated rate of 47% in Southeast Asia.[2] A woman's ability to breastfeed is reduced when she returns to work and lactation breaks and facilities for pumping or storing expressed milk are unavailable, and infant care near her workplace is inaccessible or unaffordable.

The International Labor Organization's Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 191) call for the establishment of an integrated set of essential measures to help initiate, establish, and maintain optimal breastfeeding practices:

- Maternity leave for at least 18 weeks with full pay
- Prenatal, childbirth, and postnatal health care for both the mother and her child, and cash benefits for women who do not qualify for social insurance
- Protection for a pregnant or nursing worker from engaging in work which could be detrimental to her health or that of her child
- The right to return to the same or similar paid position at the same salary rate
- Protection from discrimination at work
- The right to one or more daily breaks or a reduction in working time

Compromised growth has been linked to lower economic productivity and incomes. Stunting before the age of 2 years predicts poorer cognitive and educational outcomes in later childhood[3] and adolescence, and has significant educational and economic consequences at the individual, household and to an entire nation. Individuals can lose more than 10 percent of their lifetime earnings - and countries can lose up to 2- 3 percent of their gross domestic product (GPD)[4].

1 World Health Organization, Health topics: lactation <http://www.who.int/topics/lactation/en/>.

2 World Health Organization, Nutrition: exclusive lactation under 6 months: data by WHO region <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.NUT1710?lang=en>.

3 Black RE, Victora CG, Walker SP, et al, and the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group. Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries. Lancet 2013

4 Horton, Susan, Meera Shekar, Christine McDonald, Ajay Mahal and Jana Krystene Brooks. Scaling Up Nutrition: What Will It Cost? (World Bank: Washington, DC:2010)

Viet Nam

In 2009, Viet Nam ranked 13th in terms of number of children stunted, 30% of children under the age of 5 were stunted (about 2.5 million) and did not realize their full potential.[5] [6] Although breastfeeding was practiced by most mothers, the rates of exclusive lactation for the first 6 months of life (19.6%), and continued breastfeeding up to 24 months (22%) remained low (NIN, 2010). In 2011, a survey conducted by the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL) on the implementation of the maternity policy and adoption of optimal breastfeeding practices found that 78% of female workers were aware that "breast milk is the best nutrition for infants", but only 36% continued to breastfeed their children until they were 19–24 months of age citing returning to work as the key barrier.

In 2012, the National Assembly extended paid maternity leave from four to six months.

Though the decision was important for creating a supportive environment for a large number of female employees to practice exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months at home, it did not address the concerns of millions of female workers who wish to continue breastfeeding their children up to 24 months. In most workplaces, there are no facilities to support the expression and storage of breast milk on site.

Consequently, in 2012, A&T collaborated with the VGCL's Department of Female Workers to address this problem by engaging directly with companies and government agencies to create an enabling work environment for mothers to express and store their breast milk, and to support them in their efforts to ensure the healthy growth and development of their children.

Vice Chairwoman of Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor, Mdm. Nguyen Thi Thu Hong, at the orientation session on breastfeeding with female employees of the Viet Nam National Assembly

Photo: A&T

5 "Nutrition Surveillance 2010," National Institute of Nutrition.

6 UNICEF, "Tracking progress on child and maternal nutrition," 2009.

2. Summary

The workplace lactation support program (January 2012 – August 2014) was implemented in Viet Nam by A&T in collaboration with VGCL, employers from private companies and government agencies.

It enabled nursing mothers in 70 workplaces across Viet Nam to express and store breastmilk.

Five simple steps were followed to offer women adequate conditions at their workplace to express and store breastmilk:

STEPS	ACTIVITIES*	Implementer	Role
1	Select site	VGCL Employer	Advisory Decision
2	Develop educational materials	A&T VGCL	Production Distribution
3	Orient and train female staff	VGCL	Conduct trainings
4	Install lactation rooms	Employer A&T	Decision Funding and advisory
5	Monitor and support operations of lactation rooms	Employer VGCL A&T	Implementation Advisory Advisory

** Details on page 18*

At an affordable cost for employers:

Lactation room	*Basic* #	800 USD/room
	Advanced #	1,000 USD/room
	Comprehensive #	1,200 USD/room

Details on page 24

That benefits all parties:

Government/Society	Employer	Employee
- Lower health care costs for women and children - Lower costs for the health care system - Compliance with international / national recommendations - Investment in the future labor force	- Compliance with the labor law - Positive public perception as a family-friendly working environment - Cost-effective investment in workforce - Lower absenteeism associated with caring for a sick child - Boosting employee morale and loyalty - Retention of female employees - Lower recruitment and training costs with less staff turnover - Extra incentives to offer to potential employees - Investment in the future workforce	- Reduced absence to take care of sick children - Improved productivity - Lower health care costs for both mother and child - Adherence to the best practices recommended for the healthy growth and development of children - Higher commitment to the company and better employee morale

I am happy to be able to breastfeed my child after returning to work. Breastfeeding helps me save money and keeps my child healthy.

Nguyen Thu Ha, female worker, Yamaha Motor Viet Nam

Breast milk is the most precious nutrient for young children. As an employer, we understand the importance of breastfeeding and commit to supporting the Workplace Program and providing a favorable climate for female workers.

Lee Hyung Jin, Deputy Director of Taekwang Vina

Setting up a lactation room in the workplace is the most practical gesture to support female workers and invest in the future of the labor force.

Pham Thi Thanh Hong, Deputy Director of Female Workers' Department", Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor

3. Employer case studies

*In Viet Nam, **Canon** employs 24,000 workers in its three factories, one in the Noi Bai industrial zone in Hanoi and two in Que Vo and Tien Du industrial zones in Bac Ninh province. The factory in Hanoi is the largest with 12,000 employees, of which 90% are women of reproductive age.*

Since 2012, the Hanoi factory has implemented a workplace lactation support program in collaboration with Alive & Thrive and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor. The objective of the program is to provide support for mothers to continue breastfeeding after returning to work from their six-month maternity leave. The program commenced with an orientation for employees and staff on current breastfeeding practices, which provided information on lactation breaks and other labor rights and benefits. Following the orientation, a lactation room was established at the Hanoi factory and equipped with a refrigerator, breast milk pumps and a sterilizer for mothers to use on their breaks to express and store breast milk during working hours.

According to the Labor Code, pregnant women are allowed to take 5 days off for regular prenatal check-ups. Canon has established a series of progressive policies to support their female workers during pregnancy and after childbirth. Workers are allowed to take up to 2 days off with full pay for each prenatal checkup, depending on the distance between their home and the health facility where they are registered. Pregnant women who do not take additional leave during the month for a doctor's appointment receive an allowance of VND 150,000 (about USD 7.50). Pregnant women are also given an additional 15 minutes in excess of their regular work breaks. Furthermore, mothers with children under the age of one are provided with an allowance of VND 150,000 (about USD 7.50) each month. The company's trade union and human resource departments have also invited experts to speak in various fora and employee prenatal and parenting classes.

In addition to the benefits provided to employees, Canon has made a concerted effort to improve the quality of life of the poor and disadvantaged people in the community. The company annually funds the construction of schools that are managed by local authorities. Canon also plans to establish a kindergarten near Noi Bai industrial zone for workers who have moved from other provinces to live and work in the area. The kindergarten will be open to employees and partly subsidized by Canon.

Canon recognizes that both their employees and the company benefit from maternity entitlements.

Maternity entitlements for female employees:

- 7 months of maternity leave: 1 month before delivery (paid for by the company); 6 months after delivery (paid for by the social insurance)
- USD 7.50 monthly allowance for employees who have children under the age of one
- USD 7.50 allowance for prenatal check-ups (3 months)
- Lactation room with essential equipment (pump, refrigerator, towel, sterilizer, information, and educational materials)
- Breaks to express breast milk

Pouchen Viet Nam Company Ltd. *is a branch of the Pouchen Group, a footwear manufacturer. The Viet Nam Company operates five factories in Bien Hoa City, Dong Nai Province and employs nearly 20,000 workers. About 17,000 of them are women, of which 12,000 are of reproductive age.*

In accordance with the Pouchen Group's values, the Viet Nam Company is committed to taking care of its workers by providing them with basic welfare, medical and insurance benefits and an employee-friendly working environment. The company cooperates with the local federation of labor to ensure labor rights and also engages in corporate social responsibility in Viet Nam.

Pouchen Viet Nam Company Ltd., in collaboration with Alive & Thrive and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor, has implemented a workplace program to support breastfeeding mothers since 2013. The objective of this program is to help mothers continue breastfeeding after returning to work from their six months of maternity leave. The program began with an orientation for employees and staff on current breastfeeding practices, which provided information on lactation breaks and other relevant labor rights and benefits. In June 2013, a lactation room was established near the guard station in one factory, and equipped with a refrigerator, pumps and sterilizers to enable mothers to express and store their breast milk during working hours. Over 50 mothers have used the room. The company plans to install another lactation room near the canteen to ensure convenience and accessibility.

Pouchen Viet Nam has also partnered with Marie Stopes International, an international NGO, to implement a reproductive health care program. Under the program, women are entitled to reproductive health check-ups, counseling, and access to contraceptives and other related reproductive health care services.

Pouchen Viet Nam constructed a kindergarten for its factories (with a capital investment of USD 3 million), and waived the tuition fees for children of its employees. The company organizes annual events to recognize outstanding scholastic performance by the older children of its employees. In this way Pouchen Viet Nam is supporting thousands of families and investing in the future workforce of Viet Nam.

Maternity entitlements for female employees:

- 6 months of maternity leave (paid for by social insurance)
- Reproductive health check-ups, laboratory tests, access to contraceptives and counseling for female workers
- Lactation room with essential equipment (pump, refrigerator, towel, sterilizer, information and educational materials)
- Breaks to express breast milk
- Standard kindergarten and tuition waiver for workers' children

Kohsei Multipack Viet Nam Company Ltd. *is backed by Japanese investment and specializes in producing flexible intermediate bulk containers (FIBC) packs and related products. The company is located in Binh Xuyen industrial zone, Vinh Phuc province, and employs 1,100, of which 900 are women of reproductive age.*

"I'm always standing up for female worker's benefits," says Mr. Bui Hong Do, chairman of Vinh Phuc's Labor Union. Mr. Do believes that the workplace lactation support program pioneered by Alive & Thrive could benefit companies and employees alike, consequently he has been at the forefront of efforts to implement the program throughout Vinh Phuc province.

Vinh Phuc, situated 80 kilometers north of Hanoi on the Red River Delta, has attracted significant foreign direct investment in the past several years. Out of the nearly 123 companies in the area, 90 are backed by foreign direct investment and employ approximately 40,000 people. The income of employees ranges on average from USD 150 to 160 per month, enabling a basic standard of living.

In 2014, Kohsei was the first company in Vinh Phuc province to implement the workplace lactation support program, with the financial and technical support of Alive & Thrive. Apart from a lactation room, Kohsei provides nutrition support to its employees by offering a daily standard meal, a protein-rich lunch on the 4th and 24th day of every month, and 200 ml of milk on the 15th day of every month. The company also allows pregnant women to bring and consume their own nutritious food during work hours.

"We know clearly how good breast milk is for mothers and children. In Japan, almost every mother breastfeeds her baby, and we hope in Viet Nam you can also do so," says Kohsei's managing director at the orientation session to the workplace program. "Try to breastfeed, use the lactation room, try to nurture your babies, give them the best thing you have so they can be healthy and smart. We welcome your next generation to work for the Kohsei family," he adds, reflecting a growing consensus that today's babies are tomorrow's workforce.

Mr. Do believes that the prosperity of Vinh Phuc depends on supporting the nutritional needs and livelihood of workers across the province. At the opening of the lactation room at Kohsei, he announced the commitment of Vinh Phuc's authorities and the Labor Union to co-fund the establishment of lactation rooms serving mothers and their children in every enterprise.

Maternity entitlements for female employees:

- 6 months of maternity leave (paid for by social insurance)
- Daily standard meal, plus a protein-rich lunch on the 4th and 24th day of every month, and 200ml of milk on the 15th day of every month
- Lactation room with essential equipment (pump, refrigerator, towel, sterilizer, information and educational materials)
- Breaks to express breast milk

The Viet Nam banking sector invests in women's and children's health

The banking sector in Viet Nam currently employs 217,000 workers, of which nearly 58% are female[7]

In 2012, the banking sector implemented the first pilot workplace lactation support program, pioneered by Alive & Thrive and the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor. Two lactation rooms were established in the headquarters of the state bank and National Banknote Printing Plant, and orientation sessions were held on breastfeeding and labor rights.

The following year, two commercial banks (Maritime and Lien Viet) and one join-stock bank (Bank of Investment and Development of Viet Nam) received financial support from Alive & Thrive to implement the workplace lactation support program and install three lactation rooms in three locations.

Given the success of the pilot, the banking sector's labor union is supporting its expansion to 15 other locations. These institutions, including state-owned and commercial banks, and the banking academy and university managed by the State Bank of Viet Nam, will provide breastfeeding orientation sessions and install lactation rooms.

The program has also been successfully adapted to the varying contexts of each bank, despite the difficulties some commercial banks have faced in finding space for lactation rooms because of high rental prices in expensive commercial districts. All the banks have held orientation sessions for both female and male employees, and in addition, the labor union and health staff of these banks received a training allowance, enabling them to become their banks' peer communicators on the benefits of lactation.

In 2014-2015, the workplace lactation support program pioneered by Alive & Thrive will be replicated in 15 locations in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, with the support of the banking sector's labor union.

5 locations set up in 2012 and 2013	15 locations set up in 2014
1. State Bank of Viet Nam 2. National Banknote Printing Plant 3. Bank of Investment and Development of Viet Nam (BIDV) 4. Maritime Bank 5. Lien Viet Bank	1. Money Insurance Bank 2. SEA Bank 3. SH Bank 4. VP Bank 5. Bac A Bank – Ha Noi Branch 6. Vietcombank 7. Social Policies Bank 8. Viet Nam Collective Bank 9. Banking Academy 10. Viet Nam AgriBank 11. VietinBank 12. Mekong Housing Development Bank 13. Banking University – Ho Chi Minh City 14. Viet A Bank 15. Ban Viet Bank
Total: 20 locations	

7 Source: Banking Sector's Labor Union of Viet Nam

VietinBank *is one of the leading commercial banks in Viet Nam. It is the first bank in Viet Nam both to have achieved ISO 9001:2000 certification, and to expand its operations overseas.*

VietinBank does not merely safeguard the financial resources of the country; it also invests in its people. The bank annually invests over USD 1.2 million in the "office civil culture program" and has been recognized for its efforts in supporting its large female workforce – nearly 75% of its 20,000 employees. The bank organizes annual health checkups, consultations on reproductive health, screenings for cervical and breast cancer, and offers special health care packages.

In addition, the bank offers generous maternity benefits to support its female workers in their efforts to ensure healthy growth and development of their children. During the first six months of fully paid maternity leave, female workers receive an additional monthly allowance of USD 50.

In 2014, the bank implemented the workplace lactation support program. With the approval of senior management, the labor union offered a half-day orientation on breastfeeding practices to its employees. A room was established in the Vietcombank's Thanh Xuan branch in Hanoi to enable mothers to express and store their milk.

Orientation session on breastfeeding with female employees of Vietinbank
Photo: A&T

Those who are attending the orientation session on breastfeeding today, please listen carefully, learn, and spread the word to others – not only to others working in the office, but those working elsewhere as well. Women should be widely informed about the program since breastfeeding can help them raise children who are healthy and smart.

Tran Kien Cuong, Party Deputy Secretary, VietinBank

Maternity entitlements for female employees:

- 6 months of maternity leave (paid for by social insurance)
- Martenal allowance of USD 50 per month during 6 months (paid for by company)
- Annual health check-up, reproductive health check-up and consultation, laboratory tests for cervical and breast cancer
- Lactation room with essential equipment (pump, refrigerator, towel, sterilizer, information and educational materials)
- Breaks to express breast milk

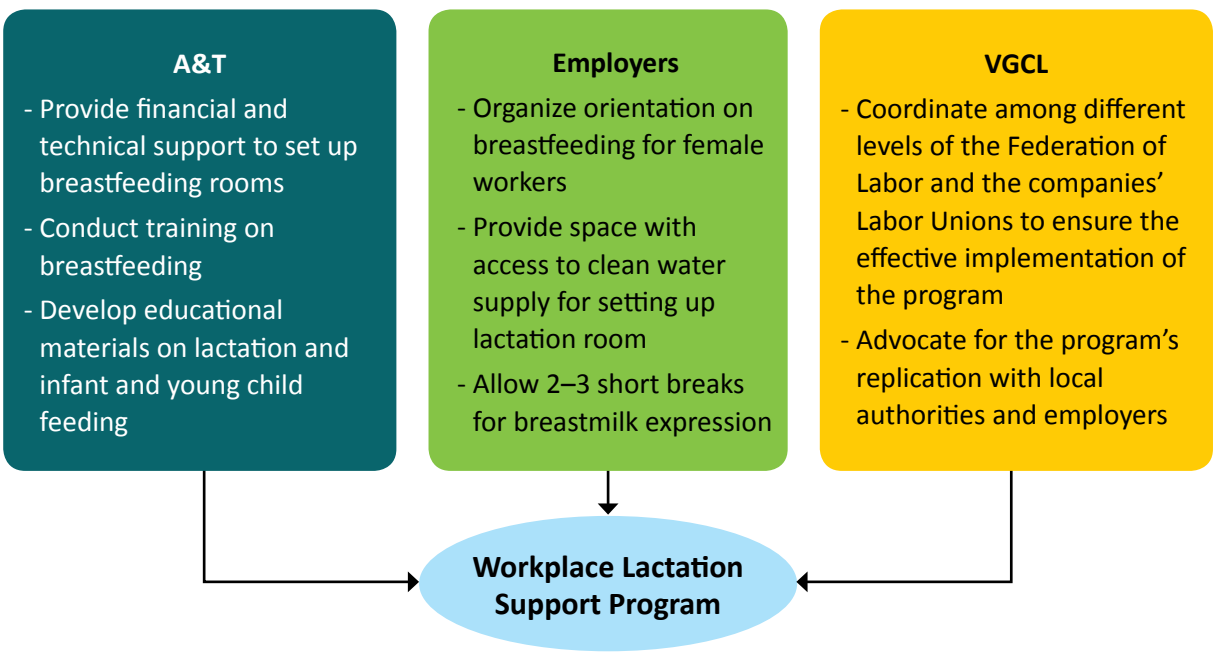
4. The workplace lactation support program in Viet Nam (Jan 2012 – Aug 2014)

A. Program objectives

- Establish lactation rooms in companies and agencies to support female employees to continue breastfeeding upon returning to work
- Inform female employees about how to use the lactation room to express and store their breast milk
- Provide female employees with essential information about reproductive health, breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, and their legal rights regarding maternity protection
- Guide health staff and trade union officials on the different steps to effectively set up lactation rooms
- Orient trade union officials at the provincial level on breastfeeding and female labor policies
- Advocate with companies and policy makers to create an enabling environment for women to adopt optimal breastfeeding practices

B. Partnership model

A&T partnered with VGCL – the national trade union in Viet Nam – and other enterprises and government agencies to implement the workplace lactation support program from 2012 to August 2014. Roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder were defined as follows:



The program was implemented in 2 phases:

- 15 lactation room were installed during the pilot phase in 2012
- 55 additional lactation rooms were installed in 2013 and 2014

The decision was made to install lactation rooms in private companies and government offices. The latter served as examples and assisted the VGCL in its advocacy efforts to convince companies to install lactation rooms.

C. Achievements (as of August 2014)

- 70 lactation rooms in 70 workplaces across 23 provinces in Viet Nam
- More than 180,500 female employees in 70 workplaces briefed on the labor law and maternity policy

2012
Pilot at 15 locations

- **13 companies**
- **2 central agencies**
  (State Bank of Viet Nam, National Banknote Printing Plant)

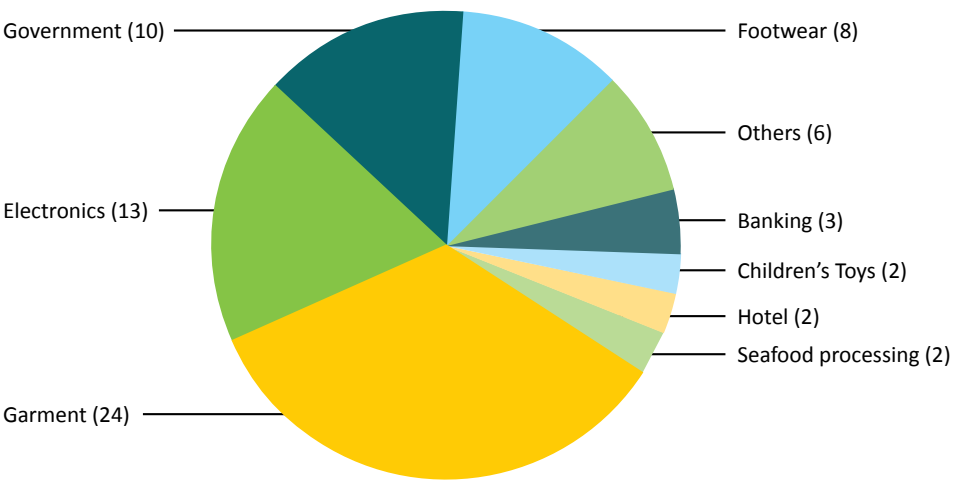
2013
Expanded to 25 additional locations

- **21 companies**
- **4 central agencies**
  (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Viet Nam General Confederation of Labor)

2014
Expanded to 30 additional locations

- **26 companies**
- **4 central agencies**
  (National Assembly, Ministry of Information and Communication, Ministry of Education, Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry)

Type of Employers with Lactation Rooms



See Annex 2 for the list of companies and their geographical distribution.

D. Program Components

STEP 1 Select sites

- **Identify companies with a large number of female employees of reproductive age**
- **Initiate discussion with company's HR team and/or labor union**

VGCL collaborated with provincial trade unions to select enterprises employing large numbers of female workers of reproductive age and with sectorial trade union leaders from ministerial agencies to advocate for the program. Companies were selected where employers demonstrated a commitment to the well-being of their female workers. VGCL and the participating enterprises signed an agreement (see Annex 3) to ensure the installation, efficient operation and maintenance of the lactation rooms.

Information and educational materials
Photo: A&T

STEP 2 Develop materials

- **Leaflet on the benefits of breastfeeding and information on infant and young child feeding**
- **Posters on breastfeeding and booklets for mothers on nutrition during pregnancy and care and feeding during a child's first 2 years**

Communication materials were produced to raise awareness among female workers on lactation, the labor policy and benefits, and the maternity policy as regulated in the amended 2012 Labor Code.

The materials were distributed to pregnant workers and to women with children less than 24 months old in the targeted enterprises during orientation sessions and through labor union officials and health staff.

See Annex 4 for information, education and communication (IEC) materials

STEP 3 Orient and train on breastfeeding

- **Orient all female staff on the importance of breastfeeding (conducted by A&T or company health staff, or contracted externally)**
- **Train labor union officers and health staff on the importance of breastfeeding**

Each company offered orientation and training sessions as follows:

1. **Two-hour orientation on breastfeeding for female staff**

   Objective: Conduct an orientation at each workplace highlighting the importance of breastfeeding, informing female employees about their rights, and demonstrating how to express, store and use breast milk.

   Topics covered: The benefits of breastfeeding, effective techniques for milk expression, storage and handling of breast milk, maintaining and building milk supply, communicating maternal health needs to supervisors, adjusting to the physical and emotional demands of returning to work.

   Attendees: Pregnant women and those with young children at the workplace.

2. **One-day training on breastfeeding for company trade union officials and health staff**

   Objective: Raise awareness about women's labor rights and benefits, and to increase the capacity of staff to address the needs of female workers.

   Topics covered: Female labor policy, facts on breastfeeding, the role of trade unions in implementing workplace lactation support programs, methodologies for organizing workshops and training courses, dissemination of information on the labor law and optimal breastfeeding practices in the workplace.

   Attendees: Company trade union and health staff

See Annex 4 for training, and information and educational materials

Orientation on breastfeeding in Lien Viet Bank, Hanoi, Viet Nam
Photo: A&T

STEP 4 Install and operate lactation rooms

- **Private and hygienic rooms (minimum 6m2), partitioned from other spaces**
- **Equipped with refrigerator, sterilizers, table, chairs and, if possible, breast milk pumps**

It is of utmost importance for a breastfeeding employee returning to work to have a comfortable and safe area where she can express and store milk during the workday. Simple lactation rooms can be created. Companies with large numbers of female employees can install partitions or curtains in the lactation room to accommodate multiple users. It is important to consider the following:

Space identification – The space needed for a lactation room is minimal; a full-sized office that would be converted into a lactation room is unnecessary. The size of the room can be as small as 6m2 to accommodate a comfortable chair, a small table and a fridge. Some possible ways to make space for a lactation room include:

- Using part of the health department, an unused office space, or a small storage area
- Adapting an existing "small space" that is currently not well utilized
- Sectioning off a corner of a room with either permanent walls or portable partitions

The lactation room at the National Assembly's office building. *Photo: A&T*

The lactation room in a garment factory. *Photo: A&T*

Basic requirements for a lactation room

- Private, safe and clean environment (Toilets are neither conducive nor hygienic and should not be used to express breastmilk)
- Partition from other spaces
- Refrigerator
- Chairs, shelf or table for breast pump
- Access to running water (if possible)
- Tissues or wipes/towel

See Annex 1 for implementation options

Number of rooms needed – The number of rooms needed depends on the size of the company, the number of female employees of childbearing age, and the number of buildings. If it takes women a long time to walk to the lactation room, consider setting up multiple sites that are more conveniently located.

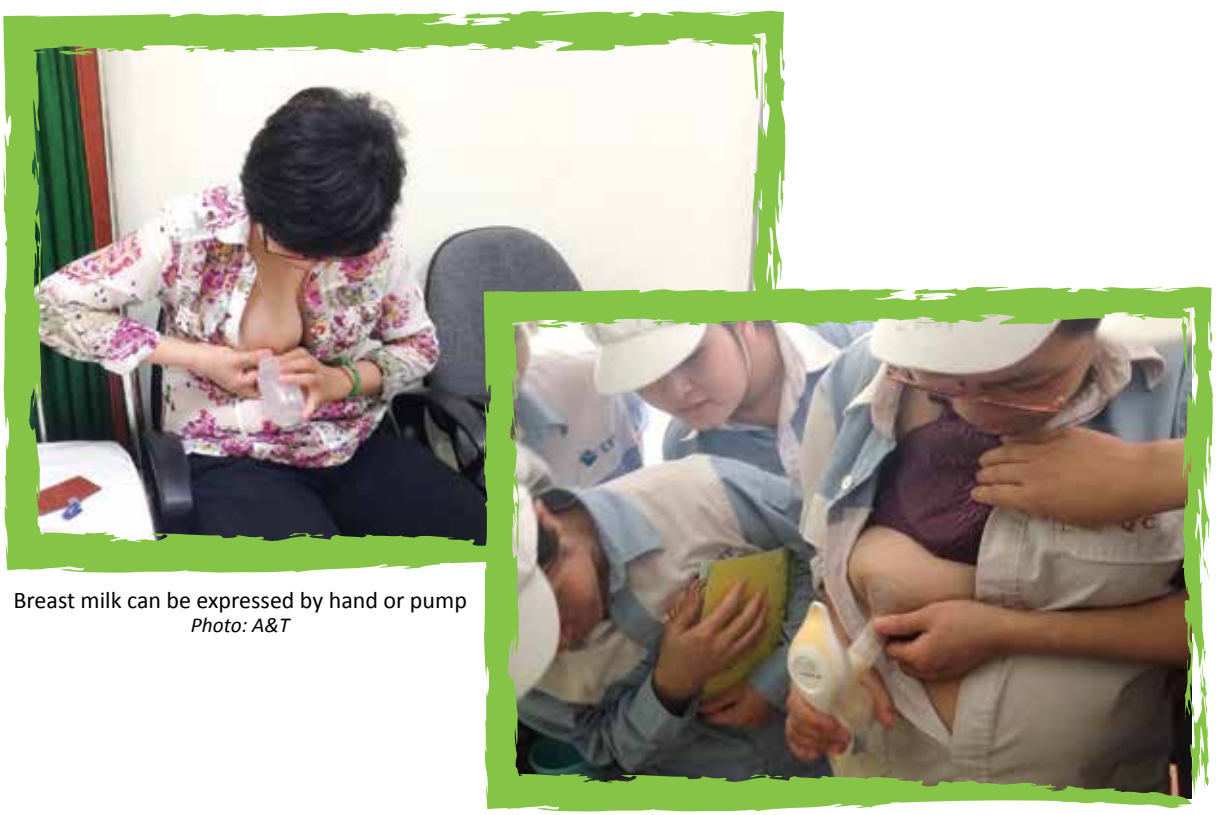
Operation of the lactation room

- **Scheduling room usage** – If a large number of breastfeeding employees will use the room, employers may want to consider scheduling usage of the room. The lactation room should be locked between uses to safeguard equipment, supplies and milk stored in the refrigerator. Companies may issue a key to each woman enrolled in the lactation support program. Keys may also be retained by the health staff, or any other designated individual.

  Room scheduling options:
  - Leave a schedule and sign-in sheet in the room or with the person responsible for the room key
  - Use a "first-come, first-served" policy (this is most effective if only a few women are using the room)

- **Expressing breast milk**
  - Breast milk should be stored in the refrigerator in the lactation room to preserve it and keep it free from contamination
  - Breast milk should always be labeled with the employee's name and the date it was collected; employees must take responsibility for storing their own milk as instructed during orientation sessions and as posted on guidelines in the lactation room

- **Cleaning the room** – Lactation program policies should stipulate that individual users take responsibility for keeping the room clean. Disinfectant wipes or spray should be provided so that each user can clean the outside of the pump and the area around the pump when she is finished. Wastebaskets should be emptied daily. If a cleaning team is not available, consider a schedule that assigns users to conduct routine inspection and cleaning of the room.



Breast milk can be expressed by hand or pump
Photo: A&T

STEP 5 Monitor and support operation of the lactation room

- **Maintain a record book managed by an assigned person and filled in by lactation room users**
- **Track use of the room and inspect it regularly**

A record book should be kept by a person assigned to manage the lactation room and filled in by users of the room.

Monitoring and support visits should be conducted by a team represented by all stakeholders (including employers and health and trade union officials). Visits should focus on:

- Interacting with female workers
- Checking the lactation record book and room usage

Women should be allowed time to express milk whenever the need arises, including time to go to and from the lactation room. Manual expression often takes longer than electric expression.

Example: Lactation room monitoring form

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MONITORING BOOK LACTATION ROOM USE

Company's Name:.....

Industry:.....

Type of enterprise:.....

Address:.....

No.	Date	Name	Division/ Department	Starting Time	Finishing Time	Number of Used Times

5. Key elements for success

GOVERNMENTS

- Implement an adequate labor code*
- Provide paid maternity leave and workplace regulations
- Create mechanisms to recognize and reward employers
- Support employers in implementing programs

EMPLOYERS

- Comply with the law and allow paid breaks for expressing milk, or go beyond the current legal framework**
- Provide adequate facilities and equipment
- Assign staff to be a focal point for the program
- Monitor and support the program
- Support female employees through the development of a breasfeeding policy***
- Encourage mothers to use their entire maternity leave
- Ensure non-discriminatory hiring practices
- Commit to investing in human resources (present/future)

EMPLOYEES

- Use entire maternity leave
- Follow guidelines on optimal breastfeeding practices
- Make full use of and maintain the lactation room

** National legal framework in Viet Nam to enhance lactation at the workplace:*
- Paid maternity leave – 6 months minimum
- 60 – 90 minutes paid breaks to allow breast milk expression
- 1 day off for each pregnant check-up, 5 times during pregnancy

*** The national legal framework is not a limiting factor. In Viet Nam, many employers who value female employees go beyond the minimum requirements.*

**** The development of a lactation policy at the workplace is paramount for encouraging and supporting employees in their efforts to balance work and breastfeeding. The policy should delineate a plan for maternity leave, a flexible work schedule, and break times for expressing milk at work, and the rules and regulations for using the dedicated room to express milk. (See Annex 5)*

Key challenges companies usually have to address:

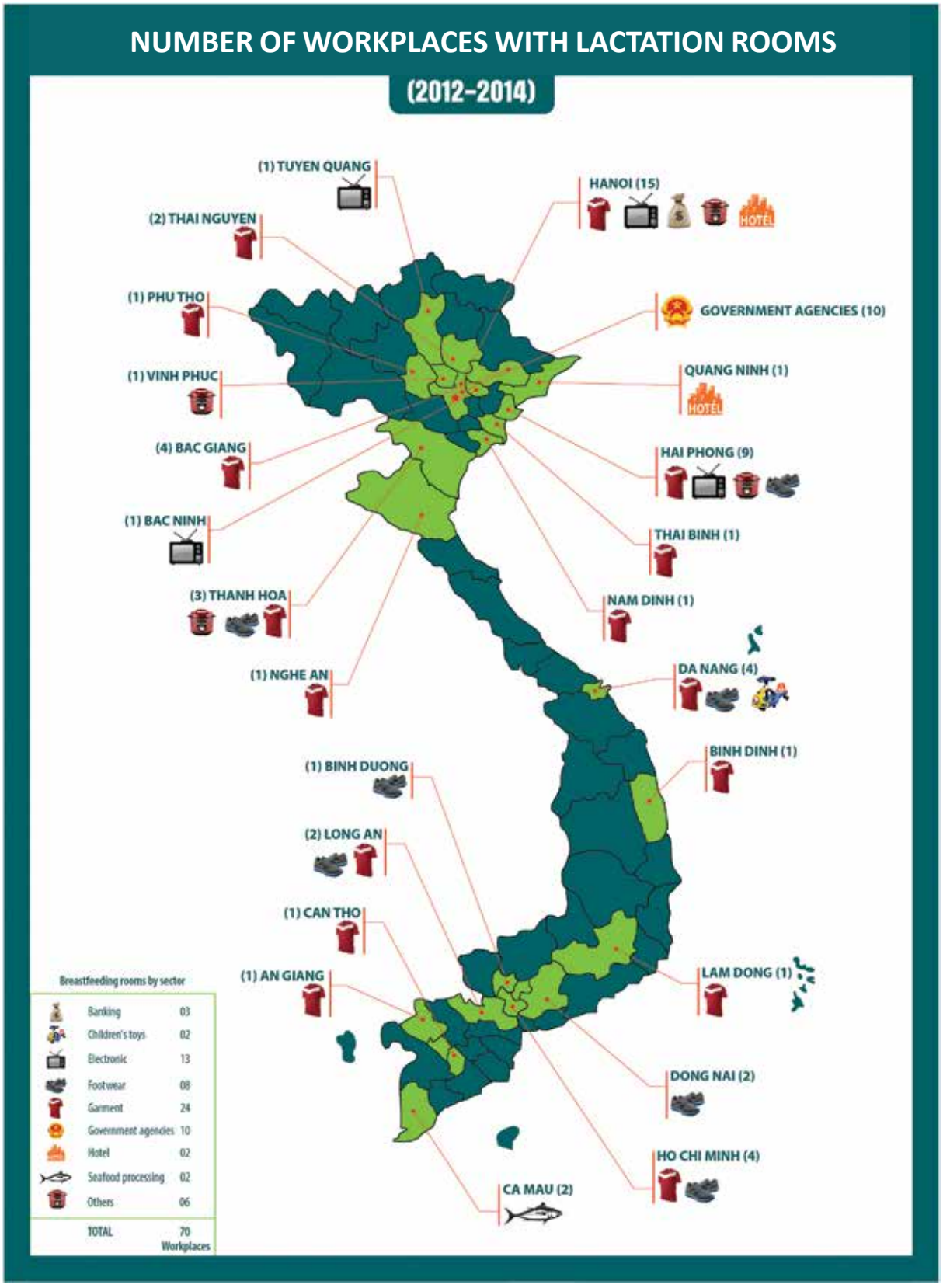
- Support from company's leaders: This is an essential condition to implement a workplace lactation support program
- Identification of space for a lactation room. Some industries such as banking, insurance and creative agencies are usually located in high rent buildings where it may be more difficult to find space that could be used to set up a lactation room
- Adequate number of lactation rooms. Employers with a large number of female employees need to make sure a lactation room is available for all employees whether they are working in offices or in production lines

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Different options to support breastfeeding at the workplace

		Basic	Advanced	Comprehensive
Lactation Room	Equipment	Electrical Outlet	Electrical Outlet	Electrical Outlet
		Room with a curtain	Room with a lock	Room with a lock
		Refrigerator	Refrigerator	Refrigerator
		Comfortable chairs	Comfortable chairs	Comfortable chairs
		Table	Table	Table
			Tissue	Tissue
			Wipes	Wipes
				Towel
	Facilities	Clean room	Clean room	Clean room
		Clean running water in the vicinity	Sink and clean water supply	Sink and clean water supply
			Room located in health department or canteen of the company	Room located near health department or canteen of the company
		Employees bring their own breast pumps and/or breast milk containers	Employer provides manual or a multi-user electric breast pump and/or breast milk containers	Employer provides manual or a multi-user electric breast pump and/or breast milk containers
	Other		Fan	Air conditioner
			Boiler	Sterilizer
Breastfeeding Education		Pregnancy and breastfeeding pamphlets and book	Pregnancy and breastfeeding pamphlets, books, and videos	Pregnancy and breastfeeding pamphlets, books, and videos
			Video/CD player	Video/CD player
			Bulletin board for posting baby photos and notes of support	Bulletin board for posting baby photos and notes of support
				Phone or internet access with helpline service
Lactation Timing		Employee takes usual lunch and break times to express milk; extra time needed is considered unpaid leave time	Extra time that may be needed is made up as part of a flexible schedule (coming in early, staying late, etc.)	Break time is considered paid time, whether the employee goes over the allotted break time or not

Annex 2: Distribution and list of companies and government agencies with lactation rooms in Viet Nam



Sector	No.	Company Name	Location
Automotive parts	1	Yazaki Ltd. Hai Phong Viet Nam	Hai Phong
Banking	2	Maritime Bank	Hanoi
	3	BIDV Bank	Hanoi
	4	Lien Viet Bank	Hanoi
Children's toys	5	Associated Viet Nam Co. Ltd.	Da Nang
	6	Keyhinge Toys Matrix Vietnam Co. Ltd.	Da Nang
Electronics	7	Tohoku Pioneer Co. Ltd.	Hai Phong
	8	Panasonic System Networks Viet Nam Co. Ltd.	Hanoi
	9	Canon Viet Nam Co. Ltd.	Hanoi
	10	Denso Viet Nam Co. Ltd.	Hanoi
	11	Young Fast Optoelectronics VN	Hanoi
	12	Yamaha Motor Viet Nam	Hanoi
	13	Asti Company	Hanoi
	14	Nissey Company	Hanoi
	15	SEI Electronics Viet Nam	Hanoi
	16	Meiko Electronics Company	Hanoi
	17	Seshin VN2 Company Ltd	Tuyen Quang
	18	Foster Company	Bac Ninh
	19	Kyocera Com. Ltd.	Hai Phong
Family appliances	20	Goldsun JSC	Hai Phong
Footwear	21	Rollsport Footwear Co. Ltd	Thanh Hoa
	22	Aurora VN Footwear Co. Ltd	Hai Phong
	23	Danang Friendship Production and Trading JSC	Da Nang
	24	Pouchen Co. Ltd.	Dong Nai
	25	Taekwang Vina Co. Ltd	Dong Nai
	26	Fu Luh Shoes Manufacture	Long An
	27	Shyang Hung Cheng Com. Ltd.	Binh Duong
	28	Pou Yuen Company	HCMC
Garment	29	Thanh Hoa Garment JSC	Thanh Hoa
	30	Valley View Co. Ltd.	Da Nang
	31	Sin Joo Bo Viet Nam	Hai Phong
	32	Sungwoo Vina Co	Bac Giang
	33	Ha Bac Garment Joint Stock Company	Bac Giang
	34	Long An Export Textile Company	Long An
	35	Viet Thang Company	HCMC

Sector	No.	Company Name	Location
Garment	36	Vinh Tien Textile Company	HCMC
	37	Sewon Co. Ltd.	Thai Nguyen
	38	TNG investment and joint stock company	Thai Nguyen
	39	Thien An Garment Company	Hai Phong
	40	Viet-pan Pacific Co. Ltd.	Bac Giang
	41	Bac Giang Garment Co. Ltd.	Bac Giang
	42	Star Garment Com. Ltd.	Ha Noi
	43	Dream Vina Company	Lam Dong
	44	Thai Binh Garment Company	Thai Binh
	45	An Nhon Garment JS Company	Binh Dinh
	46	Youngor Smartshirt Com. Ltd.	Nam Dinh
	47	MTV Pang Rim Neotex Com. Ltd.	PhuTho
	48	Minh Anh Garment JS Company	Nghe An
	49	Tay Do Garment JS Company	Can Tho
	50	An Phuoc Garment Company	An Giang
	51	Phong Phu Garment Company	HCMC
	52	Crystal Sweater Co. Ltd.	Hai Phong
Government agencies	53	State Bank of Viet Nam/Government	Hanoi
	54	National Banknote Printing Plant /Government	Hanoi
	55	Ministry of Health	Hanoi
	56	Ministry of Industry and Commerce	Hanoi
	57	General Confederation of Labor	Hanoi
	58	Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs	Hanoi
	59	Ministry of Education and Training	Hanoi
	60	Ministry of Information and Communication	Hanoi
	60	National Assembly	Hanoi
	62	Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Hanoi
Hotel	63	Cong Doan Hotel	Ha Noi
	64	Sai Gon Tourist Ha Long Hotel	Quang Ninh
Office equipment	65	Synztec VN Co. Ltd.	Hai Phong
Packaging	66	Kohsei Multipack Com. Ltd.	Vinh Phuc
Paint production	67	Nippon Company	Ha Noi
Seafood processing	68	Ca Mau Seaprimexco Ltd.	Ca Mau
	69	Ca Mau Seafood Processing Joint Stock Co.	Ca Mau
Sports equipment	70	Delta Sport JSC	Thanh Hoa

Annex 3: Agreement on setting up a lactation room in the workplace (for reference)

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM

Independence – Freedom – Happiness

_____

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON

SETTING UP A Lactation ROOM IN THE WORKPLACE

This MOU is made on this day of_____and entered into by

PARTY A:

Address:
Tel:
Fax:
Represented by:
Title:

And

PART B: **(COMPANY)**
Address:
Tel:
Fax:
Represented by:
Title:

It is mutually agreed between the above parties that they will cooperate in setting up lactation rooms at the workplace for female workers who are breastfeeding their babies. The objectives of the MOU and the responsibilities of each party are set forth below:

I. OBJECTIVES OF COOPERATION

- To provide information, in particular to female workers who are breastfeeding their babies, and to workers in general, on the benefits of breast milk. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for the first six months of a baby's life and the preferred source of nutrition for babies until 24 months of age.
- To set up lactation rooms to enable female workers to express their milk and breastfeed their babies exclusively for the first six months, even if they have to return to work earlier; and also to continue to breastfeed their babies until 24 months and beyond.
- To change the mindset of female workers and inculcate appropriate practices of breastfeeding, and to encourage them to express and store breast milk during working hours to maintain their breast milk production.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Responsibilities of PARTY A

- **To provide technical support to set up lactation rooms.**
- To provide accurate technical advice on expressing and storing breast milk, in close collaboration with specialists at Alive & Thrive (A&T).
- To provide the necessary equipment for lactation rooms. One lactation room should be equipped with a fridge, a partition, A&T posters and brochures, CDs/DVDs, and a follow-up booklet.
- To cooperate with the enterprise and its trade union to manage and maintain the operation of lactation rooms.
- To collect feedback on the quality and operation of lactation rooms from pregnant women and lactating mothers in the enterprise, and work to address their needs if possible.

2. Responsibilities of the company

- To prohibit formula milk companies from advertising formula milk within the company.
- To provide a clean space to set up a lactation room, and provide a table and chair, a shelf to display project materials, TV and DVD player or computers if possible. The company shall maintain lactation rooms in the best conditions.
- To allow female workers to have 2–3 short breaks of 10–20 minutes each to use the lactation rooms during work hours.
- To allow PARTY A to pay visits and evaluate the operation of the lactation rooms, and be responsible for giving feedback on the lactation rooms to PARTY A.
- To cooperate with the trade union to monitor the operation of lactation rooms. (See Part III on the requirements for a lactation room).

III. IMPLEMENTATION

- PARTY A shall develop a plan and work with the company to raise awareness among female workers on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant's life.
- PARTY A shall cooperate with the company to set up and adequately equip the lactation room to allow female workers to express their breast milk, store it in a fridge and bring it back home.

Requirements for a standard lactation room:

Items	Quantity	Specifications	Compulsory	Optional	Supplier
Space		Minimum 4m2	X		
Partition		2–2.5m in height	X		
Table and chair	1 set		X		
Fridge	1	Capacity: Length of warranty:	X		
Posters (Annex 3)	1 set	3 posters reinforcing messages on breastfeeding: Nurse More, No Water and No Formula	X		
Communication materials (Annex 3)	1 set	2 leaflets on breastfeeding and complementary feeding 3D video clip on breastfeeding	X		
Shelf				X	
TV/DVD				X	
Monitoring book			X		
Computer to access Mat Troi Be Tho website				X	

IV. COMMITMENT

Both parties shall commit to following the aforementioned agreement. In the event of a dispute or problem, both parties shall work together to find a solution and realize the objectives set forth in this memorandum. Four copies of this MOU shall be signed and have equal validity for two years. Each party shall retain two copies.

FOR PARTY A	FOR PARTY B
Representative	Representative

Annex 4: Training materials, videos, and informational and educational materials (Available in Vietnamese and English)

Materials		Description / Targeted audiences	Source
Leaflet on breastfeeding and complementary feeding		The leaflets promote optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices. These can be provided to mothers to educate them on infant and young child feeding particularly optimal breastfeeding practices	English version Vietnamese version
Leaflet on Mat Troi Be Tho		The leaflet promotes the benefits of Mat Troi Be Tho counseling services on infant and young child feeding in Viet Nam. It also provides the lists of the topics and times for counseling during pregnancy and the first two years of a child's life. The leaflet is distributed to those attending orientation sessions on breastfeeding and the lactation program and other female staff to enable them to seek additional services if required.	English version Vietnamese version
3D video clip on breastfeeding		The educational 3D animation video provides information on how breast milk is produced, the benefits of breast milk to the baby and to the mother, positioning and attachment and the difference between fore milk and hind milk. The clip is used during orientation session to female workers.	

Materials		Description / Targeted audiences	Source
Posters on breastfeeding		Four posters size 60 x 90 cm are placed in lactation areas, and stress the importance of breastfeeding. The posters highlight the importance of breastmilk for growth and development of the child.	BF posters: English version Vietnamese version No formula poster English version Vietnamese version
Mother and baby booklet		The booklet is a resource given to mothers who participate in the orientation sessions on breastfeeding. It provides information on optimal breastfeeding and complementary feedings practices and child development through different periods.	English version Vietnamese version
Presentation for health staff of companies and government agencies, and trade union officials		This presentation is delivered in about 1 hour, followed by a half-hour Q&A sessions by a trainer during orientation on breastfeeding. In addition, the labor unions presents on labor rights and obligations of female workers during the orientation.	Vietnamese version English version
Presentation for female workers during breastfeeding orientation		This document was produced to assist trainers to conduct a 2 hour orientation session for female workers.	Vietnamese version English version

Annex 5: Template of a company lactation policy

Name of the company's

REGULATIONS ON THE USE OF THE LACTATION ROOM

PURPOSE: To manage the expression and storage of breast milk

SCOPE: These regulations are applicable to all female staff who have returned from maternity leave and have a lactation room access card issued by the administration.

REGULATIONS:

1. Access to the lactation room:

- Staff can access the lactation room if they have registered with administration and have been issued a lactation room access card. This card should be submitted to health officials
- Staff can access the room during designated breaks for each workshop/division
- Staff are required to keep the lactation room quiet and clean at all times. If breast milk is spilt on the floor, they should clean the room immediately

2. Use of equipment in the lactation room:

- The breast milk pumps should be handled with care, cleaned and placed back on the shelf after each use
- Each mother should write her staff code on her breast milk container for easy identification
- The refrigerator should be opened and closed with care, and the breast milk containers should be neatly placed from inside to outside
- The water boiler should be used with caution. It should be put back in the designated place after each use. Health staff should be notified if the water runs out

All staff should strictly adhere to these regulations. Those who do not adhere to these regulations will not have access to the lactation room.

Head of the company

(signed)

Stay connected with Alive & Thrive

Website: www.aliveandthrive.org
E-mail: aliveandthrive@fhi360.org
Twitter: @aliveandthrive
Blog: www.lessguess.wordpress.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/fhi360.aliveandthrive
Youtube: www.youtube.com/aliveandthrive