Breastfeeding: How can we make it Work?

SUN Business Network Meeting - Eastern & Southern Africa | Nairobi | 10 June 2015
The world is still **not a friendly place** for many women wanting to breastfeed.
Women in the labor force

World: 1,340,000,000
Asia: 787,000,000
Africa: 115,000,000

Do they work in a breastfeeding-friendly environment?

Will others enter the labor force if breastfeeding-friendly?

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators, 2013, ILO KILM database
Choices working moms have to make

- Leave the workforce
- Not breastfeed
- Using unfriendly spaces
- Find a friendly workplace
## Why workplace lactation programs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government / Society</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Comply with recommendations</td>
<td>✓ Comply with regulations</td>
<td>✓ Reduce absence to take care of ill children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Lower health system costs</td>
<td>✓ Cost-effective investment</td>
<td>✓ Improve productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Utilize community resources</td>
<td>✓ Gain positive image</td>
<td>✓ Lower health care cost for mother and child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Build future human resources</td>
<td>✓ Lower absenteeism</td>
<td>✓ Follow best practices for child development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Gain morale and loyalty</td>
<td>✓ Invest in workforce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alive & Thrive experience in Vietnam

Time for breastfeeding:
- Paid maternity leave extended to 6 months in 2011 Labor Code
- 1 hour paid break regulated

Space & support for breastfeeding:
- Workplace lactation programs at 70 locations in 10 provinces
- Outreach: > 160,000 female staff
- Experience used by Ministry of Labor to formulate sub-law
Partnership model

A&T
- Provide financial and technical support to set up breastfeeding rooms
- Conduct training on breastfeeding
- Develop educational materials on lactation and infant and young child feeding

Employers
- Organize orientation on breastfeeding for female workers
- Provide space with access to clean water supply for setting up lactation room
- Allow 2–3 short breaks for breastmilk expression

VGCL
- Coordinate among different levels of the Federation of Labor and the companies’ Labor Unions to ensure the effective implementation of the program
- Advocate for the program’s replication with local authorities and employers

WORKPLACE LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM
Examples from businesses in Vietnam

- **Canon**: 4,500 female workers
  - 6 months paid maternity leave
  - Lactation room + breaks to express milk
  - Infants grant of 7$ / month
  - 7$ for pregnancy trimester check-up appointments

- **PCD**: 17,000 female workers
  - 6 months paid maternity leave
  - Lactation room + breaks to express milk
  - Reproductive health check-ups and laboratory test
  - Kindergarten and free tuition for children of staff
  - Events to praise and award children for academic results

- **MEIKO**: 2,460 female workers
  - 6 months paid maternity leave
  - Lactation room + breaks to express milk
  - Flexible unpaid leave for breastfeeding after 6 months
  - Free iron supplements at pregnancy check-ups
  - Extra meals for pregnant and lactating workers
Feedback from participants

“Now we have our own space to express breast milk, which I used to throw away before. I want to send a big thank you to the program and the leaders of my bank for their kind support.”

Ngo Thi Duyen, Maritime Bank, Hanoi

“Breastmilk is the most precious nutrient for young children. As a foreign investment company, 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
How can you support?

**Governments**
- Maternity protection and workplace policies
- Mechanism to recognize and award employers
- Support employers to scale-up

**Employers**
- Comply with regulations for space, time and support
- Commit to investing in human resources
- No push for early return after maternity leave
- Non-discriminatory hiring practices
- Monitor and report

**Employees**
- Claim rights to maternity protection entitlements
- Responsible and planned birth spacing
- Study information materials
- Avail employer support
Thank you!