



# FACT SHEET ON **WORKPLACE SUPPORT FOR BREASTFEEDING**

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## **What is Workplace Support for Breastfeeding?**

A mechanism for providing working female employees an environment that enables them to successfully breastfeed their infants at the workplace.

## **Why Breastfeeding?**

- Has the single largest impact on child deaths of any preventable intervention.
  - *scaling up breastfeeding to a near universal level could prevent 823,000 child deaths per year (lancet series).*
- Artificial feeding leads to common diseases such as diarrhea and pneumonia, which are leading causes of death among children.
  - *By supporting mothers to practice proper breastfeeding, nearly 50 percent of diarrhea episodes and a third of respiratory infections would be avoided.*
- Breastfeeding has been found to reduce the risk of childhood obesity and diabetes.
- Breastfeeding is also a natural and necessary part of the reproductive cycle for women, and as such, has a significant impact on a mother's health.
  - *Breastfeeding contributes to delayed return of menstruation thus useful in birth spacing.*
- Research has shown that breastfeeding is associated with a lower risk of breast and ovarian cancers for nursing mothers later in life.
  - *20,000 breast cancer deaths could be prevented annually as a result of optimal breastfeeding (Lancet series).*
- Breastfeeding has been shown to play a critical role in fostering a young child's brain development and cognitive capacity.
  - *shorter durations of breastfeeding for children were associated with a 2.6 points loss in IQ scores.*
  - *Other studies have shown that non-breastfed children had significantly lower IQ scores and smaller brains overall.*

## Benefits of Workplace Support

Benefits to the Employer	Benefits to the Employee
Improved retention of skills and experience.	Improved job security of female employees.
Reduced recruitment costs.	Improved performance with increased gaining of skills and experience.
Loyalty of employees.	Improved productivity hence satisfaction and self-esteem.
Increased productivity, satisfaction and resilience of the employee.	Improved health of the child including growth and development.
Added recruitment incentives for employer.	Added recruitment incentives for women.
Improved employer image.	Increased spacing between pregnancies.
Lower employers' health and insurance costs.	Better stress management.
Reduced absenteeism due to improved child and maternal health.	Decreased risk of diabetes, breast and ovarian cancer.

## The Investment Case for Breastfeeding

- Breastfeeding is an investment in improving children's health and saving lives.
- It is also an investment in human capital development that can benefit a country's economy.
- In order to meet the World Health Assembly target of increasing the percentage of children under 6 months of age who are exclusively breastfed to at least 50 percent by 2025, an additional \$5.7 billion is required. This investment translates to just \$4.70 per newborn.
- The World Bank's new Investment Framework for Nutrition notes that meeting the WHA target for exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months would save 520,000 children's lives over the next 10 years.
- If the WHA targets were to be reached by 2025, almost \$300 billion in additional economic gains across lower- and middle-income countries could be generated as a result of improved cognitive development and child survival rates.
  - *Breastfeeding is one of the best investments in global health: every \$1 invested in breastfeeding generates \$35 in economic returns.*
- Additional research has also shown that employers and other providers of health services will accrue annual savings in healthcare expenditures if breastfeeding rates increase, thanks to fewer prescriptions and reduced absenteeism rates. Healthcare costs for newborns could be as much as three times lower, with fewer hospitalizations and insurance claims.

## The Economic Case of Breastfeeding

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The estimated percentage loss in gross national income due to cognitive deficits associated with infant feeding practices an equivalent of about **US\$ 49 million loss to the Kenya economy**

Source: Lancet, 2016

# Policy Environment

## INTERNATIONAL PROVISIONS FOR BREASTFEEDING RIGHTS OF WOMEN

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) on Maternity Protection Convention 2000 No. 183 and 191 recommends at least 14 weeks (98 days) of paid maternity leave, one or two breaks daily or a reduction in work hours in order for women to breastfeed their children and, where practicable, provision of facilities for nursing under adequate hygienic conditions at or near the workplace. Some countries like Vietnam, Sweden have put legislations in place that provide 6 months paid maternity leave and Flexi working hours after 6 months to one year.

## KENYAN LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT

- In the Kenya employment of 2007 article 29 (2) a woman employee is entitled to 3 months maternity leave which translates to a total of 12 weeks while a male employee is entitled to 2 weeks paternity leave. The 12 weeks is short of the period recommended by ILO convention by two weeks.
- The Employment Act, 2017 in article 71 provides for establishment of Lactation stations in the workplace while article 72 provides for break intervals for nursing employees in addition to the regular times off for meals to breastfeed or express milk which should be counted as compensable hours worked provided that such intervals shall not be more than a total of one hour for every eight hour working period.
- Additionally, the Ministry of Health together with other stakeholders have put together guidelines and implementation framework for securing workplace support for breastfeeding initiative.

## What Does Workplace Support for Breastfeeding Entail?

### TIME

- Provide a minimum of three months of maternity leave for female employees and two weeks paternity leave for male employees, as stipulated under the Kenyan Employment Act (No.11, 2007)
- Allowing short breaks for mothers to breastfeed and express breast milk, and review workplace policies to incorporate flex time (such as part-time work schedules, longer lunch breaks, job-sharing)for breastfeeding mothers (until their babies are at least 2 years old)

### SPACE

- Provide a designated clean, private area for mothers to express breastmilk and/or breastfeed their babies (including storage facilities to keep expressed breast milk safe)
- Providing a supportive environment including appropriate furniture (chair/table) and access to water and soap to clean storage items

### SUPPORT

- Promote exclusive breastfeeding through workplace sensitization (e.g.: pamphlets, lunchtime pre-natal/post-natal classes, access to a maternity counsellor)
- Adopt supportive policies and practices that enable women to successfully return to work (guidance for supervisors, encouraging positive accepting attitudes from other employees, allowing babies in the workplace)

## WORKPLACE EDUCATION AND SENSITIZATION

- Because successful breastfeeding is a learned behavior, basic breastfeeding information, made available beginning during pregnancy, helps both male and female employees make informed choices about infant feeding and builds support among family members and colleagues.

# Status of Workplace Support in Nairobi

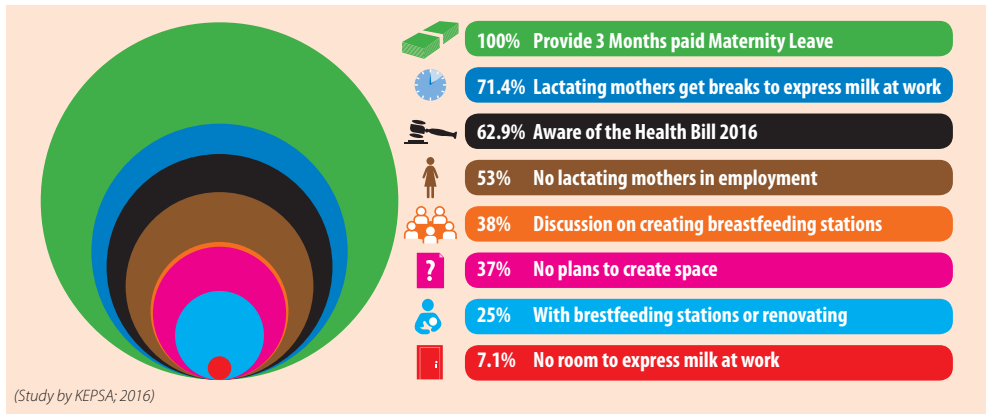
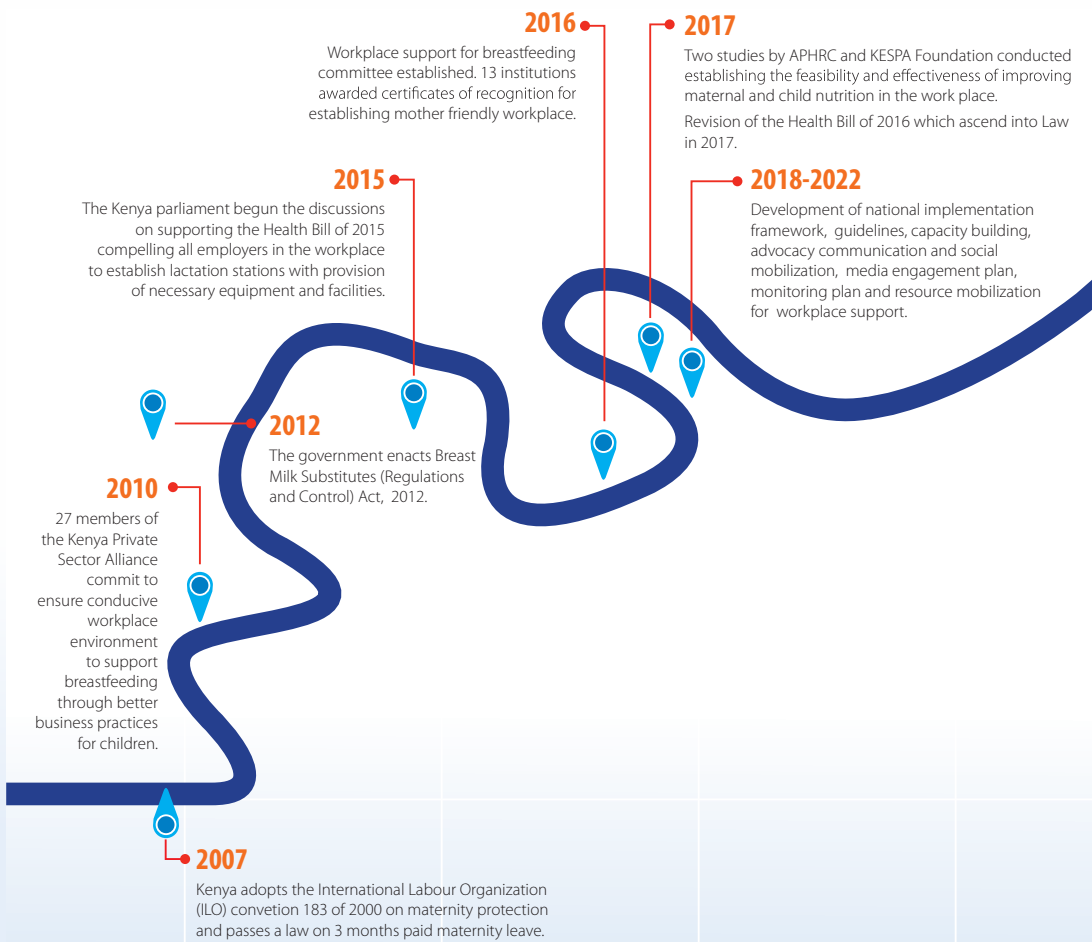


Figure 1: Status of workplace support implementation among 66 private companies in Nairobi

# Roadmap to Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces in Kenya



## In honour of public/ private / humanitarian organizations that have established lactation rooms

Organization	No. of rooms/spaces
<b>Government/Public</b>	
Ministry of Health-DFH (MOH-DFH)	1
Nandi County Government – EPK Chemomi	1
Kenyatta National Hospital – Old Hospital	1
<b>Corporate...</b>	
Bamburi Cement Limited	1
Barclays Bank of Kenya	1
CBA Group Limited	1
Citibank N.A. Kenya	1
Davis & Shirtliff Limited	1
East Africa Breweries Limited	1
East Africa Cables	1
Eka Hotel	1
Equatorial Nuts Limited	1
Gertrude Childrens Hospital	1
Google Kenya Ltd	1
Grant Thornton Consulting Limited	1
IBM East Africa Limited	1
Intercontinental Hotel	1
Isuzu Kenya Limited	1
Karen Roses Limited	1
Kenya Association of Manufacturers	1
Kenya Women Microfinance Bank	1
Kidogo Foundation	1
KPMG Kenya	1
Mabati Rolling Mills Limited	1
Madisson Group Limited	1
Mantrac Limited	1
Microsoft East Africa	1
Nairobi Bottlers Limited	1
Nation Group Limited	1
Oserian Development Company	1

Organization	No. of rooms/spaces
<b>Corporate...</b>	
Panafric Hotel- Sarova Hotels	1
Philips Limited	1
Radison Blu Hotel	1
Redlands Roses Limited	1
Safaricom Limited	1
SENACA East Africa	1
Seven Seas Technologies Limited	1
Simba Corporation Limited	1
Standard Chartered Bank	1
Standard Group Limited	1
Toyota Kenya Limited	1
Trademark Hotel	1
Unilever Kenya Limited	1
Vivo Energy Kenya Limited	1
<b>Humanitarian organizations</b>	
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)	1
Action Against Hunger (ACF)	2
International Livestock research Institute (ILRI)	1
Kenyatta University (KU)	1
Population Services Kenya (PSK)	1
World Food Programme (WFP)	2
GIZ	2
AMREF Health Africa (AMREF)	1
World Vision Kenya (WV-K)	1
Family Health International (FHI-360)	1
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	1
USAID-Kenya	1
Feed the Children (FEED)	1
International Rescue Centre (IRC)	1

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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