



Žindymas pasaulyje. Situacijos Lietuvoje tyrimas

12 October, 2017



Vilnius, Lithuania

Workshop on WBTi “Call for Action” –

Final Report

In 2016/2017, a non-profit organization PRADŽIŲ PRADŽIA (BFAG) carried out an assessment of breastfeeding trends in Lithuania using WBTi Assessment Tool. On the 12th October, 2017, the findings of the assessment were presented in Vilnius for a wide group of health providers and politicians as well as other stakeholders at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the findings, to add corrections and to call for action to improve breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding in the country.

Preparatory activities included a series of group's meetings, delegation of tasks and organizational arrangements. They involved translating Report from English to Lithuanian, editing and technical preparation of the assessment report, printing of the Lithuanian version (20 copies). Copies of the report were distributed to the participants at the workshop as well as to other interested stakeholders by mail (Annex 1. Photo of the Report cover page in Lithuanian and English).

Assessment group approached the Ministry of Health (MOH) to provide premises for presenting the findings of the assessment. The MOH took the initiative to invite the participants as well as the media. In total, almost 20 participants (not including the core group members) attended the event to discuss the findings of the breastfeeding situation assessment.

Workshop took place in the main building of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania. Attendees were representing health and social sectors, local governments, education and public health institutions as well as Mother and Child Health and Child and

Infant Nutrition authorities, including representatives from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, Vilnius University and University Clinics, maternity hospitals, Baby Friendly Hospitals, National Breastfeeding Committee as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations involved in breastfeeding promotion and protection of mothers' and children's rights, etc. (Annex 2. Photos from the workshop, Annex 3. List of participants).

The workshop was opened by the Head of the Mother and Child Health Department of the MOH of the Republic of Lithuania Ms. Ausrute Armonaviciene, who stressed the importance of the findings to be presented and analyzed in different scopes.

The presentation on Breastfeeding Trends Initiative project in Lithuania was given by Daiva Sniukaite-Adner, a leader of the assessment group and a vice chair of the National Breastfeeding Committee.

In the discussion that followed, it was elaborated that presented results clearly showed the gaps in IYCF in the country, the advantages and insufficiencies of the existing policies and programs intended to promote, protect and support breastfeeding as well as infant and young child feeding. It was stressed that even the National Nutrition Strategy has not been included in the Lithuanian Public Health Strategy, therefore it is important to talk and present data and deficiencies, so, that political decisions on promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding would be revised and brought into agenda. Moreover, good maternal protection and certain solutions to integrate parts of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes with breastfeeding protection, support and promotion has no support at a political level and in practice. Code is constantly violated in public and health sectors.

Insufficient breastfeeding education of health professionals, who work in mother and child care services, was stressed as well.

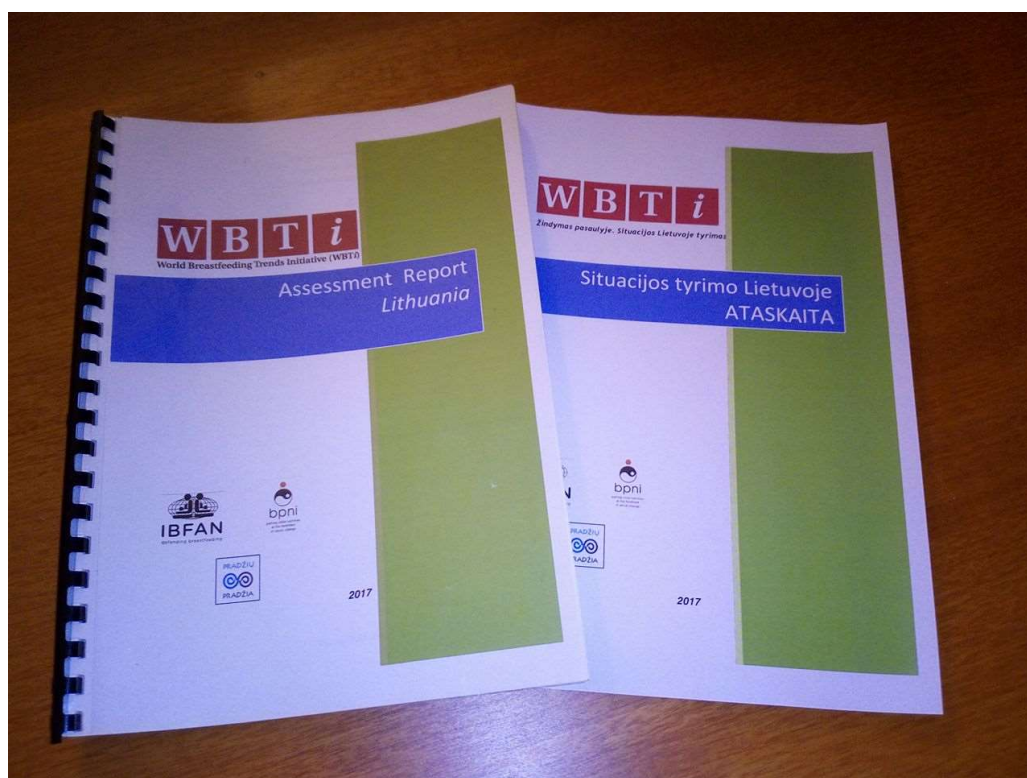
After discussion, corrections of BFHI situation were suggested and included in the report. In general, it was admitted that the assessment group did a tremendous work by examining the legal framework, demonstrating the gaps and making recommendations.

WBTi report has been accepted as the basis for improving IYCF and Breastfeeding policy and practice in Lithuania and **following recommendations were suggested:**

1. Develop and adopt a National Nutrition Policy, including National Infant and Young child feeding/breastfeeding policy, protecting, promoting and supporting measures for improving infant and young child nutrition and monitor its implementation.
2. Collect analyze and report data on IYCF including breastfeeding and complementary feeding.
3. Reform NBC with specific focus on support for implementation of IYC feeding, including breastfeeding policy and including committee members with expertise in nutrition and breastfeeding.
4. Use BFHI as a main measure to achieve improvement in breastfeeding situation. The national BFH assessment criteria should completely correspond to the global BFHI criteria and implementation strategy thereof. The biggest part of BFHI implementation activities (dissemination of information and promotion, hospital assessment procedures, etc.) should be handed over to the non-governmental sector, specifically acting in breastfeeding field.
5. The practice of early initiation of breastfeeding should become the standard of care in maternity hospitals. *Prepare and approve* comprehensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategies for improving infant and young child feeding (breastfeeding and complementary feeding)
6. Establish the Code by a law and ensure the control for its implementation.
7. Not weaken existing legal protection for maternity and breastfeeding women. Promote and welcome breastfeeding in public for those mothers who are willing to breastfeed in public.
8. Define qualification requirements for professionals and develop national policy guidelines on breastfeeding, infant and child feeding and counselling, in order to give higher importance on this neglected issue in the education of HC providers.
9. Apply knowledge and skill of the International Board Certified Lactation Consultants and skilled in breastfeeding management volunteers to help nursing mothers in the HC system and community.
10. Prepare and approve comprehensive Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategies for improving infant and young child feeding (breastfeeding and complementary feeding).

11. Include more scientific studies on lactation, breastfeeding and young children nutrition in the action plans for research institutions.
12. Prepare and adopt national recommendations for infant and young children feeding and HIV as well as for HIV infected lactating women and ensure ARV treatment after delivery for who chose to breastfeed.
13. Adopt appropriate policies and program to ensure that mothers, infants and young children will be provided adequate protection and support for appropriate feeding in emergencies.

Annex 1. Photo of the Report cover page in Lithuanian and English.



Annex 2. Photos from the workshop



