



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### Infant feeding in emergency: *lessons learned and next steps*

October 28<sup>th</sup> 2022 - National Institute of Health, Rome



# The impact of the war in Ukraine on women's infant feeding choices and practices: initial reflections



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## OUR HISTORY

- 1971** • We got our start at the University of North Carolina conducting research to develop safe and effective family planning methods.
- 1986** • We expanded our scope to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- 1990** • FHI Foundation was established. The foundation is funded by proceeds from the sale of two for-profit companies spun off from FHI 360.
- 2011** • We acquired the Academy for Educational Development (AED), expanding our capabilities to include nutrition, education, economic development, civil society and other areas.

*We are FHI 360*



Passionate  
team



Intelligent  
solutions



Positive  
impact

## WHO WE ARE

FHI 360 is an international nonprofit working to improve the health and well-being of people in the United States and around the world.

We team with governments and civil society to create jobs, educate children, provide lifesaving health care and bring about positive social change. We do this by using research and evidence to design and deliver programs that change behaviors, increase access to services and improve lives.

Our staff of more than **4,000** professionals works in more than **60** countries around the world. Their diverse technical expertise and deep understanding of local conditions provide a **360-degree** perspective that allows us to develop customized responses to the toughest human development challenges.

**fhi360**  
THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES





# The Case for Breastfeeding

*Reducing Child Mortality and Improving Maternal Health*

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- Could save up to 823,000 young children each year (14% of all deaths in this age group)
- Current rates prevent 20,000 deaths each year from breast cancer -- another 20,000 deaths could be prevented by improving breastfeeding practices further.
- Breastfeeding contributes to healthier birth spacing.



In Ukraine,  
women and their infants are among the most affected,  
but their nutrition needs are not being prioritized.

How has the *conflict changed mothers' choices* to feed their infants?

What critical actions and investments will *help protect the nutrition practices* of women during this emergency—and the long-term health of their infants?

How can we *mobilize governments and donors* to support infant feeding practices in Ukraine?

## FHI 360: Nutrition Assessment in Ukraine and Poland (September 2022)

- Interviews with mothers
- Meetings with lactation counsellors
- Visits to relocation centers for displaced Ukrainians
- Visit to regional hospital
- Engaged UNICEF 'Blue Dot' locations
- Met with Government coordinators

Infant nutrition is an *unseen crisis in Ukraine*, with a lack of recognition, advocacy, and support.

Deterioration in breastfeeding and nutrition practices now will have *long-term health impacts* on these children well into the future.

*Lack of widespread support from lactation counselors*—and they foresee the situation will get worse.

*Formula donations* are flooding centers for displaced Ukrainians and refugees — but with no education or cleaning utensils.

Many women are not receiving nutrition support or guidance, resulting in *unsafe feeding practices for infants*.

- *Many women said “How will I feed my baby?”*
- *Women stopping breastfeeding due to stress and fear. “I had plans to breastfeed, but I did not. I have conditions due to the war”*
- *Women’s plans to breastfeed were disrupted due to migration, conflict, and lack of support.*
- *Women are receiving donations of all type of milk.*
- *Adolescent mothers are not receiving support and guidance giving birth and are using infant formula.*
- *Women are concerned about the quality of food they are receiving for their infants but are unable to afford anything else.*



# What the mother have to say....

*"... No one supported me, I have no relatives, no parents, no husband so after moving in the shelter I am alone and receive the help from the shelter staff. The pediatrician asked me why I was not breastfeeding, and I explained, then he was trying to recommend several infant formulas but there we no formulas so I could not buy. "*

*" I can't give fresh fruits and fresh meat. Only canned goods...I have no choice...I wish this war will stop"*

*"Yes. The xxx company. And then, all pharmacies closed and there was no humanitarian aid. I had to find an old woman with a cow."*

*"It was a cesarean section, and then we got to the perinatal center in the intensive care unit. They injected a lot of antibiotics. The milk did not appear. The medicine affected the feeding. Then when milk appeared on the fifth day, we tried, but it didn't work"*

# What the lactation counsellors have to say...

*“Breastfeeding is not a top priority before the war ....  
Lack of skilled lactation consultant in several  
maternity hospitals.  
...”*

*“What we see is the enormous amount of infant  
formula being distributed/donated by  
organizations without any criteria and without  
providing any other support. ...breastfeeding  
rates will be even worst after the war “*

*“Lactation consultants have created a  
network and are trying to help  
mothers by responding to the  
questions and queries.  
b. receive calls and messages directly  
from women living in Kyiv...we have no  
one supporting us..”*

# Maternal and Infant Nutrition During Emergencies

*The perennial challenge*

- Displacement, stress, fear, and insecurity negatively impact infant feeding practices.
- Lack of support and attention to infant and young children's nutrition practices in emergency responses.
- Widespread donations of infant formula and canned/bottle foods for infants during emergencies that is not safe and does not meet the nutrition needs of infants and young children.

➤ [Matern Child Health J.](#) 2018 Dec;22(12):1826-1833. doi: 10.1007/s10995-018-2585-z.

## **The Effect of Mass Evacuation on Infant Feeding: The Case of the 2016 Fort McMurray Wildfire**

[Sarah E DeYoung](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Jodine Chase](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Michelle Pensa Branco](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Benjamin Park](#)<sup>4</sup>

➤ [Radiat Environ Biophys.](#) 2016 May;55(2):139-46. doi: 10.1007/s00411-016-0636-7.  
Epub 2016 Feb 13.

## **Impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake on feeding methods and newborn growth at 1 month postpartum: results from the Fukushima Health Management Survey**

[Hyo Kyojuka](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Shun Yasuda](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Makoto Kawamura](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Yasuhisa Nomura](#)<sup>2</sup>, [Keiya Fujimori](#)<sup>2</sup>,  
[Aya Goto](#)<sup>3, 4</sup>, [Seiji Yasumura](#)<sup>3, 4</sup>, [Masafumi Abe](#)<sup>3</sup>

## **Countries failing to stop harmful marketing of breast-milk substitutes, warn WHO and UNICEF**

**Agencies encourage women to continue to breastfeed during the COVID-19 pandemic**

27 May 2020 | News release | Geneva/New York | Reading time: 5 min (1226 words)

There is an urgent need for...

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Thought leadership and evidence gathering

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Advocacy

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Direct provision of nutrition support services

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# FHI 360 calls to protect, promote, and support the nutrition of women and their infants in Ukraine and other crises around the world

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***High-level publications*** to highlight the struggles of women to provide appropriate nutrition for their infants.

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***Global advocacy*** to spur investment to address the nutrition situation in humanitarian contexts

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Rapidly expand ***maternal and infant nutrition services***, working with national organizations in crisis situations

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# Thank you