



## Overview of IYCF-E Coordination and Communications

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The Sphere Handbook (2011), “Adequate programme coverage, timeliness and quality require collective action.” Effective coordination and clear, accurate information on IYCF-E are essential to successful responses.

As per the cluster approach, UNICEF is the likely UN co-ordinating body for IYCF-E however other agencies may be asked to step in dependent on capacity. The core priorities of IYCF-E co-ordination are policy and programming co-ordination to support the agreement of a common approach based on best practices; intersectoral co-ordination ensuring that agreed policies and principles are also adopted by other relevant sectors; creation and dissemination of an Action Plan laying out responsibilities and accountability mechanisms; and evaluation of the quality of the IYCF-E response. Capacity building and technical support should also be considered and addressed by the coordinating body. An important function of this group is the monitoring of the Code. (Operational Guidance on IYCF-E version 2.1 (2007) Tools included in the Toolkit include a sample TOR for the IYCF-E Working Group, a sample Joint Statement as well as alternatives and ideas for integration of IYCF-E with other sectors.

Early, accurate communication on IYCF-E can save lives by supporting, promoting and protecting optimal feeding. Multiple communication’s tools are included in the IYCF-E Toolkit. Below are sample key messages to aid responders in effectively communicating to various audiences about IYCF-E in a response. A portion of the messages target caregivers directly while the second section of messaging are focused on the media.

### **SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES ON IYCF-E FOR VARIOUS TARGET AUDIENCES:**

#### **KEY IYCF-E MESSAGES**

During emergencies, breastfeeding is the strongest protection for your baby’s health and nutrition. Especially during emergencies:

- *Breastfeed immediately after giving birth.*
- *More breastfeeding makes more milk – Breastfeed more!*
- *Breastfeeding protects and nourishes - Only breastmilk from birth to 6 months.*
- *Formula, other milks, foods/liquids and feeding bottles are dangerous to your baby’s health.*
- *Breastfeeding helps relax the mother and baby.*
- *Breastfeeding moms need everyone’s support.*

Agreed key messages following Typhoon Ondoy, Philippines, 2009 by the IYCF-E Working Group members including: UNICEF, Government of Philippines, Save the Children and other stakeholders. The messages were translated and field tested for understanding before use. Feedback was that communities liked the fact that the messages were emergency related; this finding also came out of Behaviour Change Communication analysis following the Tsunami (see Field Exchange 34 at ([www.enonline.net](http://www.enonline.net)) People were used to the ‘normal’ messages and wanted something appropriate to their current situation. In the Philippines the messages were distributed using various media including megaphones, leaflets, posters, on fans (which people used to fan their cooking fires and to cool themselves) and became the main headings for a flip chart – each message being used as the basis for information/discussion on that subject. Other methods of dissemination of messages include: radio, press, mobile phone texts, local theatre group plays and t-shirts.

*Acknowledgement: IYCF/IYCF-E Working Group, Philippines.*

## KEY SIMPLIFIED MESSAGES TO USE IN EMERGENCIES

- Babies are vulnerable in emergencies
- Artificially fed babies are particularly vulnerable in emergencies
- Use of infant formula or other milk products is dangerous in emergencies and should be avoided
- Breastfed babies are protected in emergencies
- Breastfeeding women are providing protection to their babies by breastfeeding
- Breastfeeding is a sign of strength and resilience
- The way to help babies survive an emergency is to help their mothers continue breastfeeding
- The carers of artificially fed babies need intensive support
- Donations of infant formula are not needed and are unhelpful
- Aid organisations need help from the media immediately after the emergency starts to prevent the arrival of donations of infant formula and other milk products
- Monetary donations will assist aid organisations to maximise the survival of infants

*Source: Karleen Gribble, Senior Lecturer, Presentation*

## SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES ON STRESS AND BREASTFEEDING TO CIRCULATE IN AN EMERGENCY

- Breastfeeding can help a mother and baby or young child deal with stressful or traumatic situations.
- A traumatised mother can be helped through breastfeeding her baby.
- A frightened young child will get reassurance, as well as nourishment, from breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding can also help in pain relief of infants and young children. So if a baby or young child is injured, breastfeeding can help – as well as supply essential food and fluid.
- If you have stopped breastfeeding, you can restart – if you breastfeed more, then you will produce more milk.
- Even if your breasts are soft, this does not mean they are empty – they will still produce enough milk.
- If you are breastfeeding your baby, encourage and support other mothers caught up in the crisis especially those who may be having difficulties, who may be traumatised or who have newborns. Help to build their confidence and reassure them of this amazing capacity they have to nourish and protect their babies in this emergency.
- If you are the father or the husband or the relative of a mother who is breastfeeding or who has breastfed and has stopped during this crisis, encourage her to continue or restart. Reassure her of the resilience of breastfeeding and how well she is equipped to nourish and protect her baby.

**Acknowledgement: The Harmonised Training Package (HTP): Resource Material for Training on Nutrition in Emergencies, Version 2 (2011). NutritionWorks, Emergency Nutrition Network, Global Nutrition Cluster.**

## SAMPLE KEY MESSAGES TO MOTHERS AND CAREGIVERS IN AN EMERGENCY

*Their use should be informed by the particular context and carefully translated to ensure accurate interpretation, e.g. these messages were used following the Haiti earthquake 2010*

Babies are very vulnerable but taking special care in feeding them can protect them. This is what you can do to protect your baby. The most effective way of protecting babies is to breastfeed them. Breastmilk gives your baby, food and water and is a medicine that fights illness. Babies under 6 months should not be giving anything except for breastmilk. Giving a baby under 6 months water or infant formula, milk powder or solid food under the current circumstances is dangerous. It can give them diarrhoea and this can be fatal, this is why it is so important to only breastfeed if it is at all possible. Children over 6 months should continue to be breastfed until at least 2 years.

The youngest babies are at the greatest risk if they are not breastfed. So it is essential that newborn babies begin breastfeeding immediately after birth (within an hour) and are given only breastmilk.

Some people think that stress or not having good food will make a mother's milk dry up, this is not true. A hand or shoulder massage can help you to feel less stressed and will help the milk to flow more easily when you are breastfeeding. Stressful or traumatic situations can interfere with how often and when you feed your

baby, so that you may produce less breastmilk. Babies and young children may be disturbed by stressful situations and become difficult to settle down to feeding. Whatever the reason, more frequent breastfeeds will help you make more milk if you think you don't have enough. Keeping the baby close to you, the mother, day and night will help her to breastfeed more and make more milk.

If you have had powdered milk given to you for your baby and you are breastfeeding, drink it yourself, nourishing yourself will help you to nourish your baby. Do not give your baby infant formula or powdered milk unless it is absolutely necessary because it is dangerous.

If a baby does not have a mother or if their mother has stopped breastfeeding another woman can breastfeed the baby (depending on local context).

If you have been using infant formula and breastfeeding you can increase your milk supply by reducing the amount of formula given to your baby and breastfeeding more frequently. If you have stopped breastfeeding you can start again, letting the baby suck at the breast will start the milk flowing again but this can take a few days to a couple of weeks for there to be enough milk - depending on how long it has been since you stopped.

It is very important to take extreme care in feeding babies formula. This should only happen if there is no way that the baby can be breastfed. It is very important to make sure that everything used to feed the baby is clean. Cups are better for feeding than bottles, which are very hard to clean properly. Cleaning water and water to make up formula should be boiled. Made up formula should not be stored. Seek help from organisations supporting mothers feeding their babies. Seek medical help if your baby gets sick with diarrhoea or a chest infection.

*Acknowledgement: The Harmonised Training Package (HTP): Resource Material for Training on Nutrition in Emergencies, Version 2 (2011). NutritionWorks, Emergency Nutrition Network, Global Nutrition Cluster.*

## **SAMPLE 'MEDIA SPOTS' ON IYCF-E:**

*There may be opportunity to include short punchy messages on IYCF-E in radio, press, in mobile phone text messages in an emergency. Here are some ideas to draw upon.*

- Breastmilk is sterile, secure, and instantly available. It needs no preparation or storage.
- Breastfeeding is a very clever system tailored to the baby's needs. The more a baby feeds or suckles, the more breastmilk is produced.
- Breastmilk contains not only water and all the nutrients your baby needs, but also protection against infection.
- If you have stopped breastfeeding, you can restart – if you breastfeed more, then you will produce more.
- There is no blockade on breastmilk – you have it with you right now.
- Breastfeeding can help a mother and baby or young child deal with stressful or traumatic situations. A traumatised mother can be helped through breastfeeding her baby. A frightened young child will get reassurance, as well as nourishment, from breastfeeding.
- Breastfeeding can also help in pain relief of infants and young children. So if a baby or young child is injured, breastfeeding can help – as well as supply essential food and fluid.
- Malnourished mothers or mothers who have little to eat can still breastfeed and nourish their baby.
- Stressful or traumatic situations do not stop breastfeeding or stop breastmilk production. Stressful situations can interfere with how often and when you feed your baby, so that you may produce less breastmilk. Babies and young children may be disturbed by stressful situations and become difficult to

settle down to feeding. You can overcome this by offering breastfeeding (at least every 2 hours) to your baby or young child.

- If you have a baby under 6 months of age, then just breastfeed them – do not give any extra water or milk or teas or foods.
- Even if your breasts are soft, this does not mean they are empty - they will still produce enough milk.
- The protection of breastfeeding is greatest for the youngest babies. Newborn babies are especially at risk in this crisis. So it is essential that newborn babies begin breastfeeding immediately after birth (within an hour) and are breastfed exclusively. Continue to exclusively breastfeed the baby (this means giving no other water or fluid or drinks or food, JUST breastmilk).
- If your baby is sick, for example with diarrhoea, then offer him/her frequent breastfeeding, day and night.
- You might find that older babies or young children who are sick are not interested in eating. They may want to breastfeed more – this is fine and is a good source of water, nutrients and comfort for them.
- Using milk powder or infant formula carries great risks for babies and young children – it is a source of infection, especially where water supplies are contaminated making preparation of feeds and cleaning of utensils very difficult. Your baby is much more likely to get very sick.
- If your baby is less than 6 months and you are breastfeeding and also giving milk powder to your baby, try to JUST breastfeed. This has all the nourishment and food that your small baby needs.
- If you are breastfeeding your baby, share your skills and knowledge with them. Encourage and give support to other mothers, especially those who may be having difficulties, who may be traumatised or who have newborns. Help to build their confidence and reassure them of this amazing capacity they have to nourish and protect their babies in this emergency.
- If you are the father or the husband or the relative of a mother who is breastfeeding or who has breastfed and has stopped during this crisis, encourage her to continue or restart. Reassure her of the resilience of breastfeeding and how well she is equipped to nourish and protect her baby.

*(Source: The Harmonised Training Package (HTP): Resource Material for Training on Nutrition in Emergencies, Version 2 (2011). NutritionWorks, Emergency Nutrition Network, Global Nutrition Cluster. Module 17 on IYCF-E)*

## **SAMPLE 'TWEETS' ON IYCF-E:**

“Tweeting” is a new method of communication that responders may consider. Hashtag #IYCF-E could be used. Below are some suggestions developed for the Philippines response 2013.

- Safe corners or tents where mothers can breastfeed their infants, receive counselling can support breastfeeding in emergencies [#YolandaPH](#)
- Breastfeeding mothers shld be prioritized to receive safe drinking water, extra food to protect their health, well-being [#YolandaPH](#)
- Mothers need to be reassured that they can still breastfeed their babies, even in emergencies like [#Haiyan](#) [#YolandaPH](#)
- Ready-to-use (liquid) milk substitute and feeding w/clean cup under extraordinary circumstances like [#Haiyan](#), can be considered [#YolandaPH](#)

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