

## Code Monitoring Training in Malaysia

One of IBFAN-ICDC's core activity is training but we rarely get to train mother support groups as our focus has always been at the policy making level.

In August 2014, after receiving numerous requests via social media for training on the Code, the World Breastfeeding Alliance (WABA) together with the Persatuan Penyusuan Susu Ibu Malaysia (PPPIM) decided to pull together their resources to organise a Code monitoring course in Kelana Jaya. The three day training was facilitated by IBFAN-ICDC and we managed to attract 30 participants from various mother support groups in Kuala Lumpur and surroundings. One mother came all the way from Penang and another from Perak, baby and all. There was also a group of child care givers present at the training.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) gamely chipped in, handling one session on the Malaysian Code while the Director came for the closing to give away certificates and to field many questions (sometimes fiery) from mothers regarding Code implementation in Malaysia. The dialogues during the MOH sessions threw some light over the way Code monitoring is handled by MOH. Participants were able to air some of their grievances about the complaints process and received encouraging feedback. The monitoring scene in Malaysia will, hopefully, become more vibrant after this.

The training was fun – Malaysian mothers showed themselves to be very well informed, ready to speak their minds and to push boundaries. All with a good natured camaraderie that is sometimes difficult to come by when people from different backgrounds converge. During the field trip, one participant went so far as to pose as a pregnant mother to get the information she needed about how companies promote to pregnant women and mothers. From the reports presented, it is clear participants understood the different ways companies use to get to mothers and they have become an angry lot. The sharing among participants allowed them to give vent to the poor advice some mothers receive from their less than breastfeeding friendly doctors. Mother support groups are now ganging up in social media to tell on these health professionals.

We predict that mother support groups will soon be a force to be reckoned with in Malaysia. An internet savvy group, they are able to influence trends and attitudes through social media tools among tens of thousands of followers at the click of a button. Knowing that the Code offers them protection from relentless promotion is empowering for the participants and ICDC is honoured to be part of their learning process. For the first time in a long time, there is now a new generation of mothers who will defend breastfeeding. Companies beware!



Participants from various support group who completed the 3 days training course with course organisers and Director of Nutrition, MOH (3rd from right)



There is even a test at the end of the course - some participants passed with flying colours.



Certificate for the baby who behaved impeccably throughout the 3-day training



Multi-tasking - Feed and learn

August 2014