“Family Friendly Cities and Workplaces”

Dr. Hessa ALGHAZAL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Child Friendly Cities Summit
Cologne, Germany
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Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

The first ‘Baby Friendly City’ in the world

Population: 1,405,843
24% Children (0-19) years
‘A right beginning for a better future’
Essential to early childhood development
Health benefits for mother and baby

Fostering and maintaining a culture of
Breastfeeding
Best International Practices with Innovative Community Solutions

Baby-Friendly Hospitals Initiative
‘Baby-Friendly health facilities’
Best International Practices with Innovative Community Solutions
3 community initiatives

‘Breastfeeding-Friendly Nurseries’
‘Mother and Baby Friendly Public Places’
‘Mother-Friendly Workplaces’
Design and Implementation

Three strategic goals:

1. Raising community awareness
   Targeting members of the community directly or indirectly affected by or can affect breastfeeding practice: stay at home and working mothers and fathers, medical professionals, nurses, nursery staff and the community at large.
Design and Implementation

Three strategic goals:

2. Capacity building for professionals
   Focusing on developing skills and knowledge of medical and non-medical staff at nurseries, hospitals and healthcare centers that provide prenatal, antenatal and infant care.
Design and Implementation

Three strategic goals:

3. Providing organizational incentives

An effective incentive scheme was designed through institutional accreditations. All four initiatives have the authority to provide 3-year accreditations subject to renewal upon the fulfillment of all requirements.
Results

Breastfeeding rates in Sharjah
18% in 2011 > 57% in 2018
Results
Accreditations (2012-2019)

19

Baby-Friendly Health Facilities
Results
Accreditations (2012-2019)

22 Mother & Baby-Friendly Public Places
30 Breastfeeding-Friendly Nurseries
84 Mother-Friendly Workplaces
Results

• 25,000 training hours for 2,500 health professionals in Sharjah

• Over 100 training courses and lectures for nurseries and workplaces

• The project has a sizeable spillover margin to other cities and emirates in the UAE, by setting high standards for other emirates to follow suit. While Sharjah implemented a 90-day paid maternity leave for government employees in June 2014 (up from 60 days), Dubai followed suit in March 2017.

• Launching a mobile mothers’ room for use in any public event.
Lessons Learned

• Institutional commitment is integral for community awareness efforts to succeed.

• Creating community-centered initiatives in a localized context allowed the project to operate on multiple levels simultaneously (individual, communal, institutional, governmental).

• Patronage and support of Sharjah ruling family helped secure overwhelming public sector support.

• Private partnerships in healthcare sector are essential for wider community support.
Future Plans

Baby-Friendly → Family-Friendly
Replicability

- Personalize initiatives needs and employ most impactful organizations
- Recruit famous public figure
- Localize the project and initiatives
Thank You!

Dankeschön!