



## **Results of the BFHI project in Afghanistan**

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In 1997 UNICEF launched at Malalai Maternity Hospital in Kabul (Afghanistan) the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) a "premiere" for the country. Ten midwives and six hospital staff were trained on the ten initiative steps and then supported with monthly incentive in order to implement the initiative at hospital level. After two years (October 1999) a survey, the first ever made of this kind in Afghanistan, was carried out from UNICEF in order to detect the grade of efficiency and to measure the out-put and impact of the program in the context of the Hospital activities.

A team composed of one Medical Doctor, one midwife and one female UNICEF staff was set, prepared the two questionnaires (one for the mothers, one for the Health staff) and interviewed seventy-nine (79) of the one hundred fifty (150) hospital health staff, and one hundred forty-four (144) mothers which were admitted at the hospital for delivery in a period of time of one week - from Friday September 24th to Friday October the 1st 1999.

The information's and data collected through the survey which included: Management, Training, Service delivery and Health education clearly showed that despite the hospital impact and output of the BFHI project has to be considered positive, highlighted that still few Afghan Female Mothers attend the Health facilities for delivery and that the majority still deliver at home not benefiting of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

Home delivery is a cultural behavior which definitely have been strengthened by the chronic ongoing war, which caused the total collapse of the National Health Structure and by the subsequent shortage of health infrastructure in rural area. Being realistic with the present Afghan situation we feel that the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) should be extended national wide to all existing Health facilities in order to spread the concept at least where those Health facilities are available. This will definitely be the first step to enhance and support assisted delivery and breast-feeding.