Contents lists available at openscie.com
E-ISSN: 2829-4521
Indonesian Journal of Community Services Cel
DOI: 10.70110/ijcsc.v5i2.109
Journal homepage: https://ijcomcel.org

# Public Awareness Day "Aceh Peduli ASI": Supporting Mothers to Breastfeed

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**ARTICLE INFO**

***Article History:***
*Received 20 November 2025*
*Revised 4 August 2026*
*Accepted 7 August 2026*
*Published 18 September 2026*

***Keywords:***
*Aceh Peduli ASI,*
*Breastfeeding,*
*Breastfeeding Support,*
*Public Awareness.*

**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life is essential for infant growth and development. In Aceh Province, the exclusive breastfeeding rate remains below the national rate, at 67.05%. Insufficient support from families, particularly husbands, healthcare professionals, and inadequate workplace facilities are among the factors contributing to suboptimal exclusive breastfeeding practices. Community-based activities involving multiple stakeholders are therefore needed to strengthen support for breastfeeding mothers.
**Aims:** This community service program aimed to raise public awareness of the importance of support from families, healthcare professionals, and the government for breastfeeding mothers.
**Methods:** The program was organized by Aceh Peduli ASI to commemorate World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) 2025 at Harapan Bangsa Stadium, Banda Aceh. Activities included group exercise, an educational talk show on the importance of breastfeeding support systems, educational games, free health examinations, and breastfeeding

counseling. Approximately 200 participants from the Banda Aceh community attended the program.
**Result:** The program received high levels of community participation and enthusiasm throughout the activities. This community awareness initiative highlights the importance of multisectoral collaboration in strengthening public knowledge and awareness of support systems for exclusive breastfeeding. Similar activities should be conducted continuously to promote a safe and supportive environment for breastfeeding mothers.

**To cite this article:** Ramli, N., Khafidah, W., Aslinar, A., Winanda, M., Sabrida, O., Septivera, Y., Razianti, C., Sriyanti, C., Noviyanti, N., Ardila, A., Susanti, D., Fajri, N. (2026). Public Awareness Day "Aceh Peduli ASI": Supporting Mothers to Breastfeed. *Indonesian Journal of Community Services Cel*, 5(2), 110–120.

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## 1. Introduction

Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life is crucial for infant growth and development. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF recommend that infants be exclusively breastfed from birth to six months of age without any additional food or drink, including water (WHO, 2025). Exclusive breastfeeding provides several short-term health benefits, including a reduced risk of diarrhea and respiratory infections (Horta, 2019), as well as fever and acute respiratory illness (Hossain & Mihrshahi, 2024). In the longer term, continued breastfeeding has been associated with improved cognitive development (Horta, 2019; WHO, 2025) and a reduced risk of obesity and chronic diseases later in life, such as diabetes (Meek & Noble, 2022; WHO, 2025).

WHO (2025) has promoted breastfeeding as the optimal source of nutrition for infants and young children, with a target of increasing the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding to at least 50% by 2025. However, the global prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding remains approximately 44% (WHO, 2023). In Indonesia, the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding is 73.97%, while Aceh Province remains below the national level at 67.05% (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). In Banda Aceh, the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding is reported to be 71.4% (Dinas Kesehatan Kota Banda Aceh, 2025).

The suboptimal prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding may be influenced by insufficient family support, particularly support from husbands. A lack of support from husbands may contribute to mothers not providing exclusive breastfeeding to their infants (Fajar *et al*., 2024; Mandasari & Budianto, 2021; Miara *et al*., 2024). Support from healthcare professionals is also important. In particular, support provided by midwives can contribute to the continuation of exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age (Fajar *et al*., 2024). Furthermore, workplace support and adequate breastfeeding facilities can influence the continuation of breastfeeding after mothers return to work; inadequate support may therefore hinder breastfeeding practices during the first six months (Basrowi *et al*., 2018).

Various efforts have been undertaken to increase exclusive breastfeeding practices. In Banda Aceh, a public awareness initiative involving multiple stakeholders and a range of activities to support breastfeeding was organized as part of World Breastfeeding Week. World Breastfeeding Week, commemorated annually during the first week of August, provides an important opportunity to strengthen support for exclusive breastfeeding. In 2025, World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) highlighted the theme of prioritizing breastfeeding and building sustainable support systems for infant health, in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization. To commemorate WBW, Aceh Peduli ASI initiated activities aimed at educating the public about the importance of providing support for breastfeeding mothers.

Aceh Peduli ASI is a legally registered nonprofit organization that organizes various activities to commemorate WBW, including public awareness initiatives. Public education involving community

participation can contribute to sustainable changes in breastfeeding practices (Negussie *et al*., 2024; Ware *et al*., 2016). Therefore, this community service program aimed to educate the public about the importance of support from families, healthcare professionals, and the government for breastfeeding mothers.

## 2. Methods

The community service program organized by Aceh Peduli ASI consisted of group exercise, an educational talk show on the importance of breastfeeding support systems, educational games, health and child growth and development examinations, and breastfeeding counseling. The program was conducted in three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

During the planning stage, coordination was conducted with the Aceh Branch of the Indonesian Pediatric Society (IDAI), Aceh Provincial Health Office, Aceh Family Welfare Empowerment Team (TP PKK), Public Health Laboratory (Labkesmas), Ministry of Population and Family Development (Kemendukbangga) Aceh, and Aceh Youth and Sports Office (Dispora). This stage also included coordination with the speakers and preparation of the venue for the program.

The implementation stage was conducted on August 3, 2025, at the Harapan Bangsa Stadium field in Banda Aceh. The activities included group exercise, an educational talk show on the importance of breastfeeding support systems, educational games, health and child growth and development examinations, and breastfeeding counseling. The educational talk show featured three speakers: dr. Silvia Yasmin Lubis, M.Ked.(Ped), Sp.A from the Aceh Branch of the Indonesian Pediatric Society (IDAI); Yusniwati, SKM., M.Kes. from the Aceh Provincial Health Office; and dr. Yusra Septivera, Sp.OG., SubSp.K.FM from Aceh Peduli ASI, who is also a breastfeeding counselor. The speakers discussed the importance of breastfeeding support systems from the perspectives of child health, maternal health, and stakeholder support. The talk show was moderated by dr. Cut Razianti ZB, Sp.OG., SubSp.K.FM.

The program targeted members of the Banda Aceh community who attended the event at Harapan Bangsa Stadium, with approximately 200 participants. The evaluation stage was conducted by observing community participation and enthusiasm throughout the public awareness activities.

## 3. Results and Dicussion

The public awareness program organized by Aceh Peduli ASI received high levels of community participation and enthusiasm. The program began with a group exercise session attended by members of the Banda Aceh community. Physical activity, including group exercise, is one of the approaches promoted through the Healthy Living Community Movement (GERMAS) to improve public health by increasing awareness and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Regular physical activity can improve mental health, reduce stress, and promote emotional well-being. Aerobic exercise and walking may also help prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, stroke, and cardiovascular disease (Ramli *et al*., 2022).

The Banda Aceh community showed considerable enthusiasm for participating in the group exercise at Harapan Bangsa Stadium, as reflected by the large number of participants attending the activity. Such physical activity represents a simple, cost-effective, and efficient preventive measure for improving community health (Audistmala *et al*., 2025).

Following the group exercise, the Chairperson of the Aceh Family Welfare Empowerment Team (TP PKK Aceh) officially opened the public awareness program organized by Aceh Peduli ASI with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and visited the Aceh Peduli ASI breastfeeding counseling booth. The activity was accompanied by the Advisor and Chairperson of Aceh Peduli ASI. Stakeholder involvement is expected to strengthen multisectoral commitment to breastfeeding and contribute to the development of a breastfeeding-friendly environment (Buccini *et al*., 2020). Breastfeeding mothers require support from

individuals, groups, and organizations, particularly through the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding practices (Lawrence, 2022). Aceh Peduli ASI contributes to government efforts to promote breastfeeding through educational activities on social media platforms such as Instagram and radio, WhatsApp-based educational sessions, webinars, free counseling during car-free day events, and other public awareness activities such as this community service program.



**Figure 1.** Opening of the Aceh Peduli ASI Public Awareness Program by the Chairperson of TP PKK Aceh

During the opening ceremony, the Chairperson of TP PKK Aceh emphasized that breastfeeding is a child's right and a shared responsibility, highlighting its importance for nutrition, maternal care, and the development of a healthy and high-quality future generation in Aceh. This statement emphasizes the shared responsibility of communities and the government in supporting optimal child growth and development from an early age. The effectiveness of breastfeeding campaigns can be strengthened by recognizing the important role of healthcare professionals in promoting optimal infant and young child feeding practices at every opportunity (Titaley *et al*., 2021). Health promotion and education, supported by broad public campaigns and government policies, are also important for improving exclusive breastfeeding practices (Apriningsih *et al*., 2024).



**Figure 2.** Group Photo with the Chairperson of TP PKK Aceh, Aceh Peduli ASI, and Community Members

The educational talk show, moderated by dr. Cut Razianti ZB, Sp.OG., SubSp.K.FM, focused on the importance of breastfeeding support systems. The speakers were dr. Silvia Yasmin, Sp.A from IDAI Aceh; dr. Yusra Septivera, Sp.OG., SubSp.K.FM, an obstetrician-gynecologist and breastfeeding

counselor from Aceh Peduli ASI; and Yusniwati, SKM. from the Health Office. The session emphasized the importance of support from multiple stakeholders in helping mothers continue breastfeeding. Community involvement in breastfeeding promotion can increase awareness of breastfeeding support. At the community level, such support can be strengthened through policies, lactation rooms, and informational materials that facilitate breastfeeding in public spaces and workplaces (Anderson *et al*., 2017). Government support for breastfeeding mothers may include regulations and policies, government programs, and access to information and education (Ichsan *et al*., 2021).




**Figure 3.** Educational Talk Show Moderated by dr. Cut Razianti ZB, Sp.OG., SubSp.K.FM

Support systems play an important role in breastfeeding success. Family support, particularly from husbands, can encourage mothers to initiate and continue breastfeeding. Supportive partners can provide encouragement and practical assistance when mothers experience breastfeeding difficulties (Kohan *et al*., 2016).

Professional healthcare providers, including lactation consultants, also play an important role in providing information and helping mothers develop breastfeeding knowledge and skills. Such support is particularly important during the early postpartum period (Bunik, 2023; Kohan *et al*., 2016). Health education programs for community health workers can also improve their knowledge and ability to provide effective breastfeeding support to mothers (Wandini *et al*., 2025).

Community resources, including governmental and nongovernmental organizations, are essential for creating supportive breastfeeding environments through advocacy and policy development (Lawrence, 2022; Lihua, 2022). Policies that provide flexible working arrangements and lactation support are particularly important for working mothers because they can help women balance employment and breastfeeding and potentially extend breastfeeding duration. Workplace lactation programs and legal protection for breastfeeding mothers are therefore needed, including appropriate lactation rooms and sufficient time for expressing breast milk during working hours (Bruk-Lee *et al*., 2016; Lawrence, 2022).

Yusniwati, SKM. from the Health Office explained that the government has supported breastfeeding through health legislation and government regulations. One area receiving particular attention is the provision of breastfeeding or lactation rooms in public facilities. Although regulations require public facilities and workplaces to provide lactation spaces, their implementation remains suboptimal, and not

all public facilities currently provide appropriate lactation rooms (Supriyanto *et al*., 2024). Similarly, research involving 12 ministries and government institutions in Indonesia reported that workplace breastfeeding support remained suboptimal (Rosyidah *et al*., 2025). Despite limitations in breastfeeding facilities in public spaces, the government has promoted the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and provided training for breastfeeding counselors to strengthen community support for breastfeeding mothers (Nabilah & Trisnaningtyas, 2024).

Various strategies can be implemented by health authorities to support breastfeeding mothers, including prenatal education, support for breastfeeding communities, training programs, and workplace advocacy for the provision of lactation facilities. Workplace policy advocacy can help address barriers faced by working mothers, particularly limited time and inadequate facilities. Breastfeeding support groups can also provide encouragement and resources for initiating and maintaining breastfeeding. Prenatal education and breastfeeding skills training are recommended to support successful breastfeeding practices (Murti, 2025). Brochures and interactive discussions can also be useful for communicating the benefits of breastfeeding and improving mothers' understanding (Hananta *et al*., 2025). Cathryne *et al*. (2023), for example, reported an increase in breastfeeding knowledge scores from 28.2 to 68.6 following interactive discussion sessions among pregnant women and mothers of infants aged 0–6 months. Professional healthcare providers can additionally provide counseling and support to promote breastfeeding (Olla & Jumetan, 2023).

Pediatricians also play an important role in supporting breastfeeding mothers by promoting breastfeeding as an optimal method of infant nutrition and providing continued support. They can educate pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers (Fewtrell *et al*., 2023; Giubi, 2024), including through digital platforms (Giubi, 2024). Pediatricians can also provide information on breastfeeding techniques and address myths and misconceptions that may discourage breastfeeding (Al Rifai *et al*., 2023; Giubi, 2024). A proactive approach can help address barriers such as maternal employment, inadequate support at home, and community attitudes toward breastfeeding in public (Brzezinki *et al*., 2018; Giubi, 2024).

Pediatricians also have a role in advocating for breastfeeding-friendly policies at local, regional, and national levels, including environments that enable mothers to breastfeed or express breast milk (Fewtrell *et al*., 2023). They can manage illnesses affecting infants while ensuring that nutritional needs are adequately met when breastfeeding challenges occur (Noble & Rosen-Carole, 2022). Pediatricians are also important in identifying and addressing breastfeeding problems during early postpartum visits (Bunik, 2023; Sayres & Visentin, 2018).

Another speaker represented the obstetrics and gynecology perspective. Obstetricians and gynecologists can support breastfeeding by educating mothers about its importance. During pregnancy, they can collaborate with other healthcare professionals to facilitate immediate skin-to-skin contact after birth and encourage breastfeeding initiation within the first hour. Multidisciplinary collaboration can strengthen comprehensive support systems for breastfeeding mothers by addressing both medical and emotional challenges (ACOG, 2018).

The next activity was an educational game facilitated by breastfeeding counselors from Aceh Peduli ASI, as shown in Figure 5. The game included questions about breast milk and breastfeeding. Breastfeeding-related educational games have been used to improve knowledge and promote positive attitudes toward breastfeeding among pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and healthcare professionals. Holanda *et al*. (2020) reported an increase in knowledge from 52.5% to 91.8% following a game-based educational intervention. Games can serve as educational tools for helping mothers understand breastfeeding and related challenges (de Medeiros *et al*., 2023). Educational games may also help address myths and misconceptions about breastfeeding and empower women to adhere to exclusive breastfeeding practices, which is important for child health and the prevention of early weaning (Sardinha *et al*., 2019).

Free health examinations and breastfeeding counseling were also provided during the public awareness program at Harapan Bangsa Stadium, as shown in Figures 5. These services represent important components of maternal and child healthcare. Breastfeeding counseling interventions can positively influence breastfeeding practices and may be provided through face-to-face consultations or telephone-based support for pregnant and breastfeeding women (McFadden *et al*., 2019).




**Figure 5.** (A) Free health examination in collaboration with Labkesmas Aceh and (B) breastfeeding counseling for mothers with infants.

Overall, the public awareness program was successfully implemented through a series of activities aimed at increasing community knowledge and awareness of breastfeeding. Strengthening public awareness of the importance of breastfeeding is essential for promoting the health and well-being of future generations, particularly because breastfeeding awareness and practices may remain suboptimal despite well-established health benefits (Murti, 2025).

## 4. Conclusions

The public awareness program organized by Aceh Peduli ASI at Harapan Bangsa Stadium highlighted the importance of providing adequate support for breastfeeding mothers. The program, which included group exercise, an educational talk show, educational games, breastfeeding counseling, and free health examinations, was successfully conducted with high community participation and approximately 200 participants from Banda Aceh. Support from families, healthcare professionals, and the government plays an important role in promoting successful exclusive breastfeeding practices.

Public awareness activities should not be limited to World Breastfeeding Week but can also be integrated into other health-related events and community programs to continuously promote exclusive breastfeeding. Strong collaboration among healthcare professionals, government institutions, community organizations, and families is needed to create a supportive environment that enables mothers to initiate and continue optimal breastfeeding practices.

## 5. Acknowledgment and Funding Information

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Chairperson of the Aceh Provincial Family Welfare Empowerment Team (TP PKK Aceh), the Head of the Aceh Provincial Health Office, the Head of Kemendukbangga Aceh, the Head of Labkesmas Aceh, the Advisor of Aceh Peduli ASI, and all parties who contributed to the successful implementation of the 2025 World Breastfeeding Week public awareness program.

## 6. Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors also confirm that this manuscript is original and free from plagiarism.

## 7. Author Contribution Statement

All authors contributed equally to the conduct community service project, data analysis, and writing and preparation of this article.

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