

Institute of Midwifery and Reproductive Health

Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly Switzerland

To promote breastfeeding in Switzerland, the breastfeeding-friendly environment is to be assessed using the standardised 'Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly' procedure. Based on the scored benchmarks, actions will be developed that can be implemented in Switzerland.

Background

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months (WHO, online). However, a study by Gross et al. (2014) showed that women in Switzerland only breastfeed exclusively for twelve weeks. This average duration of breastfeeding is well below the international recommendations. In 2020, the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) rated the promotion of breastfeeding in Switzerland as in need of development, as policy measures and programmes only scored 48 out of a possible 100 points (WBTi, 2020). These results highlight the urgent need for action to improve the breastfeeding environment and practices. A comprehensive systematic analysis of the breastfeeding environment in Switzerland is required to develop and implement targeted measures for the sustainable promotion of breastfeeding.

Aims

The aims of the Becoming Breastfeeding Friendly (BBF) Switzerland project are to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the breastfeeding-friendly

environment in Switzerland and to develop recommendations and processes for the expansion of breastfeeding strategies and programmes. In the long term, concrete measures are to be derived to sustainably increase the breastfeeding rate in Switzerland.

Project management

Prof. Dr. Susanne Grylka, Institute of Midwifery and Reproductive Health

Project team

- Carola Baumgartner, MSc Midwifery, Research Associate
- Aline Seeger, MSc Midwifery, Research Associate

Project partner and administration

Family Larsson und Rosenquist Foundation

Project duration

01.03.2025 – 28.02.2026

Project funding

Family Larsson und Rosenquist Foundation

Project state

Ongoing

Method and procedure

Under the scientific management of the ZHAW, as well as administrative and financial support from the Family Larsson Rosenquist Foundation, this project is being implemented in Switzerland for the first time. The BBF initiative was developed by Yale University with the aim of enabling a global scaling-up of breastfeeding support. The assessment is based on eight gears:

- Advocacy
- Political Will
- Legislation & Policies
- Funding & Resources
- Training & Program Delivery
- Promotion
- Research & Evaluation
- Coordination, Goals & Monitoring

Benchmarks in these categories are evaluated by experts in a total of three meetings. In two further sessions, targeted measures to promote breastfeeding in Switzerland will be developed. A literature and document analysis as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews will be conducted to collect data.

Benefits

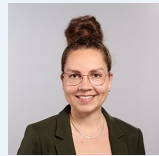
This study analyses the breastfeeding environment in Switzerland. Based on the recommendations of the expert panel, targeted measures can be implemented to promote breastfeeding. In the long term, this could contribute to an increase in the average duration of breastfeeding for women in Switzerland.



Prof. Dr. Susanne Grylka, MSc Midwifery, PhD Epidemiology as well as Breastfeeding and Lactation Consultant IBCLC has been working as a project leader in the research team at the Institute of Midwifery and Reproductive Health since 2016. Her main areas of research and interest are care during pregnancy, labour and birth, the onset of labour and early labour, breastfeeding and postpartum quality of life.



Carola Baumgartner, MSc Midwifery, has been supporting women and families during pregnancy and labour since completing her BSc in Midwifery in 2019. She graduated her Master of Science at the ZHAW in 2023. She worked as a midwifery expert and was responsible for key figures and larger projects. She has been supporting the ZHAW as a research associate since March 2025.



Aline Seeger, MSc Midwifery, accompanies expectant parents during labour, the postpartum period and the early days at home. As a research associate at the ZHAW, she teaches on the bachelor's degree program with a focus on the physiology of birth and the postpartum period. She therefore encounters the topic of breastfeeding in practice and teaching. With the BBF Switzerland research project, she is committed to a breastfeeding-friendly Switzerland.

Contact

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