



The WBW 2002 campaign aimed to reinstate breastfeeding as an integral part of women's reproductive cycle and health, and to create awareness of women's right to humane and non-interventive birthing practices. It recognised that women's reproductive continuum includes pregnancy and childbirth, before breastfeeding and care. As such, how a woman is treated at pregnancy and at birth, particularly her birthing experience, has a direct influence on the successful initiation of breastfeeding or not. With the leadership of senior midwife Mary Kroeger at the helm of the Health Care Practices Task Force at the time, and subsequently her Task Force co-coordinator, Rae Davies, WABA carried a strong message about the link between birth practices and breastfeeding.



*Labour and birth practices also impact breastfeeding. Solid scientific evidence shows that returning to birth practices that preserve normalcy can accomplish many things: faster, easier births; healthier, more active and alert mothers and newborns; and mother-baby pairs physiologically optimally ready to breastfeed.*

*Advocate for the mother-baby continuum by taking the stand that breastfeeding cannot be the 'physiologic norm' without including 'physiologic childbirth' and immediate and uninterrupted mother-baby contact.*

*– The late Mary Kroeger in her book: Impact of Birthing Practices on Breastfeeding*



*Interventions during childbirth and immediately after birth can interfere with bonding, mothering and optimal initiation of breastfeeding. Prolonged labour, use of instruments during delivery, episiotomies and pain medications are factors associated with breastfeeding difficulties. There is a direct link between birthing practices and breastfeeding. Evidence has shown that interventions during birthing interfere with successful breastfeeding.*

*– Rae Davies, former Health Care Practices Task Force Co-coordinator*

Mary Kroeger's work focused on increasing attention on the mother in the BFHI's *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding*. She specifically discussed how caring for the mother's health and well-being in the Step 4 of the BFHI would contribute to the success of this important step. The work of the health Care Practices Task Force