

turn out of many young enthusiastic professionals. Melissa Popp, the workshop coordinator and national coordinator of RUMBA Guatemala, opened the day with a superb detailed account of RUMBA's history and plans for the future. My presentation followed two excellent presentations: Viana Maza, a La Leche League Leader and WABA YOUth member, and a psychologist who presented the benefits of natural childbirth and breastfeeding from the emotional and physiological point of view. Mariana de Peterson, also a La Leche League Leader and IBCLC, presented on breastfeeding basics and kangaroo care.

Presenting on the IMBCI was timely and important for the participants to confirm that they are addressing key issues in maternal and infant health in Guatemala. The group reported a Caesarean rate of up to 90% in private hospitals. This equates to interventions during childbirth, complications from major abdominal surgery, and care that is not sensitive to the mother and baby dyad which impacts breastfeeding negatively. This young well-educated group learned vital information that will impact decisions they will be making when they begin their own families. Most importantly they are the voice of young people and they will educate their peers.

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



It is interesting and heartwarming that the WABA YOUth, more sensitised about gender issues, see women's empowerment and their right to decide on what's best for themselves and their babies as central to breastfeeding promotion.

Over the years and with the experience of working with mothers, I've been looking at the close relationship between breastfeeding and childbirth. I even think that it goes far beyond that and is related to pregnancy and the awareness that people have about caring for themselves, their relationship with their bodies, and how all this links to their decisions and the way in which they carry out those decisions.

When I started working on maternity issues, I did it mainly from a breastfeeding perspective, supporting breastfeeding mothers as what my mother had done. However, over the years I began to realise the difficulties that mothers face, and that it was not as simple as saying that "breastfeeding is the best". So I entered the world of childbirth and did a Masters in public health where my two passions were integrated – childbirth and psychology. I could approach the lives of women and really see how they feel during childbirth, and how the WHO recommendations for natural birth were experienced on a personal level. I also then immersed myself in the world of doulas to support women during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. Here, I began to realise that when women have information, support for their own empowerment