

MOTHER'S MILK: THE ORIGINAL FOOD PHOTO ESSAY

DIGGING IN: FACILITATING DIALOGUE AND ACTION

KEY THEMES AND TERMS

Iroquois (Haudenosaunee), food sovereignty, breastfeeding, proper latch, community health clinics, mastitis, *rebozo*, body image, Cesarean birth, natural childbirth, formula, midwives, medicinal plants.

CATALYZING CONNECTIONS

DECODING QUESTIONS

- *Description*: What stories are told? How did you feel reading them?
- *Personal Connection*: How can you connect these stories to your personal experience or stories in your family?
- *Common Themes*: What social issues/themes are raised in these stories? Is there a common issue shared across contexts?
- *Social Analysis*: What are the historical and social processes that created these situations?
- *Planning for Action*: What can be done? How does this inspire me to change my actions?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- Read the five breastfeeding stories. Which ones are the closest to experiences in your family or culture?
- What are some of the obstacles these women face in their desire to breastfeed their babies?
- What kinds of support are needed for women who want to breastfeed?
- How is breastfeeding encouraged or discouraged in your family or community?
- What economic and political interests are influencing the five women's decisions about breastfeeding?

INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

- What are some of the differences in culture and class represented in these stories?
- What does Chandra mean when she says mother's milk is like cosmic food?
- Why does Chandra consider breastfeeding her daughter an act of food sovereignty?
- What kinds of support did Anna get to be able to breastfeed successfully?

- What can we learn, as Anna's children do, about mothering and nourishment from the farm animals?
- What attitudes were at play among people who criticized Hilda's breastfeeding in urban Mexico?
- What values kept Hilda committed to breastfeeding even in the face of opposition from her family and friends?
- How did the attitudes toward breastfeeding shift over time in the autonomous P'urépecha community where Maria and her daughter Serena live? What are the forces that have discouraged breastfeeding and encouraged the use of formula in this community?
- How does the experience of Mexican migrant workers in the U.S. influence attitudes and practices of breastfeeding?

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Interview family members about their breastfeeding histories and experiences. What obstacles have they confronted and supports have they benefited from?

Research some of the historical boycotts against Nestle and its **promotion of baby formula** as well as current campaigns against their control of water rights and bottled water.

Despite strict **WHO guidelines**, Nestle - the world's largest food and beverage corporation with over 2000 brands and \$91.9 billion in sales in 2018 - has come under fire for price-fixing, violating water rights in times of drought, and aggressively marketing baby formula in developing countries. Nestle spent \$1.5 million on federal lobbying in 2018. The Swiss multinational corporation operates in 190 countries and houses dominant international brands including Nescafe, Gerber, Purina pet foods, Dreyer's ice cream, and several candy brands like KitKat and Toll House.

DIGGING DEEPER: RESOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND ACTION

BOOKS & ARTICLES

L'Ecuyer, Danielle. (n.d). *Breastfeeding versus formula: Which is best for your baby?* Health Prep.

Open Markets. (2019, March 29). *Open Market publishes first major policy paper tackling America's agricultural monopoly problem.* Open Markets Institute.

PAHO, Panamerican Health Organization/World Health Organization. (N.d). *Mexico declares breastfeeding a top health priority.* PAHO.

Quinn, Patrick. (2020, April 27). *Formula for death.* The Urge to Help.

Moffitt, P., Lakhani, S.A., & Cruz, S. (2018). *Infant feeding teachings from Indigenous grandmothers: Generating knowledge through sharing circles.* In Exner-Pirot, H., B. Norbye and L. Butler (Eds.), *Northern and Indigenous Health and Health Care.* University of Saskatchewan.

ORGANIZATIONS & WEBSITES

- [WHO - Breastfeeding](#)
- [AAP - Breastfeeding](#)
- [La Leche League International](#)