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| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **EDN Meeting in Portugal**  [[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3539e571489233d8470e30cf4/images/4056c96a-7bdd-4156-b0e7-18a1410bd25b.jpeg](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=fb7c52ae20&e=d0225b3a42)](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=fb7c52ae20&e=d0225b3a42)EDN members and a few guests gathered in August 2014 in Faro, Portugal. The meeting was organised by Doulas De Portugal, in particular Ana and Maria. In two and a half days we experienced a fine mixture of discussions and sharing knowledge on the doula calling, connecting and informing each other about situations that each country is facing with her doulas, as well as supporting on personal healing, through rituals, body work and singing. Our meeting was further enhanced by the beautiful natural surrounding that the organisers had chosen (www.montemariposa.pt) and the lovingly and carefully home-grown and home-cooked food offered by our hosts. The invaluable, sensitive and discreet support from the wonderful fathers taking care of the doulas’ children also made our meeting run smoothly. Thank you all!!  **Get logged in on our website and read** [the complete minutes](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=d51ef982af&e=d0225b3a42)**.**    **The new faces in the EDN office**  Regula Brunner stepped back from the EDN office. We welcome two new, motivated women in the EDN office.   https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3539e571489233d8470e30cf4/images/71a020ff-258d-4e07-924c-cfbaa0f53b1d.jpg**Lisa Sykes** completed her first doula preparation course in October 2010. Since then her passion for working with families in the childbearing year has only continued to grow.  She has attended almost 50 births, from homebirths to planned cesarean sections and supported many more parents through her 'Birth Positively' preparation classes. Lisa has held key volunteer roles within Doula UK including administering the Access Fund which enables families to access a doula who may not otherwise have the financial means to.  Prior to focusing on being a mother and doula her working background was in Systems Development and Data Analysis in private business and public education.  Lisa, her husband and 3 children moved to Morges in Switzerland from Yorkshire in the North of England during summer 2014 In the EDN, Lisa is looking after the website, the facebook page and will be networking. Contact: [lisasykes@aol.com](mailto:lisasykes@aol.com?subject=%5Bedn%5D)    https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3539e571489233d8470e30cf4/images/e431bab9-3a1f-46b3-b482-f83e3eb2bcdb.jpg**Awital Zingg-Bollag** is a childbirth educator, postpartum doula and health coach. She is mother of three wonderful children. Her roots lie in Zurich, Switzerland, but she also considers home to be in the US and Finland where she lived for 5 and 4 years respectively. She is not only interested in different cultures, one other passion is training the body and mind to work as one. She studied dance in Zurich, and then received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance and Exercise Science (B.A.) in Florida. Dance and yoga were – and still are – a very important part of her life. However, she had no idea she would end up teaching women to prepare for childbirth when she graduated. The inspiration to choose a different career path came to her after the birth of her first two children. These experiences literally changed her life, in more ways than one. She came across a totally different approach to birthing using HypnoBirthing® techniques and tools. By practicing these techniques, all three births of her were almost pain-free and the most incredible experiences of her life. Awital trained as a Hypnobirthing® Practitioner and Postpartum Doula. Since proper nutrition is so important in keeping your mind and body healthy during pregnancy and after birth for you and your baby, she completed a one year course from the [Institute for Integrative Nutrition](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=47a74479af&e=d0225b3a42) in September 2014 and currently devotes time in teaching health and nutrition in her childbirth classes. Awital will be mainly looking after the EDN finances. Contact: [info@mygentleborn.com](mailto:info@mygentleborn.com?subject=%5Bedn%5D)  **[EDN on Facebook](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=93852beda1&e=d0225b3a42" \t "_blank)**  Facebook is a wonderful way to connect across Europe and indeed the world both personally and professionally. Social media is an important means of communicating and raising awareness of the work of doulas and EDN want to help members to reach as big an audience as possible.   [If you don’t already ‘like’ our page please head over!](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=11f9c90e10&e=d0225b3a42)We would also encourage you to share your training dates and events on the page so that we can share them with our followers.  **Anything you want to shout about - let us know!**[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3539e571489233d8470e30cf4/images/845f9ae0-7d64-4560-b70c-caf196e13eae.png](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=15463cb97c&e=d0225b3a42)    **Microbirth, a look at the screening in Geneva**  **by Shannon Keith, doula**  https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3539e571489233d8470e30cf4/images/d61876f3-db38-42d8-9aef-bd0d31f36c70.jpg"We are in the midst of the largest experiment in human history."  The tagline for the new documentary film "MicroBirth" is certainly intriguing, and raises many questions.  What is the experiment?  How does it relate to birth?  Why is the scale of this experiment so impressively large?  Can we trust the source of this quotation, and the information behind it?  And, finally, is it true? MicroBirth was created by the British couple behind the organization called One World Birth, Toni Harman and Alex Wakeford.  Their passion and goal-to change the world by using media to advocate for positive changes in today's birth culture-is based on the fundamental human right to have control over one's own body, and the fact that this right is widely abused.  MicroBirth is one film in a planned series of seven, encompassing many aspects of modern birth around the globe.   MicroBirth was premiered on over 300 screens around the world on September 20, 2014, including in one of the tiny, neat theatres in the Grütli Cinema in Geneva, Switzerland.  Elena Piantino, a doula and progressive birth activist, based in Nyon, Switzerland, organized this event motivated by her own passion for change in birth.  "I didn't want to just preach to the choir!" she quipped, referencing the discussion of this change amongst those who already believe it to be vitally necessary.  "I wanted to put the evidence in front of laypeople's eyes, and let them decide for themselves."  And she did.  65 interested parents, parents-to-be, non-medical professionals, and those just intrigued by the subject of the film, as well as a handful of local scientists, doulas, midwives, and those working in birth-related specialties, all flocked to the screening, and most remained behind afterward for a lively hour-long discussion of the topics into which the film delved. Opinions and personal stories were shared, and it was clear that the spark of informed debate had been ignited. So, what is the experiment referred to in the tagline?  Scientists on the cutting edge of microbiology, the branch of science dealing with microorganisms, are gathering a growing body of evidence to support the hypothesis that a newborn's system is "seeded" with the mother's benign bacterial cultures during an uneventful, unmanaged vaginal birth, and that these cultures are critical to the normal development of the baby's immune system.  The dramatic increase of high-intervention births, especially Cesarean sections (birth through abdominal surgery) coupled with the decrease in opportunity for prolonged mother/baby skin-to-skin contact (as through extended breastfeeding) means babies are not exposed, or have reduced exposure, to these vital bacteria.  This compromises the babies' immune systems and makes them more susceptible to illness and disease over both the short- and long-term.  These scientists believe that our declining health as a global population, as evidenced by the shocking increase in killers like heart disease, cancer, asthma, diabetes, and other obesity-related illness, can be partially attributed to microscopic events during childbirth. The implications for our modern world are impossible to ignore, particularly in the face of the rising cost of health care in developed nations, the difficulties of accessing health care in undeveloped nations, and the normalization of managed, medicalized, "high-tech" birth.  "If how we are born affects our chances of long-term health," states one physician interviewed in the film, "we need to seize this opportunity to actually turn the course of human health."  MicroBirth, full of vivid imagery, accessible language, easy-to-grasp concepts, and interviews with leading research scientists, medical doctors, and other health care professionals, is a truly compelling-and unsettling-documentary. Time and further research will prove whether the hypotheses described within are true.  If you choose to watch it, keep in mind that over 28,000 babies will be born during your 110 minutes of viewing time.  How those babies are born, on a microscopic level, may dramatically affect the well-being of the human population on the planet we share. *Shannon Keith is an American expat doula, living for the last 15 years near Geneva, Switzerland, with her husband and two young sons.  She considers motherhood and being invited into the sacred space of birthing women to be the two greatest privileges in her life.  She is a singer, collects children's literature and wild mushrooms, is a passionate advocate of progressive change in birth, and believes in both God and Darwin.*      **Birthlight Conference, 13th September 2014 in Cambridge**  **by Kicki Hansard**  L-R Kicki Hansard, Sheena Byrom and Lesley PageI had the pleasure of speaking at the [Birthlight Conference](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=2d6658c06e&e=d0225b3a42) in Cambridge and I got to share the stage with some very inspirational women.  The theme of the day was “Creating community around birth: communication that makes a difference” and each speaker contributed with some wonderful studies, thoughts and experiences with an audience of around 70 birth workers. After Francoise Freedman, founder of Birthlight, opened the conference, Alison Baum from [Best Beginnings](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=d7def84414&e=d0225b3a42)spoke about her journey of becoming involved in supporting new parents as they embark on motherhood.  There are some wonderful resources on their website and they have just released a brand new app for parents called Baby Buddy and I know they would love some feedback on the functions from both parents and birth workers.  You can download the app [here](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=679c76649b&e=d0225b3a42). Emma Eaton, a PhD student from Canada shared with us the research that she has done into [“What’s a good birth?”](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=88b438036a&e=d0225b3a42) The study was carried out here in the UK and it has some very interesting findings, most of which were no surprise to the audience.  There seems to be a mismatched between what women think is a 'good birth' and what health professionals classify as 'good'. Next on stage was [Sheena Byrom](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=66eb712626&e=d0225b3a42), a midwife who over her long career has been involved in changing and improving births for mothers, families and the birth professionals themselves. Sheena shared with us how she used to work as a newly qualified midwife and how things have improved with being able to use research and evidenced based practices when working with women.   After a short break, we heard from Obstetrician [Amali Lokugamage](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=1534d2640b&e=d0225b3a42) and she presented the research that her and her colleagues did about [how evidence based](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=0914e1012b&e=d0225b3a42) the RCOG’s guidelines are and the findings shocked some of the audience.  Only 9%-12% of their guidelines are based on grade A evidence which leaves the majority of guidelines based on what is believed to be best rather than some solid research behind it. It was lovely to next see [Lesley Page,](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=77cd672a28&e=d0225b3a42) the President of the RCM who told us about her recent travels and her delight in seeing the new cohorts of midwives coming through, full of enthusiasm and with a view to work differently and more like the true meaning of the old English word *midwif,* with woman. We stopped here after a brief discussion for lunch and then, as a debutant, it was my turn to talk about [Compassionate Communication](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=ed7878c8a1&e=d0225b3a42).  What I was hoping to get across was that it is within the women themselves that the change has to begin, with the support of doulas, yoga teachers and all other birth workers.  Our role, I feel, is to help the women find their own voice and get confident enough to take responsibility for their own way of birthing and parenting.  Birth workers also need to be mindful of their use of words and language so that they connect empathetically with a woman’s needs.   [Emily Hills](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=a3767269d8&e=d0225b3a42)gave us a real insight into the experiences of a premature baby and how together with the team at Barnet Hospital, she’s been able to make some important changes to improve the way preemies and their families are supported and cared for. This was followed by Joanna Hawthorne from the [Brazelton Centre](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=7e24b56d0f&e=d0225b3a42) who informed us about courses and workshops for birth workers and parents to learn to read their baby's cues and behaviour.  The more awareness we have of babies' behaviour from birth, the better we can meet their needs and communicate with them, increasing bonding and long term health of the whole family. All the way from Australia, we had [Elly Taylor](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=ec7e8665cc&e=d0225b3a42) who is a Relationship Counsellor and she spoke about her new book [Becoming Us](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=07544d5fa6&e=d0225b3a42) and how communication between new parents can be difficult and the huge impact having a baby has on a woman’s life.  An [interesting study](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=3be316e105&e=d0225b3a42) that she mentioned was the findings earlier this year that many women suffer postnatal depression when their child is 4 years old. The day was ended with an interactive session with [David Savva](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=c5d7f5a5f3&e=d0225b3a42) where he gave us some ideas on how to make friends with the camera when you are being filmed.  Communicating messages through films and social media, we all agreed, seems to be the way to connect all the birth workers and women in the world who wants to make a difference! It was a very informative day and a great opportunity for networking and creating new friendships.  A conference with some great speakers at a very reasonable price.  I think if you didn't attend this year, you should definitely look out for the Birthlight conference next year, usually held in September!   Thank you Francoise for inviting me! *Kicki Hansard is a birth and postnatal doula who was born in Swedish Lapland but she lives and works in England.  Kicki is also a doula course facilitator and her company,* [*BirthBliss*](http://european-doula-network.us2.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=3539e571489233d8470e30cf4&id=4254544b62&e=d0225b3a42) *regularly organise workshops and conferences for birth workers.  BirthBliss is a member of the EDN.*  **Meeting 2015: UK**    **The next EDN Meeting will take place in the UK.**  https://gallery.mailchimp.com/3539e571489233d8470e30cf4/images/aa7acb0b-e562-4a37-86e7-a6ff0d80b16d.jpgDates: **September 25th-27th 2015** [**Please let Bridget know a.s.a.p.**](mailto:bridgetbaker@blueyonder.co.uk?subject=%5Bedn%5D%20participation%20at%20the%202015%20meeting) if you are thinking of participating in order to allow her organise the venue [Write to Bridget!](mailto:bridgetbaker@blueyonder.co.uk)  We wish you all the best on your doula path! **EDN office** Sabine, Ana, Lisa and Awital | | | | |