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Given my personal experience I feel that Breastfeeding information is something that mothers with an inquiring mind can currently access with great results for their babies and families.

But what about those in the community who are "information-poor"?

I live in a community where I still hear mythology about breastfeeding. I also see amongst socio-economic groups such as teenage mothers and urban dwelling indigenous communities a gap in information flow and support for breastfeeding that would ultimately benefit them in aspects of health & nutrition, and also economically. An example being that breastfed infants have fewer incidents of sicknesses that impact upon the individual's household income and on a larger scale the nation's health system.

Unfortunately the manufacturers of artificial milk substitutes still allude to mothers through their marketing. Another example being my recollection as a first time mother in assuming that I had to use these products and wean my baby at 12 months because the posters and products in the supermarkets baby aisle gave me that impression.

It is critical that those of influence such as health care providers have an up to date and accurate knowledge base. These people are quite often the only point of contact for breastfeeding mothers and it disturbs me when I witness outdated information being filtered to the community through them. It also disturbs me to see that they are still influenced by Artificial milk substitute manufacturers. Recently I witnessed first hand, artificial milk samples and literature being given and taken by Child Health Nurses. This is blatant ignorance of MAIF agreements and indicated to me that the agreement needs legislating to give it any impact.

The information poor require further assistance and education in breastfeeding because in the long term it has the potential to lift and improve the standard and quality of life. Babies born into lower socio-economic circumstances who are breastfed will be healthier and smarter which in short flows onto other social and economic outcomes.

In the interests of the future generations and I fully support the government conducting an inquiry into breastfeeding with a view to reaching solutions that will address this information gap.

Donna Goodlet - Mother of four breastfed children