



**Breastfeeding: where healthy and sustainable food systems begin**  
**A webinar / dialogue event**

<b>Date</b>	September 9, 2021
<b>Time</b>	10:00 am GMT or equivalent to: 06:00 am EDT (New York), 11:00 am BST (London), 12:00 noon CEST (Geneva/Rome), 03:30 pm IST (Delhi), 05:00 pm WIB (Bangkok), 07:00 pm AEST (Canberra)
<b>Lead organizers</b>	ANU Gender institute, ANU Institute for Climate, Energy & Disaster Solutions, Global IBFAN, IBFAN Asia, Australian Breastfeeding Association, WBTI Australia, Alive & Thrive Southeast Asia
<b>Convenors</b>	Alessandro Iellamo (Independent consultant/MIYCN specialist), Julie Smith (Australian National University), Bindi Borg (Independent IYCF specialist), Phillip Baker (Deakin University)
<b>Participants</b>	Breastfeeding and food systems specialists, advocates and policy-makers. Representatives from women’s groups and grassroots organizations This event excludes participants from the manufacturers and distributors of foods marketed for infants and young children aged 0-36 months, including commercial milk formulas, bottles and teats.
<b>Link to register</b>	All participants are requested to register their affiliation and declare conflicts of interest on registration.

**Background**

Today’s food systems are contributing to several intersecting health and ecological crises of global concern. Recognising this, many are now calling for transformative, and some even say radical, food systems change. The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) seeks to ‘transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food’. However many scientists and civil society networks are questioning what this will mean for in reality and where the mother-child breastfeeding dyad, breastmilk, and the rights of mothers and children, will fit within the food systems transformation agenda. This Dialogue will show how and why breastfeeding – as the biological norm for feeding human infants and children – is where healthy and sustainable food systems ultimately begin.



The objectives are to:

1. Bring together food systems, food security and nutrition advocates, women's groups, community support groups, environmentalists, human rights and other specialists and policy-makers to share transformative ideas and positions on breastfeeding as foundational to sustainable food systems thinking and action, with the right to breastfeed as a guiding principle.
2. Increase awareness and understanding of the pivotal role of breastfeeding as a sustainable, localised and normative food system for delivering food security and nutrition that is universally available and accessible, optimises nutrition and health outcomes, supports resilience during crisis through local and diverse supply chains, and gives agency to mothers and children.
3. Build alliances and discuss the importance of aligning actions to protect, promote and support breastfeeding across the five Action Tracks of the UNFSS, considering a) the strengths, opportunities, risks and challenges of framing breastfeeding in terms of food systems, and b) identifying strategies to ensure breastfeeding, breastmilk and the rights of mothers and children, are integral to future food systems thinking, research and action.

The starting position for this Dialogue is that the mother-child breastfeeding dyad is the world's most remarkable 'first-food system' in and of itself, though largely invisible and unprotected within current food systems action. This omission is remarkable, given the dyad delivers safe and personalised nutrition, and an array of biological factors necessary for the health and development of the child, and the reproductive health of women everywhere. Breastfeeding prevents many thousands of deaths of children and women around the world. Breastfeeding is not only highly sustainable, but also avoids the health and environmental harms associated with commercial milk formulas, an ultra-processed food.

This Dialogue brings together food and nutrition experts, women's and community groups, advocates and decision makers, to reflect and exchange ideas and perspectives on applying a comprehensive and whole-of-systems approach to integrating breastfeeding into food systems thinking, research and action. One that puts breastfeeding and the rights of mothers and children as foundational to any sustainable food system, and in doing so, identifies the most powerful levers for generating systems-wide change.



## Agenda

Time (minutes)	Title	Speaker
0-5	Welcome	Julie Smith
5-15	Opening remarks.	Penny Van Esterik
<b>Presentations</b>		
10-25	<b>Sustainable first-food systems:</b> Introducing food systems thinking and the transformation agenda, where the breastfeeding dyad fits in, and the rise of commercial milk formulas and ultra-processed foods.	Phillip Baker
25-40	<b>Breastfeeding and environmental sustainability:</b> Why breastfeeding is good for the environment, as opposed to the environmental harms of commercial milk formulas.	Arun Gupta
40-55	<b>Breastfeeding economics and 'lost milk':</b> making the work of breastfeeding visible and valued in food systems, to realise the rights of women and children to the best possible nutrition and health.	Julie Smith
55-70	<b>Breastfeeding and resilient food systems:</b> What support is needed by women as primary caregivers and breastfeeding mothers to contribute to resilience against vulnerabilities, shocks and disasters.	Vandana Prasad
<b>Facilitated group dialogues</b>		
70-75	<b>Introduction to group dialogues</b>	
75-155	<b>Breakout groups</b>	12-15 per group
155-175	Reports from breakout groups (20 minutes)	
175-180	Closing remarks and next steps	

## Contact the organizer

1. Alessandro Iellamo: [alessandro.iellamo@gmail.com](mailto:alessandro.iellamo@gmail.com) ; and
2. Dr Julie Smith: [Julie.Smith@anu.edu.au](mailto:Julie.Smith@anu.edu.au)



### Registration:

- You are invited to a Zoom meeting.
- When: Sep 9, 2021 07:00 PM Brisbane

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://anu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEkcOCqrz8iHtCw1k8ZgJEBH7kMylgCoSyH>

- After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.