AIMS For a better birth...

UN Population Award 2016

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Congratulations are due to the Polish 'Childbirth with Dignity Foundation' whose representatives, Ania Zdral and Joanna Pietrusiewicz travelled to New York to receive this prestigious award from the United Nations Secretary General. The award was in recognition of their campaigns and advocacy work over the last twenty years to inform and empower and campaign about the treatment of women in Polish hospitals.

The Foundation created the web portal www.gdzierodzic.info (where to give birth info), which helps pregnant women to choose the best obstetric ward or hospital (there's the search engine of all 404 obstetric wards and hospitals in Poland) and find answers to their questions about pregnancy, labour and maternity care (many articles, new outcomes and statistics). Because of the portal some obstetric units are changing, doctors, midwives and decision makers read the parents' comments about them and compared that with other hospitals.

The Foundation was, along with AIMS, among the founding members of the European Network of Childbirth Associations. ENCA was founded in 1993 by the Society for Childbirth Education (GfG) and held its first annual conference in Frankfurt, Germany. ENCA's purpose is to gather together representatives of lay organisations from as many European countries as possible to exchange ideas and information and support those who are trying to change maternity care for the better.



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Photo, from left to right, Jan Eliasson, former Deputy Secretary-general of The United

Nations, Ania Zdral, Coordinator of Training and Conference in Childbirthwith Dignity Foundation, Dr Babatunde Osotimehin Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The Polish members were very excited when Beverley Beech showed them a copy of Sheila Kitzinger's book 'The Good Hospital Guide', which came about as a result of a past Secretary Ann Taylor suggesting that, like the Good Beer Guide, we ought to have a Good Hospitals Guide. AIMS had no money to work on it, but Sheila asked if AIMS would be happy for her to work on this idea. The committee enthusiastically agreed. The Polish women, however, were concerned that they could not challenge medical interventions, and came up with the brilliant idea of a questionnaire that would indicate how well the women were treated in the hospitals and awarded hearts to those with the best outcomes. Over 8,000 women from all over Poland responded and as the years have passed the Foundation has challenged obstetric practices and empowered the women to demand better care. The United Nations' recognition of their work is well deserved.

Ania Zdral



photo, from left to right, Joanna Pietrusiewicz, president of Childbirth with Dignity Foundation, Agata Duda, Płonka, First Secretary at Permanent Representation of Poland to the UN, Ania Zdral.