

MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS

**Individual Fellowships (IF)**  
**Call: H2020-MSCA-IF-2017**

Project title

**Controversies in Childbirth: from Epistemology to Practices**

Project Acronym

**VOICES**

Project Number

**787646**

## RESEARCHER

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## PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Participating organisations	Legal Entity Short Name	Academic	Non-academic	Country	Dept./ Division / Laboratory	Supervisor
<b>Beneficiary / Host Institution</b>						
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD	Oxford	✓		UK	Faculty of Philosophy	Prof. K.W.M. Fulford
<b>Partner Organisations / Secondments</b>						
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE	UCLan	✓		UK	School of Community Health and Midwifery	Prof. Soo Downe
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON	UoS	✓		UK	Department of Philosophy	Dr. Elselijn Kingma

## 1. SUMMARY

### 1.1 WHAT IS THE PROBLEM/ISSUE BEING ADDRESSED?

The project “Controversies in Childbirth: from Epistemology to Practices (VOICES)” addresses some current debates on birth from engaged philosophy and medical humanities. It applies the epistemological view of controversies to the values embedded

in decision-making in the field aiming at developing a particular section of values-based practice to be used in a variety of clinical contexts around childbirth.

VOICES is directed to individuals and organizations representing the three key stakeholder groups involved: users, professionals, and policymakers.

Most current obstetric debates should be seen as controversies in the following technical sense: they reflect deep disagreements in factual, methodological, or conceptual matters. Interpreting obstetric debates as controversies is a key element in changing medical practices. VOICES will advance scientific knowledge in this area using the realist research frameworks of situated epistemology and values-based practice of what works, for whom, and in what circumstances. The project searches for applied and measurable consequences of critical epistemology on childbirth.

Obstetric controversies are a perfect experimental space for evaluating the gender, epistemic, and evaluative biases that are present in dominant discourses on childbirth.

The research assesses the emancipatory interest displayed in obstetric controversies. The kind of knowledge that serves this interest was explored with the use of Wittgenstein's language games, feminist standpoint theory, and epistemology of resistance. Understanding the epistemic basis of emancipatory action is the core motivation of this proposal.

Women throughout Europe are demanding less medicalized care in childbirth that makes fuller use of midwifery skills. Other women request elective cesareans for non-medical reasons. The action addresses the autonomy, agency and multiplicity of women's voices on childbirth; as shown in its acronym, 'VOICES'.

## **1.2 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR SOCIETY?**

The project is (a) a multifaceted analysis, that (b) brings together the three key stakeholder groups involved in today's debate around childbirth, to (c) lay the epistemological foundation for a values-based medical practice in midwifery and obstetrics, and to (d) emphasise the philosophical consequences of the worldview at stake. Birth is not just the delivery of a baby. It is a major emotional, conceptual and social life transition for a woman and for a couple. Obstetrics and midwifery are challenged to take women's voices on childbirth more seriously. Many women throughout Europe are demanding less medicalised care in childbirth that makes fuller use of midwifery skills. Other women request elective caesareans for non-medical reasons. This project addresses the multiplicity of voices on childbirth, their autonomy and agency; as shown in its acronym, 'VOICES'.

Birth controversies are an ideal experimental space for assessing the epistemic, evaluative and gender biases that are present in dominant discourses on childbirth. VOICES analyses the debate on childbirth among scientific/professional organisations, civil/user's associations and policymakers. It supports the implementation of values-based practice to the field of obstetrics and midwifery. It searches for applied and measurable consequences of critical epistemology on childbirth. Exploring the relation between rationality, normativity and praxis in the field of birth uncovers the relation between knowledge, values and certainty. The project will advance knowledge in this area by using the realist research frameworks of situated, embodied and engaged philosophy to

determine what works, for whom and under what circumstances.

### 1.3 WHAT ARE THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES?

**1. To epistemically analyse debates on childbirth.** While most analyses of childbirth are conducted in sociology, anthropology, politics and feminism, there has been very little research from an epistemic perspective. VOICES will benefit from the epistemic theory of controversies, as an innovative perspective that will disclose the evaluative content of debates on childbirth.

**2. To collaborate to develop and launch a values-based practice in childbirth.** While values-based medical practice (VBP, henceforth) has already been advanced in mental health, social care and surgery, there is a notable deficiency of VBP in obstetrics and midwifery. The UK's General Medical Council's values-based approach to consent in obstetrics has been marked by the recent UK Supreme Court decision on consent, the 'Montgomery judgment' (2015). The Montgomery judgment marks a decisive shift in the legal test of duty of care in the context of consent to treatment, from the clinician's interpretation about what would be best for patients to the values of the particular patient concerned in the decision in question. VOICES will work with the VBP team to expand current initiatives in VBP to childbirth care (VBPC, henceforth).

**3. To incorporate birth to the repertoire of philosophically relevant topics.** While there are some publications on the philosophy of birth, they typically tend to focus on ethics or phenomenology. VOICES will tackle a broader inquiry to illustrate the epistemic nature of emancipatory action around childbirth.

VOICES is hosted at the University of Oxford, where Prof. Villarrea works with, (1) the *Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice in Health and Social Care* (Centre for VBP) at St Catherine's College, in partnership with the *Nuffield Departments of Surgical Sciences and Obstetrics*; and (2) the *Women in the Humanities* (WiH) and the *Medical Humanities* Programmes at The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH). Villarrea is seconded to (1) the Research in Childbirth and Health (*ReaCH*) group at the University of Central Lancashire (*UCLan*), and (2) the *ERC Starting Grant BUMP* at *University of Southampton*.

## 2. WORK

### 2.1 SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

1. (2020) Villarrea, S., "Reasoning from the uterus: Casanova, women's agency, and philosophy of birth", *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 36:1.

2. (2020) Villarrea, S. and Kelly, B., "Barriers to establishing shared decision-making in childbirth: Unveiling epistemic stereotypes about women in labour", *Journal of Evaluation of Clinical Practice* 26, 515–519 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/jep.13375>).

3. (2020) Villarrea, S., "When a uterus comes in the door, reason goes out the window", in C. Pickles y J. Herring (eds.), *Women's Birthing Bodies and the Law: Unauthorised Medical Examinations, Power and Vulnerability*, Oxford, Hart Publishing

(<https://www.bloomsburyprofessional.com/uk/womens-birthing-bodies-and-the-law-9781509937578/>).

4. (2021) Villaranea, S., “Philosophy of Birth: from Epistemology to Practices”, *The Project Repository Journal (PRJ)*, European Dissemination Media Agency (EDMA), issue 8, January. (<https://www.europeandissemination.eu/the-project-repository-journal>).
5. (2021) Villaranea, S. (ed.), Special issue/cluster “Philosophy of Birth”, *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 37:1. Work-in-progress.
6. (2018) Villaranea, S., “Razón y útero: el debate ilustrado y la obstetricia contemporánea [Reason and uterus: The debate during the Enlightenment and contemporary obstetrics]”, in J. Borrego y C. Barroso (eds.), *Mujer, cerebro y salud*, Madrid, Síntesis, pp. 141-177, ISBN: 9788491712381. (<https://www.sintesis.com/neurociencias-211/mujer,%20cerebro%20y%20salud-ebook-2610.html>).
7. (2019) Villaranea, S. “¿Cuándo pierde una mujer el derecho a decidir cuándo parir [When does a woman lose her right to decide when to give birth]?”, *El País*, 26 April 2019 ([https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/04/26/mamas\\_papas/1556284551\\_501990.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/04/26/mamas_papas/1556284551_501990.html)).
8. (2020) Olza, I. et al., “Birth as a neuro-psycho-social event: An integrative model of maternal experiences and their relation to neurohormonal events during childbirth”, coauthored, *PLoS ONE* 15 (7): e0230992. (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0230992>).
9. (2020) Uvnas-Möberg, K. et al., “Maternal plasma levels of oxytocin during breastfeeding: A systematic review”, coauthored, *PLoS ONE* 15 (8): e0235806. (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0235806>).

## 2.2 PLENARY / INVITED TALKS

1. “Values in childbirth: from epistemology to practices”, Advanced Research Seminar on Values-based Practice, St Catherine’s College, University of Oxford, 5 December 2018.
2. “Repensando el origen desde las humanidades médicas [Rethinking the origin from medical Humanities]”, Research Seminar in Filosofía del Nacimiento [Philosophy of Birth] (FILNAC/PHILBIRTH), University of Alcalá, Madrid, 22 October 2018.
3. “Socio-philosophical perspectives in maternal care”, in EU BIRTH Conference: “From Health to Birth”, COST Action IS1405 (BIRTH), Lissabon, 17 September 2018.
4. “When the uterus enters the door, reason goes out the window”, Without Consent Seminar: “Vaginal examination during labour”, Exeter College, University of Oxford, 8 February 2019.
5. “Controversies in childbirth”, Wolfson Research Seminar, Wolfson College, University of Oxford, 26 February 2019.
6. “¿Cuándo pierde una mujer el derecho a decidir cómo parir? [When does a woman lose

her right to decide when to give birth?]", II Ciclo Jornadas Abiertas sobre Género, Diversidad sexual y Derecho [II Conference on Gender, Sexual Diversity and the Law], University of León (Spain), 12 May 2019.

7. "Barriers to establishing shared decision-making in obstetrics" (co-presented with Dr. Brenda Kelly), Shared Decision Making: Person-Centred Care & The Values Agenda Conference (SDM-I), University of West London, 26 March 2019.

8. "The tension in the labour room: the law and the practice", Concerning Maternity: Ethics, Care and Subjectivity Conference, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, 7 May 2019.

9. "How to conceptualise the pregnant/laboring subject as a rational subject", Judging Women Workshop, St Anne's College, University of Oxford, 3 May 2019.

10. "A reconstruction of the logos of genos", 1<sup>st</sup> Philosophy of Birth Conference: Rethinking the Origin from Medical Humanities, in association with the research projects ERC Starting Grant BUMP (University of Southampton) and Ministry of Economy of Spain FILNAC/PHILBIRTH (University of Alcalá), University of Alcalá, Madrid, 27 May 2019.

11. "Capacity and autonomy during labour? Unveiling stereotypes in birth", XXVIII World Congress of the International Association of Women Philosophers (IAPh): "2020: Defining the Future, Rethinking the Past", Universität Paderborn, 19-22 July 2020. [Postponed to July 2021, due to Covid-19.]

12. "Unveiling the Stereotype: Capacity and Autonomy during labour?", Women's Health@Oxford, The George Institute for Global Health, University of Oxford, 4 October 2019.

13. "Women's agency and philosophy of birth", Childbirth - A View from the Humanities Conference, Women's and Gender Studies Department, Humanities Faculty, University of Haifa, 5-7 May 2020. [Postponed to May 2021, due to Covid-19.]

14. "¿Cuándo pierde una mujer el derecho a decidir cómo parir? [When does a woman lose her right to decide when to give birth?]", II Ciclo Jornadas Abiertas sobre Género, Diversidad sexual y Derecho [II Conference on Gender, Sexual Diversity and the Law], University of León (Spain), 12 May 2019.

## **2.3 WORKSHOPS**

1. Meeting of the COST Action IS1405 (BIRTH): "Building intrapartum research through health- an interdisciplinary whole system approach to understanding and contextualizing physiological labour and birth", Valetta, Malta, 5-6 November 2018.

## **2.4 CONFERENCES ORGANISATION**

1. President of the 1<sup>st</sup> Philosophy of Birth Conference: Rethinking the Origin from Medical Humanities, University of Alcalá, Madrid, 27 May 2019.

2. President of the International Conference “What Matters to Whom: Getting it Right in Childbirth - An exploratory Seminar in Values-based Practice in Childbirth”, with Ashok Handa, Soo Downe, Brenda Kelly, and Bill Fulford as co-convenors, and the support of The George Institute for Global Health, The Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice at St Catherine’s College and the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Oxford, 18 March 2020. [Postponed to May 2021, due to Covid-19.]

## **2.5 TRAINING AND SPECIALISATION COURSES**

The Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice Research Seminar, St Catherine’s College, University of Oxford, 19 September, 21 November, and 5 December 2018.

- Introduction to Critical Theory, Prof. Alice Crary, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Oxford, January-March 2019.
- iSkills: Finding stuff – scholarly literature for your research, IT Learning Center, IT Services, University of Oxford, 30 January 2019.
- Referencing: Choosing and using software for referencing, IT Learning Center, IT Services, University of Oxford, 12 February 2019.
- Conference “Simon’s Case, Simon’s Story: Delusion as a Case Study in Neuroscience and Values-based Practice” by Prof. Bill Fulford, The Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, 13 March 2019.
- “Patient Values in Clinical Decision Making and VBP Workshop”, Warwick Business School, University of Warwick, Coventry, 11 April 2019.
- “Normal Birth Conference”, Grange Hotel, Grange over Sands, Cumbria, 19, 20, and 21 June 2019.
- “Culture and Value after Wittgenstein”, The Queen’s College, University of Oxford, 30 August-2 September 2019.
- Post Kantian Seminar, University of Oxford, January-March 2020.
- Seminar on Psychoanalysis, “Writing on clitoris”, University of Oxford, 27 January 2020.
- “Autonomy in Medical Consent”, Joanna Demaree-Cotton, Ethox Centre, University of Oxford, 19 February 2020.

## **2.6 PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH PROJECTS**

- Researcher of research project, “Controversies surrounding autonomy and responsibility: A care-ethical study into the mother-midwife relation” (CARE) (854011008), ZonMW-The Netherlands, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, The Netherlands. PI: Dr. Inge van Nistelrooij.
- Principal investigator of research project, “Filosofía del nacimiento: Repensar el origen desde las humanidades médicas [Philosophy of birth: Rethinking the origin

from medical Humanities]” (FFI2016-77755-R), Ministry of Economy of Spain, National Research Programme, University of Alcalá, Madrid.

- Researcher of research project, “Building intrapartum research through health – an interdisciplinary whole system approach to understanding and contextualising physiological labour and birth” (BIRTH), European Concerted Research Action (ISCH COST Action IS1405), University of Central Lancashire, PI: Soo Downe.
- Participant in the Humanities and Healthcare Event, The Oxford Research Center in the Humanities (TORCH), Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, 12 June 2019.

## **2.7 PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH AND INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKS RELEVANT TO THE MSCA ACTION**

- Research Member of Common Room, Wolfson College, University of Oxford.
- Associate Member of Common Room, St Hugh’s College, University of Oxford.
- Member of The Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice in Health and Social Care, St. Catherine’s College, Oxford.
- Member of Marie Curie Alumni Association.
- Member of the Steering Committee and Gender Committee of The International Federation of Philosophical Associations (FISP).
- Founding member and member of the Steering Committee of The International Birth Research and Action Association (IBRAA).
- Member of the Steering Committee of Red española de Filosofía [The Spanish Network of Philosophy] (REF).
- Member of Asociación El Parto es Nuestro [Birth is Ours Association].
- Member of The International Association of Women Philosophers (IAPH).
- Member of Sociedad Académica del Área de Filosofía (SAF) [Academic Society of Philosophy of Spain].

## **2.8 BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES**

- “Stella Villarmeá”, chapter written by Mónica Sardiña on the researcher and her VOICES project, in M. Vázquez and R. Hernández (eds.), *El Mes de las Filósofas [The Month of Women Philosophers] 3*, La Laguna, Universidad de La Laguna, Tenerife, 2020.
- “Stella Villarmeá”, entry prepared by Mónica Sardiña on the researcher and her VOICES project for the University of La Laguna Blog, 19 March 2020. (<https://filosofiaull.blogspot.com/2020/03/19-de-marzo-stella-villarmeá-mónica.html>.)



- “Presence and segregation of women in academia in Philosophy, Annual meeting of the Sociedad Académica de Filosofía [Academic Society of Philosophy of Spain] (SAF), Madrid, 14 January 2020.

## 2.9 WEBSITES AND BLOGS

- Design and development of PHILBIRTH – Philosophy of Birth Blog and web site, with information and entries on topics related to the project, in English and Spanish. (<https://philbirth.wordpress.com/> and <https://filnac.wordpress.com/>.)
- Design and development of “FILNAC: Micro-píldoras de pensamiento [PHILBIRTH: Micro-pills of Thought]” series, within El Parto es Nuestro [Birth is Ours] Association Blog.

## 2.10 COMMUNICATION

- President of the International Conference “What Matters to Whom: Getting it Right in Childbirth - An exploratory Seminar in Values-based Practice in Childbirth”, with Ashok Handa, Soo Downe, Brenda Kelly, and Bill Fulford as co-convenors, and the support of The George Institute for Global Health, The Collaborating Centre for Values-based Practice at St Catherine’s College and the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Oxford, 18 March 2020. [Postponed to May 2021, due to Covid-19.]
- Article in press, “¿Cuándo pierde una mujer el derecho a decidir cuándo parir [When does a woman lose her right to decide when to give birth]?”, *El País*, 26 April 2019. ([https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/04/26/mamas\\_papas/1556284551\\_501990.html](https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/04/26/mamas_papas/1556284551_501990.html).)
- Blog entry “Innecesárea [Un-necesarean]”, in PHILBIRTH: Micro-pills of Thought series, El Parto es Nuestro Blog, 17 January 2020. (<https://www.elpartoesnuestro.es/blog/2020/01/17/innecesarea>.)
- Blog entry “Nativity in Hannah Arendt”, in PHILBIRTH: Micro-pills of thought series, El Parto es Nuestro Blog, 19 December 2019. (<https://www.elpartoesnuestro.es/blog/2019/12/19/natalidad-en-hannah-arendt>.)
- Interview by journalist Maria Cheng for International Associated Press on the use of abusive practices in maternal health, 11 February 2019.
- Video on “Mary Warnock and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990”, for the campaign and calendar “Month of Women Philosophers” by the Red española de Filosofía [The Spanish Network of Philosophy], 2018.
- Presentation and posterior debate of “Abandoned”, a new film sharing heartbreaking stories of women denied legal abortion, Wolfson College, University of Oxford, 5 June 2020. The proposal was selected and funded by the Wolfson Feminist Society. (<https://abandoned.film/>.) [Posponed to May 2021 due to Covid-19.]

- Translation of informative leaflet on miscarriage for El Parto es Nuestro [Birth is Ours] Association, November 2018.
- Invited speaker at “A Night of Philosophy and Ideas”, Brooklyn Public Library and The Cultural Services of the French Embassy, New York, September 2019. [Talk cancelled for professional reasons.]
- President of the “II Philosophy Festival - Pan y circo: Las esclavitudes en el siglo XXI [Bread and circuses: Slavery in 21st Century]”, Picasso Museum/La Térmica, Málaga, 24-26 January 2019. ([https://www.latermicamalaga.com/eventos/ii-festival-filosofia-malaga/.](https://www.latermicamalaga.com/eventos/ii-festival-filosofia-malaga/))
- Interview by UAH.esnoticia, Spanish Press Department, on the importance of philosophy for individual development, 7 March 2019. (<http://portalcomunicacion.uah.es/diario-digital/entrevista/una-profesora-de-la-uah-analiza-por-que-la-etica-y-la-filosofia-son-fundamentales-en-la-educacion?n=2.>)
- Member of the Organising Committee, VI Philosophical Olympiad of Spain, Málaga, April 2019.
- Award-giving Ceremony of the Red española de Filosofía [Spanish Network of Philosophy], University Complutense of Madrid, 24 May 2019. Laudatio speech: “Laudatio to Professor Michael Sandel”.

### 3. PROGRESS

#### 3.1 PROGRESS BEYOND STATE OF THE ART

Childbirth has been at the centre of controversy for many years. While it is important to acknowledge the significant body of work that has criticised current ways of performing childbirth, from both outside of and within the profession of obstetrics and maternity care, it is generally accepted that a strong intellectual framework is still needed to make better practice *real*, at both the professional and system levels.

Optimal maternal and infant health is critical to societal well-being. Efforts to improve maternal health have traditionally focused on “too little, too late”. “Too little, too late” means a lack of access to good quality care, or care that cannot be accessed quickly enough, and covers inadequate access to services, resources, or evidence-based care. But “too much, too soon” can also harm. “Too much, too soon” means care before, during and after childbirth that is too much, unnecessary, inappropriate, and even harmful. ‘Too much, too soon’ care is increasing everywhere as more women around the world give birth in health facilities. While these problems have many causes, they have mostly been addressed by adhering to evidence-based guidelines for maternity care. But evidence on best practice around childbirth is not enough for the best practice to happen. For example, there is clear agreement amongst stakeholders, at all levels, in most countries, that too many cesarean sections are being carried out – such evidence has however not changed the upward trend in cesarean section; or where solutions have been tried, they end up having more of the same undesired consequences, like more labour induction to reduce cesarean section, for instance. Late evidence shows that the situation is getting worse, not better, in many contexts in terms of women’s rights, neonatal wellbeing, long-term

consequences, etc. Consequently, a new frame of reference is needed that allows new understanding and solutions.

Maternal care is a fierce battlefield between intervened vs. normal, safe vs. experienced, social vs. medical birth models. The debate on childbirth tends to be framed around obstetrics and midwifery. Framing it as a conflict between disciplines is an example of what happens when these ideas come into direct and real conflict. But the interesting dilemma is surely about birth as an archetypical human experience.

### **3.2 RESULTS**

The debate on childbirth is a debate on the notion of being human and our relation to knowledge, freedom and care. As such, it is a debate of profound philosophical import.

The project, “Controversies in childbirth: from epistemology to Practices (VOICES)”, addresses the current debate on childbirth by analysing the dialogue between the three key stakeholder groups: service users, professionals, and policymakers. The goal is to create a space for constructive argument that is relevant to understand what matters to whom. The epistemological analysis of the different perspectives makes a key contribution to the development of a values-based approach to clinical care in obstetrics and midwifery, consistent with contemporary best practice in shared clinical decision-making.

The project aims at a much-needed consensus on childbirth. The philosophical action is directed to individuals and organisations (civil, public, and social media) at large.

### **3.3 POTENTIAL IMPACT**

The “*UN Report on violence against women, its causes and consequences. A human rights-based approach to mistreatment and violence against women in reproductive health services with a focus on childbirth and obstetric violence*” (United Nations, New York, NY 2019), and the recent ruling from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in relation to recent Spanish maternity cases of non-consented induction and cesarean sections, lay the foundation for the potential impact of the project.

VOICES original input lies in a direct engagement with public’s concerns. Communication to general audiences was a key element of the action. Prof. Villarmea is personally committed to make sure that the results, methodology, and scope of VOICES were available to health users and society as a whole. As a member of El Parto es Nuestro [Birth is Ours], the Spanish watchdog organisation devoted to birth rights, she had a very concrete sense of the importance of knowledge exchange, as well as of the exciting rewards of an established social and professional network that be relevant to the present and future of the project. Her exposure to community engagement supports that VOICES reaches strong participation across sectors.

VOICES’ direct targets includes the following specific audiences: (A1) Pregnant and postpartum women, (A2) Women and users of health systems, (A3) Continuing education. (A1), (A2), and (A3) are reached through the researcher’s current

participation in networks of childbirth activism, women's associations, and scientific societies, as well as through different outreach activities.

VOICES' communication strategy uses a wide range of media and is based on the live interaction between academics and users of health services. The best example of VOICES engagement is the organisation of the international conference "What Matters to Whom: Getting it Right in Childbirth - An exploratory Seminar in Values-based Practice in Childbirth", University of Oxford, 18 March 2020. The venue is designed to include public engagement and communication to different sides of public's concern. It is to be an exciting day of discussion and debate, bringing together the ideas and experiences from a 40-strong group comprising healthcare professionals (including midwives, obstetricians, and paramedics), service users' representatives, philosophers, analysts, commissioners, media representatives, lawyers, experts by experience, statisticians, and ethicists drawn from networks across the UK and Spain.

Attendees are encouraged to engage in a lively and exploratory exchange of ideas, opinions and priorities in the sphere of childbirth. Over the course of the day, this exchange is to be promoted through responses to case studies, visualisation exercises, and interactive sessions. We will also be joined by a live illustrator who will help us to capture our responses to the seminar framing of 'what matters?' and map connections. Outcomes from the seminar are to be used to develop academic resources that may benefit pregnant women, families, and professionals in the future. The conference will take place on May 2021.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Interdivisional Research Ethics Committee (IDREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University of Oxford for ethical approval of all research involving human participants, judged the proposed research as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly approval was granted (ref no: R65018/RE001).

In addition, VOICES accessed The Faculty of Philosophy, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), and The Centre for Values-based Practices active communication with advocacy groups, across online and offline channels, broadcast, print, digital, and social media to engage target audiences. The researcher used her links with ERC Grant BUMP, EU Cost Action BIRTH, and Ministry of Economy of Spain FILNAC/PHILBIRTH research projects to circulate VOICES ongoing results. Results produced by this action were also communicated via researcher's own established public communication networks, built mainly through her service as a Board member of the Spanish Network of Philosophy and the International Association of Women Philosophers; as a member of the civil association, Birth is Ours; and as user of on-line lists, like Academia, ResearchGate, or PhilEvents.