



**Birthing Kit  
Foundation**  
Australia





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Annual Report Photo Credit: Rachel Glasby |  
The Silk Road for The Birthing Kit Foundation  
Australia 2019, Ethiopia & Uganda



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[www.kit.org.au](http://www.kit.org.au)

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## Our vision: A transformed world for women and girls.

Our mission: to positively impact the lives of women, girls and newborns around the world.

We seek to learn, listen and facilitate the full participation of women and girls in society.

By engaging in genuine partnerships with global organisations, we raise awareness about the barriers faced by women and girls, inspire innovation and entrepreneurship, and work together to address gender inequality and injustice through our global initiatives.

Guided by the principal values of knowledge, innovation, transformation, sustainability and impact, we recognise that collaboration with the global community is essential to our work and the foundation for meaningful change.


Our ultimate goal is enabled systems, in which women and girls can become truly empowered.

## Our Year at a Glance

**215**  
**ASSEMBLY**  
**DAYS**  
were held in  
Australia



**10,465**  
**VOLUNTEERS**  
dedicated  
their time to  
**ASSEMBLE**  
**BIRTHING KITS**



**117,200**  
**BIRTHING KITS**  
were sent to people  
in under-resourced  
and humanitarian  
settings

**40** GLOBAL  
**PARTNERS**  
across  
**16 COUNTRIES**  
were involved  
in our global  
initiatives



**210,960**  
**MOTHERS &**  
**NEWBORNS**  
were helped with  
health equipment  
or services



**27**  
**TEACHERS**  
trained to  
provide  
sexual and  
reproductive  
health rights  
education

★ **10 COMMUNITIES** participating in discussions about  
**GIRL'S RIGHTS & STOPPING HARMFUL PRACTICES** ★

**18,495**  
were engaged  
through our  
**ONLINE**  
**PLATFORMS**



**1,120**  
**STUDENTS**  
participated in  
**EDUCATION &**  
**SKILL-BUILDING**  
activities



**49** HEALTH  
**WORKERS**  
were employed or  
upskilled to provide  
**MATERNAL &**  
**NEWBORN CARE**



# Chairperson Report



Adapting to change became a necessity for Birthing Kit Foundation Australia (BKFA) in the 2019/2020 year as the organisation found itself in some of the most challenging circumstances imaginable. Having developed a new *Adaptive Strategy* in 2018 and embarked on its implementation, the whole organisation adapted to new ways of thinking and working as three major events successively impacted our work.

The first of these was of our own creation. A kit price rise was initiated in July in order to provide a sounder cash flow for our core work. While our supporters understood the importance of making this change, the timing proved challenging. As summer approached and bushfires affected huge areas of Australia, many loyal service clubs, which had been assembling kits for

years, turned their attention to their local communities and redirected their efforts to those closer to home. This impacted the number of Assembly Days as the funds available for kit production were reduced.

Then, just as the slow-down from the fires started to ease, Covid-19 was declared a pandemic and Australia went into lockdown. Fundraising and kit assembly were the last things on people's minds, as a new way of life put pressure on supporters of the Foundation across the country. Our programs overseas were affected, and freighting kits became a challenge.

Our response was to initiate *Kits at Home*, a campaign to encourage people in lockdown to make 40 kits at a time. 57 individuals and small groups took up the challenge. Loyal community groups stepped up too and we are pleased to report that, while our overall production was lowered to 83,540 kits, or about half of what we might have expected, we did maintain production and kept our kit distribution going.

There were 215 Assembly Days, an outstanding and generous effort on behalf of thousands of Australians.

Zonta Clubs across Australia played a crucial role in this production, holding nearly a third of all Birthing Kit and producing nearly half of all kits. This continued support is helping women who are in greater need than ever as the poorest areas of the world endure the challenges of inaccessible or compromised health services during the pandemic.

An exciting breakthrough this year was the launch of the *Earth Kit*. This is a more expensive kit, but its sound environmental credentials prepare us for a new generation of kits which meet higher requirements in a world dealing with the issues of pollution and waste.

We also adapted other areas of our work. Technology was used as the primary method of communication with our global partners. Nevertheless, our programs did suffer as schools closed and regulations stopped groups gathering.

As staff increasingly worked from home, they turned their attention and energy to our new strategies.

Great progress was made on *Kits for Sale*, an initiative to produce kits to be made available to other NGOs and being produced by specialist services employing people with disabilities. While this initiative is still in the early stage, the potential is encouraging.

New branding was developed in the second half of the year to provide a new look for the expanding avenues of our work, and preparation for an *Innovation Challenge* was undertaken in order to seek out new partnerships in the upcoming year.

As ever, BFKA is indebted to private donors and companies for their ongoing support. The Neilson Foundation gave generously for our transition to innovation and enterprise. MUN Global donated funds as well as all the gloves packed into clean birth kits. The Fullife Foundation continued their backing for our training program with APDA in Ethiopia. The Peggy Charitable Foundation, Mama Maya and Dr Grant Saffer were generous with funds. We thank them all, particularly in this difficult year.

Matt Anderson guided the staff through this challenging era as he and the staff have faced the special requirements of the last twelve months.

They all deserve our thanks for coping with the extra pressure. We acknowledged the contributions of departing Directors Melanie Cottell and Gail Casey at the end of 2019, while Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on Maggi Gregory for her many years as our Treasurer when she retired at the AGM. Frances Mpala is now our Treasurer and another new Director, Madhu Mazumdar, brings skills in technology.

The organisation survived the year financially due to our many loyal supporters and donors combined with the generous support of the Federal Government's Job Keeper initiative. This added lifeline buoyed not just our bank account but also our spirits, when harder decisions may have been needed. We ended the year in a stable financial position and the Board and staff are now looking forward to advancing our range of new approaches.

## **Jenny Weaver,**

Chairperson & Director  
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia



# CEO Report



**Last year I shared with you that our intention over the coming year was to build on the foundations of the history of the Birthing Kit Foundation Australia, and to take our organisation to new places. That has certainly been our journey over the last twelve months...**

And what a year it has been! Who could have ever imagined the compounding impact of one of Australia's worst bushfire seasons, followed by the global health crisis of Covid-19 that continues to change our lives on a daily basis. In practical terms, that's meant for us that our "business as usual" model of relying on the ability of volunteers to gather in groups to assemble our Birthing Kits has been massively disrupted. This has accelerated our plans to find new ways to create value for the women and girls around the world that our organisation exists for.

Although the past twelve months have been challenging, I have been inspired and very proud of the efforts of so many people who have continued to work incredibly hard to make a difference in the lives of the world's most vulnerable people, particularly for the many women and girls experiencing injustice and poverty. It has been a privilege to work amongst a community of dedicated people, both within Australia and on a global basis, who share our passion for equality and justice.

In the past year, we have focused on developing our understanding of the reach and impact of our work as an organisation, recognising that continual learning is essential if we are to enhance the quality and scale of our initiatives. With the support of our Australian community and our global partners, we managed to reach over 600,000 people during the 2019-2020 year. Over 200,000 of whom were mothers and newborns reached through the Birthing Kit Program – an initiative that remains close to our hearts and represents the foundation of our work.

Throughout this year of challenge and change,

our team has remained agile and committed to enhancing, adapting and growing the sustainability and impact of our work. We have created and launched the Earth Kit, a premium Birthing Kit that is better for the environment – something we care so deeply about.

During April this year, our passionate and talented team worked tirelessly to develop and launch our new "Kits at Home" initiative, allowing our Australian supporters to engage and volunteer with BFKA despite the vast and unforeseen changes that the pandemic has had on our society. The transition to a new pricing model for Birthing Kits, Earth Kits and Kits at Home has strengthened our financial sustainability and enabled us to weather the economic impacts of Covid-19.

None of this would have been possible without the contribution of our Australian supporters and partners, who continue to show their devotion to the organisation and dedicate their time to our mission. The recent growth of our supporter base and the positive feedback received by local and global partners provide our team with ever-growing motivation.

Finally, in spite of all the challenges and changes faced during the past year, our team has dedicated much time and energy into the creation of our new identity – KIT International. A transition that is an intentional nod to our past and our foundational Birthing Kit, and one that opens up an abundance of opportunity for our organisation being recognised in the global innovation and social enterprise spaces – paving the way for greater reach, diversity and sustainability. This change also, most importantly, provides the opportunity to continue improving and growing the work that we do for women and girls.

BFKA will continue to pursue bold new opportunities in three strategic areas over the next twelve months – through PARTNERSHIP with others around the world, GROWTH in the scope of our work, and being known for INNOVATION in all that we do.

**Matt Anderson,**  
CEO  
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia



## Birthing Kits

Each year, approximately 295,000 women die from preventable causes related to pregnancy or childbirth<sup>1</sup> and 2.5 million babies die within their first month of life<sup>2</sup>. The vast majority of these deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, where inequitable access to health care, widespread poverty and gender inequality increase the risks faced by expectant mothers every single day. This injustice has been the driving force behind our Birthing Kit Program, since the first 100 kits were packed in 1999.

Although a Birthing Kit does not look like much, it has the potential to be a life-saving tool for women birthing in under-resourced settings. Each kit contains six disposable items intended to support infection prevention for mothers and their babies during childbirth:

1. **Soap** to wash the birth attendant's hands and the mother's perineum.
2. **A plastic sheet** to prevent the mother and newborn from coming into contact with the ground or an unhygienic surface.
3. **Gloves** to cover the birth attendant's hands and provide protection from infection for the mother, the newborn and the birth attendant.
4. **Gauze** to clean the mother's perineum before birth and to wipe clear the newborn baby's eyes.
5. **Cord ties** to cleanly tie the umbilical cord.
6. **A sterile blade** A sterile blade to hygienically cut the umbilical cord and reduce the risk of newborn tetanus and sepsis.

<sup>1</sup> WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDP 2019, *Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000-2017*, World Health Organisation, Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, 'Neonatal Deaths- Total', Data, Available at: [childmortality.org](http://childmortality.org).



# The Birthing Kit Program

Although our Birthing Kits are designed to be used in a variety of different settings, we recognise that they are most effective when they are integrated into holistic, community-based programs that suit the needs of target communities. For this reason, BFKA distributes kits to global partners who already work within communities to address maternal and newborn health.

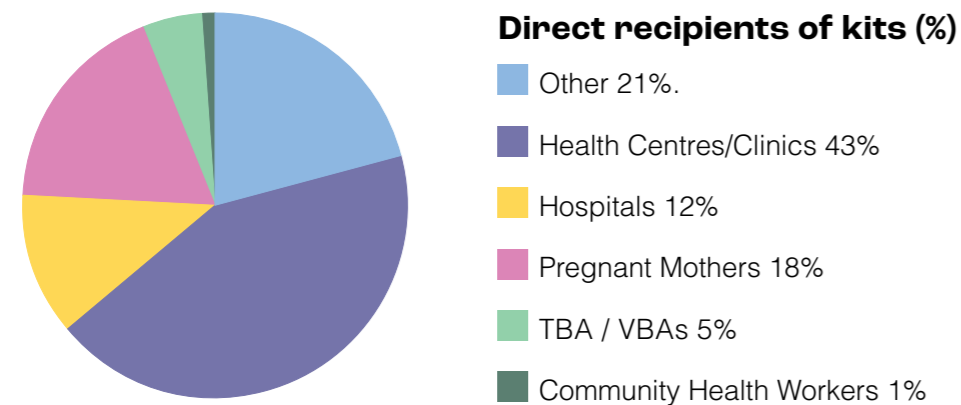
During 2019/2020, BFKA partnered with 37 organisations throughout 15 different

countries to distribute kits through the Birthing Kit Program. Depending on the local needs and context of target populations, our partners employ a number of different strategies to provide recipients with education and ensure that the kits get to women and girls in need. The types of strategies employed include:

- Hosting community education and awareness sessions

- Supporting mobile health clinics
- Deploying community midwives/health workers in remote areas or in refugee camps
- Training and equipping of traditional or village birthing attendants (TBAs/VBAs)
- Supporting under-resourced health facilities
- Providing antenatal clinics for pregnant women

## In 2019/2020, our partners reported kit distribution to the following recipients:



Other recipients included Midwifery Students in Somaliland, Community Rangers in Papua New Guinea, Community Midwives and many more.



## Challenges

The 2019/2020 year was particularly challenging for the Birthing Kit Program, as unprecedented events impacted the functionality of the program on both a local and global scale.

Within Australia, bushfires and the coronavirus outbreak impacted both the number of donations made to the organisation and the ability of volunteers assemble Birthing Kits. Consequently, consignments were temporarily put on hold and the number of kits available for distribution to partners was significantly reduced. Only 117,200 kits were distributed this year, representing 59% of the planned 199,000. This is a stark difference to the previous year, during which 210,400 kits made it to partners.

Within the field, the coronavirus presented our global partners with a number of challenges:

- 3 partners had to place consignments on hold

due to inability to receive kits during lockdown.

- Many experienced significant delays receiving allocations.
- 60% of partners have reported facing implementation challenges due to lockdowns, travel restriction and reduced kit supply as a result of COVID-19.

## Learning and Effectiveness

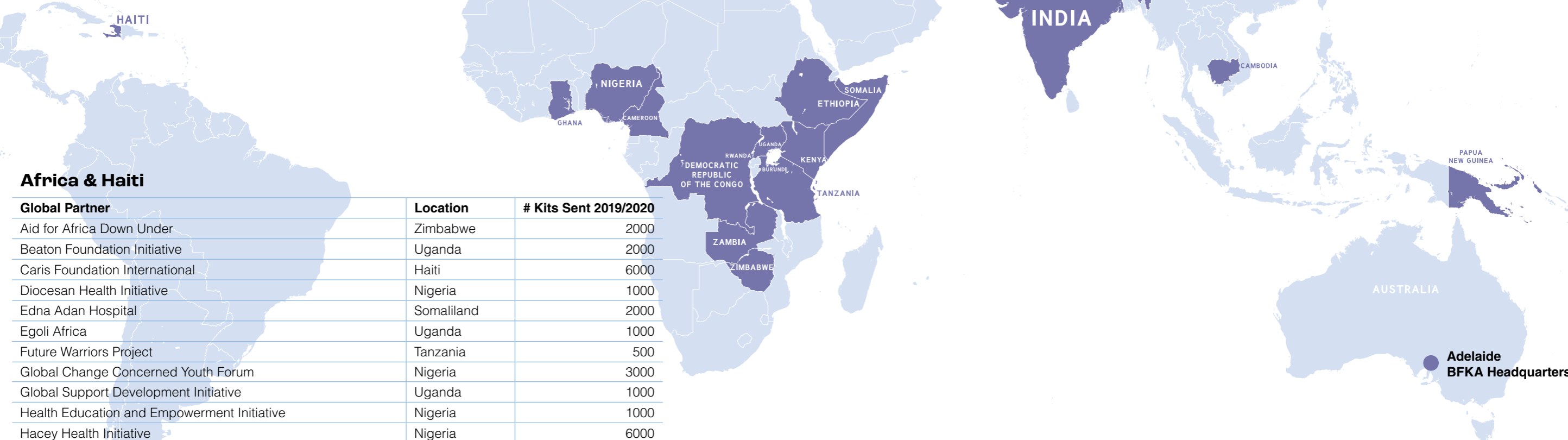
To ensure effectiveness throughout the Birthing Kit Program, BFKA ask partners to complete bi-annual reports on kit distribution and provide feedback on the kit itself. This information guides learning, review, adaptation and design processes undertaken by the team, ensuring that our Birthing Kits continue to meet the needs of the women who use them.

Over the past few years, reporting has indicated that kits are increasingly being used

within health facilities to cater for under-supply of basic hygiene equipment and as a method to link women to health centres or as an incentive to give birth in a health facility. Whilst the increased use of health services has a positive impact on the health of mothers and newborns, a number of partners have reported that the kits are not quite sufficient for use in a facility setting, with many suggesting the addition of extra items to the kit, such as an extra pair of gloves, baby clothes and chlorhexidine gel for umbilical cord care. In its current form, the Birthing Kits is a basic tool designed to meet the needs of women giving birth in humanitarian crisis or very under-resourced when access to a health facility is not guaranteed. The suitability of the kit within health facilities will be assessed by the BFKA team in the upcoming kit component review, a process guided by partner recommendations, user feedback and international guidelines.

# Birthing Kit Distribution 2019/2020

During the 2019/2020 year a total of 117, 200 kits were sent to our global partners through Africa, Haiti, South Asia and Papua New Guinea



## Africa & Haiti

Global Partner	Location	# Kits Sent 2019/2020
Aid for Africa Down Under	Zimbabwe	2000
Beaton Foundation Initiative	Uganda	2000
Caris Foundation International	Haiti	6000
Diocesan Health Initiative	Nigeria	1000
Edna Adan Hospital	Somaliland	2000
Egoli Africa	Uganda	1000
Future Warriors Project	Tanzania	500
Global Change Concerned Youth Forum	Nigeria	3000
Global Support Development Initiative	Uganda	1000
Health Education and Empowerment Initiative	Nigeria	1000
Hacey Health Initiative	Nigeria	6000
Life Aid International Initiative	Nigeria	600
PeachAid Medical Initiative	Nigeria	2000
Population Cares Uganda	Uganda	1000
Rotary Club of Makindye	Uganda	500
Redefined Ministries	DR Congo	9000
Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal & Child Health	Nigeria	18000
Reach Out Cameroon	Cameroon	200
Supporting Opportunities for Ugandans to Learn Foundation	Uganda	300
SHAPEthiopia	Ethiopia	600
Safer Hands Initiative	Nigeria	2000
SOS Jeunesse et Enfance en Distresse	DR Congo	500
Social Relief Organisation	Somaliland	5100
Teso Women's Peace Activists	Uganda	1500
Think Humanity	Uganda	600
Uganda Australia Christian Outreach	Uganda	2600
Women's Health to Wealth	Ghana	6000
Women Glory	DR Congo	800
World Vision Australia	South Sudan	6000
World Vision Australia	DR Congo	6000
World Vision Australia	Somalia	6000

## South Asia & Papua New Guinea

Global Partner	Location	# Kits Sent 2019/2020
Development Society for Poor	India	400
Enga Baptist Health Services	Papua New Guinea	300
Kanthi Samstha	India	200
Living Child Inc.	Papua New Guinea	1000
No Roads - Health	Papua New Guinea	200
Poverty Eradication Initiative	Pakistan	9000
Reef & Rainforest Centre	Papua New Guinea	1000
Touching the Untouchables	Papua New Guinea	300
World Vision Australia	Afghanistan	10000



# Along the Road to Transformation

**Rachel Glasby, our partner photographer from The Silk Road, reflects on her time in the field with BFKA.**

**Can you tell us about one image that particularly moved you during your trip to Ethiopia and Uganda this year?**

One of the most memorable images that I have taken during my time with BFKA is from our 2019 field visit to project sites in the Afar region of Ethiopia. The photograph featured to the right, is of a heavily pregnant Afar mother standing proud and tall, though tired, as she gathered her rope and pot in preparation to milk her cow. This moment was actually one of the final images I took during my time in the Afar. It was our last morning in the village of Bortalli, as we prepared to head back to the capital, Addis Ababa.

During our time in Bortalli, I had become particularly friendly with Medina, one of the oldest women in the community, and her family. Despite the hours after sunrise being a very busy time for Afar women, Medina and her daughters had graciously welcomed me to their fire to share bunna (coffee).

When the time came to say our farewells and for the women to get back to their daily work, one

of Medina's daughters slowly stood to leave. In that moment, with her standing above me with her very pregnant belly, her rope to tie the leg of her cow and her pot in which to milk it, I knew I had to ask if I could capture one last photograph.

For me, this image holds two powerful messages. Firstly, for most of us in the developed world, it's a powerful reminder of the physical work Afar women undertake each day in order to raise their families. It is a labour intensive life, with Afar women and girls bearing a workload that is heavy and burdensome. This reality is not unique the Afar; it is seen across various global communities where opportunity is defined by gender and where women and girls have to work harder, receive less support, have limited opportunities and die from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. This image speaks of that reality.

The second message I see in this image is a powerful representation of the core work of BFKA. She is a symbol of the women that BFKA reach with Birthing Kits, health programs, education and local partnerships. She stands here in this image representing all

of these women. Like many women across the world, she is here every day caring for her children, working alongside her family and growing another baby, yet does not have equitable access to health and education opportunities. She is precisely who BFKA exists for.

**What is it about photographing women and young girls that resonates with you?**

Over the past 15 years of travelling across the world with my camera, the type of storyteller I want to be has evolved. The countries that I've travelled to, the people whom I've met and the things that I have seen have all left marks on me.

Photographing moments involving other women with their families has been a consistent theme and it is a space I feel authentic and comfortable in. I have also learnt that it is often because I am a woman, and now a mother, that I have been able to connect with them at a deeper level. It often doesn't take long to share a sense of trust, and this has allowed me to photograph moments with my camera that are authentic and raw, whilst being respectful.



It is countless moments like this that have woven a tapestry within me and have carried me to a place where I strive to use my photography as a vehicle to help tell stories of different women across our world. For this reason, I dedicate a portion of my year to working alongside organisations, such as BFKA, who are committed to amplifying the voices of women and girls.

A lot of what I do is close up portraits and people who see

my work often ask me how I am able to photograph people's faces at such a close range. I don't have any special trick, but rather a strong belief that human connection transcends 'differences' like language or culture. I simply seek to meet the Human. Eye to eye, smile to smile, heart to heart, and often in silence. It is an experience that can't be created, it is just there if you allow yourself to find it in that moment.

I ask permission, sometimes verbally and sometimes with a gesture towards my camera, and they respond with trust, freezing for a moment in time with the camera. It is simple, really. However, I am constantly learning and continually holding a mirror up to myself as a photographer in an ever-evolving narrative for truth and realness. In many ways I'll always be a beginner, and that's okay with me.



**What is your perspective about the initiatives that BFKA runs after seeing them first-hand? How in your opinion do they change/ impact the lives of women?**

Being in the field with BFKA has allowed me to bear witness to the strong partnerships that you have at a local level. While we are in the field, it quickly becomes clear that BFKA shares strong, honest and real relationships with partners and beneficiaries. While working alongside Zeshi, the former Impact & Design Manager, in India, Ethiopia and Uganda, I have been involved in countless meetings where the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the true needs of the communities where BFKA partners. We have met with women, children, adolescent mothers, families, midwives, traditional birth attendants and teachers to build upon your frameworks. I believe that these rich conversations are invaluable to BFKA's

design approach and fosters a relationship that allows BFKA to better understand the nuances of working with these communities.

When you sit under a tree with these women and they share their stories, their hopes, their challenges, their belief systems, their family structures, their roles and responsibilities, you gain a truly authentic insight into how BFKA can support context specific programs that support community's needs. It is so important to remember that there is no one paradigm that will best serve all communities; context-specific programs are something that I have observed BFKA do so well.

I believe that we don't 'empower people', as is so commonly quoted. I believe that people empower themselves in the opportunities available to them and I have seen Zeshi uphold this through her work in the field with BFKA. As a health professional myself (an Emergency and Primary

Health Care background) it stands out to me that BFKA wholeheartedly recognises that the future of mothers and children depends upon so much more than what happens at the moment of birth. Your plans to continue to grow beyond the Birthing Kit by engaging and working alongside families, communities, local organisations and governments for sustainable programs is so exciting! I am looking forward to seeing more of your plans over the next few years as BFKA expands and further invests in education and livelihood programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Indo-Pacific regions.

**What are your hopes for these women and girls in the future?**

I read a passage a few weeks ago that really summarised it perfectly for me – *“To be able to realise the vaulting scope of their own capacities.”*



# Uganda – Youth at the Centre

## REVAMON – Reaching Vulnerable Adolescent Mothers and Newborns

### The Problem

The right to good health and well-being during pregnancy and motherhood is one that all women have. Yet for many women in rural Uganda, particularly those entering motherhood during adolescence, this right is difficult to achieve. Bearing a child at a young age entails intensified health risks for both mother and child, hinders educational and employment opportunities and deeply affects the ability of women and girls exercise their rights as equal members of society. For young mothers in Katakwi, Uganda, these risks have been intensified by limited access to adolescent-friendly health services, social stigma, deeply-rooted gender inequality and widespread poverty.

### The Project

For the past two years, BFKA has worked with implementing partners, Teso Women's Peace Activist (TEWPA), in three sub-counties of Katakwi to improve reproductive and maternal health outcomes for adolescent mothers and enable young girls to exercise their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) rights. Working at the individual, family, community and service-provision levels, this project has aimed to expand the individual and collective

capacities of adolescent girls, whilst simultaneously fostering institutional, political and cultural contexts to enable the realisation of SRH rights.

During 2019/2020, the second and final year of the project, key activities included:

- Building the capacity of midwives to provide adolescent-friendly care and facilitate the Group Antenatal Care model (GANC)
- Support, education and mentoring for adolescent mothers
- SRH workshops for teachers and school mentors
- Community sensitisation workshops
- Provision of health equipment and hygiene supplies.

### The Impact

#### Better health and well-being of adolescent mothers and newborns

Changes in adolescent knowledge, attitudes and engagement with SRH services were witnessed throughout Katakwi. The number of young mothers attending health facilities for maternal and newborn care and utilising family-planning services increased. Additionally, the GANC model piloted through the REVAMON

project was endorsed by the Ministry of Health and rolled out beyond project sites.

#### Young women and girls are making more decisions and seeking opportunity

Shifts in power-dynamics within families and communities were noted; adolescent mothers began accessing health services without partners and engaging in economic activities. A number of young mothers also decided to return to school to pursue further education.

#### Increased community awareness and support for young girls

Engagement with government officials and community leaders throughout the life of the REVAMON project contributed to enhanced services and support for adolescent girls. Stronger commitments to the education of girls has been witnessed throughout communities, with growing recognition that education is essential to enhance opportunities and a key protective measure against child marriage and early pregnancy.

The contribution of young men and boys to the SRH and well-being of their partners continues to be poor, despite inclusion in community sensitisation sessions.



### Learning and Effectiveness

Throughout the final year of the project, the team at TEWPA actively monitored project progress and engagement within the community, adapting activities to suit the needs of girls within the community. Although the global pandemic presented many implementation challenges, delaying project monitoring, the team at TEWPA remained agile, adapting activities to suit the needs of young mothers and ensure continual engagement despite widespread concerns of coronavirus infection.

**153**  
young mothers supported

**22**  
midwives upskilled

**27**  
teachers & peer mentors trained

**6** maternity centres equipped with clean birth kits and gloves

**9**  
schools reached with health clubs

**300**  
facemasks distributed

**17**  
boxes of soap & hand sanitiser purchased

# Ethiopia – Safe Womanhood in the Afar

## Strengthening the rural health network to improve reproductive, maternal and newborn health in Dullassa

### The Problem

Communities of the Afar, Ethiopia, a geographically isolated region in the north of the country, have long been subject to low levels of governance, limited service provision and vulnerability to external shock. Women and girls, in particular, face significant injustice every day of their lives, heightened by the low status of women in society, inadequate provision of maternal and reproductive health services, malnourishment, poor literacy and harmful traditional practices that undermine progress.

### The Project

In partnership with the Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA), a locally-led organisation working to improve health and education within the Afar, BFKA has been contributing to the improvement maternal and newborn survival and enhancing the reproductive health of women and girls throughout the remote districts of Dullassa.

Recognising that community is central to driving meaningful and sustainable change,

this project has taken a universal approach to enhance the health and well-being of women and girls and increase their opportunities for the future. By training, equipping and supporting a network of collaborative health professionals and community educators, the team at APDA are working to increase the quality of care available, strengthen referral systems, increase health-seeking behaviours of mothers and educate the broader community on women's rights.

During the 2019/2020 year, encompassing the second and third phases of the three-year project, activities aimed to further enhance the collaboration and capacity of community health teams (CHTs) and increase their engagement with the community. Important elements of APDA's work included:

- Continued employment and support of Literacy Facilitators, Women Extension Workers (WEWs) and Health Extension Workers (HEWs)
- House-to-house registration of pregnant women

- Facilitation of Community Development Committees (CDCs)
- Community education on health seeking behaviours and maternal and reproductive health
- The Afar Literacy Program
- Support to project-trained Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs)
- Distribution of locally made delivery sets

Despite facing many external challenges experienced by the people of the Afar, including regional conflict, changes in government, heightened food insecurity and the widespread impact of the pandemic, the project team has adapted activities to ensure that women continue to receive the care that they need. These challenges have highlighted the strength of relationships formed between CHTs and the communities of Dullassa.

### The Impact

#### Safer birth for women in the Afar

This year, community health teams have enhanced their collaboration and coordination, with service providers of all levels, developing practical and productive relationships. With the mutual desire to ensure that mothers are receiving the best care possible, project staff have prioritised registration and engagement with all expectant mothers throughout their communities and, as a result, referrals for births to health

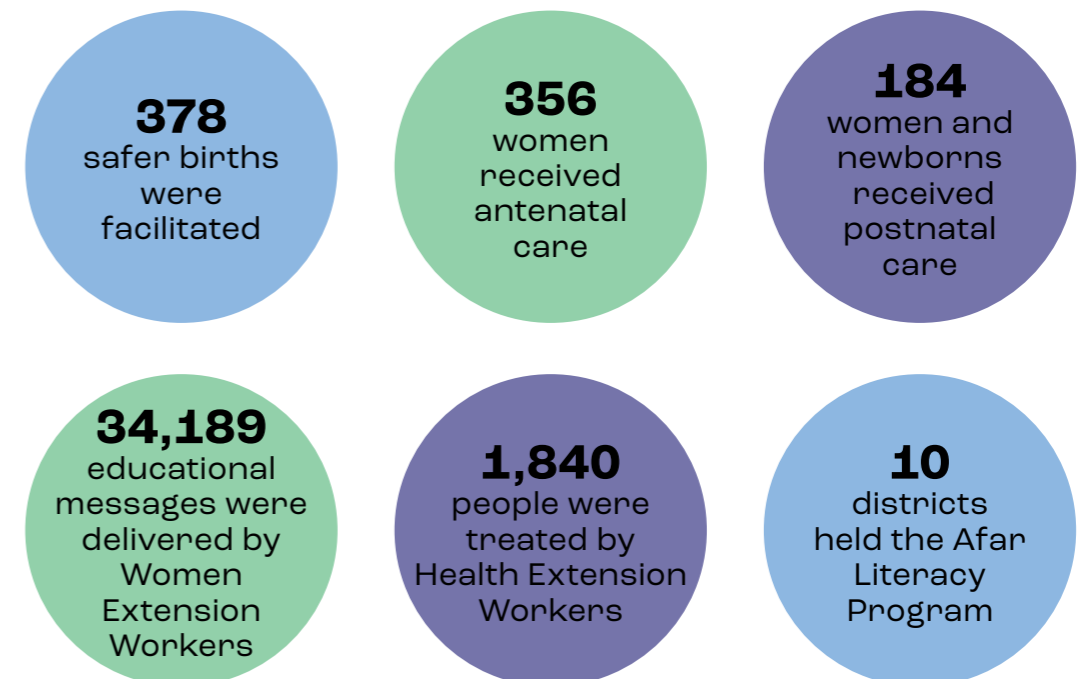
facilities have progressively increased. CHTs have also witnessed a greater sense of acceptance of the need for healthcare amongst families.

#### Education for social change

The benefits of community education, discussions and the Afar Literacy program are now being witnessed throughout the broader community. Males are increasingly contributing to open dialogue about reproductive health and safe motherhood and

community leaders are actively participating in discussions regarding the stopping of harmful practices and preventing child marriage. In all project sites, community members have confirmed that they have reduced practice of "sunna", a form of female genital mutilation, and no longer consider it to be obligatory. There is now a sense of recognition and acceptance amongst many leaders that girls should be given full opportunity to develop and pursue education before becoming mothers.

### During the second year of the project:



BFKA would like to thank the Fullife Foundation for their continual support of this initiative.



# Innovation and Sustainability

The transformation of our organisation from the Birthing Kit Foundation Australia to KIT International has not only been marked by a change in name, but a shift in culture and drive within our team. Central to our work this year has been embracing our new identity and embedding organisational values of innovation and sustainability throughout every level of our work. We have been thinking on our feet, learning-by-doing and putting every ounce of effort into growing, developing and adapting our initiatives – commitments that have been reflected throughout the following achievements.

## Earth Kits

With the growing recognition that environmental sustainability is essential for long-term change, our team dedicated a significant proportion of time to the development of the Earth Kit – an exciting and important innovation to the original Birthing Kit.

These new and improved kits continue to offer mothers, newborns and birthing attendants the same protection as the original kit, however the two major plastic components, the bag and the ground sheet, have been replaced with biodegradable versions, treated with the organic compound EcoPure.

For every 200 Earth Kits packed, BFKA has committed to planting 10 trees in Australia through a new, local partner, Carbon Neutral.

The first orders of Earth Kits have been packed by Australian volunteers and will be piloted in the field during the 2020/2021 year.

## Kits at Home

The sudden changes to socialisation sparked by the Covid-19 Pandemic called for a rapid response by the BFKA team. Restrictions on community gatherings throughout Australia required our logistics, event and marketing team members to re-design our volunteer model so that our Australian community could continue to contribute to the cause and so that our supply of kits for women around the world was not diminished.



Our team adapted quickly, developing the “Kits at Home” model, allowing individuals and small groups to assemble Birthing Kits within their own homes following COVID-safe measures. The change was well received amongst the Australian community, with 57 events taking place in less than three months – 74% of which were undertaken by new supporters. This new model has not only supported the continued production of Birthing Kits, but also provided our volunteers a sense of purpose and connection to the BFKA Community throughout periods of social isolation.

As the global health crisis continues and regulations change on a regular basis, the Kits at Home model will be essential for the continuity of our work.



## The Neilson Foundation – An Innovation Partnership

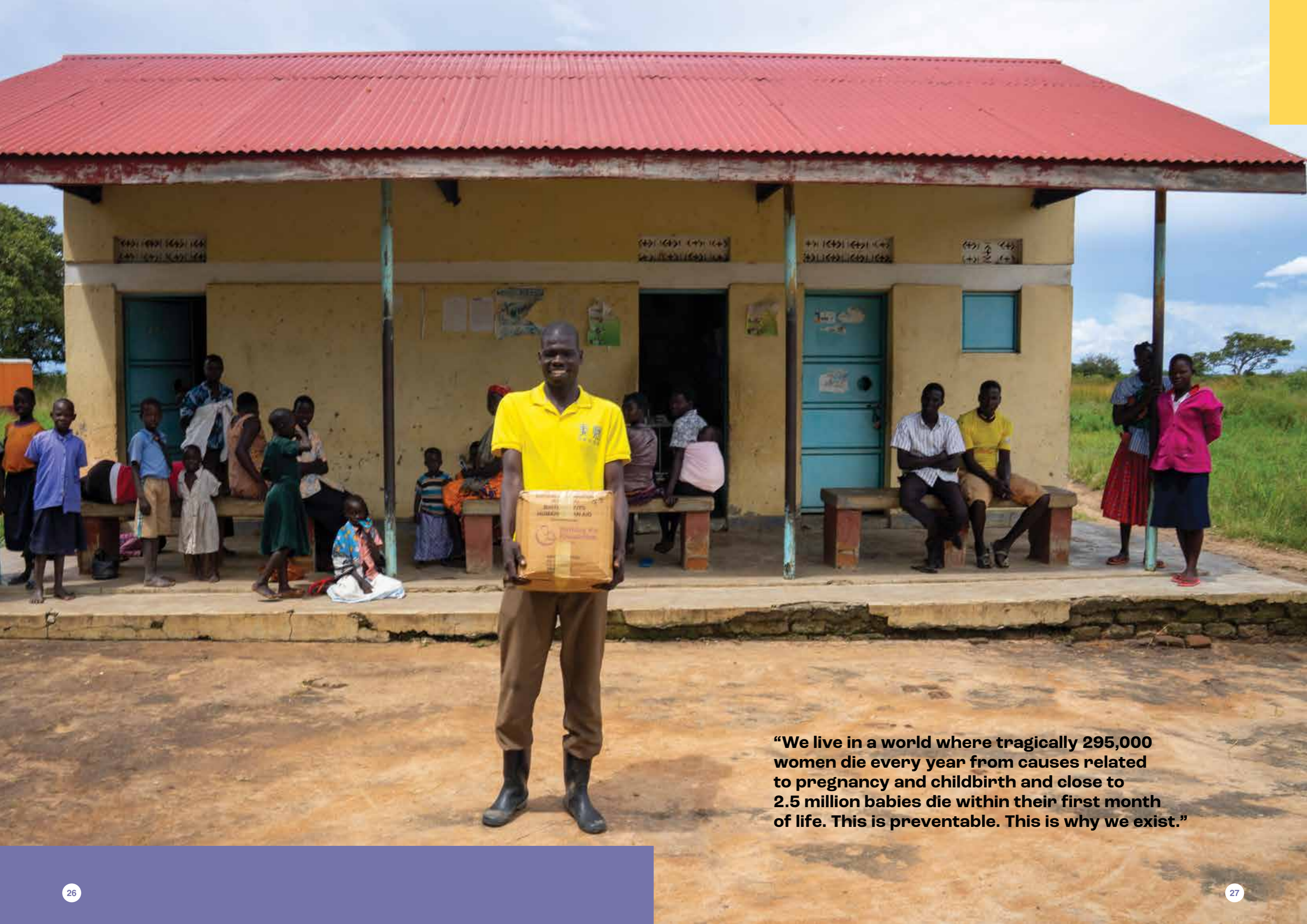
With the support of our long-term philanthropic partners, the Neilson Foundation, new innovation funding was secured to support our transition from a traditional charity to an innovation organisation. A range of exciting developments have stemmed from this partnership, including the design of our inaugural innovation challenge, the creation of the KIT Enterprise team and the scoping of

new, global impact partners. Innovation through co-design with our global partners offers BFKA the best chance to support meaningful and sustainable change in the lives of women and girls.

## Orana & Kits for Sale

Towards the end of this financial year, we established a new partnership with Orana Australia, a local organisation providing opportunities for people with disabilities to engage with their local communities and contribute through meaningful, paid work.

This partnership will support the employment and engagement of people with disabilities, as BFKA contracts Orana to assemble Birthing Kits for a predetermined fee per kit. These kits will then be sold to commercial partners around the world, with the revenue generated being used to scale up our initiatives and enhance our global impact. This model will also enhance the commercial sustainability of our organisation and reduce our dependency on donations and volunteers.



**“We live in a world where tragically 295,000 women die every year from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth and close to 2.5 million babies die within their first month of life. This is preventable. This is why we exist.”**

## Our Supporters

We would like to acknowledge the following supporters who provided financial and in-kind support to BFKA throughout 2019/2020:

### Key funders

The Neilson Foundation  
The Fullife Foundation  
MUN Global  
Peggy Charitable Foundation  
Mama Maya  
Dr Grant Saffer  
Zonta International  
(Districts 22, 23 and 24)  
McIntyre Foundation

### Photography

Rachel Glasby, The Silk Road

### Videography

Carousel Media

### Website & Branding

Svelte Studios

### Data Mapping

Artificial Intelligence  
Collaboration Network (AICN)

### Internships

Josephine Ocampo

Tessa Langhans

Finally, a warm thank you to all of our donors and volunteers for their generous support.



## Treasurer's Report

I would like to thank our supporters, members and donors for helping us raise \$764,358. Our kit-making donations constitute over 60% of our total revenue and are essential in ensuring that we positively impact the lives of women and newborn babies around the world.

The Birthing Kit Foundation Australia, has continued to attract and is grateful for philanthropic and sponsorship funds. I acknowledge the support that has been provided by the Neilson Foundation, Fullife Foundation and the Peggy Charitable Foundation.

I also acknowledge the support provided by the government's stimulus package of \$117,352, to support our staff and clients during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Our surplus for the 2019/2020 financial year was \$64,751 (previous year \$209,156 deficit). Donations and Gifts were \$269,534, including government subsidies (\$187,421).

2019/2020 was a challenging year due to the impact of the

bush fires and the pandemic, which resulted in a decrease in fundraising and outreach activities due to regulations limiting Assembly Days. This led to a reduced number of Birthing Kits being sent to Field Partners, with import restrictions and quarantine rules also impacting distribution. Kit-making Donations for 2019/2020 were \$469,676 (last year \$579,806). The working capital ratio, defined as total current assets to total current liabilities doubled during this financial year to 12.6 times as at 30 June 2020, compared to 6.3 times as at 30 June 2019.

The Foundation continues to explore new innovative ways to increase organisation revenue

through the development of long-term partnerships.

The Birthing Kit Foundation Australia (BKFA), has continued to attract and is grateful for philanthropic and sponsorship funds. I acknowledge the support that has been provided by the Neilson Foundation, Fullife Foundation and the Peggy Charitable Foundation.

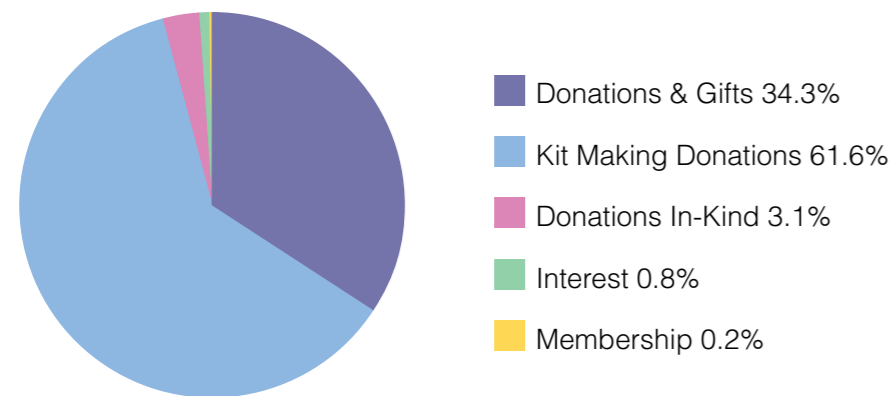
We will continue to invest cash in term deposits, recognising that while these investments deliver conservative results, they are secure and enable cash flow during the whole period.

### Frances Mpala

Treasurer  
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia

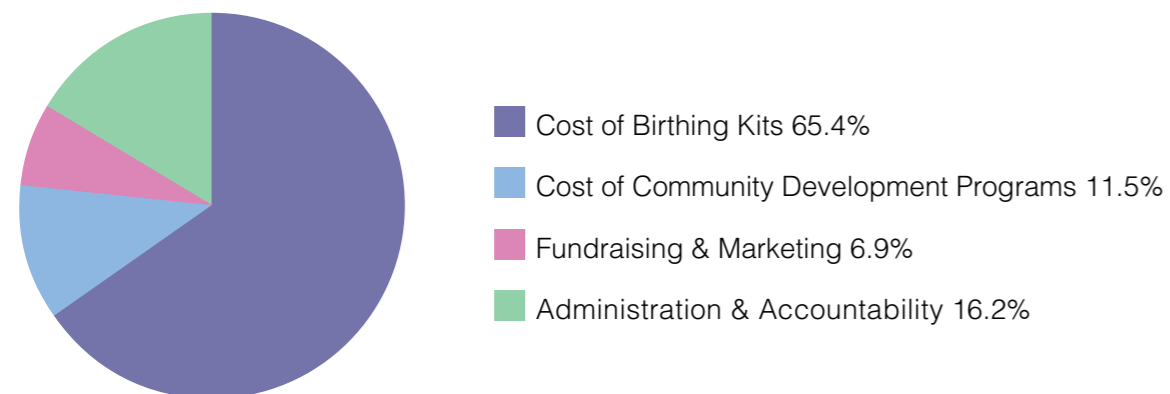


## Where our support comes from



## Expenses

This year's Administration and Accountability expenses were \$133,717, or 16.2% of total expenses (last year \$177,638, or 18.1%). Fundraising and marketing expenses were \$56,837, or 6.9% (last year \$68,166 or 6.9%)



## Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the revenue generated by Zonta Clubs throughout Australia, countless service clubs, schools, universities and individuals who took it upon themselves to fundraise for BKFA by participating in Assembly Days. This continued generosity and support ensures more women will have access to safe, clean birthing practices and resources.

Frances Mpala,  
Treasurer  
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia

## Financial Reports

BKFA summary financial reports comply with the standards set out by the ACFID Code of Conduct. The ACFID Code of Conduct is available at [www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct](http://www.acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct).

BKFA full financial reports statements are available upon request at [info@kit.org.au](mailto:info@kit.org.au).

# Auditor's Statement



1300 123 637 • enquiries@nfpas.com.au • www.nfpas.com.au

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR BIRTHING KIT FOUNDATION (AUSTRALIA)

### Auditor's Opinion

We have audited the financial report, being a general purpose financial report, of Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) for the year ended 30 June 2020, comprising the statement of financial position, statement of changes in equity, statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of cash flows, and notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the financial report of Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:

- giving a true and fair view of the registered entity's financial position as at 30 June 2020, and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- complying with the Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements, and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Information Other than the Financial Report and Auditor's Report Thereon

The Board Members of the entity are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2020, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon. The annual report is expected to be made available to us after the date of this auditor's report.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

When we read the annual report, if we conclude that there is a material misstatement therein, we will communicate the matter to the Board Members.

### The Responsibility of the Board Members for the Financial Report

The Board Members of the entity are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and have determined that the accounting policies used and described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial reports, are appropriate to meet the financial reporting requirements of the members and of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The Board Members' responsibility also includes such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the Board Members are responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board Members either intend to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the entity's financial reporting process.

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Committee website at: <http://www.aasb.gov.au/home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

NOT FOR PROFIT ACCOUNTING SPECIALISTS  
KESWICK SA 5035

  
Nicholas Matsis CPA  
Registered Company Auditor No 77408

Dated: 24 September 2020



Chartered Accountants Australia  
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

# Audited Financial Statements

## Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) (a company Limited by guarantee) Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the financial year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Donations	762,458	767,227
Membership Fees	1,900	2,075
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>764,358</b>	<b>769,302</b>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
COVID-19 Government Stimulus	117,352	-
Interest Received	6,088	3,865
<b>TOTAL OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>123,440</b>	<b>3,865</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE &amp; OTHER INCOME</b>	<b>887,798</b>	<b>773,167</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Cost of Birthing Kits	537,860	647,064
Community Development Program Costs	94,632	89,455
Fundraising & Marketing	56,837	68,166
Administration & Accountability	133,717	177,638
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>823,046</b>	<b>982,323</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>64,751</b>	<b>(209,156)</b>
Other Comprehensive Income		
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>64,751</b>	<b>(209,156)</b>

To be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes to the financial statements.

## Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) (a company Limited by guarantee) Statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	323,494	355,903
Trade & Other Receivables	82,219	8,425
Inventories	48,935	55,913
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>454,648</b>	<b>420,241</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>454,648</b>	<b>420,241</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade & Other Payables	11,726	13,047
Other Liabilities		19,511
Provisions	24,395	33,908
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>36,121</b>	<b>66,466</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>36,121</b>	<b>66,466</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>418,526</b>	<b>353,775</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>	<b>418,526</b>	<b>353,775</b>

To be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes to the financial statements.

# Corporate Governance Statement

**Birthing Kit Foundation Australia (BKFA) is committed to achieving best practice in corporate governance for non-profit organisations.**

## Corporate structure, compliance and tax status

The Foundation is an Australian public company limited by guarantee, registered under the Australian Corporations Act 2001, and complies with the requirements of the Act. The Foundation is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission (ACNC). BKFA has the benefit of tax concessions as a Health Promotion Charity, and the Foundation's Maternal Health Gift Fund has been declared as a developing country relief fund under subsection 30-85 (2) of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997, making donations to the fund tax deductible in Australia. As of 1 December 2016, registered ACNC charities are exempt from requiring a fundraising licence in South Australia and ACT. These ACNC achievements greatly reduce the time commitment in fulfilling state and territory requirements, and hopefully lays the groundwork for similar decisions in the remaining states. Where required BKFA holds fundraising licences in other states.

The Foundation is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct which defines standards of governance, accountability and ethical practice for non-government organisations engaged in international aid and development activities. The Foundation is committed to full adherence to the Code, undertakes regular compliance and self-assessment and reports to ACFID as required.

## Corporate governance and financial accountability

Under the Constitution, the Board of Directors is responsible for the overall management of the Foundation. Directors are elected by the membership of BKFA and are unpaid. The Board structure, numbers and processes for appointment are set out in the Constitution, which is available on the BKFA website. The Board meets monthly, with additional meetings for strategic planning, including the annual budget process. Financial performance reports are prepared by the Treasurer and Chief Executive Officer and are reviewed by the Board at each meeting. Audited financial statements are provided to ACFID, the ACNC, and to other regulators required by law. A summarised version of these statements is included in this Annual Report.

A copy of the full audited statements is available on request. A general meeting of members was held in May 2019 to approve a change of auditor.

## Work Health and Safety

There were no workplace injuries or incidents reported in the 2019/2020 year.

## Complaints

One complaint was received in the 2019/2020 year (not related to the ACFID Code of Conduct) and was handled and resolved in accordance with the BKFA Complaints Handling Policy.

Complaints about the performance or conduct of Birthing Kit Foundation Australia may be lodged via the link on our website, emailed to us at [info@kit.org.au](mailto:info@kit.org.au) or addressed to: Chair, Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia), P.O. Box 330, Belair, South Australia 5052.

Any person who believes we have breached the ACFID Code of Conduct is entitled to make a complaint to the ACFID Code of Conduct Committee. Such complaints should be marked 'Confidential' and addressed to; Chair, ACFID Code of Conduct Committee, Private Bag 3, Deakin ACT 2600.

## Tiffany Burton

Company Secretary,  
Birthing Kit Foundation Australia

# Our Team and Board

## Meet our team



**Matt Anderson**  
CEO



**Hemesh Lakhani**  
Business Manager



**Hilary Carruthers**  
KIT Event Coordinator



**Adrian Harris**  
Logistics & Supplies Officer



**Rebecca Davey**  
Effectiveness & Learning Coordinator



**Mercy Oloo**  
Global Partnerships Coordinator



**Tessa Langhans**  
Project Assistant  
Impact & Design

## Meet our board



**Jenny Weaver**  
Chairperson  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 11/12



**Frances Mpala**  
Treasurer  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 8/12



**Dr Julie Monis-Ivett OAM**  
Director  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 11/12



**Edward (Ted) A'Bear**  
Deputy Chairperson  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 11/12



**Dr Joy O'Hazy**  
Director  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 12/12



**Madhumita Mazumdar**  
Director  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 7/12



**Tiffany Burton**  
Company Secretary  
2019/20  
Board meetings attended: 11/12

BKFA would like to thank Zeshi Fisher, Nicole Marshall, Kellie Stelzer and Hannah Moore for their contributions throughout the 2019-2020 year. Without their hard work and dedication, we would not have been able to develop and launch our new brand. We wish them all the best in their new roles.



