

Processes for initiating the Zonta Birthing Kit Project

The Birthing Kit Foundation Australia (BKFA) and Australian Zonta clubs support the growth of the Zonta Birthing Kit Project worldwide

This document is to give clubs some direction with the Zonta Birthing Kit Project.

The BKFA is the third largest supplier worldwide of clean birthing kits after WHO and UNICEF and welcomes the opportunity to share our information.

Future expansion of the Zonta Birthing Kit Project

The BKFA are aware of many Clubs and Districts, in USA especially, that are now making their own birthing kits. An Assembly Day manual has been customized to club's needs. Most clubs have taken onboard our recommendations especially for partnership forms to remove any possibility of problems with liability.

The BKFA would like to be data collectors and provide support for this project.

Ideally if all clubs involved forwarded club name, number of kits, destination country and organisation onto the BKFA we would collate a world wide data base to showcase the growth of the Zonta Birthing Kit Project.

The BKFA has a detailed data base of where our 900,000+ kits have gone.

The BKFA has reputable organisations needing many more kits than we can supply. In Nigeria one organisation is asking for 150,000 kits annually for distribution to Traditional Birth Attendants, and the BKFA can only supply 10,000 kits.

We have a wealth of statistics and research, and information from monitoring trips and from 12 years of work that we would happily share.

The BKFA would like to record the growth of the Zonta Birthing Kit Project throughout the Zonta world and encourages the project to grow safely.

Forms to reduce potential headaches

The BKFA is keen to share its acquired knowledge to help clubs bypass any unexpected problems. We can forward all the necessary forms for all processes including for Assembly days, transport and customs forms as well as partnership forms that can be customized for an individual club or District use.

There are forms for completion by the supervising organisation and the people who actually will supervise the kit distribution on the ground. These are important for many reasons including for liability, as they place responsibility on training in how to use the kits, how to safely dispose of the waste, as well as direction in not using the kits for female circumcision, back onto the recipient organisation or individual.

Many people worry about liability and the BKFA is confident these forms deal with that issue. The target group are women in remote regions of developing countries giving birth at home, more often with no midwife or assistance, and if fortunate may have a Traditional Birth Attendant. Usually there is no road, electricity or running water and the woman is often isolated on a mountain or remote community. These are not a target group who will be looking for a lawyer if there are only two pieces of

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gauze or accidentally cut themselves. Most are illiterate and truly appreciate any help. The alternative if there was no kit, in many cases, would be death or suffering by infection for mother and baby. The target group are not the litigious type.

The Assembly Days have simple hygiene requirements which are clearly illustrated in a detailed manual and any member with basic health care knowledge can easily carry out this process. **We ask every club to notify their district insurance company for liability cover at the Assembly Day as with all Zonta functions.** The Foundation has had no liability problems with assembling and distributing over 900,000 + kits.

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We ask all clubs to be aware that funds destined to support Zonta International Service Projects (ZISP) NOT be diverted to the ZBK project.

Even though clubs in Australia have in 12 years donated over \$350,000 to the BK Project they have also increased their allocation of funds to ZISPs. Clubs have found it much easier to fundraise for a project that is simple and inexpensive and can potentially save a life. Members are more enthusiastic about fund-raising.

To be involved in the ZBK Project will cost money. Clubs need to fund-raise to pay for the kit supplies OR the supplies may be donated. The supplies may cost US\$1 for each kit and sometimes transport can cost up to US\$2 per kit depending on destination and means of transport. Each club will need to tailor the number of kits to their funds.

Most ZBK Projects start as club projects and then as enthusiasm grows it becomes a District project. However, with an enthusiastic organized team it can also start as a District project where clubs can choose their level of involvement. It all depends on how passionate the members of your District committee are about the project.

Starting point

1. Visit the BKFA website www.birthingkitfoundation.org.au and find out a little about the project and the BKFA.
2. Go to the How to Help and then Assembly Day on the menu to see the video.
3. View the steps the BKFA uses to encourage Assembly days in Australia.
4. Download the Assembly Day Manual from the **Zonta** Portal.
5. Go to info@birthingkitfoundation.org.au and request a copy of the 13 minute BKFA film on how we address the UN Millennium Development Goals.

The BKFA believes if this film is shown to clubs and at a District Conference it will motivate clubs to become involved in the project.

For a district project you require a committee of 4 – 6 dedicated people to oversee the processes and be liaison people for clubs. Possibly need to be close geographically so they can meet. It is essential to have email. They have to be really keen about the project and be prepared to commit time to meet the demand.

Level of club involvement

- they can fund-raise and make kits at their own Assembly Day
- fund-raise for another club's Assembly Day and attend it to show support
- fund-raise for a training program or encouraging in-country kit production

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- use the Assembly Day as a recruitment and reinvigorating day of fellowship for potential, new and current members
- donate funds to the BKFA for their training programs

Assembly Days are an opportunity for new members to meet our Zonta organisation with a hands-on project that actually saves lives and suffering. *The Adelaide Hills club went from 18 to 34 members in 5 years.* I believe the Birthing Kit Project is the spark that caught the attention of the prospective members, and it is the wonderful members as well as other projects that keeps them.

Assembly Days are also wonderful opportunities to involve your local high school or a local business can fund it as a team building exercise for their staff.

To administer the Zonta Birthing Kit Project at club level you need

- Kits being made at Assembly Days by volunteers.
 - A committee of 4 people to organize the Assembly day.
 - The Assembly Day manual has most of the information on the Assembly day processes. Initially many businesses may donate the supplies. 40 volunteers can make 1000 kits in 2 hours.
 - A destination for the kits with an established need for birthing kits. Our kits are targeted for women giving birth at home in remote regions of developing countries. If the club has no firm destination the BKFA has many organisations under supplied by us.
 - If there is a destination, **BEFORE KITS ARE SENT**, it is strongly recommended that specific forms need to be completed by the supervising organisation and the people who actually will supervise the kit distribution on the ground. We can supply these to be customized to the club or District. info@birthingkitfoundation.org.au *These place responsibility on training in how to use the kits and dispose of waste as well as not using the kits for Female Circumcision back on the recipients. Also addresses the issues of no political, religious, marital status and ethnic reasons for withholding kits.*
- Transport to the overseas destination organized.
 - This information is in the Assembly Day Manual. Clubs should be aware of these costs before they proceed with the project. *Often a good idea to send one bag initially to ensure the transport system is working.* The more remote the destination, often indicating a greater need for our kits, the harder it is to deliver the kits. *The BKFA has a 97% success rate with kits reaching their remote destination.*
 - There are many transport and customs forms that need to accompany the kits and also be with the recipient organisation so they can collect the kits. The BKFA has these at info@birthingkitfoundation.org.au
- Reporting
 - All receiving organisations are expected to report immediately on when the kits arrive. Once the kits are being distributed they then report on if they noticed any significant improvement in mother and

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baby's health and mortality. The BKFA can supply these forms.
There is a responsibility to your donors and club members who fund-raise and make the kits to have good reporting.

info@birthingkitfoundation.org.au

You can access the evolution of the ZBK Project on our website in the Zonta Portal under chronology.

We have now distributed over 900,000+ kits and trained over 8,500 birth attendants and produced 73,000 kits in country from locally sourced supplies in DR Congo, Ethiopia and Vietnam.

2012 will be an exciting year with our 1,000,000th kit being made.

We hope you enjoy your club's involvement with the Zonta Birthing Kit Project, and these notes give you some insight into this wonderful project.

Julie Monis-Ivett
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BKFA Director