

The big FAQs ...

The Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia) Area Workshop Report, April 2011

What is the difference between the Zonta Birthing Kit Project and the Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia)?

The Foundation was born out of Zonta in 2006 – the project had grown to the point where it needed a formal corporate structure to manage it. Without Zonta the Foundation would not have come into being. The BKFA administers the Zonta Birthing Kit Project.

For example, as a company limited by guarantee, we have to produce an annual report for ASIC complying with all Australia wide corporate standards. This provides us with the status we need to apply for funding with complete transparency.

How many women in the world die giving birth?

- About 1,000 women a day or around 365,000 per year from recent UN statistics.
- It used to be 1 every minute!
- What has made the difference?
- The UN MDG's, governments and people like us!

How do we know the kits work?

- In 2010 IMMPACT (Initiative for Maternal Mortality Programme Assessment), based at Aberdeen University, conducted general research about birthing kits and found their routine use would potentially save 100,000 babies and 6,000 mothers annually.
- From Afghanistan in 2009 it was reported that with the distribution and use of '2359 kits only one woman died and no babies.' Compare this with an expected 44 -118 women (depending on region) and 330 - 400 babies that would have died.
- Anecdotal evidence – every NGO reports back to us with information on kit effectiveness and basic statistics.

How many kits do we assemble and send out each year?

- 137,400 were sent out in the 09/10 year.
- The number each year depends on our funding. Right now, with no AusAID money this is likely to be lower BUT..
 - o We produced 95,000 Jan-Oct 2010 under the CC2A programme.
 - o We have started getting kits made in-country.

The BKFA is the 3rd largest kits distributor of birthing kits in the world, after UNHCR and UNFPA.

Can we make kits at schools for \$1.00 per kit?

- No, not until we get further funding. With no support at the moment from AusAID we simply cannot afford to subsidise kits to this extent.
- We are working hard to get AusAID help, plus accreditation, and to find new sources of funding!

The direct tax deduction is a big help!

Why are we sending the kits to fewer countries?

- Research has identified the neediest countries and we are concentrating our efforts.
- E.g. some countries provide tetanus shots to reduce infection - one of the key risks the kits are designed to manage.
- Some countries are changing e.g. Vietnam is getting to the point where they may be able to pay for the kits themselves.

How important are the training programmes?

- These are vital for success in the long term. Quality education is the key to improving the status of every disadvantaged woman on the planet.
- Things get taught and learnt that we never expect. The TBA's (Traditional Birth Attendants) in Afar have stopped FGM (female genital mutilation) as a result of their training!
- The training gives women status and hope, Dr Luc said this "The women know someone does actually care" ... Zontians care.

What is the long-term plan?

This is a long, slow process but we are aiming to have kits made in-country.

We have started, so far kits have ...

- Been regularly made in Afar, Ethiopia
- Been assembled in DR Congo
- Will soon be made in Tigray in Ethiopia
- Will soon be made in the Hamlin Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa.

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