

# midwives4mothers charity Annual Report 2022

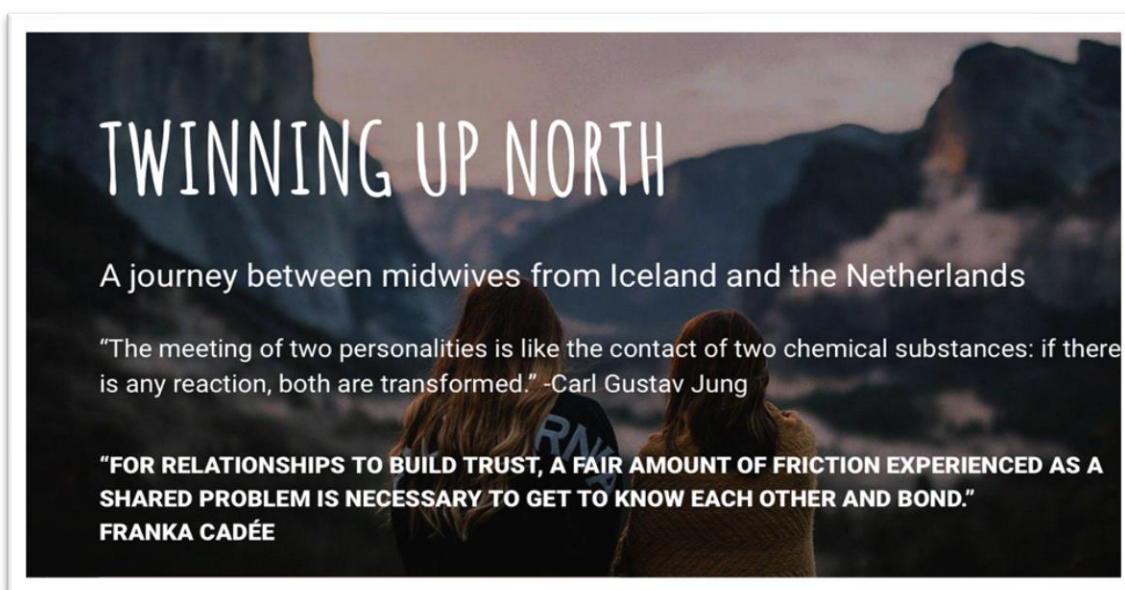
*Save lives, empower midwives!*



## Introduction

The midwives4mothers (m4m) charity (stichting) is an independent charity that was established by the Royal Dutch Association of Midwives (KNOV) in 2010. The main aim of midwives4mothers is to contribute towards strengthening the agency of midwives globally to enable them to provide quality midwifery care for women and their families. Growing scientific evidence shows that midwives play a key role in providing optimal quality sexual and reproductive healthcare through midwifery [1, 2].

The most foremost activity of m4m to reach her goal is through twinning. In a nutshell twinning is 'a cross-cultural reciprocal process where two groups of people work together to achieve joint goals' [7]. To establish a twinning project a reciprocal collaboration is facilitated between the KNOV and another organisations of midwives, guided and funded by m4m. In 2009-2012 this was with the Sierra Leone midwives (SLMA) [3,4] and from 2013-2017 a collaboration was initiated between the KNOV and the Moroccan association of Midwives (AMSF) [5]. In 2020 our last project 'twinning up North', which started in 2017, is successfully completed.



All these projects made use of the twinning method which entails that a group of up to fifteen midwives from two different contexts or cultures are linked one-to-one, as twins on the basis of equity, and a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and skills is established under the supervision of a multicultural team of twinning experts [6,7]. In this way midwives are supported to support each other and during the process they grow both professionally and personally [4-8].

## Twinning projects

The *twinning up North* project was deliberately chosen as a result of lessons learned from previous twinning projects. Outcomes from both research into twinning as well as former twinning project evaluations led to new insights into the factors that lead to successful twinning and resulted in the choice of the two current twinning projects [6]. The four main lessons learned to facilitate successful twinning are to:

- ✓ choose projects between organisations with a perceived smaller contextual and/or cultural difference,
- ✓ keep a strong focus on common goals directly related to midwifery care,
- ✓ implementing strategies to keep the momentum going
- ✓ choose a realistic project duration that keeps participants engaged.

## *Twinning up North*

**Goal:** To inspire and stimulate midwives from Iceland and the Netherlands to take the lead in generating positive change in their own work environment and be the example for their colleagues. And to exchange experiences and information between the two cultures with the aim to improving midwifery-led care in both countries.

2020 was the last year of the three year *twinning up North* project. This project was initiated because the Netherlands and Iceland both face issues of over-medicalisation of pregnancy and birth, also called “too much too soon” where the natural birth process is disturbed by early interventions. The increasing use of these unnecessary interventions leads to morbidity and negative birth experiences. Both can have long-term effects on women, their families and society.



Although the midwifery model emphasises the natural physiological approach of pregnancy and childbirth, the rising fear of childbirth and negative media attention influence the decisions that women are making. Midwives have been activists in promoting and protecting women’s birth rights at a time when society is beginning to view pregnancy and birth as medicalised events instead of as natural physiological processes of life. There is an urgent need for midwives in leadership roles to address this issue. The absence of role models and lack of leadership training in the areas of advocacy skills and media representation place limitations on midwives, their capabilities and their strengths.

During the twinning up North project fifteen twins, of similar backgrounds will be coupled (teachers to teachers, students to students, practising midwives to practising midwives etc.). These pairs are supported to set up a project together and how to lead, lobby for and promote their project in order to achieve successful results. These skills are taught in a total of 8 interactive workshops that are held throughout the three year project. The workshops are led by the project coordinators but will also include guest speakers and experts. Due to the Covid pandemic in 2020 the aim to meet each other twice a year during exchanges in both countries has not been accomplished. The project coordinators and the Twins have succeeded to get the best results possible when meeting each other is difficult. The results of this project are shown in a beautiful [E magazine](#) which you can find on the website. If possible the final physical meeting is scheduled to 2021. In 2021 the final exhibition has taken place in Iceland and The Netherlands.

## The m4m board

The end of the Iceland twinning project together with the Covid-19 pandemic is a natural reflection time for the KNOV and the m4m foundation. Partly due to Covid 10, the orientation towards a new project requires more time. The m4m board has the opinion that the new long-term choices can therefore be better done by a new board.

In 2022 the Board of m4m was temporary chaired by Carola Groenen. In 2022 the board had a few meetings with the board of KNOV about the future of m4m. Both boards agreed on the following road map with the following goals:

1. New board m4m in november 2022.
2. Communications with the members of KNOV about m4m.
3. Future projects m4m in 2023

Since september 2022 the Board of m4m was chaired by Maaïke van Rijn.

## Thank you for your support!

Thank you to all the midwife members of the KNOV who contributed € 12 each this year. Thank you also to the support of the KNOV head office team for the enabling conditions to support our twinning work.

<https://www.knov.nl/>



Maaïke van Rijn (chair m4m)

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