

# midwives4mothers charity Annual Report 2020

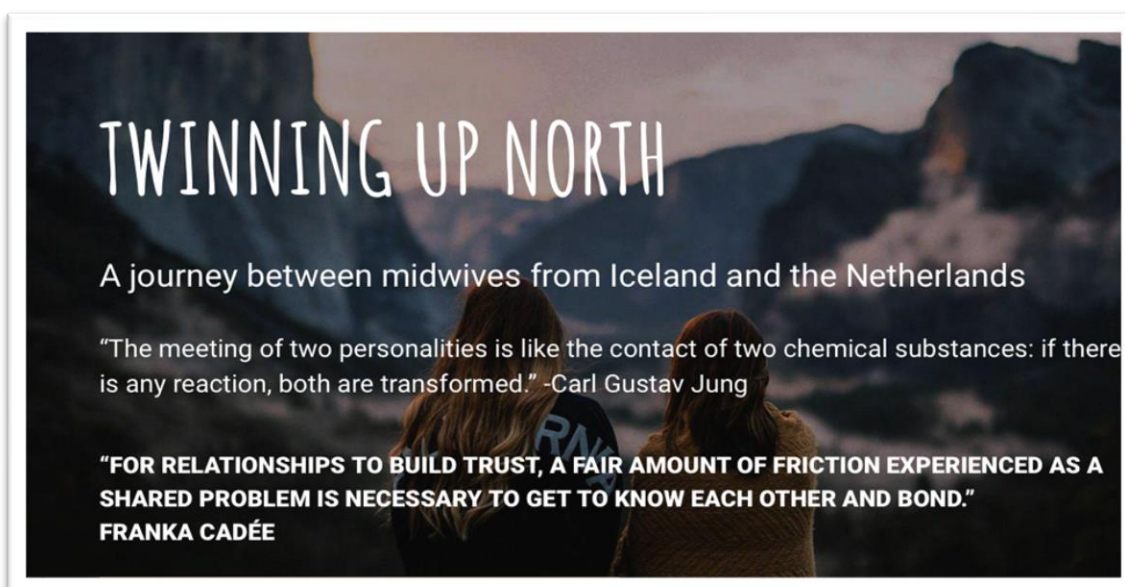
*Save lives, empower midwives!*



## 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 is 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.

## The m4m board

M4m has a voluntary Board chaired by Linda Rentes. The treasurer is George Miedema and secretary Noortje Jonker. In 2020 the board had 4 meetings with the project coordinators and 3 meetings with the KNOV board. Due to the Covid pandemic the orientation on a new international project is set on hold. The board wants to thank our loyal sponsor Moeders voor Moeders for all the years they have funded the Twinning projects. At the end of 2020 the Covid pandemic is still

active and international collaboration is difficult. The board want to take the first 6 months of 2021 to orientate on a new project. Consultations with the board of the KNOV are planned.

## 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/>



Thank you to Moeder voor Moeders (Aspen BV) for their financial contribution of €25,000 in 2020 for our twinning projects.  
<https://www.moedersvoormoeders.nl/over-ons/wie-is-moeders-voor-moeders/>



For the annual financial report please go to the m4m website [www.midwives4mothers.com](http://www.midwives4mothers.com)

On behalf of the m4m Board of,

Linda Rentes (chair m4m)

## References

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