



Brick by Brick

Building Healthy Communities

2020 Annual Report





FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

I am happy, yet again, to share our development journey as we continue to implement our life saving reproductive, maternal and newborn/child and adolescent health interventions.

This year has been challenging as we faced the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic for which we could not initially prepare. The lockdown imposed at the end of March 2020 affected the movement of clients, and our own program staff. Fortunately, we quickly made adjustments that enabled us to continue service delivery albeit at a slower pace. We rapidly returned to normal implementation after the lockdown.

Our strong partnership with the Rakai and Kyotera District Governments and the Ministry of Health helped us adjust well and to a great extent our program objectives were achieved over the year.

We observe success in implementation of our core Babies and Mothers Alive (BAMA) Program, the Mama Ambassador, the Mama Rescue as well as the FREO2 Programs.

In 2020, after completing the Mama Ambassador Program, funded by Grand Challenges Canada, we have scaled up this successful initiative with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and John Snow Incorporated.

We could not have made progress on implementation of these programs without the generous support of the Brick by Brick Partners' Board of Directors. We thank the people of the United States, Canada and Belgium who through USAID/JSI, the Belgian Development Agency/ENABEL, and Grand Challenges Canada help us to fund our work. We also thank the Puffin and ELMA Foundations and Nicoll Family Fund for the support that enables us to efficiently deliver our programs.

Last but not least, I take this opportunity to thank all of our staff who work tirelessly to deliver the programs to our beneficiaries, the Mama and Tata Ambassadors at the community level, the health workers in the government health facilities, as well as the District Local Government and Ministry of Health. I also thank the local Ugandan Board for their continued guidance in our programming.

We are looking forward to a new and interesting year with new programming in emergency transport and expansion of the Mama Ambassador Program. With the BAMA Program, and the launching of Mama Rescue we will increase our scope to address the three delays of access to quality maternity care. We will also increase our reach to adolescents through the expanded My Pads Program and the Mama Ambassador Program which supports both adolescent mothers and their infants.

With gratitude,

Daniel Murokora MD
Executive Director /Co-founder
Brick by Brick Uganda

To put it mildly, 2020 was a year unlike any other in our 17 year history. Like the rest of the world we have faced the challenges posed by this global pandemic, economic hardships due to multiple shutdowns, a health system stretched beyond its' resources, and vulnerable communities cut off from vital services.

Our dedicated staff of 34 worked miracles developing strategies to work around each and every stumbling block which we faced throughout the year. The resilience of our Babies and Mothers Alive (BAMA) Program partnership model was tested, and thanks to the commitment of our district government partners, and the courage of our front line health providers and the families we serve, we saw an expansion of our impact over the year.

Our BAMA Program continued its work improving the quality of maternal, reproductive and newborn care in 48 partnering government-funded health centers and hospitals. We established three Neonatal Intensive Care Units where, over the past two years, 910 newborns were admitted , of whom 91% were discharged alive. In 2016, 19 women died in government supported health centers and hospitals as a result of complications of pregnancy and labor. In 2020 this number was reduced to 6. The Institutional Maternal Mortality Ratio went from 220 per 100,000 live births to just 62, a 72% decrease, while the prenatal mortality dropped 40% over that same period. These lives saved are not an accident, rather they are the result of improved quality of care realized through the work of our staff, district Mentor Midwives, and over 100 Mama and Papa Ambassadors who are our champions for maternal and child health throughout the Rakai and Kyotera Districts.

Our Mama Ambassador Program, serving adolescent mothers & babies through peer-support groups is thriving. Thanks to the USAID/ JSIs Partnership Plus , we expanded MAP to serve 1000 mothers and babies for 2 years. Our research proved that the we can improve the health and development of babies and mothers' mental health. Our new program focuses on fathers, extended family and the prevention of SGBV.

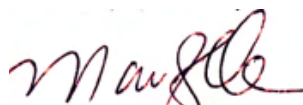
In spite of the shutdown of all schools for most of 2020, our My Pads Comprehensive Adolescent Health Program continued its work linking adolescent girls and young women to quality sexual and reproductive health services, while providing both girls and boys with the knowledge and life skills needed to ensure they stay healthy and safe.

Thanks to the generous support of ENABEL, the Belgian Development Agency, we are ready to launch our Mama Rescue Project in 2021. Due to the Covid lockdown, we experieced a series of delays, but our innovative solution to address the lack of access to transportation for women in labor will be up and running in 2021.

With our simple mobile phone app, we will link women to local motorcycle taxi drivers, providing lifesaving transport from remote village to health center and emergency referral from health center to hospital through our corps of trained automobile taxi drivers.

None of our work would be possible without the partnership we have created with Rakai and Kyotera District Governments, the Ugandan Ministry of Health, and the communities we serve throughout the year. We are grateful for the support of many donors, who generously invest in the work of building healthy communities in Uganda.

With gratitude,



Marc Sklar MD, MPH
Executive Director
Brick by Brick Partners





Who we are

Brick by Brick is an innovative bi-national partnership between Brick by Brick Partners, a US-based 501(c)(3) non-profit, and Brick by Brick Uganda, a community-based NGO registered with the Government of Uganda.

About us

We were founded by Drs. Daniel Murokora and Marc Sklar in 2004 with the mission to improve health, education, and economic opportunity in the Rakai and Kyotera Districts of Uganda. Our staff of 34 committed development professionals empower women and their families to build healthy communities by supporting maternal, newborn, and child healthcare (MNCH), sexual and reproductive health education, and quality primary education.



Babies and Mothers Alive (BAMA) Program Improving Maternal & Child Health

The Babies and Mothers Alive (BAMA) Program is a partner with the Ugandan Ministry of Health to improve the quality of health care and reduce maternal and newborn mortality in the Rakai and Kyotera Districts. Since 2005, the BAMA Program has led to a 72% reduction in maternal mortality across 48 partnering health facilities.

The BAMA Program mobilizes 120 Community Health Workers, known as Mama and Papa Ambassadors, to help increase demand for institutional obstetric services among hard-to-reach populations.

Our dedicated Ambassadors assist pregnant women in rural areas to develop a birth preparedness plan, stressing the importance of delivering at a health facility under the supervision of a skilled birth attendant.

Our 30 peer-to-peer educators, known as Mentor Midwives, have trained 300 health care providers in emergency obstetric and newborn care preventing the vast majority of deaths that are due to treatable complications from child birth or pregnancy. Our team of four Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) specialists work with health care administrators to improve the quality of data collection and analysis and help doctors and midwives make data driven decisions.

Mama Ambassador Program

Improving Adolescent Maternal & Child Health.

In Uganda, 24% of women became pregnant before the age of 19. With the support of the Canadian Government's Grand Challenges Canada Saving Brains Program, Brick by Brick Uganda launched the Mama Ambassador Program, establishing over 30 peer support care groups for 430 adolescent mothers at Rakai Hospital.

These monthly sessions, which start in the third trimester of pregnancy and last for the first year of the baby's life, focus on parenting skills, infant bonding and psychosocial support for young mothers.

The program demonstrated significant improvements in infant development, improved mental health for mothers, and a greater than two-fold increase in uptake of postpartum family planning.

In 2020, with the support of the United States Agency for Development (USAID), we began a scale-up of this successful program to reach over 1000 adolescent mothers, fathers and their extended families. We have expanded this program from one to two years and expanded community outreach to improve the support systems for victims of sexual and gender-based violence.





Mama Rescue Project

Improving Access to Maternal & Child Health

In 2020, Brick by Brick Partnered with the Belgian Development Agency/ENABEL, Dining for Women Foundation and the Spring Fertility Foundation, to launch the Mama Rescue Project a mobile phone application to provide women from remote areas with free transport to health facilities via motorcycle or automobile taxi.

When fully operational, Mama Rescue will provide more than 10,000 women in labor with transport from village to health center annually, as well as emergency transport for women in need of referral from health center to the hospital.

By addressing the delay in accessing skilled maternity and newborn care once the decision to deliver at a health center has been made, we expect to dramatically reduce the time it will take women to move from their communities to health facilities and to refer them from lower level to higher level health units, ultimately leading to a reduction in maternal and newborn complications and deaths.

Our solution has been developed locally in partnership with Yo! Uganda, and its strengthened by MTN, the largest mobile phone network carrier in sub-Saharan Africa.

Due to the Covid shutdown, we experienced a number of delays but we are happy to announce that this innovative solution will be launched in 2021.



My Pads Program

Comprehensive Reproductive Health for Adolescents

In 2020, in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic we expanded our My Pads Program model to a three tiered comprehensive adolescent health program:

In-school: As we faced the shutdown of schools for the entire year, we re-focused our efforts to reach 600 students in their villages.

Out of school: We engaged 480 adolescent girls and boys in rural communities in Kyarurangira sub-county in Rakai in the My Pads comprehensive SRH program.

Adolescent-friendly reproductive health care: All 1080 adolescents are linked to health facilities where adolescent-friendly health services have been established with BAMA -trained nurses staffing these centers.

As we pilot this innovative program engaging young people to promote healthy life choices, we are actively seeking funds to expand our work beyond the Rakai District.

School Program

Improving the Quality of Primary Education

The School Program partners with the Uganda Ministry of Education and local rural communities to improve physical infrastructure in universal primary schools through the construction of new classrooms and quality teacher housing. On March 22nd all schools in Uganda were closed, throughout the year.

Therefore, much of our work improving schools infrastructure and the quality of education was brought to a halt.

Since 2004, we have re-built nine Universal Primary Schools serving over 5000 students, providing a supportive learning environment, solar powered lighting, safe water and sanitation systems, libraries, and adequate teacher housing.





Brick by Brick Construction Company

Building a Better Uganda Through Social Enterprise

Established in 2011, this innovative social enterprise is proving that a commitment to the Triple Bottom Line, people, planet and profit can work. With expertise in the design and construction of water and sanitation systems, Brick by Brick Construction has completed over 300 projects throughout Uganda, providing safe, clean water for over 200,000 people.

We utilize an environmentally sustainable technology, Interlocking Stabilized Soil Bricks, preserving an estimated 22 acres of forest and protecting wetlands throughout Uganda.

In the midst of the Covid shutdown, Brick by Brick Construction Company employed 40 skilled masons with fair wage jobs. Our employees are integrally involved in our company's growth and development as a national leader in environmentally sustainable construction.

In 2020, despite the hardships imposed by the pandemic, Brick by Brick Construction completed a major eight-month long project for the Dugdale Charitable Trust, a New Zealand-based non-profit.

We constructed a 7-room classroom building, six-unit staff housing, a three-room nursery classroom, a kitchen fully equipped with energy efficient stoves, a ten-stance latrine block for both boys and girls with washrooms, a four-stance latrine block for teachers, and renovations for the existing washrooms.



OUR STORIES

“My parents were angry when I became pregnant, and so they preferred to save face in the community and preserve their dignity by sending me to live with a distant aunty.

I reached a point of wanting to commit suicide. Life was not that pleasing . I lost all hope studying in school, and suffered with anxiety everyday.

The BAMA staff and Mama Ambassadors provided counseling and guidance and told me that I could go back to school. During one of our MAP sessions I was asked to invite family. Despite how she felt about me, I chose to bring my mother because she was still my best friend.

It is through those sessions that we met counselor Fredrick Mugabi who told us that even after giving birth I can still go back to school.”

Gloria Nanyonja
Mama Ambassador Program Beneficiary

“I have learned how to be a better person and take care of my baby, and I am a very proud mother. I have personally made many friends who I can talk to when I have a problem. I regained my lost hope when I found out that there are people of my age who are pregnant and willing to keep and take care of their children.

During the sessions, I learned a lot about child nutrition, child development, and good hygiene and above all, to love my baby.

I have made peace within myself. I want to thank Brick by Brick and their program. It has been a good one because I have rediscovered who I am. We were taught, guided, and supported to accept our situation.”

Irene Namubiru
Babies and Mothers Alive Program Beneficiary





“ I am so excited to have been trained by the My Pads Program on how to make reusable menstrual pads and about the myths surrounding sexual and reproductive health.

I will be an ambassador in my community and help others learn how to make reusable pads.”

Deborah Nabukalu
My Pads Program Beneficiary

“We are grateful for the support that has been given to us by the BAMA Program in extending services to adolescents through home visits such as antenatal and postnatal care, and immunizations, because there are no modes of transport for these mothers to make it to the hospital for their monthly antenatal visits.

Every day we are adjusting to the rapidly changing circumstances on the ground, ensuring our communities are not abandoned and receive the services they need.”

Betty Nakamate
Midwife, Kalisizo Hospital





“Our country is struggling to reduce preventable deaths of pregnant women and their newborn babies during these times of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Our District is privileged to partner with the BAMA Program, which is committed to closing the gaps in the health system to prevent these avoidable deaths.

The health services in Rakai District have improved with the intervention of BAMA. The health workers have benefitted through capacity building which has improved service delivery thanks to BAMA.

The health services management in the District of Rakai Local Government has elevated due to the intervention of BAMA, and we appreciate that.”

Rasto Kawesi Muhangi
Assistant District Health Officer Rakai

“Our Mama Rescue Program, linking women in labor to motorcycle and automobile taxis is moving forward addressing a major barrier in access to quality maternal and newborn care at our partnering health facilities.

This is especially urgent during the Covid lockdown which disproportionately impacts poor, rural families.”

Stella Nalubowa
Mama Rescue Coordinator



Our Impact: Babies and Mothers Alive



43,960

women
served in
2020.



26

community
outreaches
conducted in
2020.



910

newborns admitted
to our 3 NICU's
since 2019, 91%
discharged alive.

72%

reduction in
maternal
deaths since
2016.



95%

accuracy in data
at our partnering
health facilities.



Our Impact: My Pads Program

2154

adolescents received HIV counseling and testing since 2016.



529

adolescent boys and young men served since 2016.



11,153

reusable menstrual pads made since 2016.



138

peer educators trained since 2016.



3654

adolescent girls and young women served since 2016.



Our Impact: Mama Ambassador Program



752
adolescent mothers
and babies served.



90 faith-based, cultural
and community leaders
sensitized in women's
health and rights.



Our research
demonstrated
dramatic
improvement in
infant
development
scores.



20%
of our young
mothers referred
for SGBV
counseling and
support.



88%
program
completion rate
for adolescent
mothers
participating in
the MAP.

Our Impact: Brick by Brick Construction Company



Over **300**
projects
completed



Fair wage jobs for
40 skilled
masons.

Over **200,000**
people provided access
to safe, clean water.



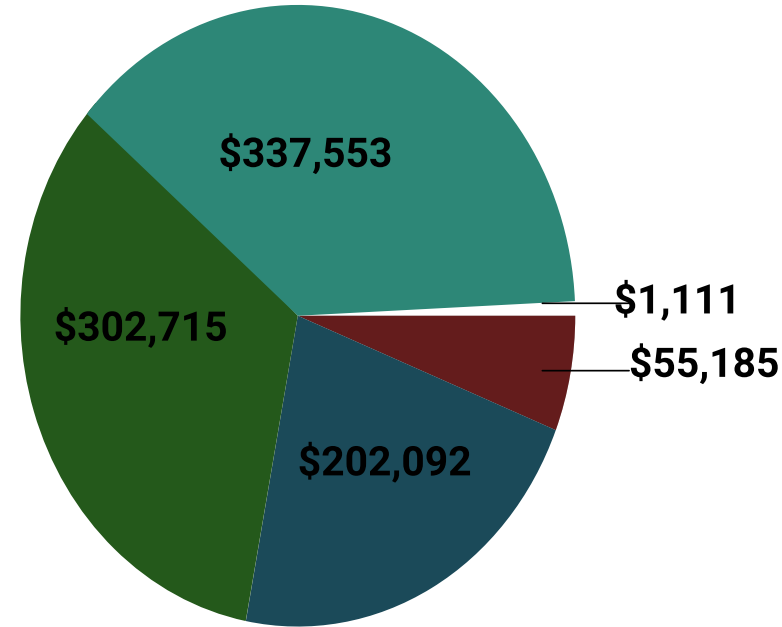
22 acres of forest
saved since 2011.



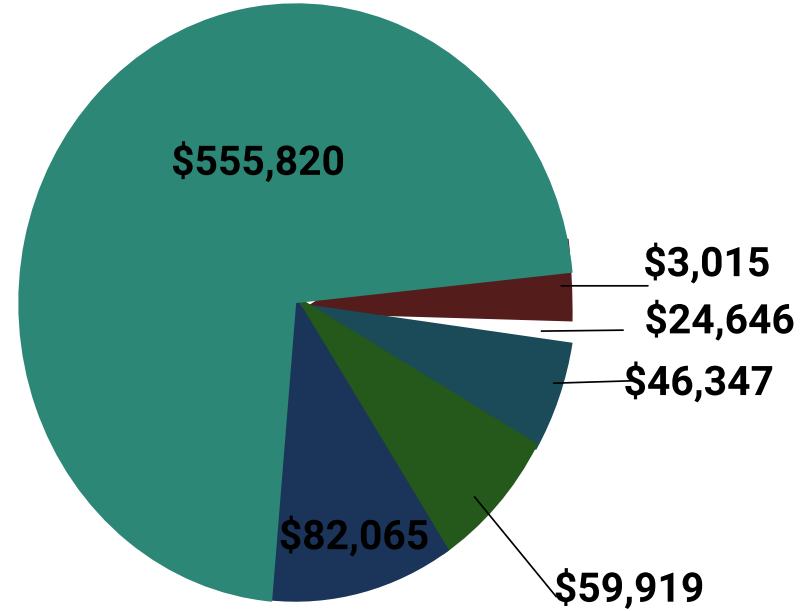
Our Finances

Combined finances for Brick by Brick Uganda and Brick by Brick Partners

2020 Income

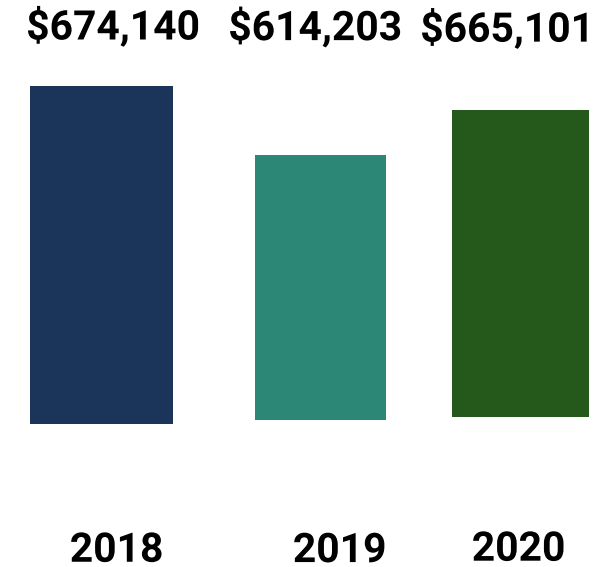







2020 Expenses









Total expenses \$771,812

Program spending: 2018-2020



	Foundations	\$302,71 (34%)
	Individual Donations	\$202,092 (22%)
	Government	\$337,556 (38%)
	Events	\$55,185 (6%)
	Other	\$1,111 (<1%)

	BAMA	\$555,820 (72%)
	Internship	\$3015 (<1%)
	Fundraising	\$24,646 (3%)
	School Program	\$46,347 (6%)
	My Pads Program	\$59,919 (8%)
	Administration	\$82,065 (11%)

Thank You to Our Generous Partners



Ugandan Ministry of Health

Enabel



Nicoll Family Fund



Partnerships **PLUS**