



**ethni.**  
**annual**  
**report**

2020

# our mission

To provide safe and empowering spaces for young women from diverse cultural backgrounds to share, connect, learn and grow.

# our vision

To live in a world where cultural and gender inequality no longer exists; a world where every young woman feels safe to step into her true power and be her own hero.

# our history

Founded in 2017, Ethni began as a social enterprise that provided support and meaningful training and employment opportunities for young women from culturally diverse backgrounds. By 2019, we had supported a number of young women to gain part and full-time jobs, however, we noticed they still wanted to stay involved with Ethni. When asked why, they said it was because Ethni was a place where they had a voice and felt heard.

This insight was the catalyst for us to reimagine the future of Ethni. In that moment, we realised we had created much more than training and employment opportunities—we'd created a powerful sisterhood.

In early 2020, with a new sense of purpose, we launched a range of programs that would support young women and equip them with the tools they need to thrive across a broad range of life situations. In the words of the sisterhood, we provide the tools they need to "do life".

# about us



We provide safe and empowering spaces for young women to learn, grow, connect and thrive.

We believe that the road towards cultural and gender equality starts with uplifting young women. So, Ethni creates opportunities for young women from diverse cultural backgrounds to embrace their stories, build deep connections, navigate life's ups and downs, and drive change in their communities.

We're not here to save anybody. Our young women are passionate, resilient, and brave; they are committed to shaping their own future and being their own hero.

At Ethni, our role is to equip young women with valuable skills to help them navigate life's challenges, their way. We respect their individual journeys and we're there by their side if and when they need us - for the long haul.





## MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

# kim rollason-nokes

With the COVID pandemic, 2020 brought new opportunities and challenges across our sector and Ethni was no different.

We started the year with a re-visioning session, where our team of young women reflected on our achievements to date, what made Ethni special and what they were most passionate to focus on into the future. While they loved our previous focus on training and employment, what really connected them to Ethni was the feeling of being seen and heard, of being a part of something.

This insight was the catalyst for us to reimagine the future of Ethni. In that moment, we realised we had created much more than training and employment opportunities—we'd created a powerful sisterhood.

Following this session, Australia and the world around us went into a hard lock down. While we were no longer able to provide face-to-face programs, we were given the time to re-brand, re-vision and build a strong offering of programs co-designed by our team of young women, led by needs of their peers and communities.

As we came out of lockdown and started re-engaging with our communities in person, we hit our stride. We found ourselves with a growing sisterhood - both online and offline - and were able to deliver programs that were deeply meaningful and impactful. 2020 was our biggest and best year yet, but it is just the beginning.

**KIM ROLLASON-NOKES**

FOUNDER + CEO



MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH REP

## nasteho mukhtar

2020 has been a year packed with big positive changes for Ethni. Ethni is now registered as a charity with the ACNC and Ethni also has employed 8 young women of colour that are passionate about better future for women and work towards making the lives of their co-sisters easier. This came with re-branding and, of course, the goal of providing cultural safe and empowering spaces where the young women in our community can come together to connect and thrive.

2020 saw us launch new programs including the Future Female Changemakers, conversation, Inspired Futures and Flawless. Those programs wowed our girls and the learning curves and milestones achieved through those programs was incredible.

The road to create a space where young women felt connected, safe and growth for Ethni has not always been easy as there were many challenges. Nonetheless, even with the challenges

Ethni has built a growing strong relationship with many young women. This is what I am most proud of because now we have built connections with young women and are able to provide for their genuine needs rather than what is assumed their needs are.

I am very proud of the community Ethni has created this year, and a space filled with opportunities for growth Ethni has provided young women. This is only the beginning for the ultimate Ethni experience with the employment of the passionate young women.

**NASTEHO MUKHTAR**  
2020 YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE

2020

75

young women from CALD backgrounds engaged in programs and support services

8

young women from CALD backgrounds employed in the Ethni team

4

new programs co-designed by young women were developed and launched

# conversations

In light of all the chaos that was happening in 2020, Ethni Conversations was successfully launched. The aim was to provide a safe space where young women of colour felt fierce and comfortable to share their experiences and adversity in a non-judgmental space. This fostered a culture of unity where the girls felt more embraced and valued for their resilience and life journey.

Through each conversation, the young women participating felt more stronger and more confident to share more of their experiences, which ranged from domestic and family violence, depression, anxiety, self-confidence issues, intergenerational challenges with their parents and families and more. After each conversation, the young women stated they felt heard and seen and more empowered through their reflection.

The young women also invited friends along and you could see them leading the way in making the subject of mental health less taboo among their friends, families and communities.

**NASTEHO MUKHTAR - PROGRAM CO-DESIGNER + COORDINATOR**



# meet sifa

Sifa has written a specific reflection on Conversations, how it has helped her to be able to share her stories and ask for support when needed. Sifa is 21 years old and arrived as a refugee from Burundi. Sifa is currently learning English at TAFE whilst aspiring to be nursing in the near future.

"I was expecting to know how I can look after myself, however through conversations I got to meet very interesting people that helped shape my life. My favourite thing I took from conversation is when others share their stories, just by listening I found this helped me to know that I am not the only one with a problem. It was also useful for me because it helped me to develop my confidence and to know how good it is to share your feelings to others. As weird as it is to say, I have learnt many things like asking for help when mentally struggling. This will only help me stay healthier and happier. Yes I will continue coming because Conversation helps me be able to deal with lots of things like how good it is to share your feelings and of course to meet new friends there"







# inspired futures

The main idea for Inspired Futures was to create a learning experience by providing more knowledge about pathways available to young women from CALD background leaving high school.

This passion project came to life as we recognised a lot of graduating young women in different circumstances facing unique challenges and not being provided with the needed support. I experienced this myself when the only choice provided by my school and family was university which wasn't really an option as I was considered an international student on my bridging visa and unable to pay the fees.

We designed this program as an opportunity for self-development in career or employment purposes, sharing personal journeys/experiences about post high school transitions, employment and career journeys, setting goals and action plans to achieve them, making them realise the skills and abilities they have and other personal things such hobbies and leisure, healthy relationships, building connections, barriers and challenges etc.

We had the opportunity to deliver this project and it was truly wonderful seeing some of the girls come in unsure about what they want to accomplish and by the end of the sessions having a better idea about their passions and creating an action plan to follow. In some cases, they were sure of where they wanted to be, however didn't not know how to get there then the workshops provided them with steps and connections/sidekicks to move forward and accept help when necessary.

In the future we are aspiring to expand on this project and provide more training, mentoring and employment pathways for young women involved in this project.

**SARA SAEIDI - PROGRAM CO-DESIGNER + COORDINATOR**

# future female change makers

Future Female Changemakers was a leadership program designed to foster young emerging female leaders from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. The program was based on two fundamental principles. Firstly, that in our current climate, the world needs more inspiring leaders that balance strength and courage with empathy and compassion, while embracing and representing our diversity and striving for equity. Secondly, that young women from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds have a unique set of skills, strengths, personal attributes and lived experiences that, when supported and equipped with the right tools, can meet this need and be influential leaders and changemakers in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

This program was designed and delivered for Ethni by Venessa Lonie. Venessa brought together her own range of personal and professional experiences of leadership, combined with guest speakers, mentors and interactive workshops to a 12 week program for 15 young women. Participants of this program have gone on to take on leadership roles within their schools and communities. Two have been elected to be Ethni's upcoming Youth Representatives for 2021 and another has started her own organisation.





# meet elizabeth

The Future Changemakers Program was a turning point in my life and the 3 months I spent with inspirational and driven women from all backgrounds and interests has had an immense effect on the way I lead my life.

Before I joined the program, I had no intentions of taking on major leadership roles but was rather looking at positions that was more isolated and single-team productions. However, as I began exploring myself and my strengths and weaknesses within leadership as a whole, I realised that I wanted to pursue a career and future in positions where I could fulfil my aspirations of being a voice in legitimacy. I was able to acquire life skills including bettering my communication with others with differing leadership styles and skills and how to be part of a good team and be a better leader to those around me.

I learned that leadership is always about the people and at the core of everything and every decision, it should righteously benefit those that are affected by those decisions. I have begun my work at Ethni part time and I continuously focus on bettering my communication with my colleagues in order to get the best possible outcomes in everything we work together in. I also adjust myself to take care of those that need extra care such as new members to the team and make sure they feel at home whilst simultaneously making sure they have as many opportunities as possible to lead the team. I continue to take risks like I learned from the program and whenever I fail, I take it as an opportunity to learn and work on what I am lacking to help others around me.

# supporters

This year we received incredible support from volunteers and organisations providing us pro bono services. This support was pivotal in Ethni being able to build a strong foundation in which to launch into its new vision.

**3340+**

volunteer hours provided  
by the team and  
supporters from the  
community.

**\$53k**

pro bono support and  
services provided - from  
program delivery to  
branding and  
marketing



# 2020

## funding partners



## program partners

