

ethni.
annual
report

2021



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 social change in their communities together.

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.



our mission

To provide safe and empowering spaces where young women from diverse cultural backgrounds can come together to navigate life's challenges and drive meaningful social change in their communities.

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.

Over 2020 and 2021, Ethni found its stride and co-designed range of new programs with our team that focus on equipping young women with the tools they need to thrive. From mental health and DFV support to leadership development, employment and life skills. We are proud to support young women across their full life experience and be part of their journey's to becoming the future leaders our workplaces, communities and world needs.



Fun in the sun at one of our school holiday Beach Retreats



MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

kim rollason-nokes

Ethni's shift in vision and focus in 2020 paved the way for 2021 to be a year of growth, learning and evolution as an organisation. Through the vision of our young women and with the support of amazing partnerships and collaborations, we were able to design and launch some exciting new initiatives.

It is hard to capture all the highlights of the year in a short report, but the common thread through them all was the incredible vision and passion shared by our team and community of young women as they took ideas and brought them to life.

From our Safe Sisters and Big Sis projects, to Ethni Studio and our 'Our Voices. Our Stories' school program, each was created and led by an outstanding team of young women from diverse cultural backgrounds. They brought together their own skills, strengths and lived experiences to create meaningful, life changing experiences for their peers and broader communities. The growth in our team to 15 young women who are working across program facilitation, peer mentoring, admin and Ethni Studio is, for me, a reflection of what an amazing year 2021 has been.

As we head into 2022, we have ambitious plans to expand the services we deliver, build our financial sustainability and continue to develop a team and community of young women that will be the future leaders we need. I know with our expanding team and their shared vision and relentless tenacity that anything is possible.

KIM ROLLASON-NOKES
FOUNDER + CEO



MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH REP

naomi musangi

The year of 2021 has been a year full of positivity for Ethni. Ethni has employed 15 young women from CALD backgrounds and many young women of colour, who are extremely passionate about empowering other young women. These young women have lived experience which makes recruitment so special, as this shows that these women will work to make the lives of their co-sisters a lot easier. This was possible because Ethni has created a safe space for young women from CALD background to be able to express themselves with no judgment. They have built an incredible bond with Ethni as an organisation.

This year was also huge as Ethni also designed a program called "Big Sis" this program aims to support young women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds who have or are currently experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV) to navigate the challenges, have access to crucial, culturally safe support and break down cultural and social barriers to engagement within their family and broader community networks. Ethni was excited to partner in this project with QPASTT to provide training for the team who will be delivering Big Sis in 2022 and beyond to further their knowledge and understanding around mental health and domestic and family violence.

Ethni as an organisation has gained so many beautiful young women from CALD backgrounds and built an extremely strong foundation. Many young women feel at peace and have made Ethni a safe place to be themselves and share their passion, life goals, challenges and many more. As a young woman from a refugee background growing up in Australia I wished we had an organisation like Ethni, as life can be extremely challenging for young women. However, I am extremely grateful that Ethni now exists so that we can equip young women with valuable skills to help them navigate life's challenges, their way, and provide the tools they need to "do life". With all the amazing work Ethni is doing, I cannot wait to see what the future holds.

NAOMI MUSANGI
YOUTH REP + BIG SIS MENTOR

2021

IN A SNAPSHOT

152

young women
engaged in
programs and
support services

15

young women
employed in the
Ethni team

6

new co-designed
programs and initiatives
were developed and
launched.

big sis

After a year of development, we have been given the exciting opportunity to pilot our Peer Support Model in partnership with QPASTT with funding from the QLD Government with a particular focus on young women who are currently experiencing or have experienced domestic or family violence.

The 'Big Sis' program will provide a 6 month program that both supports young women to navigate the challenges of DFV, while also assisting them to reconnect and build stronger relationships with their mothers or other important women in their lives as a means to breaking the intergenerational cycle of violence.

In 2021, we recruited an incredible team of 6 peer mentors who bring their own lived experiences of DFV and mental health and a passionate commitment to support other young women through their own journeys. To prepare, the team participated in four training days with QPASTT, The Centre for Women and Taking Steps. These training days spanned everything from DFV and mental health literacy, to unpacking and understanding the role of a Peer Support Mentor.



The Big Sis team in training with QPASTT.



Exploring our strengths at our
Inspired Futures program



our voices. our stories.

The Our Voices. Our Stories project aimed to foster intercultural understanding and dialogue and build cultural competency among children and young people through cultural arts workshops in schools, while at the same time providing training, employment and leadership skills for young women from CALD backgrounds.

This project commenced with a Facilitator Training Program where 14 young women came together to learn the fundamental skills of designing and delivering workshops for children and young people with Queenie Pelesa from District Studios. They co-designed the content of the program, which was then offered to high schools across SE QLD. We also had support from the Global Learning Centre in designing the content of the programs so they were meaningful and aligned with QLD curriculum. During 2021, the program reached:

843 children and young
people engaged
across SE QLD

Some of the highlights include, 5 out of the 7 schools we have delivered to have expressed interest in booking us again in 2022. We also have seen facilitators building confidence in delivering the workshops with one facilitator receiving a standing ovation at one school for her spoken word poem about coming to Australia as a refugee.

meet sheila

I joined this program because I wanted to be a part of the change I dream to see in this world. By being able to help facilitate these various programs it enabled me to not only feel a sense of purpose but also hopeful that the change I want to witness is unraveling right in front of my eyes.

Through this program I have learnt that patience is key, I would also say that these programs have made me become more resilient, confident, and mindful.

The biggest highlight has been being able to share my own life experiences with total strangers, yet being able to relate with some who have gone through similar experiences.

I think these workshops are important as I definitely think that it is a starting point to foster a positive internal monologue within each individual, as to how they may perceive and take in other people's perspective and life experiences moving forward. They create safe spaces for young people to have such difficult conversations that are paramount to a healthier future for all.

I love what this organisation stands for, and for the many opportunities presented to help better my leadership skills. It has brought me so far so quickly and to be able to have such complex conversations with such strong, beautiful like-minded women is the power move we all need!



The Facilitator team after delivering workshops to 180 students at Stuartholme.



stuartholme school

"A holistic education is one that challenges students to not only listen but understand and respect the experience of others. Working with Ethni provides that for our students at Stuartholme.

Through engaging facilitation techniques, cultural immersion workshops and vulnerable storytelling the Ethni presenters encourage students to see a world beyond their lived experience.

The benefit of these processes is the development of not just empathy, but compassion in our students. Additionally, it highlights the joy, diversity and talent that refugee and migrant members contribute to our community. Looking beyond the student experience, the Ethni workshops are also a useful professional development tool for staff, allowing them to explore multiculturalism on a deeper level and are able to unpack the Ethni experience in their own classrooms.

The Ethni team have been wonderful to collaborate with, consistently open to feedback and willing to develop programs and initiatives. Ethni holds a unique point of difference, with vibrant and passionate facilitators who truly communicate on our student's level. The positive feedback from our students is evidence that Ethni's approach is effective in creating change."

CLAIRE LAWLER

SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATOR - STUARTHOLME SCHOOL

SAFE SISTERS

The Safe Sisters project was a multifaceted project that created opportunities for awareness, education and healing around the issue of sexual violence among young women from CALD backgrounds. This included both in-person workshops and events and a series of online resources.

The project was led by a team of 8 young women who designed the structure and content and led the conversations across the events. The highlight of the project was a women's gathering at the end of October that brought together over 40 women of different ages, cultural backgrounds and life experiences to talk about sexual violence, how it shows up in their lives and communities and what we need to do to support young women to break the cycle and heal from sexual violence. Safe Sisters also saw the launch of our own 'WGYG Unpacked' Podcast, which further 'unpacked' topics discussed on our We Got You Girl instagram platform.

Resources were developed by the Ethni design team and are available on our Safe Sisters Hub online at:

ethni.com.au/safesisters



Nas, Sheila and Aish - three of the Safe Sisters team

WORDS FROM THE **gathering**

“While I breathe
I hope”

“There is strength in vulnerability and sisterhood. Healing is best done together. Facilitating these important discussions is an investment in the community collective healing”

“Keep the conversation going, listen to our young women, support them and watch them grow”

“So powerful and continue the sisterhood”



Aminata facilitating a discussion at Safe Sisters.

Ethni Studio team with Jessica Rhian who provided pro bono brand strategy support



ethni studio

Ethni Studio is a social enterprise initiative created and launched by three young graphic designers in our Ethni team - Le Thy Nguyen, Natasha Peter and Adorel Ng.

The Studio provides branding services to purpose-led businesses and organisations to bring their brand to life through carefully crafted and executed design across a range of business needs.

Ethni Studio was founded to empower women, drive diversity in design, and build positive and supportive connections for positive social change. The teams vision is to use the Studio as a platform to support other young women of colour in the design industry by providing mentoring, internships and employment pathways.

Ethni Studio has worked with 5 clients in 2021 with incredible feedback on their services.

In 2021, the design team also designed and launched a range of products, including our Strengths and Feelings Cards and notebooks that are sold as fundraising for Ethni. In 2021, we made over \$5,200 in product sales.



Elizabeth with our Feelings Cards developed by our Design Team.

our team

2021 saw the biggest growth in the Ethni team as we continue to build on one of our strategic pillars of creating employment pathways and building a team of skilled and confident young women.

The Ethni team now consists of 15 employees who are spread across 4 different programs and areas of the organisation.

4

Peer Support
Mentors in our
Big Sis program

3

Designers in
the Ethni
Studio team

2

Team members
in operations
and admin

6

Facilitators
delivering
programs

Over the year, we received support from a number of people and organisations who provided training, mentoring and professional development to our team. These organisations included QPASTT, District Studios, JR Creative, Global Learning Centre, The Centre for Women, Renee Shea and House of Eden Studio.



Nasteho with one of our Social Work student placements, Marina.



supporters



This year we received incredible support from volunteers and organisations providing us pro bono services. This support was pivotal in our organisation having it's biggest year of growth so far and creating opportunities for so many young women in our communities.

2200+

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

\$22k

pro bono support and
services provided - from
team development to
marketing and mentoring.



2021

funding partners



pro bono support

renee shea

Jessica Rhian Creative

program partners



Specialist Domestic Violence & Women's Wellbeing Services



QPASTT
Queensland program of assistance to survivors of torture and trauma

