

2020 Review



Welcome

Founder message
Lauren Exton
Director Followings
Foundation

I acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which this report was prepared. I also pay respect to the Wurundjeri Elders, past and present, and extend this respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait people from other communities across Australia.

I am pleased to share with you the 2020 report of our ongoing partnership with Busubi Empowered Communities (BEC). This partnership brings to life our commitment to community development and sustainable poverty reduction.

When Followings Foundation came to life in 2017 - the pace was fast and the impact was mighty. By 2019, we had taken our fourth group of volunteers to the village of Busubi to work at the BEC Learning Centre we built in 2017.

Last year's report outlined the upcoming goals for our fifth team who were headed to Uganda in 2020, At the top of the list: expanding the current programs on offer—Agriculture, Tailoring, Performing Arts, Sports, Computer Studies, programs that are all free to the community and run seven days a week.

Given the global experience in the year 2020 it would be fair to assume that we didn't meet these goals - but guess what? We did - and we even added in a new Catering program!

Despite our fifth immersion group never reaching the rich soils of Uganda due to the COVID19 pandemic, and the Centre being shut down for five months due to government lockdown in the middle of 2020, we still achieved growth.

Followings Foundation continued to fundraise and support the team in Uganda virtually, and the BEC team worked harder than ever to not only empower their students and staff with new skills and a stronger sense of community, but to protect them from the harsh consequences of Ugandan lockdown and COVID19.

None of this would have been possible without our Creative Engagement Director—Rebecca Boon, our dedicated Board Members, our donors, everyone who has contributed in any way to the success of Followings Foundation over the past year. Most importantly, thank you to John and Shallon and Derrick and their team at BEC for excellent reporting, keeping our donors up to date and for striving to grow stronger everyday!

In 2021, I look forward to growing our impact in the communities where we work and live, and continuing to make a difference around the world.

“We are so proud of our commitment to grassroots change. Both partners understand that the goal is neither to give nor receive endlessly, but to grow together. Side-by-side, BEC and Followings Foundation are committed to becoming beacons of change in both Australia and Uganda. Our mutual desire to fundamentally redefine the nature of internationally assisted Community Development makes us unstoppable.”

- Lauren Exton
Founder & Director

Foundation Objectives

Objectives

To continue to support and fiscally sponsor the staffing, resourcing and maintenance of BEC Learning Centre as they move towards becoming financially independent.

To create partnerships with non-government organisations and community groups addressing poverty, social disadvantage and environmental protection.

To increase the breadth of Followings Foundations' traditional corporate social responsibilities, ensuring the best possible social and developmental impact.

To continue to be an active ally against systemic racism in all its forms.

Followings Foundation Board

Rebecca Boon
Secretary



Lauren Exton
Treasurer



Liz Lynch
Director



Staff (paid) and volunteers from Busubi Empowered Communities



John Ssentamu

Director



Shallon Nakimwero

Manager



Milly Nasejje

Tailoring



Ronald Nsubuga

Performing Arts



Pauline Namatovu

Hairdressing



Claire Nakimbugwe

Computers & Catering



Dr Brian Ssenkumba

Medical Volunteer



Paul Nkalubo

Agricultural Volunteer



Joshua Niyomugabo

Security



Derrick Ssebugwano

Sports Coach Volunteer



Lydia Nasejje

Leadership Volunteer



Vincent Senge

Finance & Savings Volunteer



Fundraising & Spending

It only costs us \$7 to raise \$100 and that puts us in the

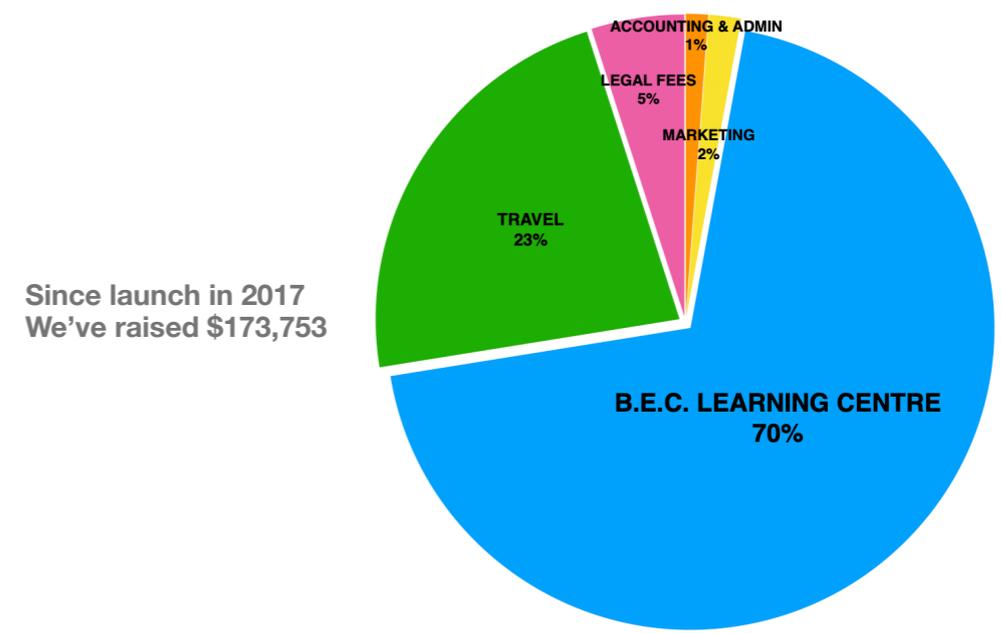
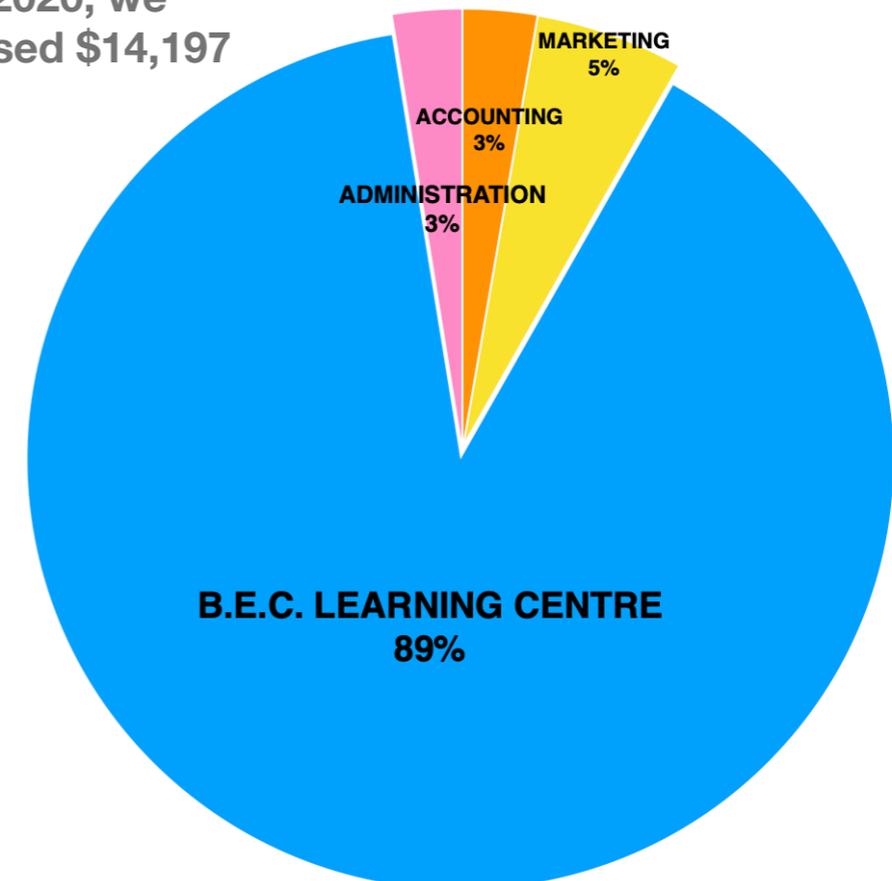
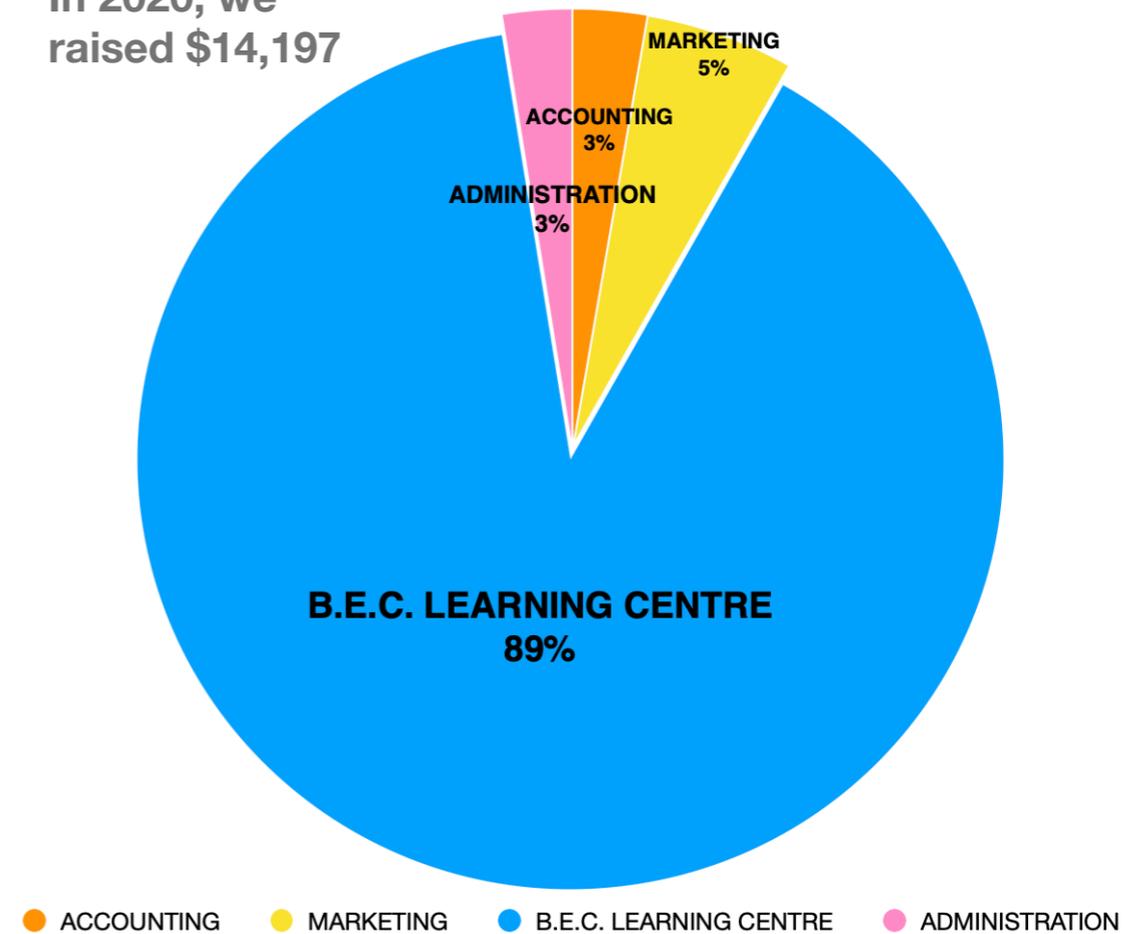
A for Excellent

ranking with leading charity watchdog—CharityWatch.org

See our detailed 2020 profit and loss statement at www.followingsfoundation.org and subscribe to our quarterly progress reports while you're there!



In 2020, we raised \$14,197



Since launch in 2017 We've raised \$173,753



The story so far...

In [February 2017 John and Lauren](#) discussed John's ideas for a community centre over a Zoom call.

She could build a website to support him in his vision. Instead, she decided she would form a charity, bring a team of people to Uganda for nine days in November and raise enough money to build John's dream—the [Busubi Empowered Communities Learning Centre \(BEC\)](#).

And so it was. In November 2017 Followings took its first team to Busubi. Workshops with the community were held, villagers learned to make reusable sanitary pads, empowering brainstorming sessions took place, and the contract on the building was signed and paid for.

By May 2018, when Followings' second team arrived, the BEC Learning Centre was complete, [resplendent](#) in blue and green.

We [installed solar power](#), contracted a local carpenter to build a blackboard and sturdy desks and chairs, purchased three [sewing machines](#), two laptop computers and [began paying staff](#) to teach [free classes](#) at the Centre—tailoring, sports, music, dance, drama, agriculture and computer studies.

By the end of our third trip, there were [12 computers](#), a [30 000L water tank](#), beautifully maintained gardens, an agricultural loan scheme, a [high-powered projector](#) hung from the ceiling and even more solar power!

By our fourth trip, some volunteers had been back two, even three times! The Centre had been open for just over a year offering [free classes, seven days a week](#). BEC was [accredited](#) by the Directorate of Training to run nationally approved examinations and issue nationally recognised certificates of study.

[Hydroelectricity has been extended to the village](#) and [a library](#) at the Centre is frequented by students daily. Education will always be our number one priority.

In March 2020, we were forced to abandon our fifth trip, but we continued to find ways to fundraise, and [Rebecca's chocolate box](#) for her work colleagues never failed us. Wages continued to be paid to centre staff, even as BEC closed down for five months. Our commitment to our partners paid off, and a successful reopening occurred in September, seeing students flock back to the centre under COVID safety protocols.

As Followings looks ahead, forming partnerships with other socially conscious organisations continues to be a priority along with expanding our team to keep up with the tasks of fundraising and proper governance. BEC and Followings continue to work towards a better future for the community of Busubi, and hope to expand the model into other villages in the years to come.

[Thank you](#) for your support, as we support [the village of Busubi](#) in their goal to change their circumstances and brighten the future of their most [cherished loved ones](#).



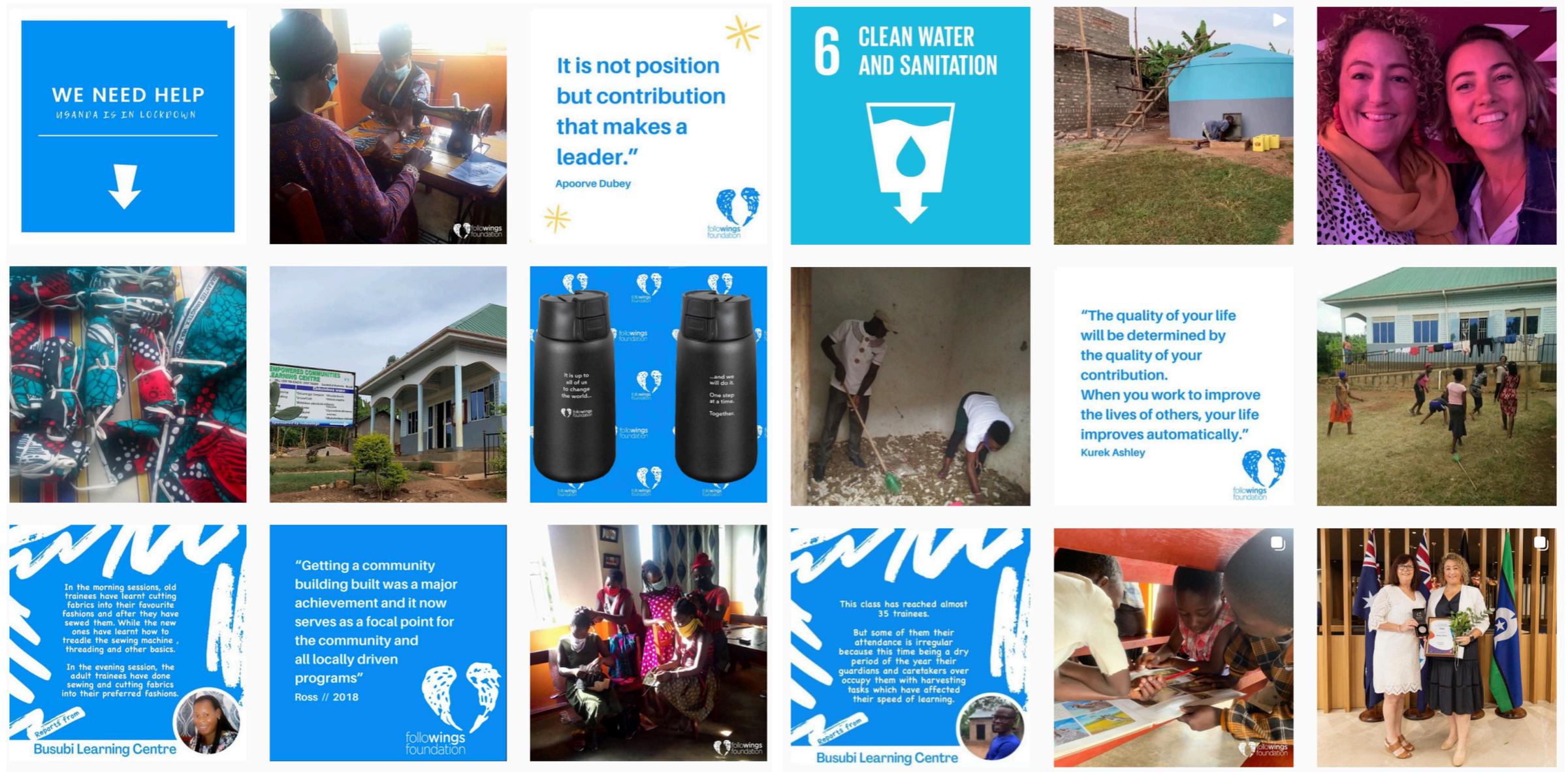
Looking ahead...

It can feel hard to look ahead during times like these, but we know what keeps us moving forward:

A clear vision for an empowered community who support one another, learn together and become stronger with shared knowledge.



Social Media



Follow Followings!

When you engage with our posts by sharing them or commenting on them, we can reach more supporters!

 @followings.love

 @followings.foundation

 Followings Foundation



2020
in
pictures



2020 in pictures





followings
foundation

Leap now, your wings will follow.