

UK Friends of Khwendo Kor Annual Report for 2011-2012

I am pleased to present this report on the activities undertaken by UK Friends of Khwendo Kor in this, my first year as Chair. In doing so, I would like to start by acknowledging the work that is undertaken by members of the Executive Committee and the support from FROK members, both financial and otherwise. Without such a strong underpinning, the work of FROK simply would not be possible – no matter how big or how small the contribution, it all adds up the work of FROK.

So let us remind ourselves of the core reason for our being:

- to support Khwendo Kor (KK) in its work for women and their families in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK, formerly the Northwest Frontier Province).

As reported last year by our outgoing Chair, Ian Sinclair, KK's work is undertaken in the context of the most formidable ongoing challenges and ones that show little sign of relaxing. The security situation remains tense, the plight of persons displaced from their physical and geographical homes continues to be of grave concern, the aftermath of the floods continues – and the chronic under-development and deeply conservative culture and associated oppression of women of the region persists.

While the context shows little sign of improvement, the work of KK goes from strength to strength. Its unique approach of 'bottom up' development that seeks to introduce sustainable services and developments only as and when the community members are fully on board as partners is combined with advocacy with, and for, the communities with whom it works – and especially their women and children. Its ability to engage communities where no others have done so has led to KK being invited on many occasions over the last year to join in consortia bids led by much larger organisations who have less expertise and/or success in interventions in the especially remote areas. One such successful bid was for the AWAAZ programme funded by UK Dept of International Development. It is interesting to note that others bidding for the project also wanted KK as a partner, even though KK refused to enter an exclusive partnership with anyone. This eagerness to include KK must have to do with its reputation and perhaps a little to the links with DfID that FROK was able to foster when Maryam was in UK.

KK is, however, at a crucial stage in its development. Until recently it received a major part of its funding from one donor, Oxfam Novib, and was supported to work holistically. Since it became clear that such funding was to be time limited (it ends

completely in December 2012) KK has striven to find alternative sources to enable its work to continue. Given the vagaries of the contemporary international donor situation, this has led to them having to bid increasingly for funds tied to single service-focussed schemes such as increasing the numbers of schools or achieving set targets for registration of female voters rather than holistic interventions despite the proven success of the latter. KK remain committed to their principle of starting with the village communities' self-identified needs and then introducing the idea that women and children-centred interventions are crucial to any sustainable development. However more of their time and energy than hitherto is having to be devoted to meeting donors' more individualised requirements for information and results, making the value of untied monies such as those provided by FROK even more important.

The more positive outcome of KK's efforts to achieve more diversified funding has been that it has been able to maintain its existing work on education and health and gain increased funding for micro-credit, while taking on an increasing range of activities related to peace, work with families displaced within Pakistan, women's rights and the promotion of democracy.

FROK's activities during 2011-2012

I was fortunate to take on the Chair just after Maryam's visit to the UK to collect her Honorary Doctorate from the University of York. Whenever Maryam visits the UK, our membership numbers increase as people experience her vision and integrity at first hand. I am pleased to say that our membership at the year end (31 March 2012) stood at 89. Our *circulation list* is wider as we have a separate category on our database for 'interested parties', including overseas supporters of KK.

As well as widening awareness of KK's work, our membership base provides a good solid core for our financial support to KK. If we retain our current membership, this brings us around £6,500 each year (members often donate more than the basic membership fee) before doing any independent fundraising at all. Given that we aim to send £12,000 to KK each year, the shortfall feels a good deal more feasible than it would do if we had to start from zero each time! It also underlines the importance of continuing to recruit new FROK members. The more members we have, the more likely we are to achieve our target and the better KK's situation.

While the contribution of many of our members remains primarily financial (alongside taking an interest in KK's work through reading our Newsletter, visiting our website or coming to meetings) some become more involved. As well as Committee members, we have recently recruited members to provide their written English skills to help KK with some of their written materials, funding proposals and so on and to help FROK with our

newsletter. Some of our members have also visited KK offices while on visits to Pakistan, two of whom, Maureen and Del Hussain, are speaking about their trip at the AGM. Thank you to all!

Since the last AGM, FROK's Executive Committee has met three times and has produced two Newsletters. FROK committee members also have regular email exchanges with KK staff. As well as discussing matters of mutual concern in our work together, such close contact also enables us to keep abreast of wider developments in that region through hearing of it at first hand. In addition to matters reported above, the following summarises FROK's activities:

(i) *Financial Support of KK:*

As always, a key value of FROK's financial support to KK is that it is not tied to specific grants, enabling KK to be responsive to new opportunities as they arise as well as affording some protection against emergencies and/or crises of cash flow emanating from the myriad of funding streams that are now a fact of life for KK. In the last financial year, we transferred £12000 of untied money by the time of last year's AGM in July. However, we have found it more difficult to achieve our target in this financial year and the final amount to be sent is likely to fall short of £11,000, perhaps a reflection of the current financial climate.

As already said, a core part of our fundraising comes through membership fees and donations. In addition, we continue to have collection boxes in local shops in York and Oxford which bring in a steady flow of funds (thanks to Shehzad Ali and Noman Paracha) and are always ready to supply boxes to members who can identify new outlets. Stalls – including jewellery and home produce stalls (thanks in particular to Lesley Dellaganna and Jacqui Chainey) – continue to be very well received. And one new member recently hosted an evening in her own home providing wonderful Pakistani food and hospitality (thanks to Naeema Hann and her husband Michael) while Maureen, Del, Monika and Elizabeth (all from Benson) as well as running stalls and helping with events have also won the support of the local PROBUS group.

FROK is also pleased to report its continuing association with the J. and A. Clark Charitable Trust, which it introduced to KK and which has made hugely significant financial contributions over the years. The Chair of its Women's Empowerment Group, Caroline Pym, who is also an ex officio member of the FROK Committee, is stepping down from that post later this year (though her activities in this field will continue). Caroline is a quite remarkable woman, now in her 80s, and I would like to thank her for her unstinting commitment to KK and understanding of the context of its work.

The Hazel Bines memorial fund has raised a total of £10,100 in memory of Hazel, who was an active FROK supporter as well a distinguished educationalist. Hazel was working in Pakistan , for the Department for International Development up to 2002, and became involved in the work of KK at that time. FROK is responsible for these funds and support is being given to KK to assist them undertake teacher development programmes.

(ii) *Micro credit activities*

FROK has continued to support the micro-credit side of KK's work through trying to find new UK outlets for the Mazari goods made by village women. Although this can prove logistically challenging – deadlines to meet; paperwork to be completed and so on – KK staff tell us how beneficial it is to the women themselves in terms of both finances and status to have their markets extended in this way. We are delighted that, as reported last year, two of the items were included in the New Internationalist/ Amnesty Christmas catalogue for the first time and we are hopeful that this relationship will flourish further. University of York students in a Fair Trade co-operative also placed a sizeable order and other such outlets may be worth pursuing. Some FROK members continue to run stalls (thanks especially to the Oxford group for their work on stalls), offering not only an outlet for the goods but also an opportunity to publicise the work of KK and establish new contacts. We are hopeful that a new catalogue will shortly be available, displaying the increasing range of high quality goods that are available. Our thanks go to the tireless work and vision of FROK member Elma Sinclair in particular.

(iii) *'Technical Support'*

FROK members – in particular Ian Sinclair and Elma Sinclair - continue to offer technical support to KK staff and we are delighted that they have recently been joined in doing so by Elspeth Crawford. This work centres in particular on advice about the written English and presentation of KK's funding proposals and other reports. Such partnerships work well due to the commitment of both sides, with KK staff whose first languages are Pashto and Urdu thus being able to meet the Western expectations of their written English work and FROK becoming increasingly familiar with KK's more detailed workings.

This year has seen a different type of work being shared in this way and one that has brought both new challenges and new understandings. KK staff asked for help in editing a set of Case Studies that they were developing for Norwegian Church Aid. This has required an even more detailed understanding of the context of KK's work both through the introduction of terms as yet unfamiliar to FROK members but also through the engagement with issues that are being written about that enter into ever more sensitive areas such as the continuing use of jirgas to determine the fate of women.

(iv) KK staff as Human Rights Defenders

FROK ventured in a new direction this year in supporting the stay in York of Khalid Usman, KK's Director of Operations, from January to April. We were delighted when Khalid was awarded a Human Rights Defenders Fellowship at the University of York (see <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cahr/defenders/index.html> for more details) as we hoped that this would prove beneficial for Khalid himself and for his work with KK. It also afforded FROK members an opportunity to get to know better a key member of KK staff. Sadly Khalid had to return home earlier than expected because of family illhealth and the pressure of work at KK so was not able to meet as many FROK members as he would have liked. However we are in dialogue with KK about the possibility of a female staff member applying for a future Fellowship and believe that we have learnt a lot from this first experience of an extended stay of a KK staff member.

(v) Rukhshanda Naz

Members will have seen that we have Rukhshanda Naz as our guest speaker at the AGM. Rukhshanda has known Maryam Bibi, CE of KK, for many years through their shared commitment to women's empowerment. Rukhshanda also recently joined KK's Board of Directors and is very familiar with the work of KK. A lawyer by background, Rukhshanda worked for the Aurat Foundation before joining UN Women as their Regional Director in the north west. In the autumn of 2011, she came to Warwick University and will undertake postgraduate law studies there from the autumn of 2012. Rukhshanda has already attended two FROK committee meetings and will be a great asset to us in developing further our understanding of the position of women and children in KPK and FATA. We were delighted when she agreed to speak at our AGM.

(vi) Links with the Pakistani community living in the UK

We are pleased to say that we are gradually establishing new contacts with UK based Pakistanis through our membership, in supporting the development of a Pakistani Society at the University of York and in networking with other women's organisations working on Pakistani-based issues. We are doing so in the belief that we must remain alert to the need for our link with KK to be interactive and of mutual educational and other benefit rather than slipping into a 'donor-recipient' model that does little to address the historical and contemporary context of the situation of women and children wherever they live.

In summary, I hope that you read this Annual Report with interest and that in doing so you are encouraged to think of ideas for developments to present to the Committee and to consider ways in which you yourself might contribute further to the work of KK. Our door is always open!

Marilyn Crawshaw, Chair, June 2012