

UK FRIENDS OF KHWENDO KOR (FROK), AGM , 11 JULY 2009

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2008/09

Introduction

This year, 2008 - 9, has thrown up many difficulties for Khwendo Kor (KK) and for FROK. The escalating political situation in the areas of Pakistan where the work of KK is focused has impacted on their operations which has, in turn, limited the financial support that FROK has been able to send. However, FROK remain confident in the abilities of KK as an organisation and look forward to a busy future of continuing interaction. The following report appears to be as much about KK as FROK, because KK's situation drives FROK's work; it is necessary to describe them both.

Health Project (Pinner parish church)

The year started well with the news that Pinner Parish Church had raised £11,850.36 for a KK project to provide health services to mothers and children at the village level and decrease mother and infant mortality rates. This involved purchasing a mobile van, which will provide health services to 25 villages, and arranging 5 medical camps. Safe delivery services will be provided to at least 1000 mothers and health services to 1500 children. This was to be provided in the frontier region of Bannu.

Unfortunately this then became an unsafe area for KK to operate in as one of their drivers was kidnapped and KK had to agree to withdraw. It took time to resolve all these issues. The health project was transferred to the neighbouring area of Karak and has now started. These difficulties illustrated the sort of problems KK were beginning to face.

FROK's Activities, 2008 – 9

- *Financial Support of KK:* While a substantial amount of money has been raised over the past 2 years, it was impossible to send all of it to Pakistan this year because of political unrest. FROK has been working with KK to find ways around this and we hope to start sending funds twice a year as agreed at the last AGM. Robust accounting systems have been introduced and seem to be working well. FROK did transfer £8500 (in last year's accounts) in April 2008 to support staff training and a further £1700 for sponsorship of teachers in UWIC (Urban Working and Indigent Children) schools.

- *Administrative Support of KK:* FROK sent 2 representatives, Elma and Ian Sinclair, to the funding review conference in March 2009,,(see below). Executive member Carol Morris and FROK member Alison Leaver also visited KK and supported their work.

- *Interaction with KK:* Because of the unstable political situation, the Foreign Office advised people not to visit; this meant that students from the University of York were unable to go to Peshawar as they have for the past 3 years to have hands-on experience of KK's work. FROK and KK are in close electronic contact through email and phone calls, with regular reports and consultation.

FROK's Executive Committee has met three times this year. We have formalised our internal communication systems and explored new sources of funding, as well as responding to KK's needs.

A Challenging time for KK

Khwendo Kor (KK) face a continuing and worsening situation, particularly in one of their operational areas (the Federally Administered Tribal Areas – FATA) with the overspill of the war in Afghanistan, political instability in Pakistan and the resurgence of the Taliban. The problems of this area of Pakistan, and indeed others further afield including the Swat valley, have been well publicised. KK has also been drawn into supporting people displaced by the war. They have been asked by local NGO's and international organisations working in the area to develop programmes for the refugees. This reflects the esteem in which KK is held. While they are very eager to accept this responsibility, it will mean rethinking their core activities to ensure on-going programmes are not compromised.

Clearly, addressing the education of girls and the health needs of women in that situation requires courage and determination. However we need to remind ourselves that the majority of Pakistanis and their Government share KK objectives. The principles of KK being part of the community and operating within the best traditions of the local culture provide it with enormous strength, which makes it such an effective organisation and an inspiration to all those who work with it.

The next challenge that KK had to address was issues raised and a change of tack by OXFAM NOVIB (the Dutch development agency). This agency has and continues to generously fund KK's work. However they felt that KK needed to address two matters. Firstly KK did have management problems that arose out of the fact that KK were funding what was effectively long term and continuing activity, such as managing schools, but relying on short term and project funding. There were difficulties in sustaining this.

OXFAM NOVIB, as a long-term funder, raised concerns about this and also raised the second challenge that KK should be more of a "rights based organisation". In their view this meant among other things that KK should establish and develop schools but seek to hand them over to the Government as soon as possible. They also felt that KK should not be involved in micro credit. Members of FROK felt that this was a not a very practical observation in the current circumstances where the Government's writ hardly exists for law and order, let alone services to the community. There are also problems with the motivation of the Government's education service.

It was proposed that a donor conference should be held in March 2009 and Ian and Elma Sinclair represented FROK. Caroline Pym of the J and A Clark Charitable Trust, who work closely with FROK, also attended. A FROK paper, prepared beforehand, reinforced the view that KK needed to have a holistic approach, as that was how it built influence and overcame barriers to its work from traditional leaders.

The conference largely confirmed the FROK position and other donors, as set out in the Sinclairs' report, "described KK as 'perfect', while another said that her only advice to KK was to carry on doing what they were doing".

Clearly KK will need to review their organisation and financial management and this is now being actively pursued. Support has been given from donors on this. Whilst the support is there, that does not mean that the problems will go away.

KK has had to face a number of challenges this year which would have sunk many an organisation but their spirit and principles and strong sense of mission have taken them through, although there is much still to do.

FROK's Future Work

This has implications for FROK, as we may need to reorientate what FROK supports. Generally we have assisted building development, vehicles and staff training. We may over time seek to support KK's core activity to help ensure the sustainability of the organisation. We also need to assess with KK how we can effectively fund raise. It is easier to raise money for projects but we need to find a way of supporting sustainability. No doubt this will be an issue that the charity's executive will continue to address over the coming year.

The charity has held back on sending further money in 2008/9 until the situation has clarified so we can use our resources to greatest effect. The Executive meeting prior to this AGM will be addressing proposals from KK as to how we can support them with our existing resources.

Hazel Bines

A final sad word needs to be reported on the tragic and unexpected death of Dr. Hazel Bines in October. My sister Hazel first worked with KK in the late 1990's whilst working for DFID in Pakistan. She was always an advocate for KK's work through her direct interest in girls' education and was a great admirer of Maryam Bibi, KK's founder and chief executive. She was elected by last year's AGM to the executive but died before she could make an impact, which would undoubtedly have been substantial. Her family and friends have established Hazel's School Fund through donations to FROK and this will be used to support girls' education probably through teacher development, her other great interest. Final details of how this fund will be utilised will soon be agreed with KK.

Conclusions

KK has had to face a number of challenges this year which would have sunk many an organisation, but their spirit and principles and strong sense of mission have taken them through. FROK, too, has faced difficulties, but remains strong in our faith in KK.

I am stepping down as chairman at the AGM but have been nominated to be the charity's treasurer and a member of the executive.

Jonathan French

Chairman, FROK.

9 July 2009