

FROK

The UK Friends of Khwendo Kor

Registered charity no: 1095857

Annual Report for 2020-2021

Welcome to the Annual Report of the UK Friends of Khwendo Kor (FROK), covering activities undertaken by FROK's Trustees and members during the year from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. FROK is a volunteer-run charity so incurs minimal expenses. We retain only £1,000 each year for unexpected emergencies and transfer the rest of monies raised directly to Khwendo Kor (KK).

Founded in 1993 KK is one of the oldest women-led and women-managed NGOs in this region and works with women and their families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) (formerly the North West Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas). FROK promotes KK's four core values - commitment, accountability, mutual respect and integrity - and its vision of 'A compassionate society where women live with dignity and self-reliance'. KK's participatory development approach and in particular its 'Viable Village' model focuses on the active involvement of communities, especially women and children, in its key areas of Education, Civil and Political Rights, Health, Combating Gender Based Violence, Social Cohesion and Livelihoods Improvement. Communities, with KK's support, are therefore at the core of defining what changes are needed, identifying the means for bringing them about, and thereby taking a lead in their own development. You can read more about KK's work on the FROK website (www.frok.org.uk) and on that of Khwendo Kor (www.khwendokor.org).

We are grateful for all contributions, financial or in other ways, received during this reporting year from members, donors or other supporters. And what a year it has been. At the start, the UK had recently gone into lockdown and the pandemic and associated restrictions have continued to dominate our lives to this day, both here and in Pakistan. This has had consequences for FROK and KK. For FROK it has meant that we have been unable to carry out any of our usual fundraising activities, most of which involve 'in person' events. This mirrors the experiences of many UK charities. However we were pleased to have raised over £5,000 through our dedicated COVID Appeal and offer our very grateful thanks to all who contributed. It was heartening that so many members and supporters dug deep to help. Those members who specifically support the UWIC schools also kept up their regular contributions; again we say thank you. For KK, the consequences of the pandemic has meant engaging in humanitarian efforts in the areas where they work and where poverty has further heightened the impact of Covid-19. There are obvious financial implications. As funding within Pakistan was diverted to pandemic relief, KK was successful in attracting some project grants and has been

distributing food, animal feed and chickens, sewing machines and support for economic revival. They have also sought philanthropic donations within Pakistan. However the need for their existing work continued even though income streams for that were squeezed or dried up completely. Their financial pressures were further exacerbated by FROK being unsuccessful in attempts to transfer our annual donation during the reporting year. In last year's Annual Report and through our Newsletters, we have kept members and donors aware of the impact for us of Pakistan's new national regulatory framework for NGOs and INGOs. Like many others, KK struggled to meet all the new requirements but was making clear progress. However neither they nor we had anticipated that FROK transfers would be affected.

The current situation is that FROK and KK have now drawn up a formal agreement to cover the use of FROK's donation, enabling KK to apply to the government's Economic Affairs Division for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with respect to its relationship to FROK. These processes are lengthy and resource-intensive of staff time but we are pleased to say that the money transfer was finally successful in May 2021, i.e. just outside of the year covered by this report, as a result of the MOU application being formally acknowledged. We are hopeful that the MOU application will soon be fully approved and that future money transfers, starting this summer, will be smoother. Please see further details below under 'Financial Support for KK'.

The situation facing KK remains tense but we are aware of the tremendous support that continues to be given to them by past employees and local supporters. KK was recently asked, by an overseas team conducting a review of projects their organisation was funding, to explain why KK was able to establish sustainable projects while so many others failed. It is clear that the answer lies in the core involvement of communities and especially women, the careful building of trust, and attention to building the capacities of communities to advocate for themselves.

Finally in this section, we want to pay tribute to Carol Morris OBE who sadly died in April 2021. Carol was a very good friend to KK and to Maryam Bibi during her time with the British Council in northwest Pakistan, a founder member of FROK on her return to the UK, and a champion of the UWIC schools. A huge presence in the lives of many, she will be sorely missed.

FROK's activities during 2020-2021

As members are aware, the Trustees reluctantly decided to cancel last year's **AGM** because of the pandemic. Although we decided that it was not appropriate to organise a face-to-face AGM again this year and instead hold it by zoom, we hope to revert to a face-to-face one in 2022 and will explore the possibilities of also enabling people to connect to it remotely, what is now called a 'hybrid' event.

One of the upsides to our decision to cancel the AGM is that the speaker that we had engaged, Professor Claire Chambers from the University of York, agreed to address us instead at an event in the autumn of 2020 on the subject **Human Writes: Pakistani Women's Writing**. Although we had originally planned this as an 'in-person' talk, the pandemic thought otherwise and we switched to zoom. In the end, that led to us having a much bigger audience than usual. It also allowed colleagues and supporters in Pakistan and other parts of the world to join in, including Claire's co-presenter, Sauleha Kamal, from Islamabad. It was a fascinating talk by two very well informed and engaging presenters and provoked a very thoughtful discussion which we reported in our Newsletter.

When it became clear that FROK would not be able to run one of its main York fundraising events of the year in March 2021 – a clothes swap called 'Frock for FROK' – we developed the idea with KK of jointly producing a film of women's experiences of the pandemic. 'Sharing Women's Experiences of the Pandemic from York and NW Pakistan' had its premiere in March and recently topped 200 viewings on you-tube - https://youtu.be/wGWw_8Y9mBw. If you haven't already watched it, we urge you to do so as it conveys both the commonality facing women everywhere – albeit in very different financial situations - but also the high regard with which KK is held among its communities and the strength of its values. We are also grateful to the involvement of the volunteers in York and in Peshawar for putting it together.

We were especially pleased at both events to be joined by KK colleagues. We hope to put on more such events in the future **and very much hope our fundraising efforts can also be restored to previous levels.**

FROK's **Trustees** have held three meetings this year – all by zoom - supplemented by email and phone contact in between. We also maintain regular **contact with KK staff** by email, phone, and whatsapp to keep up to date with developments within the organisation itself as well as in the wider region.

FROK's **membership** remains remarkably steady and at 31st March 2021, we had 108 members. Members' subscriptions, donations and fundraising efforts form a substantial part of our annual donation to KK.

Our twice yearly **Newsletter** remains a key contact with members, supporters, donors and other interested parties in the UK and overseas. UK FROK also has a **Facebook** page that is 'liked' by around 1,600 people of whom 82% are male and 18% female. The largest percentage lives in Peshawar, followed by Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. In fifth place is the UK with 52 people. Overall, half are aged 25 to 34. Ideas for posts are always welcome: please contact the Admin through the 'UK Friends of Khwendo Kor FROK' facebook page.

In addition, the following summarises more of FROK's activities:

Financial Support of KK

FROK aims to raise a minimum of £12000 each year as a contribution to Khwendo Kor's costs that is not tied to any specific project or appeal, enabling them to fund activities not normally covered by other donors. This enables KK to take up new opportunities and/or have some protection against emergencies. Funds were successfully raised in 2020/21 to fulfil that target and sufficient donations had also been received to send an additional grant of £11,000. This was to assist KK who were having to react to uncertainties arising from the more intensive regulatory processes for NGOs in Pakistan which was inhibiting or delaying funds from other donors. Our contribution would also help KK sustain some of their operations. The funds raised from the Covid appeal (£5,088) and for the UWIC schools (£440) were also included in the planned transfer of funds to KK of £28,528. However because Pakistani Banks were concerned about this new regulatory regime, initial attempts to transfer the money were unsuccessful and it was not until further clarification was supplied by the Pakistan government that the funds were finally transferred to KK in May 2021.

Despite these difficulties FROK has continued to secure the support of regular donors and the film and yoga events in February 2021 were particularly successful in raising funds. This means that in addition to the £28,528 referred to above, the charity had a closing balance of £9,282 in March 2021 which will provide a strong base for the achievement of the target of sending a further £12,000 this summer.

Technical Support

FROK members offer regular technical support to KK staff. This includes help with written English where needed and assistance with funding proposals or report writing. **If any members have technical skills they would like to share, please get in touch.**

FROK Website

We continue to run our website in a low maintenance manner to match our available resources. Limited resources also influence our decision to not use twitter. We are pleased to report it has a regular flow of website views reaching to 175 during March, almost all from the UK. Do let us have any suggestions for its improvement.

Links with the Pakistani community living in the UK

We continue to build and maintain contacts with UK-based Pakistani individuals and organisations and look forward to extending these where possible.

In summary, we hope that you enjoy reading this Annual Report and that it encourages you to continue your much needed support for KK, both financially and in solidarity with its aims. FROK Trustees always welcome your ideas, suggestions and offers of help as we strive to enhance our work of supporting Khwendo Kor. If you wish to get more involved in any way at all then please get in touch.

Marilyn Crawshaw, Chair

June 2021