

UK Friends of Khwendo Kor (FROK)

Annual Report for 2012-2013

I am pleased to present this report on the activities undertaken by UK Friends of Khwendo Kor (FROK) in my second year as Chair. The activities cover both the work of the Executive Committee and the support, both financial and otherwise, that comes from FROK members in all parts of the UK. Ranging from the signing of a cheque once a year, to setting up a Standing Order, to producing the text for a Newsletter or hosting a fund raising event and so on, the work of FROK has continued to grow. Every contribution to helping achieve our goal counts.

So let us remind ourselves of our goal, the reason for FROK's existence:

- 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).

Before going any further, I want to make special mention of Elma Sinclair who, as members are aware, died on 15th April this year. As I said at her Memorial Service, there would have been no FROK without the impetus that came from Elma and the deep friendship she forged with Maryam Bibi while Maryam was studying in the UK. Neither would FROK have flourished in the way it has without Elma's uncompromising work in setting it up and running as a 'going concern'. Elma leaves a huge hole to fill but we are determined to ensure that her legacy in this crucial work is not lost; she would expect nothing less of us.

We reported last year that KK carries out its vital work in one of the most challenging arenas in the world today. The shocking attack on Malala Yousafzai, the schoolgirl targeted by the Taliban for standing up for girls' education, brought that very starkly to the attention of the world. KK has known Malala and her father for many years – in fact it was at a seminar that KK was instrumental in organising that Malala spoke in public for the first time. We are honoured to have Malala's father speaking at our AGM this year. Sadly and worryingly, the situation has deteriorated further despite the massive coverage given to the plight of women and girls in the region where Malala lived and where KK works. Serious attacks on those striving to improve the situation of women and girls have increased in number. KK staff are at the heart of emerging networks and discussions that enable like-minded individuals and organisations to come together to develop strategies to resist such intimidation and provide mutual support. One such initiative developed by Maryam Bibi and three other local senior female figures is intended to connect tribal people and the rest of the country, make links between tribal

women in all parts of Pakistan and promote the representation of tribal women in government. However the strain of being an activist in such an environment cannot be under estimated and we applaud their courage and their vision.

We also reported last year that KK, like many other NGOs in developing nations, has found its funding sources being seriously threatened as Western/Northern countries and organisations restrict funding streams in their attempts to manage their own financial affairs. This has added to the pressures that anyway come with donors' increasing tendencies to fund fragmented sections of the needs of a community, such as a school, or a citizenship advocacy project or a health facility. Someone said to me recently that people don't live their lives in boxes but funding too often comes packaged that way. How true that is.

KK has had to reduce its staffing contingent during the last year with some of its interventions also curtailed even though the need continues and despite funders being highly satisfied with the work itself. KK nevertheless continues to work hard at chasing new funding sources and striving to remain true to their values, rooted as they are in the importance of holistic working. To this end, key staff have recently completed a strategic planning exercise in which they shaped a core proposal for seeking funding for what is provisionally called 'The Viable Village' – a proposal developed in part with FROK members. 'The Viable Village' builds on KK's proven success of working with village communities on the needs that they themselves identify in the order of priority (as much as possible) that they themselves determine but with KK enabling them to see the core role of women and children-centred interventions for ensuring sustainable development.

As with all good ideas, when villagers themselves see the improvements that KK's work can bring, then those in neighbouring villages come forward for help. It is KK's ability to provide sustainable interventions in ways valued by local communities that is the hallmark of their approach. I have lost count of the times that I have come across people in many walks of life who are familiar with the northwest of Pakistan who speak with intense admiration and wonder about KK and its achievements.

Although very sorry that one of our guest speakers at the AGM, Dr Salma Masood Khan, Chair of the KK Board of Directors, had to withdraw at the last minute because of changes to her visiting schedule to the UK, we were delighted to be joined by others who know personally of KK's work. Such personal contacts extend our understanding of KK's work and further strengthen our links.

FROK's activities during 2012-2013

We are pleased to say that our membership has remained remarkably steady. At the year end (31 March 2013) it stood at 94 and our circulation list of the Newsletter is wider as it goes out to our wider database of 'interested parties' and overseas supporters of KK.

As always, our membership base is the bedrock for achieving our aim of providing annual unrestricted funds for KK of around £12,000. At current levels, members provide us with around £8,500 a year in subscriptions and individual donations alone. This reminds us of the importance of continuing to recruit new members: whether someone can manage the basic subscription or more, it all counts towards supporting the valuable work of KK.

The majority of our members express their interest in KK through reading the Newsletter, visiting our website or [new] Facebook page or coming to occasional meetings. We are always delighted when members are also able to become even more involved. This year, we continued to benefit from the skills and commitment of Lisa Yacoub and Elspeth Crawford in helping with the Newsletter and with other written English advice and we were delighted to welcome Penny Bartlett as our new Membership Secretary.

Since the last AGM, FROK's Executive Committee has met three times and has produced two Newsletters. We also have very regular contact with KK staff via email or the occasional telephone call, enabling us to keep abreast of developments in their work and retain a keen sense of what is happening in the region and the country from other than the usual media outlets. We are fortunate that two of our members, Del and Maureen Hussain have taken the opportunity while visiting family in the region to spend time with KK staff again this year and report back to us.

In addition to matters reported above, the following summarises FROK's activities:

(i) Financial Support of KK:

As already mentioned, FROK provides financial support to KK that is not tied to specific grants. This enables KK to respond to new opportunities and have some protection against emergencies including financial emergencies. Unfortunately, we just failed to achieve our target of raising £12,000 in the current reporting year – perhaps a reflection of the financial situation in the UK - and instead transferred £11,120 of untied money. However we are pleased to report that the situation this year looks far more promising and I hope at the next AGM to report having achieved our target comfortably.

Stalls selling jewellery, home produce and micro credit goods continue to be well received (thanks in particular to Lesley Dellaganna and Jacqui Chainey). One recent 'clothes swap' event run in York during International Women's Week raised a remarkable £400+. And the FROK Birthday Appeal to celebrate its 10th birthday raised over £2000. Our thanks go to all that have contributed to fundraising over the year.

For members interested in undertaking any fundraising, we can supply collection boxes, posters, laminated photos and a DVD of KK's work, brooches and keyrings/bag charms designed specially for FROK/KK in the UK and starter packs of second hand jewellery.

FROK also continues its long association with the J.A. Clark Charitable Trust. FROK introduced this Trust to KK and they have since made significant financial contributions. Caroline Pym from the Trust sits as an ex officio member of the FROK Committee. She provides invaluable help and advice and is a relentless networker, thus putting us in touch with many important individuals and organisations.

As reported last year, the Hazel Bines memorial fund 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. A total of £3000 has been transferred to date.

Finally one of our members, Carol Morris, raises funds specifically for the UWIC schools in the region. This year a total of £1330 was transferred to KK.

(ii) Technical Support

FROK members Ian Sinclair, Elma Sinclair and Elspeth Crawford continued to offer technical support to KK staff during the last year, including the provision of advice on the written English that KK has been required to use in various arenas. This arrangement has continued to work well and requires commitment and goodwill from both sides. We are confident that it also helps the FROK committee to understand better the work of KK through the many queries and answers that arise and we believe the same to be true for the KK staff involved.

FROK was also delighted to be approached in the spring by Renate Bieleman from The Netherlands. Renate has significant financial and HR skills and expertise and has experience of working in Pakistan and elsewhere in the world. She was keen to put these at the disposal of KK. FROK was able to facilitate Renate spending time with KK in the spring which provided valuable help to KK *and* has enabled FROK to hear about their

work from someone bringing a fresh pair of eyes to the situation, not least through her attendance at the AGM and the Committee meeting immediately prior.

(iii) Rukhshanda Naz

We reported last year that Rukhshanda Naz, our guest speaker at the 2012 AGM and member of the KK Board of Directors, was planning to be in the UK for much of 2012-13 studying for a postgraduate international law degree. FROK has benefited enormously from Rukhshanda's presence. She is able to attend our committee meetings and to comment on our work and that of KK in between – and, importantly, to promote the work of KK and FROK in her unstinting attempts to improve the rights of women and girls.

(iv) Micro credit activities

FROK's engagement with the micro-credit side of KK's work has reduced somewhat over the last year. Appropriately, KK have concentrated on developing their home markets, with some measurable success. In addition, it can be difficult and time consuming to try and meet deadlines, for example for Christmas orders, when working across continents and in a context where we are all novices with such skills. However, we are pleased to report that one of our members, Maureen Hussain, is taking the lead on this side of our work and made useful contacts with the relevant staff during her recent trip out there. Watch this space for new goods coming our way!

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

We have continued to establish contacts with UK-based Pakistanis through our membership and through continuing to network with other women's organisations working on Pakistani-based issues. We are especially pleased to be joined on our Committee for 2013-4 by two such members, Naeema Hann and Ayesha Shahid.

In summary, I hope that you find this Annual Report of interest and that it encourages you to continue your support for KK. Please also let us know of any ideas that you have for developing our approach to our work and consider if there are any ways in which you yourself might contribute further to the work of KK. Our door is always open!

Marilyn Crawshaw, Chair

June 2013