

# FROK

**The UK Friends of Khwendo Kor**  
**UK registered charity no: 1095857**

## **Annual Report for 2013-2014**

This is my third Chair's Annual Report of activities undertaken by UK Friends of Khwendo Kor (FROK) national executive and members and covers the year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014. FROK exists in order 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) and to promote the values that KK stands for. No matter how big or how small the contributions we receive from members and from donors – financial and otherwise - they are all valued.

As you know, KK works in a context where security pressures are relentless and attitudes towards females are deeply conservative. Those who speak out and strive for improvements to the lives of women and those living in poverty show immense courage, knowing that they themselves are then targeted. The stories that make it to Western media outlets are just the tip of the iceberg but they are a daily reality for KK staff. Led by Maryam Bibi, KK continues to strive for its vision of 'A compassionate society where women live with dignity and self reliance' through working on the four key areas of Education, Civil Rights, Health and Women's Economic Empowerment.

Despite the great demand for their work, the financial pressure on KK continues unabated with Western funding sources remaining adversely affected by domestic 'austerity' measures. KK is further developing its concept of 'Viable Villages' as one way of encouraging funders to better understand the need for a whole village approach to community development, peace and stability rather than fragmented schemes aimed at, say, building schools or improving female citizenship in isolation. Our lives do not fit neatly into segments and so interventions that do not take account of the whole context are less likely to be effective. In keeping with that, KK also links villages to other NGOs besides KK, to government agencies and to other villages, drawing on women villagers as key figures alongside men. Its TQK initiative designed to connect women from the Tribal Areas to the rest of the country and to promote their representation in government has met with remarkable success. It is a long journey KK staff understand and accept that.

KK's work continues to receive recognition within Pakistan and internationally. For instance Amnesty International Australia recently selected Yasmin Gull as one of their '10 bravest women's stories in the world' and KK's work has been featured in two new documentaries this year. In December 2013, Maryam Bibi was given the honour of speaking at a highly prestigious conference in London run by the Muslim Charities Forum and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation

Fund (PPAF). FROK was represented in the audience and I can confirm the respect and admiration that KK's work receives. Indeed the talk led directly to KK being selected as one of the pilot areas for a PPAF-funded initiative to use staff from Sussex Mental Health NHS Trust led by Dr Shakil Malik, Consultant Psychiatrist, to help with the development of psycho-social resilience among traumatised staff, communities and displaced persons. We are delighted that Dr Malik will be telling us more about this initiative at the Annual Meeting.

### **FROK's activities during 2013-2014**

We are pleased to say that our membership has remained remarkably steady and stood at 94 at the end of the subscription year (31 March 2014). Having such a stable membership base is crucial to fundraising as the combination of annual subscriptions, Standing Orders and members' donations forms the lion's share of monies that we raise. We have recently revised our membership form and copies are available on request. Members are urged to sign up new members whenever they can, whether this brings in the minimum subscription or more.

Our circulation list for the Newsletter continues to grow. It goes out to all members but also KK supporters in different parts of the world as well as those in the UK who do not join FROK as members but are nevertheless supporters and/or donors. The number of 'likes' on the FROK Facebook page has risen over the year to 80+ and our website remains an important part of our profile.

Since the last AGM, FROK's Executive Committee has, as usual, 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 and maintain as keen a sense as we can of what is happening in the region and the country from other than the usual media outlets. Although the security situation makes it difficult for FROK visits in general, our members Del and Maureen Hussain visit family in the region each year. As before, they were able to take time out in March of this year to meet with KK staff and were given the honour of officially opening the Hazel Bines Training and Resource Centre and Elma Bibi (Sinclair) Handicraft Centre, as reported in the latest Newsletter.

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

#### **(i) Financial Support of KK:**

One of the important aspects of the funds that we raise for KK is that they are not tied to specific grants. This enables KK to respond to new opportunities as well as providing some protection against many kinds of emergencies including financial. Last year, sadly, we fell slightly short of our target figure of £12,000. I'm pleased to report that in the current reporting year, we once again achieved our target comfortably and look on track to do so again in 2014-15.

Raising funds has been achieved in a variety of ways. Some members have organised stalls selling jewellery, home produce and micro credit goods. York members ran a 'clothes swap'

event again during International Women's Week. And a member in Northampton was successful in being selected by her Church to host a Lent Lunch which raised the quite remarkable sum of more than £800. However the use of our Just Giving site has dwindled considerably – so if any members and supporters feel inclined to do a sponsorship activity such as a half marathon or a dedicated walk then do use it to collect sponsors.

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

As previously reported, the Hazel Bines memorial fund was established following the untimely death of Hazel, an active FROK supporter as well a distinguished educationalist who had worked in Pakistan. I'm pleased to inform you that the remainder of the fund is shortly to be transferred to KK for teacher development programmes.

Finally one of our members, Carol Morris, raises funds specifically for the UWIC schools in the region. This year a total of £1400 was transferred to KK.

#### **(ii) Technical Support**

FROK continues to offer technical support to KK staff as needed, especially with regard to written English.

FROK is also committed to help fund development initiatives for KK staff. During Gul Lalai's time in York (see below) she was able to explore more fully the use of on-line training modules and we look forward to working with her to develop an appropriate strategy for KK staff to include both on-line and face to face training.

#### **(iii) Visit of Gul Lalai to the UK**

Members may recall that Khalid Usman spent time at the University of York in 2012 as part of their Protective Fellowship Scheme for Human Rights Defenders. I am pleased to report that Gul Lalai, Director Programmes, was also selected for the scheme against a highly competitive field and was in York for 4 months from September 2013 to January 2014. As with Khalid, it proved very helpful indeed to get to know better such a key staff member and to work together on ideas for developing our partnership further. Gul Lalai herself tells us that she now feels better placed to work on KK's programmes and deal with international donors, having spent time in the West with opportunities for study time and reflection alongside Defenders from around the world.

#### **(iv) Rukhshanda Naz**

We reported last year about how much we had benefited from having Rukhshanda Naz, member of the KK Board of Directors, in the UK studying for a postgraduate international law degree. Rukhshanda attended our committee meetings, was unstinting in giving advice and information, and promoted the work of KK at every opportunity. We were sorry indeed to see

her return to Pakistan in January. However I am delighted to tell you that Rukhshanda was successful in completing her postgraduate studies and returned to the UK in April of this year for her graduation. I'm sure that you'll join me in sending our heartfelt congratulations.

**(v) Micro credit activities**

Maureen Hussain, who has the lead role on liaison with KK over their micro-credit goods, especially the mazri goods, has got into her stride with this work. She has made useful contacts with the relevant staff during her trips to the region and we are delighted that we can continue to support such economic activity.

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

We continue to build contacts with UK-based Pakistanis, not least through contacts made at the London 2013 Conference where Maryam Bibi was invited to speak.

**In summary,** I hope that you find this Annual Report is both of interest and inspiring for your continued support for KK. As always, if you yourself have ideas about our approach to what we do or if you wish to get more involved then please get in touch.

**Marilyn Crawshaw, Chair**

**June 2014**