

FROK

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

Annual Report for 2015-2016

I wish to start this Report in acknowledging the death in February of our President, Simon Gillett. Without Simon, FROK may never have come into existence. He knew Maryam Bibi, the founder of Khwendo Kor, when he was working in the region for the UN. When Maryam gained a scholarship to come and study at the University of York, Simon put her in touch with family and friends who quickly saw the worth of Khwendo Kor and so FROK was born. Simon remained a steadfast supporter and will be greatly missed.

This is my fifth Chair's Annual Report of activities undertaken by UK Friends of Khwendo Kor (FROK) Trustees and members and covers the year from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. FROK exists in order to support Khwendo Kor (KK) in its work with 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 and its vision of 'A compassionate society where women live with dignity and self reliance'. Contributions we receive from members and donors – financial and otherwise - are all valued for the part they play in meeting FROK's aims.

Led by its founder and Chief Executive, Maryam Bibi, KK focuses on the four key areas of Education, Civil Rights, Health and Women's Economic Empowerment and its scheme of promoting 'Viable Villages'. It also meets humanitarian challenges as they arise, including most recently the mass movement of people from North Waziristan (see below) and the earthquake of October 2015.

I reported last year on the displacement of many thousands of people from North Waziristan – what were formerly called Internally Displaced Persons, now renamed 'Temporarily Displaced Persons' - as a result of military activities taking place against the insurgents. Regardless of age or infirmity and predominantly female, these people were enduring the loss (even if temporary) of their homes, uncertainty about the future and very challenging living conditions. I am saddened to report that their displacement continues and there is still no date set for their return to their homes and neighbourhoods. KK continues to support them within the resources it has available. It is to the discredit of the international media that they receive so little attention.

As in previous years, I have to report that , unfortunately, little else has changed in the context within which KK works. Security issues prevail and attitudes towards females remain deeply conservative though you will hear shortly of some heartening developments. The staff continue to live with personal risks as well as those to the organisation as a whole as a result of their work. Their commitment is humbling.

However Khwendo Kor as an organisation continues to develop its distinctiveness in combining service delivery with local, national and international advocacy for structural and lasting change. In doing so, it commands respect and is regularly sought out for comment and advice and to share its working models and experiences. Its *'Viable Villages'* community development model of integrated working continues to reap encouraging results and attract interest. KK has also been keen to increase attention to mental health issues, both where this involves psychosis and also where people and communities are suffering the effects of deep seated trauma. As always they will be bringing their own values to this work, raising the needs of females in particular and looking to develop models that work in their particular environment rather than simply transporting models from elsewhere. With regard to advocacy, I would like to highlight in particular KK's role in helping with the development in FATA of TQK or 'Brave Tribal Sisters'. Among other TQK activities which increasingly give a voice to the women of FATA, some members have now stood for regional parliament and although as yet unsuccessful, their time will surely come.

KK has always regularly worked in partnership with other organisations in the region and FROK is delighted to report that they have this year developed a pilot partnership with Afghanaid. This is as a direct result of the autumn visit to the UK by Maryam Bibi (of which more below) and with the financial support of the JA Clark Charitable Trust. The partnership provides great potential for mutual learning and, hopefully, income generation as each have strengths to bring to it. It is going well.

KK continues to be sought out by donors and other funders from both within the country and international sources. Of course it can never count itself to be financially secure and a major challenge ahead is not only to secure funding for its direct work but also to build its own HQ. Its current central offices are not only rented but also in a residential area and it has been known for some time that it must move. KK have managed to secure the money to purchase land and now need donations for the buildings themselves. **We hope that FROK members will support them in that endeavour.**

FROK's activities during 2015-2016

The outstanding FROK activity this year was organising and hosting a two week programme of events in the autumn of 2015 for Maryam Bibi, KK's founder and Chief Executive. We reported on this in our Autumn newsletter but I wanted to repeat some of the highlights here. With its overall theme of 'Building female dignity and self reliance in the conflict zones of northwest Pakistan', Maryam visited more than twelve venues and met current and potential donors, policy makers, human rights workers, academics and students as well as FROK members and supporters. Starting with Quakers in Oxford, talks and discussions were also held at St. Columba's Oxford centenary celebrations, Pegasus Grange Oxford, Oxfam GB, Sussex Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Afghanaid, Amnesty International, Centre for Applied Human Rights York and the Days for Girls Rotary project. Maryam also gave public lectures at the Brunel and Leeds Beckett universities and the University of York. An invitation-only event was held at the Royal Society for Medicine London where more

than 40 high profile attendees were also addressed by Kamran Arif of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Mustafa Qadri of Amnesty International, both of whom praised the work of Khwendo Kor and painted a very vivid picture of the nature of the challenges facing them. This was a rare opportunity to hear first hand about Khwendo Kor's remarkable work through Maryam's ability to blend a sophisticated analysis of the context within which Khwendo Kor works both nationally and internationally with real-life examples from the field and using a rights-based approach. **However** we were also hugely disappointed that Laila Shahnawaz, who was due to accompany Maryam on the trip as an up and coming female member of KK's staff, was refused a visa right at the last moment. We consider such decisions to be short sighted and difficult to understand, given the opportunities this visit would have provided both for Laila to be exposed to the UK context and for us to learn more about the context within which the female leaders of tomorrow are working.

Turning to more mundane but nevertheless important matters, FROK's membership remains steady. At the end of the subscription year (31 March 2016), we had 100 members (numbers have gone up and down over the year). These provide the backbone of our fundraising through providing reliable annual subscriptions, Standing Orders, occasional donations and fundraising events. Some members also have particular contacts with local organisations, shops, trusts and faith-based groups and their advocacy of KK has sometimes led to quite substantial donations.

Our twice yearly Newsletter remains a key route for keeping in touch with our members, supporters, donors and those otherwise interested in KK's work both in the UK and overseas. Somewhat surprisingly, we have also had a surge in interest in the FROK Facebook page, which now has more than 1000 'likes', mainly from overseas. We are always on the lookout for members with an interest in such areas to get involved.

Since the last AGM, FROK's Executive Committee has had three face to face meetings with regular email and phone contact in between. We are also in regular contact with KK staff which allows us to keep up to date with developments within the organisation itself as well as in the wider region. Once again this year, two of our Trustees – Naeema Hann and Del Hussain (and his wife Maureen Hussain) - were able to travel to the region on family visits and include a visit to see KK staff. As before, these visits strengthen our ties *and* allow KK staff to have direct contact with FROK members. As always, all were greeted with immense hospitality and were able to see many sections of the staff hard at work. We hope that the security situation eases sufficiently to allow more members to visit in future.

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

(i) Financial Support of KK:

The money raised by FROK is 'unrestricted', in other words it is not tied to a specific project unless we have undertaken a specific fundraising appeal. Unrestricted donations benefit any organisation as it enables them to take up new opportunities and/or provide some protection against emergencies or unexpected shortfalls.

In the current reporting year, we achieved our target of £12,000 very comfortably and in fact sent just over £21,000.

Funds have been raised in various ways, some of which we report in the Newsletter. To pick out just two recent examples: one supporter, inspired by a seminar attended by Maryam Bibi during her visit, set up a Just Giving page and attracted substantial donations; and a small Human Rights Trust Fund heard about us through one of our supporters and made a donation that enabled the purchase of a microscope for a Health Centre and computer screens for a school. We also continue to put on stalls selling jewellery, home produce and micro credit goods and give talks to interested parties.

One of our members, Carol Morris, continues to raise funds specifically for the UWIC schools in the region. This year a total of £700 was transferred to KK.

Our thanks go to all supporters and donors.

For members interested in any type of fundraising, we can supply collection boxes, posters, laminated photos and DVDs of KK's work – and access to our Just Giving pages especially for anyone interested in undertaking sponsored activities. There are also starter packs of second hand jewellery. We have this year developed a simple sheet with Tips for Fundraising and a 'how to' guide for running a Clothes Swap with one in the pipeline for running jewellery stalls.

(ii) Technical Support

FROK continues to offer technical support to KK staff as needed. As well as helping with, for example, written English and commenting on Standard Operating Protocols I am pleased to report we have recently enlisted a member keen to make available her advanced computing skills. She is already helping with the development of syllabi for schools and will later help with developing management information systems. **If any members have interest in sharing their technical skills then please get in touch.**

(iii) Micro credit activities

Maureen Hussain continues to be our lead person for liaising with KK over their micro-credit goods, especially mazri goods. It is helpful for KK and FROK that Maureen has been able to visit KK annually, meet with the women making these goods as part of KK's work on female economic empowerment and comment on new lines coming on stream. FROK is pleased to continue to support such economic activity even if only in a small way.

(iv) FROK Website

We have been considering for some time whether to update our website and work on this has now got underway with the help of one of our supporters. So watch this space!

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

We continue to build contacts with UK-based Pakistani individuals and organisations and look forward to extending these where possible. We were especially pleased to welcome many of them to the events held during the autumn visit of Maryam Bibi.

In summary, I hope that you find this Annual Report informative and interesting but that it also encourages you to continue your much needed support for KK, both financially and in solidarity with their 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 2016