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# FROK: UK Friends of Khwendo Kor

## Gaining access in remote areas the KK way...

This picture, taken at a KK teacher training project funded by Action Aid, illustrates vividly the cultural norms within which KK must begin work if it



is to bring development to remote rural areas. The women cannot not leave their own households unless accompanied by a male relative. Then, even with their faces totally covered, they must be hidden from the view of the men from other families.

Turn to page 3 to read how KK negotiates access to such areas and the holistic change it aims to bring about.



Turn to page 3 to find out why Laila is tied to her bed.

Buy Christmas presents and help KK at the same time!

**“This award gives a very clear message that women can make it, whatever the circumstances of their birth.....”**

*So went the introduction to Maryam Bibi's address to graduands when she received her Honorary Doctorate from the University of York in July. She continued:*

*“In my life, I have learned that education is the single most powerful instrument that can be given to someone. If you use it for your own personal goals then it will help you to achieve those but if it is*

*simultaneously used for empowering others, the results could be phenomenal as you can see*



*today - me a tribal*

*L—R: Polly Griffith FROK secretary; Caroline Pym J. A Clark Trust; Maryam Bibi; Marilyn Craw-*

*shaw FROK Chair woman from Waziristan getting this award.”*

*For a full copy of Maryam's speech, go to our website: [www.frok.org.uk](http://www.frok.org.uk)*

**STOP PRESS: October: Maryam wins One World Action top award for Human Rights**

**in '100 Unseen Powerful Women of the World' see p2**

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### Special points of interest:

- How disabled women can be helped through micro-credit schemes
- KK's work increasingly acknowledged for its contribution to human rights
- Getting 'special needs' help to children in the floods
- KK's holistic and painstaking approach to women's and children's rights
- Meeting the politicians

“Expanding micro-credit offers a way to help Shah ....”

Shah is 17 and she knows that at that age she should help her father Lal Nawaz support their family. They are one of the poorest households in Turhka Kohi Jandri, itself one of the poorest villages in one of the poorest areas of Karak. Lal works as a petrol pump attendant but the low pay is insufficient to provide for his seven children, two of whom are disabled. One of the disabled children is Shah. For her, inability to help her family was the most distressing aspect of her inability to use her legs.

Then KK brought their micro-



credit programme to Turhka Kohi Jandri and other village women encouraged Shah to apply for a loan. With this, she set up a shop in her home, selling items the local women wanted, including shoes, jewellery, sweets and biscuits.

### The KK micro-enterprise worker

*Shah Minas told KK "Before KK gave me the loan and I started my shop I was unhappy because I couldn't help my family. The loan gave me a way out from feeling miserable and helpless"*

reports that Shah now runs her shop with confidence and sees herself as an important member of her family and the village.



**FROK's sales of baskets made by the women of Karak directly support such micro-credit loans and training. This Christmas we have an exceptional chance to increase this support.**

## Prestigious Human Rights Award for Maryam



Women' award for the 'unseen powerful women who change the world'. Marilyn Crawshaw (centre) and Caroline Pym (right) accepted the award on her behalf from Hannah Davies, OWA Director at the Award Ceremony in London in October 2011. More details at:

<http://oneworldaction.wordpress.com/100-unseen-powerful-women/>

Maryam and the work of Khwendo Kor have been honoured by being the winner in the Human Rights category for the One World Action 'One Hundred

*'The work women have done has been of the kind that is largely invisible, but without which the world would not exist as we know it' .... Mary Honeyball MEP talking about the 'One Hundred Women' award.*

## Khalid Usman, KK's Deputy CEO awarded Human Rights Defenders Fellowship in UK

FROK congratulates Khalid on his award of a 3 months Fellowship in the Centre for Applied Human Rights, University of York from January 2012. He will have a schedule of study and visits and will work on a specific project to take forward the work of KK while he is here.

We look forward to having Khalid

here in the UK, learning more of KK's work, enabling him to meet FROK members and networking with UK based donors and interested bodies.

Let us know if you would like  
to host an event for Khalid in  
your area





## Laila's story

(See picture on front page)

Laila was 10 years old when she was first seen by KK staff working with the flood victims. She was found tied to a bed by her desperate mother, who needed to control her while also caring for her other children amid the chaos of the floods. Left free, Laila would throw off her clothes and run around naked, attacking passers-by, hitting other children on the head with stones.

Her mother told the KK worker that when Laila was born she was a 'normal' baby. However, at 5 months she developed a fever. The family were too poor to take her for medical treatment, and the fever continued until she was a year old. As time passed, it became clear that she was not developing normally. By the age of ten, she could recognize her own name, speak a few words and feed

herself, although left alone she would eat garbage, paper and matchsticks and if she went out, could not find her way home.

Then the floods came and Laila regressed completely. She lost the little speech she had, became incontinent and aggressive and lost her memory and all sense of her identity, no longer recognising her name.

Once the family's plight was known, Laila was referred to a KK psychologist for assessment and is now receiving special educational provision, while the whole family is receiving social welfare help.

Laila's story illustrates how the demands created by the floods continue to require funding. Otherwise, families whose lives improved because the emergency revealed their desperate needs will fall back into obscurity.

Healthy children too require ongoing support. Many are still living in the camps. To see how KK continues to provide for them in "Child Friendly Centres" funded by UNICEF, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL5HJZjmHs4>.

Since **FROK** began, KK has responded to huge emergencies caused by the 2005 earthquake, by mass movement of refugees displaced by military operations in 2009, and by the 2010 floods. Each has left it with new, unexpected and ongoing responsibilities. **FROK has contributed not only to the immediate relief work, but also to the new "core costs" which enable KK, unlike many international agencies, to remain alongside those whose lives and communities must be rebuilt.**

**Your membership and donations are crucial for KK's work. Make a further donation! Do some fundraising! .....££££££££££££££££**

## Gaining access in remote areas....



The rural villages which are the centre of KK's work lie in the remoter areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Tribal Areas. Here it is not only the Taliban, nor even only the men, who cling to cultural traditions that keep women in strict purdah, uneducated and powerless. Women themselves are initially shocked and frightened at the idea of venturing outside the family home unaccompanied by male relatives.

Progress has to be painstakingly slow, something which foreign donors find difficult to allow for. Permission to work in a village must be negotiated with government, military and Tali-

ban officials before religious leaders, village headmen and finally village men themselves can be approached and a Men's Committee set up. The men are interested in water, roads, agriculture and their children's health. KK offer referrals to bodies which can help with the first

three and suggest they must speak to women about the last. So KK female staff finally win permission to talk to women and suggest that they might learn to work together with women from other families.

Health and girls' education are the priorities of women, but teachers and health workers from the towns are unwilling to work in these dangerous areas. So KK encourages local traditional birth attendants and any women with basic literacy to volunteer for training. **As our pictures show**, KK is prepared to begin work within traditional cultural norms of purdah as long as that means girls

can be educated.

So a holistic process begins. Medicines bring a need not only to read instructions but also for money to buy them. This can be earned from home with the help of micro-credit, but enterprises require various skills, including accounting. Soon women begin to ask for adult education for themselves. Seeing their children healthy and living standards improved, men now trust KK and are willing to allow this. *Contd overleaf*



*The openness on the faces of the little girls in school*

## Politics and Public meetings

FROK took advantage of Maryam's visit to England for her honorary doctorate ceremony to raise funds, win new members and influence politicians. Her main themes were the holistic nature of KK's work and the slow flexible timetable needed to carry this out in remote war-torn areas.

Maryam discussed developments in the Afghan/Pakistan border areas with leading UK politicians from both Houses of Parliament, including a 45 min talk with David Milliband, part of which he recorded for his widely-followed Blog. The Secretary of State for International Development arranged a meeting for her with his Director for West Asia and Stabilisation. This covered wider development issues as well as the possibility of more DfID funding for KK. The Director suggested a further meeting when he next visited Peshawar. (Update – in October Maryam was invited by the High Commission to meet with UK Conservative and Labour parliamentarians visiting Peshawar.)

Maryam's programme included public meetings

and seminars with Pakistan PhD students, academics, professional and business people, and groups with allied interests such as peace work, fair trade and women's rights.

These have given welcome boosts to FROK: in its work in the Oxford area where it is hoped there will now be an active group; through new contacts with members of the UK Pakistani community; and in reinforcing links with the University of York, where FROK began.

### Donate your Winter Fuel allowance

You may have heard of suggestions for pensioners who can afford it to donate their winter fuel allowance to help those in fuel poverty elsewhere.

Donating it to FROK could enable the purchase of fuel efficient stoves like this—please consider it!

Check out our website:  
[www.frok.org.uk](http://www.frok.org.uk)



## Gaining access *contd*

Eventually women are playing their part in village development and the whole community is strengthened to demand its rights from government authorities.

This is the model KK works towards. Sadly, international agencies do not always understand the flexible time-scale demanded by sustainable, culturally sensitive development. Nor are they accustomed to a holistic model which links health, education, micro-credit and democratic rights. One agency will specialise in education and give funds for one village, another will only provide health education in a different village.

These issues about current development models are discussed by Maryam with politicians and donors at international conferences and on her visits to the UK and US. Meanwhile KK seeks to ensure that the openness of the faces of the little girls in its primary schools (see photo on previous page) continues in their openness to each other and to new ideas when they become adult women.

## Will you remember the work of KK this Christmas?

To order a *large lidded basket*, suitable as a needlework box or for general storage, go to

<http://shop.newint.org/uk/storage-basket.html>

For a *6-bowl changair* to add a talking point to the snacks you offer guests or to make a still-life of your fruit-bowl, go to

<http://shop.newint.org/uk/changair.html>

**And much more!**

Host a second hand jewellery  
stall in your workplace or for  
your friends

(packs available)



## EXPANDING MICRO- CREDIT

This autumn, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund has greatly extended the credit provision with which it supports KK's micro-enterprise work. In response, KK is reorganising and extending this section of its work. When the reorganisation is complete, FROK will explore if there are new ways in which it can support the expanded section.

### CONTACT US AT:

Chair: Marilyn Crawshaw  
50 Middlethorpe Grove  
York YO24 1LD  
[Marilyn.crawshaw@york.ac.uk](mailto:Marilyn.crawshaw@york.ac.uk)

Donations to:  
Jonathan French  
85 East Parade,  
York YO31 7YD  
[jonathan@french85.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@french85.fsnet.co.uk)

Membership:  
Penny Bainbridge  
33 Vyner St  
York YO31 8HR  
Tel: 01904 659574  
[bainbridge.penny1@gmail.com](mailto:bainbridge.penny1@gmail.com)

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