



FROK: UK Friends of Khwendo Kor

FROK

Reg charity no: 1095857

UK Friends of Khwendo Kor

Autumn 2009

Editorial and KK's New Strategic Plan

As this Newsletter is being written, the situation in Waziristan has finally attracted the attention of the media. The long-delayed major army offensive has been launched, and the stream of refugees with which Khwendo Kor (KK) has been working throughout the summer has become a flood.

The mood of KK staff is still very positive. Their work has survived the difficulties in the Dir area caused by the SWAT offensive; FROK's support has enabled them to pioneer work with the refugees from Waziristan; they have restructured their objectives and plans to meet the demands of donors in the current situation and are opening new offices as a result. Their normal work in health and educa-

tion is continuing, and micro-credit and human rights activities are expanding.

KK's New Strategic Plan

The last Newsletter reported on the Donor Conference in Peshawar in March. As a consequence of that meeting, in early August, Committee Member Carol Morris flew out to Peshawar to lead the staff of KK in restructuring their strategic plan for the next 3 years.

The new plan relieves Maryam Bibi of much of the responsibility for the day to day operation of KK, which will be transferred to Khalid Usman, who becomes Director of Operations. Maryam will concentrate on influencing policy within Pakistan, strengthening links with partners at home and abroad, and fundraising. KK will add human rights advocacy and relief

and rehabilitation to its core activities in education, health and micro-credit.

Carol Morris writes:

This workshop was carried out in difficult physical conditions and to a very tight schedule. No sooner had the extremely hot weather begun to abate to the mid thirties centigrade than the Holy Month of Ramadan commenced.

The workshop came at a very important time in KK's development, a time of change and transition. Attendance regularly topped fifty, and the Chief Executive, all senior staff and Regional Managers attended throughout. This demonstrated a high level of staff commitment to the process of planning, which ensured that facts and ideas were fully understood and debated by all.

Carol does not mention that she spent 3 weeks in Peshawar at a time when Westerners were advised that it was dangerous, or that she travelled to visit the UWIC schools (for Working and

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Special points of interest:

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- ♦ **FROK Links with like-minded people overseas**
- ♦ **How to support women's micro-credit schemes**

SPREAD THE WORD—PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON!



Maryam Bibi talks with Hilary Clinton on her recent visit to Pakistan. KK's new strategic plan emphasises Maryam's role in advocacy and influencing policy at national and international levels

FROK AGM

This year's FROK AGM was held in Oxford in July. It was our best attended AGM and we are very grateful to members who travelled from York for the day. There were changes in the Committee as a result of Phil Crawshaw stepping down as Treasurer. Jonathan French left the position of Chair to take on the post of Treasurer and Ian Sinclair was elected Chair. Steven Bines reported on the plans for the Hazel Bines Fund, set up in memory of Hazel, who died suddenly last year, all too soon after joining the FROK committee. Ian and

Elma Sinclair reported on their visit to Peshawar to attend the Donors' Conference in March, and Caroline Pym, who attended the same Conference on behalf of the J.A.Clark Trust, presented slides of her visits to KK projects. This was followed by a lively question and answer session.



The Pinner ambulance is now operational!

THE PINNER AMBULANCE

We reported in an earlier Newsletter about the fact that Pinner Church raised over £11,000 during its Lent Appeal 2008 to enable KK to equip and staff an ambulance and hold 5 medical camps in the Tribal Areas. However, the deterioration in the security situation meant that the project had to be diverted to a remote area of Karak province where the infant and maternal mortality rates are similarly high.

The ambulance is staffed by a Trained Birth Attendant and Lady Health Visitor who will travel around 25 villages giving health education, treating minor complaints and, above all, supervising maternity cases, referring any complications and transporting emergencies to the nearest hospital. The ambulance has now started work and the first medical camp, held in June, treated 300 patients.

KK's working area includes Dir, the section of the North West Frontier Province sandwiched between SWAT and Afghanistan. The army offensive against the Taliban in SWAT this summer increased the already severe security problems the Dir staff were facing. The government was forced to close all its girls' schools in the area, but KK was able to keep some of its schools open, because they did not have obvious buildings for the Taliban to attack. The Dir office staff eventually had to move to a safer area but KK is delighted that the office has now been able to reopen.

KK opens new offices—thanks to FROK

FROK has provided the funds to equip a new KK office in Islamabad. This implements one of the decisions made during the strategic planning workshop. International agencies are increasingly reluctant to allow their staff to visit KK in Peshawar, and government offices are based in Islamabad. KK has rented a room in Islamabad where it will be able to meet with donors, hold seminars and exhibit micro-credit goods.

In the media...

In July, Maryam Bibi was the subject of the "A Life in the Day of" feature in the Sunday Times. The article was by the award winning foreign correspondent, Christina Lamb, and apparently got a very high reader response. Caroline Pym's letter following up on the article was published by the "Sunday Times". One result of this publicity was that FROK acquired an enthusiastic and generous new member in the Gulf!

Surviving the dangers

Maryam Bibi writes:

"In our Dir region work, Ibrash and his team are doing a wonderful job and working very hard at reopening schools and strengthening relationships with the communities, teachers and parents and even government functionaries. Our Director of Operations, Mr Khalid Usman,

reported last week that 70% of our schools are open, with more than 50% attendance, mainly girls. Such a breeze of fresh air amidst all the trouble we are having."



One of the Mazari goods made by women for sale through KK

The room will also provide sleeping quarters for staff who need to stay overnight, cutting the time and danger involved in travel to and from Peshawar. It will provide a base for Maryam Bibi, whose role in KK will increasingly focus on influencing government policy and working with other agencies in Pakistan and abroad for human rights. The office is already in use.

Dera Ismail Khan is at the centre of the refugee crisis. It is also the

area where the Fair and Free Election Network (FAFEN) is funding KK to work for 3 years. FAFEN is an initiative of various civil Pakistani organisations which have grouped together to encourage all members of society, including women, to exercise their democratic rights. As KK will be working in the area both with the refugees and to promote democracy, it is opening a new office here.

Maryam Bibi in the United States

The Synergos Institute was founded in 1986 by Peggy Dulany, a member of the Rockefeller family who is still its Chair, to "address global poverty and social injustice by supporting and connecting leaders so they can work in collaboration to change the systems that keep people in poverty." Last year Maryam Bibi was proposed and accepted as a Fellow of Synergos and this September she was invited to the USA to take part in a seminar

with, among others, Kofi Annan and members of the Rockefeller family. Synergos organised a series of meetings for her and she felt that the contacts made and the opportunity to share with influential people her views on the situation in Pakistan meant that, even in the current situation, this had been time well spent. The Synergos Institute has nominated Maryam for the Peter and Patricia Gruber Foundation Prize in Women's Rights.

FROK NEEDS YOUR HELP

One element of KK's new strategic plan is to reduce its dependence on its major donors, whose support cannot be relied on in these troubled times. It has asked FROK to help it in building up a contingency fund to strengthen its sustainability.

More specifically, it has asked FROK to attempt to raise £12,000 a year of unallocated funds for this purpose. The FROK Committee has agreed to attempt this but it presents a challenge for which we shall need support from all our members. It has always been easier to raise funds for specific purposes such as the HQ building, the Pinner Ambulance (see

p.2) or the Waziristan Appeal than for core funding.

FROK's unallocated funding comes mainly from membership subscriptions, monthly donations by banker's order and fundraising stalls and events. We are therefore asking all our members to think whether they can recruit any new members, start or increase a banker's order, run a stall or organise an event. Or do you have other fundraising ideas?

In the past, members have run marathons, asked for donations to KK as wedding, birthday or Christmas gifts, collected and cleaned second-hand jewellery

for stalls run by other members and run a car-boot sale of unwanted household items. If you have a new idea or want help with publicity materials, we can be contacted online at www.frok.org.uk or contact any of the officers of the FROK Committee listed on the back page.

Future editions of this newsletter will keep you updated on our progress towards our target of £12,000 of unallocated funding each year.



Another of the mazari goods for sale from the KK micro credit schemes for women

FROK's Links Abroad

At the FROK AGM, a member asked if there were similar organisations supporting KK in other countries. The answer was that there were no organisations but a number of individuals. The FROK committee has since discussed how to make closer links with these overseas supporters and decided to offer them Associate membership of UK FROK. Members may like to know a little about some of them.

Kevin Eglinton & Lissa Selga are based in Australia and have had a long association with KK. Lissa was originally involved with KK in 2001 through an Australian Government volunteer placement. Kevin first visited in April 2001 with a follow up visit for a strategic planning process in July/Aug 2001. Both Lissa & Kevin have revisited KK in 2002, 2003 and 2009, to assist them with planning and strategic development.

Lissa is an experienced human services Project Manager having worked in Australia, the UK, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Indo

nesia. She has a Masters in International & Community Development. Kevin has 35 years experience in Executive Health Service Management in Australia including study tours in New Zealand, the USA and Canada. He has international aid experience in Pakistan and Afghanistan and is currently studying for a Masters in Social Science – International Development.

On their most recent visit in September 2009, they assisted KK to develop a 3 year proposal for Oxfam Novib and provided advice on KK's current and future organisational framework, including sustainability, succession planning and the implementation of a new salary and benefits structure. A highly consultative process was undertaken with senior staff, through a range of workshops and discussion sessions with those from head office and regional branches.

Lissa & Kevin are committed to providing KK with ongoing support and are interested in forming closer links with FROK.

Miranda from Holland was also a VSO volunteer. Miranda initiated sales of KK mazari products in Europe and has already sold several hundred pounds worth. She has been a great help to Elma both over technical matters such as customs and over how and what to sell.

Hilda is from Germany, as is Kurt. Hilda worked with KK back in the 1990s and still returns frequently to visit and support them. Kurt is an enthusiastic donor who gave funds to open and run one of KK's centres.

MARKET FOR MAZARI GOODS—BUY CRAFTS AND HELP KK

One of the aims in KK's new strategic plan is to enable many more women to earn an income of their own, thus improving their status in the household and their confidence. KK's work in the micro-credit field first concentrated on enabling women to develop businesses in animal husbandry, horticulture, tailoring and village shops.

More recently it has also developed women's skill in weaving mazari, a dried grass which grows wild even in the desert areas of the mountainous frontier regions. Women can harvest it, dry it and weave it with the age-old technique learned from their mothers. Now KK has helped them develop attractive, cost-effective, well-finished products of use in any home.

The classes which teach them how to improve and market their crafts also provide them with a meeting place where they can talk to women from other families. They gain confidence and wider horizons as well as a source of income. The contribution which they are enabled to make to family finance earns them new respect as well as food and education for their children. Their goods have now reached a quality where they can be exported to the much more remunerative markets abroad. Since the summer, FROK has been exploring UK markets for them with some success. The Fairer World shop in York has taken some and Fairtrade at St. Michael's, a shop in Oxford, will be trying some out from February. Others will be approached in the New Year. Stalls at events & churches have sold well and also created interest in KK's work, leading to new contacts with fairtrade organisations & other charities.



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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have been delighted to welcome recently a number of new members with Pakistani roots, something we have needed since FROK was founded but previously been unable to achieve. Two of these, Shehzad and Sahar, have recently moved to York from Oxford and have been co-opted onto the Committee, where they made a valuable contribution at the last Meeting. Before leaving Oxford, Shehzad had recruited two of his work colleagues, also from Pakistan. Another group, with roots in the NWFP and contacts in the ex-patriate Pashtun communities around London and the Midlands, have contacted FROK through its website and are eager to raise funds for women's education.

Together with a general increase in membership, this has increased both FROK's areas of expertise and its geographical spread. We now have clusters of members in the York/Leeds/Bradford area, the London area, Oxford and Bristol. This should make it easier to arrange fund-raising and recruitment events.



*For details on how you can join
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