

FROK: UK Friends of Khwendo Kor

FROK

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UK Friends of Khwendo Kor

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FROK's work with Khwendo Kor

This Newsletter highlights some of the reports which keep FROK in touch with the work of Khwendo Kor (KK) that we are funding in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Tribal Areas (FATA).

Maryam Bibi, KK's Chief Executive, describes a visit to the Tribal Areas for routine supervision. Carol Morris reports on her visit to the schools for indigent working children with which she was involved while working for the Dept for International Development (DFID) while in Pakistan, and which she encouraged FROK to support through KK when DFID funding ended.

Both illustrate the central role which local communities and individuals play in KK's work. Maryam's report also shows the sensitiveness and impartiality with which security issues must be handled. Everyone, from the Taliban, through the village headmen, to government officials, must be kept "on side".

Despite KK's expertise in this, recent emails from Maryam have made clear how difficult the situation is becoming. They also alerted us to catastrophic floods in the area, which made half a million people homeless but have been little reported in the UK (see below).



Khwendo Kor's HQ building in Peshawar

Maryam's reports show the sensitiveness and impartiality with which security issues must be handled.

Floods and Fears

In August Maryam wrote:

'We are going through very difficult times. Villages around Peshawar are hit by heavy floods and thousands of people have become homeless. All the time people are asking us for help. Now due to military operations in the tribal

areas, thousands of people have been migrating to Peshawar. The scenes are horrifying, women and children scattered in open spaces with nothing over their heads. Local people are trying to help but the disasters are too big. Girls' schools are increasingly under attack and hundreds of schools have been closed in fear. Two of our

schools in Bajaur are also closed due to military operations.

We are organising a big seminar on these issues to draw the attention of higher-ups with the help of other partner NGOs.

Amongst all this, hearing from FROK is like a breath of fresh air'.

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Special points of interest:

- Security situation worsens
- Floods add to the fears
- Maliks support KK's work
- Fundraising efforts exceed expectations
- Maryam Bibi graduates with an MPhil

SPREAD THE WORD—PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON!

In July, Maryam Bibi travelled to Bannu in the Tribal Areas. This and the report below it are shortened versions of her report.



Meeting with one of the Men's Committees in the Tribal Areas

'Around 30 mainly tribal men came to the meeting. Heated discussion took place around issues including government negligence and the influence of the Taliban. KK was urged to consider construction of small bridges and roads, water and electricity supply etc. We clarified KK's priorities (establishment of girls' schools, adult learning centres, medical camps and identity cards) and suggested that most other things they

A VISIT TO THE TRIBAL AREAS

were asking for could be done if they worked collectively to link with government departments. KK shared its concerns about security issues for female staff and KK vehicles in the area.

Some of the maliks (village headmen) were clear that they had already sought the permission of Taliban leaders in their area for KK's work and that was why the girls' schools were functioning in their villages. Others believed they had to do more work before they could as-

sure KK on the security problems. For them it was their first time of interacting with KK.

At the end of the meeting, demands for girls' schools and adult education centres in around 20 villages were noted down; at a follow-up meeting, the demand for schools increased to almost 50'.

'A senior government official expressed his appreciation of KK's work in an area where almost no other NGO could work'

Visits to the Schools

'The interest of the community in KK's work was very clear. KK must keep in close contact with the villagers so that theybecome strong allies of the organisation.'

*Maryam Bibi, KK's
Chief Executive*

'On the following day, I visited schools in the area. That at Noormandi illustrates the mixture of problems and achievements I found. This school was established in a mud room given by an activist from the village. There are 90 registered students and two teachers. The classroom was quite big but still not enough for 90 and it lacked ventilation. I saw many children with bad skin problems. KK had recently organised a medical camp here where a hundred people

were treated. The teacher was very motivated and the students answered most of the questions that I asked, including on English and Maths. However, a shortage of books was clearly inhibiting their learning.

Under a tree outside, another class of adolescent girls was attending a literacy session. This teacher needed capacity building in all subjects and also in teaching methods. A mother told me she had released two of her daughters for the literacy classes because she was de-

termined they should have the education she had been denied.

The KK activist who owned the schoolroom had already started construction of another room for the school. However, the fact that the premises belonged to one person meant that KK and the school were dependent upon his cooperation. His wife constantly asked me for help in construction of a latrine. She said that the number of students was huge for the existing facility at her home and this created a lot of problems for the family'.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Here are three of the fundraising initiatives that have happened since the Spring Newsletter:

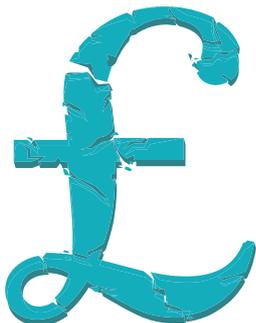
At the end of April, Sarah Luther and Nic Gebbels organised a live concert of Pakistani music in York. This coincided with Maryam's successful viva for her M.Phil, so she was available to speak about

KK's work. This event was greatly enjoyed by almost 100 people, raised over £300 and attracted many new members for FROK.

Carol Morris seized the opportunity of Maryam and Aneela Qamar (Joint Chief Executive) being in the UK in July to organise an event at Kingsley Hall in London, where Maryam and Aneela

were able to discuss KK's work with supporters. Around £600 was raised through donations and sale of KK craft goods.

Andrew Sinclair and Audrey Lee were married in June and asked for donations to FROK via Justgiving as an alternative to wedding presents with a target of £1000 for KK.



PINNER REACH DOUBLE THEIR TARGET

As reported in our Spring issue, the Parish Church at Pinner adopted FROK as the charity for their Lent Appeal this year. They were hoping to raise £5,626 to fund a health project in the Tribal Areas. This amount was sufficient to equip a van to travel around 15 villages and provide emergency

transport to hospital. KK would staff the van with a Lady Health Visitor and a Trained Birth Attendant who would deliver health education, contraceptive advice and screening of pregnant mothers. The funding would also cover 10 medical camps in the area which would immunise the children and provide

primary medical care for the villagers. It was expected to benefit 1000 mothers and 1500 children.

Amazingly, the actual total raised by the Lent Appeal was over £11,000, including Gift Aid. This should be sufficient to cover also the salaries of the staff involved. FROK and KK are deeply grateful to the Pinner congregation for their outstanding generosity.

A VISIT TO THE UWIC SCHOOLS

Earlier this year, Carol Morris (FROK member) visited the 4 UWIC Community Schools in Mardan with Maryam, Aneela, and Bilqis (KK's Education Co-ordinator). She writes:

'Unlike February 2005, when my visit was made in pouring rain, the day was sunny and very warm. Following our school visits, we had lunch at an old and

famous roadside café, 'Tarojaba'. Chapli kababs with excellent naan bread - definitely a place to eat when you next visit KK!

Our first stop was at **Islami Community School**, Misri Abad. The key person in starting the school in 2000 was Mr Abdul Wahid, who gave space in his home and yard and motivated the community to let the work-

ing children have an education. He is now a qualified teacher and works in a government boys' primary school. He told us he wants to start another community based school and KK will discuss this with him.

There are 98 girls and 4 boys with 3 teachers and the students were very active and their teachers showed great interest and involvement in their progress. It was a joy to see the school thriving so well.

'FROK's support to these schools over the years has ensured that hundreds of children from the poorest of the poor families are getting a free education and it makes a real difference in their lives'. Carol Morris

We went next to **Stori Mashoman School**, Ram Bagh where there are 30 girls and 4 boys. The teacher, Ms Nargis Saeed, has taught at this school since it started (2000) and was about to marry. Her replacement will be Ms Noreen Nissar. One student there reminded me about my visit in 2005! She is now in Class 4 and doing well, as are all the students.

At **Paradise School**, Gujar Gari we found 34 girls and 3 boys studying hard. We also met Ms Badam, a wonderful community activist in her 60s who was one of the founders.

The largest of the UWIC schools is Apna School, Mustafa Abad. 43 girls and 112 boys attend this school. They are all from

families working in the local brick kilns and they all have to work in the kilns. The 3 male teachers are very committed and regularly talk with parents to encourage them to let their children come to school. The classes are spread across 4 rooms and the yard. The students are keen and it was good to see the mix of so many boys and girls studying together.



APNA SCHOOL, MUSTAFA ABAD,
CHILDREN WHO WORK IN THE BRICK
KILNS.

Donations from the Parish Church at Pinner will fund a health project in the Tribal Areas covering 15 villages: delivering health education, contraceptive advice, screening of pregnant mothers and more.....



STORI MASHOMAN SCHOOL, RAM BAGH: THE GIRL IN GREY SITTING ON THE LEFT IS THE STUDENT WHO REMEMBERED MY VISIT IN 2005.

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ANEELA QAMAR LEAVES KK

FROK was very sad to learn of Aneela Qamar's departure from KK, prompted by her husband's overseas posting. Aneela has been a much valued KK staff member since its early days and has worked tirelessly to help it develop into the organisation that it is today. She will be sorely missed. FROK sends Aneela and her family its very best wishes for their future health and happiness.

FROK's AGM in July

Maryam Bibi and Aneela Qamar were able to report in person to FROK's well attended 2008 AGM in York on 12th July.

Maryam gave a wide-reaching report on the political and security situation in Pakistan. The Pakistani government and foreign powers ranging from China to the USA all had an input into the affairs of NWFP and FATA, but the local people found it very hard to make their voices heard. In a volatile situation, KK concentrated on listening to the "real life" concerns of the villagers and increasing their capacity to take part in their own government.

Aneela reported on recent developments and future plans for KK's programmes. In Education, there is now a demand to extend provision at both ends of the age range. Girls want secondary education, there is a new interest in youth projects, and mothers ask for pre-primary activities, as well as adult education for themselves.

For administrators, teachers and traditional birth attendants, KK is placing emphasis on staff development and training. This is an area where FROK funds are being made available.

There was discussion of future developments in FROK, with interest in how members could help increase understanding of the situation in Pakistan. It was suggested this might involve encouraging visits to Pakistan, by both ordinary members and UK politicians. However, the increase in security risks since the AGM means that visits have had to be postponed for the time being.

It is hoped that the 2009 AGM will be in Oxford to give members from the South an opportunity to attend.

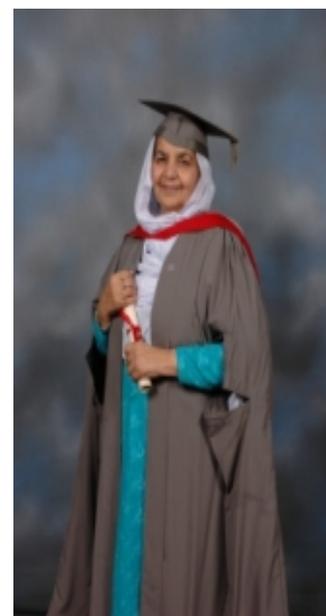
UNIVERSITY of YORK AND KK

On July 11th, Maryam Bibi received her M. Phil degree for her thesis on establishing girls' schools in the Tribal Areas. We are sure all FROK members will join us in congratulating Maryam on achieving this academic distinction while continuing her work among the dangers and stresses of NWFP and the Tribal Areas.

OTHER KK LINKS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK

Earlier this year, Marilyn Crawshaw (FROK Member) and her colleague Patricia Walton were awarded a British Council travel grant to visit Peshawar. As well as spending time with academics from the Universities of Peshawar and Kohat and with other NGOs, they were pleased to have the chance of learning more of KK's work. For the third year running, one of the University of York Masters in Social Work students was able to spend some time with KK as part of their practice-based learning.

We're on the Web!
Check out our
website at
www.frok.org.uk



Maryam Bibi MPhil at her Graduation in July 2008

*For details on how you can join FROK or make a donation, please visit our website—www.frok.org.uk—or contact the Membership Secretary, 50 Middlethorpe Grove, York YO24 1LD
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