

Spring/Summer
2015



Contact us at: www.frok.org.uk—Reg Charity No: 1095857

FROK: UK Friends of Khwenddo Kor

Health as a human right

As regular readers know, the Tribal Areas (FATA) is the most challenging area for KK's work. According to Wikipedia they have just one doctor for every 7,670 people: in the UK the comparable number is between 21 & 22. The figures (unlikely to be wholly accurate) tell only a small part of the story: doctors are based in towns which are hard for rural people to reach; most are male but women can only see female doctors and must be accompanied on all journeys by a male relative. Yet, widespread suspicion of vaccina-

tions makes the area a residue of polio; an estimated 80% medical facilities have been destroyed; poverty and malnutrition mean the burden of disease is very heavy. Women and children, it seems, must face these difficulties without medical assistance.

Given the need, the focus on health in this newsletter is self-explanatory. We reference the education of a female doctor from the rural area, the linking of a village committee to the relevant health authority, the role of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) in providing reproductive health services, and the support given to 450 people with HIV/AIDS. These all illustrate KK's core approach of working with local groups and

employing, training and supporting local women. So why include items about stalls, registration cards, International Women's Day? Because these too are related to health. Military approval is one key to doing anything: the stall helps get it. Income & good diet are necessary to health: registration helps obtain them. Above all the backing and trust of the local community is needed, without which nothing can be done safely or indeed done at all. And to this end, all Khwenddo Kor's activities contribute.

Let's make it 100!

FROK needs just a few more members to top the 100 mark. Can you recruit one more?



Del & Maureen Hussain of FROK congratulate female Skills graduates

Young females graduate from KK's Skills Training Centres

Twenty five young women who had received training in Mazri Production, Tie & Dye Techniques, Cutting and Stitching, Embroidery successfully completed their training earlier this year. Together with evidence of the quality of work done by other female entrepreneurs assisted by KK, this led to the FATA Development Authority awarding KK vocational skill centres for the following camps: Jalozaï, Hangu and Tank. At its most recent count, the Economic Empowerment program of KK has set up 12 training centres and at least 160 women have been given training.

From Dir to medical school—the story of one young KK student

Ms. Neelam Bibi is the second oldest of 6 sisters and 5 brothers in a small farming family. Her parents are illiterate. She was admitted to a Government Girls Primary School in Mathorh before enrolling at the KK DIL community school in Buthqila. There she went on to pass Grade 5 with distinction, top of 22 schools in that area. She transferred to a Government Girls Middle School where she had to walk 5 kms to and from school each day. After KK's Buthqila School was upgraded to middle level, Ms Neelam re-

turned and went on to pass Grade 8 from this school. Now she found that she had to transfer again to complete to a higher grade but this school, Government Girls High School Kityari, was 10 kms away from home and required her to walk part of the way and get a ride in a van. At the same time, staying in education was extremely difficult due to the presence of Taliban and forces opposing girls' education everywhere.

Ms. Neelam eventually had to go even further afield for the next stages of her education with the 20 kms managed on foot and, again, in a van ride. She was finally selected by the then KP government in a scholarship program "Story Da Pakhtunkhwa" (Stars of Pakhtunkhwa) scholarship programme for the top ten position holders in the intermediate examination board.

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Neelam Bibi receiving a scholarship cheque to help her with her studies

International Book Celebrations, UK and Pakistan style

It's always interesting to see whether similar events differ between our two countries. One example is the international celebration of books. Here's an account of KK's activities:

'Every year around the world, 14th February is celebrated as International Book Giving Day whose aim is to give books to as many children as possible. Many countries come up with different ways to enthusiastically mark this occasion especially for children who have no books to claim as their own.

Khwendo Kor's Education Team held an event in Mathra Village, Peshawar District to highlight the importance of books. Religious, reference and story books were distributed to promote reading for children. Mathra is where Khwendo Kor has its Deen Dunya primary school. Some of the funds of UK FROK supports this school.

The books were printed in Urdu and Pashto. Thanks to Alif Laila for donating 100 sets of colorful storybooks which were given out to the participants.

During the event, excited participants



Primary children enjoying books, KK's Deen Dunya centre

shared their views about the importance of reading books. Adult women participants said how much they learnt about books and the importance of reading them; but were not aware that young children would appreciate them in the same way. They promised to read books themselves plus encourage their children and relatives to develop reading habits'.

Here in the UK, we have something called 'World Book Day' in March each year, which comes at the end of a fortnight devoted to books. Many schools encourage primary and pre-school children to come dressed up as their favourite characters and to bring to school or nursery their favourite books—because, of course, far more children in the UK own books and have them around their family home to read or be read to.



UK primary children in the UK dressing up as their favourite book characters

Yoga for FROK

Thanks to Laura Potts, who ran a Yoga class in International Women's Week and donated the proceeds to FROK

International Women's Week in FATA

We reported last year on IWW celebrations in FATA and KPK. We are delighted to say that this tradition had continued, all the more remarkable when one considers the opposition such a move can generate. A seminar arranged by TQK (Brave Tribal Sisters) included prominent women speakers, a theatre play, poetry and a documentary.

If you currently make an Annual Subscription to FROK by cash or cheque, have you considered converting it to a Standing Order instead?

Do you have an interest in stamps & stamp collecting? If so, you could help raise money for FROK through collecting used stamps from FROK members and turning them into cash. Get in touch and we can tell you how!

Brunel Law students join hands with KK

FROK was delighted to support undergraduate Law students at Brunel University, London who recently ran 2 stalls to raise awareness about KK. They found keen interest among the other students and hope to do more in the future.

Fallout from Peshawar school shootings almost force UWIC school to close—community pressure prevails

Due to the security situation, especially after the attack on the army school in Peshawar which hit the headlines here too, all schools were asked by the authorities to take their own security measures. Private schools raised their fees to cover these additional measures but KK's schools, especially those for the very poorest, found it difficult to comply fully with the directives to have armed guards, fixed metal wires, raised boundary walls and to install security cameras.

Interestingly, KK recently told us that the Mardan Community Based school, also called a UWIC school (see our report on UWIC schools in our last newsletter), has lately reported increased enrolment

(presumably because some families cannot meet raised fees elsewhere) and KK have given it a second teacher. Initially it had to close because of the new security requirements but the local community wanted it re-opened urgently to .. *Contd on back page*

FROK is pleased to announce that we have raised some additional funds this year—thanks to you! KK will put it towards building their own HQ so they can move out of their current rented premises. This will both help with their running costs and make them more independent.

A matter of health—update from a Waziristan TDPs camp

Maryam Bibi Chief Executive of KK sent a very moving account of her visit to the Baka Khel Temporarily Displaced Persons (TDPs) (formerly known as IDPs) Camp in Bannu in late May where she saw despair alongside hope for the future:

‘This camp is established for TDPs from Waziristan after the operation last year. My heart weeps and don't have words to explain what the women and children in the camp are



Children engaged in drawing at the camp

going through, this camp is considered as among the best places set for the displaced people.

I went inside one tent enclosure where around ten extended families reside and met a group of women. I will give two examples:

A 40 years old widow with six children 3 boys and 3 girls of different ages told me she lost her husband on the way while they were leaving their homes from North Waziristan. Her one son is mentally not well, the other one got hepatitis and last one is very young. She said her husband used to cook bread for livelihood now with sick and young children in camp she has no other option but to beg which she had never ever had done before. She gives every morning and evening a bag and container to her young daughters who collect bread and curry in the camp. Procedural complications led to not to have a ration card in her name due to absence of documentation so she misses out the food distributed in the camp. Both her daughters are going to school established by military in the camp though.

The other woman also a widow told me a similar story. She has six daughters and four sons and one daughter is with disability. She said when her daughter was 2 years old she got severe fever. She took her to nearby health centre where an assistant gave her an injection immediately after which her daughter's limbs became dysfunctional and she lost one leg altogether. Now the girl can't use one leg and frequently falls. Both mother

and the girl are very passionate about education and her daughter goes to the school in the camp but with great difficulty.

Both widowed mothers were prepared to give their daughters in custody of trustworthy people for better future. I felt the bleak future made them feel the burden of their daughters as too much for them. There was an urge in their request that their daughters need and deserve better life and education. I felt both mothers were very vulnerable and they could be easily exploited. The heat, lack of water, the malnourished women

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Registered people living with HIV (PLHIV) receive more care

KK is now supporting more than 450 people diagnosed as HIV positive and their families. Nearly 50 Traditional Birth Attendants are providing reproductive health services to women in KK working villages. At least one Health Committee has been linked with the Health Department while counselling sessions by outreach team to PLHIV & their families are in progress.

KK awarded ‘Best Stall’ at recent cultural event

We are pleased to report that KK was awarded “Husn-e-Karkardage” on “Best Stall” in the “District Sport Gala and Cultural Event” by Core Commandant Bannu on May 14th, 2015. The award was based on the layout of the stall and the displays and quality of the products prepared by local women from FR Bannu through Khwendo Kor's Economic Empowerment for women programme.

During the event Government departments, NGOs, INGOs (International NGOs) & Community Based Organisations displayed their own stalls. Many officials, consultants, medical



Visitors browsing the goods at KK's prize winning stall

students and other guests visited the KK stall and praised KK's efforts. *See above article for background to the TDPs Skills Centre established by KK and from where*

these goods came.



Know anything about Quilting?

FROK has a great idea and needs your help to make it happen!



We'd like to create a quilt made by women in KP, FATA and the UK to accompany Maryam Bibi at speaking engagements when she comes to the UK in the autumn. It really would be a symbol of women coming together. **Could you manage this project, with our help?**

A matter of health—

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and children, loss of belongingness and self esteem were evident despite efforts by military for giving relief.

I went to see our **KK Skills Centre, the one whose products got first prize recently (see page 3)**, which is established in the same camp. I felt better to see that our and your efforts dear FROK are reaching the most vulnerable and making a difference. The tent room used as skill centre is quite big and more than 30 women TDPs and girls were present in the centre. They were all intensely involved in learning different skills and were so keen to learn from visitors. They were not shy in discussing their problems and looking for solutions from each other. One elderly woman said she wanted to get literacy classes. Younger girls were enthusiastic about selling their products, many mothers had children with them while learning skills. Opposite to the previous group, here the women gave strong messages of hopefulness, making efforts and looking up to something, though both groups belong to the same tribes and come from same economical background’.

Here at FROK, we cannot help but wonder if it is the KK approach that is leading to these women and their children to have better physical and mental health and more hope for the future.

From Dir to medical school— the story of one young KK student contd from front page

.... Although she received a scholarship for 4 months, this was later withdrawn and transferred to a boy student.

In the meanwhile Ms Neelam persevered in trying to gain entry to university as a medical student and was finally successful in 2014, firstly for Kohat Institute of Medical Sciences and then Fatima Jinnah Medical College, Lahore. When she got her place, her family was offered money for the place by the well-off father of another female student on the waiting list for entry, but her family refused it. Her father has now sold his small farming land to bear her expenses and has become a ‘daily wage’, sometimes driving a vehicle for other people or sometimes working on his brother’s land to earn bread for the family. A remarkable story.

Fallout from Peshawar school shootingscontd from page 2

..... to ‘... avoid wastage of time of their children’. The local community and teachers of the school agreed to provide a guard and offered to meet the camera expenses from the teachers’ salaries. KK management instead found the money to provide the required camera so that the 80+ children could resume their studies.



Children attending the KK school at Baka Khel TDP camp

Women attending the KK vocational centre at Baka Khel TDP camp



Want to Donate to FROK or get a friend to join and not sure how?

Advice from our Treasurer

On our website at www.frok.org.uk, you can access a form to set up a **standing order**, download and **post a completed membership form and cheque** or find details on how to do a **bank to bank transfer**. Remember to fill in a **gift aid** form if you are a UK tax payer. For those with **Charity Aid Foundation (CAF)** accounts you can send me a voucher or set up regular payments

You can also donate up to £10 by sending a **text** to 70070 with the following message:

FROK10 £[put here the number of pounds you want to donate - choose from 1,2,3,4,5 or 10].

Another online donation route—either a one-off or regular amount—is through **www.justgiving.com/frok/Donate**. If you declare you’re a UK tax payer, Justgiving will add gift aid to any donation.

You can also send me a **donation direct** (Jonathan French, FROK Treasurer, 85, East Parade, Heworth, York, YO31 7YD): cheques made out to FROK. If you’re a taxpayer, please complete the gift aid form. (If you have already completed a form, it will not be necessary to do it on every occasion. I will come back to you if there is a problem).

For **online banking transfers**, use the bank account details on the website but please also let me know you’re doing this. By putting your surname in ‘payee reference’ or emailing me at:

Jonathanfrench97@gmail.com

on the first occasion you go down this route so I can confirm receipt.

Finally, you can now support FROK when you make **on-line purchases** by using the **THEGIVINGMACHINE**.

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