

FROK

The UK Friends of Khwendo Kor
Registered charity no: 1095857

Annual Report for 2017-2018

Welcome to Annual Report of the UK Friends of Khwendo Kor (FROK), the seventh during my time as Chair. The Report aims to convey a sense of activities undertaken by FROK's Trustees and members during the year from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. 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 (KP, formerly the North West Frontier Province) and to promote KK's four core values - commitment, accountability, mutual respect and integrity – and its vision of 'A compassionate society where women live with dignity and self reliance'. We greatly value all contributions received during the year from members, donors or other supporters, be they financial or in other ways.

KK was founded in 1993 by Maryam Bibi and a small group of female friends and Maryam remains its Chief Executive today. Increasingly, the day to day running of the organisation is carried out by her two hugely talented and dedicated 'deputies': Gullalai and Khalid Usman. KK continues to focus on the four key areas of Education, Civil Rights, Health and Women's Economic Empowerment and its 'Viable Villages' approach continues to attract a lot of attention from both within and outside the country. You can read more about these on the FROK website (www.frok.org.uk) and that of Khwendo Kor (www.khwendokor.org.pk).

Humanitarian challenges are, sadly, also never far away in this part of the world. Currently, KK provides services to, and advocates for, those involved in the mass movement of people from North Waziristan in 2014 that resulted from military activity against the insurgents. Many remain displaced and living in camps while others have now returned to their homelands. Conditions in the camps are very challenging and KK provides schools, health facilities, identity card registration facilities (without which women cannot access humanitarian aid), child-friendly spaces and women-friendly spaces. For those who have now been able to return to their homelands, they are faced with rebuilding their family and community lives amidst the rebuilding of physical infrastructures. Although KK is so well placed to assist with this, it has nevertheless proved difficult to reliably obtain the security clearance that is required for each separate work project. Frustratingly this is even the case when they have successfully obtained funds to start work and despite the fact that KK is one of the very few NGOs with a core focus on women and children and the only one headed by a woman. KK works hard to get such security clearances and is tantalisingly close to regular success.

As will be clear from the above, security concerns in the region remain very high. These, together with its history and terrain contribute to the enduring poverty of the people and the highly gendered conservative culture, make life especially difficult for women. However KK has always sought to work right at the cutting edge where other services are scarce or non-existent, so they are no strangers to adversity and slow progress. This makes their commitment all the more remarkable. We highlight here just a few of KK's 2017 achievements to give you a flavour:

- More than 5,000 children benefited from KK's education-related activities
- Over 1,000 women took part in KK's women leaders' development events

- Almost 9,500 women were assisted to obtain CNIC cards enabling them to vote and access humanitarian aid in their own right
- More than 13,000 people were reached through KK's health-related activities
- Members of local community organisations in Dir Upper raised almost 10,000,000PKR (£63,000) for their Viable Villages schemes from sources other than the project itself (e.g. Public Health funds)
- 40 projects in Dir Upper were handed over successfully to the community to run

We reported last year of some potential changes that could quicken the pace of progress, namely plans to merge KP and FATA into a single province. We are pleased to report that in May 2018 (i.e. after the year on which we are reporting), this was agreed. While not a panacea, it is anticipated that this will lead to greater investment in schools, health facilities and employment opportunities in FATA in order to bring its economic and social state closer to that of KP. There is a long way to go. KK, as one of the very few organisations that combines service delivery with advocacy, will be using all its skills and experience to work alongside others to ensure that progress is achieved across the genders. As part of that, KK continues to provide the secretariat to the Takrah Qabailee Khwenday (TQK) (Brave Tribal Sisters) network, a remarkable movement intended to bring together all those interested in bringing about change in the social, economic and political situation of tribal women, youth, children and their communities driven and inspired by the tribal women and men themselves. One key aspect is to encourage more women to become involved in political processes. We have reported on this in previous newsletters and will be featuring TQK in our forthcoming Newsletter, perhaps especially apt in the centenary year for the first women getting the vote in Britain.

KK continues to secure funding from within (including through philanthropists) and outside Pakistan but maintaining a sustainable income and hence a stable workforce is far from easy. The international development scene is ever more squeezed in our troubled world; many donors continue to prefer short term projects that rarely include good attention to an organisation's capacity building needs; donors' priorities can change or their criteria might only allow them to work in the same region for a fixed number of years; and the lack of 'bridging funds' means that staff have to be let go when project funding runs out thus losing valuable, experienced staff and jeopardising the trust that has been carefully built up with the beneficiaries. When these are coupled with the ongoing difficulties in gaining security clearance, KK is facing more challenges than ever. They are relentless in trying to lower such obstacles but of course this also takes up much of their time and energy.

As we said last year, it is all the more remarkable that KK staff maintain their morale and commitment, fuelled without doubt by the strength of their belief in their mission and vision.

FROK's activities during 2017-2018

Since the last AGM, FROK's **Executive Committee** has had three meetings supplemented by email and phone contact in between. In order to keep down costs and time spent travelling, we have been experimenting with meeting via skype. We have done this across clusters of trustees meeting in Oxford and York, thus enabling some face-to-face contact to be maintained amongst those living geographically close. This seems to be working well.

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. There has been no opportunity this year to try and bring KK staff over to the UK so we have not able to test out whether our representations concerning visas have borne fruit. We would like

to especially thank the York Central MP, Rachael Maskell, who made reference to our earlier visa difficulties in a debate on girls' education in the House of Commons earlier this year, at the same time drawing attention to KK's important work in the region.

FROK's **membership** remains steady. At the end of the subscription year (31 March 2018), we had 115 members (numbers fluctuate over the year but are slightly higher than at the same time last year). Members might recall that last year we asked each member to recruit at least one new member and we're pleased to report that two members recruited 16 between them! It would be great if anyone could improve on that total! Members' subscriptions, donations and fundraising efforts form a substantial part of our annual donation to KK so such recruitment is especially welcome. Another member has recently pledged to approach some local and national organisations, businesses, trusts and faith-based groups for donations and is developing a specimen letter that others can use too. For that we are most grateful.

Our twice yearly **Newsletter** remains a key source of communication with our members, supporters, donors and other interested parties both in the UK and overseas. We have also continued to see a rise in the number of 'likes' on our **facebook** page which now stands at more than 1400, mainly from overseas. Penny Bainbridge, who looks after it, has been doing themed posts over the year linked to selected UN days and these make for interesting reading.

That brings us to **GDPR**, the new data protection legislation which came in to effect on 25th May (so after the end of the year being reported on here). Many of you will have been inundated with GDPR related requests from a host of organisations, including FROK. Several people have wondered why we asked you to provide 'OPT IN 1, 2' consent when some other organisations have only needed a 'single click' reply. This is because we correspond with you on a range of matters, albeit not that often. So although we are *required* to send our members such information as the date of the AGM and membership renewal notices, our other correspondences (Newsletter, notices of fundraising events, Appeals) fall outside a 'membership only' category. Many thanks for responding. It's been a lot of work but important that we are fully compliant with the new requirements.

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

(i) Financial Support of KK

FROK's aim is to raise at least £12,000 each year for KK to have as an 'unrestricted' donation, i.e. not tied to a specific project unless we have undertaken a specific fundraising appeal. The benefit is that this enables KK to take up new opportunities and/or provide some protection against emergencies or unexpected shortfalls.

In July 2017 we sent £12,000 along with an additional donation of £7,000 that was available from accumulations from earlier years. We also sent £400 specifically for the UWIC schools. In the reporting year 2017-18, we raised £14,361, almost the same as the previous year. This means that we will be able to meet our minimum annual donation and send it shortly after the AGM in July 2018. We will also be able to offer similar support to the UWIC schools as last year. The actual amount to be sent will rise further as additional funds have been raised since the end of this reporting year. Actual amounts sent will be reported in next year's Annual Report.

Funds are raised in various ways, some of which we report in the Newsletter. For example, recently SharntiTrust (a small grant making charity) made a grant to the TQK/Brave Tribal Sisters (which we mention earlier in this report) to run a specific training programme for women from FATA in anticipation of a General Election in the summer. In contrast a

group of members in the Coventry area got together and ran a range of social events, raising valuable funds in the process.

Members also run stalls selling jewellery, home produce and micro credit goods and give talks to interested parties. **For anyone 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 and simple instructions sheets on 'Tips for Fundraising' and a 'How to run a Clothes Swap event'.

(ii) Technical Support

FROK continues to offer technical support to KK staff from time to time. For example, as well as helping with the written English on some of KK's own documents (such as their updated KK Profile publication) some members provide detailed assistance to KK staff with report writing skills and the development of funding proposals. **If any members have technical skills that they are interested in sharing, such as in finance or management information systems, human resources, fundraising etc, please get in touch.**

(iii) Micro credit activities

Maureen Hussain is our lead person for liaising with KK over their micro-credit goods. Maureen and her husband Del were again able to visit KK this year while on a family visit to the region. FROK is pleased to continue to support such economic activity albeit in a small way.

(iv) FROK Website

We are pleased to report that we have now been able to rebuild and launch our website with the help of two volunteers, Kath Cox and Jonathan Crawshaw. Many thanks to them; we really are most grateful! We hope readers have had time to look at it (www.frok.org.uk) as we believe it's a great improvement. Do let us have any suggestions for further improvement.

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

We continue to build and maintain contacts with UK-based Pakistani individuals and organisations and look forward to extending these where possible.

(vi) Links with Friends of Khwendo Kor US (FOKUS)

We are pleased to report that our US sister organisation has now been granted legal status and is working hard to support KK. We are in regular contact and feel sure that the growing international community of support for KK will reap great rewards.

In summary, we hope that you enjoy reading this Annual Report and that it encourages you to continue your much needed support for KK, both financially and in solidarity with its 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 2018