



Annual Report

2009 - 2010

Kurdish & Middle Eastern Women's Organisation Limited

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CHAIR'S REPORT:

I can scarcely believe that it is already twelve years since a group of us, driven by despair and frustration, decided to set up an organisation to champion the cause of Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women. Driven by an unadulterated belief that honour based violence was wrong and should not be tolerated in a civilised society, we set up the Kurdistan Refugees Women's Organisation in 1999. In 2009 we merged with the Middle East Centre for Women's Rights in 2009 and subsequently adopted the name; Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation, which better reflect our client base. In August 2009, the Organisation was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and our full title is now Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation Limited.



Over the last twelve years the Organisation has gone from strength to strength and within the last twelve months we facilitated over 457 advice sessions on issues of Housing, domestic violence, forced marriages, Benefit, no recourse to public funds, immigration issues, etc. As a result of our hard work and the generous support from a number of funders, many Kurdish and Middle Eastern women have started new lives, away from their abusive partners, have regained their self confidence and are currently on the way to becoming fully integrated members of our mainstream community.

One aspect of We are also particularly pleased that we have started to build close working relationship with a number of Mosques and mother tongue schools, which has enabled us to reach a large number of "hard to reach" women. As a result we are now running a series of ESOL and English Conversational Classes at different place . We have also developed relationship with the British Red Cross, who has provided some First Aid training for a number of our clients.

However, notwithstanding our tremendous successes, it is nevertheless the case that honour based violence and other forms of abuses against women continue to be a matter of great concern and that much work remains to be done. It is therefore essential that we continue to work even closer with the police, politicians, councillors, social workers and school teachers and other women's organisation in order to ensure that we achieve our goal.

Without any shadow of a doubt it would not have been possible to carry out our work had it not been for the support – financial and otherwise – given to us by a number of funders. They are all listed at the end of this report and to them all I would like to express a very big thank you. The help and support they gave has made a significant impact on the lives of many Kurdish and Middle Eastern women who can now look forward to a brighter and a much happier future.

As always I would also like to thank my management committee colleagues, the staff and volunteers for the generous support given to the Organisation, often in difficult circumstances. And to the many distraught women in our community we re-affirm our commitment to continue the struggle against domestic violence and honour killing on your behalf.

Gona Saed - Chairperson

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The last twelve months was another successful period in the life of the Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation.

In March 2010, we launch our DVD - For Honour and Love, a specialist training resource on Honour-based violence in partnership with Eighteen and Under – at the Amnesty International, which attracted over 100 delegates, from various organisations, including the police, local authorities, schools, various women groups, Members of Parliament, the Nationwide Foundation, etc. As a result of its success, it was suggested by our funder, the Nationwide Foundation, that the launch be replicated in at least six other UK Cities. Since then there has been a constant demand for the DVD, which is modestly priced at £40 each and we have been asked to run training courses on the four themes covered, i.e. Honour Based Violence; Forced Marriages; Female Genital Mutilation and Controlling.

I am also very happy to report on the improving working relationship which is taking place with the local mosques, Kurdish speaking mother tongue schools and the British Red Cross. Through these bodies we have been able to reach a number of vulnerable women, which might not otherwise be possible.

We continue to enjoy welcome and generous support from a number of funders, whose names we are pleased to list elsewhere in this report. However I would like to mention Lloyds TSB and the Henry Smith Charity, both of which have agreed to fund a volunteers project that will enable us to provide training Administration, Awareness, Advocacy and Events Planning for at least twenty volunteers in order that they can gain paid employment in the future.

This is indeed both a challenging and exciting time for the organisation. Together we shall overcome the barriers that await us and continue to build on the successes of previous years.

Sawsan Salim - Director

HISTORY OF KMEWO:

The Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation, replaces the Kurdish Refugee Women's Organisation, which was established in 1999. Its primary goal was to champion the cause of women from Kurdistan and the Middle East - mostly victims of domestic violence, honour killing, forced marriages, female genital mutilation and other forms of human rights abuses. However, on arrival in the UK, their problems were soon compounded by their inability to speak the English language; not being able to find paid employment; lack of accommodation and problems relating to their immigration status.

It was in response to these problems that a few dedicated and visionary women, with determination and drive, formed the Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organisation. Initially they started giving advice and counselling, two days per week, from a small office in Archway. However as news of our services spread within the community, demand grows and soon we were working five days per week. The opening of the Peckham office follows swiftly thereafter. In 2009 the Organisation was merged with the Middle Centre for Women's Rights and after a name change it was registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Earlier this year our new Company was formally granted charitable status.



MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANISATION:

A board of five trustees, all women from within the Kurdish and Middle Eastern community, manages the Organisation. The board meets every two months in order to monitor performance, determine policy issues, and to decide on long-term strategy. In between meetings the Chair meets with the Co-ordinator to discuss and deal with operational issues.

OUR AIMS:

- 1- To relieve the distress and suffering of Kurdish and Middle Eastern women and children in necessitous circumstances resident in the UK and in such parts of the world as the Trustees may from time to time determine
- 2- To promote the human rights of Kurdish and Middle Eastern women through providing information, research and organising conferences and seminars on human rights issue.
- 3- To promote equality of opportunities of women particularly those within the Kurdish and Middle Eastern communities resident in the UK and elsewhere by providing information and educating the general public on such matters.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN OVER THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS

Advice and outreach support:

Over the last twelve months 457 client-visits to our offices in Archway and Southwark for advice – some of these clients visited us an average of six times over the period. We received more than 1000 telephone calls. Issues covered under this project include; housing, welfare benefit, domestic violence, immigration, forced marriages, FGM, etc. This project is part funded by the Nationwide Foundation.

DVD - For Honour and Love Plus Training Materials:

The DVD, entitled Honour and Love, was produced in partnership with “Eighteen & Under in Scotland and the Training Materials in partnership with Leeway Women’s Aid (Norwich). This culminated in a launch at the Amnesty International Centre in March 2010. As a result of its success, a series of regional launches are being planned for six other UK Cities. This project was funded by the Nationwide Foundation.



Volunteer's Recruitment & Development Project:

With financial support from Henry Smith and Lloyds TSB we started a volunteer's recruitment and development project. Over a three year period the aim to recruit and train twenty women volunteers in Advocacy, Administration, Awareness, Events Planning and Befriending. The training programme for each candidate is planned to last between 3 and 6 months after which each of them should be ready to seek paid employment. So far 17 women have joined the programme and their feedback is extremely positive. Typical of the responses from the volunteers are; "As a new volunteer at KMEWO I find myself in the right place for my occupation which is teaching. I have found that volunteering could be very important for me".



Reaching Communities Programme:

The Reaching Communities programme, which was funded mainly by Big Lottery, is approaching its initial three year period and it has been a tremendous success. The following table details the success of the project over the three year period;

Outcomes of the Reaching Copmmunities Project				
Outcome One - 600 isolated women have their confidence restored				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Establish goals	184	230	238	652
Develop relationship	574	450	444	1468
Confidence building	297	224	190	711
Peer support	297	224	190	711
Promotion & publicity				
Outcome two - 600 women achieved training and education to NVQ (Level 2) standard				
Contact education providers	10	10	15	35
Support goals/achievements	277	230	285	792
Visit training & education providers	10	10	10	30
Mapping - further education providers				
Outcome three - 600 women escaped from social isolation				
Provide support	574	450	444	1468
Activities and outings	574	450	444	1468
Support each other	297	224	190	711
Support network	297	224	190	711
Promotion and publicity				
Outcome four - 600 women integrated into British society				
Provide information and seminars	277	230	345	852
Tours and visits	297	224	155	676
Inform local services about the project				
Provide a supporter for individual women	184	230	238	652
Develop orientation guides				

In her response to our successful completion of this project, the Grants Officer, Lynn Stoddart of Big Lottery wrote as follows in the project closure letter; “Thank you for sending us your completed End of grant report. I am delighted to confirm that it meets all our requirements, for which we are very grateful. I was pleased to see that the project has been so successful and made such a difference to the lives of the beneficiaries



INTERPRETING & TRANSLATION:

We continue to accompany our clients to various organisations on a routine basis, e.g. the police, solicitors, colleges, Hosing department, Refugee, Job Centre plus etc. to carry out interpreting and translation on their behalf. This is an ongoing and ever increasing part of our work and 90 such visits were carried out during the last twelve months.

NETWORKING:

KRWO continues to work with a number of other organisations, in order to share good practice, inform and be informed about each others work, support and participate in the work and activities of each other, etc. Amongst these are; Safer Islington Partnership, Islington Faith Forum, Arab Advice Bureau, Iranian community Center, Red Cross, MARAC, MPS HBV working group, CPS, Amnesty International, Southall Black Sisters, Peckham Community Council meeting, IMECE, IMKAAN, Newham Asian Women Project, the Metropolitan Police, Women Asylum Aid, Women Resource Centre, Refugee Council, Latin American Women Aid, Islington & Hackney Domestic Forum, International Federation for Iraqi Refugees, Coalition against Deportation to Iraq, Forward, Manor Garden Center, Iranian and Kurdish Women Rights Project, Peckham Voluntary Sector Forum, Roj Women, Islington Voluntary Action , Evelyn Oldfield, Eighteen and Under, Refugee, Leeway Women’s Aid, Respect And Broken Rainbow .



NEWSLETTERS, MAGAZINES AND WEBSITE

Aside from domestic violence the other issues which make up our very heavy caseloads are Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) Because FGM has been a part of the tradition and culture of many Middle Eastern countries and does enjoy widespread support amongst older women within the targeted communities it is a particularly difficult issue to deal with. Regarding the issue of NRPF, the difficulty stems from the fact that the Government has given the husbands/male partners undue rights in the application process, which they often used in a vindictive way against the women. To reach as many women as possible on these two issues, we are using, increasingly, our Newsletters, Magazines and our Website to raise awareness of the issues.

The Newsletters and Magazines are published and distributed quarterly (500 copies each) and visitors to the website range from 2000 to 4000 per month.

PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY:

Over the last twelve months the Organisation has been very fortunate in gaining access to a number of external media and agencies for the purpose of promoting and publicizing its work. For example, the Director was invited to speak on the subject of Honour Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation and Stoning by BBC TV and BBC Radio, Kurdish TV and the Refugee Council Newspapers.

FINANCE:

Over the financial year April 2009 and March 2010 the income of the Organisation was £109,407.00 and expenditure £100,149.00. (A separate Annual Accounts for the period is available)

FUTURE PLANS:

The following two projects will form a part of our strategic plan for the future;

Family Support & Teenage Conflict

One of the features of today's society is the apparent tensions that exist within the family. Gone are the days when the main influence in a young person's life was the parents and the extended family. Young people are instead looking outside of the family information, guidance, knowledge and inspiration and tend to regard the family as of only limited importance. It is more so the case with Kurdish and Middle Eastern family, where the parents can scarcely speak the language, with little or no knowledge of western traditions and culture.

However the biological bond that binds them together seems to be unbreakable and this is both a source of love and a recipe for conflict. It is a widely held belief that the ideal situation for society is a strong family unit, a view with which we fully concur. One of our priority projects for the future to support the family and to try and address the conflict that exist within the family..

Mental health project:

One of the unpleasant effects of domestic violence is the psychological impact it has on the victims and their children. Over 70% of the women we have seen, as clients, speak about not being able to sleep at night and how they are always feeling depressed and are lacking in self-confidence. Most of them also spoke about their children having nightmares and a range of behavioural problems. This project will help to address these issues, ensuring that the victims of domestic violence and their children are provided with appropriate advice, support and counseling. Initial discussions have started with professional in the field and the Co-ordinator is hoping to open discussion with the Kings Fund about supporting the project, both practically and by the provision of funds. The likely start date for this project is March /April 2010.

PUBLIC BENEFIT OF OUR WORK;

Our work does meet all the requirement of the Public Benefit test;

Our benefits are clear – we provide advice and advocacy on domestic violence, honour based violence, forced marriage, health, education, housing, etc. to vulnerable and disadvantaged women

The benefits are related to our aims – all the benefits that we provide are consistent with our aims and objectives.

Benefits must be balanced against detriment or harm – none of our activities are considered to be harmful to others or to the environment

The beneficiaries must be appropriate to the aims – all our benefits are appropriate to our aims and are directed towards a significant number of women in the community.

Where benefit is to a section of the public, the opportunity to benefit must not be unreasonably restricted: - our services are available, Nationwide, and is provided completely free of charge.

MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS OF KURDISH REFUGEE WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

Members of the Management Team:

Ms. G. Saed	Chair
Ms. T. Abdulla	Secretary
Ms. T. Ahmade	Treasurer
Ms. S. Omer	Trustee
MS. J. Al-Jabiri	Trustee

Staff

Ms. S. Salim	Director
Ms. A. Rosati	Volunteer Coordinator
Ms. H. Babakir	Advice & outreach Worker
Ms. J. Silverstone	Development worker

Volunteers:

Ms. G. Al-Kalifa
 Ms. E.Polat
 Ms. R. fraje
 Mr. I. Karim
 Mr. K. Omer
 Ms. M. Khalil
 Ms. F. Bizuayene
 Ms. M. Honess
 Ms. M. Banda
 Ms. F. Barzinji
 Ms. Ch. Karim
 Ms.E.Buyuhgul
 Ms.A.Ibrahim
 Mr. F. Saed
 Mr. A. Salih

FUNDERS AND SUPPORTERS:

KRWO would like to thanks the following individuals and organisations for their support and assistance over the last twelve months:

These include the following:

All our dedicated volunteers, Caxton House- all staff, Noel Hudson / Peckham Voluntary Sector Forum, Maria Gonzalez - IVA, Middle East Centre for Women's Right, Evelyn Old Field, Farida Baycan –Imece, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Judith Fitzsimons DV policy Coordinator-Hackney, Lola Lakoja-Southwork Housing Department, Jerry Campbell – Detective Chief Inspector, Dashty Jamal-Iraqi Fedration, Red Cross, Enfield Council, Daban –Kurdish School, Iranian Community centre, Al-Hassania Arab speaking group, Al-Aman, Genevieve Ford-Saville Grants Officer,

Thanks to Nationwide Foundation Lorna Mackie & Anna Jones, City Parochial Foundation- Sioned Churchill & Austin Taylor-Laybourn, Big Lottery Fund Reaching Community -Lynn Stodart, Islington Council Chezerina Dhaliwal & Anne Clark, Lloyd TSB Foundation and Henry Smith Charity Genevieve Ford-Saville-Grants Officer.