




Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation

Annual Report

for the year ending March 2008

A close-up photograph of a woman with long dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. Her right hand is raised in front of her face, palm facing forward. The words "I have RIGHTS" are written in black marker on her palm. The background is dark and out of focus, with a circular decorative pattern visible on the right side.

I have
RIGHTS

Chair's report

Yet again I am pleased to announce another outstanding year for IKWRO, where the organisation helped more clients than ever before and increased our public profile, and contributed to the struggle for women's rights and against discrimination worldwide. IKWRO has been firm in its commitment to universal human rights in the face of cultural relativism, helping our clients to access the law and to enjoy their rights as human beings.

IKWRO's astonishing growth is entirely due to the dedication and skills of our volunteers and staff. This year, we saw the appointment of our second employee thanks to funding from the Tudor Trust and the City Parochial Foundation: this has made a crucial contribution to IKWRO's ability to deliver services to some of the most vulnerable people in the country, and has transformed the way IKWRO is run.

Our Director, Diana Nammi has been par-

ticulary tireless in her work here in London, across the UK, in Europe and internationally, where she has been representing our organisation, campaigning, speaking at conferences, and affecting policy at every level.

I would like to express my profound pride in our organisation's growth, and my gratitude and respect for all those hardworking people who made it possible that an organisation founded in 2002 can, in such a short time, have managed to positively change the lives of so many women and girls, to save so many lives,



Nazira Mehmari addressing a conference at Västerås, Sweden.

and become nationally and internationally influential.

I wish express my deepest thanks to all of those people, and to our funders and supporters for their essential contributions to IKWRO's phenomenal growth.

Nazira Mehmari

Mission Statement :

Our mission is to protect Middle Eastern women at risk of 'honour' killings, domestic violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation, and to support them in upholding their right to live without fear or oppression.

Director's report

I would like to express my great pride in IKWRO which is becoming one of the leading voices for minority women in the UK, and increasingly influential internationally, speaking out against domestic and 'honour'-based violence, 'honour' killings, forced marriage and female genital mutilation in the UK.

It is a mark not just of the quality of our services, but of the intense need for it, that for another year running we have seen our caseload more than triple in size. This year, over 900 women have been directly helped by IKWRO to deal with violent and abusive situations. Over 20% of self-referred clients came through our websites, which were created and are managed by Joanne Payton, working as a volunteer; our web presence also made us visible to various UK and international media outlets and researchers.

Over the year, IKWRO has arranged conferences, meetings and

seminars in English and in Middle Eastern languages to raise women's awareness of their rights and the recourses available to

who are isolated from their families, practical help to women who are victims of violence under the restrictions of the inhumane 'no



Diana Nammi, Director of IKWRO

them in the UK; to raise public awareness of the position of Middle Eastern women in the UK, challenging cultural relativism which denies women's rights in the name of 'culture' or 'religion', ignores the suffering of women and children facing violence, and protects and magnifies the power of male dominance in traditional communities.

We have provided capacity building programmes for women

recourse to public funding' legislation, and providing training to the police and other organisations on how to respond to violence in Middle Eastern families. We have been invited to address numerous events and conferences on the subject of 'honour' killings and forced marriage in the UK and Europe, both as a key note speakers and consultants.

The strength of our voice is entirely due to

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the efforts and talent of our staff and volunteers: their skills and sacrifices have directly made changes in women's lives both in terms of safety and awareness. Special thanks go to IKWRO's dedicated and talented staff and volunteers. Thanks also to our other supporters within and without the UK's Middle Eastern communities, we feel we are creating a wave of positive change in attitudes to women in the UK, as part of a larger movement towards women's liberation around the world. Increasingly, IKWRO is building links with sister organisations at a European and international level.

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to all those funding bodies who have helped our work, and in doing so have saved some of the most vulnerable women in society from abuse, violence and even death. I also want to pay tribute to the generosity, understanding and commitment of our funders and all those whose made donations to IKWRO.

My special thanks go to IKWRO's Management Committee for their day-to-day work for the organisation and their support to myself.

Diana Nammi

Development, activities and achievements

IKWRO offers a wide range of advocacy and support to Middle Eastern women and their children, living in the UK, who are at risk of domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and 'honour' killings. The trustees consider that the charity's activities in meeting its objectives have been mostly satisfactory during the year.

Services are provided by trained staff and volunteers, who form one-to-one relationships with IKWRO's service users.

IKWRO's work falls under two main headings, **Direct services** and **Awareness raising and campaigning work**.

The organisation received grants from The Tudor Trust and City Parochial Foundation which were used toward providing advice and advocacy work, campaigning, tackling poverty, and raising awareness within our target communities.



IKWRO were invited to lead the 'Reclaim the Night' march in 2007 organised by London Feminist Network.

Direct Services

IKWRO delivers a range of direct services provided via telephone, a drop-in session, and appointments. These include practical and emotional support for women who are at risk of 'honour' killings, forced marriage and domestic violence. IKWRO advocates for women and puts them in touch with the services necessary to guarantee their safety and protection and gives general advice on welfare rights, housing, immigration and family issues, employment and provides interpreting support and assistance with filling forms and applications.

We also provide a free counselling service in Farsi language. During this year IKWRO provided advice and support to 923 women, from all over the UK: 345 of these required extensive casework. Of these 75 cases involved service users at risk of 'honour' based violence. Forty-six cases required help with immigration issues which we helped through making expert witness representations. Forty-three of these were successful.

The majority of our clients were in the 16-35 age range, who represent an increased risk of forced marriage and 'honour'-based violence.



IKWRO provided one-to-one casework services to 345 clients this year

IKWRO thanks:

the
Tudortrust

Islington Strategic Partnership

**SPORT
RELIEF**

cpf City Parochial
Foundation
Tackling poverty in London

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation

Awareness raising & campaigning

IKWRO campaigns for the fundamental rights of women, in particular the rights of minority women and their access to the law on equal terms with the majority of British citizens. IKWRO believe that women's rights should be universal, and reject all discrimination against women, and the denial of women's rights in the name of culture or religion

This work includes:

- Organizing conferences, seminars, workshops and training for communities and professionals.
- Lobbying and campaigning to promote equality, civil and women's rights.
- Lobbying and campaigning to influence policy formation in the UK.
- Providing training for statutory and voluntary agencies on abuse against BME women and issues facing survivors of gender abuse.

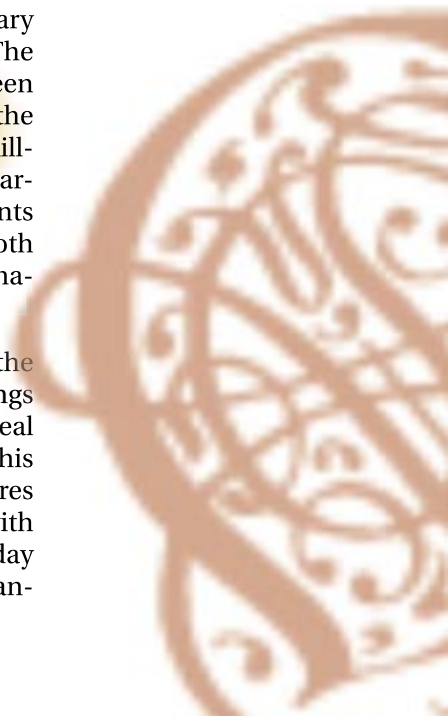
- An annual conference to raise awareness of the incidence of violence against women (particularly BME women) the difficulties that asylum seeking and refugee women from these communities face in asserting their fundamental rights, and to commemorate all victims of 'honour' killings.

IKWRO has taken part in numerous consultations and has delivered training for numerous professionals including police officers, social service departments, safeguarding children abroad and voluntary organisations. The organisation has been invited to address the subject of 'honour' killings and forced marriage in many events and conferences both nationally and internationally.

IKWRO's work in the area of 'honour' killings has received a great deal of media attention. This has included features and interviews with the Guardian, Sunday Times, Evening Stan-

dard, Eve Magazine, Glamour, Company and many other newspapers and magazines; TV interviews (SKY, BBC 24, Channel 4, More 4, ITV, GMTV, CNN, Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya and Fox TV). Diana's speeches and opinions have been translated into many languages and quoted in media sources around the world.

We also responded to many researchers' and students' requests for information in order to encourage the study of forms of violence against women.





Scenes from IKWRO's 2007 conference

Conferences

This year we managed to arrange four seminars on the topic of violence against women in the Farsi and Kurdish languages, including one in Leeds. Diana spoke at 64 conferences, seminars or training sessions across the UK over the 2007-08 period.

IKWRO's 2007 annual English-language conference featured a wide range of speakers including (as Chairs) Simin Azimi from the Refugee Women's Association and Azmat Nisa, a District Judge, and was held at the Amnesty International Human Rights centre.

Presentations were made by DI Brent Hyatt from the London Metropolitan Police, Juliette Murray-Topham, Direc-

tor of the BBC documentary 'Honour Kills', Sarah Pepper, Child Protection Co-ordinator for Islington Children's Social Care, Anna Hardy from Karma Nirvana, Lynne Townley from the Crown Prosecution Service, Superintendent Mak Chisthy from the Warwickshire Police force, and Hannah Buckley from the Forced Marriage Unit with a closing statement from Baroness Caroline Cox.

Statements from survivors of family violence were a particularly touching part of the event, as was an excerpt from Juliette Murray-Topham's documentary.

The lobby display featured artworks by Jerro Roy, a painter and supporter of IKWRO.

The conference was rated very highly by attendees, with most giving it full marks on their feedback forms.



Diana Nammi addresses the Policy Spotlight conference

This was a very good project, not only for young people but it helped our family too. My mother has learnt from the "Art and Dance" by watching us and she started painting at home. This helped my mum too.

Feedback from a girl who attended IKWRO's 'Hear Me Out' project

Before being a participant, culturally i would not swim in public and never with men. I felt others would laugh at my body and where there was a chance of swimming or being in a sauna I was too shy to take part especially when men were around. I was scared of the water too. Now I can swim and feel confidence in my body and I can hold my head up and walk around the swimming pool.

Feedback from a woman who attended IKWRO's swimming lessons

'Hear Me Out'

A grant received from Local Network Fund was used towards a Capacity Building Project for young people and children which was called 'Hear Me Out'; an art and dance program where children and young people were involved in the community activity. 'Hear Me Out' was an amazing experience both for IKWRO and for the young people. It taught positive activities, being involved and expressing feelings, encouraging families to take part in activities and encouraging young people and children to believe they are capable of making a change in the world.

The experience brought young people together and helped to bridge gaps between them. It helped the participants to gain skills, improve their communication and increase their confidence. The project attracted 18 children between the ages of 5 to 18.

Sports activities project

This project is part of our capacity building project for Iranian, Kurdish, Arab and Afghan female service users and their children. The Sports Activities Project aimed to create an increase activity, encourage healthy living, break isolation and build self esteem, community involvement and confidence through sporting activities. Learning to swim is pleasurable and healthy and boosts confidence, enhancing feelings of self respect, and as a group activity it gives companionship to lonely and alienated women. The project was funded by Sport Relief and attracted 25 women from our target communities

Community Chest

A grant was received from Islington Community Chest to fund the work of our running costs of volunteers, training and facilities. This grant has proved invaluable for the running of IKWRO's office.

'Justice for Banaz' campaign

Since the murder of Banaz Mahmud, a young Kurdish woman, in 2006, IKWRO have been actively involved in campaigning for justice, and for a full investigation into the failures in police procedure that could have caused her death.

IKWRO members attended the trial of Banaz's father and uncle and were pleased with the verdicts and sentencing in the case. IKWRO, along with Karma Nirvana, held a demonstration calling for justice while the trial was in progress.

IKWRO's petition calling for justice for Banaz



Demonstration outside the Old Bailey (photograph © Simon Evans, Education Action)

and for a review of police procedures in dealing with 'honour'-based violence, has received thousands of signatures of support, particularly from BME communities in the UK.

IKWRO continue to campaign for a police investigation and disciplinary action against officers who failed to

respond to Banaz's appeals for help, for a marker to honour Banaz's life (her grave is unmarked) and for the extradition and trial of two further suspects in the case who have fled to Iraq.



Banaz Mahmud: Victim of 'honour' killing in 2006



Screenshot from www.stophonourkillings.com, which receives between 40 and 50 thousand unique visitors per month

Websites

IKWRO has two websites, the first concerning IKWRO's services and campaigns in the UK at www.ikwro.org.uk, which gets around 5000 unique visitors a month and provides 20% of IKWRO's self-referred clients, and allows IKWRO to publicise our campaigns.

We also run a networking project at www.stophonourkillings.com which gets between 40 and 50 thousand unique visitors a month, including almost 1000 subscribed supporters who receive an email newsletter and action alerts about urgent campaigns. This has brought IKWRO a great deal of publicity and credibility to speak out on issues of 'honour'-based violence against women, and has

put us in contact with scholars and activists around the world.

Financial review

Total income in the year amounted to £63,299 with total expenditure amounting to £62,142 leaving a surplus in the year of £1,157 which is carried forward for future use.

Accumulated reserves at the balance sheet amounted to £18,646; of which £14,864 represent income reserves.

Acknowledgments:

On behalf of the Trustees we thank all members of staff and volunteers for the tremendous support they have given us through the year. We also thank our funders: **The Tudor Trust, City Parochial Foundation, Sports Relief, Local Network Fund and Islington Community Chest** for their most valuable support for the work that we have done during the year. This has been crucial for the smooth running of our organisation.

We would also like to thank all those private donors who made contributions to our funds, and to support women with 'no recourse to public funding.' Our thanks also go to our sister organisations which have supported our work and campaigns such as Justice for Banaz, and to the media who have shown such lively interest in our work.

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Rights Organisation**

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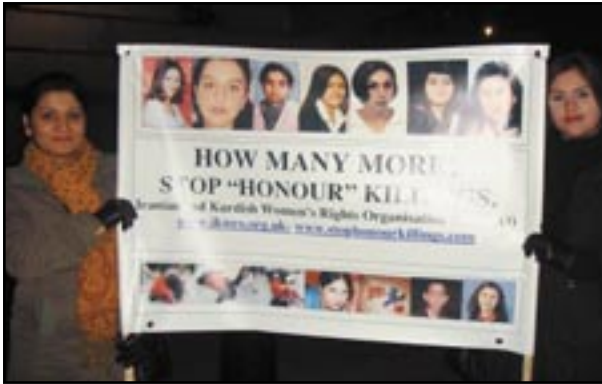
Arabic: 07846275246

Kurdish: 07846275246

Farsi: 07846310157

www.ikwro.org.uk

www.stophonourkillings.com



Sazan Salih and Tara Behnam; the banner shows victims of so-called 'honour' killings

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Chair
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5. Simin Azimi
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*Appointment of trustees
is governed by the Charity
Constitution.*

Staff

1. Diana Nammi
Director
2. Sazan Salih
Advice coordinator

Volunteers

1. Joanne Payton
**Information and
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2. Susan Foster
Fundraiser
3. Margaret Allan
Updating policy
4. Nasrin Sami
Updating policy
5. Jenny MacArthur
Advice team
6. Khadijeh Shahabian
Advice team
7. Fedra Mardani
Advice team
8. Sara Alaei
Advice team
9. Tara Behnam
Advice team
10. Juman Mohamed
Advice team
11. Halaov Rashidi
Advice team

History

The Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation was established in London in 2002 to support Iranian and Kurdish women, but which now provides help and support to women and girls (and couples) from Arab and Kurdish regions, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey.

From humble beginnings as an entirely volunteer-based organisation, IKWRO now employ two full time staff and ten trained volunteers.

تو
مافت
هه به
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تو
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دارید