

THE WOMEN'S LIBRARY

Al-hasaniya moroccan women's centre annual report 2010/2011



Chair's foreword

I'm truly grateful to the wonderful team we have who have worked so hard this year and managed despite the incredibly difficult financial climate, to maintain the much-needed services and keep user needs at the forefront.

The biggest challenge of all is undoubtedly the Government's call for the Big Society and its dismissive policy of the ethos of multiculturalism. An ideology that was once the flagship on all that is good practice for a true harmonious society.

Change of government has meant a change of direction and with the coalition it has been marked by austerity measures of the most extreme. As the razor-sharp cuts begin to blight most of our society's services, whether within the Education services, Social Services or indeed within the Voluntary Sector, a slow but nonetheless stark picture is emerging on the devastating impact these cuts will have on our clients and the society in general. Yet our Prime minister speaks of the Big Society and advocates inclusion and cohesion, above all he calls for full integration of all citizens to form a more approachable, human and caring society?

The austerity measures taken, will undoubtedly hit many of our users and I have no doubt in my mind this will cause displacement, which in turn will have some serious impacts on the mental well being of the children and the young mothers we assist and support. Some of these are new migrant workers and refugees. Displacement is an uprooting and unpleasant process especially for those who fled violence; to be sent away from their safety net such as this area where great support is available, will cause further disruption and in a way have an impact on the health service providers as an increase in depression will no doubt be the natural process. Disrupting children from their trusted habitat will also have a negative impact on their educational achievements and mental stability and well being. Cuts in student's eligibility for help and assistance and proposed increase in University fees will also mean that a good section of our community has no hope of reaching such academic excellence. The challenge will be for our Government to demonstrate that the cuts are not becoming a detrimental social-engineering tool that will drive the poor to being poorer.

What is undeniably true is that organisations such as Al-Hasaniya are to face their biggest challenge in keeping the services delivered with an increased number of users and a remarked decrease in resources.

Fatima Mourad

“Tri-borough working won’t be painless or easy. And neither will it be a complete answer to that £50m black hole. So the final piece of our austerity strategy will be spending reductions”

Sir Cockell, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea borough on the recent amalgamation of services of the three boroughs in a bid to serve the residents and save money. He goes on to say:

“Altogether our strategy is an attempt to get in shape for a new era, one of municipal austerity. But austerity isn’t quite the same thing as parsimony. So we are not going to start acting as if all spending is wasteful or wicked. Nor are we going to set aside our ambitions for Kensington and Chelsea.

We at Al-Hasaniya hope that the boroughs involved will indeed honour their commitment to those who are vulnerable in our communities, sick, old, socially disadvantaged and marginalized. They are **also** members of the society and if we are to strive for the Big Society as our prime minister purports to, and want us to achieve then we must not forget the needy.

Al-Hasaniya’s trustees and staff sincerely hope that those whose support we seek in honouring our commitment to the Moroccan and Arabic speaking women and their families, will continue their pledge and support to assist us, encourage full integration, independence and self-reliance, thus fostering a fairer, equitable and balanced Big Society.

Drastic cuts can easily sway from austerity to parsimony and with that we will see a more divisive society rather than one big society.

In his speech recently, Prime Minister David Cameron spoke of his support to Muslim women and organisations who seek to support this section of the community to fulfil its role in bringing about changes and modernity. We hope that those responsible in funding such groups will take that advice onboard.

Souad Talsi MBE

Manager's Report

It has been a year of highs and lows, thankfully the highs have balanced out the lows and we have had many reasons to celebrate this year. Yes funding as always has been and will continue to be tough to attract, and yes demands on our services will continue to increase, but most people in the voluntary sector and certainly the team at Al-Hasaniya have learnt to not solely rely on the money. Whilst we fully recognise that this is no way to sustain an organisation in the long run and provide services, sometimes needs must.

The highlights of the year were certainly Souad's MBE award, so much deserved and a true recognition of her hard work over the last 30 years. Coupled with being named one of the 5 small charities of the year by the Guardian Society Awards we were elated! Recognition and moral support go a long way for a small organisation like ours. The knock on effect has been very positive for us and we hope that we can continue to live up to the high standards we are held in.

My colleagues have mentioned the difficult times that we are all going through and how these will inevitably effect us. Whilst it cannot be denied that we are going through tough times and they will become worse before becoming better, we also cannot deny that in comparison to other boroughs, on the whole the voluntary sector in Kensington and Chelsea has been protected from the mass cuts taking place in other areas. For this we have to say thank you and hope that the value of the VS continues to be recognised and protected.

We will continue to do our best to attract the right funds to meet the needs of our users. These will not remain the same, growing generations, shifts in politics, world events all inevitably take their toll on the make up of any society, Kensington & Chelsea in particular will see some major changes over the next few years.

Our projects are detailed over the next few pages and more information can be found on our website www.al-hasaniya.org.uk

Thank you for all your support, we look forward to another year of hard work.

Zakia Chentouf

Thursday 2nd December was a very special day for the whole team as 2 staff members and CEO of KCSC, Mary Gardiner went to collect the award and attend the grand ceremony. To be short listed among 800 was indeed a special rendition for us; to be notified that we actually were amongst the 5 winners, was a moment of absolute elation and pride; a moment that made all the testing and strenuous times and arduous work worthwhile.

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to the success of this wonderful organisation over the years and those who remain absolutely dedicated and loyal to its ethos of excellent service delivery to the most needy and vulnerable of women in our community.



Picture taken at the Guardian's Charity Awards Ceremony where Samantha Herron, Souad Talsi MBE (Al-Hasaniya) accompanied by Mary Gardiner (CEO KCSC) went to collect the award on behalf of the organisation with Baroness Valerie Howarth and public service editor David Brindle for the Guardian Newspaper.



More information can be found on the Guardian Society website at:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/dec/02/guardian-charity-award-winners>



Mental Health Project

This project not only supports families (as it was initially developed to do), it has grown with the needs of our community to incorporate all aspects of mental health and to work to bring about a holistic approach for our users. Mental health is something that can affect anyone whatever position they are in. It is no secret that social circumstances do impact negatively on mental health problems and in some cases the users we work with have all the odds against them. Poor housing, low incomes and in many cases broken relationships, the emotional and mental health of these on women is fragile. The project acts as a safety net to help them to overcome their problems, both practically and emotionally, doing so in a safe respectful environment.

Cases and individuals will vary with some issues requiring more specialist support than others and therefore an essential part of this project is to work in partnership with other statutory services.

The Arabic Family Service team at Parkside Clinic is our main leading partner on this project working closely with our service users offering families a very unique service. In addition to providing one to one counselling for our users, the AFS also works with users in a group capacity. Regular structured weekly group sessions are run at the centre, which are always very well attended with consistent positive feedback. We receive extensive referrals for this service from across London both from statutory services and voluntary organisations; however restrictions have to apply due to funding.

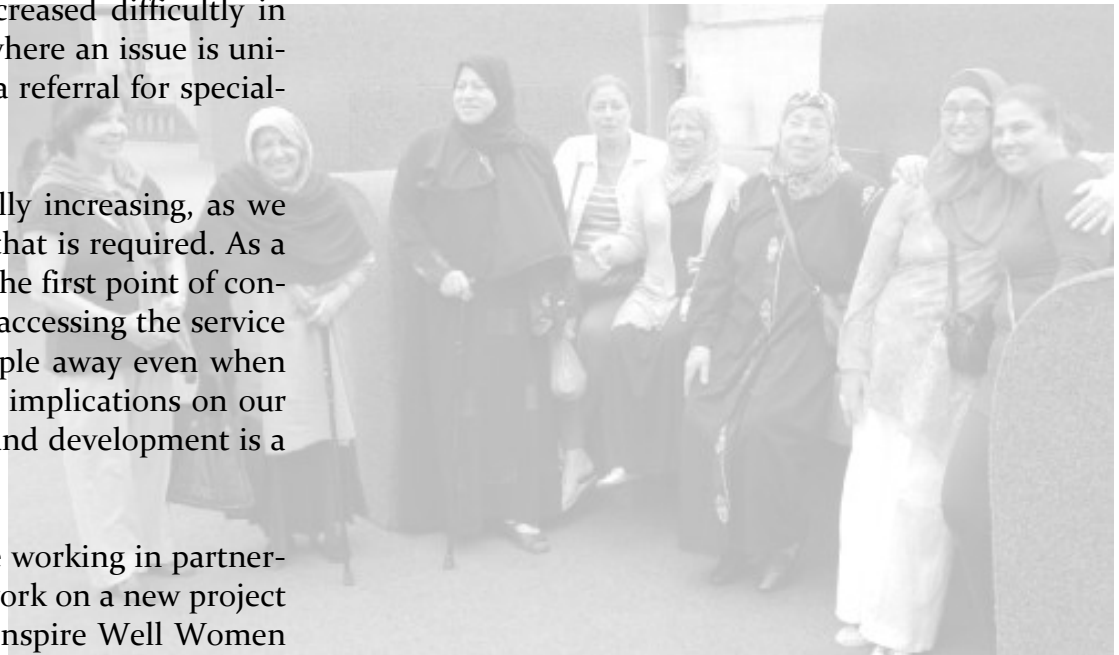
Over the year, we have supported our users through the twice-weekly drop-in sessions available at the centre. These are designed to allow our clients to access our services without an appointment where they are able to speak with a member of staff and gain immediate help with a practical issue. This would generally range from supporting users with their finances; contacting benefit agencies, rent arrears/ repairs; speaking with housing officers/ landlords, family problems; working with solicitors/ social services, immigration queries etc.

The development of this project has included training in the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities Parenting Programme. As a trained SFSC parenting coordinator I am able to run the course for our users. We have already run two of the 13week programme at the centre during this year, both in partnership with the AFS and both very well attended.

As with all the services within the borough, across London and the UK, we have noticed a significant impact on our services as a result of the reductions/ cuts from central and local government. Where we were able to refer our users for more specialised advice whether this was to their local CAB, Law Centre, Social Services, solicitors etc, we are now finding increased difficulty in securing the support our users need. Only where an issue is unidentified as 'high risk' are we able to make a referral for specialised support.

The impact on our services/ staff is gradually increasing, as we are unable to obtain the necessary support that is required. As a grass roots community organisation we are the first point of contact for our users where numbers in people accessing the service is increasing. It is very difficult to turn people away even when we are not in a position to help in-turn has implications on our services. How we maintain service delivery and development is a daily effort.

On a positive note, we are very excited to be working in partnership with Midaye Somali Development Network on a new project funded by NHS Kensington & Chelsea. The Inspire Well Women Programme will consist of confidence building courses, group therapy sessions and physical activities all targeting women's health and well-being. Further details will become available once the project starts in April 2011.



Esma Dukali
MH Project Leader

Older People's Outreach Project

This project is a lifeline to many of our elderly clients, who are vulnerable and find it difficult to get out and about. The elderly can easily find themselves trapped inside their homes because of physical disability, increasing isolation and depressive moods.

Some of these women become so isolated that they lose all contact with the outside world. It is only when they find themselves in grave difficulties and in need of outside help that they reach out to an organisation such as ours. They may have accumulated fuel bills, which they are unable to pay or need emergency repairs in their home. In extreme cases it is not until a woman falls ill and is admitted to hospital that their plight is brought to our attention.

Having made an initial visit and invited these women to come to our luncheon club on a Friday - where they can get together with other women from their communities and enjoy a warm meal - the change in their demeanour and mental well being is evident. All they needed was a little help and encouragement to take the risk to leave their home and venture into the unknown, and then the desire to go out and socialise is their own. The centre becomes a sanctuary for them, where they know they will always be welcome and safe. Activities such as our film club and programme of workshops give them new things to think about and engage with, which improves not only their mental but their physical health.

We had been hoping to expand this service beyond the borders of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, but due to the current financial climate the future is looking bleak for the vulnerable and elderly of our communities. We have already been advised that there will be no further funding for the luncheon club from our current funder for 2011. We shall of course endeavour to do all that we can to keep this vital service going, for the sake of our women.



Dardasha

It was at the weekly luncheon club that the *Dardasha* oral history project was born. We had long observed that whenever the women got together and had the opportunity to speak in their local dialect, they would enjoy sharing stories about their lives in Morocco and here in the UK.

Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Kensington Housing Trust, ministry for Moroccan abroad, *Dardasha* is documenting the personal migratory stories of Moroccan women who settled in the Portobello area of London between 1960 and 1990. The project will be launched in June of 2011 with an open day at the Kensington Town Hall, where the documentary film, oral recordings, written testimonies and photographic exhibition will be presented to the public.

When I began work on this project I personally knew very little about the migratory experiences of these women. Having spent time in Morocco, I was familiar with the lives of Moroccan women in their home country; but I knew very little about the lives of Moroccan women living here in London.

It was thus that we embarked on a shared journey. I have learned so much from these wonderful women, both from the process of helping them to uncover and tell their story and from the remarkable stories they have told. I will only ever be able to imagine what it is like to have to leave your family and home country because of economic circumstances and journey to a strange land, where you have to make a living and build a new life for yourself and your family.

This is not a choice which is ever made lightly and it has been a joy and a privilege to work with these brave, honest and inspiring women. Their stories deserve to be heard and preserved for future generations.

Samantha Herron

OPO/ Dardasha Project Leader



Domestic Violence Project

This project has become the core of our services. It is a lifeline to many and has enforced the ethos of the centre and pledge to assist, encourage and empower those who seek our advice and help. Domestic violence itself is still misunderstood by many of our women. Too often the only violence they recognise is the physical abuse. That in itself is often seen as permissible and is understood even if not condoned.

The project has two distinct roles to play:

One2One casework: involves those who access our services because they have recognised that the treatment received is abusive, cruel and unacceptable and need urgent help, assistance and encouragement to leave the violent home.

Preventative workshops: regular workshops involving partners within the domestic violence forum, offering counselling, discussions and above all how to prevent serious damage to the women and their children. It is pivotal that our women learn to recognise DV early and that it is wrong and not their fault. Such sessions operate as a very effective preventative measure as early intervention is very important to a happier mother and children and stops greater damage as we witness all the time with the cases we deal with.

This project has been incredibly effective and a mouth piece for so many women that it earned us the privilege of being part of the *UK Refuges Home Office Gold Book*, allowing us greater recognition by the Home Office, which is vital when dealing with those of limited leave to remain in the UK and therefore have no recourse to public funds.

We continue to work with a variety of both statutory and voluntary agencies specialising in assisting and empowering those who suffer DV. The partnership is proving to be a great success in allowing us to fully implement our goal and target with this group of women. Dealing effectively with the abuse they suffered, empower them to take ownerships of their lives and be independent and confident enough to speak for themselves.

Case study;

Mrs D came to see us in 2009 for support. Having entered the UK to join her husband, she was given the two year limited stay as the foreign spouse. Her husband subjected her to verbal, emotional and physical abuse from the moment she entered the UK. He was controlling and cruel. She was eventually thrown out of the matrimonial home rendering her homeless, and penniless. Having used the local park as her home, she was finally brought to our Centre. The most important task for us was to secure a safe home for her as a top priority. Limited leave to remain comes with No Recourse To Public Funds and so it was a mammoth task to find shelter for her and whilst we were trying to do so, she made the decision to return to the violent husband who in turn sent her back to her country of origin, she remained there nearly 12 months, before he agreed to her return. Once back the same pattern of violence and abuse ensued. She left and was able to stay with benefactors who accommodated her for over 12 months, in return for housework and other domestic duties, whilst we worked tirelessly with the Police, her lawyers and medical team to prove the utter demented behaviour her husband subjected her to. She was eventually granted indefinite leave to remain. Support both emotional and on a practical level continue in the hope that Mrs D will overcome the traumas she suffered and begin a new life.

Austerity measures have already begun to have an impact on our ability to effectively deliver and implement our pledge towards these women. This is because agencies we work in partnership with have suffered drastic cuts that have ultimately affected their ability to continue working with us. Whilst our services have not suffered the same drastic cuts, it remains to be seen how negative such an impact will be in the overall delivery of such a vital and lifeline project to so many women.

In a way it goes against our Prime Minister's pledge when he says he will continue to offer support for those supporting Muslim women. Such a verbal pledge has not been translated to a real offer of help on the ground.

Mouna El Ogbani
DV Project Leader

Partnership Activities at the Centre

Weekly Coffee Mornings – a very popular session amongst our users, these weekly coffee mornings attract a large number of women who regularly attend. They are able to meet other women/ mothers/ families and share experiences as well as benefit from structured group counselling, workshops and activities.

Weekly Counselling Group – run in partnership with Fatima El-Guenouni from Parkside Clinic and Naima L’bini, RBKC Social Worker, this group consists of referrals from the clinic, social services and other services. It offers women regularly weekly structured counselling sessions where they are able to discuss and share experiences with each other facilitated by the therapist.

Men’s Drop-In Service – this service was developed through partnership with Age Concern Kensington & Chelsea following a need identified by the steady increase of men accessing our services. The feedback was generally that they did not have a service to access for help with their issues and as we are a women’s centre, it proved difficult to maintain this support given the vulnerability of our own service users.

The drop-in runs fortnightly on a Tuesday, where an Arabic speaking male member of staff from Age Concern will attend the centre and deal with queries from elderly male members of the community



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011
(INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

				2011	2010
				£	£
				TOTAL	TOTAL
				FUNDS	FUNDS
				£	£
Statement of Financial Accounts		Notes	£ Unrestricted Funds	£ Restricted Funds	
	INCOMING RESOURCES				
	Grants	4		172361	172361
	Donations and Fundraising		8282		8282
	Bank interest		50		50
	Total incoming resources		<u>8332</u>	<u>172361</u>	<u>180693</u>
	RESOURCES EXPENDED				
	<i>Charitable expenditure</i>				
	Policy and Development		10000		10000
	Running Costs and Centre Manager			51811	51811
	Children & Family Mental Health Project			41324	41324
	Domestic Violence Project			18189	18189
	Older Peoples' Outreach Project			21487	21487
	Capacity Building			19433	19433
	Dardasha Project			3919	3919
	I'm In Project			1752	1752
	Office Furnishings			2500	2500
	Older Peoples' Luncheon Club			2262	2262
	CCME			670	670
	GPAW			0	0
	Youth Project			(279)	(279)
	Resilient Communities			0	0
	Transport			0	0
	<i>Governance costs - accountancy</i>			2400	2400
	Total resources expended		<u>10000</u>	<u>165469</u>	<u>175469</u>
	Net incoming resources before transfers		(1668)	6892	5224
	Transfers between funds	3	<u>(36)</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>0</u>
	Net incoming resources after transfers		(1704)	6928	5224
	TOTAL FUNDS AT START OF YEAR	7	43373	38146	81519
	TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR		<u>41669</u>	<u>45074</u>	<u>86743</u>

Movements in reserves are all recognised and losses are shown above.
The charity's incoming resources and resources expended all relate to continuing activities.

Winner of:



theguardian
Charity Awards
2010
Winner

Al-hasaniya **moroccan women's centre**

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