



annual report

2011-12



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A message from a service supporter:

Baroness Joan Hanham

There are two things which stand out in my mind about the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The first is the great number of people of different nationalities and cultures, who have come to live here, for a variety of reasons – sometimes escaping from dangers and persecution in their own country.

The second, is the number of voluntary and community organisations which, initially at least, have sprung up to provide guidance and support, to them, based on the experience of their instigators, of finding their way, at a difficult and bewildering time. Helping with overcoming language and cultural barriers, accessing education and health care and living within a highly diverse community.

Standing proudly among these, for the last 26 years has been the Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre. I well remember its initial start as a small but dedicated group, which has now expanded into being a highly regarded organisation – reaching out to often isolated women, encouraging them to become an active part of the wider Borough community – advising on access to services, providing supportive activities and promoting integration.

Souad Talsi, who is a founder member of Al -Hasaniya and has been its inspiration since, has recently been awarded an MBE – a proper recognition of what she has done over the years.

There are literally hundreds of voluntary organisations, and thousands of volunteers, in the Borough, covering almost every aspect of life. Each is dedicated to particular aspects of people's needs, aspirations, involvement and community and cultural cohesion. It is an aspect of life here which makes it such a special place in which to live. To them, and Al Hasaniya, in particular, we owe a great debt of gratitude.

Baroness Hanham, CBE

Freeman of the Borough and Leader of the Council 1989 – 2000.



Chair's foreword:

Jubilee Year

Year 2012 will be marked by two contrasting and memorable events. On the one hand we all have witnessed the delightful and joyous way in which the nation celebrated the Diamond Jubilee, and on the other hand, the severe austerity measures that have been delivered right across the board. No sector has escaped the financial onslaught, whether within the statutory or indeed the voluntary sector. A year where the words '*cuts*', '*tightening the belt*' and '*need for austere financial measures*' reverberated - and still echo - everywhere; and nowhere has that "*tightening of the belt and squeeze*" been felt sharp as within the voluntary sector.

Relentless pressure and tough competition over the same limited "pot" has meant that the voluntary sector has had to revise its focus and direction by implementing radical measures to survive, whilst trying to continue and make a real difference to those they seek to serve. Above all keep the same service level and support.

Our users, the majority of whom live within the Golborne ward in North Kensington have been at the forefront of these cuts as many are on benefits due to their immigration status as asylum seekers, or simply disabled and/or elderly. The Housing Benefit cap has also sent panic alarms to those with children, as further displacement will undoubtedly cause increased mental anguish and insecurity.

According to the statistics put together by the GLA Intelligence Unit, Golborne, in North Kensington and Northumberland Park in Haringey, are the most deprived wards in the capital.

In more than 20 years of experience in the voluntary sector, this is truly one of the most testing times I have ever witnessed; yet I remain optimistic because there is still so much to do, as challenging as this may seem; but I sincerely believe that we can all work harder to achieve more, and so more for less is a possibility, given the right expertise, commitment and redirection of resources.

It is therefore imperative in my opinion as a civilised society that we continue to rally behind the needy, vulnerable and disabled to assist, support and show solidarity, but in the same breath encourage those who are able-bodied and employable to train and develop relevant skills to return to work and reduce the culture of welfare dependency. It is the right and responsible thing to do. Through the media some politicians have managed to vilify all those who are on benefits, and that it is increasingly becoming a social stigma. It shouldn't be like this and we should all work harder to preserve our rights to benefits when in need and work hard to put back when able to do so. A balance is needed, and the sooner everyone is onboard, the better. It is equally right and proper that we also continue to support and protect those who are less fortunate in our society.

I hope that those who are in a position to support our work will appreciate the worth, depth and quality of the job done by the team, and that this was delivered with an excellent value for money ratio. Without the voluntary sector delivering this much needed service, the statutory sector would have an impossible task at hand.

Fatima Mourad

Chair and Trustee



Manager's report:

Over the last two years the centre has managed to see over 1000 clients and deal with over 2000 telephone and email enquiries. We made over 100 home visits to the elderly and disabled, held over 60 workshops with various partners and participated in over 30 events across the tri-borough boundaries, and held four major public events at the centre; bringing the statutory and voluntary sectors together, and inviting the public to participate. In addition to responding to calls from abroad where our expertise on female migration is growing steadily and our competencies are becoming further enhanced.

Al-Hasaniya's presence has never been as pertinent as it is today, both due to the austerity measures hitting those hard to reach minorities within minorities; and the continuing difficulty in accessing main stream services as suffered by our users and their families. Austerity measures as stated by our chair in this report are proving to be a challenge and we are currently working very hard to keep the services going, and to raise adequate funds to cover the crucial running costs, as without this budget being secured the centre is at risk of closing or at best reduce its service delivery drastically.

We feel that apart from the important one-to-one service delivery we offer, our input in terms of services under the government's PREVENT programme is of equal importance and urgency. World events have affected our young generations and the impact has been very evident indeed. We have a role to play in addressing often difficult issues, such as religion, tolerance and politics as understood by our young people. This can help in reaching a happier and a more united community. A community that regardless of where its origins lie is bound together by one factor alone: *Britishness*. Biculturalism need not be a divided loyalty but indeed a multiple belonging. We feel that resources must be diverted to good projects to enable them work for a more integrated society, free of prejudice and intolerance.

The reader will no doubt find that the figures quoted in this report are staggering in view of our limited capacity in terms of manpower, but it can also demonstrate the sheer determination of our staff and their commitment. Such a dedication must be recognised by those who hold the public purse, to allow us work for a happier, healthier and more cohesive community.

Our most recent and very exciting event held at the House of Commons surely says it all; a first in the history of the House of Commons, and for this I wish to convey a huge thank you to all those who supported us in holding the event and for ensuring that we had an excellent number of notable speakers.

Last but most certainly not least, we wish to congratulate our chair on her nomination and award of the 2012 Westminster volunteer of the year; an award that goes a little way to recognise her enormous energy, loyalty and dedication to the voluntary sector and her unyielding commitment to helping the vulnerable in our society.

Souad Talsi MBE

Acting Centre Manager and member founder of Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women centre

Our Projects and Services:

Mental Health Project

The biggest change to this project this year is that it has reduced to a part-time position following a cut in funding from Westminster in June 2011. Services remain consistent however at a reduced level, especially to those we serve from Westminster area.

Mental health is on the increase and this is a great concern, not just to the individuals we support but with regards to the impact of this on their extended families, particularly children.

One to one support continues to be a great element of this project and one that is needed the most by our users. It is vital for them that they have someone that they can access, talk to and trust to help them through their personal difficulties. We continue to do this through appointments and weekly Drop-In surgeries which are always very well attended with an average increase of 3-5 new users per week.

With the current ongoing changes taking place in services across the sector, we have noticed a steady increase in service users from other boroughs which places a great strain on the service. It is very difficult to know where to refer these clients on to given that legal and advice services have been hit the hardest. More often than not, we are left with no choice but to support those in serious need and in particular those who are more vulnerable. This is most definitely the largest gap in services available.

Working Partnerships/Consultations

Runnymede Trust – arranged focus groups for both men and women to take part in a government research initiative looking at migrants, the 2nd generation and elderly retirement.

MRCF Consultation on Legal cuts – ‘preventing migrants and refugees in accessing justice’. This was a very interesting consultation which looked at legal aid cuts across the legal sector in the process of being implemented by the Government. We later took part in further consultations with ILPA to put forward a submission to the Public Bill Committee who took our views on board. Our submission was also sent to our local MP’s in a bid to further highlight the issues our most vulnerable clients would face.

Following on from this, we were invited to speak at the House of Lords on the 28th February about the Legal Aid cuts and the effects of this on the families we support. I was delighted to do this on behalf of the organisation. Further information can be found on my MRCF blog at; <http://www.mrcf.org.uk/we-cannot-fill-the-gap-if-legal-aid-is-withdrawn>

RBKC Census – as the only Arabic speaking centre in the borough and with Arabic being the second largest spoken language in the borough; it was vital that we

extended our support to the Census in a bid to allow as many of our users to understand the importance of completing these forms. We provided a total of four Census Drop-In surgeries at the centre to help clients complete the forms.

Gaps in services . . .

Accessing specialist services is increasingly becoming difficult. Whilst client referrals are increasing, agencies to which to refer these clients onto are decreasing; what was once a straight forward referral to a Law Centre or a local CAB is no longer the case. Cases are often passed from one service to the next with no consistency in communication between agencies and this is very confusing for our clients. There is no choice but to wait longer for appointments and where issues arise that are very urgent, we have to intervene if only to negotiate more time for our clients to seek specialist advice. This is impacting not just on vulnerable service users but on the service as a whole.

Future Plans . . .

To develop training for service users around mental health in order to help them better understand and recognise the signs around it, together with methods of coping.

Provide fun/interactive workshops/activities/trips for our users with an aim to alleviate some of their mental strains. Clients have expressed a great need for this, particularly as much if not all our time is taken up with supporting the daily issues they are faced with. This will no doubt be a challenge as it requires additional funds which we do not have at our disposal. Most likely we will need to be more creative in our thinking and link our users in with other services.

Esma Dukali
MH Project leader

Domestic Violence Project

Although domestic violence continues to be a hidden topic within our community, women are reaching out for help. They understand that abuse is not something they need to hide and deny. We have seen an increase in self referrals as well as from our partners. Women are reaching out from other boroughs as well as from outside London. The only barrier that faces us is finding Arabic speaking outreach worker that could support the women. We have received a large number of enquiries from our users regarding having similar organisations as Al-Hasaniya in other parts of the UK. This shows that the women are appreciating our support and that they are getting the right help.

We continue to support women in accessing mainstream services. Our main goal is to continue to empower our users with culturally sensitive advice and one-to-one emotional support. This will enable women to make positive and appropriate choices for themselves.

It is increasingly difficult for women who are here on a spouse visa, or who have limited leave to remain and this often comes without recourse to public to receive just justice and support immediately. We have seen the end of the Sojourna

Project on the 30th March 2012. This project supported women with a direct experience of domestic violence to secure safe places of refuge, and access to financial support for them and their children, as well as supporting them obtain ILR status.

Destitution Domestic Violence Concession replaced Sojourner Project in April 2012. DDVC supports domestic violence victims who are here on a spouse visa to notify the UK Borders Agency that they need access to public funds while they make a claim for indefinite leave to remain in the UK. For more information you can access the website of the Home Office UK Border Agency. We attended a conference relating to this project on the 3rd July 2012, organised by the Women Resource Centre. This gave us a better picture of the project and how we can access it to support those in need.

We continue to work closely with many external services such as the Police, Solicitors, Benefit Agencies, Social Services, Advance, and Health Services. We have had positive results due to our membership in the UK Gold Book. Three clients gained indefinite leave to remain. Our work with victims is taken into account with the Police. We have provided statements to support the victim's case in Court especially those who suffered sexual abuse.

When women leave an abusive relationship, it is a big step for them. They face many difficult and extremely personal and sensitive issues. We support them in connecting with the appropriate agencies. Many of these women arrive with mental health issues and require counselling or psychotherapy. Our main struggle is finding Arabic counsellor that can help them. There are counsellors in organisations such as the Women's Trust and Westminster IAPT. But they will face language and cultural barriers, as well as long waiting lists. Most of these women have not been able to access English classes due to the level of control that is indicative of their relationship with their partners.

We are still working in partnership with Parkside clinic but their catchment area restricts the referrals we receive from other boroughs.

The launch of our 3Es project helped our women tremendously. The women could get support in accessing ESOL classes and other relevant classes like IT, as well as empowering them to return to work and to integrate within society.

It has been a busy year with various activities available to our users. We have run health workshops such as self esteem and assertiveness, well being, and physical activities, as well as Oral health sessions. We had other workshops like Family Law and Benefits, especially with current changes in Welfare Benefits. We took women on trips to: the Hajj Exhibition; Kensington Palace; The Queen's 60th Jubilee at Battersea Bridge to participate in the celebrations; and a picnic Holland Park.

The highlight meeting of this year was my attendance at the Women's Federation for World Peace at the House of Lords. I was delighted to be Al-Hasaniya Ambassador and to share the work we do with national and international

organizations. I still like the quote by Caroline Handschin (the Women's Federation for World Peace's International Vice Chair for Europe): "Educating a daughter is like watering a neighbour's tree."

Future Plans . . .

We will continue working with our partners to empower women and to reduce their isolation. We will provide interactive workshops and trips for our users. They have enjoyed the health workshops more this year but they also raised an interest in children and family services. They are eager to learn more about their right as it is the main barrier for them to seeking support. We would also like to find an Arabic Counsellor that could help them with their mental health.

Mouna El Ogbani
DV Project leader

Older People Outreach Project:

This project is a life saver for many of our elderly service users who due to language and culture barriers find it difficult to access the services, health and welfare that they need.

It is a unique project for Moroccan and Arabic speaking women over the age of 55, most of them suffering from isolation and health problems, making them vulnerable and unable to go outside their homes, further exacerbating the feeling that they are losing contact with outside the outside world.

The Older People Outreach Project has been set up to help meet the needs of the elderly for services such as culturally appropriate food, companionship, information and advocacy in their mother tongue. We are trusted by our service users who are often regarded as 'hard to reach' by mainstream service providers.

We hope to meet the needs of the elderly community by providing social, emotional and practical support for those who may be suffering from ill health, isolation & deprivation, and, therefore, may be at risk. We liaise closely with social services, councils, health authorities, and community and voluntary organisations to ensure that the needs identified by the elderly community are met as far as possible.

We provide facilities to address and engage the elderly generation who may be suffering from depression and isolation. Some of the work that we do include: providing one to one support and advocacy on a wide range of issues including health, housing and welfare benefits. Offering home visit to the most vulnerable and in need women, including hospital visits. Outreach work, day trips and social activities including our weekly Friday Lunch Club.

Our policy work is to enhance and strengthen our partnerships with other voluntary organisations under the new tri-borough strategies: AgeUK, Pepper pot, Nubian life, History Talk, Smart and Advocacy plus.

It has been a busy year with various activities. We have run different health workshops such as Ageing Well courses which focus on 5-week sessions to raise awareness of Dementia and memory problems and well being, as well as oral health and action on hearing loss.

History Talk offers us a 6-week session introducing the history, politics and culture of North Africa. We covered topics like women in the Middle East and North Africa, Europe and its influence on North Africa, and also migration and education.

In May, we launched a new topical initiative centred on Moroccan proverbs called "Time for me", which is a session associated with our weekly Friday Lunch Club. This is a time of spontaneity, nostalgia and laughter with Moroccan proverbs, which we use liberally in our speech, and which often provides a witty insight into our culture's beliefs and traditions. We choose a topic in which every one of the service's users can contribute.

Our recent diverse cultural gathering was an immense success; it brought over 40 elders from our community at large, encompassing five differing ethnic groups and over 10 nationalities, over a couscous and a glass of mint tea. It demonstrated our ethos that multiple cultural identities can create a sense of multiple belonging and good community cohesion.

Wafaa Jahdaoui
OPO Project Leader

Inspire Well-Women Project

(In partnership with Midaye Somali Development Network)

This project came about through a joint bid to Kensington and Chelsea NHS and was successful in securing two years funding in March 2011 to deliver a program of services to Somali and Arabic speaking women. Led by Midaye Somali Development Network but delivered jointly with Al Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre this project is the first of its kind to jointly support both user groups.

We know that our users experience many of the same health related problems, especially depression and isolation and that these can lead to mental and physical health problems and general dislocation from mainstream society.

Our aim is to offer our clients holistic support which combines talking therapies, self advocacy and confidence building and regular opportunities to take part in exercise that nurtures physical and mental well being. To bring about self-reliance and independence, provide our clients with the skills and knowledge to make informed choices and build confidence to advocate for themselves. And finally to enable our clients to access health services more effectively thus preventing health problems escalating.

Programme carried out in year one . . .

	Number of women attending/supported	Outcome Achieved
Self-Advocacy Training – 1 x 6 weeks Programme	11	95%
Group Therapy – 2 x 13 week Programme	22	90%
Parent Empowerment Sessions – 2 x 10 week programme	17	90%
Tai Chi – 2 x 12 week programme	22	90%
Health workshops – x 4	56	100%
One to one support	55	100%

Identified development through an end of year one assessment found a greater need for talking therapy; increase our partnership with the Arabic Family Service at Parkside Clinic and linking with other counselling services, providing alternative forms of physical activity; develop links with local services such as the Portobello Green Fitness Centre, introduce interactive learning; increasing links with local initiatives with the aim of encouraging users to continue using the services once this programme has ended, and finally end of project analysis; link with research students to development a full analysis/ evaluation and outcome summary of the programme.

Esma Dukali
IWW Project Leader

3Es Project – Engage, Empower & Educate:

The project has now been operating for a year and has already proved its need and worth. It is both a popular and a successful project. Without a doubt there was a gap for a project like this and Al-Hasaniya has bridged that gap. It's the only project of its kind aimed specifically at supporting Moroccan and Arabic speaking women, helping them build their confidence and supporting them to better integrate into society. The project endeavours to support the women's access to local services, to gain training, to seek gainful employment, and to generally be more active within their local community. The centre provides a safe and motivating environment running workshops for personal development, confidence building and employability.

The project is very innovative and creative in its approach to Educate, Empower and Engage the women, building partnerships with organisations London wide to ensure the women are provided with the correct tools/information that will subsequently give them awareness of what's available to them within the local community. Within the short lifespan of the project we have already managed to put on at the centre a Cook and Taste session (working with Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust), 2 six-week ESOL Classes, a Mother-Child Print workshop, as well as 4-week Embroidery sessions (working with Kensington Palace on both projects), an ICT class (working with Nova) and an Into Work programme (Clement James). All these projects were met with enthusiasm and the ladies were very active in their participation.

The Cook and Taste Programme is a 6-week session that equips parents with practical cooking skills and nutritional knowledge. Every week parents get together to share ideas, prepare meals together and enjoy the food afterwards. Each two-hour session covers a new food group and also teaches skills such as label reading.

Our in-house ESOL class was designed to build basic confidence in the women, enabling them to use English in their everyday life when communicating with teachers, doctors, their local council as well as when seeking employment. On completion of a six week course the women are encouraged to further do an accredited ESOL course with partner training providers. Many of the women are anxious about attending initial assessments (for most it would have been the first time they access UK education) so the project provides support for these ladies with someone in attendance with them, upon request.

One of the most rewarding workshops for the clients to date has been the 'Victoria Revealed Exhibition'. Al-Hasaniya was approached by Kensington Palace to participate in a creative workshop which would be part of the permanent collection at the palace. Encouraged to participate in this project were parents, children and elderly ladies. At the end of the project and once the exhibition was displayed the ladies were invited to attend the palace to view their work and contribution. The women later told me they were amazed at their work and it had left them with a sense of pride at what they had created and achieved.

Ibtesam Hassan
Project Leader

Additional projects/ partnerships . . .

Youth work

Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Centre, in partnership with the BMCE Bank (London Representative Office) and the Moroccan Consulate, started this innovative and inspiring project to assist, support and encourage British-Moroccan youth reach their full potential.

The ethos behind the project is to build on the successes we have within the community and to spread the success stories so as to inspire others within the community, and offer them good role models and strong leadership, thus enabling them to integrate in society.

The project is not intended to replace or indeed duplicate statutory programmes within the local communities we will be working with, but indeed to act as a complementary mission, bridging the gap when needed.

Researchers have concluded that children who have good role models learn to be motivated self-learners. By introducing children to role models for all aspects of their lives, you are nurturing their imagination

Timetable and location

We have already started, and the first workshop took place in early December 2011 at the Consulate, and was very encouraging indeed. Future workshops will be every six weeks, with the venue and guests to be announced separately each time.

We also hope to:

Organise workshops, short talks and Q&A sessions, led by the success stories at various venues, schools, associations, and the Consulate, depending upon the vicinity of the audience.

Organise visits to banks, hospitals, research centres and prestigious hotels etc., where the 'leader' will be the success story, sharing his/her experience.

Desired Outcome

We hope to reach and inspire those who have lacked leadership and role models in their lives and assist them in achieving their full potential, and to be successful in whatever career path, they choose to follow.

The main desired outcome is to have a community that is healthy, fully integrated and one that positively contributes to the Big Society. We started in December, and so far a total of six workshops have been held. The results so far have been excellent, as we managed to grow our network, allowing the participants the opportunity not only to meet successful role models, but also to offer work experience at businesses and other establishments; had it not been for the project, these youngsters would not have had such an opportunity.

A vigorous and industrious effort is pledged to assist those in need of work placements to be supported whenever possible. We aim to offer information whenever viably possible to those wishing to gain an appropriate apprenticeship/internship, and career advice.

The absolute aim is to have a cohesive and resilient community as we see dual citizenship as being a rich multiple belonging, extrapolating the best of both cultures.

Souad Talsi MBE

Queen's Jubilee . . .



Kensington Palace (Victoria Revealed) . . .



Gaining skills with the help of 3es project . . .



Kensington Palace (Stitches in Time Project) ...



Empowering women to do better: 3es project



International Women's Day . . .



Moroccan Consulate Visit . . .



Weaving the thread of livelihood (Brunei Gallery) . . .



Tai Chi Classes . . .



Self Advocacy Training . . .



British Museum (Haj Exhibition) . . .



Luncheon Club . . .



NHS North West London Public Consultation . . .



RBKC Mayor & Moroccan Minister celebrating the Older People of North Kensington. . .



Al-Hasaniya at the House of Commons . . .



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

AL-HASANIYA MOROCCAN WOMEN'S PROJECT
(a company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)		YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012		2012	2011
				£	£
				TOTAL FUNDS	TOTAL FUNDS
		£	£	£	£
	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds		
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Grants	4		212297	212297	172361
Donations and Fundraising		3483		3483	8282
Bank interest		56		56	50
Total incoming resources		3539	212297	215836	180693
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
<i>Charitable expenditure</i>					
Running Costs and Centre Manager			55358	55358	51811
Mental Health Project			24686	24686	41324
Domestic Violence Project			17967	17967	18189
Older Peoples' Outreach Project			15379	15379	21487
Older Peoples' Luncheon Club			1015	1015	2262
Capacity Building			38193	38193	19433
Dardasha Project			15108	15108	3919
3 E's Project			27504	27504	0
Inspire Well Women Project			20180	20180	0
ICT Training Project			1676	1676	0
Creche			137	137	0
Policy and Development			0	0	10000
I'm In Project			0	0	1752
Office Furnishings			0	0	2500
CCME			0	0	670
Youth Project			0	0	(279)
<i>Governance costs - accountancy</i>			2250	2250	2400
Total resources expended		0	219454	219454	175469
Net incoming resources before transfers		3539	(7156)	(3618)	5224
Transfers between funds	3	(6585)	6585	0	0
Net incoming resources after transfers		(3047)	(571)	(3618)	5224
TOTAL FUNDS AT START OF YEAR	7	41669	45074	86743	81519
TOTAL FUNDS AT END OF YEAR		38622	44502	83125	86743

Movements in reserves and all recognised and losses are shown above.

The charity's incoming resources and resources expended all relate to continuing activities.

Al-Hasaniya Moroccan Women's Project Ltd

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Charity Reg. No. 1010556