

THE SAWAN

SAWA-Australia
SUPPORT ASSOCIATION FOR THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 5 FEBRUARY 2005

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SAWA OBJECTIVES

- * Raise funds for Afghan women and children;
- * Increase community awareness of the forgotten needs of Afghan women;
- * Encourage women, men and young people to join SAWA-Australia;
- * Set up SAWA/RAWA support groups throughout Australia.

SAWA-Australia Committee

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PLEASE PASS SAWAN ON TO FRIENDS/FAMILY

FROM THE CONVENER

SAWA's first year, 2004, was very successful and packed full of activities, most of which increased community awareness and raised substantial funds. Our deeply-felt thanks to everyone who contributed. I know you all enjoyed it, but it's so important for people to understand that their work was not only appreciated but contributed to making the world a better place.

Perhaps the tragic Tsunami ending to 2004 was a 'blessing in disguise' in that it may cause a change of thinking on the part of many leaders and citizens of the world. The time has come for governments to force their armaments manufacturers to melt down their weapons to produce construction materials for homes, hospitals, bridges and roads - not only in the affected Asian countries, but also in other countries like Afghanistan, which have lived with similar devastation for decades.

It is time for all those with differing views to lay down their arms and experience the true meaning and enormous benefits of dialogue; of explaining themselves to their neighbours and the world; of the value of neighbourliness and cooperation. It is time also for more women to come forward and take their rightful places in leadership at all levels, not only in developing countries, but in the developed world. Consider how this will change the way we operate. We know how women think through problems and how they understand better the value of all-inclusiveness and cooperation. We were all born equal.

Using the traditional knowledge and experience of people at the local village level and giving them the necessary outside resources to solve their own problems, is essential. It seems basic that leaders and other decision-makers listen to the people. Governments, in particular, must listen. They need to join forces with NGOs and aid organisations to re-think how they go about helping those most in need. They need to help local and Indigenous people do what they know best.

The best way to help Afghan women is by a direct monthly debit of \$20 or more. SAWA and RAWA guarantee that your money is not spent on 4WDs or air fares for westerners.

Thanks to all those Committee members who managed SAWA so successfully last year.

Grace McCaughey

SAWA in South Australia

The screening of the movie "Osama" in May 2004 provided a welcome opportunity to promote SAWA's work and aims. The distribution of leaflets at the cinema led to the establishment of a local SAWA group in the Adelaide region. By the end of the year our group had grown to 17 members.

We began our work by contacting community groups (mainly University of the Third Age groups) in and around Adelaide with offers to present a talk about the situation of women in Afghanistan. There was always keen interest in the offer, and over the last six months we gave several talks. We used the SAWA slide show produced by one of our members and available on CD (see the "products" section of the SAWA web site for details); it proved a great success with every audience. As a result of these speaking activities we were asked to attend a meeting of the Social Justice Group of a church as well. We always ask for donations where we speak and over the period of six months raised some nine hundred dollars.

Several months ago SAWA received an enquiry from Oxfam about the possibility to sell RAWA products through the 17 Oxfam shops around Australia. Because Oxfam is located in Adelaide, our group was asked to follow this up. There were a few delays, but after some emails to RAWA and phone calls to Oxfam we were able on New Year's Eve to go to Oxfam's warehouse with a copy of RAWA's booklet "RAWA, the Voice of the Voiceless" and other information on RAWA. As a result negotiations are now underway between Oxfam and RAWA for a regular supply of RAWA goods to Australia's Oxfam outlets, and we should begin to see RAWA goods appear in Oxfam shops later this year.

The RAWA booklet has proven itself an excellent tool to explain the plight of Afghan women and assist in fundraising. We sold about a dozen copies during the last few months at speaking events. Two high schools purchased a copy of the book and a copy of the SAWA slide show CD for their library and for use in the classroom. The curriculum advisor for religion to Lutheran schools at Flinders University recommended the book and CD to all Lutheran religion teachers, so we hope to receive enquiries as the new school year gets under way.

We have not yet mapped out our activities for the coming year. There is a feeling that we have not yet exhausted all possibilities for speaking to community groups, but we will have to investigate how to contact new groups. As our list of contacts grows there should also be a possibility for a larger fundraising event. One task for the coming months will be to work out the best approach for such an undertaking. **Matthias Tomczak, Brighton SA 5048**

<http://www.es.flinders.edu.au/~mattom>

2005 DATES

March 1st SAWA AGM 2005 Castlemaine
Mar 8 SAWA Stall International Women's Day
Newstead March 21st Afghan New Year
May Melanque Concert Castlemaine
April/May/October Afghan Parliamentary Elections?
Film fundraiser Castlemaine
Mariam Rawi visit September 2005

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A DIRECT APPEAL FROM RAWA

RAWA enters 2005 with a financial crisis, which adversely affects many humanitarian projects currently run in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Due to a significant downfall in donations, RAWA may be forced to close down many of its projects whilst they are still greatly needed. That would be a painful decision and have bitter results for thousands of suffering Afghan women and children. Therefore we appeal to all of our supporters and well-wishers of Afghan women to share their contribution in keeping the great humanitarian task going forward.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2005 BEING:

1) **Malalai Hospital, Pakistan** with the help of the Afghan Women's Mission and donations received from our supporters around the world, we re-opened Malalai Hospital in Pakistan in 2001. This hospital provides free medical care to over 250 Afghan refugee women and children every day. **BUT** due to lack of funds, we have no option but to scale down from January 2005.

2) **Health Centre in Farah** (a western province of Afghanistan) established 2003. It has 3 specialists visiting over 150 patients a day. The whole Farah province has only 1 small ill equipped state run hospital. This clinic has run as a reliable health centre with people coming from remote villages and queuing for free treatment and medicine. Budget problems may force the administration to close it down if funding does not flow through in the near future.

Monthly expenditure listed below:

<i>Staff salary</i>	\$US 1400
<i>Fuel – vehicles/generator</i>	\$US 300
<i>Medicine</i>	\$US 4800
<i>Maintenance – ambulance/generator</i>	\$US 100
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	\$US 1458
<i>Stationary</i>	\$US 60
<i>Daily food expense</i>	\$US 80
TOTAL	\$US 8198

3) **Literacy Courses for Women - RAWA** launched a massive campaign to establish over 540 literacy courses across Afghanistan which was in response to financial promises made by many people across the world. Unfortunately soon after the Iraq issue came into focus, Afghanistan's issues of educating women was forgotten. Consequently RAWA were forced to close many courses. . This trend is still intact and RAWA will be forced to cancel many more if funding is not received!

Each course teaches between 15-20 women and girls and the expenditure is not great. You can sponsor one or more literacy courses and send your donation monthly (\$US 84) or annually (\$US 1008). Your \$US 84 donation can educate 15-20 women and girls monthly.

4) **Orphanages:** 9 different RAWA orphanages currently give parental care and provide shelter and education for over 350 children. Some children are not sponsored and their future hangs in mid air. They need your financial support to stay at orphanages and continue their education.

Two levels of support is available – Full or partial sponsorship.

Full being just \$46/month which will provide a child with food, clothes, health care, life skills, education, school supplies and an opportunity to live in a safe environment full of tolerance, love and respect;

Partial sponsorship is available for just \$33/month.

5) Schools - Likewise RAWA schools in Pakistan are in dire need of financial support. Hundreds of children are currently enrolled in our schools in different cities of Pakistan. These students can't attend Pakistani schools for many reasons, chiefly because of financial and language problems. They need to continue their education and that is possible if the schools run by RAWA remain open.

RAWA's schools admit students from Class 1 to 12 and the **ANNUAL** cost of each school is listed following.

<i>Personnel salary</i>	<i>\$6720</i>
<i>House rent</i>	<i>\$5042</i>
<i>Electricity</i>	<i>\$524</i>
<i>Gas</i>	<i>\$645</i>
<i>Phone</i>	<i>\$605</i>
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	<i>\$403</i>
TOTAL for year	\$13,940

Any donations will be gratefully accepted and we ask that when making online donations through credit cards to visit the website of SAWA Australia: www.sawa-australia.org

SAWA-Australia Annual Balance Sheet

10.10.3 to 31.12.04

Subscriptions	\$2,120.00
Fundraising and donations	\$19,221.00
Total to RAWA	\$17,430 + \$28,500
(various events and major donors) =	\$45,930
admin (3.1% of income)	\$1,437.00
Balance 31.12.04	\$2,473.57

NORFOLK ISLAND GROUP

Some folks on Norfolk Island are interested in forming a group there. If interested please see contact list.

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Biographies - Afghan Cabinet ministers

<http://www.institute-for-afghan-studies.org/>

Sediqa Balkhi Minister of Martyrs and Disabled

Sediqa Balkhi daughter of Sayed Ismaeel was born in 1329 in a religious and educated family and has earned bachelors degree in Islamic Studies. She also followed religious studies in Iran during the years of migration. Both in Afghanistan and in the migration Environment besides teaching and working as a manager she has made endeavours for enlightenment of the mentality of people, she was also involved in fighting the Soviet invasion through publishing articles and holding seminars. She has made endeavours for providing the young generation of Afghan refugees with education and providing the vulnerable women and girls with a business.

Doctor Masooda Jalal - Minister of Women's Affairs

Doctor Masooda Jalal daughter of Alhaj Tellah Mohammad was born in Gulbahar of Kapisa district in a middle-class and educated family. She in fact hails from Khesatk of Jerm of Badakhshan, she has studied primary and secondary school in Gulbahar High School. In 1361 graduated from Rabia-e-Balkhi High School and joined medical college the same year. She earned her degree from Kabul medical institute in 1367. In 1368 she started her service as an ear doctor for Maiwand Hospital and then was appointed in mental health Hospital. From 1372-1375 she was the women's right Director in a Women's Organization, then she was a member of the children's Department of Kabul Medical Institute, and served as a doctor in Ataturk Hospital. In 1375 she worked for UNHCR and afterwards, she was the health advisor of WFP and also a National Program officer with that organization.

- 1 in 9 children born in Afghanistan will probably die before the first birthday;
- 1 in 6 children will probably not survive until the age of five;
- The national illiteracy rate amongst Afghans over 15 is 71 %.
- 45 % of all primary school age children are not enrolled in school, while nearly 60 % of primary school age girls are not attending classes;
- Nearly 90 % of births take place at home, and a similar percentage are attended by unskilled birth attendants rather than properly trained health practitioners;
- At 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births, Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world; and the majority of those maternal deaths are preventable;
- Diarrhea diseases affects nearly 30% of children under the age of five;
- 1 in 5 children under five suffers from respiratory infections;
- Nearly 60 % of Afghan households do not have safe water, while one-third of households do not have a sanitary latrine;
- Nearly 7 % of primary school age children age do paid work;
- Nearly 6 % of children do not live with both parents;
- 41 % of Afghan girls are married before the age of 17;
- An estimated 8,000 children are, or have been, associated with fighting forces;
- Over 80 % of children in orphanages have a living parent.

Following varied and wide-ranging consultations and discussions across Afghanistan involving children from all walks of life, the children of Afghanistan themselves identify key areas of action to address the indicators above:

- The promotion of security in our country, on our roads, in our villages and for our parents;
- The promotion of peace between different people living in Afghanistan, to listen to people and children;
- The chance for our families and friends and all people of Afghanistan to live in good health, to make us stronger people, able to contribute to Afghanistan's future;
- Adequate responses to our concerns over violence against children (especially inappropriate physical and psychological punishment, humiliation and degradation of our dignity), early and forced child marriage, child trafficking, and danger from the physical environment, including landmines and vehicle traffic.
- Protection of children against the risk of hazardous labour;
- Protection of children from all types of harassment and discrimination;
- The establishment of vocational skill training centres for street working children.
- The provision by Government of financial support to vulnerable children and our families;
- Better collaboration between the police and children, especially street/working children;
- Access to education for all children; the more we know, the more we can contribute to rebuilding Afghanistan;
- Children's participation in local and national decision making that affects our lives. We want our President to meet with us and listen to us. We want to be consulted on issues directly related to children in Afghanistan and on identifying solutions for problems Afghan children are faced with;
- The facilitation of children's gatherings every year, so that children can learn from each other, can speak with one voice and can promote nondiscrimination and unity;
- The establishment of children's centres and children's groups, where we can learn and develop ourselves, where we can speak freely and discuss issues that affect our lives;

- Those responsible for protecting children, under the terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children, such as the Government, the UN, international and national NGOs, our parents and families should all be accountable for fulfilling our rights;
- We will walk hand in hand with children who don't participate in community activities, who don't participate in education or play; through our encouragement they will be able to participate;
- Children with disabilities, children who are poor and children who have to work all have the same rights and all of us are willing to help each other;
- Through children's groups, we can change the lives of children in our villages;
- We will make sure that all children go to school. We will talk to parents and tell them that their children should go to school and when they then start school, we will help them;
- We will promote children's rights amongst parents, teachers, elders, government and international agencies;
- We will promote good works for the future of our country, in our communities, schools and families; we will promote peace, learning and development for all children of Afghanistan;
- We promise to respect and listen to adults. We ask adults to respect us and listen to us also. We are their future, so it is important that adults consult us about education, about development, about security for children, about play and sport, about health care and skills training. **Full story:**

<http://www.unicef.org/media/files/ChildrensManifestofinal.pdf>

SAWA Report 2003/4

The past 12 months has been a busy time for SAWA and its supporters. Our fundraising efforts in Castlemaine during 2004 have included ; film screenings; a wonderful concert featuring local musicians and performers; the music of Kelly Auty and a talk by Castlemaine resident Gavriel Langford, detailing his time working in Afghanistan and the conditions there. We were also delighted to host RAWA member Mariam Rawi during her successful speaking tour in April.

Supporters around Australia and overseas have also been active in raising funds for the cause - Women in Black and Ignite the Flame (Sydney), Matthias Tomczak (Adelaide), Mariam Rawi and Onnie Wilson (Melbourne, Townsville and Canberra), Robyn Smythe's talks in Mildura, Penny Blazey (Dromana) and Kate Fischer (USA). And a special mention to 8 year old Tilly Parsons who raised over \$300 with the help of her classmates.

The funds raised have been forwarded to RAWA for projects such as mobile health clinics, Malalai Hospital and in assisting destitute women.

Since our inception, fundraising efforts have raised over \$40,000 dollars and SAWA wishes to thank all of you who have contributed to this cause. Recent events in Asia have brought home to us the frailty of human existence, but with people's generous support and tireless efforts we hope to provide some small relief for our sisters in Afghanistan.

Memberships were due for renewal on 1st January, 2005. Please renew today and help ensure that SAWA continues its important work for RAWA projects.

Paul Connell

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can contribute enormously to promoting SAWA:

- Pass this newsletter to a friend/neighbour/relative
- Print and/or copy the SAWA leaflet and this newsletter and give to friends, work colleagues, relatives and organisations. Forward it to your address list or through your organisations.
- Encourage others to join SAWA and to check out the award-winning web page:

www.sawa-australia.org

- Invite a few friends and neighbours or members of a group you belong to, over for morning tea/supper.
- Ask your organisations/employers to make a donation
- Run a fundraiser (some ideas on previous page) or join SAWA as an organisation member
- Make a bequest in your will to Sawa-Australia

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JOIN SAWA HERE:

Name:.....

Organisation:

Address:.....

Post Code..... Phone:().....

Email:

I support the objectives of **SAWA**

Signed:.....Date:.....

(circle as appropriate):

Organisations: \$100.00

Individual \$20.00

Concession \$10.00

Student \$5.00

School \$10.00

Donation \$.....

TOTAL \$.....

(Pay by cheque, via Internet or direct deposit through your bank)