



2009/2010 Annual Report

SAWA-Australia

Secretary's Report

January – December 2009

The year 2009 marked the fifth anniversary of SAWA-Australia's existence. We were very fortunate to facilitate a RAWA member's visit to Australia in May and June 2009 to speak about the plight of Afghanistan's women. Shazia's tour was supported by Zonta District 23 Area 2 and the AEU, two of SAWA's sponsors. The strong message she sent to her audiences was "Nobody can impose democracy on another country." She spoke to rapt audiences all around Australia, raising awareness, funds and membership levels.

2009 saw the further growth of the Vocational Training Centre for women in Kabul. Set up in February 2008 in consultation between SAWA-Australia and the Organisation for Promoting Afghan Women's Capabilities (OPAWC), the Centre, operated by OPAWC, has gone from strength to strength and has served over 300 women, providing them with free literacy and handicraft courses. To satisfy Afghan government regulations for charities, SAWA and OPAWC formalized their relationship in October 2009 through a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines mutual responsibilities and expectations. In addition, Latifa, the Centre's new director, took the protocol of the literacy course to the Ministry of Education to obtain approval for a one year extension and received strong praise for her work. The literacy course, now in its third year, has already made a big difference for families, particularly those without a male breadwinner.

A major milestone in the development of SAWA's work this year has been the formation of local SAWA groups in August 2009. These were set up after Shazia's tour; Malalai Joya's book launch in June and July also brought many new members to SAWA. Our established groups in Adelaide, Sydney and Castlemaine were joined by new groups in Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne, Hobart, Wagga Wagga (Riverina) and Lismore (Northern Rivers). All local groups have been active with awareness building and fundraising. Some highlights include: Sydney SAWA supporters were privileged to receive an invitation to the Australian premiere of "The Sweetest Embrace: return to Afghanistan" shown at the

SAWA-Australia was founded by a small group of people in Central Victoria, with help from others in Sydney and Melbourne, and incorporated in Victoria in 2004. In 2005 the committee moved from Castlemaine to Adelaide, and incorporation was transferred to South Australia. In 2010 the association changed its name to SAWA-Australia (SA) to allow the formation of state associations. SAWA-Australia does not have paid staff and works exclusively through volunteers.



Shazia speaks at the Prime Ministerial Bob Hawke Centre of the University of South Australia in Adelaide, May 2009

Canadian Film Festival. The 4th annual SAWA Lunch, held at Finola's Restaurant in Sydney, always a successful occasion, raised \$5,969. SAWA's newest innovation, the ECOSILK bags have been an amazing success, selling well wherever they appear. Our latest group, Northern Rivers, held various activities, among them the "One Light" fundraiser in Mullumbimby, which raised \$2,100. Melbourne and Perth were active, while Adelaide screened the film "My Tehran for Sale" at a Q and A evening with the film's director, raising \$740. A musical evening called "Around the World in 60 Minutes" was also held, raising over \$1,000 and another in April at the Australian Education Union (AEU) which raised \$1500. The Adelaide group also acknowledges the steadfast support of the Unitarian Church of SA whose Refugee Support Group donated \$1,000 as a final donation as they decided to disband.

SAWA support for organizations other than RAWA was clarified; SAWA continues to support RAWA in Pakistan and OPAWC in Afghanistan. Threats from the Taliban forced Hewad High School to relocate, causing much disruption to students' education. However the first computer course using computers purchased with donations from SAWA was held at the school during the summer vacation of 2009 (July/August). In spite of the fact that the move demanded a significant rent increase Hewad was able to continue functioning with SAWA's assistance.

In October we received the distressing news that Lailoma Jan, one of the school's teachers, lost her husband in a traffic accident. SAWA resolved to pay an additional \$1,000 over and above the regular quarterly payment as a school welfare fund.



Students at Hewad High School enjoy their new computer lab

SAWA became a "Cause" on facebook in 2009, where its membership is growing at amazing speed. This membership is made up of mainly young people from all over the world. Bulletins outlining the work of SAWA and the current situation for women in Afghanistan are posted at regular intervals.

SAWA ordered and received another shipment of Afghan handicraft for distribution between the local groups for sale/display at fundraising functions.

Sadly, two highly valued members of the SAWA committee resigned in 2009, firstly our Membership Officer, Helen Fletcher and then later in the year our Treasurer, Olga Enigk. SAWA acknowledges the time and effort contributed by both these busy women. They will be a challenge to replace.

SAWA Secretary Barbara James 4 March 2010

January – June 2010

When SAWA's convener Matthias Tomczak travelled to Europe in April to visit family and friends he took the opportunity to take a detour to Pakistan and Afghanistan and visit Hewad High School and the Vocational Training Centre. He discussed future plans and needs with school principal Khatira in Rawalpindi and centre director Latifa in Kabul. His reports from both locations gave members detailed information about progress with SAWA's support projects.

The rapid growth of the organization during 2009 that followed the foundation of new local groups in all states brought not only increased support but also new challenges. At the 2010 Annual General Meeting held on 23 March 2010 it became obvious that the organization needed a better structure to handle its growth. Following the adjournment of the meeting, a Special General Meeting was held on 28 April 2010, at which an Interim Committee was elected to prepare the procedure to incorporate independent state associations of SAWA-Australia in different states and to administer SAWA-Australia's business until another Annual General Meeting.

The major concern of the Interim Committee was to ensure that the financial assistance SAWA currently provides to its projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan continues, and that SAWA continues to expand its support base throughout Australia.

An Annual General Meeting was called for 27 July 2010 to change SAWA-Australia currently incorporated in South Australia into the first state association as SAWA-Australia (SA). It quickly became apparent that associations wishing to incorporate in other states would be required to use a model constitution based on a common purpose. A model constitution based on a proposal prepared by the Interim Committee was drawn up for presentation at the meeting.

The proposed model, a structure of state associations, which can incorporate under their own state legislation should they choose to do so, is predicated on goodwill and cooperation between associations and branches, whilst allowing autonomy at the locality level.

I am excited by the prospect of the new model for this wonderful organization, SAWA-Australia, based on cooperation through diversity.

I am confident that membership figures and donations will rise alongside state/local based activity through the energy and resourcefulness of our members and supporters.

SAWA Secretary Barbara James 11 July 2010

On 27 July 2010 the Annual General Meeting of SAWA-Australia resolved to

- change the name of the association to SAWA-Australia (SA)
- change the financial year of the association from the calendar year to the fiscal financial year (July – June)

To bring the reporting cycle into line with the new financial year this Annual Report includes a report for the first six months of 2010.



At the end of the reporting period SAWA-Australia had local groups in 9 cities and a total membership of 425.

Two examples of activities of local groups are seen here: The stall of the Sydney group during International Women's Day 2010 (left) and Melinda and son of the Brisbane group at the 2009 Peace Fair (right).

Project Reports

Hewad High School

Report by SAWA Convener Matthias Tomczak

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit Hewad High School in Rawalpindi. I met with the teachers and with representatives of RAWA and was able to discuss the needs and future directions for the school.

The school is housed in an ordinary residential building. Most rooms are the size of ordinary bedrooms, and the classes are cramped. A few square metres on one of the landings has been closed off with tin walls to make a science laboratory.

Last year the school had 14 qualified teachers (teachers who hold a diploma of education) and two assistant teachers, and there were about 280 students. This year the number of students has gone down. Many families have returned to Afghanistan, some have moved to other countries. Now the school has 173 students. There were only 5 new enrolments for year 1; they were placed in the year 2 class, so there is no year 1 class this year. The school had to terminate the employment of two teachers, leaving it with 12 qualified and 2 assistant teachers. About two thirds of the teachers are women, one third are men.

Classes are held from 8 am to 12.30 pm to allow students to work after school. To conform with Afghanistan's regulations for school hours the classes are distributed over six days of the week. Additional voluntary classes are offered during the afternoon: Mathematics for years 10, 11 and 12 from 12.30 to 1.30 pm (with 19 students: 12 girls and 7 boys) and computing for year 7 and older from 4 to 5 pm.

The most pressing need of the school is clearly a bigger building. The school has a good range of books and other literature, kept in storage because there is no room for a library. English is part of the



compulsory curriculum, but there is a big need for additional voluntary English classes. Given the shortage of qualified English teachers and the large number of private language schools, English teachers command a substantially higher salary than the teachers of the school, and the school has not been able to hire an English teacher.

When asked what the school's priorities are, should SAWA be in a position to increase its support, the first requirement was funds for an English teacher. Second on the list was a digital camera with the capability to take movies in reasonable quality.

Everyone was very appreciative of and thankful for SAWA's support. Being able to set up a computer laboratory with SAWA's help was seen as particularly important; every employer's first questions are: "Can you speak English? Do you know how to use a computer?" SAWA will have to address the need for an additional English teacher.

The students are all bright and cheerful and filled my days in Rawalpindi with light. Some 37 of them live in RAWA's Watan orphanage, the home of the artists of SAWA's greeting cards. They went out of their way to make my stay a most enjoyable memory.



Vocational Training Centre

Report by SAWA Convener Matthias Tomczak

Following my visit to Hewad High School I travelled from Rawalpindi to Kabul to meet Latifa, the director of the Vocational Training Centre, and see how the Centre operates. In the two years since March 2008, when the Centre was established through SAWA's initiative, it has grown beyond all expectations. It is now housed in two buildings. The Literacy Program, which is funded by SAWA, had just moved into a new building three days before I arrived. The paint was still fresh, and some furniture was still missing. School principal Adila and teacher Fahima are still there. Three literacy classes were in session.

The change in atmosphere from my last visit in October 2008 was remarkable. 18 months ago the first group of women went through their one-year course; all were shy and insecure, and Adila could not coach them into speaking to me; she had to tell me about their backgrounds and motivations herself. This time all students were bright and cheerful, and several women volunteered to tell me how they had come to attend the course.

The Handicraft Program is only a few blocks away. Rakia, who used to teach in the literacy course, is its financial and organizational manager. The program is funded by an Italian aid organization and offers courses in tailoring, hand embroidery, machine embroidery and bead working. It has an excellent display room, and the products are of excellent quality. When women have finished their training they can produce garments on their own accord or sell their work to the Centre. The Centre has just joined the Federation of Afghan Business Women, which will enable them to exhibit at trade fairs.

The reason why OPAWC moved the literacy course was that after having trained some 300 women over two years, Adila could not find any more women in the suburb who wanted or were allowed to enrol, so the Centre was moved to another suburb. The plan is to move the Centre every two years, slowly covering more and more suburbs. Adila described again how hard it is to convince families to send their women to the course. Often she invites mothers to sit in for a few days and see for themselves that the presence of women without head scarves does not mean that the Centre is a way to hell.

The handicraft centre, which has well equipped work rooms and an excellent showroom, will stay in the same place. Not all women who finish the literacy course are prepared to walk the long distance to the handicraft centre, but many do it. The teachers, of course, have longer and longer ways to get to work, which shows how dedicated they are.

Sometimes women ask to be admitted to the handicraft course. OPAWC's policy is not to allow any woman to enter the course before she completes the literacy course.



Students of the Centre welcome Matthias, with School principal Adila (left) and teacher Fahima.



Some of the items produced in the Vocational Training Centre

Birthing kits

One of the greatest threats to a woman's life in Afghanistan is to die in childbirth. A lack of women doctors, reluctance to get assistance from male doctors, and unhygienic conditions mean that every 28 minutes a woman dies during childbirth.

The Zonta Club of Adelaide Hills has been providing birthing kits that guarantee hygienic conditions since 2004. One square metre of plastic sheeting for the mother to lie on, a piece of soap, two gloves, three gauze squares, three cord ties or two clamps and a sterile scalpel blade cost little but achieve much.

SAWA has provide birthing kits to Afghanistan's women on several occasions. In 2009 birthing kits were assembled and sent again to increase the chances of healthy childbirth conditions. The Castle-maine group assembled 1,000 kits in August, while earlier in the year another 1,000 were assembled in Sydney.

Ronda Walker of Kyneton and Grace McCaughey and Jill Leisegang of the Castlemaine SAWA group with birthing kits (below). RAWA distributes the kits in the villages (right).

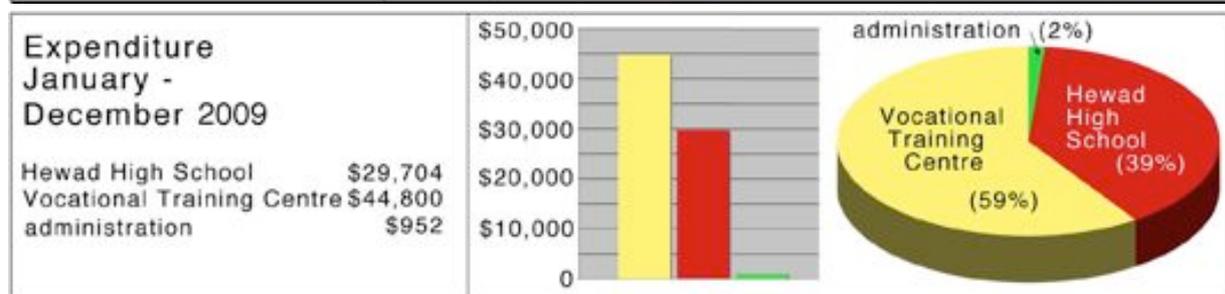
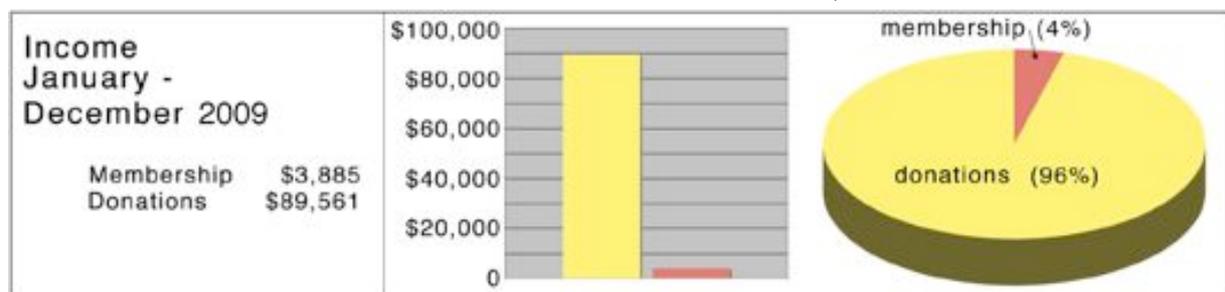


Financial Report

Report for 2009

SAWA transfers funds to Hewad High School in four installments in January, April, July and October. The Vocational Training Centre receives its full annual allocation in January each year.

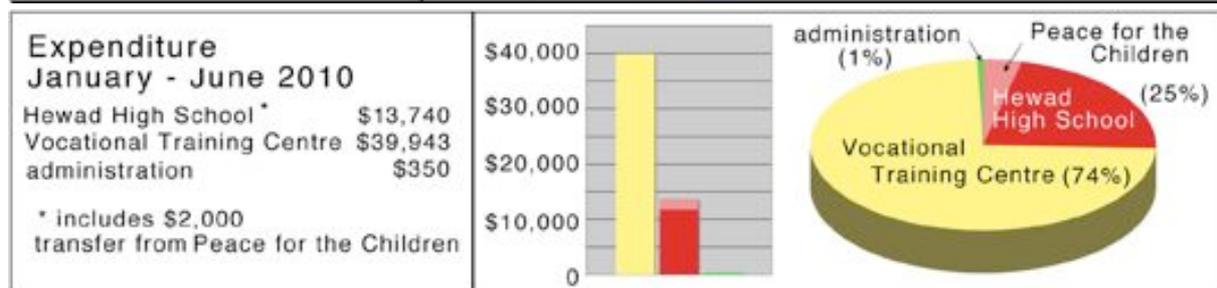
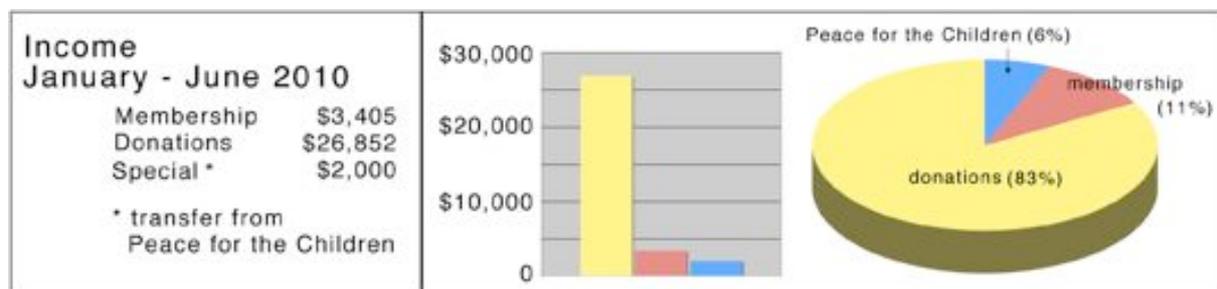
Balance brought forward (1/1/2009)	\$17,866.52
Income	\$93,445.88
Expenditure	\$75,455.74
Balance at 31 December 2009	\$35,856.66



Report for January – June 2010

During the first six months of 2010 Hewad High School received only two of its four annual installments. This makes the share of the Vocational Training Centre, which received its full annual allocation in January, appear larger than in the previous report.

Balance brought forward (1/1/2010)	\$35,856.66
Income	\$32,257.00
Expenditure	\$54,031.78
Balance at 30 June 2010	\$29,081.88



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