2011/2012 Annual Report

SAWA-Australia (SA)
July 2011 – June 2012

It is with great pleasure, tinged with some sadness, that I present the 2012 Secretary's Report.

I have held the position of Secretary since 2007 and during that time I have watched SAWA grow, evolve and diversify, even gain a new identity: SAWA-Australia (SA). My daughter and I are moving to Sydney at the end of the year and I have decided to resign from the position although I will remain a member of the organization.

As always there have been many highlights over the past year.

The remarkable Afghan activist and ex-Parliamentarian Malalai Joya toured Australia in August and September as guest of the Melbourne Writers' Festival. She spoke at two events in Adelaide; "Why is Afghanistan going backwards?" at the AEU Hall and "What future for Afghanistan?" at the Hawke Centre as well as engaging in media interviews. In Hobart the local SAWA (SA) group took Ms. Joya into Ogilvie High School and participated in two events, in Parliament house and with Amnesty International. An event in Perth had to be cancelled unfortunately because Ms. Joya fell ill earlier in her tour. We thank Ms Joya for her continued support of SAWA (SA) and wish her well in her brave struggle for equal rights for women in Afghanistan.

We have been fortunate to have continued assistance from some very generous charities.

The DAK Foundation funds a very popular English class for 70 students at the Vocational Training Centre. Days before the end of the reporting period the Foundation gave SAWA (SA) funding for another year, so this class will continue for more women after the 12 month period has elapsed.

GlobalQuest, the charity initiated and managed voluntarily by staff at Coffey International Limited, funds a computer course at the Vocational Training Centre as well as the teacher salary. Students participating in this course have expressed a strong wish to have their own English class, as so much on-screen information is in English.

SAWA (SA) thanks these two charities for their ongoing support and looks forward to working with them in the future.

We received a very positive report from one of our main projects, the Literacy Course run at the Vocational Training Centre in Kabul for war widows. Last year the course received highest marks in a nationwide survey organized by the Literacy Section of the Ministry of Education and appeared on national radio as an example for others. The Project Report on page 4 has more details.

2012 saw the introduction of a new SAWA (SA) support project.
Thanks to a very generous donation by Planet Wheeler, the charitable foundation established by the founders of the Lonely Planet guide books, SAWA (SA) has been able to venture into the new field of women's health, an area we have been keen to pursue for quite a while, as the need is so great. The Hamoon Clinic in Farah Province, the poorest province in Afghanistan, is run by OPAWC. The Clinic was in desperate financial need and in danger of closing. Through the generosity of Planet Wheeler it is again providing free treatment and medicine to people who otherwise would go without, as well as operating a fully equipped ambulance servicing patients in outlying areas.

2012 has been a busy year for fundraising:

1. SAWA (SA) and strong supporter WILPF (SA) held a combined Quiz Night at the Box Factory in Adelaide. The event was a lot of fun and a great example of teamwork in action.

2. Due to a shortfall in available funds, SAWA (SA) had to send out a special appeal to all members to enable it to honour its pledge to support the Literacy courses at the Vocational Training Centre. Thankfully, the response was wonderful with the shortfall covered in less than a week.

3. On International Women's Day, Shalimar Belly Dance in Forster, NSW presented "Shimmy by the Sea," raising much needed funds for SAWA (SA)'s work, saying how happy they were to find such a grass roots organization.

4. The SAWA (SA) group in Western Australia held an enjoyable fundraising afternoon event entitled "Bowling for Afghanistan" in East Fremantle. Most of those who came were enthusiastic about competing for the SAWA Cup again in 2013.

5. SAWA (SA) was fortunate to host a very special event in Adelaide. Highly respected, multi-award winning ABC journalist Sally Sara A.M. recently returned to Australia from her position as Afghan correspondent based in Kabul. Whilst there, Sally reported on both sides of the conflict thus gaining rare insights into the complexities of the country and its people. Sally graciously agreed to share with us some of her experiences in Afghanistan. Her presentation "Sally Sara: My time in Afghanistan" was lively, funny, shocking but above all honest and compassionate. Proceeds from the evening, which was a sellout, helped to send much needed funds to women at the Vocational Training centre.

6. Not long after this event another followed, again in Adelaide, this time musical. The delightful a cappella group Nobody's Fault but Mine entertained us with a wonderful afternoon of beautiful singing.

7. A very special Yoga class happened in Toowoomba recently. SAWA supporters sent out an invitation to a holiday class to support the women of Afghanistan. The funds raised were divided between SAWA (NSW) and SAWA (SA).

Exciting developments occurred during the reporting period with our dialogue through art project that resulted in a major...
contribution to our financial support for the Vocational Training Centre. The Project Report on page 10 has more details.

2012 saw also a new partnership for SAWA (SA). AFCECO, the Afghan Child Education and Care Organization, has been a friend of SAWA for a long time but we have never had the means to support its fantastic work. AFCECO runs orphanages in several cities in Afghanistan. The orphanages are supported through sponsorships for their children, with sponsors mainly in the USA. AFCECO's objective is to nurture a new generation of empowered Afghans who can rise above misogyny and fundamentalism and escape the destructive environment of poverty and drugs. It is my pleasure to report that one of our members has decided to sponsor one of AFCECO's students, who is in her first year of university, studying law.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help of a number of people who willingly donate their time, skills, money, ideas and passion to this wonderful organization.

Firstly the SAWA (SA) committee; Matthias Tomczak (Convener/ Newsletter Editor), Christine Tomczak (Treasurer), Kath Jones, Ruth Redfern, Libby Drew and Christine Gamble. My personal thanks to you all for supporting me in my time as Secretary. Also the many members and supporters whom we can always count on to help us in our work. In particular, Yvonne Allen, Scott Bain (Designer), Bob Schahinger (Auditor), our friends at APHEDA (who facilitate our tax-deductibility), Ruth Russell and Maureen Arnott from WILPF (SA), Ruth Fletcher (Zonta /SAWA Liaison Officer) and Cintra Amos (Zonta), St Ignatius Parish, and all our generous, caring members. SAWA (SA) could not do the fantastic work it does without your help. I wish SAWA (SA) all the very best for the future and hope that you can continue to make a difference in the lives of women and children in Afghanistan.

Barbara James 30 July 2012

Project Reports

Vocational Training Centre

*From the report for the year 2011 and an interim report on English classes from mid-2012 provided by Latifa Ahmady, director of OPAWC*

Two years have passed since the Literacy Section shifted to the place called Spin Kalay intersection where we received many requests from the women of the area, and the result of the Literacy Course and its outcomes since the move have been excellent.

Usually students for the Literacy Course are found by promoting the course at the beginning of every teaching year. In 2010 the OPAWC teachers had to run a hard campaign to encourage women to join the literacy classes. This year was different; the
beginners’ class that is established every year found its students in a different way. Most of the students came by their own accord. Families living near the center had gained confidence and sent their daughters to the center; even the mullah, who had spread propaganda in 2010 and asked the men of the area not to send their wives and daughters to the literacy course, has sent his wife to the center to learn. This is the biggest success OPAWC’s Literacy Center has achieved and shows that summer is on its way after a hard winter.

Class One was promoted to class Two. Class Two was promoted to class Three and finished the prescribed program; the students are ready to graduate, and the graduation function will be held soon. Now the students can join formal schools if they want.

OPAWC gave special attention to the Literacy Center and allocated the most hard working teachers to it. The result of all the efforts has now become visible to the public.

Last year the Literacy Section of the Ministry of Education organized a nationwide survey related to literacy training over all of Afghanistan. OPAWC’s Literacy Course at Spin Kalay received the highest scores for learning, regularly, discipline and punctuality. The National Radio of Afghanistan selected OPAWC’s Literacy Section to record the methods they teach at the center. The program was broadcast in all provinces of Afghanistan and the center promoted as an example for other courses.

**Teachers’ Day**

Teacher’s Day is a school holiday in Afghanistan. The students of the center celebrated it together. They were happy, wore colorful clothes and gave presents to their hard-working teachers. OPAWC also praised the instructors and acknowledged their hard work with small gifts. Students presented articles and poems praising the important role of teachers in the community. When the coordinator of OPAWC asked the students how they came to the center for celebrating the function on a day which is a holiday for others, they said: “We have learned how to live like human beings, how to enjoy the moments we find, how to cope with the difficulties and problems faced by family members and the community.” OPAWC encouraged them to continue their good work in future to benefit from the positive results of their struggle.

**The English course**

The English course is the latest project of the Literacy Section. It was initiated in October 2011 and will run for one year. More than 70 students are learning the basic skills of English for free. The aim of establishing this course is to support women to become familiar with this language in order to help them find a job in other agencies. It is also a response to requests from poor women attending literacy and handicraft courses of the Vocational Training Center. It was their wish to attend an English course beside literacy and handicrafts. Finally, with the help of the DAK Foundation OPAWC was successful in providing this opportunity for them.
The objective of this Course was to help women of the VTC to learn a new language beside their learned skills and become familiar with some useful common expressions, to help them find a job or, while selling their products, communicate with foreigners. This is to support them to stand on their own feet and earn an independent income to feed their children.

When the course was announced the VTC received enrolment requests from more than 500 women and girls from VTC as well as from outside. But we gave the chance to women of the VTC. As laid down in our operational plan, we decided to give priority to women who had already participated in the Literacy classes and had begun handicraft training in the VTC. An examination was arranged, and after the results were reviewed we established two shifts of classes for a total of 70 students.

It is about 9 months that this course has been run and the result has been rewarding. Students are able to communicate with each other in English and are happy to learned the basic skills for a new language. The project has been fruitful in two respects, and within less than one year OPAWC has seen two good results. Firstly, about 70 women and girls learned how to read and write and become familiar with a new language. Secondly, these women have become good teachers at home, where they teach their children.

When the project was approved, OPAWC hired a hard working instructor and bought beginner books like "Let's go". The Instructor teaches this book in addition to the basic Alphabets etc. Students have now requested to continue the course and teach them at a higher level, but we told students that we cannot continue the higher level teaching because we have a waiting list of students whom we already promised at the beginning of the project that we would enroll them after the first term. We hope that with further financial support we can keep our promise to those students.

Most of the women who come to the center come with their small babies. They said they strongly wanted to attend the course, but they have problems with their babies. If they bring the babies to the Center, it creates difficulties for all; if they leave them at home again it is a problem for them and they will miss the class. OPAWC has its own problems; our financial situation doesn't allow us to hire a baby sitter and to allocate one room for the kids. But we told the students that we will try to find a solution together with donors.

**The computer course**

The computer course is another important project that started in October 2011. It also runs for one year, but the course has been divided into two half-year courses. One group of women will become familiar with computers, obtain basic computer skills and learn the office program; after finishing the six months of the course they will graduate and receive Merit Certificates. Other students will join the program for the next six months. This process will continue till the end of the project. The project is supported by GlobalQuest.

**Staff seminars**

OPAWC’s Staff participated in a one day seminar, held on the 19th of September 2011. The seminar was arranged by the Deputy of Literacy of the Ministry of Education for skill enhancement and capacity building of staff working in the 5th district of Khoshal khan mena, Kabul. OPAWC also arranged two day seminars for its own staff training in November 2011.
Hamoon Clinic

From the report for of January 2012 provided by Latifa Ahmady, director of OPAWC

Hamoon Clinic or Health Center is a small medical center in Farah province, situated at the far west of Afghanistan close to the border of Iran. Despite its small size it plays a great role in providing free treatment to the poor people of Farah, as there is no proper government hospital in the province. This medical center was proposed for the first time in 2001. It took more than a year to open the clinic; it was officially inaugurated on 6 August 2003 but opened to patients two weeks before. During the almost nine years of its operation Hamoon Health Center has gained a good reputation among the people as it offers free treatment with best medical specialists and free medicine.

Health care in Farah province is terrible. The province has the largest area of all provinces and a population of around 900,000 people, yet only one ill-equipped hospital exists in the entire province. People go to major cities like Herat and Kandahar even for minor treatment. Women and children have been the main victims of that lack of facilities. Hundreds of women have been reported to have died from gynaecological diseases.

Hamoon Clinic has two main doctors: one gynaecologist and one medical and child specialist. Both together treat around 150 patients per day. All treatment is free, including medicine and doctor’s consultation fee. The number of patients visiting the clinic is high, but the number of patients per day is limited through a registration process on arrival.

In Afghanistan’s male-dominated society women are rarely shown to doctors by their male family members. Women and children are therefore given precedence over male patients at the Health Center because they are the most vulnerable and needy people and form the main part (95%) of the patients visiting the center.

The clinic has a total of 10 paid staff and 3 volunteers. The employees are: the administrator, two doctors, two nurses (one paid, one a volunteer), two pharmacists (one paid, one a volunteer), two vaccinators (one paid, one a volunteer), a driver, a guard and two cleaners. Doctors are working five hours on six days of the week. The administrator manages and monitors the work in the clinic. He is
One of the doctors treats a patient.

The funds to operate the Clinic are supplied by Planet Wheeler. A grant of $30,000 was provided in October 2011, covering the operating expenses until mid-2012. A second grant of $31,000 was given in June 2012 to cover the period until October 2013. OPAWC gratefully acknowledges Planet Wheeler's support.

Two patient stories

A mother who lost her three young sons, who lost 15 other members of her family during bombing raids of the USA, what do you expect she has in her life? I am full of pain, sorrows. I want to die, there is fire in my heart, I am burning for my handsome sons. Their children have become orphans. I bring the children to this clinic many times. Thank you, OPAWC, for running this clinic, it is really needed for this poor society of mostly widows and orphans; they give the children medicine and some food like cereals, this support reduces my financial problem.

I was sick, several times I went to private clinics, but the medicine didn't bring any changes. I have come from Roken, a district of Farah, I have come by foot as there are no hire cars in my village. It took hours to arrive in the center of the city. But when I come to this clinic, I feel a little better, as I can see other women who have pain like me, who lost members of their family, too. The clinic personnel are good people, they know how to talk with a mother full of pain, they treat me very well, they listen to my stories and always give me a chance to get a registration number. I am praying for all of you, God may bless you for your help and support. We poor and lonely women need your help, please don't forget us, we are in need of your support. I want to say if it is possible please provide more registration numbers. I can see a lot of women waiting for getting a number, but soon the distribution of numbers is finished. Thank you again.

Shah bibi-Said alam

I am a woman of 6 children; I lost my husband in November 2011 in NATO air strikes. I lost my house, property, everything I had in my life. Now I am living in a bad condition. I cannot work because I have been injured on one hand during the bombing, and I am illiterate. Most of the time I am thinking what should I do with these children. Our neighbors give us some food sometimes but not always. I used to work, washing and cleaning in houses near me, though it is hard for me to do so. But I force myself and want my children not to die because of hunger. My oldest son is 14 years old, he used to sell plastic or something like that. Because of my bad situation my children cannot go to school; three children go begging. I am passing through a bad period in my life. Sometimes I fear that my children may take to drugs. Although I am living far away I bring my children to Hamoon Clinic for treatment. Hamoon Clinic supports poor and forlorn women like me. Most of the time when I come to Hamoon the doctors behave well with us, they treat us in a good way and give us medicine. I am thankful to OPAWC for establishing this health center for the poor. I want to say please if you can establish other fields of treatment in the clinic; for example, I have pain in my back, my bones have problems, and other people like me have bones broken or injuries from bombing, but Hamoon Clinic does not have facilities for this. I hope that OPAWC will continue its good work. We trust OPAWC and its Clinic, thank you so much.

Shabnam Saleh
**Student scholarships**

AFCECO, the Afghan Child Education and Care Organization, has been a friend of SAWA for a long time, but we never had the means to support its fantastic work. AFCECO runs orphanages in several cities of Afghanistan. The orphanages are supported through sponsorships for their children, with sponsors mainly in the USA. AFCECO aims to nurture a new generation of empowered Afghans, people who have been given a secure and healthy home life, education, secular and democratic in nature, a place from which they can rise above racism, fundamentalism, and escape the destructive environment of poverty and drugs. Girls are kept from school, treated like slaves and are likely to be sold into bondage. If there is a hint that here is a child who, given a chance, just may become a leader in her or his community, she is a candidate for life and education in an AFCEO orphanage. Children come from all ethnic backgrounds and languages. Preference is given to orphans, child laborers, abused girls and children from remote areas where Taliban and extremists dominate society. AFCECO orphanages are not a humanitarian mission, they enable young Afghans to take responsibility for the future of their country.

The decision of a SAWA (SA) to sponsor a university student was the starting point for a new SAWA (SA) project, sponsorship of girls from an AFCEO orphanage who have completed high school and are entering university. The first sponsored student is Shazia, now a young woman in her first year of university studies in law. It is hoped that other SAWA (SA) members will also take up a sponsorship and SAWA (SA) can widen its support for AFCECO. Here is a brief note from Shazia:

"My name is Shazia. I am 21 years old and live in New Hope, an orphanage in Afghanistan run by AFCECO.

I am studying law at a private university in Kabul and work part time at the AFCECO office in Kabul. I am in charge of communication between children at the New Hope orphanage and their sponsors.

Here is a little bit about my personal life. My father disappeared when I was a baby and never returned. He was kidnapped by Hezb-e Islami, an Islamic fundamentalist party that was involved in atrocities during the Civil War in Afghanistan of 1992 – 1996; its leader is wanted by the Karzai government. My mother lived all her life in the hope that my father may return one day. She adopted a son whom I dearly love as my younger brother. My mother works as a cook in one of AFCECO's orphanages in Jalalabad and my brother Sohail lives with her. My mother supported me through my life to receive my education and she is very glad that I am attending university now.

I would like to thank my sponsor from the bottom of my heart for her generosity for providing me with financial support."
The project of dialogue through art initiated by Melbourne artist Gali Weiss has made a decisive step forward. To recall developments, in July 2009 Gali got 14 artists together to produce a set of concertina-type books, which were then taken to the Vocational Training Centre and handed to the women to decorate them with their personal stories. When the books were exhibited at the IMPACT7 International Multi-disciplinary Printmaking Conference in Melbourne after their return to Australia in 2011 the State Library of Queensland purchased the entire set of books for $9,720, a welcome support for the Vocational Training Centre. We thank the State Library for giving SAWA (SA) permission to use photos of the artwork for future fundraising.

SAWA (SA) plans to publish a book with all personal stories of the women and reproductions of the art.

Education is everything.
Education is a torch, education is the light of life.
Education is the beauty, education is the elegance of life.
Ignorance in life is always pain and sorrow;
Education is pleasure and joy of life.
Education shows you what is legal and illegal,
Education is the guide and instructor for life.
Let's learn it from the core of our heart.
Education is a need of life.
Let's all love education.
If education dies, life will not survive.
Save us from the ignorance of life.

Two of the completed art books and an excerpt from the text
Report for 2011/12

Income and Expenditure show the total financial activity including funds channeled through the APHEDA account; this is followed by income and expenditure for the SAWA (SA) account at Bendigo Bank and the account held with APHEDA.

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<th>Income</th>
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<th>Expenditure</th>
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<td>donaions &amp; membership</td>
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<td>Vocational Training Centre</td>
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<td>APHEDA account donations</td>
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<td>APHEDA administration</td>
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SAWA (SA) account
- Bank balance brought forward (30/6/2011) $ 12,246.30
- Total income (includes $366.26 interest) $ 122,765.38
- Total expenditure $ 107,838.19
- SAWA (SA) bank balance at 30 June 2012 $ 27,173.49

APHEDA account
- Bank balance brought forward (30/6/2011) $ 4,629.00
- Total income (includes $ 299.00 interest) $ 14,409.00
- Total expenditure $ 6,045.00
- APHEDA bank balance at 30 June 2012 $ 19,038.00

Notes:
1. Special events and activities (birthdays, film nights, concerts, dinners, quiz night, entertainment book, bowling, yoga, selling a house, selling art books)
2. A donation for RAWA from Danish supporters, sent through the SAWA (SA) bank account
3. Donations received from Planet Wheeler for Hamoon Clinic
4. Donations received by APHEDA on behalf of SAWA (SA) for tax deductibility; this amount includes $10,000 received from the DAK Foundation for English classes starting in October 2012 and still held in the account
5. $ 34,650 sent from the SAWA (SA) account, $ 5,380 sent from the APHEDA account
6. $ 366.26 interest on the SAWA (SA) account, $ 299.00 interest on the APHEDA account

Financial Report

Annual Report 2011/12
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