

Recent activities and events – (December 2011 – March 2012)

Advice and information

Despite a decrease in funding KMEWO has continued to provide advice and support to women from the Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North Africa communities on issues affecting their daily lives. Delivered by our Advice Worker, KMEWO continued providing practical and emotional support, advice and information for Kurdish and Arabic speaking women from our offices in Caxton House, this services is provided by our Arabic speaking advice worker Hanan Juba and Kurdish speaking director Sawsan Salim with the support of our dedicated volunteer Zakia, Halima and Rezan

Women's empowerment programme:

Our Project Coordinator and Development worker Antonia ...has been very busy organising a range of training and awareness raising sessions for Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African women in Islington. The following are some of the sessions delivered;

Smoking/ Shisha and their harmful effects on health & wellbeing – this session took place at the Muslim Welfare House Mosque on 29th Dec 2011. **26** young women and girls attended this seminar, which was facilitated by a speaker from Smoke Islington Free. In their feedback most of the young women said that they did not previously appreciate the danger of smoking shisha and that in future they will try and persuade families and friends to give up the habit. Their feedback on the seminar was extremely positive and they all agreed that such information need to be more widely available.



Breast cancer – a total of **30** women attended this seminar on 25th January 2012 at the Muslim Welfare House Mosque on breast cancer. The speaker from Brest Cancer Care kept the women fully engaged from start to finish. There were many questions and lots of discussions, and they all expressed full satisfaction with the day's event.



Mentoring & Training event – on 10th. February **10** women attended a mentoring event at our Archway Office to learn about building self-confidence, developing a business idea and how to start their own business. Most of the women came with ideas for starting a business, which includes cake making, sewing, cooking, childcare, etc. This was a very successful session which was facilitated by a speaker from Laamiga.

Dance therapy – At the Al-Aman Centre **11** women attend this dance therapy on 9th February 2012. Dance is considered to be an important remedy for people with mental illness and the activities of the women seems to have confirmed this assertion. Everybody got stuck in and their only disappointment was that the session had come to an end.

Puberty – the session was specifically for teenage girls and took place on 13th February 2012 at the Muslim Welfare House Mosque. **33** teenage girls attended this seminar, which they all said was an eye opener. They all learnt a great deal and suggested that were organised more sessions in the future.



Mental health - on 24th February 2012 we provided a training session at IMECE Turkish group for women on the effects of cut in the economy and Mental Health



Keeping women safe in Islington - on 24th February we participated in a forum meeting, organised by Islington Council, where the main theme was Keeping Women Safe in Islington. **13** other women's groups took part in the event, each group bringing along a number of their members/clients.



ESOL classes - since January we have been running ESOL classes at the Muslim Welfare House Mosque. On Mondays we run Entry Level 1 for two hours, which is attended by thirteen women and on Thursdays we run Entry Level 1 & 2, which is attended by **24** women. Another class which was run from the Finsbury Park Mosque four weeks **8** women attended.

Volunteering placement – **7** women volunteers have been recruited and placed on a three month (January – March 2012) as part of our volunteering project. Examples of training undertaken so far by the volunteers are;

Zakiye;

1. Business training with Islington Refugee Forum
2. Mental Health First Aid training

Somaya;

1. Housing diploma course
2. Mentoring training

Faiza Hussein;

1. Housing diploma course
2. Women's safety in Islington
3. Mentoring training

Halima Nur;

1. Islington Council FGM training
2. Women's safety in Islington
3. Mental health first aid training



Networking event; On 8th March we attended a Women's Legal & Policy Network event which was organised by Rights of Women. The agenda for the event were;

1. Group work / policy updates
2. Law and policy updates from Rights of Women / group discussion
3. Update and discussion – implementation of Section 14 of the Policing and Crime Act in London

Health awareness training sessions & celebrations;

- On 8th March we ran a training session at the Islington Somali Mosques on breast cancer, which was attended by **11** women. The feedback from the women was very positive and they all felt that they learnt a lot.
- **Islington International Women's Day:** Participation in Boost your employment skills event Facilitated by the London Borough of Islington, this event was held on Thursday 8 March 2012 at the Assembly Hall. The theme of the event was employment for women and there was representatives from local employers, the Council and community organisations. The event was well attended and everyone seems very happy with the results



- **On 8th March we participated in an International Women's Day celebration, organised by the Forum for Equalities and Human rights in Southwark.** The event was held at ST George the Martyr, Borough High Street,

London SE1 1JA on Thursday 8 March and includes talks, dance and music and there were representatives from a number of BME groups. There were speakers from UN Women, Amnesty International and Rights of Women. The focus of the discussions was Domestic Violence, the vulnerability of Latin American women in the UK, other forms of women's rights abuse.

- **Conference and social Celebrations** – An event celebrating International Women's Day 2012 on Saturday 10th March 2012 in partnership with International Federation of Iraqi Refugees for families from Middle Eastern Communities. The event was attended by **over a hundred** women, their families and children. Sawsan Salim – Director of KMEWO was one of the speakers in the event, she spoke about the challenges for Middle Eastern Women and their struggle for equal rights with men within the Middle Eastern countries, she also highlighted the kind of problems that women from these communities face in the UK. Following the serious part of the evening's event was a social dinner, music and dance. Guests partied until about 12:00 midnight with music from singers, a DJ and a fair amount of drinks and food. Everybody left the event in a very jolly and happy mood.



- **On 17th March 2012, in partnership with the Highbury Quadrant Primary School**
- we ran a health fair, which was attended by **40** women. A number of organisations, i.e. Breast Cancer Care, Smoke Free Islington, Archway Health Clinic, Stroke Association and others took part by displaying leaflets/promotional materials and gave advice and information on a range of topics to the attendees.



KMEWO would like to acknowledge the generous support from its funders, i.e. Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Henry Smith Foundation, Islington Council, Awards for All, Lloyds TSB Foundation, Nationwide Foundation and London catalyst.

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