

THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL (TWC)

TRUSTEES SUMMARY REPORT FOR 2016

2017 was saddened by the illness and death in October of our much loved President Emeritus - Joan The Lady Kings Norton of Wotton Underwood. As Chairman she had brought about many useful innovations, made many new friends for TWC and inspired and supported us all in our work, which she continued to do in her later Presidential role. Hers was a long history of service to many causes and organisations including FIWAL and Corona Worldwide, with whom we shared a special lunch in her memory.

The year saw the furtherance of last year's two initiatives. The informal grouping of seven charitable organisations with ties to the Commonwealth, with the purpose of mutual cooperation and support while each retaining its own identity and purpose, held a very successful joint lunch. Also, the Consortium of our Diplomatic Patrons held two very productive sessions.

Our programme of cultural and fund raising events included a Taste of Malaysia, once again generously and thoughtfully hosted by our Patron from that country. The year started with a Chinese New Year Luncheon, The Queen's birthday was celebrated in fitting style by a delightful tea party at The Rag, and we ended the year with our usual Christmas luncheon with musical interludes. Three of our Honorary Officers personally hosted events in their gardens and one at a local restaurant. Visits were made to a number of interesting places, including the last of our very enlightening programme of visiting different places of worship. All of these contributed to our mutual enjoyment and understanding, as well as to our fundraising, and we owe a huge debt of gratitude to those who hosted, arranged and supported such a full and successful programme.

The 2016 Community Initiatives in Inclusion (CII) Course organised by our partner ADAPT in Mumbai and targeted at women working with disabled children and their families in their own communities in Asia, Asia Pacific and The Middle East was successfully completed by 20 participants including teachers, trainers, social workers, therapists and parents of disabled children from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan and India. They then returned to their organisations and countries to carry out the projects they had developed and presented as part of the course and share the benefits of the training with colleagues in their own organisations and, in many cases local networks of CII alumni. Their reports on the execution of those projects will be reviewed by the ADAPT faculty and TWC's training adviser and, along with the evaluation processes conducted in Mumbai, will ensure that the Course continues to play a key role in meeting the changing conditions and needs in the Region. As this report goes to print, the CII 2017 course, now extended to 14 weeks in Mumbai to allow participants a better chance to assimilate the training and also learn from each other's experience, is mid term with participants from Bangladesh, Nepal, the Tibetan Government in Exile, Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, Tajikistan and Mongolia. Sadly, once again circumstances in the Middle East prevented our other partner SETI from organising any regional training.

Due to some very generous donations from within our membership and from friends and the increased success of our Events programme, we met our Training Fund commitment without drawing on our reserves. Because of the key role which the CII training is officially recognised to be playing in the promotion of Inclusion for children with disabilities in the Region, the Trustees have restated in detail their existing Reserve policy which is to ensure the continuity and development of TWC support for at least three more years and hopefully as long as it is needed.

In conclusion, we thank our Diplomatic Patrons, Committee and Members, Donors and Friends for their generous financial, practical and moral support in all our endeavours. And we thank the Founder/Director, Faculty and staff of our partner ADAPT, with whom we are privileged to work so closely, and our Hon. Training Adviser for their unstinting care in organising, evaluating and developing the CII course to the ultimate benefit of thousands of disabled children and their families in the countries of "our" region.