

# **Moroccan Community Welfare Group MCWG Dar Al Arqam**

## **ANNUAL REPORT: 2003/2004**

### **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**

The MCWG Skills Development Centre is run at 36D Oxford Gardens, London W10. The Centre provides accredited CLAIT courses aimed at giving 14-21 essential IT skills that are recognised in the real world. In 2002 we created a purpose built Study Library room, consisting of various literatures to assist National Curriculum and academic subjects, as well as Internet facilities, magazines, journals, and tapes relevant to young people and issues that affect them.

The Study Library is also used for Homework Support sessions and Careers Advice workshops. The aim of the workshops is to prepare young adults for work. CV creation and letter writing sessions also prepare users for job applications. Our good ties with Kensington and Chelsea College, Nottingdale Technology Centre, Holland Park School Inclusion Project, and the RBKC Youth Offending Team allow our tutors to refer our users to these agencies.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL**

To compliment the informal educational programme at our existing centre, MCWG launched its Supplementary and Mother Tongue School in October 2003 for 8-12 year olds to provide Arabic classes. The MCWG Supplementary School runs every Saturday from 10.00-15.00 at the Kensal Resource Centre. The School has been a huge success with over 20 pupils benefiting, and learning the Arabic language. We plan to add a 2<sup>nd</sup> class to cater for the different age groups.

In February 2004 various trips were organised for the pupils of the school, such as ice-skating and a visit to the Central Mosque and Regents Park.

### **HOMEWORK CLUB**

The Homework Club began in September 2003 to deal with the educational underachievement of local Muslim children. The session is for 8-13 year olds, and runs every Thursday from 5pm-7pm. Users bring in homework from both National Curriculum and Arabic subjects, and obtain advice and support from a tutor. The project has improved the educational attainment of those who attend, and provided with new confidence.

### **ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE**

The MCWG Annual Spring Conference aims to address Islamic and social issues concerned with the family and the community, particularly young people, and the challenges facing this group. Renowned speakers are invited from around the world to deliver lectures on Islamic topics that are very relevant to Muslims living in Britain.

### **COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

We run the Community Library for older members of the community whose first language is Arabic. The library contains a vast amount of unique cultural and Islamic literature in both Arabic and English, and includes books, magazines, newspapers, directories, videotapes, and audiotapes.

### **EID FESTIVALS**

Every year MCWG holds its Eid Festivals for Eid Ul Fitr and Eid Ul Adha at the Skills Development Centre. We have found that the culture conflict experienced by youths from Muslim families born into a British society is softened by such events.

### **ARAFAT COMMUNITY IFTAR**

In January 2004 MCWG again held a communal Iftar on the day of Arafat. The event united the local Muslim community and highlighted the importance of this Islamic holy day. Following the group Iftar a lecture was delivered on the theme of Arafat and Hajj.

### **SPRING RESIDENTIAL TRIP**

In May 2003 22 young people attended the 9th Annual Spring Expedition to Glenborrodale, Scotland. Attendees participated in educational visits, and team-building exercises.

### **SCUBA DIVING COURSE**

During the May school half term our youths attended a special scuba-diving course at Holland Park School. Children learnt to use diving gear in the School pool, and trained about safety procedures involved a deep sea diving.

### **FOOTBALLTEAM**

The MCWG football team had another successful year: In May 2003 they won the Fulham FC All Nations tournament, in October they won the Amal Trust Muslim Tournament, and in January 2004 both the Under 19s and Under 14s won the London Youth 5-A-Side Championships, and went on to represent London in the regional championships. In light of the success of the juniors football team, a small party was organised to commend the members for their ongoing dedication to the team. Scooters were presented to each of the team members in recognition and appreciation of their efforts.

### **WHIPSNADE ANIMAL PARK**

On 30 November 40 children from the Supplementary School and Youth Centre attended a special Eid trip to Whipsnade Animal Park. The Children learnt about the amazing animals on show, and enjoyed a picnic together.

### **SCIENCE BOAT TRIP**

Following a successful visit to the science Museum, 35 youths participated in a unique creative science experience on a canal boat. The boat trip was organised in conjunction with the Science Museum, and involved scientific experiments, educational talks, and activities whilst learning about the natural wildlife on the Grand Union Canal. Participants took part in recycling paper on the boat, and benefited immensely from the activity.

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### **GIRLS' COMPUTER CLUB**

The Moroccan Community Welfare Group provides projects for excluded groups in the community. In September 2004 we plan to start a Girls' IT Club. The project will involve young Muslim girls learning

key IT skills and creating their own Web Page. This activity will allowed excluded, disaffected girls to come together and gain confidence and motivation. We also plan to provide more job related accredited course, such as IT training, as well as careers advice. Importantly, we are in the process of becoming an approved centre with the Oxford, Cambridge, and RSA group to deliver accredited CLAIT course at our Centre.

### **Sailing Trip**

Following the success of the half-term Scuba Diving session at Holland Park School, a sailing trip was organised to Crystal Palace. It was an eventful day and participants were able to enjoy the scenery and environment as well as gaining an educational insight into the concept of sailing and what is entailed.

### **Youth Club**

In July, both junior and senior members the MCWG youth club, joined forces to give the youth club premises a new make-over. Everyone had fun painting and re-arranging furniture and equipment in preparation for the new sofas that were bought.

### **Autumn Half-Term**

During the October half term holidays, youth members were able to choose from a wide range of activities that they could partake in. Participants were able to go horse riding, go-karting and a special trip to visit the Chelsea Football Cub was also organised.

In December 2003 a talk was held for the junior members of the MCWG youth club, and the guest speaker was John Ob. A big lecture and dinner was also organised for the more senior members of the club, as was a trip to the ice-skating rink.

The February 2004 half term holidays were also very eventful. More than 25 members benefited from activities like horse riding, kayaking and lessons in table tennis coaching.

### **Relief Fund**

During the last week of February 2004, news came in of a horrific earthquake which had a hit a small fishing town in the northern parts of Morocco. Many people had been killed and even more were seriously injured. Hundreds of people had lost their homes and possessions and were being forced to live in appalling conditions. MCWG felt a huge duty to try and do their best to help the victims of this tragedy. A relief fund was set up and the organisation was able to send 160 inflatable beds and 300 pairs of trainers as a contribution.

### **Media**

This year the MCWG has come to recognise the importance of forging links within the local media. By doing this it has allowed us to have our voice heard and our work be known to the community. Gaining exposure within the media enables us to inform the community at large the importance of the services that we offer. Articles have been printed in the GL-Link, Kensington & Chelsea News, Education News and the Kensington and Chelsea Informer.

### **Training**

In June 2003 our Chairman AbdelMajid Semlali, attended a two day course organised by the Black Training Enterprise Group (BTEG). The course was entitled 'Planning for Success' and aimed at people within management status, to help them build their skills when managing their staff and organisation. Other areas that were covered were Effective Communication, Equality in Practice & Legislation, Business Planning and Cash flow Budgeting.

Our Project Manager also attended a course with the Institute of Fundraising, and is now a qualified fundraiser; MInstF(cert).

### **Partners**

Over the years MCWG has forged strong links with many other organisations within the voluntary sector in and around North Kensington. During this past year close partnership links have been formed with Sure Start, Supplementary School Consortium, Chartered Accountancy Self Help, Tennant Management Organisation, Migrant & Refugees Community Forum and MAK.

### **CONCLUSION**

MCWG has been keenly aware of the importance of education to the well being of a community in a deprived area such as Inner London. It is for this reason that MCWG's activities have a common aim: to enhance the education of youths in order to improve the condition of the community in general. MCWG have embarked on a programme to enhance the education of its users, as well as that of its project members' education as well as. MCWG has successfully implemented projects that have made an important contribution to individuals and the community as a whole. It aims to continue doing so.

### **Special Thanks**

Finally, the Moroccan Community Welfare Group is extremely grateful to all the various trusts and organisations that have supported us in some way during the past 12 months. We would like to take this opportunity to specifically thank the following organisations:

**RBKC Community Education, RBKC Social Services, The Camden Charities,  
European Social Fund, Local Network Fund, Lloyds TSB, Golborne United SRB,  
Maktoom Foundation, K&C Neighbourhood Renewal Fund/Community Chest,  
The Tudor Trust & CAF.**