



Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development

Annual Review 2001-2002



Promoting change, well-being and human dignity

The Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development (FORWARD) is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to improving the health and well-being of African women and girls wherever they reside. FORWARD promotes action to stop harmful traditional and gender-based discriminatory practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early and forced marriages and widowhood rites, which violate the human rights of women and girls and adversely affect their overall health and well-being.

Vision

FORWARD envisages a world in which all African women and girls are able to enjoy the highest level of physical, mental and social well-being and are accorded their human rights to bodily integrity, dignity, equality and freedom from all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence.

Philosophy

FORWARD recognises that violations of women's and girls' basic rights, and their inequitable access to health provision, adversely impact on the socio-economic development of African communities worldwide. FORWARD therefore adopts a holistic view which requires a multi-sectoral strategy for the implementation of health, education, economic development and socio-economic programmes. By working with individual women within communities at the local grassroots level, and with community-based organisations, statutory groups, governments and other members of civil society at local, national and international levels, FORWARD seeks to create a better understanding of the multiplicity of issues that impact on the health and well-being of African women and girls.

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FORWARD's work on culturally sensitive issues such as FGM continues to bring a number of challenges as well as opportunities. In this current climate of fear and global terrorism, we are more conscious of the need to remember the millions of children and women whose lives are plagued by a legacy of social terrorism and practices designed to make them 'acceptable as women'.

We are all aware of diminishing financial resources, as well as the reduction in the commitment to reproductive health concerns and the loss in the gains that women fought for at Cairo and Beijing. FORWARD continues more than ever to fight for the situation of women and girls, who form the majority of vulnerable people worldwide.

Over the past two years, we have worked tirelessly to finalise our strategic plan for 2003-2006, to make our work more effective, dynamic and integrated. We have continued to carry out our primary function of advocacy and awareness raising, through education and training of statutory bodies and key agencies. As part of the UK professionals training programme, FORWARD has trained health, education, social services and police personnel in Cardiff, Manchester, London, Birmingham, Bristol and Liverpool.

Through our 'peer educators' programme, we have initiated a process of change from within practising communities, where a cadre of dedicated women are helping and persuading other women not to mutilate their girls. We are continuing to raise the issue of FGM at events where women's health and well-being are discussed. Our next challenge is to train a group of male peer educators from practising communities who would work with other men to spearhead the campaign against FGM.

FORWARD and members of the FGM steering group in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster were present at the opening of the latest FGM

specialist service at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington. This is a positive step towards serving the needs of women and girls affected by, or at risk of FGM in London, and we are hoping for more of these services to become available across the UK.

A further two sets of young girls have graduated from the rehabilitation centre at Dambatta, northern Nigeria. The young women are leaving the centre physically repaired (from their fistulae), and psychologically and economically empowered to return to their communities as whole women with skills and knowledge to offer.

The years 2001 and 2002 have been positive ones for FORWARD, with many interesting developments in our UK, European and Africa projects. We have had staff changes, welcomed new faces and seen renewed commitments from supporters as well. We would like to thank all our funders who have made our work possible and all our supporters who have generously supported FORWARD's work in a number of ways to assist

us in bringing
c h a n g e ,
h u m a n
dignity and
well-being
to African
women and
girls in both
the UK and
Africa.



Reflections



Highlights

The Vagina Monologues

Over the past two years, FORWARD has been proud to be one of the nine charities involved in the V-day UK campaign, which runs alongside the award winning play The Vagina Monologues. The play explores women's experiences of their vaginas and the mystery, the joy, the depth and sorrow that is associated with these experiences. The play was written by the playwright and women's activist Eve Ensler, who helped to set up V-day in the USA in 1997.

The V-day 2002 campaign was launched on Valentines day, 14 February 2002, which marked the beginning of a seven-week campaign to celebrate the vitality, innovation, vision and creativity of women. The campaign also aimed to raise consciousness, among the general UK public, of issues of violence against women.

FORWARD's participation in the V-day campaign helped to raise our profile and gave us an opportunity to highlight FGM as a form of gender violence and a violation of the human rights of women of girls.

V-day is a global movement to stop violence against women through raising awareness and funds for women's organisations campaigning to stop the abuse of women. FORWARD has already received over £3000 from the profits of the play and the gala performance at the Royal Albert Hall, which included a cast of celebrities, actresses, singers and comedians.

In July 2002 FORWARD worked in collaboration with V-day, and, using the results of a survey on domestic and sexual violence conducted at the gala performance, presented a series of demands to Barbara Roche and Patricia Hewitt (Ministers for Women) to prioritise issues of violence against women. The demands included creating a national violence against women strategy (to co-ordinate the work of voluntary and government services), producing an education and public awareness campaign, developing resources and ensuring proper justice for survivors of violence.

FORWARD is very pleased to be collaborating with the Vagina Monologues and the V-day campaign and hopes to continue this collaborative partnership in the future.

FORWARD Celebrates its 20th Birthday

This year, 2003, marks the twentieth anniversary of FORWARD's existence, from its humble beginnings in 1983 when Efua Dorkenoo OBE started the organisation as a working group of the Minority Rights Group. FORWARD has been a pioneering force in the campaign to stop FGM in the UK and in Africa, and has contributed to promoting awareness, advocacy and policy development. FORWARD will celebrate the occasion in early 2003 with a performance of the play 'Ikpiko: Sense of Belonging', which was recently performed in London, as well as an evening concert featuring artists from Africa and the diaspora. There will also be an opportunity to have a lively debate about the similarities between FGM and 'designer vaginas'. This event will also be accompanied by the publication of a book detailing the journey of FORWARD through its 20 years of campaigning and activism to promote the rights and health of African women and girls.

FORWARD goes on Air!

As part of awareness raising in the community, FORWARD has participated in three radio programmes on FGM on Spectrum Radio. FORWARD's Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse took part in a panel discussion (on the practice of FGM) on the 'Health Africa' programme, which specifically reaches an African audience. This was in response to the British Medical Association's (BMA) guidelines on FGM for General Practitioners (GPs), which were released in the summer of 2001.

Other guests included a representative from Black Women's Health and Family Support, (a grassroots community organisation working against FGM), and a male activist who has been mobilising men against FGM in the UK and, more recently, in Canada. The debate proved to be lively, tackling the prevention of FGM from a health versus a human rights perspective; professional intervention and child protection; mobilising men against FGM; and the comparison of male circumcision to FGM.

FORWARD also appeared on Radio 4, Cardiff Red Dragon, BBC World Service and BBC Midlands after the BMA guidelines on FGM were re-launched. FORWARD welcomes these radio and media interviews as they provide an excellent platform to raise awareness of the issues surrounding FGM among the public, and especially among African communities resident in the UK.

Future activists Kamillah and Salma with Zahrah and ageing activist Adwoa at the Islamic cultural centre and central mosque



Mosque Health Week

FORWARD started a unique initiative when we participated in a health fair held by the Islamic Cultural Centre and Central Mosque in 2001. Our stall displayed a full range of books and leaflets and our staff were present for much of the week to offer advice and information to visitors, who were primarily from the various Muslim and ethnic communities. Organisers estimate that over 1,300 people attended this week-long event. We answered many questions and had interesting and stimulating debates with passers-by. We gave out over 50 information booklets on FGM and Islam. Because this event coincided with the 11 September incident, it really brought home the need for minority women's concerns to be kept firmly on the global agenda, ensuring equity and upholding human rights at all times. When we returned to the Central Mosque in October 2002 we received an equally warm welcome from both the organisers and the visitors. Again, the general response to our presence at the three-day health fair was very positive, and we got the opportunity to distribute even more information booklets and talk to women as well as men on the harmful effects of FGM.

Training for Professionals on FGM

'It just goes to show how much I didn't know about this topic. I didn't even know it was illegal, even though I work with the "Child Protection Act 1989". This would be a very interesting topic, which I would like to find out more about, as our working community is becoming increasingly multi-cultural'.

Assistant Social Worker

FORWARD's UK programmes have focused mainly, but not exclusively, on the training of professionals in health, social services, education and the police force. These professionals have an important part to play in preventing FGM, protecting children at risk and supporting and caring for women and girls who have been affected. These statutory sector professionals are increasingly likely to interact with women from practising communities as the number of refugees from Africa increases. FORWARD believes it is essential that professionals are made aware of the social and cultural context and consequences of FGM, and of the practical strategies needed to respond sensitively and effectively to women and girls affected or at risk.

In 2001, FORWARD initiated a programme to mobilise professionals against FGM, with funding from Comic Relief and the Department of Health. Multi-agency training days took place in Hounslow, Cardiff, Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol and Manchester. All were well attended by a diverse range of key professionals in the health and social services sector. All the participants felt the training was worthwhile, helping them to build confidence in addressing this issue within their professional capacities.

These training sessions have sparked interest and debate among the participants, and some of the professionals have formed strategy groups to encourage further training and to discuss cases of FGM and the roles that each professional group should play. Throughout 2001 FORWARD has continued, when requested, to provide training sessions for professionals all over the UK. Trainees have included midwifery students, people from trade unions, social service departments, health promotion agencies, health authorities and many more.

FORWARD has had the privilege of working in collaboration with a health promotion training advisor in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham to plan training for community health practitioners. FORWARD is also conducting a pilot training initiative to provide four training days for midwives (in London) in collaboration with the Royal College of Midwives. This year FORWARD conducted three training days for midwives in London, which addressed child protection and health issues surrounding FGM.

Liverpool FGM Strategy Group



UK Programmes

Wall Chart & Information Pack

FORWARD was awarded a grant from the Body Shop Foundation and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) to produce a wall chart giving information on FGM and listing the clinics and support services for women and girls who are at risk, or affected by, FGM. The colourful and user-friendly resource has been distributed among community groups, hospitals, health centres, genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinics, and GP surgeries in the major cities of the UK. It is hoped that the posters will

raise awareness of these issues among professionals and encourage women from practising communities to gain the support, advice and medical attention they need.

FORWARD is also currently producing an information pack on FGM, which will provide up-to-date information on the issues, prevalence, health and human

rights dimensions, asylum and legal issues, international initiatives and the situation in Africa, the UK and Europe. There is a high demand for information packs from students, academics and the statutory sector as well as asylum and immigration lawyers. FORWARD is one of the main providers of information on FGM in the UK and is building a substantial resource centre in the FORWARD office.



Training of Professionals in Kensington, Chelsea & Westminster Health Authority

The survey on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of health professionals in Kensington, Chelsea, and Westminster (KCW) Health Authority, conducted in 2000, highlighted the need for health practitioners to be sensitised to issues of FGM. Three training sessions were tailored for this group in 2001 and continued in 2002. The training aims to provide FGM awareness and to show consultants, doctors, paediatricians, midwives, nurses and health visitors within the area a culturally sensitive approach to caring for women who have undergone FGM. The course for midwives and nurses was repeated due to the high demand. As part of a separate initiative, FORWARD was involved in a half-day training session for local GPs working with refugee communities in the KCW Health Authority. All professionals responded enthusiastically and we hope some will go on to provide services for women with a new understanding and sensitivity.

The trainers on the project were Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist Mr Harry Gordon, from the Central Middlesex Hospital African Well Women's Clinic, and Ms Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse, Acting Director of FORWARD. Mr Gordon presented detailed information and slides describing the types of FGM, vulval complications, and female genital reconstructive surgery. Both trainers advocated that FGM should not be medicalised in any way. Therefore, 'Sunnah' circumcision (which could include the total or partial cutting of any of the following: the clitoral hood, the clitoris, and the labia minora) is not an acceptable alternative to infibulation, as it justifies FGM and perpetuates the practice by not dealing with the cultural beliefs that sustain it. Participants were also informed about child protection strategies and encouraged to refer cases to Social Service Departments. This project was funded by the KCW Health Authority.

Training of Trainers Programme

FORWARD's training programme with professionals has highlighted the need to standardise training on FGM and to provide technical information and models of good practice for key trainers in the UK. In order to achieve this, FORWARD facilitated a training of trainers programme to increase their adult training skills, exchange new thinking on FGM and improve the confidence of key experienced personnel who have been involved in training professionals on FGM. The three-day residential training session took place in September 2002, and included a diverse range of trainees and trainers from various multi-agency professional groups. The training was a pilot initiative, which set out to create a core group of multi-agency trainers who are able to implement high standard modules of training on FGM for statutory sector professionals throughout affected areas of the UK. FORWARD hopes to expand this training programme to reach more professionals in 2003 and to compile a training manual which can be used as a guide for training professionals. This programme was carried out in collaboration with Research, Action and Information Network for the Bodily Integrity of Women (RAINBO) and IPPF.

Training Peer Educators

In March 2001, FORWARD conducted a study on women from FGM practising communities (Somali, Ethiopian, Sudanese and Eritrean) in the London Boroughs of Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster, to contribute to the development and implementation of educational programmes and materials on FGM. The research validated the devastating physical and psychological effects of FGM on women. In response to this FORWARD gathered groups of interested women and community leaders from practising communities for peer education training. The ethos of this peer education was that after training, individuals would return to their communities to campaign against FGM at a grassroots level and with a culturally

sensitive approach. This could be in the form of a health seminar, role-plays, coffee mornings or one-to-one discussions with family and friends.

Within these peer education sessions, the trainers from FORWARD, (Eunice Munanie and Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse), highlighted the importance of community involvement, and the role and benefits of peer education. The course included raising awareness of FGM, detailing its negative health consequences and human rights issues, highlighting skills required by peer educators and discussion of various cultural values underpinning FGM and myths and taboos that surround and perpetuate the practice. The participants were shown, through a lecture and role-play, practical steps for raising the subject of FGM in the community. In addition, they discussed which strategies work and do not work for peer education and brainstormed new ideas. The participants examined case studies, took part in role plays, and, as a group, worked out how to manage these situations at the community level.

In addition, trainees were taught counselling skills relevant to peer education, how to support women affected or at risk, the referral procedure for accessing health services and how to keep accurate and confidential records. They were also informed about how FORWARD can support them in the field.

Each participant took part in two training sessions to complete the course.

One of our peer educators encountered a *circumciser* in the community and reprimanded her, so that the circumciser said she would stop practising. Another peer educator raised the issue of FGM with her childhood friend, who told her that her stepmother was intending to take her and her two sisters home to have FGM performed. With the information that our peer educator gave her, she was able to raise the issue with her father who agreed that FGM was not necessary. She was therefore able to protect herself and her sisters.

FORWARD is hoping to repeat this peer education project, which was funded by KCW Health Authority, but this time with men from practising communities as they have a pivotal role to play in the campaign.

Working Together Against FGM: a forum to address FGM in the UK

On 19th February 2001, FORWARD held its third conference on FGM with the aim of 'strengthening our combined efforts for a future without female genital mutilation'. The conference brought together NGOs, government representatives, community organisations, inter-agency professionals, researchers and academics from all over the UK, as well as from parts of Europe and Africa. The forum was jointly chaired by Baroness Gould (patron of FORWARD) and Naana Otoo-Oyortey (chair of FORWARD).

The panel sessions included Hon. Christine McCarffety, MP and Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, who spoke of the government's initiatives to address FGM in the UK. Other key areas covered by the conference were FGM as a human rights issue, the ethics of research and funding FGM initiatives. During the afternoon panel sessions, participants had an opportunity to discuss, at length, strategies and models of good practice. The day highlighted the need for greater collaboration between NGOs, statutory agencies and community organisations in order to develop practical and effective community programmes. The need to lobby for an amendment to the current law against FGM and the need for research on the prevalence of FGM in the UK also emerged from the discussions. The day highlighted refugee and asylum issues, and the need for comprehensive and widespread training for professionals.

FORWARD hopes that the conference will forge stronger collaborative links between the key players and stakeholders in the campaign against FGM and in the work that is being done to stop the practice both in the UK and in Africa.

In March 2002, FORWARD organised its fourth annual conference with the theme of 'positive partnership with communities', which aimed to focus on the role of community organisations in the campaign to end FGM. The conference was attended by a number of representatives of community organisations from all over the UK and offered a rare opportunity for everyone to share their own positive and negative experiences of working in the field. The most positive outcome of the day was the realisation of the need for greater collaboration between organisations working directly with practising communities. Also identified was the need for a national network to be built up between community organisations dealing with FGM.



UK Programmes

Strategic and Business Plan

The Council of Management and the staff of FORWARD have been working very hard on developing and fine-tuning the organisation's strategic and business plans for 2003-2006. This exercise was worthwhile in helping us to think through our work and to focus on our comparative advantage and way forward.

The strategic plan outlines the new direction, objectives and goals for FORWARD for the next three years. A re-examination of our initiatives and success to date has indicated that we are most successful in working on issues of FGM when they are linked with other initiatives of women's empowerment (socio-economic and psychological). As such, we are committed to working on FGM within a holistic framework that includes development in literacy, vocational skill development, women's, children's and human rights as well as a sense of self-worth. FGM is so inextricably linked to other aspects of gender discrimination and violence that to prevent it effectively, FORWARD must not only be able to provide the information and knowledge, but also equip women and girls with the skills and the determination to stand firm against the practice.

This new perspective has forced us all to think seriously about how we intend to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. The business plan outlines the discrete activities that FORWARD will undertake over the next five years in order to achieve the objectives, and clearly identifies the resources we will need.

These two documents will be critical in the years ahead and will help us drive FORWARD's work both in the UK and in Africa.

FORWARD's strategic goals will focus on addressing the following three critical areas:

1. to promote change in social behaviour, and prevent and eliminate all harmful traditional and gender-based discriminatory practices which adversely affect the health status, well-being and dignity of African women and girls
2. to promote action to improve the health, well-being and human dignity of African women and girls as fundamental to the well-being and socio-economic development of African women, children and men
3. to ensure the operation of an effective and efficient organisation to implement the strategic objectives of FORWARD between 2003 and 2006

Recognising that a holistic approach to women's health and well-being is paramount, FORWARD is embarking both on innovative projects and initiatives which provide sustainable women's health, and on development programmes through a multi-sectoral approach.

Women's Health and Development Project: Dambatta, Nigeria

FORWARD's project in Dambatta, (Kano, northern Nigeria) has enjoyed great success in its second and third years. FORWARD Nigeria was established in 1999 to implement this project. The project's objectives were to improve the health, social and economic status of women and girls suffering from vesico-vaginal fistulae (VVF) and has had an incredible impact on individual women and their communities.

The project has seen a further two sets of girls graduate from the VVF rehabilitation centre. Almost all have had successful repairs of their fistulae and are leading more empowered and dignified lives. The project has rehabilitated over 75 women and girls to date and has helped many others through outreach activities.

Vocational activities at the centre have continued, including soap making, petroleum jelly production, sewing, knitting and livestock rearing. When women return to their communities they employ these skills to set up small businesses of their own or with other women in the community. The project complements these activities with literacy classes, small business management courses and women's human rights empowerment.

FORWARD Nigeria has expanded its outreach activities to develop community health committees in seven surrounding villages. These committees are responsible for raising awareness of health issues in the community and keeping records of health concerns. The project also aims to establish a mother and child health centre to improve the health of female children and to provide safe motherhood services and advice on general health problems.

In the second and third years of the project, FORWARD Nigeria has continued to enjoy great participation — from communities (at the

Africa

grassroots), NGOs, and community-based organisations, as well as local, federal and state governments — in all its activities.

In 2001, FORWARD Nigeria was awarded a grant from the African Women's Development Fund to develop a programme on democracy and political issues affecting women — raising women's awareness of their civil, political, sexual and reproductive rights, as well as increasing their knowledge of democracy and governance. Activities have included workshops with local women and the production of materials which encourage more women to become informed about local politics and to use their votes appropriately. The project hopes to train interested women to stand for local council positions in the 2003 elections in 2003, to help raise the representation of women in government.

FORWARD Nigeria has worked in close collaboration with other national NGOs to draft a federal bill to address violence against women in Nigeria. The draft bill was the focus of a conference, facilitated by FORWARD Nigeria and other local and national NGOs, on issues of violence against women, particularly domestic violence.

This year the project was visited by the Minister for Women's Affairs of the Federal and State governments and the Kano State Commissioner for Health. Both pledged their support for the work being done by FORWARD to address the issue of VVF. The project is also receiving government funding to help expand the agricultural and poultry production elements, which will act as a training opportunity in livestock rearing for women and provide much needed sustainability funds for the project.

This project has come to the end of its three-year Community Fund and DFID funding period and has been striving to develop sustainable initiatives to generate income for the project. FORWARD and

FORWARD Nigeria are also seeking funds from other sources to continue the project in Kano and to replicate this project in neighbouring Jigawa State.

NIGERIA SUCCESS STORIES

Ground Nut Oil Producer

One of the graduates from the centre, who was interested in producing groundnut oil as a means of income generation, has been so successful that she now supplies the rehabilitation centre with groundnut oil on a monthly basis. She has become an example to the rest of the women and has even formed a women's group in her community where she conducts training on oil production for other women.

Literacy Teacher

Literacy classes within the rehabilitation centre have resulted in excellent standards of literacy among the clients, even within the short time that the women have spent at the centre. FORWARD Nigeria has now expanded this literacy training to 20 villages surrounding the project, where outreach literacy classes are taught five times a week, by facilitators trained by FORWARD Nigeria and the Agency for Mass Education, Kano.

One of the women who graduated from the rehabilitation centre last year has established her own literacy class in her village. She started the class with funding from the Local Government Authority and the Department for Education of her local government area.

Her socio-economic status has risen dramatically as a result of the skills she acquired at the centre. She has progressed from being an outcast to a respected teacher in the community.

Programmes

Rights, Rites & Righting Wrongs:

Finding Models of Good Practice: FGM/FGC

45TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW)

In March 2001 FORWARD attended the CSW 45th session in New York. The Commission was established by the UN Economic and Social Council to promote women's rights and has become a global advocate for gender equality. State delegates and NGOs from all over the world were invited to take part in the session which focused on two key areas of concern: HIV/AIDS and its impact on women and the girl child; and gender and racism.

FORWARD presented a paper at the FGM parallel session organised by the Women's National Commission (WNC). The FGM session looked at models of good practice as a stepping stone to discussing proactive measures to help affected women and girls. We aimed to continue the debate and information exchange on FGM in the UK and in Africa. The FGM session at the CSW proved to be an ideal environment to gather international and national NGOs and state delegates to discuss FGM and share good practice models on how to stop FGM.

Christine McCafferty, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, spoke of the UK Parliamentary Hearings that took place in May 2000 and the recommendations for central government action. Dr Faith Mwangi-Powell (previous Director of FORWARD), conducted an overview of FORWARD's work and that of other NGOs involved in the campaign against FGM in the UK and Africa. She highlighted the key role such organisations have played in advocacy and policy development at government level in the UK, key examples being the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act in 1985 and establishing FGM as an issue of Child Protection. Dr Mwangi-Powell also emphasised the importance of community education on FGM and the need to approach this with cultural sensitivity. Research on the views and practices of communities that carry out FGM, and the training of professionals in health, education, social work and the police, are also areas of importance for NGOs that were highlighted in this presentation.

Both Dr Faduma Hussein (Leytonstone African Well Women Clinic) and Ms Comfort Momoh, (FGM Specialist Midwife, Guy's and St

Thomas' Hospital) reported on the work of their African Well Women Clinics in London in helping women suffering from FGM. They stated that the clinics play an important part in providing services to women needing 'reversal' operations, counselling and support.

The session facilitated lively discussions, with comments and questions from state delegates and NGO workers. Of great importance to FORWARD, was the fact that UK government delegates were present at the FGM session, giving FORWARD another opportunity to create awareness and lobby for government support and action on the issue of FGM in the UK.

Strasbourg Meeting

In May 2001, FORWARD was invited to be part of a technical working group, which met in Strasbourg to draft a document for the European Parliament on FGM and the way forward for Europe. The document was proposed by Ms Elena Valencia and Ms Emma Bonino, Italian Members of the European Parliament. The document was ratified by the European Parliament on 20 September 2001. The document requested several actions be taken, including: "...that all member states:

- ✿ condemn FGM as a violation of human rights and as a crime
- ✿ pursue and punish any resident who commits FGM, even if the crime was committed outside the country (extraterritoriality)
- ✿ devise a complete strategy to eliminate FGM in the European Union — to include prevention, education, legal and social mechanisms to protect women and children at risk of FGM
- ✿ have an educational programme linked with the strategy (including national and international publicity campaigns)
- ✿ that the above educational programme to also target the judiciary and parliaments — to assist them to draw up laws where such laws do not exist and to maximise the use of laws where they do exist
- ✿ recognise the right to asylum of women and girls at risk of FGM

The recommendations have been passed to the UK government and we are waiting for the UK's response.

European Network

FORWARD is a founding member of the European Network on FGM. The network was established to increase collaboration and research between all countries with FGM practising communities. It is hoped that FORWARD, in collaboration with European partners, will be participating in various research initiatives to develop best practice models in the campaign against FGM.

Some of the members of the network, including FORWARD, have been successful in securing funding to conduct research evaluating the impact of the different legal positions in Europe. The cross-Europe research will be conducted in 2003, and so far the first partners' meeting has taken place in Ghent, Belgium.

Forum on Marriage and Rights of Women and Girls

The interagency Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls was established to share experiences of research, programmes and work on issues of forced and early marriage and to identify common agendas for advocacy and policy development on national, regional and international levels.

FORWARD is involved in this initiative because FGM is sometimes linked to early marriage. The Forum views marriage as a sphere in which women and girls have inalienable rights, and that the principles of social justice, which pertain in the public sphere, must also exist in the private arena of marriage.

The Forum is totally dedicated to the abandonment of all forms of forced and early marriage especially where girls involved are younger than 18 years. The Forum also finds all forms of violence against women and girls abhorrent, including all forced, coerced and non-consensual activities within marriage. As part of its activities the Forum has produced two pivotal documents: 'Early Marriage: whose right to choose?' (2000) and 'Early Marriage: sexual exploitation and the human rights of girls' (2001). These documents pull together information on the human rights and entitlements of women and girls in marriage cross-culturally. The first document formed the basis for a more comprehensive study on early marriages, conducted by UNICEF. Both Forum documents also provide examples of abuses of these rights through individual women's stories.

Sadly, one of the founding members of the Forum, Marlene Hinshelwood, passed away in November 2002. Marlene was a very active member of the Forum and will be greatly missed, both as an activist and as a friend of the FORWARD team.

FGM On The Agenda

AFRICA HEALTH FORA

FORWARD's Acting Director has been working with the Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (LSL) African Health Forum, a regular meeting in which all community groups providing services in the LSL area participate. These meetings afford the opportunity of raising issues on FGM with voluntary organisations who have direct contact with practising African communities. Through such informal contact, FGM is kept on the agenda in the African communities within the LSL area.

FORWARD is also a member the West London African Health Forum, which has similar aims and covers the London Boroughs of Hounslow, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham.

FORWARD is part of the of WNC Health Sub-group which works as a pressure group and supports government initiatives to combat FGM. The WNC and the Family Planning Association are working together with relevant groups (including FORWARD) and individuals to keep FGM on the agenda of relevant government departments and voluntary sector organisations.

FORWARD has also been working to follow up on the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Hearings on FGM. During the hearings in May 2000 there were nearly 30 recommendations made by the expert witnesses (in respect of UK action). FORWARD has been working with Officers from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health to see that some of the most important recommendations are implemented.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACT

In 2001 to 2002, four Social Services Departments approached FORWARD for advice and support on FGM cases. One instance required FORWARD to attend a strategy meeting to provide expert advice. FORWARD continued to support the social worker through the process until she was convinced that the girl was no longer at risk from FGM. In the other cases, advice was given by telephone. FORWARD is pleased to be approached to provide support and expert advice in such cases, and to assist statutory agencies to provide a sensitive and culturally relevant service.

GO! and partnerships

INCOME

£

Grants receivable	157,110
Donations	28,456
Income.....	7,761
(charitable trading activities)	
Interest.....	<u>2,557</u>
TOTAL	<u>195,914</u>

EXPENDITURE

Direct charitable expenditure	155,766
Fundraising and publicity	5,432
Management and administration	
Salary	13,882
Office costs.....	9,910
Accounting, book-keeping and payroll.....	1,200
Financial advice.....	608
Costs of trustees' meetings.....	29
Other.....	<u>844</u>
TOTAL.....	<u>187,671</u>

Consolidated balance sheet at 31.3.02

Restricted funds	67,942
Unrestricted funds.....	66,741
TOTAL	<u>134,683</u>

The Summary Financial Information on this page has been extracted from the full audited annual financial statements of FORWARD for the year ended 31 March 2002, as directed by the Charity Commissioners, using the SORP convention.

Auditors 2001/2002 Layton Kaye

A copy of the full financial report can be obtained from FORWARD.

Patrons

Lord Kennett
Alice Walker
Baroness Gould
Skin (Skunk Anansie)

Founder

Efua Dorkenoo OBE

Council Of Management

Naana Otoo-Oyortey (Chair)
John Baguley (Treasurer)
Florence Bjalkander
Fareda Banda
Comfort Ottah
Marie Barrow
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Fiona Adamson
Antionette Salah Phillips
Ahmed Bedri
Inna Ismail
Inderjeet Wilkhu
Zeinab Nurr
Mariama Conteh
Liz Kawonza

Staff

Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse
UK Programmes
Co-ordinator/Acting Director
Rahmat Mohammed
Nigeria Project Co-ordinator

Volunteer Support:

Elisha Jorden
Mike Coulston
Joanna Levy
Amira Malik

Amanda Lawrence/Sabrina
Lee/Amira Malik
Training Project Co-ordinator
Zahrah Awaleh/Amira Malik
Administration and Finance Officer

SPECIAL THANKS

Our thanks go to the many individuals, donors and organisations that have made our work possible.

Special thanks to:

- Department of Health
- Department for international Development (DFID)
- Council for Ethnic and Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO)
- Comic Relief
- Community Fund
- Jo Bryant Trust
- Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Healthy Authority

And all our many dedicated individuals supporters

The FORWARD Team



FORWARD

Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development

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In early 2002, FORWARD was donated a **Marc Chagall** lithograph, entitled 'The summer evening'. The anonymous donor placed no stipulations on the donation and after much discussion a decision was made to sell the painting.

On July 2nd 2002, the painting was sold at Sotheby's for £4000. FORWARD would like to take this opportunity to thank the donor for her extraordinary generosity.

Produced by: Sabrina Lee, Zahrah Awaleh and Amira Malik
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