

**FORWARD**



**ANNUAL REPORT** 2005 – 2006

Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development

## Who We Are

The **Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development (FORWARD)** is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works to advance the sexual and reproductive health and human rights of African girls and women. The focus of our work is female genital mutilation (FGM), vesico-vaginal fistula, and child and forced marriage, among other gender discriminatory practices.



## Our Vision

FORWARD envisages a world in which all African girls and women are accorded their inalienable rights to dignity, equality and freedom from gender-based discrimination and violence – a world in which they are able to attain and enjoy the highest level of physical, mental and social well-being, irrespective of their age, culture, religion or socio-economic status.

## Our Mission

FORWARD is committed to eliminating gender-based violence against African girls and women, particularly FGM and child and forced marriage. We effect change through developing capacity, and by building evidence to influence policy and challenge practices that undermine their health, human dignity and sexual rights.

## Our Core Values

**FORWARD believes that:**

1. Gender equality, non-discrimination and empowerment are critical to the well-being and dignity of African girls and women.
2. Democracy, transparency and accountability are fundamental to the realisation of the right to health.
3. Positive social change takes place from within local communities. This can be promoted through enabling marginalised and vulnerable groups to actively participate in shaping their own lives and well-being.
4. Human rights of girls and women must be upheld so that they are able to fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive health free from violence, coercion or ill-health.



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# Reflections from the Chair and Director

Continuing the fight against gender-based violence (particularly FGM and child and forced marriage), FORWARD has had a very busy year. It has been a year in which we have spent a lot of time thinking through where the organisation is and where we want to be in respect of our goals and the impact we want to have at the national and international level. We have subjected the organisation to a thorough 'health check', to ensure that we are 'fit for purpose' and are ready to take on the new challenges we have set ourselves. It has been a process that has been demanding, enlightening and empowering all at the same time.

Our thinking is expressed in our Strategic Plan 2007–2010 and summarised in our revised mission statement. Our three goals for the next three years reflect our critical priorities:

- The global elimination of harmful gender-based discriminatory practices, such as FGM, and the protection of the health, well-being and dignity of African girls and women
- The realisation (particularly for vulnerable African girls and women) of their rights to sexual and reproductive health, and their access to quality and affordable services
- To be a 'world class' NGO promoting positive change, well-being and human dignity of African girls and women.

To achieve these goals we will work towards the elimination of FGM in the UK, promote access to services and support for girls and women already affected by FGM, and campaign to ensure that FGM prevention is integrated into child protection and human rights frameworks, particularly in Africa.

Using our experience of successful interventions in relation to FGM, FORWARD will also undertake advocacy to influence policy and practice in relation to child and forced marriage, and to increase recognition of these as health and child rights issues particularly in Africa.

To achieve these goals it is critical that FORWARD retains its position as one of the

world leaders in the field of gender-based violence affecting particularly African girls and women. This means we will have to ensure that the internal systems for governance, leadership and management are reviewed and strengthened, and that the excellent work we do is effectively publicised to increase our visibility and profile. We will also have to significantly increase the organisational funding base, identifying new funding streams that will enable the recruitment of new staff members who can undertake the activities to achieve our goals.

In the last year we have continued to work with existing and new partners – including the Islamic Cultural Centre and The London Central Mosque, Westminster Primary Care Trust, The Sudanese Women’s Rights Group and the Metropolitan Police – in order to reach out to FGM-practising communities, providing information, empowerment and support to help them in their fight against FGM.

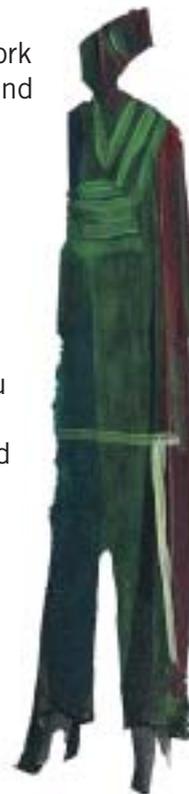
We have developed and provided tailored training courses and expert technical advice for the statutory sector, so that they are prepared to respond effectively to suspected or actual cases of FGM and provide culturally appropriate and sensitive services for affected girls and women. We also continue to provide individual support to girls and women who need to talk through their experiences with someone who understands the short- and long-term effects of FGM on their lives.

As part of our strategic direction, we are focusing on work with young people – both male and female – with the belief that engaging with the younger generation is critical to the achievement of long-term, sustained positive change of attitudes and behaviour. For this reason, our work over the next three years will have a definite youth theme.

While FORWARD develops and grows, we always remember that our success would not have been possible without you – our supporters and funders. It is your donations and support that have made it possible for FORWARD to work towards making the health and rights of African girls and women a reality. We want to take this opportunity to say thank you!

We hope that you find our achievements over the last year (detailed in this report) inspiring, and encourage you to continue to support us to make our vision of a just and equal world for African girls and women a reality in this decade!

*Naana Otoo-Oyortey &  
Adwoa Kwateng-kluvitse*





# Highlights



## Launch of WHO FGM and Obstetric Outcomes Study

On 7 June 2006, a World Health Organisation study paper on FGM and obstetric outcomes was launched in the UK in collaboration with and at the Home Office. The research – published in the *Lancet Medical Journal* and to which FORWARD founder, Efua Dorkenoo OBE, was a contributor – is the largest, most controlled study ever undertaken on the implications of FGM for the obstetric care of affected women. The study involved 28,393 women from six African countries where various forms of FGM are practiced: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan.

The research was long-awaited by the anti-FGM campaign, as it presents overwhelming evidence of a range of adverse obstetric health outcomes associated with FGM. The research confirms that all forms of FGM are dangerous. Previous claims that FGM types I and II resulted in few negative obstetric consequences have now been proved false. The study results clearly show that *all* forms of FGM pose significant risks to the health of women and their babies. These risks include the increased need for caesarean sections, prolonged hospitalisation and heavy bleeding after the birth of a baby, and increased risk of perinatal death.

We are very pleased to be associated with the study and welcome the media attention on FGM generated by the publication of the study results. In an interview with the BBC World Service, Efua Dorkenoo outlined the findings and denounced the justification of FGM on medical and religious grounds. FORWARD is delighted that significant evidence confirms what we have long known. We believe that this research can play a significant role in the advocacy and campaign work of anti-FGM activists worldwide. Not only does it highlight the necessity of our work to eliminate FGM, but also the need to ensure that health professionals have the skills and knowledge to provide girls and women affected by FGM with the sensitive and appropriate health care they need.

## FORWARD Premières Moolaadé in the UK

Over the last year, FORWARD is delighted to have undertaken a number of exciting initiatives involving the award-winning African film *Moolaadé*, produced by the legendary Senegalese film-maker Ousmane Sembene. *Moolaadé* won the prize for Best Film in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004. It brilliantly addresses the controversial subject of FGM in Africa, powerfully depicting local women's grass roots resistance to the practice. The film, set in a fictional village in Burkina Faso where FGM is carried out every seven years, tells the story of a woman named Collé, who was subjected to FGM but who refused to allow her only daughter to also become a victim when the time came. The film opens with drums announcing that six young girls have fled the excisors. Four of the six seek protection (*Moolaadé*) from Collé. The village is unsettled as two values clash: the right to protection, and the attachment to tradition as symbolised by FGM.

FORWARD was honoured to be invited to launch the UK première of *Moolaadé*, on 30 May 2005. The launch was an outstanding success; the screening was sold out and many guests stayed for the panel discussion which followed, led by FORWARD and development experts. The launch received much media attention –

highlights of which are available on our new website.

FORWARD took the opportunity to launch the FORWARD FGM Fund, a specific donations fund, the proceeds of which will be used to increase our work to prevent and eliminate the practice of FGM in Africa.

*If you would like to make a contribution to the FORWARD FGM Fund call Sarah on 0208 960 4000 or visit our website to make a donation.*

## FORWARD Premières Moolaadé in the Horn of Africa

*Moolaadé* provides FORWARD with a powerful advocacy tool that has directed international attention towards FGM, and which we plan to use as a key element in our campaign to end FGM and promote change and well-being for girls and women in Africa.

After the UK launch, Ousmane Sembene asked FORWARD to nominate African languages into which he could dub and subtitle the film, to make it accessible to Africans, and particularly to African women's organisations working to tackle gender-based violence in Africa.

FORWARD is so impressed with *Moolaadé* and its potential as an advocacy tool that we have been promoting its screening at every

opportunity; in the UK has included showings in London, York, Cardiff, Cambridge, Nottingham and Oxford.

In January 2006 FORWARD's Community Development Officer, Enshrah Ahmed, held the pilot launch of the film in Khartoum, Sudan, in partnership with the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA Network). Prior to the launch, mini screenings were held for Sudanese organisations working in the field of women's rights (to introduce them to the film), and for the media (to give them an opportunity to see and comment on the film). These were intended to prepare a platform for the film, gauging public acceptance and assessing the extent to which organisations felt the film was appropriate. *Moolaadé* generated great enthusiasm, which encouraged FORWARD and SIHA Network to proceed with the main screening.

The main launch took place in front of a packed audience, including representatives from civil society organisations, the government and the media. The response was extremely

positive, exceeding our expectations, with all groups in the audience clearly identifying with issues raised in the film. The general consensus, summarised by one attendee, was that the film was "very sincere and true in reflecting the reality of African women and communities".

Other people were moved by "the anti-FGM solidarity and the revolution led by the women in the village". The overwhelming responses received through the feedback questionnaires indicated that most attendees believed *Moolaadé* was relevant to the Sudanese context, and that it should be used as an advocacy tool in ending violence against women, including FGM and child and forced marriage, in all segments of Sudanese society. A few were so enthusiastic about the film that they asked to use it as an advocacy tool even before it had been dubbed or subtitled into other languages – requests which FORWARD was, of course, only too happy to assist with!



### FORWARD's Work with the Metropolitan Police

A definite highlight of this year has been FORWARD's work in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, and the recognition this received at the Annual Police Gala Awards 2005.

FORWARD's Enshrah Ahmed with star of *Moolaadé*, Fatoumata Coulibaly

In 2004, the London Metropolitan Police identified Detective Inspector Carol Hamilton as the force's focal person on FGM. Working with Carol Hamilton to push the FGM agenda with practising communities, the Metropolitan Police, FORWARD and Somali Human Hope organised a community meeting for the Somali community. The meeting was very successful and brought together Somali men and women, religious leaders and youth to discuss the range of issues surrounding FGM. There was particular emphasis on the new FGM legislation, and the implications for parents and carers in the UK arranging to take their daughters out of the UK for FGM. The seriousness of the topic was enlivened by music and facilitation by Maryam Mursal – an outspoken Somali woman singer-songwriter who uses her music to advocate against FGM. Performing her famous anti-FGM song, she brought attendees to their feet in appreciation and support.

FORWARD was delighted when, as part of the initiative, parents and carers in Hounslow were written to before the 2005 summer holiday to educate them about the new FGM legislation and its implications. This led to parents calling FORWARD to ask for more information. Carol Hamilton continues to train Metropolitan Police staff to ensure that police officers, and especially the child protection officers, are aware of the issues and their roles and responsibilities regarding FGM. The activities undertaken under the auspices of the 'FGM Project' culminated in the Metropolitan Police, FORWARD and Somali Human Hope receiving the Annual Metropolitan Police Diversity Award, in recognition of this innovative project.



Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse, Said Ahmed of Somali Human Hope, DI Carol Hamilton and the Metropolitan Police Child Abuse team, with Sir Ian Blair at the Police Gala.

It is a matter of sadness for FORWARD that DI Carol Hamilton is now handing over some of the work she has been doing on FGM to the Police's Operation Violet team, as the volume of work is so overwhelming. She has been committed and dedicated, beyond the call of duty, to educating and working with the community. At the same time, there is a potential positive in that Operation Violet has more staff and is a

cases of abuse, but also with prevention, by working and engaging with communities and professionals through, for instance, training and awareness raising programmes. FORWARD is looking forward to continuing to work in partnership with officers from Operation Violet to sustain the excellent start that has been made in working with practising communities.



The 'FGM Project' Team at a meeting with the London Somali Community.

specialist Metropolitan Police team, which we hope will result in FGM issues being more mainstreamed by the Police. Project Violet is an initiative established by the Metropolitan Police to respond to faith and culture related forms of child abuse. Project Violet is not only concerned with investigating and achieving prosecutions for





## Campaign to Make FGM History in Sudan, & International Zero Tolerance to FGM Day

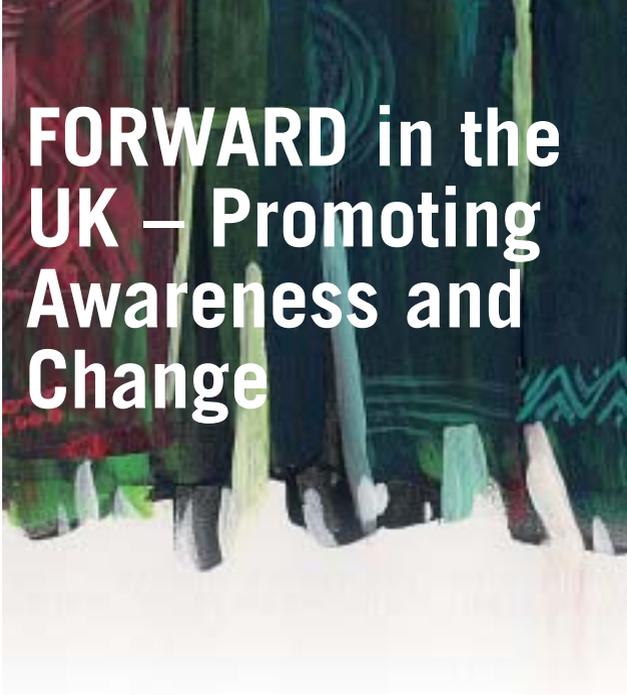
The tragic death of a four-year-old Sudanese girl as a result of bleeding due to FGM (in Khartoum, Sudan in December 2005) led FORWARD to launch a campaign to **Make FGM History in Sudan**, in memory of little Enaam. A statement in solidarity with FGM activists in Sudan was issued by FORWARD. It called upon our supporters, sister campaigners and all those working for the realisation of the rights of girls and women worldwide to join the campaign, increase mobilisation and demand effective legislation against *all* forms of FGM in Sudan. Supporters showed their support by sending letters to the Sudanese Ministry of Justice and the Sudanese Embassy in London, demanding they take immediate action to eliminate all forms of FGM in Sudan and hold the Sudanese state accountable for protecting the human rights of girls and women. In collaboration with the Sudanese discussion website, Sudan For All, online petitions in English and in Arabic were created, outlining the campaign demands.

On 6 February 2006 – the third **International Zero Tolerance to FGM Day** – FORWARD called on the wider international community and African governments to Make FGM History. In particular, we demanded that African

governments issue, review and implement laws and policies to protect African girls' and women's sexual and reproductive rights, in accordance with The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. FORWARD took the opportunity to again ask supporters to sign the Make FGM History in Sudan petition, and help send a clear and united message to the Government of Sudan that FGM and the abuse of girls' and women's rights will not be tolerated in any form.

In total, over 2,000 signatures were collected which, along with a formal appeal letter signed by both FORWARD and Sudan For All, will be submitted to the authorities in Sudan shortly. FORWARD would like to thank all those who supported and promoted the campaign, including Association for Women's Rights in Development, Women's Asylum News, the UK Islamic Cultural Centre and Central Mosque, the International Women's Month Website, and in particular Sudan For All who translated the petition. Thanks also to all the individuals who signed the petition – we read every comment and your support strengthened our resolve to carry on the fight against FGM.

Please continue to support FORWARD to Make FGM History!



# FORWARD in the UK – Promoting Awareness and Change

## Community Training and Engagement

As part of FORWARD's overall commitment to promoting sustained change, our engagement with FGM practising communities has been strengthened. This year FORWARD has worked in partnership with a number of community-based organisations, including the Sudanese Women's Rights Group in Cardiff and Somali Women's Action Group in Glasgow, as well as Somali women and men in Birmingham. Also, as part of our Community Development Strategy, FORWARD has delivered a number of awareness raising sessions to youth and other community organisations, including Westminster Domestic Violence Forum, The Association for South London Black Women's Organisations, Nubian Mothers Organisation and the Umoja Pamoja youth organisation.

Recognising the need to reach as many communities as possible, FORWARD is building long-term relationships with organisations such as Sudanese Youth Club, The Westminster Refugee Consortium, Domestic Violence Intervention Project and Brent Centre for Young People, with whom we hope to work in partnership in the very near future.

## FORWARD and The London Central Mosque

FORWARD has also continued its community development work with Muslim communities, through the on-going collaboration between FORWARD and the Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque (ICCCM UK), particularly Dr Y Teinaz. The ICCCM was a great supporter of our launch of the film Moolaadé and publicised the event on their website. We were pleased to welcome representatives and friends of ICCCM at the première.

We also thank the ICCCM for the support they gave to our appeal against FGM in Sudan. By linking our campaign to their website we were able to collect a number of signatures from visitors to the Central Mosque website.

Recently, we have embarked on a series of meetings to plan further joint work. These planned initiatives include a training programme on violence against women, including FGM, for community and religious leaders from FGM practising communities in the London borough of Westminster.

## Providing Training and Support to Protect Girls at Risk

One of FORWARD's main functions is to provide advice, support and training in relation to FGM and child protection, not only to girls and women affected by or at risk of FGM, but also to professionals and the general public. Based on the premise that professionals play an important role in the campaign against FGM, FORWARD provides comprehensive training to professionals from the police, health, education and voluntary sectors, as well as from social services, to ensure they have the knowledge, confidence, skills and understanding with which to respond to FGM sensitively yet effectively.

As part of this training programme over the last year, FORWARD has conducted over 23 training sessions to multiple social service departments, Area Child Protection Committees, health workers and Primary Care Trusts, education professionals, Sure Start staff, and community organisations and NGOs. Perhaps the most important message of all communicated in these training sessions is that, as is made clear in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, FGM is illegal and professionals therefore have a duty of care to respond to actual or suspected cases of FGM, as they would with any other child protection issue or concern.

Also, as part of our overall aim of protecting girls at risk, in the last year FORWARD has been involved in over 30 cases of FGM. This includes providing advice and assistance on FGM and child protection to social service

departments, police and teachers in relation to seven cases of suspected FGM; providing psychosocial support or referrals for specialist health care for more than ten women affected by FGM; and acting as an overall provider and source of FGM information and advice to vulnerable women and girls and legal firms in relation to asylum cases.

## Advocacy and Awareness Raising

Much of FORWARD's work seeks to advocate and raise awareness in relation to our priority issues, which are aims that are mainstreamed throughout the many initiatives detailed in this report. In this way we seek to reach out not only to girls and women affected by FGM and their communities, but also to professionals and the general public.

In addition to raising awareness through the delivery of training courses on FGM, over the last year FORWARD has been invited to talk and give presentations at a number of conferences and meetings. These all provide the opportunity to promote greater awareness and understanding of gender discriminatory practices affecting African girls and women. These occasions have included events at The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and various student societies and local groups such as Guildford Amnesty International society. FORWARD Founder, Efua Dorkenoo, presented a paper on FGM at the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology Conference in

October 2005, which has been published in the European Women's Dermatology Society newsletter.

As part of our ongoing advocacy efforts we are members of a number of working groups and fora. Over the last year we have spoken out on behalf of African women at meetings on various issues related to our work, such as violence against women, honour killings, forced and child marriage, sexual health and refugees. This year our advocacy and awareness raising work with future health care workers has also increased, including the activities detailed below.

### **Reaching Out to Health Care Students**

As part of our strategic aim to increase our focus on young people, FORWARD has been pleased to increase our outreach work with student groups at a number of universities within and beyond London. In particular, FORWARD has been working with Medsin, a national network of health care students based in various medical schools around the UK. We were initially invited, by Medsin and Amnesty student groups at Guy's and St Thomas's Medical School, to talk about FGM and FORWARD's work to a group of more than 30. This generated much discussion and interest. Since then FORWARD has attended similar events organised by Medsin Cambridge and Medsin Durham, and in March also facilitated workshops at the Annual Medsin Global Health Conference. We are delighted to have had these

opportunities to engage with the next generation of health workers, and have been deeply encouraged by their enthusiasm and commitment to the cause.

### **New Programme with Islington Victim Support**

This year also saw the development of a very interesting partnership initiative with Islington Victim Support, on a project entitled 'Domestic Violence Prevention for Young Refugee and BME (black and minority ethnic) Women'. As part of the project, FORWARD worked with a group of 'looked after' young women on a wide range of domestic violence issues, including cultural forms of violence such as FGM and child and forced marriage. FORWARD worked with several experts on gender-based violence, including a Metropolitan Police representative who was able to give the participants some very simple yet valuable tips for keeping themselves safe. Opinions expressed in the programme feedback forms indicated that the participants found this two-day intensive programme highly informative and fun.

The success of this project has invigorated our enthusiasm to undertake projects targeted at youth. As a result, we are currently considering developing a project for young men from refugee and BME communities, to address their ideas about, and roles in respect of, domestic violence and culturally specific forms of violence.



## FGM and Asylum

FGM is increasingly becoming an asylum issue, and therefore over recent years asylum, in relation to FGM, has become a growing aspect of our work. There has been much debate as to the legitimacy of FGM as grounds for asylum and human rights appeals, which are extremely complex legal issues. While it cannot be disputed that FGM constitutes a grave violation of a woman's rights, the controversy surrounding FGM as grounds for asylum relates to the debate over whether women from a particular country or ethnic group, who are at risk of FGM, constitute a 'particular social group', in terms of the definition of a refugee under the Refugee Convention 1951.

FORWARD's position on the subject is very clear: women who legitimately seek asylum on the grounds of FGM should be granted protection, as should any women facing torture and violence on the basis of their gender. Women seeking asylum due to gender-based violence face difficulties in relation to discussing and proving such personal and sensitive experiences. Therefore, FORWARD also asserts that the gender guidelines that the UK Home Office incorporated into its asylum policy instructions for its asylum case workers in 2004, must be strictly adhered to, which is currently not the case.

This year we have been contacted in relation to 18 cases of women in the UK seeking asylum on the grounds of FGM. Solicitors representing

these women frequently contact FORWARD to request expert reports on FGM in a particular country, or among a certain ethnic group, to be used in court for asylum case hearings. They require detailed information about the prevalence of FGM within the applicant's country of origin and ethnic group, the health risks associated with the practice, and the availability (or lack) of alternatives and protection for women who do not want to undergo FGM. Of great significance are the likely methods used by local communities to impose this practice on young girls and women against their will, and how, even where legislation exists prohibiting FGM, it may not be enforced. This year FORWARD has provided eight of these reports. We see this work as another important way of supporting and protecting girls and women who are at risk of FGM, and hope that in the future UK Asylum Policy and Procedures will be more sensitive to the needs of women and girls seeking asylum because of gender-based violence.

The inclusion of FGM carried out under duress, as grounds for an asylum application, was discussed this year in the House of Lords. FORWARD provided background information for this discussion, which took place on 8 December 2005. It was prompted by the case of Zainab Esther Fornah, a young woman from Sierra Leone, who since 2003 has been seeking asylum in the UK on the basis that she will be subjected to FGM if she is returned to Sierra Leone. Baroness Rendell of Babergh began the discussion and stated: "My Lords, UNICEF and the UN have called for asylum status to be

granted to girls and young women who flee their country to escape female genital mutilation, but in practice few women have been granted asylum on these grounds". The nature of FGM was also discussed, as were the reasons for the continuation of the practice in the UK. Current schemes attempting to combat FGM, including the work of FORWARD, were brought to the House of Lords' attention. A full transcript of the debate can be accessed via our website.

In January 2006, FORWARD Director Adwoa Kwateng-kluitse was interviewed on the Irish 'Radio News Talk' programme, to discuss a

### **Forthcoming FORWARD Study on FGM Prevalence in England and Wales**

In 2005, FORWARD began work to conduct a new study to estimate the prevalence of FGM in England and Wales. The study is being funded by the Department of Health and undertaken in collaboration with the London School of Hygiene and City University.

The findings, which are expected to be launched in autumn 2006, are extremely eagerly awaited. An urgent need for such data has been expressed at all levels, from grass roots organisations through to parliament. As well as providing an estimated figure for the number of women in England and Wales who have undergone some form of FGM, the study also aims to provide a crude estimate of the number of girls under the age of 15 who are at risk of FGM in England and Wales.

specific case which had attracted extensive media attention. The case is that of Pamela Izevbekha, who fled Nigeria for Ireland in the hope of saving her two daughters from suffering FGM; her third daughter had already died as a result of the practice. In November 2005 Pamela lost her appeal for asylum in Ireland, with the Irish government claiming that her children are not at risk in their home country. The case is at present unresolved, and Pamela has been allowed to remain in the country until the next legal step, which may result in her being ordered back to Nigeria.

Currently, the lack of reliable data documenting the extent of the practice in the UK causes considerable difficulty for the anti-FGM campaign. For this reason, the results of the study will be of great value to many necessary initiatives, including targeted advocacy programmes, the production of a successful national strategy for the prevention and the elimination of FGM, and also for acting as a baseline against which to measure the achievements of programmes addressing FGM.

Reliable data on FGM will also assist maternity and gynaecological services seeking to provide specialist care for women affected by FGM and suffering the associated health consequences. In conjunction with the study, FORWARD has also assisted the Department of Health to produce a CD-ROM (to be completed later this year), which is aimed at health care professionals and which is intended to give guidance for the mainstreaming of FGM into health care.

# FORWARD in Africa – Promoting Change & Well-being

## Well Women and Children's Centre in Northern Nigeria

In 2004, FORWARD was awarded a grant from Big Lottery Fund to run a project to improve maternal and child health services in Kano and Jigawa states in northern Nigeria. The project's objectives include reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, increasing the number of women attending antenatal clinics, and improving the health of children by reducing malnutrition and increasing the uptake of immunisations.

During a visit to the project by Adwoa (FORWARD Director) and Loraine Layton (FORWARD auditor) in March 2006, we were impressed by the fact that the local government was supporting the two Well Women and Children's Centres (WWCCs). These services

include running antenatal clinics, providing immunisations, anti-malarials and anti-tetanus injections, and also running a children's clinic, providing immunisations and monitoring and treating children for malnutrition. The Matrons, Hajiya Hawa Isyaku and Mrs Cudjoe, have made the WWCCs welcoming and accessible. Both had worked with the local general hospital to ensure that women and children went for their immunisations (including tetanus and polio), despite resistance in Kano State to the polio vaccine.

The project had noted that both mothers and children were not getting a good diet, and so FORWARD Nigeria has developed a high-protein weaning food named Soyalac – a mixture of local, highly nutritious grains milled together and cooked into a pap. FORWARD Nigeria has



Clients recovering from VVF surgery in Northern Nigeria

sent the Soyalac to be tested and approved by the necessary authorities. Over the last year it has been found to be excellent for helping the children (and mothers!) to develop and grow well.

This visit reaffirmed FORWARD UK's commitment to the girls and women of Northern Nigeria who are faced with a great deal of poverty and hardship. After visiting these WWCCs in Nigeria, Loraine Layton exclaimed "it is only when you visit this project that you fully appreciate the importance of this work in providing support to women and their children and the real difference it is making to girls affected by fistula."



## Gender and Reproductive Health in Northern Ghana

The end of 2005 saw the end of the second year of the four-year Comic Relief funded project on Gender and Reproductive Health in Northern Ghana. It has been another very busy year. The government of Ghana launched the *Women's Manifesto* and started the debate on the Domestic Violence Bill, which acted as a reference point, as well as a spur, for our partners in respect of their policy advocacy work.

A successful media campaign was launched to fulfil the project objective of 'putting girls' and women's gender and reproductive health issues on the public agenda and mobilising public support to address them'. On this theme, four

radio announcements in English, Kusaal and Gruene were produced. This project was so successful that the radio station still plays the announcements, even though the contract is over. Radio discussion programmes in various local languages, where listeners could call in, received such positive response from community members asking for further discussion that the radio station has repeated the segments on several occasions. A radio drama on child marriage, non-education of the girl child, violence against women and *tazaba* ('sister-in-bed') was played on air in local languages between September and November 2005.

This year has also seen the production of a manual on the rights of women and children to be used as a quick reference guide by members of the statutory sector and local organisations. Our partners have also organised and run workshops for members of the statutory sector and other NGOs and government agencies, focus group discussions with community members, and a leadership training workshop for women's group leaders. In terms of work with youth, partners have established six girls' clubs and ten school clubs. All of these different groups have been targeted to ensure that messages about girls' and women's rights reach all segments of the community. In the course of this year, the project has provided information to over 300 women and girls, and has been able to influence over 300 members of the statutory sector, NGOs and other activists. Perhaps of most importance is the fact that over 200 traditional leaders, *magazias*

(women of influence), and opinion leaders have been reached with the anti-violence against girls and women messages.

An interesting, unexpected spin-off of the project has been a one-day workshop on domestic violence organised by RUMNET (Rural Media Network, a member of the Project Implementation Committee). This resulted in the formation of the Northern Regional Coalition on Domestic Violence which, on 8 March 2005, launched a campaign to fight domestic violence. Another positive development has been the expansion and replication of the project into the upper West and East and Bolgatanga areas, funded by Coraid. This will no doubt significantly increase the impact we are able to make and reflects the significant recognition that FORWARD's innovative work has received.

An extensive baseline study on the incidence, causes and effects, and manifestations of selected gender and reproductive health issues has been completed. Once it has been synthesised and produced into a user-friendly, accessible format it will be used to underpin other necessary interventions and activities.

During the monitoring visit this year, FORWARD's Director, Adwoa, was able to visit six villages in three project areas to meet and talk with over 180 beneficiaries. The discussions were wide-ranging and fascinating.



Project beneficiaries in Fahini, Northern Ghana, participating in a focus group discussion on gender-based violence

It was heartening to see first hand that, as a result of the project, the beneficiaries fully understood the health and rights issues addressed by the project, including FGM, child marriage, non-education of the girl child and *kayayei* (street porters working in markets in the capital). Unfortunately, however, in relation to other issues the girls and women did not appear to be thinking in broader terms in respect of other forms of violence and human rights violations. This indicates that, despite the progress made, there is still a great deal of work to do to ensure that girls and women fully understand, and advocate for, their own rights.

# Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls

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FORWARD continues to host the Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls, a network of organisations based mostly in the UK committed to the realisation of the rights of girls and women in relation to marriage. It has been a difficult year, as there are no designated staff to support the administration of the Forum. However, despite these restrictions, the Forum (pioneered by FORWARD Chair Naana Otoo-Oyortey and supported by staff of the International Planned Parenthood Federation in Kenya) organised a very successful three-day consultation in Kenya. This event was primarily held to discuss the draft advocacy guide that had been requested by African NGO participants at the 2003 Ouagadougou Technical Consultation. The guide is intended to cover all aspects of advocacy in a user-friendly format, and has sections on a variety of issues that NGOs need to be aware of for successful advocacy initiatives. These include: the need for increased advocacy initiatives on child and forced marriage; an advocacy framework (including the definition of advocacy, the need for advocacy to form part of an integrated programme of action, and the importance of good data collection and

analysis, etc); and advocacy tools, strategies and target audiences.

The meeting brought together a very wide range of actors in the field of child and forced marriage, from as far away as India and the USA. The contributions, in respect of what was already being done on the ground and the successes achieved, made for fascinating and productive discussions about the guide.

The guide is being finalised and is expected to be finished and ready for field testing by September 2006. To request copies of the guide, after October 2006, contact the Forum through FORWARD.

## FGM in the Media

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FGM is a deeply emotive issue which inevitably attracts media attention. However, press coverage is often not balanced, and lacks sensitivity and understanding of the complexity of issues related to the practice. FORWARD is frequently contacted by journalists, radio stations and TV companies for interviews and information related to FGM and child marriage. We are keen to provide this service in order to promote accurate and non-sensationalist media coverage.

This year, FORWARD's media coverage has included the BBC, the *Guardian*, the *Independent*, *Arabic International Daily*,

*Camden New Journal* and *Women's Enews*. As part of our Make FGM History in Sudan Campaign, following the tragic death of a girl in Sudan due to FGM, Enshrah Ahmed (FORWARD's Community Development Officer) gave a number of press statements to national and international media and to the Sudanese press. Enshrah also contributed to an article for *Alsharq Alawset*, a leading Arabic language newspaper based in London, and gave an interview to the BBC Arabic Service on the same subject.

FORWARD's involvement with the media became even more public this year when we were asked to collaborate and provide specialist technical support for the following far-reaching features.

## Westway

FORWARD's Director provided a half-day training session to the production team of the BBC World Service

*Westway* programme, before the team started to develop a story about FGM. *Westway* was a long-running radio series broadcast worldwide, featuring a health clinic managed by a diverse group of health workers. Producers ran a four-day story line about FGM. The programme illustrated the concerns and difficulties faced by a UK health clinic when it encountered a situation where a girl from Sierra Leone believed that her parents were going to take her younger



sister home to undergo FGM. The health professionals in the clinic, who were of African, Asian and European descent, had to tackle their lack of knowledge of FGM, as well as a fear of being labelled racist, in order to act to protect the little girl. FORWARD was delighted with the coverage of these issues, and ensured that the subject was approached in an honest and appropriate manner, and that the information could not be misconstrued by African communities listening in.

## The Bill

FORWARD's expertise was also sought by ITV's *The Bill* programme, for an episode aired in October 2005. It featured an FGM story line about an Egyptian Christian Coptic family who were grappling with the issues of keeping their culture alive in the UK. The father had arranged for his daughter to return to Egypt to undergo FGM, but the mother objected and contacted the police. However, she lacked the courage to clearly state the case, merely informing them that her daughter had disappeared, rather than revealing the whole truth. At the end of the programme, FORWARD's details were displayed and consequently we received a surge of interest from people wanting more information on the topics discussed.



## The Sun

Assistance was provided to *The Sun's* 'Dear Deidre' feature, for a response to a problem-page letter about FGM, published in February 2006. The author of the letter, who had undergone FGM, was experiencing related psycho-sexual problems and requested advice on reversal operations. FORWARD provided advice regarding an appropriate reply, and Deidre's published response suggested contacting FORWARD for confidential advice and support in relation to FGM.

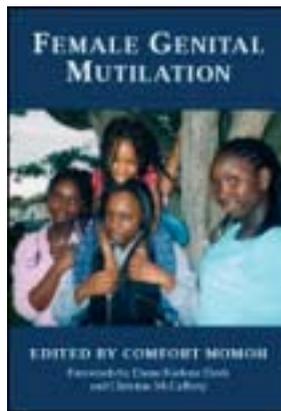
FORWARD welcomes these opportunities as innovative ways of creating greater awareness and understanding of the numerous issues faced by affected girls, women and families, and by professionals.

## New Resources and Publications

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An important aspect of FORWARD's work is to provide advice, information, training and support in relation to FGM, and a key activity is the production and dissemination of materials and resources. This year we are proud that significant new publications have been produced in consultation with FORWARD.

*Female Genital Mutilation* – edited by friend of FORWARD, Specialist FGM Midwife, Comfort



Momoh – is a compilation of articles written by a diverse spectrum of experts working in the FGM field, including a number of FORWARD associates. FORWARD's Director, Adwoa Kwateng-kluvitse, contributed a chapter entitled 'Female Genital Mutilation and Child Protection', and in November 2005 was happy to attend the launch of this valuable resource.

FORWARD was involved in the production of *Female Genital Mutilation: A Royal College of Nursing Educational Resource for Nursing and Midwifery Staff*, published in April 2006. As FORWARD's Director states in the foreword, "nurses and midwives, who may come into contact with girls and women who have undergone FGM, have a responsibility to provide them with the best care. They will not be able to do this unless they know and understand FGM." The guidance provides background information regarding FGM, including health consequences, important legislative aspects, child protection and human rights. Also incorporated into this learning resource are the London Child Protection Procedures with

respect to FGM. This publication is a valuable initial step for raising the awareness of nurses and midwives, dispelling myths and enabling them to act appropriately and sensitively when caring for women and girls affected by FGM. The booklet can be accessed via the resource page on the new FORWARD website.

Another welcome publication is the *Female Genital Mutilation* booklet produced by the Westminster Female Genital Mutilation Steering Group of Westminster Primary Care Trust (PCT), chaired by FORWARD. This resource seeks to ensure that health professionals meet the needs of FGM affected women, by providing specific guidelines for good practice in relation to the roles and responsibilities of health professionals. Detailed instructions are given, not only for specific treatment procedures but also for reporting and referral processes for specialist care in Westminster PCT. The pamphlet for professionals will be distributed along with a laminated sheet of key information for professionals on the wards and an Arabic leaflet targeted at the community. These key resource materials will be available from FORWARD or Westminster PCT from September 2006.

FORWARD Founder, Efua Dorkenoo, contributed a paper on FGM to a publication entitled *The Banyan Tree Paradox: Culture and human rights activism*, published by the International Human Rights Internship Programme (IHRIP) at the Institute of International Education. Efua presented the paper at a IHRIP workshop on 'Culture and Rights: Challenges and Opportunities for Human Rights Work' in Siem

Reap, Cambodia in August 2005. In the paper, she strongly advocates for a human rights based framework to oppose the argument of cultural relativity in relation to FGM. The publication is available from the IHRIP: [www.iie.org/ihrip/](http://www.iie.org/ihrrip/).

## Launch of the New FORWARD Website!

As you will know if you have recently visited our website, the new FORWARD website has been launched! Our old website has long been in need of a revamp, and last year volunteer Nuerki Oyortey took up the challenge of designing and developing a new look for the



outdated website. Later Sjanie Hugo kindly volunteered her skills to improve the site. Since Sarah Fisher joined the team she has been working hard to produce more material. She has been working with Gary Straughan of the web development organisation Brainbox to develop and produce the site, and with support from volunteer Michael Coulston, the site is at last up and running.

The new site contains far more information about our work and useful resources and advice for our clients, professionals, students and the public, on our key issues of FGM, child marriage and obstetric fistula. The latest FORWARD news and updates are available on the site, and it is also now possible to donate to FORWARD online.

Please have a look at [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk) – we would love to hear your comments and suggestions!



## Fundraising News

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In March 2006, students from York University Fusion Society raised a staggering £2,500 for FORWARD by organising an event in which students celebrated modern urban culture through innovative arts, dance, music and fashion performances. The show sold over a thousand tickets, and at the end a video clip about FORWARD was shown to raise further awareness of our work. We would like to say a huge thank you to Caroline Jee, organiser of the event, and all those who participated. Fusion is an annual event, so to learn about next year's Fusion visit their website [www.yorkfusion.org](http://www.yorkfusion.org).

Student groups Medsin Cambridge and Medsin Oxford also deserve a big thank you for the money they raised through organising showings of the film *Moolaadé*. Thank you also to students at Nottingham University who fundraised for us by screening *Moolaadé* and



Performers at Fusion 2006, Fusion President Caroline Jee (right).  
Photo by JPW Photography.

holding a charity club night, as well as organising a stall to raise awareness of FGM and collecting signatures for our Make FGM History in Sudan Campaign.

*If you are a member of an organisation which would be interested in helping raise funds for our work, in these or other ways, we'd love to hear from you!*

## A New Strategic Plan and a Call for New FORWARD Council of Management Members

Over the last year we have been working long and hard to develop a new and exciting Strategic Plan 2007–2010, to set out clearly our vision, objectives, programmes and priorities, building on our strengths and achievements to successfully lead our work for the next three years. With the new plan we strive to remain at the forefront of the campaign against FGM, as well as drive forward work on our other priority issues – child and forced marriage and non-education of the girl child. The new plan, which is currently being finalised, will be launched in autumn 2006 along with a new Business Plan and Communication Strategy. We are optimistic that these key organisational documents will lead FORWARD from strength to strength.

With the development of our new Strategic Plan we are currently recruiting dynamic and committed individuals to join our Council of Management to lead FORWARD at this important time. In particular, we are looking for

members with legal, fundraising, press or business backgrounds and expertise. If you have some time to spare, are committed to FORWARD's vision and mission, and believe you could make a positive contribution to our next stage of development, we look forward to hearing from you! Call Adwoa if you would like more information or would like to join the FORWARD Council of Management.

## Staff News

### New Staff, Sarah Fisher

In October 2005 I became the latest member of the FORWARD staff team. With a background in Development and Gender Studies, and a keen interest in feminism, development and social justice issues and gender-based violence, I was delighted about the opportunity to join FORWARD.

Working first as the Administration and Finance Officer and now the Information and Communications Officer has been an exciting and rewarding experience. It has provided me with great insight into the work of an international development organisation and a real chance to help promote and achieve the rights of African women and girls. My work at



FORWARD has been challenging and diverse, and as a recent graduate I have been keen to get involved on a practical level in a variety of programmes that are so related to my passions and academic background. My most recent project has been the new FORWARD website. In the future I am looking forward to continuing to improve our communications, in order to reach out to and inspire present and potential supporters and advocate for the realisation of women's human rights.

### Goodbyes

FORWARD is sad to say goodbye to Naomi Reid and Karen Proudlock who have now left FORWARD for new endeavours. We wish them every success in the future and are extremely grateful for the contributions they made as members of the FORWARD family.

Former and current staff members, Karen Proudlock, Enshrah Ahmed and Naomi Reid, and intern Anu Kuusisto.



# Financial Statement 2006

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 2006, as directed by the Charity Commissioners, using the SORP convention.

Auditors 2005/06 Layton Kaye.

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

*Charity Registration No. 292403*

## INCOME

Grants Receivable	£283,314
Donations	£9,280
Income (charitable trading activities)	£11,233
Other	£1,202
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£305,029</b>

## EXPENDITURE

Fundraising and publicity	£3,529
Grants payable	£63,245
Other project costs	£51,480

### Management, administration and staff costs

Administration Salaries	£32,499
Office costs	£16,146
Accounting, book-keeping and payroll	£2,093
Cost of trustees' meetings	£590
Project Salary Costs	£66,354
Other	£3,146
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£239, 082</b>

## CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET AT 31/3/06

Restricted funds	£283,671
Unrestricted funds	£ 21,358
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£305,029</b>

# The FORWARD Team

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## Founder

Efua Dorkenoo OBE

## Patrons and Matrons

Lord Kennet

Alice Walker

Skin (formally of Skunk Anansie)

Baroness Gould



## Council of Management

Naana Otoo-Oyortey – Chair

Yaw Addo – Treasurer

Marie Barrow

Fiona Adamson – Chair, Development Group

Scovia Cherotich

Hanan Ibrahim

Inna Ismail

Anaclet Katambara

Anna Nsubuga

Comfort Ottah

Antoinette Sallah-Phillips

## Staff Team

Adwoa Kwateng-kluvitse – Director

Efua Dorkenoo OBE – Founder and Consultant

Enshrah Ahmed – Community Development Officer

Karen Proudlock (left December 2005)

Sarah Fisher – Information and Communications Officer (joined October 2005)

Naomi Reid – Administration and Finance Officer (left October 2005)

## Volunteer and Intern Support

Michael Coulston

Sjanie Hugo

Anu Kuusisto

Ashley LoBuglio

Nuerki Oyortey

Anastasia Polkovnikova

Michela Serri

# Special Thanks

## Thanks to our Funders

Big Lottery  
City and Parochial Foundation  
Comic Relief UK  
Department of Health  
EC Daphne Programme  
Islington Victim Support  
Jo Bryant Trust  
Lloyds TSB  
The Sigrid Rausing Trust  
V Day – Until the Violence Stops  
Westminster Primary Care Trust  
Women at Risk

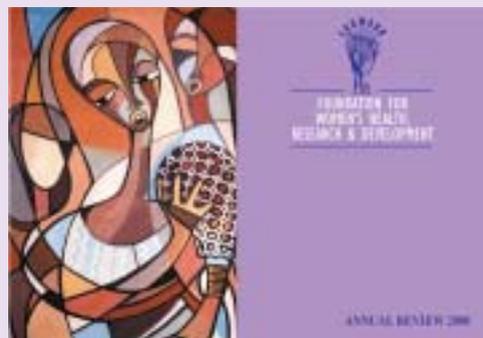
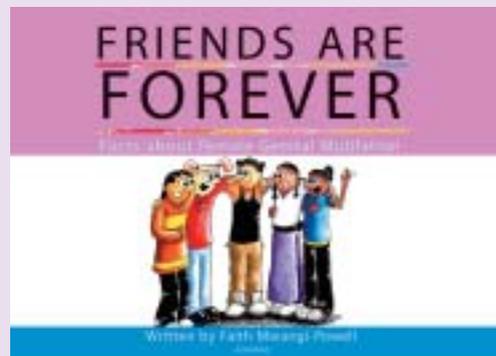
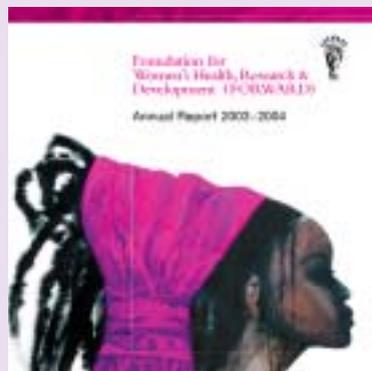
*Thanks to everyone who has assisted FORWARD – be it financially or in kind – anything you can give is most appreciated!*

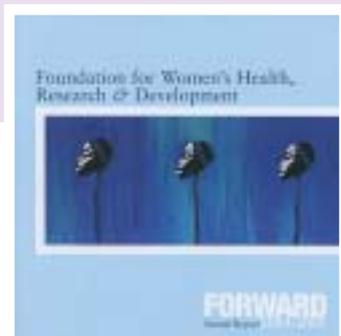
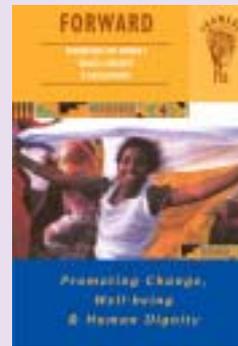
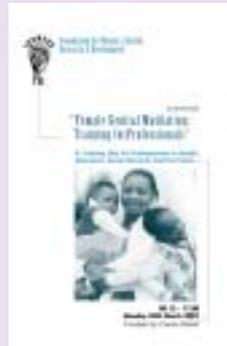
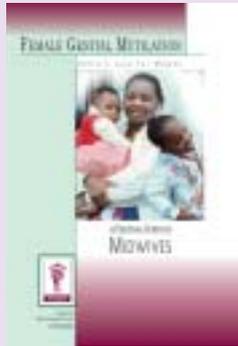
## Special Thanks To

Martin Dartey (Ghana) - Original Cover painting - 2004  
Gabrielle Poole – stunning artwork used for our new website  
Gary Straughan of Brainbox – development and hosting of the new website  
International Planned Parenthood Federation – donation of IT equipment  
Nuerki Oyortey – initial design of new website  
Prime Events – support for the *Moolaadé* première  
The Hemp Trading Company- donation of clothing for the *Moolaadé* première

*FORWARD would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all our supporters, donors, volunteers and the individuals and organisations whose assistance and support has been so important to our work.*

# FORWARD Publications





A full list of FORWARD's Publications is available on the FORWARD Website or from FORWARD



# FORWARD



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Produced by: Sarah Fisher

Design & Print by:

Thumbprint Creations UK +44 (0)20 7613 3331 [www.thumbprintcreations.com](http://www.thumbprintcreations.com)

Original painting: Title- Networking: by Martin Dartey (Ghana)- In private collection - 2004