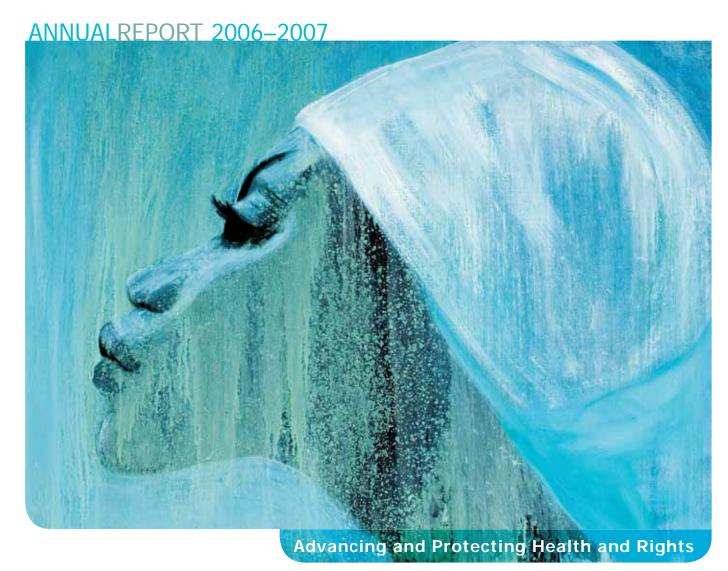
Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development





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Who we are

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

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.



Margaret Nyuydzewira - Chair

REFLECTIONS

From The Chair & Executive Director on Safeguarding health, rights & dignity of African girls & women

This year has been an exceptional period of transition and change for FORWARD. We have welcomed ten new members to our governing board, a new Chairperson and a new Director. We say goodbye and thank you to our Interim Director- Maureen Salmon, and to our three retired Council Members – Deborah Ainger, Anna Nsubuga and Interim Chair – Antoinette Sallah-Phillips. They were instrumental in facilitating this transition to ensure that our vision to advance and protect the health and wellbeing of African girls and women was not compromised. We have continued to influence policy development and facilitated access to specialist services to safeguard and protect health and rights both in the UK and in Africa.

December 2007 sees the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children Review, following up the outcomes of the 27th Special Session on Children. In the past year, our work has put into action the global promises made at these events. The participation of young people is at the heart of our efforts to bring about change in the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) in the UK. Our innovative programme Young People Speak Out in London is making strides in creating a cadre of young activists for change. We are proud of these dedicated young men and women who are passionate about spearheading change within their communities through campaigning and peer education. Our rights approach to programming reflects the UN World Summit for Children's recommendations for a global commitment to using the voice of youth to advocate for change. We now have elected two young people to our Council of Management, demonstrating the positive use of FORWARD's youth

wing in leading the organisation into the future.

At FORWARD we aim to facilitate and enable change to come from within. Working with and through strategic partnerships is at the very core of our work. We believe that all stakeholders have a role to play in advancing the health and wellbeing of African girls and women whether it be at local or national level. We are all accountable, as policy makers, funders, statutory bodies, civil societies, religious and community leaders, women's organisations and as young people to make a difference. We at FORWARD make collective action our responsibility and we have continued to expand our partnerships and collaborators both in the UK and in Africa.

We take this opportunity to share with you our annual report for 2006 / 2007, which charts our key achievements and our challenges. Over this period we have strengthened our training and capacity building work through tailored training for the London Met Police, and provided much needed research evidence to support policy making and programme development. In Africa our East Africa programme has continued to the second phase with new partners in Tanzania. In West Africa, we have initiated new work in Sierra Leone and consolidated our programme partnerships in Nigeria and Ghana.

We would like to use this opportunity once again to express our deep sadness on the death of Mr Ousmane Sembène, the film Director and Screenwriter, who passed away on 9 June 2007. FORWARD will forever treasure and remember his visit to our offices to discuss his film Moolaadé which is his gift to African women to support the cause. This film is a key tool to our project in East Africa to help advance the human rights of African girls. FORWARD has developed a Facilitator's Guide to support the screening of this film.

With a new team on board, we are committed to take FORWARD's work to a new level, while strengthening the past gains and building on lessons learnt. We have steadily improved our funding and staffing. We look forward to operating at full capacity with your continued support and generosity. We welcome the steady growth in our membership. We extend our appreciation to you, our supporters, funders, and partners and look forward to building further on these partnerships to safeguard the health, rights and dignity of African girls and women over the coming year.



Naana Otoo-Oyortey - Executive Director

Baroness Gould - Patron

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Launch of the FGM Prevalence Study

FORWARD's patron Baroness Gould hosted the launch of the research "A Statistical Study to Estimate the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales" at the House of Lords on 9 October 2007. The launch was attended by over 100 participants from the House of Lords, government departments, statutory bodies and community organisations. The event attracted huge media attention and helped to bring much needed attention to FGM, a silent human rights violation. The lead researchers were Efua Dorkenoo OBE, Linda Morison and Alison Macfarlane, and we appreciate their efforts in getting this work finalized

The study was funded by the Department of Health and in partnership with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Department of Midwifery, City Hospital. The study reveals that nearly 66,000 women with FGM live in England and Wales (2001) and the number of maternities to women with FGM increased by 44% to over 9,000 in just three years. More significantly, there are nearly 16,000 girls under the age of 15 at high risk of WHO Type III FGM and over 5,000 at high risk of WHO Type I or Type II, suggesting the practice is on the increase.

Long awaited by the campaign to end FGM, this study addresses the lack of reliable data on the extent of FGM in the UK and so will better enable the planning and implementation of a more comprehensive national strategy for the prevention and the elimination of FGM. The findings will act as a baseline against which to measure the achievements of programmes addressing FGM, and targeted advocacy programmes. The recommendations call for improvement in care, to help meet the challenge of providing targeted maternity and gynaecological care. It reiterates the need for vital support services for girls and women with complications from FGM, and to ensure greater collaboration between the statutory agencies, third sector organisations and practising communities.

In conjunction with the study, FORWARD and the Department of Health have produced a CD-ROM aimed at healthcare professionals and providing guidance for the mainstreaming of preventative and support measures for those affected by FGM.



Prevalence Study Launch - House of Lords

"The United Nations has recognised FGM as a human rights violation and the practice is prohibited in the UK under the FGM Act (2003), Children Act and other legislations. Yet lack of reliable data on FGM prevalence has until now marginalised the issue. This study represents a major first step to fill the gap in available data on FGM. The estimates of FGM provided in this study highlight the need not only to enhance health care for girls and adult women who have already undergone FGM but call for systematic actions to prevent FGM being passed on to the younger generations."

- Efua Dorkenoo, OBE, Principal Investigator of the study

"This study suggests that the practice is on the increase. It is hoped that the results of the study will support the planning and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy in the UK that will help to expedite efforts to end FGM within a generation."

- Baroness Joyce Gould, FORWARD Patron

"This study suggests that the practice is on the increase. It is hoped that the results of the study will support the planning and implementation of a comprehensive national strategy in the UK that will help to expedite efforts to end FGM within a generation"

Key Facts:

- An estimated 66,000 women with FGM are living in England and Wales
- Over 20,000 girls under 15 could be at risk of FGM in the UK
- 11,000 over 8 are highly likely to have already been subjected to FGM

For a copy of this study, go to: www.forwarduk.org.uk

"The Department is pleased to have supported and funded this important study that continues to profile FGM issues, a key objective of which is bringing an understanding to practising communities that such mutilation is unacceptable" — **Department of Health**

Project Azure

Building on the 2006 "Summer is for fun not pain" initiative, FORWARD is once again a partner of the Metropolitan Police's new campaign – Project Azure, launched 11 July 2007. The campaign sets out to improve the enforcement of the FGM Act 2003. The law makes it a criminal offence in England and Wales to mutilate the genitals of females who are UK nationals or permanent residents in the UK and forbids taking a girl out of the UK to have her mutilated. FGM is a criminal offence, and more importantly, FGM is a violation to human rights – therefore a child protection issue.

To this date, no one has been prosecuted under this law, and FORWARD endorses the action taken by the Metropolitan Police to offer a £20,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and successful prosecution of anyone aiding and abetting, counselling, procuring or carrying out FGM in London. There have however been a number of girls who have been saved through this campaign. Therefore the focus on prevention and protection is equally critical to ending FGM.

FORWARD played a significant role in the launch of Project Azure, along with our young people in the Young People Speak Out Programme and other FORWARD supporters. We took part in the media events prior to and after the launch at a national and regional level. These included interviews on the BBC 1 Ten O'clock News, Radio 4, LBC Radio, BBC Radio 94.9FM, The Guardian, and The South London Press. FORWARD's former Director Adwoa Kwateng-Kluvitse collaborated in the production of the Met Police Film which was also launched on the day.

Women's National Commission

In September, Maureen Salmon our Interim Director participated in the Women's National Commission (WNC) Roundtable on 'Priorities for the Minister for Women'. The Rt Hon. Harriet Harman, QC MP, Minister for Women, was the key speaker.

The Roundtable was a significant gathering of experts and key stakeholders to discuss three priorities; the one of foremost importance to FORWARD's work is 'Tackling violence against women'. The Roundtable was chaired by Baroness Gould, Acting Chair of the WNC and Patron of FORWARD.

Rotary Club Event in Hitchin



Naana Otoo-Oyortey receiving the Hitchin Rotary Club Cheque!

Naana Otoo-Oyortey was presented a cheque for £680 by the Hitchin Rotary Club at their "fifth Monday" dinner at The Sun Hotel on Monday 30th July. The cheque which was given to FORWARD was in recognition of our work to advance African women's health and rights. The funds were raised from Hitchin Rotary Club's Concert for International Women's Day at St Mary's Church on 8th March. Ms Janine Blackmore representing the Hitchin-based company, Tomorrow, who also sponsored the concert, presented the cheque to FORWARD. FORWARD is most grateful for this gesture.

"One of the young women had suffered VVF as a result of Female Genital Mutilation, as she had been taken to a local barber and a piece of tissue cut from her vagina, believing that it would make her more 'agreeable' to and loved by her husband..."

New Image

FORWARD is pleased to unveil its new look. The new logo was launched at the House of Lords on the same day as the launch of the FGM Prevalence Study. The new strap line – safeguarding rights & dignity – emphasizes the national and global role of FORWARD as a rights based organisation and is in line with our strategic vision of advancing and protecting rights, health and wellbeing for African women and girls.

In designing the new logo, we wanted to stay linked to FORWARD's past as part of a 23 year journey but wanted to reflect FORWARD's work at all levels and with men, women and children from a variety of backgrounds both in the UK and in Africa. We do not see the new logo as an ending or a separation from FORWARD's past, but rather a continuation that is organic.



Graduation Ceremony in Dambatta -Kano, Nigeria

In October 2007, FORWARD's Youth Coordinator Mari-Claire Price visited FORWARD-Nigeria as a guest at the 8th Graduation Ceremony at the Dambatta VVF centre. Graduating this year were 20 young women aged 14 plus. All the women had come to the centre suffering from Obstetric Fistula, however the causes of their condition varied between the women. One of the young women had suffered VVF as a result of FGM, as she had been taken to a local barber and a piece of tissue cut from her vagina, believing that it would make her more 'agreeable' to and loved by her husband. At the graduation ceremony the young women dressed in veils they had produced in their empowerment and skills classes. The ceremony had many guests including former clients, husbands of the graduating clients, FORWARD-Nigeria staff, local community leaders and a representative from Kano State Ministry of Women Affairs.

Some of the young women performed a dramatisation about the effects of obstructed or prolonged labour and acted out a scene where members of the family were insisting a young girl in labour be taken to hospital. Each young woman was presented with a certificate and a bag of knitting wool, beads and other items to take back to their communities and use as a way of income generation.

Fatima I Umar, FORWARD-Nigeria Director handed out prizes to the young women who had achieved highest in literacy, hygiene and skills classes. She then went on to address the guests about the work of the Dambatta Clinic and FORWARD-Nigeria insisting upon the necessity for husbands to take care of their wife's health and to allow time for healing. A local community leader also spoke about the importance of good antenatal care and in tackling VVF and related health consequences. The graduation coincided with the monitoring trip to the project.



2007 Graduation Class - Dambatta VVF Centre

"We are imploring upon the government and international organizations to recognize and support the efforts by non governmental and civil society organizations..."

Tanzania Declaration on Child Marriage

FORWARD attended this landmark event in Tanzania in September. We are proud to share the Declaration.

We the participants, at The National Consultative Meeting of Stakeholders on Ending Child Marriages, 19-21, September 2007, make the following declaration:

- That, there is a pervasiveness of child marriages in Tanzania,
- That, Child marriages have dismal physical, psychological and health effects on children,
- That, Tanzania has signed and ratified various international conventions on children's rights including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC);
- That we are calling upon the government and other stakeholders to take action including;



Participants of the National Consultative Meeting to End Child Marriage in Tanzania

- Domesticating international instruments so that they can be part of the laws and enforceable in Tanzania,
- To increase the age of marriage from the current age of 14 to at least 18.
- To put in place strategies on how to educate the public on the effects of child marriages
- Making Secondary education compulsory and Universal so as to reduce the number of girls who are in child marriages,

We are imploring upon the government and international organizations to recognize and support the efforts by non governmental and civil society organizations and to work together with these organizations in an endeavour to end child marriages

FORWARD IN THE UK

Building Capacity and Strengthening partnerships to protect and advance rights of African women and girls

Young People Speak Out Project Empowering young people

CORWARD is enthusiastic about the success of the Young People Speak Out project, funded by the John Lyon's Charity which was launched in November 2006. Now in its second phase, this is the first systematic programme of initiatives aimed at working in partnership with young people from Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities to develop an innovative youth-led campaign to stop Gender Based Violence (GBV) with a particular focus on FGM and Child and forced marriage.

This provides a safe space for BME youth to articulate their views and concerns, and to engage in interactive training and culturally sensitive education on Gender Based Violence with a focus on tackling FGM and Child and forced marriage. The YPSO projects builds on its momentum by producing a group of 'Peer Educators' who actively engage at the forefront of the ongoing campaign to end all forms of GBV at the community level.

Following the successful youth consultation meeting on 23 August 2006, attended by 30 young people, 10 expressed an interest and commitment to the project. Their training sessions included activities such as discussions, debates, video and film-screenings (including the award winning film Moolaadé) and group video-making workshops with the film company Banyak. Some of the young people were also able to utilise their creative skills in poetry and story writing, as well as conduct interviews for inclusion in the magazine for the project – Bridges.

The first key success was getting a dedicated group of young men to commit to the project as in FORWARD's experience FGM and Child marriage are considered girls' issues and men and boys rarely show any interest in these topics. In another significant step, the project also opened up lines of communication



Young People Speak Out Project



between some girls and their mothers as after the modules several girls were confident enough to broach the issue for the first time with their mothers.

FORWARD consolidated the progress carried out in the meetings and training sessions with the production of the 'Young People Speak Out –This is Our Voice' DVD. Participants developed the initial concept and storyboard, as well as the production either through acting or technical support. This has already been used as a training tool by FORWARD to develop the project further and engage more young people.

Young people involved with the project also got the opportunity to take part in the Met Police 'Project Azure' campaign launch in July 2007 and the launch of FORWARD's study into the prevalence of FGM in the UK at the House of Lords in October 2007. At both very high profile events, FORWARD's young Peer Educators spoke with media about their work through Young People Speak Out and their campaign to end all forms of Gender Based Violence, in particular FGM and Child Marriage. The YPSO project has also been covered in the Big Issue and BBC News.

Voices from the Young People Speak Out Project The Second phase

We have already embarked on the second phase of Young People Speak Out which now focuses on engaging more young women and men from FGM practicing communities into the project. Project modules and creative sessions will provide a space for the Peer Educators to further develop the campaign to secure and safeguard rights for all African girls and women through awareness raising, peer outreach and collaboration with community organisations, schools and youth groups.

"I am involved in FORWARD's Young People Speak Out project for several reasons. It helps me to be able to speak my mind about the grief I have had to bear for so long in my life. I was circumcised twice when I was 14 years old: they carried out the operation without any anaesthetic, and then they did it again because they thought they had not done it properly. This led to difficult medical problems, I was traumatised, physically and emotionally heart broken. I came here to be safe and I had my operation to re-open my scar, which was helpful but some tissue is still exposed. I hate the dysfunction that was inflicted on me and I hate the people that did this to me. But above all I still have hope and believe that I can put this behind me and make a better life.

I think the Young People Speak Out project is very important because I have come across people who have been circumcised like me and also people who know very little about our story and the trauma that we have gone through. I can speak about the importance of safeguarding African girls and women because I am a victim and know what it is like to have gone through this, though there may be many more who are in a worse situation than me. We need to stand up and protect young people and try to teach them about the medical and psychological problems that FGM brings about. It is wrong to force people into circumcision and marriage. We need to protect others and make people in Government and the Home Office aware that this is not a joke. When I was first interviewed by an immigration officer I had just arrived in this country, I was scared and ashamed to talk about such a personal matter as my circumcision, the effect of this was that they said I had changed and embellished my story and used that as the basis for not allowing an appeal, even though there is medical proof since I have had a reversal operation in this country! We are not lying about our circumstances, they do not know how hard it is to talk about the way I was being forced and beaten in order to be circumcised and the painful treatment I had to go through without any anaesthetic.

We as youth supporters should campaign and fight to protect our sisters and mothers because we are the people of the future."

- A YPSO participant and FGM survivor

"My interest in working with FORWARD through the Young People Speak Out project is rooted in the opportunity to acquire campaigning techniques which project a message that is heard. In this case that message is awareness of the practices of FGM and child and forced marriage; two pertinent issues that need to be tackled as a means to standardising human rights.

As an African woman, the rights of African women and children are important to me on numerous, personal levels. The most significant being that I feel change happens from inside. That is to say, in order to achieve change, it is African women themselves who need to be aware, vigilant, educated, and motivated.

Through YPSO, I feel change may come. Young people are very vocal, and by demonstrating our awareness of the issues, we may diminish



these illegal and unethical practices by talking and standing up for our younger siblings or friends who may be in danger's way.

Unfortunately with all the progress we have made in technology, we, as the human race, are yet to provide universal education. The scales are heavily tipped. And it is this defining factor that remains the progress barrier encroaching on the rights of women and children worldwide."

- Ato Abe, Young People Speak Out

"Imams were
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Protection Policy..."

International Zero Tolerance Day London Central Mosque

As part of its community development work with Muslim communities, on 6 February 2007 and in recognition of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM, FORWARD organised a training day at the London Central Mosque. This event was possible thanks to a grant from the Westminster Primary Care Trust and through the collaborative partnership between FORWARD and the Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque (ICCCM).

The participants were predominantly Muslim, many of whom were community and faith leaders including Imams. The training was designed to help Imams and religious leaders based at the ICCCM better fulfil their roles according to the Child Protection Policy within the UK. Imams were encouraged to raise the issues of Gender Based Violence particularly FGM and Child Marriage in their sermons and Friday prayers and give advice that reflects the UK laws and Child Protection Policy when approached for advice on the same issues.

The event was a great success. FORWARD would like to thank all the staff based at ICCCM, in particular Dr. Ahmad Al Dubayan and Dr. Teinaz. Without their immense help and support this event would not have taken place.

Community engagement is key to making FGM History in the UK!

Providing Training and Support for Professionals 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 build capacity of professionals and the general public. FORWARD provides comprehensive training to professionals from the police, health, education, social services and voluntary sectors 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 training sessions to multiple social service departments, Area Child Protection Committees, health workers and Primary Care Trusts, education professionals, community organisations and NGOs.

FORWARD has also been involved in specific cases relating to FGM. This includes providing advice and assistance on FGM and child protection in cases of suspected FGM; providing psychosocial support or referrals for specialist health care and counselling services for those affected by FGM; and 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 addition to our training courses on FGM, over the past year FORWARD has been invited to talk and give presentations at a number of conferences and meetings providing the opportunity to promote greater awareness and understanding of gender discriminatory practices affecting African girls and women.

"Implementing laws is not an obvious and automatic process, and requires sufficient time, means and engagement in order to be successful. ..."

" 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 woman facing torture and violence on the basis of their gender..."

Improved Enforcement of FGM-Legislation in Europe

FORWARD is excited to be part of this EU initiative to enhance the implementation of criminal and child protection laws on FGM in the EU. Implementing laws is not an obvious and automatic process, and requires sufficient time, means and engagement in order to be successful. This project intends to improve this implementation by building on the research of the first Daphne-FGM laws project.

Working with the original Daphne partners (ICRH, FORWARD, CAMS, University Valencia, Malmö University), this project's objective is to propose practical recommendations for the implementation of the law regarding FGM in Europe by reviewing these laws, building the capacities in FGM prevention for professionals in 5 EU countries, proposing a framework for FGM laws in the EU and disseminating recommendations regarding their enforcement.

This project will also expand its work by seeking information on the laws of FGM in the 10 new Member States as well as creating a web-tool with up-to-date info on European criminal and child protection laws, including recommendations for its enforcement.

FORWARD's particular purview within this consultation is FGM and asylum policy. Every week, FORWARD receives calls from women who seek asylum on grounds of FGM. 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, and more so in the case of FGM 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 provide greater protection and support to women and girls affected and at risk of FGM.

FORWARD IN AFRICA

Promoting gender equality and reproductive health in Northern Ghana

PORWARD continues its work in Northern Ghana to put girls' and women's gender and reproductive health issues on the public agenda and to provide information, skills, knowledge and tools to local institutions and communities to work toward the promotion of girls' and women's rights. The project, funded by Comic Relief and in partnership with the Association of Church Development Projects (ACDEP), Maata-N-Tudu and Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocesan Development Office, raises awareness of a variety of forms of GBV and focusing in particular on four: FGM, child marriage, non-education of the girl child, and kayayoo (head porterage), as well as providing information to over 350 women and girls and impacting over 270 individuals in statutory sector civil society organisations and activists.

On these issues four workshops were organised at the District level targeting NGOs, gender activists, chief and youth chiefs (Zaachi), traditional rulers, women opinion leaders and assembly persons with the objective of mobilising traditional rulers and opinion leaders to understand, support and promote the fight against Gender Based Discrimination in the Tamale metropolis (May 2006), and in the Tolon / Kumbungu District (June 2006) and in Bolgatanga (September 2006). A manual "Handbook on the rights of Women and Children" has been produced and distributed to 53 key stakeholders in the Northern Region who, properly trained, are now able to use them thus multiplying the impact of this project. Distribution will soon take place in the Upper East Region too.

Over the year, new Gender and reproductive health clubs were inaugurated in 4 junior secondary schools in Tolon, Kumbungu, Zangbalin Yipelgu and Dalun. Although the clubs had been started in year two the formal inauguration took place this year. In all there were over 100 club members who will form the core of a cadre of young campaigners.



Gertrude and Ayisha - Project partners

In Kpalgun, for the first time in the community 12 female students have been enrolled in the Kpalgun Junior Secondary School. At the start of the project there were no female students in this junior secondary school! This is an even more significant development in that traditionally girls in this area do not go beyond primary school level. To build and sustain this impetus a Gender Club will be formed in the school a patron for the club has already been identified

The socio-economic empowerment of young women and mothers in rural communities was strengthened through group formation, training and the provision of micro-credit to young women and mothers in the targeted communities. These groups are all on target to make a profit and thereby able to improve on their economic and social status within their communities.

"Personally the programme has helped me very much because I now know the rights of women and also the fact that rights go with responsibilities. This knowledge has enabled me to create awareness among women that some of the problems in their marital homes would never have gone far if they knew their rights and their responsibilities."

 Discussions with Mrs. Asara Telly, Federation of Moslem Women Association of Ghana – FOMWAG

Strengthening Young women's voices in leadership positions

Ayisha Iddi and Charity Adongo represent beneficiary groups on the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) of the FORWARD partnership project in Ghana. Both young women have experienced the phenomenon of "Kayayoo". Kayayoo refers to the migration of girls and young women from northern Ghana to southern Ghana to engage in menial jobs including carrying head loads in markets as market porters. It is estimated that about 87 % of the young girls in Accra and Kumasi that are engaged as kayayoo, come from the northern Ghana. Kayayoo is a manifestation of the level of deprivation and poverty among women and girls in the three northern regions. Many are forced into this hazardous health risk to earn money for continuing education or to prepare for marriage.

Ayisha is 18 years old from Tolon district- Northern Region. She completed her senior secondary school (SSS) in July this year and is currently awaiting her results. Ayisha is the first in her family to attend SSS and proudly says that her determination to go to school required her to also migrate to Accra on three occasions to work as a Kayayoo. This was the only way she managed to pay her school fees and essential items needed to survive in school. Additionally Ayisha says that her membership of the PIC has helped her to improve her leadership skills, while her allowances have also supported her further in her education. In Kalgun, a village in Tolon district, the project has resulted in 12 girls being enrolled for the first time in junior secondary school. All the girls are in the young women gender and reproductive health clubs. Ayisha wants to become a lawyer and is really hoping that she will get the right grades for her to go to university. However she laments that she does not know how she will fund her university education.

Charity is 24 years old from Dakeo in the Upper East Region and works as a Secretary with the Ghana Health Service. Charity says her role in the PIC is to bring the reality of young women and girls from her community. She says that the evidence of her participation in the project is through her new confidence and leadership skills. "I have learnt a lot, for example, about leadership roles and working with groups. At first when I was young, I was afraid to speak in public freely, but now I am changed, I am able to share my views with others, advise fellow young women about gender and reproductive rights issues and feel really positive about myself".

Advancing human rights of African girls and young women in East Africa

We are in the second phase of a regional project in East Africa to build the capacity of African NGOs to advocate for girls and women's health and rights by utilising the award winning film Moolaadé as an advocacy tool.

To date the "Advancing the Human Rights of African Girls" project – funded by the Sigrid Rausing Trust – has achieved a number of significant outcomes in the three selected countries (Ethiopia, Sudan and Tanzania). In particular, a Facilitation Guide to support the screening of Moolaadé as an advocacy tool has been produced and translated into Arabic.

" the focus of the project is working with internally displaced persons from the war torn Darfur Region who have settled in the mayo area on the outskirts of Khartoum, where the prevalence of FGM is nearly total..."

In Sudan, the focus of the project is working with internally displaced persons from the war torn Darfur Region who have settled in the mayo area on the outskirts of Khartoum, where the prevalence of FGM is 98-100 per cent. Two 2-day workshops were held at the Khadamat Health centre, which were attended by 28 Midwife Supervisors, who are working in 8 centres providing reproductive health services to girls and women who practice FGM as a cultural requirement. On International Women's Day 2007 Moolaadé was screened by SIHA at the French cultural centre in Khartoum. This event was open to the general public and over 300 students watched the film which generated an important discussion on the controversial concepts of traditional practices versus religion. In May 2007 Moolaadé was presented in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, for a group of journalists and media professionals, who were all impressed by the film and interested in the film being translated into local languages particularly Somali so that it could be used to reach out more communities.



Dr. Monica Mhoja and Justice Natalia Kimaro

FORWARD funded the Children's Dignity Forum to organise a national consultative meeting "End Child Marriage in Tanzania," which took place at the Russian-Tanzanian Cultural Centre in Dar es Salaam in September 2007. FORWARD's new Director Naana Otoo-Oyortey and Muna Dol, a intern working on the East Africa project participated in this event. Naana made a presentation on "Advocacy Strategies and Techniques on Child Marriage; the Tool Kit."

This three day consultation was extremely well attended with over 50 participants attending daily. The consultation which is the first national consultation in Africa on child marriage brought together government agencies, researchers, NGOs, religious leaders and individuals. The objectives of this consultation was to share advocacy strategies to end child marriage in Tanzania, to review and make recommendations on the legal obligation to end child marriage; to share experiences of the media as an advocacy tool; and to develop a national forum for making child marriage an agenda in Tanzania. Moolaadé was also screened at the consultation.

This innovative consultation received broad media and TV coverage and created widespread interest in the issues generating overwhelming support to elevate the fight against child marriage to centre-stage of the national agenda with the testimonies a powerful incentive. By the end numerous agencies indicated their interest and support in forming a task force to take forward the work on child marriage and a declaration was developed which will be used for advocacy action.

Increasing access to specialist services and information in Northern Nigeria

WWCC in Northern Nigeria

The Well Women and Children's Centre project in the Kano and Jigawa states continues to improve service delivery for maternal and child health and raise awareness on issues of HIV/AIDS. In partnership with FORWARD-Nigeria, the project has established two Well Women and Children Centres to provide information and services on immunisations, antenatal and postnatal care, as well as working with mothers to ensure children are protected from malnutrition. FORWARD-Nigeria works with Traditional Birth Attendants, Social Workers, Male Motivators and Village Health Workers from 10 selected communities in Kano and Jigawa, training and promoting good antenatal care and reproductive health care, and awareness of nutrition and malaria. The Well Women's Centre also target husbands in raising awareness of their wife's health and wellbeing and recent work with local community leaders has strengthened awareness of issues within the communities and led to an increase in the numbers of women attending the clinics from different villages.

"FORWARD-Nigeria works with Traditional Birth Attendants, Social Workers, Male Motivators and Village Health Workers from 10 selected communities in Kano and Jigawa, training and promoting good antenatal care and reproductive health care"

"Some women who have recently undergone repair for their fistula and graduated from the VVF clinic at Dambatta, have now returned to their own communities and set up small village empowerment groups for local women ..."



Dambatta, Kano, Nigeria

The VVF clinics in Dambatta and Jahun are receiving an ever-increasing number of clients each year. Demand for the service is high with many women travelling for miles, often suffering from complications as a result of Obstetric Fistula, to access these services. FORWARD-Nigeria is hugely proud to be able to provide these women with services including repair of the fistula, long term rehabilitation of up to 10 months and empowerment and literacy sessions, enabling them to later return to their communities with skills that will help themselves, their families and their communities. Some women who have recently undergone



FORWARD-Nigeria team

repair for their fistula and graduated from the VVF clinic at Dambatta, have now returned to their own communities and set up small village empowerment groups for local women, to share the skills and knowledge they have acquired in antenatal care, literacy and income-generating activities with other women, having themselves first attended the centre with no literacy skills.

Skills such as jewellery making, knitting and the production of Soyalac (a mixture of local, highly nutritious grains) and ForwardLeen (Petroleum Jelly-based skincare produced by the clients), allow these women to return to their communities and share the income-generation responsibilities with family and husbands.

With a visit to the project in January and October 2007, FORWARD UK has recently reaffirmed its commitment to the girls and women of Northern Nigeria with the conviction that it is of the utmost importance to keep providing support to women affected by fistula and to raise awareness amongst women, husbands, community leaders and health care providers of the importance of good antenatal health care.

We look forward to the development of new initiatives through FORWARD-Nigeria in the upcoming year including a radio awareness-raising campaign and the continued success of the VVF and Well Women's Clinics. "The purpose of the consultation was to share information on practices in Sierra
Leone which have a negative impact on the development and sexual and reproductive health of women and girls..."

Initiating engagement on practices which affect the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls in Sierra Leone

In December 2006 a one day consultation was organised by FORWARD in collaboration with the Reproductive Health Department of the Ministry of Health in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The purpose of the consultation was to share information on practices in Sierra Leone which have a negative impact on the development and sexual and reproductive health of women and girls and to begin to explore possible strategies for addressing these practices, and help reduce the potential harm these practices have on women and girls.

Given the political and other sensitivities to practices on women and girls which affect their sexual and reproductive health, it was deemed best to invite a small group of health organisations, international NGOs, rights groups and women's NGOS that are already working on some of these practices, such as FGM, child marriage, and the improvement of child and maternal mortality. The initiative was in direct response to a mapping exercise conducted by FORWARD in March 2006.

Participants agreed that a number of activities were now possible, and critical for organisations working on FGM and child marriage in Sierra Leone. In particular, there was a need for:

- Coordination and network formation
- Wider collaboration with policy makers and law enforcement agencies.
- · Training and capacity building
- Strengthening evidence base from Sierra Leone

In February 2007, the "National Movement for Emancipation and Progress" (NaMEP) was set up with some of the organisations who attended the consultation in December. NaMEP has a membership of 13 national organisations working on the eradication of harmful traditional practices.

NEW RESOURCES AND PUBLICATIONS

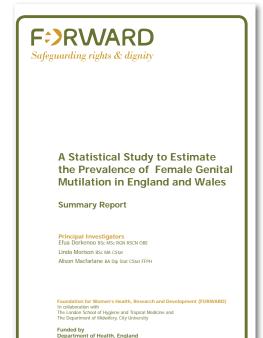
An important aspect of FORWARD's work is to provide advice, information, training and support in relation to FGM, and a key activity is the production and dissemination of materials and resources. We are proud to highlight below the publications that FORWARD and its members have produced or participated in this past year.

"A Statistical Study of the Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales" – FORWARD, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Department of Midwifery, City University

This year we are proud to have launched this FORWARD-led study for which FORWARD founder, Efua Dorkenoo, was a principal investigator. This study, funded by the Department of Health finally offers reliable data concerning the prevalence of FGM in England and Wales and will immensely assist the campaign to end FGM and to safeguard the rights of all African girls and women.

"Ending Child Marriage – a Guide for Global Policy Action" – International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls

FORWARD's new Director – Naana Otoo-Oyortey – led the initiative of the publication "Ending child marriage – a guide for global policy action" by the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls. Our former Director Adwoa Kwateng-Kluvitse provided technical guidance and writing support as the host organisation of the Forum on Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls. This tool is aimed at key policy makers to improve the quality of life of the millions of girls and young women forced into child marriages, underlines the urgency for global policy action.



"Handbook on the Rights of Women and Children" - Dajiah J. Iddrisu, FORWARD, ACDEP

As part of the project for the promotion of gender equality and reproductive health in Northern Ghana, Dajiah J. Iddrisu prepared for ACDEP the "Handbook on the Rights of Women and Children" which FORWARD cosponsored. This booklet presents these human rights in a format that simplifies understanding of these human rights for non-legal development workers and rural women so that they can use this quick reference guide as a training tool to further advocacy.

"A Case Study in Four Communities of the Bongo District and Bolgatanga Municipality Areas of the Upper East Region of Ghana" – Gender Unit of the ACDEP, FORWARD

FORWARD also co-sponsored "A Case Study in Four Communities of the Bongo District and Bolgatanga Municipality Areas of the Upper East Region of Ghana", a survey conducted by the Gender Unit of the Association of Church Development (ACDEP). The aim of this publication is to provide baseline data for informed community level action among partners.

DVD: "Young People Speak Out - This is Our Voice"

This is a DVD produced in collaboration with Banyak Productions. It highlights young people's involvement in FORWARD's campaign to end all forms of gender based violence, in particular advocating for change in the practice of FGM.

Forthcoming publication:

"Taking Action to End Child Marriage Resource Kit" – FORWARD, IPPF, EENET, and WOMANKIND

This is a CD-Rom containing resources to assist campaigners around the world, at all levels and working in all situations in their fight to end this practice. Included on this CD-Rom will be a guide for advocacy, an exhaustive bibliography and UNICEF information. FORWARD is looking forward to the launch of this tool in January 2007.

Ordering Publications:

For more information on these and other resources and publications, please visit our website or call us on 020 8960 4000.

FORWARD NEWS

This year, FORWARD has seen significant changes on the staffing and management front. We are extremely sad to have to say goodbye to Adwoa Kwateng-Kluvitse after five years as the Director of FORWARD. Adwoa left at the end of March and is the new Country Director for Action Aid in Ghana.

Enshrah Ahmed, the UK Programmes Manager, also left and has joined the UN in Sierra Leone. Over the years, both have demonstrated considerable dedication and commitment to the elimination of FGM and all forms of violence against African women and girls and we are so sorry to see them go but know we still have good advocates to support the advancement of the rights of African women and girls.

Sarah Fisher, who joined FORWARD as Administrative and Finance Officer and then later Information and Communication Officer also left to pursue a new career in London. Sarah continues to assist FORWARD as a supporter of FORWARD's work.

We at FORWARD wish them all the very best in their respective positions.

FORWARD thanks Maureen Salmon who acted as Interim Director. Maureen, who previously had worked with FORWARD as a management consultant, within a very short time successfully helped to bridge the transition by putting into operation the new strategic plan and communication strategy. Maureen's mission ensured that FORWARD's transition maximised outreach within the UK and in Africa, as well as providing leadership and strategic direction, facilitating the re-branding process and the recruitment of a new leadership to the organisation. We would like to thank Maureen for her hard work and commitment to FORWARD.

FORWARD welcomes Naana Otoo-Oyortey as new Director. Naana has previously served as the Chair of the Council of Management and joins FORWARD from the International Planned Parenthood Federation. She has a passion for African women's health and brings years of experience on gender and rights issues. Naana holds a MPhil in Development Studies.

FORWARD also welcomes new members of the staff team, Yasmin Aktar, Administrative and Finance Officer; Mari-Claire Price, the Youth Co-ordinator for the Young People Speak Out Project; and Khalda El Hafiz, the Community Development Officer. We are delighted that the new members of the team have settled in well and supported the transition very efficiently, we are truly proud of their achievements within this short time frame.



FORWARD Team

FORWARD TEAM

Founder

Efua Dorkenoo OBE

Patrons and Matrons

Lord Kenent

Alice Walker

Skin (formally of Skunk Anansie)

Baroness Gould

Council of Management

Margaret Nyuydzewira- Chair

Yaw Addo- Treasurer

Nawar El khalifa

Gibril Faal

Faduma Hussein

Monica Mhoja

Hana Murgani

Beatrice Mutali

Irene Noel

Jessica Nott

Naomi Reid

Hanan Ibrahim

Lisa Smith

Retired Council Members

Fiona Adamson

Deborah Ainger

Scovia Cherotich

Anna Nsubuga

Moira Reddick

Antoinette Sallah-Phillips

Staff Team

Naana Otoo-Oyortey - Executive Director

Adwoa Kwateng Kluvitse - Director- left March 2007

Maureen Salmon - Interim Director and Consultant

Efua Dorkenoo OBE - Consultant

Enshrah Ahmed – UK Programme Manager-

Left June 2007

Khalda El Hafiz - Community Development Officer

Mari-Claire Price - Youth Co-ordinator

Yasmin Aktar – Administrative and Finance Officer

Volunteer and Intern Support

Amina Begum

Michael Coulston

Muna Dol

Emilia McIlveney

Nana Mensah

Estelle Robinson

Olabisi Shei

Sara Tescione

Samirah Toure

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2007

Statement of Financial Activities for the year

Statement of Financial Activities for the year

| INCOMING RESOURCES | £ |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Donations | 38451 |
| Grants Receivable | 313337 |
| Other Income | 8332 |
| TOTAL | 360120 |
| | |
| EXPENDITURE | |
| Fundraising | 1846 |
| Charitable Expenses | 331070 |
| Governance | 10141 |
| TOTAL | 343057 |
| | |
| Net Incoming Resources | 17063 |
| Total Funds B/F | 221848 |
| Total Funds C/F | 238911 |

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH 2007

| Current Assets | 281517 |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Creditors | (42606) |
| Net Assets | 238,911 |
| Represented By: | |
| Restricted Funds | 168151 |
| Unrestricted Funds | 70760 |
| | 238911 |

This summary financial information has been extracted from the full audited annual financial statements of FORWARD for the year ended 31st March 2007 as directed by the Charity Commissioners, using the SORP convention.

A full copy can be obtained from FORWARD.

FORWARD will forever

Sembène (1923-2007)

remember Ousmane

for having done a

great service to the

global campaign to eliminate FGM. We

will strive to push

forward his vision to

as a tool to support

deepest sympathy

goes to his family and

the cause. Our

staff.

use his film Moolaadé

SPECIAL THANKS and TRIBUTES



PORWARD would like to thank all our donors for their support over the past year. We particularly appreciate those who continue to give money on a monthly basis to support us. You have made our work possible. We would like to acknowledge particularly the following donors, organisations and individuals for their support:

Bromley Trust City Parochial Comic Relief

Department of Health John Lyon's Charity

Network for Social Change The Sigrid Rausing Trust V-Day – Until the Violence

Stops

Westminster Primary Care Trust

WOMANKIND Worldwide (merged with Women at Risk)

Barbara McVey

Charities Aid Foundation

Community Technology Project

Christopher Peat Dr Ross Williams Gabrielle Poole

Gary Straughan (Brainbox)

James Ingram

Monica Rabagliati Trust

Michael Coulston

N Robins

Prior Park College

Rotary Club of Hitchin

Ruth Ratcliffe

Sally Crawley (in memory of

Josie Alexander)

Su and Di Todd

Again, FORWARD would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all supporters, volunteers and donors who have generously given to FORWARD financially or their time and expertise. Your support has been invaluable in strengthening and assisting us in our fight against FGM and Child Marriage.

³² A Year in Pictures

