



Empowering girls and women for a better world

09

F→RWARD

Safeguarding rights & dignity

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

F→RWARD

Safeguarding rights & dignity

09

Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development



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Mission statement

FORWARD is an African Diaspora women's campaign and support charity that was set up in 1985. Our work responds to the need to safeguard dignity and advance the sexual and reproductive health and human rights of African women and girls. We work with individuals, communities and organisations to transform harmful practices and improve the quality of life of vulnerable girls and women.

Our vision

That women and girls live in dignity, are healthy and have choices and equal opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Our mission

FORWARD was founded to safeguard dignity and advance health and human rights for African girls and women globally.

- **We educate** policy makers, communities and the public to facilitate social change and realise the full potential of women and girls.
- **We advocate** for sexual and reproductive health to be central to wellbeing.
- **We support** programmes to tackle gender-based violence in particular female genital mutilation and child marriages.
- **We empower** and mobilise vulnerable girls and women to articulate their issues and exercise their right to services and choices.

Our values

FORWARD believes that:

Protection of women and girls' rights and dignity are non-negotiable.

People's voices, needs and experiences should inform all our work.

Participation of girls, boys, women, men and community leaders promotes equity and ownership.

Provision of safe spaces and specialist services for girls and women should be central to programmes.

Partnerships and alliance building with civil society and community organisations, donor agencies and governments creates synergy and accelerates change.

Highlights by the Chair

We have all witnessed the global economic meltdown over the past year. The impact of this crisis has affected people in different ways. For many women's charities like us, the impact is reduced funding, but our smaller local partners have been worst hit.

Now, more than ever, we need to safeguard dignity and rights, particularly for the most vulnerable. I am proud that FORWARD has continued to be a source of support for many voiceless women and girls. We continue to be vocal in informing policy making, educating the public and engaging with communities.

This period has also been one of strategic growth for FORWARD. We have reshaped our vision to ensure that we continue to stay dynamic and responsive. This year we have started the women's leadership and body knowledge activities as part of our continued investment in girls' and women's human rights and sexual and reproductive health. We believe that this forms the basis of their wellbeing and development.

Our new strategic aims

We have engaged with our stakeholders, funders and partners to help shape our direction. I am pleased to share our strategic aims for the next five years:

- Prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriages and related health violations and gender-based violence.
- Increase access to sexual and reproductive health services and human rights education and livelihood programmes for vulnerable girls and women.
- Improve the knowledge base of civil society partners and their capacity to lobby governments and donor agencies for enabling policies and programmes.
- Enhance the voice and leadership potential of Diaspora African women in shaping their wellbeing in the UK and influencing the development of girls and women in Africa.

Securing sustainable funding continues to be a major challenge. Competing for limited government funding for issues that do not have targets can be problematic. However, we have been most grateful to independent trusts and foundations that have supported our work. I would like to thank my board of Trustees for their commitment and support throughout the year and commend the FORWARD staff for their dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm.

It has been a privilege for me to serve and represent FORWARD.

**Margaret
Nyuydzewira,
FORWARD
Chair**



Reflections by the Executive Director

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I am always grateful for times like this, to express our gratitude. Thank you to the many individuals, donors, trustees, acquaintances, staff and volunteers who provided time, money, technical expertise and leadership in support of our work. Your generosity enables FORWARD to safeguard rights and empower girls and women. This annual review is evidence of your contribution to our work.

Inspirational women

In 2009, I was inspired by 25 young women affected by child marriage in Tarime, Tanzania. Aged between 14 and 23 years, these brave girls shared their life stories and experience of FGM, forced marriage and abuse. The confidence building and skills training enabled them to set up "Tunaweza Girls' Network"- a Swahili word for "we can". These girls now support their peers who are going through similar experiences. We hope that with your support we will be able to work with the wider community to provide a safety net for other girls at risk.

I was really privileged to work with some amazing women this year and you'll get to read about some of their stories in this annual review. All of these women are a constant reminder of true courage at the grassroots level. My ambition is that their passion, dedication and efforts will be recognized widely and enable them to access needed resources to continue their activism at the local level.

- **Anne-Marie Caulker** from Sierra Leone became an activist at the age of five when she was forced to undergo FGM twice. She is now working with women excisors to drop their knives.
- **Layla Ismail** originally from Somalia was our lifeline in our community leadership programme in Bristol, working tirelessly while pregnant, until the very last hour before giving birth to a beautiful baby girl.
- **Pendo Issacs** from Tanzania, the Ward Executive Officer, a survivor of domestic violence and child marriage, who now dedicates her life to helping vulnerable girls and young women is a Patron of Tunaweza.
- **Betty Makoni**, the Founder of the Girls' Child Network who survived violence herself and continues to champion the rights of girls in Zimbabwe. Betty has been chosen as one of the 10 CNN Heroes for 2009.

The future

In 2010, I look forward to you joining us to celebrate our 25th anniversary. We will also be moving offices to enable us to expand our services. We plan to develop more community alliances, scale up our campaign to end child marriage, strengthen our work with African women in the Diaspora, and, of course, to continue our advocacy to end FGM.

We hope we can rely on your support to empower girls and women for a better world. I really urge you to continue to keep in touch with us.

Warm wishes,

Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE
FORWARD Executive Director



Educating policy makers, individuals & communities

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Public education forms a key part of FORWARD's work. We recognize that information and knowledge is essential for shifting behaviour and practice. We use a variety of methods to reach national and local audiences. Over the last year, we have done this through research, workshops, and by developing resources and publications. FGM and child marriage violate sexual and reproductive wellbeing and are a major barrier to attaining the Millennium Development Goals on poverty, gender equality, education, child mortality, maternal health and HIV /AIDS.

In 2009, FORWARD's education activities aimed to increase awareness of FGM, influence policy discussions and get people engaged and sensitized. This work has had a direct impact on statutory and voluntary agencies. We trained over 1,500 individuals across the UK in our public education sessions.

"The session on FGM was such an eye-opener and all of our delegates found the lecture very illuminating. They have been inspired to try and set up student campaigns against FGM and help in any way that they can."

Feedback from a training session for Leicester School of Medicine, attended by 100 delegates



Informing UK government on integrating our issues into strategy on violence against women and girls

FORWARD continues to be a strong voice in protecting African women's health and rights at the policy level. Our research and consultations with communities affected by FGM has informed the following policy recommendations:

- That government strategy is framed within a gender-focused and integrated approach and includes all equality strands. This means that government strategy should:
 - adopt a broader definition of Violence Against Women (VAW)
 - recognise links between all forms of VAW as well as links with other crucial issues such as poverty, refugee and immigration status
 - recognise that VAW occurs regardless of race, religion, or socio-economic background, and avoid stigmatizing immigrant communities and vilifying cultures
 - be mainstreamed across all levels of policy
 - address preventative work and the provision of services
 - reflect the different strands and aspects of VAW to help address the impact of VAW on all women in the UK.
- Redress the chronic underfunding of services, especially for specialist women's third sector organisations.
- Prevention needs to focus more on community engagement programmes and community-based studies.
- Redress the impact of the "cohesion agenda" on BME women and girls.
- Demonstrate commitment to tackling FGM and take a balanced approach to legislation, safeguarding and community engagement. We provided a comparative analysis between the UK and France which has brought approximately 50 cases on FGM before the courts, many of which resulted in convictions (including one circumciser).
- A VAW UK-wide study should be repeated every 10 years and have a dedicated section on FGM and child marriage.

Educating communities on child marriage in Tarime, Tanzania

It is important to create a safe space for women with the same experiences to work together. Giving them the confidence, skills and voice to stand up for their rights can have massive positive consequences.

The impact of FORWARD's work has resulted in a new mood for change in Tarime, a district in the Mara region of Tanzania. This is down to a fundamental shift in young women's understanding of their rights and their potential.

Home to the 10 clans of the Kuria ethnic group, Tarime has entrenched harmful traditional practices, including FGM and child marriage. Working with our local partner, the Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), we provided technical support to conduct research on young women's experience of child marriage in the district.

The project, which is jointly funded by Comic Relief and the Sigrid Rausing Trust, aims to tackle child marriage. 25 child mothers were trained to interview their peers at the village level. They helped identify the research themes and developed the interview questions.

The research results showed that:

- FGM continues to be an important rite of passage for girls and a precursor to child marriage in spite of a 1998 law banning FGM
- child marriage is very common and directly linked to poverty
- marriage requires payment of four to ten cows to the bride's father
- there are high levels of domestic violence and tolerance of wife battering with little access to justice for many young brides
- divorce rates in the community are very high.

A consultation was organised for 20 Ward Executive Officers in Tarime to share the results of the research. Some of the young women who took part used role-play to educate government representatives and traditional leaders about their situation and the consequences of child marriage. **A number of Ward Executive Officers pledged to take action against child marriages.**

Now the 25 young women have formed “Tunaweza Girls Network” a Swahili word for “we can”.

This support and campaign group have started to raise awareness of incidents of child marriage in the district. This newspaper article shows an incident of child marriage reported to the Patron of the network and CDF by one of the young women. A reporter was sent to Tarime to cover the story. Police censorship of reports, however, means that the true extent of rights’ violations is not accurately reported in the media.



Advancing women's rights in Islam

A seminar was jointly organised by FORWARD and the Islamic Cultural Centre at the Regents Park Mosque in London on women's rights, health and sexuality within Islam. The one day event in June 2009 heard from Islamic scholars, women scholars and agencies to shed clarity on new learning and thinking. It shared research on FGM and sexuality, new marriage contracts and developed strategies to respond to violence against Muslim women living in the UK.

The discussions focused on marriage, sexuality and women's rights in Islam. This included FGM and sexuality, domestic violence, honour killings, family planning and reproductive health, marriage and divorce. The participants from voluntary organisations, universities and statutory agencies shared information, ideas and strategies on empowering women to exercise their rights. This seminar is part of FORWARD's programme with religious leaders and will be replicated in other parts of the UK to ensure wider discussion and understanding of the rights of women and girls within Islam.

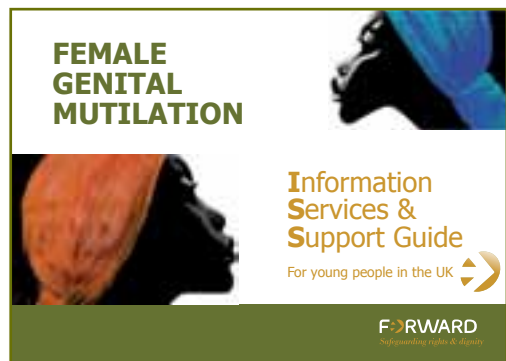
Study on community views and experiences on FGM

"FGM is always with us: Experiences, perceptions and beliefs of women affected by female genital mutilation" is the final report of the community study that was jointly conducted by FORWARD and Options Consultancy. This study was done in three cities and worked with community women and young people as primary researchers. They were trained to interview their peers and assess their experiences, perceptions and beliefs of women affected by FGM. The study looks at a number of issues, including what motivates the practice of FGM, why it should stop and the impact of education and awareness of FGM on women's lives.

This study provided in-depth information and views of women on what they required from health services. This will inform FORWARD's wider policy and community work. The youth study and the Bristol study will be out in 2010.

You can access copies of these resources on our website:
www.forwarduk.org.uk

Providing resources to educate and inform



New publication on FGM for young people in the UK

"Female Genital Mutilation: Information, Services and Support Guide for Young People in the UK" (ISS Guide) was written and produced by young people for young people. Its dual purpose is to increase awareness of FGM and related health and social issues and signpost readers to specialist services and support in the UK. This user-friendly resource will form a key part of FORWARD's school-based education programme – it has already been widely distributed and addresses a major gap in accessible resources for young people.

To date over 1,000 copies of the ISS Guide have been distributed nationwide. This includes youth organisations, schools, college and university students, youth workers, school nurses, asylum and refugee organisations and peer educators.

UK FGM factsheet

FORWARD was commissioned by the UK Government Equalities Office to write the first government-supported factsheet on FGM. It has been endorsed by the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The publication has now been translated into Arabic and Somali. The Deputy Minister for Women, Maria Eagle MP, (pictured below) launched the FGM factsheet in London at an event which was hosted jointly by FORWARD and the Metropolitan Police as part of the Pan London FGM Working Group summer campaign.



Advocacy and campaigns

Our advocacy and campaigning work is driven by our values of participation, partnerships and people's voices. We advocate for sexual and reproductive health rights and for policies which supports girls and women to exercise and realise their rights.

FORWARD strives to empower girls and women to understand their context and articulate concerns. We also help them to build their confidence and acquire skills to make changes in their lives and enable them to safeguard their daughters from practices such as FGM.

"FORWARD is a strategic, highly regarded, leading organisation in the FGM field (further demonstrated by the fact they were mentioned by many respondents in this assessment). We suggest that FORWARD would be well placed to undertake and/or facilitate any further work."

Taken from "An Assessment of Voluntary and Community Sector Activities Tackling Female Genital Mutilation in the UK", Women's Resource Centre, 2009



End child marriage campaign

Child marriage is a global problem that violates girls' rights – affecting their health, choices, education and life chances. In many countries, child marriage is not recognised as a major development concern. It's why child marriage, defined as marriage of girls before they are aged 18, is a key focus for FORWARD.

Our End Child Marriage campaign calls for action on child marriage and related issues to be integrated into the global development agenda. Over the past year, FORWARD has established a core network of organisations to lead this global call to action. In 2010, together, we will go public with the call.

Facts and figures on child marriage

- Globally, more than a third (36%) of women aged between 20 and 24 were married, or in union, before the age of 18.
- An estimated 14 million adolescents aged between 15 and 19 give birth each year. Girls in this age group are twice as likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth as women in their 20s.
- Marriage of young girls is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In Niger, more than three quarters (77%) of women aged between 20 and 24 were married before the age of 18. In Bangladesh, this rate was nearly two thirds (65%).

Source: Child Protection Information Sheet – Child Marriage, UNICEF May 2006

New special initiative on FGM

FORWARD's lobbying to persuade and influence funders to support community level programmes has resulted in a new Special Initiative on FGM.

The City Parochial Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Rosa, the UK Women's Fund, will work together to support community-based prevention work on FGM in the UK. The funding, which will be available for up to three years, is welcome news and will help breach the huge lack of funding for community level prevention work. FORWARD hopes to play a strategic role in engaging with key local level agencies to share learning from these programmes.



END FGM European campaign

There are half a million women and girls affected by FGM living in Europe according to European Parliament estimates. The exact numbers are impossible to ascertain. The END FGM European campaign aims to get the European parliament to agree a definitive strategy to end FGM globally and to provide support and protection to women and girls who flee their countries from fear of being mutilated.

FORWARD is the UK partner of the new END FGM European campaign. The campaign is led by Amnesty International Ireland with a secretariat in Brussels and has over

12 partners across Europe. The launch of the draft strategy for the campaign will take place in five European cities in 2010.

The campaign is calling for:

- health entitlements: services which are accessible, available and acceptable
- a collaborative approach to criminal justice and social protection of girls and women
- clarity and coherence on FGM as grounds for asylum
- greater commitment within the EU development cooperation on rights of women and girls
- a comprehensive approach to data collection on FGM across Europe.



Youth advocates campaign

FORWARD believes that young people's voices, views and concerns need to be heard, represented, and nurtured. This is why we were one of the UK partners of a Europe-wide youth advocacy training programme led by YouAct (European Youth Network on Sexual and Reproductive Rights).

The training culminated in a campaign focusing on the June European Parliamentary elections to raise the prominence of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The highlights of the youth advocates campaign included:

- A photo exhibition at Roehampton University to raise awareness among young people.
- A letter campaign targeting candidates running for the European Parliament.
- A European Joint Statement on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in the Global South which aimed to raise awareness of SRHR within development assistance.
- An online advocacy day across Europe with other Youth Advocates in Action groups which focused on the EU joint statement and called for people to sign it to show their support.

FORWARD attended the "High-Level Meeting on Maternal Health-Millennium Development Goal 5" and the 4th International Parliamentarian's Conference on the Implementation of International Conference on Population and Development in Addis Ababa as part of the youth delegation. We joined other civil society organisations and government to advocate for better recognition of young people's voices and rights.

One key pledge in the call to action was "to create legislative and policy mechanisms to ensure meaningful and effective youth participation... empowering [youth] to influence, implement, and monitor and evaluate national policy that affect their interests" (Addis Ababa Statement of Commitment, 27-28 October 2009).



Responding to FGM in Europe

FORWARD took part in a two year multi-country project funded by the European Commission's Daphne Programme on legal provisions on FGM in Europe. This project which ended in 2009 was a partnership led by the International Centre for Reproductive Health based in the University of Ghent. Other partner agencies were: the Human Rights Institute at University of Valencia, Spain, the Faculty of Health and Society at Malmö University, Sweden, and the Commission pour l'Abolition des Mutilations Sexuelles (CAMS), France.



RESPONDING TO
FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION
Striking the right balance IN EUROPE
between prosecution and prevention

A summary of the recommendations from the project are shared in this new publication.

On protection of girls at risk:

Development of a risk assessment protocol for professionals that will assist in assessing the level of risk and in identifying the point where reporting to judicial authorities is inevitable.

On gynaecological screening of girls:

Ethical and legal advice should be given on compulsory genital screening of girls at risk. If such screening is necessary, the family and/or girl should be able to choose her own doctor.

On provision of specialist care:

Development of a referral system (for girls at risk and women living with FGM) and accompanying protocol for professionals. Continuous efforts should be made to train professionals on FGM and relevant legislation. Continuous efforts should be made to share experiences among EU countries on law implementation.

Tackling FGM and asylum in the UK

FORWARD has seen an increase in the number of requests for help and advice about FGM and asylum. Many families of non-permanent residents in the UK whose children were born in the UK are desperate to resort to use the asylum route to protect their children from FGM. However, the UK policy on seeking asylum on the grounds of FGM is unclear. The 2003 FGM Act only protects UK permanent residents and citizens. A new resolution by the European Parliament recognises that FGM can be grounds for asylum because it constitutes gender-specific persecution.

As part of the EU project, FORWARD organised a seminar on "FGM, Asylum and Refugee Policies in the UK" to highlight this gap in the UK policy and assess asylum policies and situation of young people. The seminar brought together a wide range of practitioners and stakeholders to share experiences, new research and develop recommendations for policy, programmes and asylum case work.

Campaigning to maintain FGM specialist services in London

Women and girls living with FGM often require specialist services to address the health related complications from FGM. This specialist care includes counselling, surgery to open up women who are closed and treatment of related sexual and reproductive health problems. FORWARD is very concerned by the frailty and lack of sustainable specialist services for young women affected by FGM. Currently, there are 15 specialist services in the UK, 10 of which are in London.

This past year, London's Waltham Forest African Well Women Service has been under threat through changes in commissioning. FORWARD has led on a campaign to protect this service which is internationally recognised for its groundbreaking work. We worked with the group to lobby their MP and Waltham Forest Primary Care Trust to raise the issue within women's sector organisations.

FORWARD is also acutely aware that this issue of sustainability and support is a major challenge in other specialist services. In 2010, we will campaign to prevent the marginalisation of these vital services and lobby for the establishment of more specialist services for girls and women affected by FGM.



Empowering girls and women

FGM and child marriage impede women and girls from fulfilling their potential. Providing information, opportunities to meet, learn and practice new skills will empower women and girls. This will also help strengthen their collective capacity as agents of change and enable them exercise their rights. At the same time local partners and community based organizations need skills, resources

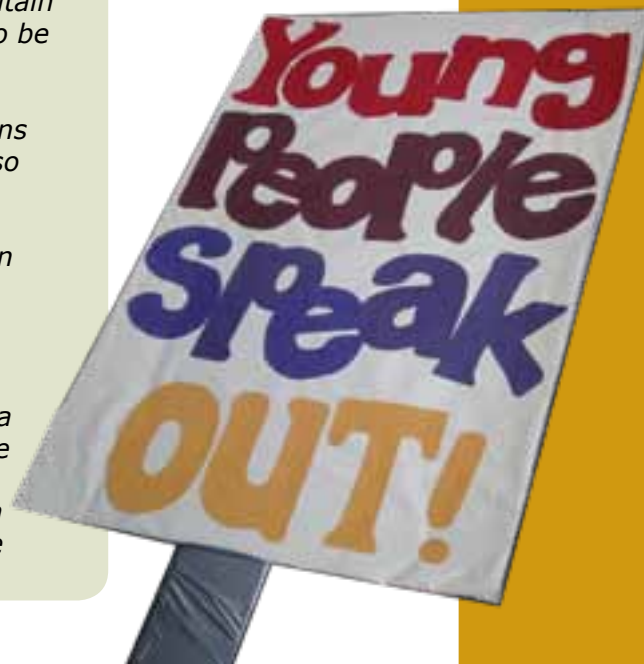
and to learn from others to operate effectively and be able to support women and girls that they work with.

In FORWARD we continuously strive to facilitate information sharing, creating opportunities for sharing and learning and mentoring young women. This work is guided by our values of participation, people's voices and partnerships.

"I think that the work that FORWARD does on FGM is absolutely amazing because it's so focused on an aspect of culture and gender-based violence that affects Britain dramatically, and is so unknown and so necessary to be brought to light.

"Getting young people involved broadens our horizons in what we can do; bringing new ideas to the table so we don't get stagnant about such important issues. When I taught about FGM in my school as part of citizenship and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) classes, I had girls coming up to me saying 'How can I get involved?' and I think that kind of enthusiasm is often underestimated.

"Young People Speak Out (YPSO) is such a good idea and it's such a privilege to be a part of all this. I love the fact that FORWARD are so welcoming and open to ideas and say 'If you can get it started, if you can get this going, please do and we will give you all the support that we can'." – Asiya, YPSO member



"I was mutilated at the age of five.

"It was after my first term of school, during a weekend. I was playing a game called "akasa" when one of my stepmothers asked me to accompany her to the garden to collect palm kernel. I innocently followed her and when I reached the garden, she asked me to go with her to the stream to bathe. She grabbed me and another woman appeared and held me. She cut my clitoris with a blade. It was shocking and very painful.

"I lost my mother at a very tender age and my father, being polygamous, had many wives and children which made life difficult for me. I suffered a lot of violations during

my childhood and this has strongly inspired me to become an activist to fight for the rights of other women and children."

Anne-Marie is an activist in Sierra Leone. She is the Chair of NaMEP, an umbrella organisation that works against FGM and promotes the rights of women. She is also the Founder of Katanya Women's Development Association (KAWDA) which operates in 10 districts in Sierra Leone. Although FGM is still a taboo subject in Sierra Leone, KAWDA is making progress by working directly with excisors to drop their knives for other economic options.



Freedom of expression through the arts

This 10-day training enables girls and young women to use photography, painting and performance to express their feelings, aspirations and experiences of gender-based violence. Young women, most of whom have no previous artistic experience, portray issues that inspire and concern them.

- 22 young women took part in Ethiopia. They organised a photo exhibition that was attended by 50 community members.
- 25 child mothers participated in Tanzania. They also organised a drama for Tarime Ward Executives to depict the situation of child brides and child mothers.

A booklet illustrating artwork from the training will be released in spring 2010.

Empowering young people from FGM practising communities in the UK

Working with young people as advocates for change is a strong FORWARD guiding principle. We aim to educate and empower people living in the UK from FGM practising communities with leadership, communication and advocacy skills and provide opportunities to help shape change in their communities.

Young people have an essential role to play in changing attitudes. Our Young People Speak Out Programme (YPSO) gives young people the skills they need to campaign against violence against women in their communities. It is entering its fourth year in 2010.

Fuelled by the enthusiasm and momentum of the youth advocates, YPSO is expanding its activities, and regional outreach through skills training, awareness raising, and building partnerships with community based organisations.



Highlights of experiences and views of youth advocates

"The first time that I came to the training I didn't want to talk about it [FGM], I just wanted to listen. But when I found out the information I had more confidence to go out there and tell people."

Somali male, aged 21.

"I feel that YPSO is important to FORWARD's work as it gives youths a way to not only feel involved, but like they have an active input into helping make a change."

"YPSO has taught me valuable skills such as team work and presentation skills and it has increased my level of confidence in speaking. It has also given me ideas and direction in my life. In my recent trip to Sudan I opted

to explore how FGM is being tackled by students in Ahhad University and have built links to work with a number of students."

Nora, YPSO member

In 2010, FORWARD will continue to position young people at the forefront of its work and YPSO will:

- work with the African Women's Welfare Group in Haringey to engage young people in filmmaking
- pilot our schools programme in selected schools in London
- strengthen the voices and confidence of young women
- expand the YPSO programme to Middlesbrough, Bristol and Manchester.



Community leadership and skills building in the UK

Our Community intervention programme engages African women and families to safeguard their health, rights and dignity. Through partnerships, this work is a powerful tool in engaging African immigrant organisations to share knowledge, experiences and support each other. The research conducted in 2008 enabled women to assess the extent of the practice of FGM and share experiences of women from different ethnic communities.

When African immigrants and asylum seekers from FGM practising communities come to this country they often need to access information and support services but don't know where to turn for help. They need to be signposted to information.

Our leadership training allows women to learn transferable skills and become more self-confident and assertive. With funding from the Westminster Primary Care Trust, Equality and Human Rights Commission and Wates Foundation, FORWARD has trained a total of 31 women as community champions and advocates in London and Bristol. They will lead on community outreach work.

"It has been an honour and privilege to be involved in this project. It has impacted my practice as a Mental Health Nurse and improved my presentation skills. I value all the new connections and friendships I have made through this." – Evelyn, community champion, London

"The speak easy training has been an eye opener and enabled me to start using this training with my children and to help speak confidently about my right to information as a practising Muslim woman" – Mahasin, community champion, London

Strengthening partnerships and local organisations

FORWARD recognises the important role of strengthening the technical and organisational capacity of project partners and small organisations that we work with. We provide on-going technical assistance including training, fundraising ideas and information, proposal writing, strategic planning, research, monitoring and evaluation techniques and tools for project implementation.

In August 2009 FORWARD organized a workshop for eight project partners in our West Africa Programme to develop strategies for building long-term partnership. Partners shared programme lessons and experiences and explored how to further collaborate. The majority of our project partners are small and do not have adequate staff capacity or sustainable funding. This means that capacity development often precedes programme delivery. This is also a challenge facing African Diaspora community organizations that we work with in the UK.

Providing treatment, rehabilitation and skills for women and girls affected by obstetric fistula

Obstetric fistula is a debilitating condition which happens as a result of complications when giving birth. To add to the physical damage, women and girls are left incontinent. It is a taboo condition, but is easily treatable. However, without medical attention, they are left without dignity and facing a life of misery.

Over the last decade, FORWARD has worked with FORWARD Nigeria on a Fistula Repair and Rehabilitation programme. The project undertook 98 repairs; 78 were successful. 18 of these women went on to give birth via spontaneous vaginal delivery without complications. Two gave birth via caesarean section and another two died in childbirth.

The project funding ended this year with a final project evaluation. Funded through the UK Department for International Development and the Big Lottery, the rehabilitation model allowed for a long period of recuperation. There is very scarce information on fistula repair success rates and rehabilitation. There is even less data available on subsequent childbirth and post repair reproductive performance.

The case studies from the project demonstrate the impact on maternal and child welfare and community empowerment after fistula repair and rehabilitation. The programme is also unique in its consequent outreach and long term follow up of post-repair clients.

Case Study – Maimuna Ibrahim

Maimuna is one of the more mature women at FORWARD Nigeria's centre in Dambatta. She is 30 years old and second wife to her husband.

She developed recto-vaginal fistula giving birth to her seventh child. She had one unsuccessful attempt to repair the condition at the general hospital in Gusau. It didn't work so she was referred to FORWARD Nigeria. After completing the centre's Fistula Repair and Rehabilitation programme, her condition finally improved.

At the centre, Maimuna expressed a keen interest in sewing and knitting. In 2007 she completed a basic literacy courses and learnt how to tailor. Recently she bought a sewing machine which FORWARD provided part payment for.

Now she is a successful tailor in her home village. Maimuna became pregnant after rehabilitation and delivered a healthy baby, without complications or procedures, in 2008.



Fundraising & volunteering activities

FORWARD's fundraising work enables us to support the programmes that you have read in this review. Our fundraising activities include writing applications to trusts, foundations and governments. However we rely on innovative fundraising and creative volunteering from our members, friends and the general public to either raise money or raise awareness on our issues.

Skydiving

"I'd heard about the long-term health consequences for women and girls affected by FGM, so I know that this was an issue that I wanted to look at. So, when I was challenged to highlight the work of a worthwhile cause during a training programme, I set myself the challenge of raising £5,000 to support FORWARD and its work.

"I decided on two things: it would take something out of the ordinary to raise such a large sum, and it would be much harder to reach my target if I were fundraising on my own. My answer to this was to organise a sky jump and to recruit five friends to do it with me. So on Sunday 9 August, we drove to an airfield in Oxfordshire. It was a lovely sunny day and at approximately 2pm, at 2.5 miles up, we jumped out of an airplane. It was an exhilarating (sometimes terrifying!) experience and I'm glad to report that we all landed safe and well.

"In total we raised over £5,000 for FORWARD." – Onyinye, FORWARD supporter



FGM on the plinth in Trafalgar Square

This summer, the centre of London was the spotlight for Anthony Gormley's art project: One and Other, which took over the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. People were asked to use the space for an hour in any way they wanted to. Only 2,400 people appeared on the plinth, so we were delighted that FGM was one of the issues highlighted:

"I was pretty surprised to be picked at the last minute to appear on the plinth. The surprise soon turned to worry about how to show, with integrity and humanity, the awful plight of what girls around the world experience as a result of FGM. In the end, I hope that my hour raised awareness about the number of countries where FGM happens, how many girls are affected, and the wide range of health and rights issues that arise as a result of it."

"The crowd stayed with me throughout and each time I cut the petals of a red rose and scattered them, to commemorate some of the three million girls who will be cut this year, the people gathered below applauded. I felt humbled and privileged to stand in the centre of London and speak out on behalf of girls

and women around the world, who are often unable to speak out for themselves." – Julia, FORWARD volunteer

Elsa and Jenny from FORWARD run 10K

On July 12th FORWARD's Youth Programme Coordinator, Jenny and Africa Programme Manager, Elsa, joined 20,000 people taking part in the annual British 10k run through the centre of London. They raised £580. Next year we hope you will join FORWARD Members in the 10K run to raise funds for child mothers.

Climbing Kilimanjaro to support child mothers and child brides

Sean Donovan-Smith successfully climbed Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa and raised over £1000 for FORWARD's work with child brides and child mothers in Tarime.



What you can do

Our vital work to end gender-based violence and harmful practices is only possible thanks to the wonderful support and generosity of individuals and companies, and public and private grants.

There are numerous ways you can make a significant and lasting contribution to FORWARD. Change can only happen if it is done in a sustainable way and this is why regular donations are particularly important to us.

Here are just some of the ways you can continue to support FORWARD:

- become a permanent sponsor of FORWARD's programmes – you can do this through standing orders or payroll giving
- find out if your workplace does match-funding so your donation is multiplied
- if you already have everything you need, ask your friends and colleagues to make a donation to FORWARD instead of buying you a gift. There are plenty of opportunities: birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, Christmas....
- take the plunge and complete a marathon!

You can donate online through our website: www.forwarduk.org.uk. If you would prefer to donate another way, please contact our office on 020 8960 4000 or forward@forwarduk.org.uk

Current programmes at a glance

Project description	Project highlights
<p>Young People Speak Out (YPSO)</p> <p>This project provides 16 to 25 year olds from FGM-practising communities with confidence, support and skills in campaigning, advocacy training and awareness-raising of gender-based violence within their community.</p> <p><i>Funded by John Lyons Charity and London Councils.</i></p>	<p>Peer education training on gender issues, rights, gender based violence, leadership skills and communication and media skills.</p> <p>Short film to dispel myths and raise awareness of FGM.</p> <p><i>Say Sumthin</i> event using music, poetry and comedy to highlight FGM issues. 200 young people attended.</p> <p>Youth Advisory Council established.</p> <p>ISS Guide developed, published and disseminated in the UK.</p>
<p>Advancing the Health and Rights of African girls and Young Women in East and West Africa</p> <p>This project aims to empower girls, build the capacity of local partner organisations through technical assistance and financial support, and increase public awareness of the issues.</p> <p><i>Funded by Sigrid Rausing Trust.</i></p>	<p>Confidence building and photography and performance art. Skills learnt have allowed girls to set up income-generating schemes.</p> <p>22 young women and girls in Ethiopia trained to use photography, painting, and performance to express their feelings, aspirations and experiences of gender-based violence.</p> <p>14 girls from six Nigerian states trained on advocacy and peer education skills.</p> <p>West African Partnership Network established to facilitate 'south-to-south' experience sharing.</p> <p>Six partner organisations received financial support to strengthen infrastructure and develop their organizational capacity.</p> <p>Contributed to the production of the documentary film <i>The Witches of Gambaga</i>.</p>

<p>Taking action to end child marriage in Tanzania</p> <p>This project supports CDF to undertake research to explore context and needs of child brides and child mothers</p> <p><i>Funded by Comic Relief.</i></p>	<p>Training on research techniques: 25 girls took part in the research in ten clans in the district.</p> <p>Tunaweza Girls Network: Young women who took part in the research formed this network to support each other and campaign against child marriage and FGM.</p> <p>Community consultation: results of the research shared with local government officials and paralegals, ending with participants pledging to support the girls' network.</p>
<p>African Women's Health and Wellbeing Project</p> <p>This project aims to improve the sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing of African women and young women. They will access information, specialist services and skills building opportunities to help them protect their daughters from FGM.</p> <p><i>Funded by Westminster NHS PCT and the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Wates Foundation.</i></p>	<p>Network of new partnerships developed in London.</p> <p>13 women trained in leadership skills.</p> <p>Local Community Advisory Group established.</p> <p>Come & Dance initiative brought children and mothers together to dance, drum and exercise.</p> <p>15 women trained through the "Speakeasy" programme.</p> <p>Community Consultations organised in Bristol and Liverpool to mark Zero Tolerance Day in February and March.</p>
<p>FGM community development work</p> <p>This project targets Somali women and girls who are affected by, or at risk of FGM, to improve their sexual and reproductive and mental health and wellbeing, and to fully participate in society.</p> <p><i>Funded by Bristol NHS PCT.</i></p>	<p>Local Community Advisory Group established.</p> <p>Leadership skills training delivered to 15 women.</p> <p>Recruitment of community coordinator and youth coordinator in Bristol.</p>
<p>END FGM European Campaign</p> <p>FORWARD is the UK partner in this project led by Amnesty International Ireland.</p>	<p>12 European partners are part of this campaign.</p> <p>Members of the European Parliament were lobbied to endorse the statement against FGM.</p>
<p>End Child Marriage Campaign</p> <p>This is a network of UK-based agencies and individuals to advocate for action on child marriage and related issues to be integrated in the global development agenda.</p>	<p>FORWARD is the host agency in this campaign.</p> <p>Campaign issues will focus on the Millennium Development Goals.</p> <p>Campaign will be launched in 2010.</p>

Statement of financial activities for 2009

FORWARD

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INCOMING RESOURCES £	
Donations	57,268
Grants received	428,000
Other income	14,412
TOTAL	499,680

EXPENDITURE	
Fundraising	
Charitable expenses	438,452
Governance	10,060
TOTAL	448,512

Net incoming resources	51,168
Total funds b/f	137,901
Total funds c/f	189,069

Balance sheet as at 31st March	
Current assets	197,931
Creditors	-8,862
Net assets	189,069

Represented by:	
Restricted funds	125,910
Unrestricted funds	63,159
	£189,069

This summary financial information has been extracted from the full audited annual financial statements of FORWARD for the year ended 31st March 2009 as directed by the Charity Commissioners, using SORP conventions.

A full copy can be obtained from FORWARD.

FORWARD team

Patrons and matrons

Baroness Gould
Alice Walker
Skin (formerly of Skunk Anansie)

Trustees

Margaret Nyuydzewira – *Chair*
Hanan Ibrahim – *Vice-Chair*
Lisa Smith – *Treasurer*
Naomi Reid – *Membership Secretary*
Beatrice Mutali
Catherine Torazzo
(stepped down October 2009)
Faduma Hussein
Gibril Faal
Irene Noel
Jess Nott
Monica Mhoja
Nagla Naguib (elected October 2009)
Yaw Addo (stepped down October 2009)

Staff

Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE – *Executive Director*
Elizabeth Gezahegn King – *Africa Programme Manager*
Estelle Robinson – *Policy and Information Officer*
Gifty Saba – *Admin Assistant*
Jenny Comery – *Youth Programme Coordinator*
Khalda El-Hafiz – *Community Programme Coordinator*
Rita Buhanda – *Community Outreach Worker*
Sanuba Din – *Finance and Admin Manager*
Susana Oguntoye – *Senior Policy and Research Officer (resigned July 2009)*

Volunteers and interns

Areej Abuqudairi
Ayisha Ahmed
Beke Mguni
Carrie Battiste
Freweyni Tegbaru
Imhotep Oyortey
Julia Lalla-Maharajh
Kamon Lam
Madeleine Kennedy-Macfoy
Michael Dumbuya
Michael Brooks
Nora Tahir



In loving memory of LORD KENNET & JANET NARH

FORWARD

09

We are deeply saddened by the death of our two staunch supporters, Lord Kennet who was a patron of FORWARD for many years and Janet Narh, a former broadcaster with BEN TV who was a spokesperson for FORWARD. We would like to express our condolences to the families at this tragic period.



Many thanks to funders and individuals who supported our work in 2009

Bristol NHS PCT
Bromley Trust
City Parochial Foundation
Comic Relief
UK Department of Health
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

European Commission Daphne Programme
John Lyons Charity
London Councils
Media Box
Sigrid Rausing Trust
Wates Foundation
Westminster PCT

D Ainger, JH Bahgat, JL Baker, Mr Banks, JL Bauer, G&W Bell, MN Bentley, DP Blackmore, K Bogdans, SM Bolitho, N Brindley, H Bunter, P Burns, EKL Carlsson, Mr & Mrs Channer Pitt, CG Client, E Coldicote, J Comery, RA Cooke, M L Coulston, M Couve, PH Cox, Y Craig, EJ Crooks, P Crozier, J Curran, A Cutler, AF Dale, RT Dalio, J Dewhurst, S Donovan-Smith, R Drew, JM Eccleston, T Fearman, A Foster, A Frankel, S Frempong, M Frost, I Fudge, Ms Fuller, E Gezagehn-King, C Harrison, S Harrison, J Hiller, G Holden, C Holland, N Holland, Inner Wheel Club of East Ham, International Administration Guernsey (IAG) Ltd,

H Iozzi, D Irving, A Jackson, H Jackson, JS Keating, ME Kennedy, Lord and Lady Kennet, N Kingsford, R Larsen, RJ Lawrence, K Lyons, J Marshall-Cook, JM McGregor, D&G Melisent, V Mercer, J Molloy, DJ Moore, JJ Murphy, AE Myers, O Nwulu, Prof. Okrafo-Smart, GS Padley, M Parish, S Parmar, S Pathan, S Peck, MK Preuss, R Ratcliffe, Rey & Russ, D Rogers, Ms Ross, HE Runesten, M Salter, M Seltman, E Small, J Snow, Soroptimist International-Lewes and District Branch, JM Stabler, RL Stevens, J Szameitat, S Walsh, JC White, JM White, M Wright, E Zakrzewska.

Pro bono technical support

Many thanks to Gary Straughan from BRAINBOX for web technical support and ongoing advice and monitoring of our web resources.

A big thank you to Advocates for International Development (A4ID), particularly to Elisabeth Baraka who facilitated our access to much needed

legal support for our office move.

We truly appreciate the expert legal support and advice we received from Simmons & Simmons legal team in the year-in particular Tim Barnard, Natalie Goh and Maureen Harris.

To Alache Ode and Abear Elsayed, many thanks for your excellent technical support and guidance which helped shape our new strategic plan and vision.

FORWARD would like to say a MASSIVE thank you to everyone who has supported us in any capacity over the past year. We are deeply grateful for all of your support and

look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year. Together we will be able to continue safeguarding women's rights and dignity.

F→RWARD

Safeguarding rights & dignity



**Foundation for Women's Health,
Research and Development**

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London NW10 6RB

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Email: forward@forwarduk.org.uk

Web: www.forwarduk.org.uk

Charity Registration number: 292403

Company Number: 01921508

F→RWARD

Safeguarding rights & dignity



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Empowering girls and women for a better world

09

F→RWARD
Safeguarding rights & dignity

**ANNUAL
REPORT**