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*"My thoughts are with the FORWARD team as you celebrate your 25th anniversary. I feel so proud of being part of the journey of FORWARD and wish you many more years of activism, dynamism and leadership in transforming lives, policies and people"*

**Adwoa Kwateng, Country Director,  
Action Aid Ghana and former Director of FORWARD.**

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# Message from the new Chair



**I took on the position of Chair for the Board of Trustees at FORWARD during an exciting time. Indeed our persistence in raising public awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM) as a rights violation has paid off. Today we see an increased government interest in FGM in the UK, and child marriage coming up on the global development agenda.**

I am pleased to share with you FORWARD’s achievements over the past 25 years. We have grown from a small project to become a vibrant and cutting-edge organisation, having attained recognition at local, national and international level. We have expanded our advocacy and campaign work in the UK and in Europe. As the UK Partner in the END FGM European Campaign we are making progress within Europe to ensure the adoption of a binding policy on FGM. Through our policy work in the UK we have succeeded in ensuring government inclusion of FGM within the violence against women strategy.

In the past 10 years our Africa programme has expanded, raising the profile of neglected rights violations, including obstetric fistula and child

marriage. These continue to affect the health, wellbeing and life options of millions of girls and women, resulting in poverty, disability and death. We have worked with partners to get global recognition for child marriage through a series of campaign actions and regional consultations in Burkina Faso, Kenya and the UK. Our work in Tanzania with child brides is helping develop leadership skills among affected girls to create change.

FORWARD’s work has been possible due to the efforts of many generous funders, supporters and friends who share our vision to safeguard rights and dignity. Our appreciation goes also to our committed patrons, trustees, volunteers and staff who have been instrumental in shaping our work, and providing expertise and vital resources. We are grateful to the many trusts, foundations, primary care trusts and central government who have provided us with sustainable funding over the years.

Many thanks to you all – our successes mirror your efforts and I look forward to your continued support in the coming year. On our part we will continue to strive to realise our vision of all women and girls living in dignity, being healthy, and having choices and equal opportunities.

Warm wishes

**Dr Soheil Elneil**

# Reflections from the Executive Director



**Our 25th anniversary year gives us a memorable and ideal opportunity to showcase our accomplishments and chart our progress. I am very proud to be part of this development and to see FORWARD as a transformed, professional and strong women’s support organisation.**

This is evident through our work in informing and shaping policies and transforming African women and girls. We have been instrumental in building leadership at the local level to transform women, girls and communities. I am pleased to share with you our achievements and milestones.

Last year, FORWARD launched an ambitious new strategic plan to transform lives of African women and girls, adopting new approaches to safeguard dignity, health and choices. We adopted new values to inform our rights-based approach which centres on protection, participation, partnerships and provision. We also moved into new premises, increasing our operating capacity and enabling us to start new services within these premises, including training, advice and support for women.

We have shifted to a more targeted focus on girls and young women to enable us to build new leaders and galvanise new talents. We scaled up our work with young women in the UK and in Africa. The Young People Speak Out Programme has expanded nationally, enabling over 100 young people to become change agents. In both Tanzania and Ghana the establishment of new girls’ networks and clubs is sparking off a new Girls Movement which we hope to continue to nurture and strengthen.

With new staff and trustees on board, we are set to expand our capacity and focus, to reach African Diaspora women in the UK; increase action with men and boys; and address multiple barriers that face women and girls. The work of FORWARD continues to be in demand and we hope we can continue to rely on you to transform the lives of at-risk and vulnerable women and girls globally.

I hope you will enjoy this glimpse of the work of FORWARD and our partners.

Thank you for your continuous support and generosity!!

**Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE**



# Who we are

# Transforming policies



**FORWARD is an African Diaspora women's campaign and support charity. We aim to fulfil the sexual and reproductive rights of African women and girls. We operate in the UK and Africa to facilitate change in practices and policies that affect access, dignity, rights and wellbeing.**

## Our issues

**Female genital mutilation (FGM):** Each year 3 million girls undergo FGM. FGM violates sexual and reproductive rights and creates unnecessary suffering.

**Child marriage:** Marriage of children under 18 affects mainly girls. It violates their right to choose their spouse; impairs health, life options, and education; and perpetuates poverty.

**Obstetric fistula:** Obstetric fistula is a disability caused during child birth. Two million cases remain untreated because fistula affects poor, young and voiceless women. FGM and child marriage are associated causes of obstetric fistula.

## Our vision and mission

Our vision is that women and girls live in dignity, are healthy, have choices and equal opportunities.

### Our mission involves:

- Public education and training
- Policy advocacy and campaigning
- Programme support and services
- Provision of resources, evidence and information
- Promotion of empowerment and voice.

## Our goals

1. End gender based violence, in particular FGM, child marriage and related rights violations.
2. Increase access to specialist and support services; and to rights education and livelihood opportunities for vulnerable girls and women.
3. Improve capacity and sustainability of partners.
4. Strengthen networking and policy engagement of African Diaspora women.

**A core principle of FORWARD is that girls affected by FGM and child marriage have a voice in policy processes, and play an active role in the delivery of programmes that affect them. This is particularly vital at a time when far-reaching changes at local and national level are happening amid ongoing economic uncertainty.**

## Informing FGM policy in the UK and in Europe

Over the last 12 months we have continued to expand our role in influencing change at regional, national and European level. This has helped FGM gain increased visibility within the wider end violence against women and girls (VAWG) work by governments, and within civil society partnerships and coalitions.

Our impact has meant that FORWARD has established new partnerships, being co-opted to key working groups, and increased our work with key decision-makers.

## Highlights of our policy engagement:



### The Women's Health and Equalities Consortium (WHEC)

FORWARD is a founding partner of WHEC. WHEC aims to develop the sustainability and engagement of women's health and social care sector, and strengthen the voice of women and girls at national level in the UK. As a Department of Health Strategic Partner, WHEC ensures that women's health and equality are visible on the government policy agenda and accounts for the experience and expertise of the women's voluntary sector. Over the year WHEC has engaged the Government on the Single Equalities Bill; proposed changes to the National Health Service structure; and commissioned research into the sustainability of Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) women's organisations in England and the impact of the Gender Equality Duty on women's organisations.



Participants at the END FGM European campaign launch



# Transforming policies

## Influencing government policy on FGM

After several years of campaigning by FORWARD and other key agencies, the UK government took on a coordinating role for FGM work through the post of the FGM Cross-Government Coordinator and the FGM Forum. FORWARD has since the establishment of this post:

- Played an active role in the FGM Forum, including hosting for an interim period
- Lobbied the new Home Secretary for policy direction on FGM
- Supported the development of the FGM multiagency guidelines which provide professionals with a framework to respond effectively to women and girls affected by FGM.

### Joining the campaign to save the Women's National Commission

FORWARD has worked in partnership with the Women's National Commission (WNC) over the last 25 years, and it was with deep regret that we witnessed WNC's abolition by the new Government. Since its inception in 1969, the WNC had played a unique role as the official independent advisory body giving the views of women in the UK to the Government. FORWARD joined the campaign lobby to save this unique space for women to inform UK policy development. Last year we supported the inclusion of an FGM focus in WNC's research on violence against women: "Still We Rise" and "A Bitter Pill to Swallow."

## End FGM European Campaign

FORWARD is the UK partner of this three-year Europe-wide campaign led by Amnesty International Ireland. The campaign is committed to ensuring that the European Union adopts a definitive strategy to end FGM and provide protection to women and girls who flee their countries for fear of being mutilated. In 2010, we:

- organised the UK launch, in the Houses of Parliament, of *Ending FGM: A Strategy for the European Union Institutions* with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health
- lobbied the UK Government to focus on girls' rights in advance of the Millennium Development Goals Summit
- supported an awareness-raising campaign – "Petals Campaign" – and lobbied for the UK government to endorse this campaign. To date, over 25,900 people across Europe have signed up to the campaign.



Baroness Gould, FORWARD Patron and Chris McCafferty, former MP

**Lynne Featherstone, the UK Minister of Women, signed the petition, saying:**

*"Female genital mutilation is a clear, extreme and indefensible violation of the rights of women and girls, and for the thousands that are 'cut' every day, the physical and emotional consequences can last a lifetime. We are committed to prevent and tackle this terrible practice wherever it may take place, and strongly welcome the END FGM campaign."*

## Generating evidence to inform policy and action

### Voices of child brides and child mothers in Tarime, Tanzania

*"I refused to go through FGM because I knew other friends who were mutilated and had bled heavily and one had died. So I was scared that if I went through the ritual I might die and dreaded the fact that the bodies of those who die during FGM are just thrown away."*

PEER research report, 2010



# Transforming policies



Child brides and children in Tarime, Tanzania

The release of this report coincided with the Children’s Dignity Forum (CDF) – our partner organisation – campaign in Mwanza and Mara Region to help protect girls at risk of undergoing FGM during this FGM season. The campaign focused on information dissemination, radio programmes, round table discussions with local politicians and officials, and community dialogue. Over 2,000 people have directly been targeted in this campaign to reduce the number of girls in Tarime district undergoing FGM.

**In November 2010, during the FGM season, Tunaweza Network and CDF played a key role in raising national attention which has led to the prosecution of two female excisors.**

With FORWARD’s support, CDF has also produced a documentary “Child Marriage – Ndoa Za Utotoni”.

## REPLACE project partners signing petals

FORWARD is partnering with Coventry University, the Federation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands, and West Midlands European Centre in Brussels to support and inform the European Commission’s 2020 Strategy to end violence against women and to increase recognition of FGM within Europe. FORWARD has worked with the lead partner, Coventry University, to undertake participatory action research in Bristol which

involved conducting six focus group discussions with practising communities. The results will inform the development of health, psychology and behavioural change approaches. The project outputs will include:

- a resource pack in English and Dutch on good practice interventions
- a REPLACE FGM website: [www.REPLACEFGM.eu](http://www.REPLACEFGM.eu)
- an executive report and recommendations for EU policy-makers.

## The Road to Sustainability

*“Just sit down for a moment and think about how important a specialist service can be to a woman. She experiences being embraced and supported by an organisation that understands her culturally. This is vitally important.”*

WHEC report, 2010

This research (commissioned by WHEC and co-produced with Imkaan) examined the sustainability of BAMER organisations working with women on health and gender-based violence in England, and reviewed a range of challenges the sector faces. The overarching recommendations include the need for policy-makers and commissioners to: value the sector; acknowledge the demand for specialist services for BAMER women; and recognise BAMER women’s organisations’ knowledge of and expertise in the issues faced by their clients.

REPLACE project partners signing petals







Sierra Leone research

**FORWARD’s work empowers vulnerable and at-risk women and girls to realise their rights and raise their voices. We train and support them to gain skills and information and access resources to transform their lives.**

In 2010 we improved the leadership and research skills of child mothers, child brides and girls at risk of teenage pregnancies and FGM in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. We facilitated women and young women in the UK to mobilise action at local level to reach out to their peers. We provided grants to our partners in Africa, and established long-term relationships to strengthen their capacity and organisational development to undertake effective programmes.

### Voices of girls

#### Raising voices of girls at risk in Liberia and Sierra Leone

FORWARD worked in partnership with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) to support their member associations to undertake participatory ethnographic evaluative research (PEER) in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This was part of IPPF’s broader programme on “Girls Decide.” We trained 36 pregnant young women, child mothers and girls at risk in poor urban communities in Monrovia and Freetown, to interview their peers on their experiences of pregnancy, sexual matters and their access to sexual and reproductive health services.



The PEER approach helped to reveal the underlying pressures and contextual factors that influenced decisions of girls and young women and made them vulnerable to teenage pregnancy. The study confirmed that early pregnancy and motherhood significantly affected the lives of girls and young women, creating stigma, hardship and poverty.

*“You need certain items and you cannot afford them – so you will go out and ask your boyfriend for it. But as we say ‘Money in hand, back on ground’ – if men give you money they expect you to have sex with them.”*

#### Freetown study

*“They have pressure from the peers, pressure from the boys and they have poverty on the other side – it is hard for teenage girls to make decisions.”*

#### Monrovia study



### Supporting young women leaders

FORWARD’s strategy of supporting young women as leaders has grown in the past year. Young women’s leadership is central to reaching women. We are proud to have worked with so many young leaders in Africa and the UK.

Aku Xornam Tevi, the dynamic head of Purim African Youth Development, is one of the few young women leaders in Ghana. Since 2007, FORWARD has supported Aku to build a youth-led organisation that is succeeding in making in-roads on difficult issues. Their campaign “Say No to Sexual Harassment” is being rolled out in primary schools. Since taking part in the training on girls leadership in Sierra Leone, Aku has gone on to establish eight girls clubs with a total of 500 girls.



# Transforming people

## Strengthening young women's leadership and engagement in the UK

FORWARD's strategy for engaging young women is about facilitating skills development and mentoring their talents to support collective action and transformation. "FORWARD Women" (a group of 15 young women) have in the last year undertaken awareness campaigns and innovative arts-based advocacy events to educate wide audiences on FGM, child marriage and obstetric fistula, using poetry, performance, creative writing, photography and art. With support from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, FORWARD has started a new internship programme which enables Diaspora African young women to acquire relevant leadership skills and experience to support this group. We have also replicated the youth programme through partnerships in Rochdale, Middlesbrough and Bristol.

*"From this I have learnt so much about myself, my strengths and work life. I have gained a lot more knowledge about the subject but also practical experience, like how to handle people and run events."*

*"My highlight was the film project and seeing the young girls grow in confidence. I also enjoyed taking a lead in the young women's group, chairing meetings and creating a team."*

**Nora, Youth Intern and Young Women's Coordinator, January-June 2010**

*"Having always wanted to advocate against gender discrimination, this internship has given me more drive to pursue a career in this direction. I have already had the chance to improve my time management and ability to handle multiple tasks and I now look forward to doing this kind of work for the rest of my life!"*

**Saria, Youth Intern and Young Women's Coordinator, July-December 2010.**



## The making of Think Again DVD

The thought-provoking film *Think Again* – produced by 15 young girls aged 11-23 in Haringey, north London – depicts a 12-year-old's struggle to challenge her mother's decision for her to undergo FGM. With training on FGM, creative media and drama techniques, the girls had the skills and confidence to write, perform and produce the film. FORWARD worked in partnership with the African Women's Welfare Group to develop this film. The young women have since transformed into a campaign group.

This resource has been broadcast widely on the UK Community Channel, receiving over 7,500 views on YouTube to date, and a flow of requests from professionals and community groups reaching audiences around the UK and Europe. The film will be used to create an educational pack for distribution to schools and organisations to highlight the very real risk girls are facing in the UK.

Please check out these videos on our FORWARD UK Youtube channel.





# Transforming people

## Reflections from the young women involved in the making of *Think Again* DVD

*"I've learnt to be more non-judgemental, and it's really important to listen to each other's opinions. We all have different personalities but we have to work together for the same goal."*

**Tanzanian Somali female, aged 18**

*"We were able to motivate each other, I didn't want to speak at the event but as soon as I saw Ayan do her poem I was like, yeah I can do that! I didn't feel alone, I had the whole group with me."*

**Somali female, aged 16**

*"I used to really hate working in groups at school, I held back and felt too shy to suggest anything in case it was stupid. Because we had to work together a lot here I wouldn't mind taking a lead now, I know what needs to be done to organise the group and I would be happy to tell people my ideas to get things started."*

**Somali female, aged 16**

*"The highlight for me has been the friendships I've made, I don't have any sisters, but you lot feel like my sisters now."*

**Yemeni female, aged 18**

*"I haven't ever worked with people who are older than me before, through school everyone's in the same year group. I enjoyed hearing different points of view and still be seen as equal in the team."*

**Somali female, aged 14**

## Comments on *Think Again* from YouTube

*"Nice short film guys, congratulations, well done for producing it. Really made me think. Thanx im going to do more research into it."*

*"Well done on your short film ladies. Excellent job. I love to see people doing things for themselves. You can keep going now and tackle other subjects with just as much confidence. More power to you."*

*"Real nice to see teenagers do something powerful."*

## Supporting women's empowerment and leadership development

Fifty women in Bristol and London have benefited from leadership skills and community outreach training. The training equipped women gatekeepers with information, confidence and skills to engage their community on FGM and safeguarding sexual health and wellbeing.

*"The training was empowering. It gave me the confidence to aim higher. I can't believe that I am able to stand in front of people and do a presentation. My confidence has soared."*

**Khadra, participant**

What began in 2008 as a small group of participants in our adult PEER research, has transformed into a thriving activist group of Bristol women who have been at the forefront of transforming their own communities.

*Some highlights of the Bristol community development achievements:*

- **Marking International Zero Tolerance to FGM Day:** 70 people representing community organisations, statutory agencies, religious and community leaders celebrated the day in Bristol. This resulted in increased dialogue between statutory agencies and community women on contentious issues such as safeguarding children and the barriers that women face in accessing services.
- **Bristol women march against FGM:** On 16th June, some 30 women marched through Stapleton Road in Bristol, chanting "No FGM" to raise awareness. This is the first ever community women's march against FGM in Europe. The women distributed flyers and leaflets on the streets, in shops and to car drivers. The press conference which took place afterwards resulted in wide publicity of the march in the local and national media.
- *"Our message has been seen and heard – loud and clear!"*  
**Layla, Bristol Project Coordinator**
- **Bristol FGM Community Partnership were finalists** in the Chartered Institute of Public

Relations Pride Award 2010 Awards. This is a partnership between FORWARD, Bristol Primary Health Care Safeguarding Team and the Avon and Somerset Police.



*Bristol march against FGM*

## Connecting women to health, information and advisory services in London

Women living with FGM in the UK are mainly refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and tend to experience multiple discrimination. This leads to poor access to services and increased vulnerability. To address some of these barriers, FORWARD has started a new service in London to provide a safe space for women to share their experiences, meet other women, and get connected to needed services. The monthly **coffee morning sessions** provide advice and information, and serve as a support group for women. The service has become popular through word-of-mouth and is organised by a community volunteer.



# Transforming people

*"I now have something to look forward to – first Wednesday in the month."*

**Somai, Brent borough resident**

To highlight the importance of safeguarding, especially during the summer holidays when it is thought that girls in the UK are most at risk, FORWARD coordinated a one-day Health Promotion Day to address women's health and sexual wellbeing and the safeguarding of girls from FGM. Participants were presented with a rose flower each, signifying the beauty and innocence of the young girls. Using the rose, participants pledged to protect their girls from FGM as they would protect the beauty of the rose flower. Asked how they would protect the flower from harm, the women demonstrated by shielding the rose in a pot and watering it, ensuring that no one picks any part of the rose.



## Increasing public awareness and professional competency in addressing FGM

Professionals need to have the knowledge and confidence to address FGM within their area of work. It is only through competent and culturally sensitive engagement with practising communities that all parties will have the confidence and trust to work together to end FGM, help women affected, and protect girls at risk.

*"What is FGM? If you had asked me the same question four months ago, I would have looked at you as if you were speaking in another language. But today, I am at least proud to define and explain FGM to my friends."*

**Participant, Rochdale**

## Youth advocates facilitating professional training in London

This year, FORWARD youth advocates facilitated FGM safeguarding training for professionals at conferences and workshops across London. A recent partnership with Metropole Learning Colleges invited FORWARD's youth intern, Saria Khalifa, to deliver three trainings to future health care workers, social workers and teachers. The training inspired participants, mainly from FGM-practising communities, to explore the implications of FGM and how to respond effectively to prevent it and protect girls at risk in the UK. Discussions revealed that deep-rooted perceptions about the clitoris harming the baby during labour and FGM being an Islamic requirement persist, and participants left determined to share what they had learnt with those in their family, community and places of worship.

## Feedback from training by young women's group

- "Greater level of camaraderie and unity, we're more comfortable speaking up in front of each other."
- "We work well together to reach decisions that reflect the majority's views and have got better at finding solutions to problems quickly and implementing them efficiently."

## Participants in Rochdale

- "I was researching on the internet and reading the documents I got from the workshop and I could not keep it for myself. I decided to share with my family, and they were looking at me as if I was coming from another planet! They have never heard about such thing before, and asked me hundreds questions, that I could not all answer..."
- "I am discussing now about FGM with all my mates at the college, trying to find out if anyone knew about it before, and try to get more friends to join the workshops. Most of my friends did not know about it, some have heard about it but did not think that it could happen in the UK."

## Professional training: sample of organisations trained this year

African Women's Welfare Group; Birmingham Women's Aid; Bristol Primary Care Trust; Children's Society; Leyton College; London Borough of Ealing; London Borough of Lambeth; London Safeguarding Children Board; Luton NHS ; Metropolitan Police; Nottingham Domestic Violence Forum; Nottingham Women's Aid; Refugee Council Sheffield; South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre; Thurrock Council



# Celebrating 25 years of FORWARD

## Voices of African Women

FORWARD held a music concert to celebrate its 25th Anniversary at Rich Mix, London on 27th November 2010. This was a night of unique performances from London's leading female African artists to raise awareness on FORWARD's work in particular tackling FGM, child marriage and rights of African women and girls. The line-up included Amira Kheir, a Sudanese-Italian singer and songwriter; Sona Jobarteh, a famous kora player and singer; Maryam Mursal, a Somali star; and rising stars Ruby and the Vines. The performance artist Christina Oshunniyi brought the audience to tears with her poignant dramatization of FGM.

This event also launched the "Sign a Rose Petal", the END FGM European Campaign where many of the audience signed up to the campaign to express support for a European Union wide strategy to end FGM. The campaign has to date got 25,000 signatures. [www.endfgm.eu](http://www.endfgm.eu). The evening was truly a lot of fun, with laughter, networking and dancing. This was a chance to highlight the beauty of African music, African women and African culture without pain.



Maryam Mursal



Ruby and the Vines



Christina Oshunniyi



Sona Jobarteh



# Looking back

## Reflections of a journey 'FORWARD' – Efua Dorkenoo, Founder

**FORWARD's origins lie in a two-year project on FGM within the London-based Minority Rights Group. The project's success placed FGM and harmful practices on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights' agenda. In its short time span, the project generated much interest in various sections of British society, as well as among a few Africans, including the late Maurice Assad of the Egyptian Coptic Orthodox Church and the late Professor Ahmed Bedri of Ahfad College in Sudan, both of whom felt the issue deserved greater international recognition.**

I decided to continue with the project and, with the support of Jennifer Kenton, a young black British volunteer, the Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD) began in 1983 in my living room in Tufnell Park, North London. It was registered as a charity in 1985, with a broader objective of promoting the wellbeing of African women and girls, but prioritised FGM as a key campaign focus.

In those early years, FGM was an extremely sensitive political issue. Africans, both in the UK and in Africa, viewed the campaign against FGM as a form of cultural imperialism, labelling any Africans taking part as traitors or 'coconuts'. Even those opposed to FGM felt discussion in the West would provoke racism against Africans and black



*Efua Dorkenoo with Meryl Streep*

people. With the exception of Akwe Amosu (a Nigerian female journalist), our initial members and supporters were mainly white. My thanks to the late Lord Kennet, late Lydia Sinclair of MIND, Louise Panton, Baroness Cox, Sheila Kitzinger, Hildegard Dumper, Martin Bedenham, the late Mike Mensah, Fiona Adamson, and many more whose contributions FORWARD will never forget. The input of three young African women – Badria Ali, Catherine Ntyalin and Zeinab Gass – was crucial in the early days in helping place FGM on the UK child protection agenda. They were ostracised by the African communities for speaking out against FGM. I say generations of African girls will bless them!

There has since been a seismic shift in attitudes on FGM. Africans started engaging around 1989, and by 1992 FORWARD was African-led with key contributions from Naimat Osman, Comfort Ottah, the late Nana Colerangle, Hadijah Said, Osman Segulleh, Ekow Filson, the late Sam Maselino, Dr Ronke Jomo-Coco, Jeanette Golding, Marie Barrow and more.

Whilst I lay the organisation's foundation and international profile, each Executive Director after me has added further dimensions to the campaign.

# ... over 25 years



## My experiences of FORWARD over the last fifteen years

My first contact with FORWARD arose as a result of my undertaking an Honours degree in Applied Social Studies at Stafford University. I contacted FORWARD for advice on reading material about FGM. The information and material received from FORWARD was extremely useful and instrumental in my decision to do my final year's dissertation on FGM.

I first visited FORWARD to attend the Annual General Meeting in 1995, having completed my studies. The event took place in FORWARD's office, which was a crowded, cramped small room in the Covent Garden area of London. Having thanked the Committee for their help and support with the successful completion of my

academic work on FGM, I was invited to join the Committee. In later years I served as Chair of the Board. Over the years I have seen FORWARD blossom from a small organisation staffed by dedicated and passionate unpaid staff (who also held their own permanent full-time jobs), to the internationally known and respected organisation that it has now become; with equally dedicated full-time paid staff. Arriving at FORWARD's new offices to attend this year's AGM, my breath was taken away by what had been achieved. "From small acorns mighty oaks grow."

The awareness of FORWARD's achievements has encouraged me to take a three-year sabbatical from my own career in the Criminal Justice System in order to dedicate more of my time to the aims and objectives of FORWARD. I have undertaken some voluntary work on behalf of FORWARD in West Africa. This has entailed visiting a number of partner projects and organisations, as well as undertaking capacity building with one umbrella coalition based in Sierra Leone.

For me it has been an inspirational 15-year involvement/relationship with The Foundation for Women's Health, Research and Development. I look forward with great anticipation to many more years of active ongoing participation. There is still much to be achieved!

**Marie Barrow**, volunteer and former Trustee



# Timeline of FORWARD milestones

# Key resources and publications produced by FORWARD

FORWARD registered as a charity  
UK Female Circumcision Act passed by Parliament

1985

First African Well-Women Clinic established at Northwick Hospital in collaboration with Dr. Harry Gordon

1992

Launch of the Gambia project on FGM – women’s health and alternative rites of passage

1996

Mobilising men against FGM in Kenya

1999

FORWARD leads on child marriage conference in Burkina Faso

2002

Start of Sigrid Rausing funded young women’s programme in six African countries  
UK première of Moolaadé

2005

Launch of the Prevalence Study on FGM at the House of Lords

2007

FGM Petals campaign  
Woman, Whose Canvas exhibition organised by FORWARD Women  
FORWARD celebrates its 25th anniversary!

2010

‘Female Genital Mutilation: Dilemmas for Professionals in Health, Education and Social Work’ conference organised

1989

FORWARD founder appointed WHO Special Advisor and helped facilitate adoption of resolution on Harmful Traditional Practices & FGM at World health Assembly

1994

FORWARD initiates project on obstetric fistula in Kano Nigeria

1998

UK All-Party Parliamentary Hearings on FGM

2000

Launch of UK FGM Act in FORWARD offices by David Blunkett

2004

Young People Speak Out! is established to nurture a new generation of activists

2006

Campaign to keep Waltham Forest African Well Woman Service  
END FGM European Campaign begins

2009

FGM - A Counselling Guide for Professionals  
Child Protection and FGM

1992

FGM: Proposals for Change

1996

The Way FORWARD

1997

Out of Sight, Out of Mind?: A Survey into Inter-Agency Policies and Procedures Relating to FGM in England and Wales

1998

Moving FORWARD  
The SWITCH Project: A FGM-Related Study

1999

Early Marriage – Sexual Exploitation and the Human Rights of Girls  
FGM: Knowledge, Attitudes and Responses Amongst Communities and Health Professionals  
Female Genital Mutilation: A Case Study in Birmingham  
Friends are Forever  
Holistic Care for Women: A Practical Guide for Midwives

2001

Early Marriage and Poverty – Exploring Links for Policy and Programme Development

2003

The Ouagadougou Technical Consultation on Early and Forced Marriage and the Rights of Women and Girls  
Legislation in Europe regarding Female Genital Mutilation and the Implementation of the Law in Belgium, France, Spain, Sweden and the UK

2004

A Statistical Study to Estimate the Prevalence of FGM in England and Wales

2007

Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER) Study  
Ending Child Marriage – a Guide for Global Policy Action  
Moolaadé Facilitator’s Guide

2008

FGM Information, Services and Support (ISS)  
Guide for Young People  
UK FGM Fact Sheet

2009

Think Again DVD  
Child Marriage DVD  
Voices of Child Brides and Child Mothers  
Research Brief on FGM  
Ending FGM: A Strategy for the European Union Institutions

2010



# Voices from FORWARD volunteers and interns



FORWARD's success over the 25 years has been through the efforts of staff and committed and passionate volunteers. Through their hard work, FORWARD has developed into one of the leading organisations in the UK for African girls and women's sexual and reproductive rights. Their contributions are invaluable to our organisation and we wish to thank the numerous volunteers who have worked with us.

*"It's hard not to get drawn in by the emotional and physical consequences that so many girls and women go through. The FORWARD women are a strong, beautiful bunch that fights for a worthwhile cause; the rights and dignity of their kin."*

**Bess, intern**

"I worked with FORWARD Nigeria for three months over the summer in their Fistula Rehabilitation Centre in Kano State, Nigeria, on the Niger border. With over 100 degrees temperature and with little power, dust storms and mosquitoes, the environment was sometimes challenging!

I was asked to help coach the Project Manager and train three department managers in management and project skills. Initially I conducted a needs assessment and became familiar with the project and staff roles. There were 25 staff members working on the site which included a farm full of goats, sheep and rabbits, and cassava and peanut crops to plant! There was also a tertiary college with eight teachers teaching for 33 hours a week to up to 50 clients. Needless to say I was busy!

Women and girls go to the centre for six months residential rehabilitation, including psychological and health improvement, fistula corrective surgery, and education in income-generation schemes. I was also involved in health education via village outreach and visits to key stakeholders such as government officials, the local hospital, other charities and trustees. In my spare time on a Sunday I would volunteer at the local maternity ward of the neighbouring hospital, helping women birth their babies or assist in theatre with a caesarean section. This gave me a good idea as to why obstetric fistula happens with complex or prolonged labour.

I was honoured to observe fistula corrective surgery, to see how this transformed the lives of those affected and to share the joy of the programme graduates as they left for a newly restored life!"

**Ann-Marie, volunteer**





# Our partners

## UK

- African Well Women's Group (AWWG)
- Bristol NHS Primary Care Trust Safeguarding Board
- Coventry University (*REPLACE FGM project*)
- DVIP (Domestic Violence Intervention Project)
- FGM Forum
- Gargar Foundation for Development (GFD)
- Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation
- Metropolitan Police – Project Azure
- Naz Project
- New Step for African Communities (NESTAC)
- North East Refugee Service (NERS)
- Refugee Women of Bristol (RWoB)
- West Midlands European Centre (*REPLACE FGM project*)
- Women's Health and Equalities Consortium (*with Platform 51, Women's Resource Centre, Maternity Action, Positively Women, Rape Crisis England and Wales, Imkaan*)

## Africa and Europe

- Amnesty International, Ireland – END FGM Campaign
- Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), Tanzania
- Federation of Somali Associations in the Netherlands (FSAN) (*REPLACE FGM project*)
- FORWARD Nigeria
- Inter-Africa Committee- Nigeria Chapter
- National Movement for Emancipation and Progress (NaMEP), Sierra Leone
- Purim African Youth Development Platform (PAYDP), Ghana



# How you can support our work



**If you would like to further FORWARD's work to safeguard the dignity and rights of African women and girls, there are many ways that you can make a difference.**

**Take action in your local area**  
We need to raise awareness of our issues. FGM, child marriage and related rights violations are neglected human rights concerns. You can organise your own events, set up friends of FORWARD, and/or take our campaigns to your local area.

**Help us fundraise**  
You can sign up to become a regular donor. Alternatively you can help us to fundraise. We always welcome innovative ways for raising funds! Please speak to us and discuss this further.

**Become a volunteer or take up an internship**  
We always welcome extra support and expertise in a number of areas. You can volunteer with our office and our projects in the UK and in Africa. Call or write to discuss this further. We will provide training, mentoring and support.

**Sign up to be a supporter or a member of FORWARD**  
You can either choose to become a supporter or register to become a member of FORWARD. Members can attend our Annual General Meeting, be part of our emailing list, and receive updates on information and events. Visit our website to download the forms, or call us.



# Financial statement 2010

# The FORWARD team 2010

## FORWARD

Statement of financial activities for April 2009 – March 2010

### INCOMING RESOURCES

£

Donations	50,087
Grants receivable	350,342
Other income	24,207
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>424,636</b>

### EXPENDITURE

Fundraising	
Charitable expenses	372,750
Governance	11,867
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>384,617</b>
Net incoming resources	40,019
Total funds b/f	189,069
Total funds c/f	229,088

### Balance sheet as at 31st March

Current assets	234,809
Creditors	-5,721
Net assets	229,088

### Represented by:

Restricted funds	160,376
Unrestricted funds	68,712
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>229,088</b>



### Patrons

Baroness Gould  
Alice Walker  
Skin (formerly of Skunk Anansie)

### Board of Trustees

Margaret Nyuydzewira – Chair (resigned October 2010)  
Dr. Soheil Elneill – Chair (appointed October 2010)  
Hanan Ibrahim – Vice Chair  
Lisa Smith – Treasurer  
Gibril Faal  
Faduma Hussein  
Monica Mhoja  
Beatrice Mutali  
Irene Noel  
Jess Nott  
Nalga Naguib (resigned October 2010)  
Dr. Yunes Teinaz (appointed October 2010)  
Booan Temple (appointed October 2010)  
Catherine Willoughby (appointed October 2010)

### Staff

Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE – Executive Director  
Julie Christie – Head of UK Programmes  
Elizabeth Gezahegn King – Africa Programmes Manager  
Sanuba Din – Finance and Administrative Manager  
Estelle Robinson – Policy and Information Officer  
Jenny Comery – Youth Programme Coordinator  
Naomi Reid – Africa Programmes Officer  
Khalda El Hafiz – Community Programme Coordinator (resigned June 2010)  
Rita Buhanda – Community Programme Coordinator  
Gifty Saba – Administrative Assistant



# Many thanks!

## Interns

Asiya Elgadi – Africa Programme  
 Bess Johnston – Information  
 Candice Hays – Information  
 Chiara Ferronato – Africa Programme  
 Helen Beecher Bryant – Research  
 Josephine Hombarume – Research  
 Meredith Asheri – Finance and Administration  
 Nora Tahir – Youth Programme, FORWARD Women Coordinator  
 Rebecca Hammond – Policy and Information  
 Roselyn Frempong – Finance and Administration  
 Saria Sous Nageeb Khalifa – Youth Programme, FORWARD Women Coordinator

## Volunteers

Ann-Marie Wilson – Africa Programme  
 Linda Gasim – Community Programme  
 Maria Aden – Community Programme  
 Michael Brooks – Administration  
 Naima Ibrahim – Information  
 Princess Kandeh – Community Programme  
 Sahara Handule – Information  
 Sarah Walliamohammed – Community Programme  
 Taysir Mohamed – Community Programme



## Many thanks to the funders and individuals who have supported our work in 2010 and over the past 25 years.

### Funders

Amnesty International – Ireland  
 Big Lottery Fund  
 Bristol NHS Primary Care Trust  
 Bromley Trust  
 Comic Relief  
 Equality and Human Rights Commission  
 Esmee Fairbairn Foundation  
 European Commission – Daphne Programme  
 International Planned Parenthood Federation  
 Hilfe  
 Jo Bryant Trust  
 John Lyons Charity  
 London Councils  
 Media Box  
 Monica Rabagliato Trust  
 Network for Social Change  
 Pioneer Investment Fund  
 Rotary International  
 Sigrid Rausing Trust  
 Soroptimist International

Trust for London (formerly City Parochial Foundation)  
 UK Department of Health  
 UK Department for International Development  
 UK Home Office  
 V-Day – Until the Violence Stops  
 Wates Foundation  
 Westminster NHS Primary Care Trust  
 Women at Risk/ WomanKind Worldwide

### Individuals (2010)

D. Ainger; JH Bahgat; JL Baker; Mr. Banks; CJ Baxter; MN Bentley; DP Blackmore; GR Brassington; H. Bunter; EKL Carlsson; CG Client; E. Coldicott; PH Cox; YJ Craig; P Crozier; RCK Cunningham; TJ Curran; YAF Cutler; AF Dale; SP Donovan-Smith; R. Drew; JM & JO Eccleston; C. Fearman; A Frankel; S. Frempong; Ms Fuller; S & C Harrison; V. Hayes; G. Holden; H. Iozzi; JE & D Irving; SJ Keatings; ME Kennedy; Lady Kennet; N. Kingsford; JG Macdonald; KM Manning; J. McGregor; D & G. Melisent; V. Mercer; J Molloy; DJ Moore; AE Myers; GS Padley; S Parmar; S. Pathan; C. Pitt; R. Ratcliffe; Rey & Russ; D Rogers; JM Scott; MO Seltman; JM Stabler; JD & MA Stanley; RL Stevens; AL Targett; JM White.



# Many thanks!

## Letter from a fundraiser

To all those at Forward  
 I am Alaa Benwien from Edinburgh  
 I sent you an email in September 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 to tell you that I raised money at my  
 local mosque on Eid for your organisation.  
 I am so sincerely sorry that it has taken  
 me this long to send you the money.  
 I was caught up in my school work and  
 had a lot of commitments that it had  
 slipped my mind. A very rubbish excuse  
 I know 😊. I hope you accept my apology.  
 It was also difficult because I am only 17  
 and my bank does not give check books out  
 to those under 18, so instead I went to  
 my local post office to send you the money.  
 I'm sorry it's only £82 there was other  
 charities going on at the mosque, but I'm  
 really thankful that many men and women  
 at my mosque took recognition of the cause  
 I hope to raise money for you again soon  
 and this time send it to you on time.  
 I wish you all the best at putting  
 a stop to FGM

Photo credits: FORWARD, Frewine Solomon, Prosper IVON,  
 Gee Photography, Yves salmon,  
 Equality Now, Seri Wendoh and Kate Norman

## A Note from a young activist in Liberia

I am called Marcontee B. Okai and live in Liberia. I am 17 years of age and just coming out of high school this year. I am one of the supervisors in the PEER study. I went to school on a scholarship with the help of Mrs Roseline Toweh of YWCA, a volunteer of Family Planning Association of Liberia. It was a blessing because my parents are unemployed with three girls.

I love working with girls because I feel that there is something about girls that only girls can discover. I want to enrol in the university where I will study sociology. I also enjoy fashion as a hobby.

The idea for this club came about in 2006, when I was 13 years; at which time my aim was to gather those girls in the community that were unfortunate not to attend school to learn how to read. I had books that were given to me by Mr. Nathaniel Barnes for those that could read to sign for and take home and return afterward.

Later I decided to include Sexual Reproductive Health and Etiquette and that was how the club got her name- "GIRLS OF DESTINY WORLD READING AND ETIQUETTE CLUB". The aim is to enable girls to develop good manners and to be useful in the society. Our motto is "Manners means sensitive awareness of others."

After a lot of years of hard work and shortcomings the club was finally launched this year, 27 February 2010 at the YWCA of Liberia. Now I am working with 25 troublesome, awesome, lovely and stubborn girls that give me a hard time getting them to meeting but that is lovely part of my work.

My plan is to make sure and see to it that every young girl in Liberia has quality education and information about sexual and reproductive health. I hope that FORWARD will help me achieve this plan.



"FORWARD UK and Girl Child Network Worldwide partnered to deliver a girls empowerment training in Tanzania and Sierra Leone. During the time I was with FORWARD I got this strong feeling that this is indeed an example of a true partnership for Africa led organisations to tackle gross violations of girls' rights. The confidence building training for girls is not only making them visible but enabling them to break the silence and give them tools to mobilise in their communities. At first when I met the girls they were reserved, shy and quiet. After a few days I saw them blossoming to life and speaking out. Transformation is imminent and it is clear FORWARD UK has succeeded in unleashing potential in young girls whose existence would never been known. I can see that in the next few years girls will walk in the fullness of their potential"

**Betty Makoni - CEO Girl Child Network Worldwide**