



# Annual Report 2013

Working together to safeguard rights and dignity  
of African women and girls

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# Reflections from the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director

At the core of FORWARD's work is safeguarding the rights and dignity of African women and girls. This involves working together to tackle social norms, engage with communities and professionals, provide the evidence to shape and inform policy, and invest in girls and young women. In the past year we have had the privilege of strengthening our collaborations, partnerships and links with multiple stakeholders to drive our agenda of change.

In 2013 we intensified our partnership work in the UK, Africa and Europe, demonstrating how working together has helped FORWARD transform the lives of women and girls affected by, and at risk of, female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and obstetric fistula. We worked with fifteen partners to provide leadership training, research skills, mentoring and networking opportunities. We supported four young women from slum areas in Sierra Leone on a learning visit to Ghana, which gave them new insights to shape their Girl to Girl programme in Freetown.

2013 was truly inspiring for us to work with such dynamic young women and girls who used creative arts, campaign action and participatory research to explore FGM, safeguarding issues and peer to peer activism. This further highlighted the value of multiple strategies in transforming the lives of women and girls. FORWARD also initiated a new European partnership programme with young people to enable us to share our programme legacy and learn from others.

FORWARD recognises that FGM, child marriage and obstetric fistula are all shaped by and fuelled through gender discriminatory social norms. Therefore we focused on shaping policy and transforming behaviours through a series of high level events, roundtables and lobbying action. We made great gains on FGM policy at European level through our partnering action with the 'END FGM European Campaign'.

Our efforts to transform lives of women and girls has been possible through the tireless dedication of our trustees who provide oversight to our work; our staff who continue to put in long hours of work; and our interns and volunteers who have given their expertise and time.

We appreciate the generosity of our funders who have continued to believe in our cause, and the new supporters who have come on board to donate to and support our work. We are pleased to share with you our annual report, which highlights our programmes, partnerships and people behind the scenes.



Dr Sohier Elneil, Chair,  
Board of Trustees



Naana Otoo-Oyortey  
MBE, Executive Director

# About FORWARD

FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development) is a leading African diaspora women's campaign and support charity. We are committed to advancing and safeguarding the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and dignity of African girls and women. We invest in women and girls to enable them to play a key role in changing the practices and policies that affect their rights and wellbeing. FORWARD was founded in 1983, made a fully registered charity in 1985, and works in partnership in the UK, Europe and Africa.

## **Our Vision:**

A world where women and girls live in dignity, are healthy, have choices and equal opportunities.

## **Our Aims:**

- Ending gender based violence (GBV), in particular female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and related health rights issues affecting African girls and women.
- Increasing access for at risk and affected women and girls to specialist support services, skills and livelihood opportunities.
- Improving the capacity and sustainability of partner organisations.
- Strengthening voices of African diaspora women and girls in policy processes and development.

## **Our Values:**

FORWARD's work is centered on the following:

- Protection of rights of women and girls
- Provision of entitlements and support.
- Participation of those affected, by enabling them to engage effectively, building partnerships at all levels with key stakeholders.

# The Context of Our Work

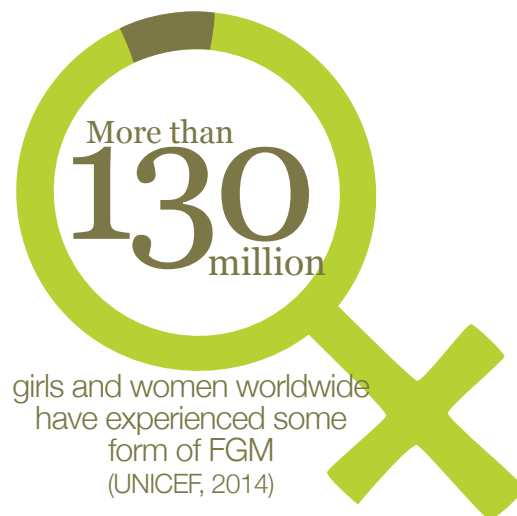
## Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”.

FORWARD works to inform and shape policies and services, engaging affected communities to end the practice of FGM in the UK, and to change attitudes towards FGM in Africa.



\* (City University London & Equality Now 'Female Genital Mutilation in England and Wales: Updated statistical estimates of the numbers of affected women living in England and Wales and girls at risk. Interim report on provisional estimates' 2014)



## Child marriage

Child marriage refers to the formal and informal marriage of a child under the age of 18 years. While child marriage affects both sexes, girls are disproportionately affected. Their overall development is compromised, leaving them socially isolated with little education, skills or opportunities for employment and self-realisation.

FORWARD is working to end child marriage in Africa through community projects with grassroots organisations, and at the international level through global partnerships.



In developing countries, complications from pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death for girls aged

**15-19** years

(UNFPA, 2013)



girls in the developing world will be married by the age of 18.  
(UNFPA, 2012)

Between  
**2011** and **2020**, it is  
estimated that more than

**140**  
million

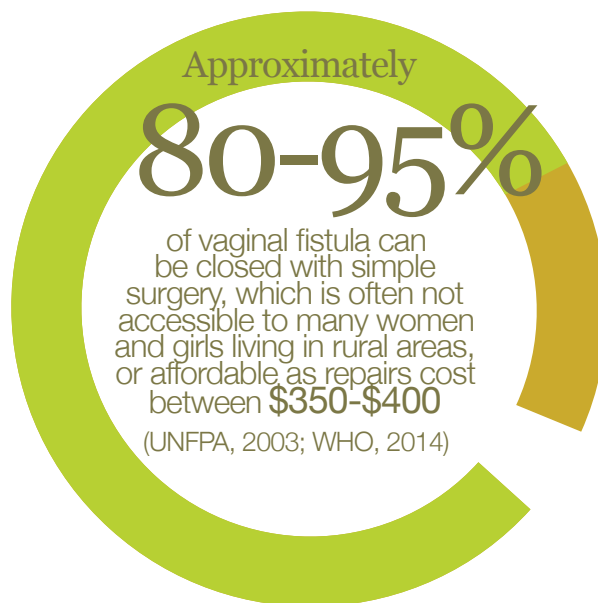
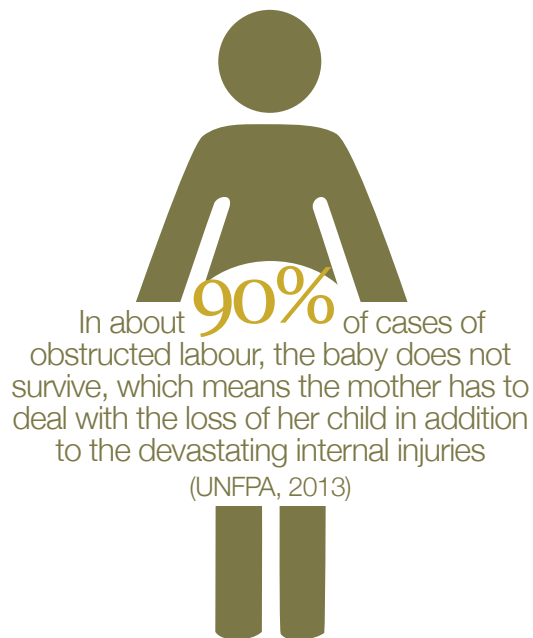
girls will become child brides  
(UNFPA, 2013)



## Obstetric fistula

Obstetric fistula is a devastating pregnancy related disability that affects an estimated 50,000-100,000 women each year, predominantly in Africa (WHO, 2006). Fistulae occur during obstructed labour when the baby's head exerts prolonged pressure on the mother's pelvis. The blood supply to the tissue around her bladder, rectum, and vagina is cut off, causing tissue damage. This results in leaking of urine and/or faeces through the woman's vagina. Usually the baby does not survive.

FORWARD has been working to end obstetric fistula in Africa since 2002 through research, access to treatment, maternal health services, social re-integration and rehabilitation.



# How We Work

## Community and African diaspora engagement

FORWARD recognises that unless we change attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of FGM affected communities in the UK; it will not be possible to create positive and permanent behavioural change. Our community team engages affected communities through events, training and community development approaches. This includes leadership development, social support, networking and outreach action to motivate and impart knowledge.

## Youth empowerment

FORWARD's youth programme, 'Young People Speak Out', builds on our community engagement by empowering young people to help create change in their communities. We enable them to raise awareness about FGM in the UK by providing skills, peer to peer training and support for youth advocates (16 -25) in schools, universities and within communities.

## Capacity development of African partnerships

FORWARD operates in East and West Africa in partnership with local organisations to respond to FGM, child marriage and obstetric fistula with the aim of improving the sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and women. Our programmes develop leadership skills and the capacity of vulnerable girls and young women through training and practical resources, and we facilitate the establishment of young women led programmes. In addition we support our project partners through alliance building and financial assistance. We help young women and girls to access support services and information to enable them to strengthen their voice and visibility through research, networking and economic opportunities.

## Informing and shaping policy and practice

FORWARD's policy engagement and ongoing advocacy work underpins our core activities with communities. We continue to offer policy guidance and recommendations at local, regional, national and international level – both as an individual organisation and in partnership with others. Our work has helped to shape the policy landscape on FGM and child marriage domestically. In addition, FORWARD is recognised as a lead organisation working on FGM throughout Europe, and our work as part of the End FGM European Campaign has helped to secure considerable policy gains with European Parliament. Our policy work is based on evidence and equips practitioners with the knowledge and information to respond effectively to women and girls at risk of, and affected by FGM, child marriage and maternal health dangers.



# Working Together to Tackle FGM in the UK

FORWARD's work to end FGM is based on strong partnerships and close relationships with communities. This is because sustainable change can only take place at the community level. Building on these relationships, our FGM work in the UK focuses on engaging the African diaspora and FGM affected communities; supporting schools and key professionals to respond appropriately to FGM; and provide needed services for women and girls affected by FGM.

## Ending FGM Together in Haringey

### A Community Resource:

- Information about FGM
- Services and support

**F:ORWARD**  
on counting, rights & dignity

**SAFEGUARDING  
FGM**

## Haringey project

FORWARD's project 'Ending FGM Together in Haringey' ended in March 2013. This project supported a localised, multi-sector approach to tackling FGM in the London borough of Haringey. We worked with an advisory board consisting of local government, professionals, community members and young people to develop a strategy for Haringey. The project supported women and young people in the community through leadership training sessions, outreach events and school sessions.

The participatory training sessions equipped women from FGM affected communities with knowledge of the physical and mental health impacts of FGM, women's sexual and reproductive health rights, the legal implications regarding FGM, and available support and FGM services.

This training enabled the women to become health leaders and agents of change within their communities. Following the completion of the course, a graduation day attended by both statutory, voluntary and community members was held for the women, providing opportunities for discussion and networking.

Sessions were also held in schools including two bespoke 'Empowered' programmes for young women that aimed to increase knowledge and confidence. Through workshops about FGM, gender based violence, mental and sexual health, dance and self-defence, they were enabled to become advocates about FGM in their schools. The 'Empowered' programmes were supported by school sessions across the year group including designing posters and holding debates on FGM.

1

multi-agency FGM forum was held, bringing together professionals in key agencies and the local authority to develop local strategy around FGM

30

women completed the training sessions and reached out to **200** others in their communities

250

young people were reached through school sessions in **2** schools

50

professionals trained on FGM

## Community summer campaigns

The summer holidays are a high risk period where many girls may be taken back to their country of origin to undergo FGM. To help safeguard against this, FORWARD organises annual community events in Bristol and London. The 'Communities Work Together' events opened with a film screening of Muted Cry, a play on FGM, produced through

a partnership between FORWARD and Ocean Somali Community Association (OSCA). Muted Cry was written by members of the community and aims to encourage dialogue around FGM in affected communities. The screening of the play was followed by open discussions led by FORWARD.







*FORWARD's Youth Group in Bristol*



*Kerry McCarthy MP at the Bristol Event*

At the Bristol summer event the screening was followed by discussions led by the Youth Team and workshops for men and women. Both events provided the communities with the opportunity to ask questions and get involved in discussions around supporting women affected by FGM and the ways to best safeguard girls at risk of FGM.



*A gift is awarded to Laila Ismail for years of hard work as FORWARD community worker in Bristol*



At the London summer community event an FGM expert panel discussion was held. Panel members included Metropolitan Police, civil servants from the London Borough of Haringey, community leaders and the NHS.



120

men and women attended our summer campaigns to demonstrate their commitment to safeguard girls from FGM

“

*I am glad I came here today, I believe we need to plan more activities in our communities so people are aware of this harmful practice.*

– Community member and Summer Campaign attendee

“

*FORWARD presented a successful event, and we need to plan many more FGM workshops with the community.*

– Community member and Summer Campaign attendee



## Professionals training on FGM

2013 marked the first year of delivery of FORWARD's accredited training courses. Geared towards equipping frontline staff with the knowledge and skills to respond to FGM, the course 'Responding to Female Genital Mutilation: Training for Professionals and Frontline Staff', is Open College Network (OCN) accredited. The full day course moves beyond basic FGM training and covers the policy context and legal implications of FGM. The training aims to equip professionals to respond confidently to FGM, and enables them to develop action plans on FGM that are geared towards their specific setting.

Courses were held in May and October, reaching doctors, nurses, midwives, social workers and teachers. This training is in addition to the many in-house trainings FORWARD facilitates for schools, police, social workers and other organisations. For information on our training and costs please contact: [Yvette@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:Yvette@forwarduk.org.uk)

“

*I think this is a great course - good course for social workers, midwives and teachers – Participant at professional training*

+  
1500

young people, communities and professionals trained on FGM nationally through tailored training

“

*Great trainers who are very knowledgeable. It was participatory and engaging and I thoroughly enjoyed it. – Participant at professional training*

## Women's health and leadership course

FORWARD's 'Women's Health and Leadership Training' is a unique programme that aims to develop local leadership and create community links. The training was delivered in Bristol and in the London boroughs of Lambeth and Haringey to enable women to become health advocates in their communities. Six sessions covered FGM and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights; health consequences of FGM; legal implications; access to support and FGM services; outreach and self-care; and how to safeguard children from harm. The training was designed to increase essential life skills including confidence, self-reflection, self-esteem and activism, which are critical to promoting permanent community led change thus safeguarding girls from FGM.

The sessions were participatory and created an environment that permitted participants to examine their own socio-cultural beliefs and values allowing them to answer “why FGM?” in a safe and non-judgemental space. Following the training the participants indicated that they have greater confidence to safeguard their daughters from FGM and were able to take an active role in their communities by communicating and passing on information about women's health in a sensitive manner.

“

*I have learnt about how to protect my children from FGM. – Training participant*

“

*My journey started years ago, but now I feel I have skills and knowledge to help myself and others. – Training participant*



## European Commission funded community projects

FORWARD delivered training sessions to 13 male and female change agents as part of the CHANGE Project. The two year project, funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Programme, aims at enabling communities in the EU to advocate for the abandonment of FGM through the empowerment of key community members. The project is led by TERRE DES FEMMES with partners in Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands with FORWARD being the UK partner.

The initiative is unique as it includes men and brings a much needed male perspective to the campaign on FGM. Following the training FORWARD continues to support the change agents to organise awareness raising activities about FGM in their communities, ultimately working to end the practice in Europe. See <http://change-agent.eu> for more details.



## REPLACE 2

REPLACE 2 is a two year project funded by the European Commission Daphne Programme. This project follows the successful completion of REPLACE 1 in 2011. REPLACE 2 is the product of the cooperation of six European countries, England (Coventry University and FORWARD), the Netherlands (FSAN), Italy (CESIE), Portugal (APF), Spain (Gabinet) and Belgium (Ghent University). REPLACE 2 will implement and evaluate the behavioural change and community-based toolkit developed by REPLACE 1. Partners will work directly with FGM affected communities in the EU to understand barriers to behavioural change and therefore develop tailored interventions that community groups and NGOs can use in future efforts to bring about the end of FGM in the EU and beyond. See the REPLACE 2 website:

<http://replacefgm2.eu> for further information.

## Para-Counselling training for community women

2013 also saw FORWARD pilot new accredited Para-Counselling training. The training aimed to enable community women to support women and girls affected by FGM. The training, which provided practical skills as well as FGM information, was delivered in collaboration with the Women and Girls Network (WGN).

18

women trained in the accredited Para-Counselling course

# Collaborating

with Young People to Safeguard Rights



## Schools programme

As part of FORWARD's efforts to safeguard children at risk of FGM we have been working with support from the Metropolitan Project Azure to engage with schools on FGM. The Schools Programme aimed to increase awareness of FGM and strengthen educational professionals' capacity to safeguard and support girls affected by and at risk of FGM. The sessions focus on training key education professionals, awareness and outreach sessions for students, development of school policies and the creation of educational resources and materials.

The Pilot Schools FGM Project in Greenwich, engaged the whole community and involved an FGM Advisory Group, training for key professionals, a school based programme and community links event. Participants felt that the training gave them greater understanding of the socio-cultural context surrounding FGM and they felt they would be "more knowledgeable and sensitive to the prospect that FGM may be practised in the students' communities and families."

To find out more about our schools programme contact:

[youth@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:youth@forwarduk.org.uk)

26

sessions held over six months, which were a mixture of teacher training, student awareness sessions and outreach sessions

612

participants attended FGM sessions or trainings (both school staff and students)

“

*I really enjoyed the models of FGM. I liked how the people speaking were young, they really related to me. – Student*

“

*I learnt that FGM is a terrible thing to do whether it's type 1, 2 or 3. The fact that you guys are working towards changing it is such amazing work. I didn't even know about this. Thank you for the lesson! – Student*

“

*[FORWARD's Schools Project] is good practice [that] should be carried out throughout London. – James Cleverly, London Assembly Member*

“

*I spoke yesterday with my class about the sessions – and the AMOUNT of information between them that they came with is excellent – I was so proud and impressed with them and that is all down to what you taught them. They even taught me some things I wasn't aware of. Despite my initial reservations, I would definitely like to have you back to our school. – Teacher*

“

*I was unsure of what to expect in terms of the delivery of such a delicate subject. Throughout the day you ladies were great and very conscious of the students' needs in terms of not making it as frightening as I thought it would be. – Teacher supervising FGM sessions*

## CREATE YouthNet

CREATE YouthNet is a two year European Commission Daphne programme led by FORWARD in partnership with Federation of Somali Associations (FSAN) in the Netherlands, Family Planning Association (APF) Portugal and Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO) - UK. CREATE YouthNet aims to safeguard young people from harmful practices, in particular FGM and forced marriage, and focuses on youth engagement and campaign action, participatory research and school support.

As part of CREATE YouthNet, European and national networks of youth advocates were developed and strengthened with the skills and capacity to campaign against harmful practices such as FGM and forced marriage, and provide peer to peer support to those affected and at risk. The networks aim to increase participation of diaspora youth to engage in their European communities and in national and European policy, development and prevention. A two day Youth Advocates Conference was held in London with young people from each of the partner organisations attending. The conference consisted of training, presenting the research that young people conducted in their countries, and developing a youth national action plan for each country to address the issues of FGM and forced marriage.



400

professionals and NGOs working with young people will be supported in helping those affected

500

young women from affected communities will benefit directly from the projects work and **1,000** indirectly



## ‘These Are Our Friends’

Throughout September and October 2013, the FORWARD youth team held creative campaigning workshops in London, Bristol, Birmingham and Rochdale (Greater Manchester) for 31 young people (14 -25). The two day spoken word workshops engaged young people to create youth friendly communications and arts resources to raise awareness about FGM.

The initiative uses spoken word and poetry as a tool for young people to widen their knowledge on FGM, explore girls’ and women’s experiences of FGM, and amplify their voices as youth advocates on the issue of FGM.

‘These are our Friends’ highlights the fact that FGM is an issue in the UK and not a problem that occurs in “another faraway country”- that FGM is a problem for everyone, a problem that is happening in OUR communities.

The writing produced in the workshops will be developed into a poetry book to be released in 2014.

“

*‘These Are Our Friends’ - Chatty, charmingly cheeky, social media obsessed young women, some rocking Hijabs and high-tops, and too-cool, teenage-nonchalant young men who (once the smart-phones were switched off) discussed the issue, and in the short time we had together, crafted considered ‘poems and protest’. Poems that mixed youthful energy with wisdom and critical insight that shed light on the personal and nuanced human side of an issue that affects more than just one part of a woman’s body... but whole communities across religions, cultures and generations. – Creative Director: Richard ‘Rich Blk’ Mkoloma*

## ‘I Carry the Name of my Parents’: Young People’s Reflections on FGM and Forced Marriage’ PEER research

As part of the CREATE YouthNet project, FORWARD in partnership with FSAN, IKWRO and APF conducted a Participatory Ethnological Evaluation Research (PEER) with young women and men from communities where FGM and forced marriage occur.

Key findings from the PEER highlights young people’s awareness of the harmful consequences of FGM and forced marriage, and the fact that the majority of young people want an end to these practices. However, many still believe in the underlying reasons why these practices continue - including protecting girls, preserving virginity and ensuring girls and young women adhere to cultural norms and values.

Please contact [youth@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:youth@forwarduk.org.uk) for more information about the research.

“

*I think a lot of girls are against FGM. It has a lot of negative effects on a woman’s health. I think a lot of young men find it less bad, because they know very little about it. I think when they know more about it and the consequences for a woman, then they would see it as something that can’t be practised anymore. – PEER participant*

## FORWARD art installation at the 'Gender Agenda' Exhibition, W3 gallery

In March, FORWARD held a one month exhibition 'Evoke', in partnership with Acton Community Forum, W3 Gallery and Southall Community Alliance. The installation was part of the gallery's exhibition on 'The Gender Agenda' and featured art pieces donated to or produced by FORWARD over the years to raise awareness of FGM in a creative way. On International Women's Day FORWARD's youth team held an event at the exhibition to celebrate the day. The event included music by FORWARD Ambassador, Bumi Thomas, and spoken word performances from FORWARD Youth Programme.



### Beauty: I sit in silence and ponder

"As a child I was made to believe that it's good for me, a ritual that marks me as a woman of class, beauty and dignity. Little did I know that my feminine parts were ravaged in exchange for pain, trauma and a loss of sensation, that's just naming a few of the qualities that make me a 'beautiful' women in the eyes of those that condone Female Genital Mutilation as a trait of my femininity."





# Africa Partnerships

## Hearing from our partners

In 2013, FORWARD has both strengthened and expanded our local and international partnerships with eight organisations across five countries: Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopian, Ghana and Sierra Leone.

This includes the mentorship of two new young women led organisations: ProFutures Development Initiative (PFDI) in Ethiopia, and Girl to Girl Empowerment Network (G2G) in Sierra Leone. FORWARD has provided mentoring and technical support over the past year to build the organisational and management capacity of these unique organisations. This has strengthened their ability to support vulnerable girls, child mothers, child brides and young women affected by multiple forms of abuse.

279

girls and young women received entrepreneurship skills training and income generating activities support and **106** are running profitable businesses

55

girls' and young women's networks established and running actively with **1,105** members

701

professionals and community leaders trained on women and girls' rights

400

girls rescued from FGM through the safe house support

2299

girls and young women received training on leadership skills and sexual & reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

1

regional conference 'East Africa Regional Conference on Child Marriage' conducted in Tanzania

“

*We regard ourselves honoured to have FORWARD technical support as we have quickly learnt what partnership means, we have quickly learnt to be trusted, accountable and confident in our actions. [...] Now we are moving forward very fast, stable and prosperous.*

*– Koshuma Mtengeti, Executive Director, Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), Tanzania*

“

*With over 8 years of funding and technical support from FORWARD, you've demonstrated your deep commitment to our work with women and girls across the country. You believed in us and our ability to make a difference and change lives. Your support has repeatedly played a key role in our success in empowering over 1000 girls in most regions of the country in sexual and reproductive health, confidence building skills and other leadership skills. This is what we stand for now, the slogan for the girls clubs: E –Empowerment of girls, B- Building confidence in girls, A- Acting as a voice to change lives and communities. We say thank you again for your support.*

*– Aku Xomam Adzraku, Purim African Youth Development Platform (PAYDP), Ghana*

# Tackling Obstetric Fistula in Africa

## Responding to the needs of women and girls with obstetric fistula in Sierra Leone and Tanzania

In 2013 FORWARD conducted Participatory Ethnological Evaluation Research (PEER) in partnership with Haikal Foundation to shed light on the experiences of women suffering with obstetric fistula in Bo, Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone programme aimed to improve sexual and reproductive health and related entitlements, and strengthen capacity of partner organisations to deliver interventions. A huge impact was made on the PEER researchers recruited to support the evaluation. Their participation in the programme directly impacted their lives and enabled them to acquire skills and confidence to communicate their situation to others and also to listen to the stories of other women in similar situations. Many of the women found the supportive network to be very valuable and expressed the desire to continue the process. Please contact [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk) for a copy of the research.

Following a PEER conducted in 2010, the Girl to Girl Empowerment Movement (G2G) was founded in January 2013 in response to the PEER researchers' recommendations. G2G is a girl led organisation which aims to promote the sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls and to help end harmful practices like FGM. The Movement supports over 90 girls. FORWARD provided technical and financial support to improve their organisational capacity.

“

*I believe there are many other women out there who are not getting the help because they are ashamed.*

*– PEER interviewee*

“

*It is not easy for women and girls with fistula to get help. This is mainly because people are not aware of the condition or how to treat it.*

*– PEER interviewee*

“

*They [FORWARD] never treated me like I had this sickness. They showed love and fed me with my favourite foods...like cassava leaves...I feel strong to talk to others about this fistula.*

*– PEER Researcher*

“

*In the first place I was ashamed to explain my problem to others, I only ever thought I was the only one suffering from this sickness called fistula. I thought that when I explained my problem to anyone they will gossip or back bite me but this research and workshop has made me realise that I am not alone and that there are others like me and that this process will help other women too.*

*– PEER interviewee*

## Case Study – Peer Researcher, Sierra Leone

*I would like to tell my story. I was in labour for six days at home as it was hard to get to the hospital because it was war time. But my husband decided to take me to Pujehun hospital. On the way, there was an ambush and my husband was killed. A soldier took me to the hospital.*

*When I got to the hospital, they called the doctor, the baby was dead inside but its arms came out first. So I had an operation, but during the operation, the doctor made a mistake and I developed fistula. There was no treatment available because of the war. I lived with it for six years.*

*After that, I heard on the radio about fistula so I went to Gondama hospital and was sent to AWC. I got treatment and have felt much better in the last four years. I live with my sister and farm rice, cassava, and so on. I gave most of the money I received in the PEER workshop to my sister to thank her for looking after me all these years. – Young woman from Bo, Sierra Leone*



6

young women leaders have been mentored by G2G Movement and now focus their new found skills to a further **87** women in the community

60+

women's lives in Bo were transformed through the PEER experience, gaining skills in interviewing, data collection and working together as a team



*Young girl, Gonder, Ethiopia*





*Young women and girls at Girl's Camp in Ghana, a project between FORWARD and PAYDP*

# Working in Partnership to Address Child Marriage, FGM and Sexual Reproductive Health in Africa

In Tanzania, FORWARD continued their work with UTU Mwanamke on Maternal Health Equity to improve community responses to the health of women and girls; improve the sexual and reproductive health of girls and young women; and respond to maternal health problems, including fistula rehabilitation and access to health care. This year their work included training health workers on sexual and reproductive health issues; identifying fistula survivors through community outreach and referring them to fistula services; carrying out a baseline survey of the maternal and reproductive health services in the districts where they operate; and also enabling fistula survivors to rebuild their lives through an economic empowerment scheme. FORWARD and Children's Dignity Forum (CDF) continued their work shaping the agenda on child marriage, FGM, and girls' rights in Tanzania through the provision of skills training and the production and distribution of educational materials on SRH services and rights. Similarly FORWARD has worked with Chama Cha Uzazi Na Malezi Bora Tanzania (UMATI), to empower girls through sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) education, income generating activities and skills training.

FORWARD's partner in Kenya, Sinyati Women's Group, has continued working towards an end to harmful traditional practice through leadership training and

holding open discussion forums for men and women. As a result of their work, more girls have been empowered to say 'no' to child marriage, and there is an increase in the community's awareness of the negative impacts of FGM and child marriage. In addition FGM is no longer performed openly and ceremoniously.

30

young Peer Educators received training to educate other young girls about sexual & reproductive health & rights SRHR in Tanzania through CDF

3

new girls clubs created, providing support and information on rights to young women in Tanzania through CDF

4

major campaigns about FGM and child marriage carried out in Tanzania

600

people took part in an awareness raising campaign involving 2 media organisations to engage young people in dialogue around SRHR issues in Tanzania through CDF

879

women attended antenatal care; 933 are now using family planning; 8 women have been referred to fistula health services by UTU Mwanamke in Tanzania

2

girls in Tanzania have successfully established their own tailoring businesses from their own savings thanks to the work of UMATI



# Case Study

Sally Lekodie ran away from her parent's home to avoid FGM and child marriage. She has benefited from Sinyati's leadership training, rights training, counselling and guidance and chose to take refuge in one of her teachers' homes, and is continuing her education despite threats from her father. Sally strongly believes that girls must be encouraged to say no to FGM and child marriage so that they can continue their education and have a bright future.

- Sally is part of the Sinyati Women's Group in Kenya.

12

girls have reported they no longer rely on their families for financial support; **36** girls said they were now able to meet their daily needs

25

girls are working towards economic independence through a cattle rearing and dairy farming business established by girls groups through ProFutures Development Initiative in Ethiopia

60

girls have opened up to bank accounts and started saving for small businesses through support from PAYDP in Ghana

“

*Thinking of my life before joining the club, I can feel the difference within me. I am no longer shy or afraid of sharing my past for the other girls to learn. I have come to see myself as one whose life is just as important as other persons. – Nyangeta Jeremia, 22 years old and mother of 5 children, part of the 'Girls of Victory' CDF project in Tanzania*

“

*Let us empower the young girls to say no to FGM and early marriage and slowly force out the culture of polygamy in the Kuria community. Girls who attend school become more aware of their rights and more likely to choose men who are not married. – Kuria Primary School teacher part of the 'Girls of Victory' CDF project in Tanzania*

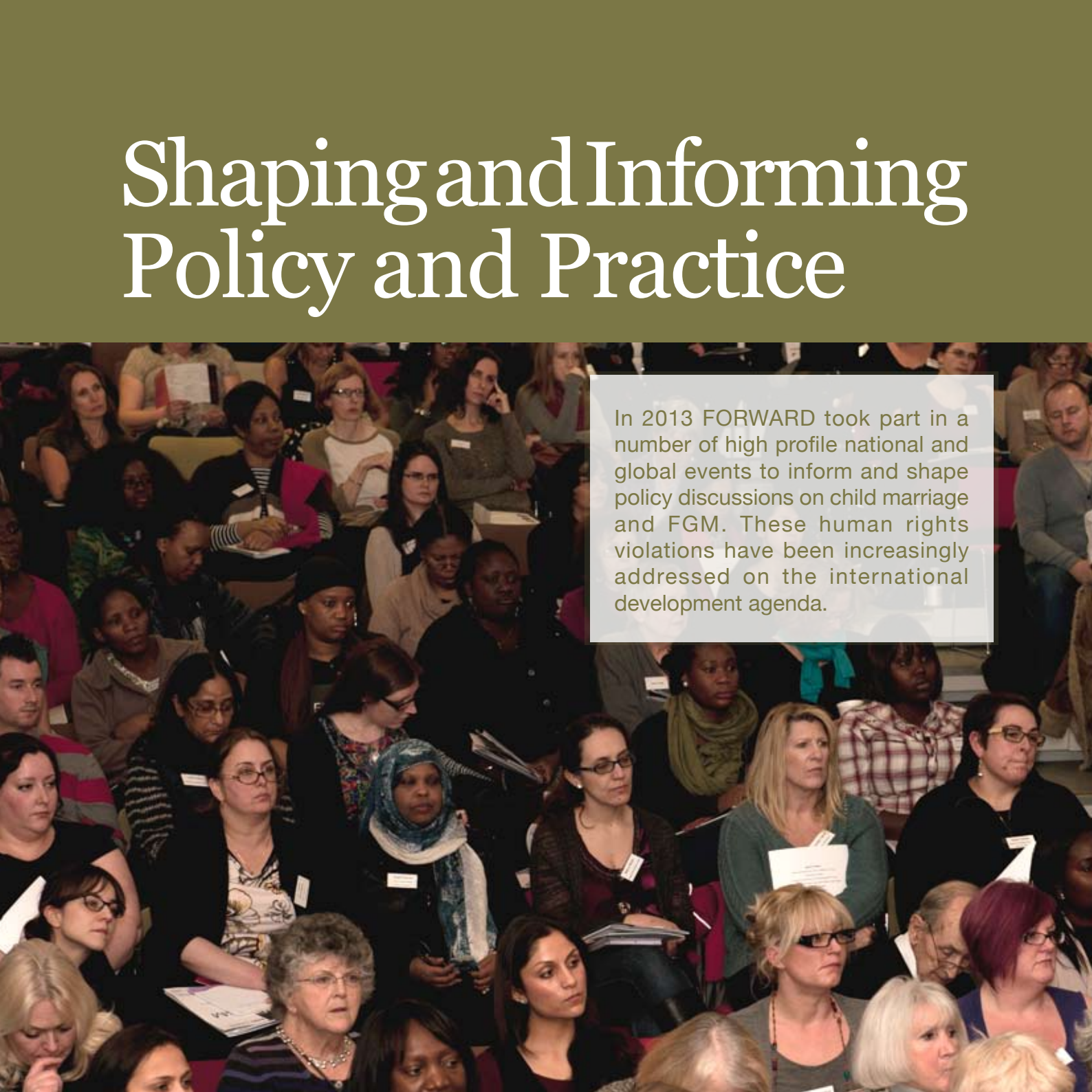


*Magreth in Tanzania on her school graduation day - made possible through the FORWARD & CDF partnership programme which supported her return to school*



*Young woman in Tarime, Tanzania*

# Shaping and Informing Policy and Practice



In 2013 FORWARD took part in a number of high profile national and global events to inform and shape policy discussions on child marriage and FGM. These human rights violations have been increasingly addressed on the international development agenda.

# National

## Parliamentary and local government engagement

2013 was a monumental year in the campaign to end FGM and FORWARD was very much at the forefront of activity. In January 2013, we worked in partnership with Karl Turner MP (Labour, Kingston upon Hull East) to prepare for the first Westminster Hall Debate on FGM. The debate was a pivotal moment, increasing the attention of parliamentarians to FGM. We also worked to raise awareness of FGM with the Ministry of Justice, Home Office and Department for International Development (DFID).

In 2013, FORWARD was invited to join the Home Office led inter-ministerial group on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). At the regional level, FORWARD also contributed to policy drafting at the pan London level by consulting and scaling up the views of community women to inform the Mayor's Office of Police and Crime (MOPAC) VAWG strategy review.

In recognition of her expertise and continued work championing women's rights, FORWARD's Executive Director, Naana Otoo-Oyortey was invited by DFID Secretary of State Justine Greening to join her Expert Advisory Board on Women and Girls alongside other leading experts.

## Women's Health and Equality Consortium (WHEC)

FORWARD continued its work as a partner of WHEC, a strategic partner of the Department of Health. WHEC exists to ensure that experiences and needs of women and girls are reflected in health and social care policy in the UK. In light of the Health and Social Care Act, our work with WHEC focused heavily on enabling women and community groups to gain a greater understanding of the impact the act had on their work, and how they could navigate the new system. We did this by engaging women throughout England, including training community women in Bristol and London.

## 'A Childhood Lost'

A report on child marriage from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population Development and Reproductive Health was developed and launched in parliament. FORWARD was a member of the panel providing guidance and advice on the report.





## Lynne Featherstone visits FORWARD office

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM (6th Feb), DFID Minister Lynne Featherstone paid a visit to FORWARD's office. The visit provided the minister an opportunity to learn more about FORWARD's engagement of communities in Britain and Africa to work to end FGM.



*Lynne Featherstone with FORWARD staff*



*FORWARD chair Dr Elneil shows minister Lynne Featherstone the FGM models we use for training*

### Safe from harmful traditional practices

FORWARD joined six other London based organisations (Southall Black Sisters Trust, IMECE Women's Centre, Women and Girls Network, Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO), Latin American Women's Rights Service and the Ashiana Network) on a pan London project on harmful traditional practices (HTPs). This two year project is led by Asian Women's Resource Centre. Funded by London Councils, it focuses on FGM, forced marriage and honour based violence, offering support for women and girls affected by these issues, counselling, one to one support, training and workshops.

### NSPCC helpline

FORWARD, together with a number of leading FGM experts, campaigners and advocates formed an expert advisory committee alongside the NSPCC ahead of the launch of the NSPCC helpline dedicated to FGM cases in the UK. The helpline provides advice, information and support for anyone concerned that a child's welfare is at risk because of FGM.

### London FGM prevention project

FORWARD along with eleven other organisations led by Tender, started a project addressing FGM, gangs, sexual exploitation, and promoting healthy relationships in schools. This project is funded by London Councils and delivers drama based projects about abuse, to students in primary and secondary schools.

23

staff received training sessions

31

sessions in schools

162

students reached through FGM sessions

## FORWARD's Executive Director named one of London's 1000 influential people

Naana Otoo-Oyortey MBE, FORWARD's Executive Director, was announced one of London's 1000 most influential people in acknowledgement of her long established work promoting and safeguarding women's rights. The Power List, compiled in September 2013 by the Evening Standard in conjunction with Battersea Power station, featured Naana in its 'Crusaders, Philanthropists and Leaders' section, and highlighted Naana's work to tackle FGM and child marriage. FORWARD is extremely proud of Naana and is pleased her amazing hard work was acknowledged in this way.

## Europe

### Ending FGM in Europe conference

FORWARD and Iranian & Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation (IKWRO) organised a conference 'Ending FGM in Europe: Exploring policies, approaches and lessons' on 28th February. The conference included a key note speech from Jane Ellison, MP and speakers from DFID, the Home Office and community organisations based in the EU. The day provided invaluable insights into the current situation on FGM in EU countries and examined links between diaspora organisations and countries of origin. Over 300 participants, predominantly from statutory agencies, academics and NGOs attended the conference. The conference report, including an overview of the presentations and recommendations, can be requested from FORWARD at:

[forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk).

## FGM in the European Union & Croatia - report launched

The long awaited study commissioned by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in response to calls from the European END FGM Campaign for data on FGM was launched in March. The EIGE report on FGM in 27 EU countries and Croatia was launched and presented by Vice President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding. The aim of the report is to support policy makers and all relevant institutions by providing them with reliable and comparable data for evidence-based actions and policy improvement in the area of FGM.



# Africa

## Tanzanian child marriage conference

FORWARD and their local partner in Tanzania, Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), organised the East Africa Regional Conference on Child Marriage in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on the 12-13 June 2013. The conference was supported by The Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Graca Machel Trust and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Eighty five participants from eleven African and European countries including the Zambian Minister of Chiefs and Traditional Affairs, Tanzanian Minister for Constitutional Affairs, young women affected by child marriage, representatives from civil society organisations, academics and UN representatives from across Europe and Africa. A call to action was submitted to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to develop a General Comment on child marriage. This would provide guidance to governments and policy makers in Africa to protect children from child marriages, including relevant standards for effective monitoring.

## Safeguarding girls from FGM in Tanzania

FORWARD drew global attention to the plight of over 400 girls fleeing FGM in Tarime, Tanzania in December. During the annual FGM season which is announced by traditional elders from the Kuria Ethnic Group, adolescent girls come under huge pressure from families and peers to undergo FGM. The girls who had been sensitized against FGM through the peer to peer advocacy project conducted by FORWARD partners CDF, ran away and sought refuge in Masanga Centre, a local school converted into a refuge by Catholic Church.

FORWARD wrote a letter to the Tanzanian High Commission and informed the UK media which raised international attention to the issue and raised concern of these girls' situation and encouraged action from local government in Tanzania. FORWARD also provided financial support for the upkeep of the girls in the centre.



*Zambian Minister, Koshuma Mtengeti (CDF), Tanzanian Minister & Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE, FORWARD*



*Participants at the Tanzanian child marriage conference*



## FORWARD presence at the 1st FIGO Africa regional conference in Addis Ababa

FORWARD's work on obstetric fistula and child marriage was profiled at the International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics' first regional Africa conference. Elsa Gezahegn-King, FORWARD's Africa Programme Manager, delivered a presentation on FORWARD's PEER conducted in Ethiopia, which examines the link between child marriage and obstetric fistula.

Please contact [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk) for a copy of the research: 'No Girl Should be a Child Bride' - Taking Action to End Child Marriage in Lay Armachiho District, Amhara Region, Ethiopia.

“

*This year, we have had an unprecedented number of girls running from this grave human rights violation and we are not able to meet the high cost of feeding these girls till the end of December. The community awareness activities are yielding results. Many of these girls have done so with the support of their parents. This shows that there is rising opposition to FGM in this region of Tanzania. At this time, we need the support of our local Government and the police to help protect these girls.*

*- FORWARD's partner in Tanzania, Koshuma Mtengeti of Children's Dignity Foundation*



Girls in Tanzania at the Masanga Centre where they had sought refuge from the FGM cutting season 13/12/18 16:45

## International Day of the Girl Child

To mark International Day of the Girl Child, FORWARD's Executive Director Naana Otoo-Oyortey attended a high level meeting held by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and The Graca Machal Trust in October 2013. The meeting created the space to discuss measures to help end child marriage in East Africa. The high level meeting was a direct result of FORWARD's East Africa regional conference on child marriage, held earlier in 2013, and was attended by the Tanzanian Minister for constitutional affairs.

In the UK, FORWARD marked International Day of the Girl Child with the Thomson Reuters Foundation who released the film 'Pregnant at 13: Tanzania's Child Mothers'. The film, about child mothers and their experiences, features the girls and young women who are supported by FORWARD and our partner, Children's Dignity Foundation through the child mother's programme in Mara Region, Tanzania. The film was developed using photographs and interviews taken by photographer Chiara Ceolin at our project in Mara Region, Tanzania.

# Strengthening Action through Global Partnerships

## Gender and Development Network



In 2013 FORWARD co-managed and launched the 'Harmful Traditional Practices: Your Questions, Our Answers' resource with the Gender and Development Network (GADN). The report includes contributions from a number of NGOs working on VAWG, including FORWARD,

and covers a number of harmful practices with a specific focus on child marriage and FGM. The resource aims to provide an introductory overview of harmful traditional practices (HTPs). The launch of the resource was hosted by DFID and included contributions from FORWARD Executive Director, Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE, the Minister for International Development, Lynne Featherstone and Princess Mabel Van Oranje.

## Girls Not Brides

Girls Not Brides is a global partnership of civil society organisations committed to ending child marriage. In 2013 Girls Not Brides UK was formalised, with FORWARD and Plan elected as co-chairs of the network.

As part of our activities to mark the second annual International Day of the Girl Child (October 11th 2013), the Girls Not Brides UK partnership authored a briefing paper which detailed the action necessary to end child marriage, including clear recommendations for the UK Government. These recommendations can be found on the FORWARD website.

## END FGM European Campaign

In 2013 the END FGM European campaign, hosted by Amnesty International Ireland, worked to increase EU action and policy on FGM. The campaign focused on advocacy, action and lobbying to raise support and commitment from European Parliament for Europe wide action on FGM. In 2013 a number of high level policy events and conferences were held, leading to policy gains in Brussels.

As a result of the campaign, the European Commission organised a high level roundtable in March to explore specific actions to end FGM. Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE, Executive Director of FORWARD, Dr Christine Loudes, END FGM Campaign Director, and Ifrah Ahmed, founder of United Youth of Ireland, all attended and called for urgent EU action on FGM. The EU Commissioner, Members of the European Parliament, First Lady of Burkina Faso and leading anti-FGM campaigners including Waris Dirie, Khady Koita and Chantal Compaoré also attended the event.

## European Commission action plan - ‘Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation’

The European Commission released its first ever communication action plan ‘Towards the elimination of female genital mutilation’ to mark the International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women (25th November 2013). The action plan incorporated five key areas of the END FGM European Campaign including the need for data in Europe, provision of training for health and legal professionals, resourcing civil society, prevention action within the EU, and urged EU external relations to raise the issue of FGM in annual dialogues and in its work with the African Union.

“

*“Today the European Commission is joining forces with some very inspiring women to call for zero tolerance for female genital mutilation. This is an extremely harmful practice which violates the human rights of women and girls. The EU will fight to end female genital mutilation – not only on International Women’s Day, but on all 365 days of the year. - Vice-President Reding, the EU’s Justice Commissioner*

# Fundraising and Volunteering Activities

## Running for FORWARD



Julia Sukan del Rio successfully raised over **£600** towards our work on FGM by running her first half marathon in Paris in March 2013.



Griselda K. Togobo also ran her first half marathon, the Great North Run, and successfully raised over **£500** towards our child mothers and child bride's project in Tanzania.



Four friends- Kevin Fielding, Will Asher, Chris Clark and Jim Stichbury, participated in the Tour Le Jog, which involved cycling over 1000 miles from Land's End to John O'Groats- raising over **£1,000** for FORWARD.

## School fundraising and climbing mountains

Hornsey School for Girls have been campaigning on FGM and child marriage and raised **£136** for FORWARD through activities at their school.

Laura Macara and friend Hardip found another amazing way to fundraise for the work of FORWARD by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa, raising an incredible **£5,320**.

These are a selected few FORWARD supporters who fundraised for FORWARD's work in 2013. FORWARD would like to thank these supporters for all their amazing hard work and commitment to our work. We would also like to thank all those who raised funds for us in 2013 and who are not mentioned here. It is through these fundraising activities that our supporters raise further awareness of the issues of FGM and child marriage and in the process raise much needed funds for us to continue our work.

These are just a few ways in which our supporters have raised much needed funds for our work. For more ideas and to discuss your fundraising plans further please contact: [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk)



## Freeplay radios donated on International Women's Day

To mark International Women's Day (8th March), Freeplay Energy, a leading global brand of clean, dependable energy products, donated eight solar radios to our Girls and Women's Programmes in rural areas of Tanzania, Ghana and Sierra Leone. The radios are vital to ensure and enable access to information and learning for vulnerable girls and young women in these regions.



*Young woman in Tarime, Tanzania, listening to the news on one of the Freeplay Radios whilst working*

# Building Partnerships with Funders

## DFID working group

FORWARD attended a two day meeting ‘Measuring Change Toward Ending FGM’, organised by the Department for International Development (DFID), to share information between civil societies and donor organisations. Our Executive Director, Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE was invited to speak at the panel discussion chaired by the DFID Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lynne Featherstone. One of the key recommendations from this consultation was the call for better coordination of FGM work nationally and globally.

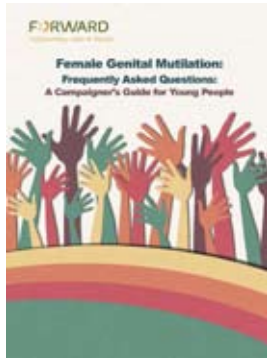
## Tackling FGM initiative – launch of phase two

Trust for London, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Rosa held a parliamentary event on 1st July to present an independent evaluation of their jointly funded special initiative to combat FGM. FORWARD’s Executive Director, Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE, spoke at the launch along with others such as MP Jane Ellison, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on FGM. Results from the first phase of the initiative were presented at the launch, which was attended by civil society organisations that took part in the initiative.

## Chime for Change

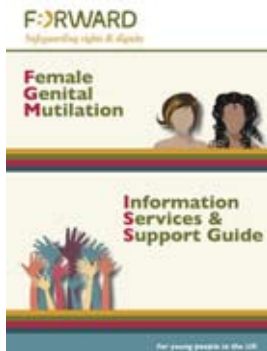
FORWARD partnered with Catapult (a crowd funding organisation focusing on projects for women and girls) for the first ever Chime for Change concert held on 1st June 2013. The event allowed fans to decide which charity working on the rights of women and girls they would like to contribute to. Beyoncé, Florence and the Machine, Jennifer Lopez, Madonna and many more took to the stage in London to bring attention to girls’ and women’s issues all over the world. FORWARD’s project ‘Support 200 Women Affected by FGM in London’ was selected. Fans were able to donate to this project and we were successful in reaching our fundraising goal. We would like to thank Chime for Change, Catapult and individual donors for helping us reach our target of **\$39,135** to provide training for community outreach workers to support women in London who have experienced psychological trauma due to FGM.

# 2013 Publications



## FGM Frequently Asked Questions: A Campaigner's Guide for Young People

A youth friendly resource that provides responses to both frequently asked, as well as more difficult questions about FGM.



## Information Services and Support Guide (ISS Guide)

A youth friendly resource which provides information about FGM as well as signposting to support and services that young people can access regarding FGM.



## 'I Carry the Name of my Parents': Young People's Reflections on FGM and Forced Marriage

PEER (Participatory Ethnological Evaluation Research) on young people's views and attitudes on FGM and forced marriage and how it impacts their lives. This research was conducted as part of the CREATE YouthNet, a Europe wide project engaging young people as advocates in the UK, Portugal and the Netherlands.

# Our Partners

## UK & Europe

- » END FGM European Campaign - [www.endfgm.eu](http://www.endfgm.eu)  
(FORWARD is a founding member of the campaign, part of the working group to see the campaign journey from campaign to network and our Executive Director, Naana Otoo-Oyortey is Chair of the network.)
- » Acton FGM Specialist Clinic
- » Associacao Para O Planeamento Da Familia (APF) - [www.apf.pt](http://www.apf.pt)
- » Bristol NHS - [www.bristol.nhs.uk](http://www.bristol.nhs.uk)
- » Enabling Education Network (EENET) - [www.eenet.org.uk](http://www.eenet.org.uk)
- » End Violence Against Women (EVAW) - [www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)
- » Federation of Somali Associates in the Netherlands (FSAN) - [www.fsan.nl](http://www.fsan.nl)
- » Gender and Development Network - [www.gadnetwork.org](http://www.gadnetwork.org)
- » Girls Not Brides - [www.girlsnotbrides.org](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org)  
(FORWARD is a co-chair of the UK network)
- » Her Centre Greenwich - [www.hercentre.org](http://www.hercentre.org)
- » International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)- [www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org)
- » New Step for African Communities (NESTAC) - [www.nestac.org](http://www.nestac.org)
- » Ocean Somali Community Association (OCSA) - [www.oceansomali.org.uk](http://www.oceansomali.org.uk)
- » Refugee Women of Bristol
- » The Gaia Centre - [www.refugee.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/gaia-centre-lambeth](http://www.refugee.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/gaia-centre-lambeth)
- » Women's Health and Equality Consortium (WHEC)- [www.whec.org.uk](http://www.whec.org.uk)

## Africa

- » Advocacy Movement Network (AMnet), Sierra Leone
- » Chama Cha Uzazi na Malezi Bora (UMATI), Tanzania- [www.umati.or.tz](http://www.umati.or.tz)
- » Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), Tanzania - [www.cdftz.org](http://www.cdftz.org)
- » Chipua Institute for Social Transformation, Tanzania- [www.chipua.org](http://www.chipua.org)
- » Girls 2 Girls Empowerment Movement (G2G), Sierra Leone
- » Girls of Dignity World, Liberia
- » Haikal Foundation, Sierra Leone - [www.haikalfoundationssierraleone.org](http://www.haikalfoundationssierraleone.org)
- » Planned Parenthood Association of Liberia (PPAL)
- » Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone (PPASL)
- » Purim African Youth Development Platform (PAYDP), Ghana - [www.paydp.org](http://www.paydp.org)
- » Sinyati Womens' Group, Kenya
- » UTU Mwanamke, Tanzania - [www.womensdignity.org](http://www.womensdignity.org)



# Financial Statement 2012-13

## Statement of Financial Activities for April 2012 – March 2013

Incoming Resources		£
Donations		44,671
Grants Receivable		708,421
Other Income		26,436
<b>Total</b>		<b>779,528</b>
Expenditure		£
Fundraising		3,116
Charitable Expenses		757,985
Governance		14,880
<b>Total</b>		<b>775,981</b>
Net Incoming Resources		3,547
Total Funds b/f		188,528
Total Funds c/f		192,075
Balance Sheet as at 31st March		£
Fixed Assets		4,743
Current Assets		759,360
Creditors		-572,028
Net Assets		192,075
Represented By:		£
Restricted Funds		124,409
Unrestricted Funds		67,666
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>192,075</b>

# FORWARD Team

## Patrons and Matrons

Baroness Gould  
Don Boyd  
Karon Monaghan QC

## Board of Trustees

Dr. Sohier Elneil – Chair  
Hanan Ibrahim - Vice Chair  
Lisa Smith - Treasurer  
Beatrice Mutali  
Catherine Willoughby  
Faduma Hussein  
Gibril Faal  
Jessica Farrand  
Dr. Yunes Teinaz

## Ambassadors

### Carlou D

Singer, guitarist and one of Senegal's greatest musical talents.



“The part of hip-hop which I have kept in my music is the courage to be direct.”  
- Carlou D

### Ade Daramy

Sierra Leonean journalist, broadcaster, social commentator, motivational speaker and media trainer.



“I agreed to become a FORWARD ambassador having grown up in Sierra Leone and known someone who passed away after going away to be initiated (FGM). I believe the battle is not solely to be fought by women and that men should also play a role in joining in the debate and raising awareness.”  
- Ade Daramy

### Bumi Thomas

Multidisciplinary artist inspired by her multicultural heritage. Her music and art represent the journey of a modern African creative in the diaspora.



“I became an ambassador of FORWARD to be proactive in channelling my creative talents to safeguarding women's rights and creating awareness about issues restricting the empowerment of women in society. FORWARD is such an innovative organisation that is skilled at implementing initiatives to promote women's empowerment and to place women's rights at the centre of socio-economic development in Africa and various communities in the diaspora. It is really an honour to serve and represent them.”  
- Bumi Thomas

## Gavin Weston

Multi-media artist, author of 'Harmattan', a novel focusing on the issue of child marriage, lecturer and inventor.



“Being invited to be an ambassador for FORWARD was a pivotal point in my life. I feel passionate and angry that thousands of child marriages occur every day. Change can happen, and we must continue to chip away, by whatever means, and make it happen again. We can and must end child marriage!  
- Gavin Weston

## Seye

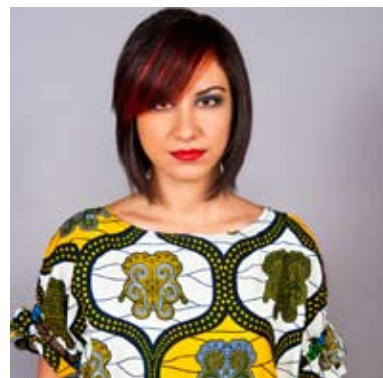
Making a name for himself playing guitar for big name pop artists such as Ellie Goulding, Paloma Faith, and The Noisettes, Seye now has a successful solo career. His music fuses Afrobeat with grime and guitars, rounded off with playful electronic productions. Most recently he has been part of Damon Albarn's Africa Express project.



“FORWARD is just that. FORWARD. One of the few organisations trying to take an African issue from the past and move on. FGM and child marriage are horrible things that affect people all over the world and the fact that FORWARD are there for young ladies going through that is amazing. I wanted to help spread the message as soon as I found out about them. Let's keep moving... – Seye

## Sinem Bilen-Onabanjo

Journalist, photographer, publicist, former English teacher.



“I feel it is my responsibility to use my position and skills for the greater benefit of womankind, and humankind at large, by helping support women and girl children around the world through FORWARD.  
- Sinem Bilen-Onabanjo

# Staff

Naana Otoo-Oyortey, MBE – Executive Director  
Elizabeth Gezahegn King – Africa Programme Manager  
Sanuba Din – Finance and Admin Manager (left in 2013)  
Naomi Reid – Projects and Events Manager  
Rita Buhanda – Community Programme Coordinator (left 2013)  
Yvette Robbin-Coker – Training & Development Coordinator  
Saria Khalifa – Youth Programme Lead  
Maria Aden – Community Outreach Support Officer  
Gifty Saba – Finance and Administrative Assistant (left 2013)  
Rita Janani - Executive Assistant (until August 2013) – Reception and Office Assistant  
Dina Baky – Youth Programme Officer  
Nadia Gahakwa – Youth Programme Assistant  
Kekeli Kpognon – Head of UK Programmes  
Rukayah Sarumi – Campaigns and Advocacy Manager  
Zara Mahdi – Africa Programme Project Coordinator (Sierra Leone)  
Bisrat Yigletu - Interim Community Programme Coordinator (left in 2013)  
Deborah Richards – Interim Senior Finance Officer  
Fosdicka Crankson – Senior Finance Officer  
Wossenyelesh Kifle – Africa Programme Officer  
Em Williams – Youth Programme Officer, Bristol  
Alexandra Sinclair – Youth Programme Officer, Bristol (maternity cover)  
Layla Ismael – Community Development Worker, Bristol  
Naima Ibrahim – Community Development Officer

# Interns and volunteers

Becky Withey  
Deeqa Ahmed  
Elise Van Zeeland  
Foluke Cole  
Frances Berry  
Grace Avoti  
Grace Pollard  
Jane Murdoch  
Jennifer Njeri Muturi  
Lachelle Roddy  
Llianne McDermott  
Mariam Conteh  
Mary Macia  
Mirela Hajric  
Rebecca Germano  
Seble Alemu  
Tara Blake  
Zoe Henry



## Volunteer/Intern voices

“I am passionate about the eradication of FGM so being part of a team who works to safeguard women’s sexual health is an honour. My role, as a youth programme intern, is also fulfilling as it is teaching me many aspects of research that I was hoping to learn. It was also great meeting and working with all [the FORWARD staff]. I have learnt a great amount, and I have been greatly inspired by all of your dedication and passion for the job [FORWARD] does.

– Seble Alemu

“FORWARD is a fantastic organisation full of really hardworking and enthusiastic people carrying out great work. [...] I was given lots of opportunities to attend events and training and was given a good insight into the work of the teams I was working for. [...] I have enjoyed all of my time at FORWARD. [...] Thank you for a fantastic experience!

– Grace Pollard

“Working among a site that is full of women with good energy and great goals has been extremely motivating for me. I enjoyed being surrounded by everyone because they were so friendly and kind and extremely

accommodating. I feel like [FORWARD] is a very powerful organisation that is making world changes for the greater good. [...] I am extremely happy that I was placed at FORWARD. [...] Thank you so much, you have done more for me than I would be able to express in words. [...] I thoroughly enjoyed working in an NGO and fighting for human rights, especially in FGM and FM because these topics are crucial but underrated; I liked it so much that I may have decided to pursue a career in human rights law, which is a huge take-away experience, for me personally. I am thankful for the opportunity and sincerely value everybody’s kindness.

– Mirela

“I have enjoyed every aspect of my placement in FORWARD [...] I felt that the FORWARD team is positive and they work well individually and collectively.

– Mariam Conteh

“When I started my internship at FORWARD I thought I knew a fair bit about FGM and harmful traditional practices but within my first hour I had learnt something new. Through conducting research, chatting over lunch with colleagues and attending focus groups with community members, I felt that I was constantly learning. The internship allowed me to meet

like-minded passionate people. The Youth Advocates Training (which anyone can join) was particularly enjoyable and complimented the internship perfectly.

– Becky Withey



“The experience went far beyond my expectations. I learned a wealth of information about UK law and women’s initiatives for gender justice.

– Lachelle Roddy



“I really enjoyed working with diaspora women on such a ‘hot-topic’. The knowledge they have, and shared with me, made me realize how complex FGM and FM are, and how difficult they are to tackle in our modern society. The atmosphere at FORWARD gave me the opportunity to support the team wherever I could, and also motivated me to read and study more about all the topics FORWARD is covering.

– Elise van Zeeland



# Thank you

FORWARD would live to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported our work in any capacity over the past year. We are deeply grateful for all of your support and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the coming year.

A special thank you goes to our funders, both individual givers, individuals who have fundraised for us and the major Trusts, Foundations and organisation. Without you all our work would not be possible:

- » Amnesty International Ireland
- » BBC Children in Need
- » Big Lottery-Awards for All
- » Bristol City Council
- » Catapult
- » Comic Relief
- » European Commission Daphne III Funding Programme
- » European Commission Europe Aid
- » Home Office- Crime Innovation Fund
- » Human Dignity Foundation
- » John Lyon's Charity
- » Lankelly Chase Foundation
- » London Councils
- » Matrix Chambers
- » Rosa
- » The Alan and Babette Sainsbury Charitable Fund
- » The Body Shop Foundation
- » The City Bridge Trust
- » The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- » The Sigrid Rausing Trust
- » The Women's Resource Centre (WRC) & The Women's Health and Equality Consortium (WHEC)
- » Trust for London

Together we can keep up the fight to safeguard the health, rights and dignity of African women and girls.

# What can you do to support the work of FORWARD?

There are several ways in which you can help change lives and achieve a safer and healthier future for African women and girls. Please contact FORWARD for further information or to discuss your interest. Here are just a few ways that you can get involved:

- Raise awareness in your local area and within your community
- Become a supporter or member of FORWARD
- Fundraise for FORWARD
- Make a regular or one off donation to FORWARD
- Join our Young People Speak Out programme for training, to gain skills in mentoring, advocacy and more. Please contact our Youth Programme for more information [youth@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:youth@forwarduk.org.uk)

To donate towards FORWARD's work please visit:

1. [www.justgiving.com/forwarduk](http://www.justgiving.com/forwarduk)
2. [www.charitychoice.co.uk](http://www.charitychoice.co.uk) and search for FORWARD to donate.

Please contact FORWARD for more information, materials and support.

# Contact us

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FORWARD is a UK registered charity. Charity Registration number: 292403  
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