



# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

DRIVING SOCIAL CHANGE: COMMUNICATING OUR MESSAGE CREATIVELY



Thank you to Farida Makki for the front cover artwork 'The Doer' from her series of 'Tahour Triptych'.

Tahour triptych is a visual exploration of community centred empowerment. It tells the story of the Doer, the Done and the Doted. These 'villagers' may look happy, sad, powerful. There is a hidden hopefulness and optimism, there is a dignity and despair.

Each portrait shows an historic perspective of FGM:

- The Done female has been an Egyptian, African, Victorian, slave (Page 49)
- The Doer female/male a medic, midwife, shaman, wise woman, healer
- The Doted is the man, slave owner, Victorian husband, groom, the village (Page 6)

They are bound together in the name of purity, sanity, social standing, protection, love...IT TAKES A VILLAGE is an attempt not to judge, but to talk, to understand, to share knowledge, to promote human rights, to empower.

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# REFLECTIONS

## FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For 35 years FORWARD has employed innovative approaches to engage with African communities affected by multiple forms of violence against women and girls. This year, we have observed a heightened and stronger level of engagement with communities.

This report celebrates our approach to creating a diverse, multi-channel platform using the arts, new media and new voices to inspire and encourage social change across the UK, Africa and Europe.

For example, in March 2018, we premiered *Uncomfortable Conversations: A Letter to my Husband*, a short film directed by Kabung Lomodong, FORWARD's Programme Support Officer. It follows Sara – an expectant mother who bravely confronts the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM) with her husband ahead of the arrival of their daughter. This short film continues to provide a platform for reflection, collaboration and community building. The script, as with all our messages is written from the voice of the community; using real life testimonies of FGM survivors and their families shared with us in a series of focus groups for last year's theatre production *Uncomfortable Conversations in a Foreign Land*. This creative space allowed men, women and youth affected by FGM to express the pain of the journey of survival; and their passion for an end to FGM.

We cast Mahasin Abu, FORWARD's Community Support Worker, and Sudanese actors who brought their own cultural perspectives, which were affectionately relatable to many in the audience. Met with a five minute standing ovation at the premiere, Sara's story resonated deeply with the audience as it was not just her story– but also theirs. Shared with enthusiasm on social media, the highly anticipated screening event brought together the Sudanese community in a way we had never observed. Men and women, husband and wife, father and daughter, mother and son all came together in large numbers to share and exchange views and experiences on what still is a highly gendered and taboo topic.



The success of Uncomfortable Conversations: A Letter to my Husband is an example of best practice in social change communication: marrying authentic storytelling to explore key issues; using inspiring art and new media to create dialogue and community ownership. These pillars can be seen in several of our projects in the year; including our Musicians Unite to End FGM (MUTEFGM) tour supported by Arts Council England and headlined by conscious blues musician Corey Harris; MyBodyMypower a 16 days of Activism Instagram campaign spearheaded by our TuWezeshe Fellows; and our Hidden Scars Art Exhibition featuring artists from affected communities, amongst others. These diverse and creative channels of engagement continue to help us reach new audiences across the globe.

In the coming years we will continue to deliver innovative, creative projects that facilitate and encourage an interactive exchange of dialogue with communities; which will continue to inspire, educate and mobilise audiences to take a stand in the fight to end violence against women and girls.

We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to the communities, musicians, artists, filmmakers, photographers and young advocates we have collaborated with this year and who have used their knowledge, talent and expertise to present our vision of a world where every African woman and girl is free from the fear of violence.



Dr Sohier Elneil  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Naana Otoo-Oyortey  
Executive Director

# ABOUT FORWARD

FORWARD is an African-led, women's rights organisation. Our work focuses on the issues of female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) that impact on the health, dignity and wellbeing of African women and girls.

## OUR VISION

A day when African girls and women will live in dignity, are healthy, have choices and enjoy equal rights free from fear of violence.

## OUR APPROACH

Our work champions women's rights on many fronts: from working with communities to bring about change, to equipping health, education and social care professionals to respond appropriately; from providing evidence for policymakers to holding politicians to account. Our expertise and experience at community, national and international levels makes us the trusted, go-to organisation for issues affecting African women in the UK and diaspora.

Right: The Doted from Tahour Triptych by Farida Makki





# WHY FORWARD EXISTS

For 35 years, FORWARD has been working to end female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage, physical and sexual violence and related maternal health issues in Africa and the diaspora community. These human rights abuses are an assault on the dignity of African women and girls; ultimately limiting their ability to reach their full potential.



# 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."

IT IS ESTIMATED  
THAT UP TO **200 MILLION**  
GIRLS AND WOMEN WORLDWIDE HAVE UNDERGONE FGM.



UNICEF, (2016)

THERE ARE AN  
ESTIMATED **137,000**

WOMEN & GIRLS AFFECTED BY FGM IN  
**ENGLAND & WALES**

MACFARLANE, A. &  
DORKENOO, E. (2015)

**60,000** GIRLS  
UNDER **15**

ARE AT RISK OF FGM IN THE UK

MACFARLANE, A. &  
DORKENOO, E. (2015)



# CHILD MARRIAGE & CHILD MOTHERHOOD

Child marriage refers to both formal and informal marriage of any child under the age of 18 years. While child marriage affects both sexes, girls are disproportionately affected by child marriage and child motherhood. Girls living in poverty are less likely to be aware of their rights and have little to no access to opportunities and education, making them more vulnerable to early pregnancy and the resulting complications.

Child marriage and motherhood compromises the overall development of young women, leaving them socially isolated; with little education, few skills or opportunities to achieve their full potential.

**THERE ARE CURRENTLY  
700 MILLION  
WOMEN WORLDWIDE  
WHO WERE MARRIED AS  
CHILDREN**

**GIRLS NOT BRIDES (2016)**





# MATERNAL HEALTH

Whilst motherhood is often a positive and fulfilling experience, for many women and girls in many countries in Africa, it is inextricably linked to suffering, ill-health and even death. Those in rural areas and poor communities with limited access to health care are most affected.

The major direct causes of severe maternal injury or death include: haemorrhaging, infections, high blood pressure, unsafe abortions and obstructed labour (WHO, 2016). These risk factors are increased in pregnancies of young girls, especially when certain types of FGM have been performed; and in environments where women do not have access to health clinics. The result being that childbirth takes place in unsafe and unsupported environments.

FORWARD's work on maternal health focuses primarily on obstetric fistula – a debilitating consequence of prolonged labour with no access to emergency obstetric care.

**OVER ONE MILLION  
WOMEN ARE ESTIMATED  
TO BE SUFFERING WITH  
OBSTETRIC FISTULA**

(LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE, 2013)

**YET FEWER  
THAN 20,000  
FISTULA SURGERIES  
TAKE PLACE EACH YEAR.**

GLOBAL  
FISTULA MAP





# AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICES OF CHANGE

## EMPOWERING YOUNG AFRICAN WOMEN LEADERS

TuWezeshe Akina Dada (Empowering Our Sisters in Swahili) Young Women's Leadership and Empowerment programme has continued to spearhead FORWARD's work nurturing a new generation of bold and resilient African women leaders. The project operates in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somaliland, England and Wales and offers a weekend residential leadership programme which includes: advocacy and campaign skills training, mentoring and access to sub-grants to develop and implement self-initiated projects. Through FORWARD's social media platforms, participants are able to connect with advocates from across the world to collaborate and discover the power of female solidarity.

**Below:** The Ugandan fellows and mentors.

"Because of the training I now feel empowered and unstoppable, I now clearly know that being a girl is not an obstacle for me to be anything I want. In fact it is an advantage to me because I can easily help other girls like me because we share the same background."

Euphonia

TuWezeshe participant, Tanzania







The London fellows and mentors.

1

UK TuWezeshe participant Rochelle and the girl's network she created visited parliament in March 2018 to discuss race, politics and FGM policy. Her project focuses on the political mobilisation of young African women for which she delivered a series of workshops on FGM, sexual and reproductive health and political rights to members of her girl's network. The girl's network is scheduled to meet University of Cambridge student and YouTube vlogger Courtney Daniella to discuss women's empowerment.

2

TuWezeshe Fellow Jernene was featured as a panel speaker at the University of Liverpool Iberian Week's screening of *Pelo Malo* (Bad Hair) for which she gave commentary on the politics and social significance of Black hair. Black hair – she argued, has been stigmatised by western standards of beauty and is in fact a representation of self-care and resistance: both vital constructs in social change and leadership. Jernene has also been featured on Dropout radio where she spoke on feminism, race and creativity.

63

young women have enrolled on the fellowship across six countries

37

women of African heritage with expertise from diverse fields such as law and marketing were chosen to offer technical assistance, moral support and mentoring

41

young women were awarded sub-grants of up to £500 to implement social action projects challenging Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV) in their communities

12

young women have formed the Young Women's Advisory Panel to provide continuous feedback on the TuWezeshe Programme, to ensure we are constantly listening to and acting on opportunities to adapt and evolve the programme

16

young women in Tanzania showcased their social action projects at a girls Symposium, reaching 95 people from the community including their peers, teachers and police



# #MYBODYMYPower

Our UK Fellows created the hugely successful #MyBodyMyPower social media campaign for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence combining striking images of young black women and their reflections on how race, class, disability and religion impact how they experience sexual harassment.

Here is a selection of the #MyBodyMyPower campaign.



"'My body my power' means not being the world's standard of beauty, and being my own. I myself am enough. I am the way that God intended and no one can take that away from me."

Flakes



"My body and mind are my strength. I believe in solidarity, empathy and compassion. It's how you show your power and empower others. Women of all backgrounds need to remember that bodily autonomy is not given to us and cannot be taken from us. It's something we own."

Jabs



It's important that we don't divide ourselves in terms of who wears what, or who looks like what, because the ideas we have amongst ourselves, the ones that segregate us, are a result of the common male influences and misogyny women experience. There is a lack of empathy in communities – in terms of religion, in how we look, in terms of our preferences. Empathy is something we need to lean on; without empathy we can't succeed.

Hafsa





"The whole idea of reclaiming your body and owning your body and sexuality is especially important for women, in particular young black girls. Our bodies have been brutalised so much throughout history by white supremacy, so I think it's important that we talk a lot about that with our daughters and sons. Not only is a black body not up for consumption, it's to be celebrated and to be praised."

Cherina



"It's important for us to reclaim our bodies because we don't owe them to anyone else, they are ours. We don't have to make excuses for the actions of other people. When we feel uncomfortable we don't have to be ashamed of it and we don't have to justify those types of feelings."

Marie



"I think it's about time that young girls stand up together and break the western stereotype of beauty.

Beauty is not defined by our status, size or complexion, it is defined by who we are, how we decide to look and how we make that come across. Our size does not define us, and we are beautiful and powerful whatever shape, size or colour that we are."

Natalie



"Love yourself unconditionally and live fearlessly with all your mind, body and soul. No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

Laura



"Taking ownership of your body is important. I take ownership of every curve, every shape, and define the beauty of my body within myself. There is no set definition for beauty when it comes to a woman's body."

Ukaylah



# FORWARD

## AT EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS

The European Development Days 2017 focused on Investing in Development putting special emphasis in the three main crosscutting issues: gender equality, youth and private sector. FORWARD had a stall at the main event and also was able to give a presentation of our work to some of the forums thousands of visitors.







# YOUTH COUNCIL ADVISING OUR YOUTH-LED WORK

In September 2017 we launched our Youth Advisory Council, which is made up of a group of 12 young women from Black, Minority, Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) backgrounds. Their key role is to act in an advisory capacity to the Youth and Schools Programmes. Their strategic input, ideas and feedback ensures that our work is continually shaped by the experiences and insight of young people. They are instrumental in the planning of events, campaigns, creation of resources, and engaging with policy makers.

**Below:** Members of the Youth Advisory Council





# CASE STUDY:

## EMPOWERED YOUNG WOMAN LEADING CHANGE!

I joined the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) as having been involved in a lot of youth activist work with FORWARD over the last few years I am really passionate about the work the organisation does. I've learnt that absolutely anyone can raise their voice against harmful practices, the voices of young people really matter in this area and there are so many creative tools at our disposal to campaign and advocate on behalf of those who often lack the ability to raise their voice.

I've grown so much in confidence through being involved with the work of FORWARD and the YAC. Since becoming involved in youth activism work in this area a few years ago I've now performed a poem I wrote as a creative writing process with FORWARD three times in front of live audiences - something I wouldn't have dreamed possible in the past! The last occasion at We Too was definitely one of my proudest moments.

I will use the skills that I have gained from being involved with FORWARD and the YAC to keep raising my voice and having open discussions about topics that people might find uncomfortable to speak about. I will also encourage other young people to get involved in similar work as I firmly believe everyone has something to give and contribute. By far what I've enjoyed the most is all the incredible women I've had the pleasure and honour of working with, whether that's the staff at FORWARD, the YAC, other women from the youth programme or people who attend the events - everyone inspires me so much and will continue to do so in the future!

**ANJELI**

Youth Advisory Council member





# WETOO

## YOUTH-LED ARTS EVENT

We Too was an evening of empowering spoken word from our network of youth activists – interwoven with head wrap demonstrations and henna tattoos, food and live music sets from hip hop duo **Poetic Pilgrimage** and UK rapper **Sharna Cane**. This event was also the launch of our Young Womens Hub which will be a safe space for Black Asian Minority Ethnic and Refugee (BAMER) women to meet, network and participate in discussions exploring all aspects of their lived experiences.



UK Rapper  
Sharna Cane

A poster for the 'We Too' event. It features a portrait of Sharna Cane wearing a black beret. The text on the poster includes: 'We Too', 'All women coming FORWARD. Turn up in your bold colours!', 'Join us for the launch of FORWARD's Young Women's Hub an evening of empowering spoken word, interwoven with live music from Sharna Cane and Poetic Pilgrimage. An opportunity to network and indulge in a bit of self-care with our Afroscapes, henna and headwrap demos.', 'Tuesday 19th December', 'DOORS 6.00PM (FOOD &amp; NETWORKING)', 'SHOWTIME 7pm-11pm', 'Venue @ Surya', '154-156 Pentonville Rd. London N1 9JL', 'Tel: 0207 541 0030', 'www.suryalondon.com', 'TICKETS £7 ADV', and '£10 ON THE DOOR £5 STUDENT TICKETS'.



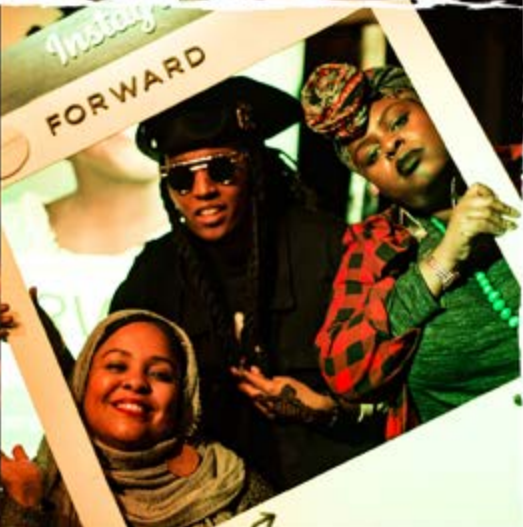
Hip hop duo  
Poetic Pilgrimage

"Honestly I really liked the vibe of the event. It was every engaging. I'd never heard of FORWARD but found myself resonating with the cause and speeches- thinking this is something I would love to be part of."

Safia, We Too attendee







# SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT

*I learned to keep  
my body safe*

*Primary school student*

*I wanted to say a huge thank you for the informative and insightful session you have delivered to the staff this morning. They are all extremely grateful and feel their knowledge has developed considerably. My PSHE lead will definitely be in touch to put dates for next academic year in to the diary for student sessions. Many thanks again.*

*Thomas Knyvett School, London*



OUR SCHOOLS PROGRAMME CONTINUES  
TO FLOURISH HAVING REACHED OVER  
35,000 YOUNG PEOPLE SINCE 2013:

**8045** students reached through 183  
student sessions 2017-2018

**1865** staff reached through 64 staff  
sessions in 2017-2018

I learnt today that FGM is illegal  
in the UK and that it is a mistake.

Primary school student

I really hope FGM is stopped.  
Everyone should have human rights and  
girls should feel safe and comfortable.  
This session was awesome!

Year 6 Boy, Stonebridge Primary School

I liked the bit when we had to  
write inside the body of the characters  
saying what their rights were

Year 6 Girl, Stonebridge Primary School

One of the best training days I have  
ever been on in terms of quality,  
resources and knowledge. Lots of practical  
information that I can pass on.

Training the Trainers Participant.  
Manchester



# CREATIVE EDUCATION SESSIONS IN SCHOOLS

We empower young people to take the lead in educating their peers about FGM. By supporting them to work collaboratively, get creative and build new skills, we nurture young bold voices to articulate their rights to protection from FGM with confidence.

15 students (Eltham Hill School) 10 students (Woodhouse College) received 8 weeks training in:

- COMMUNICATION • PROJECT AND EVENT PLANNING
- CAMPAIGNING AND ADVOCACY SKILLS • BUDGETING

Using their newly learned skills, the students at each school designed and delivered awareness-raising campaigns for years 7-10 which culminated in to Enrichment days featuring:

## WOODHOUSE COLLEGE:

- Information stalls and boards
- Fundraising through badge and T-shirt sales designed by students
- Vulva cupcakes decorating competition (Donate and Decorate)
- Video interviews of students discussing their knowledge of FGM
- Interactive discussion points and polls





## ELTHAM HILL:

- Canvas bag decorating
- Poster making
- Poetry
- Vulva cupcake making
- Singing
- Drama

**Left:** Students at Eltham Hill School deliver an FGM session



The young people facilitated and led all the days' activities, giving them a huge sense of pride and achievement.

**Above:** Woodhouse College student with her vulva cupcake creation.

**Left:** Students at Woodhouse College take part in an enrichment day.

# CASE STUDY:

## USING KNOWLEDGE TO POSITIVELY INFLUENCE YOUNG MINDS

In 2016, concerns were raised when a year 5 boy at a London school confided that his family secrets should always stay within the family, regardless of the severity, impact or danger involved. He was adamant that individuals should never approach Social Care as they only cause more harm.

In June 2017, FORWARD returned to deliver refresher workshops to Year 6 pupils. During the safe and unsafe secrets segment, it was encouraging to see that the young boy now had a very different perspective on seeking support and advice. He volunteered answers to the question "when is it okay to break a promise?" with "when someone is being physically abused or beaten". He later visited the facilitator during the drop in session to discuss his situation, explaining the progress that had been made within his domestic setting and that he now understands it is okay to reach out for help. This incident signified the importance of engaging in these conversations with young people at an early age.

"Overall the day was filled with fun activities, great discussions and hard work. Many students and teachers were excited to see the involvement of everyone in spreading awareness about FGM. I learnt many skills such as: organisation, time management, leadership and boost in confidence."

Eltham Hill School participant

"I thought that the event provided a positive outcome and impact to younger years in boosting their confidence enough to discuss FGM with their peers. I thought that us as a team worked and communicated well together."

Eltham Hill School participant



# OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH GLOBAL PARTNERS

An integral part of FORWARD's holistic approach to addressing our key issues is engaging with and building the capacity of local and often women-led organisations focussing on social change in Africa. We build their technical capacity, knowledge and reach, by enabling them to collaborate to create wider social impact that is sustainable. We have worked with and continue to develop relationships with eight partners across, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Tanzania, Somaliland and Uganda in the past year.

In many communities, child pregnancy and motherhood is directly linked to female genital mutilation (FGM), obstetric fistula, child marriage, and exclusion from school. Yet child motherhood remains a neglected issue on the international development agenda. FORWARD's Africa programmes seek to promote the rights of girls at risk and child mothers, as they are often the most vulnerable of girls.



# IN TANZANIA

**\*27** IN EVERY  
**100** GIRLS



FALL PREGNANT BETWEEN THE AGES OF **15-19**  
WITH THE FIGURE RISING TO **37%** IN RURAL AREAS  
AN ESTIMATED\*\* **80000** GIRLS DROP OUT OF  
SCHOOL EVERY YEAR  
DUE TO PREGNANCY



# TANZANIA

## SUPPORTING CHILD MOTHERS: DEVELOPING YOUNG WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Working with our partners Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), we have trained child mothers and girls at risk of child marriage on human rights, vocational and entrepreneurial skills – alongside advocacy skills, so that they can challenge harmful traditional practices within their communities.

- 25** child mothers learned about different forms of gender-based violence, including FGM and child marriage.
- 25** trained young mothers received revolving loans to support their chosen economic activity.
- 13** child mothers from Berege and Kibakwe wards received 2 pigs each and started pig keeping enterprises.
- 12** child mothers from Mpwapwa Town, Pwaga Wards and Munguwi Village were provided with materials to help run their mini restaurants.
- 117** (55 Male, 62 Female) community members learned about violence against children and positive parenting methods through 16 community outreach sessions conducted by the young mothers we work with.





# CASE STUDY:

## CHILD MOTHERS REALISING THEIR RIGHTS

I fell pregnant when I was just 16 years old. My employer fired me, saying that I would have mood swings brought on by my pregnancy which would lose her customers. To make matters worse my aunts and uncles told me I had brought shame on the family and so they abandoned me.

I have changed so much from the girl I was; in March 2017 I heard about Children's Dignity Forum (CDF) and FORWARD and they trained me as one of their PEER Researchers exploring the difficult issue of teenage pregnancy in Mpwapwa district. The finished report is something I am very proud of.

I have gained so much confidence since working with CDF/FORWARD. I learned about sexual and reproductive health (SRH), life skills and completed the entrepreneurship and leadership training. I've become a strong agent of change by educating young girls, both in school and out of school about the impact of teen pregnancy. I'm also the Chairperson of CDF's Out of School Girls Club in Mpwapwa.

The entrepreneurship training I received from CDF/FORWARD has given me the knowledge and skills to start a business, identifying viable business ideas and managing business. They gave me start-up capital and with this support I run a mini restaurant. My hope for the future is to return to school to build a better career.

### ZAWADI

Supporting Child Mothers Development  
and Rights Project recipient, Tanzania





We have also worked with our partners Umati on the **Haki Ya Binti (The Rights of our Daughters)** project educating members of the community to reject harmful traditional practices which limit girls' abilities to enjoy their rights to enjoy a more fulfilling life.

**113** young women are running active income generating initiatives – including sales of fish, vegetables and other food items, personal tailoring, batik and soap production.

**25** mentors were trained to support young women.

**1185** girls and young women developed leadership and confidence skills.

**1752** (874 males and 878 females) have increased awareness on violence against women and girls and are challenging discriminatory practices.

**119** professionals attended awareness sessions on girls' rights, laws and policies including teachers, health care professionals, police gender desks and community based organisations who are now collaborating to safeguard the rights of children.

**105** men and boys were engaged in dialogues on tackling gender based violence and violence against women and girls in Tarime District. 20 of them have volunteered to be champions in their respective communities.

**18** faith and traditional leaders joined as champions in their respective wards.



Above: Our Executive Director with young men who attended the launch of the Teenage Pregnancy Campaign in Tarime, October 2017.







After the entrepreneurship training, now I generate my own income by tailoring. I generate profit each week which is used to support my family and to buy Vitenge to make my business to grow.

Naomi, CDF Girls Club participant.





# CASE STUDY:

## TRANSFORMING CHILD BRIDES TO BECOME AGENTS OF CHANGE

My family forced me to undergo FGM so that I could be married off. I had to leave school. Then I was married off at age 10 to a Kurya man who was older than me. He was very violent, he used to beat me and treat me badly. I had to live with the violence for years fearing the consequence of leaving him.

Traditionally my father is expected to pay the bride price back to my husband if I left my husband. Once he beat me badly while I was pregnant, and was hospitalised and I lost my child. In my hospital bed, I decided not to

go back to him again and when I was discharged from hospital I went back to my parents and refused to return. Now I am staying with my parents doing small business.

I am a member of Nyumbani group in Matongo and I have received different trainings such as girls' rights, life skill and leadership. This enabled me to know my rights and build my confidence. Besides, I am a survivor of forced FGM and child marriage. So, I confidently speak against the practice to raise awareness in the community and enable parents, girls and communities in general to say NO to FGM and child marriage.

If FGM stops, it will give opportunity for girls to be girls and fulfil their academic dreams and their goals in life. I am now advocating against these practices along with my fellow network members.

**MARGARET**

18 Tanzania Haki ya Binti beneficiary





**SIERRA LEONE**

**HAS THE 7TH HIGHEST**

**TEENAGE PREGNANCY**

**RATE IN THE WORLD, 20-24**  
**WITH 38% WOMEN AGED**

**HAVING GIVEN BIRTH 18**  
**BEFORE THE AGE OF**



# SIERRA LEONE

DEVELOPING RIGHTS-BASED AND EMPOWERING APPROACHES  
TO TO MOBILISE ACTION TO END FGM (DREAM)

## PROJECT AIM:

to build a protective environment for girls to be free from FGM, child marriage and sexual and gender based violence. FORWARD is working with two partners: Advocacy Movement Network (AMNET) and Girl2Girl Empowerment Movement (G2G).

**IN SIERRA LEONE WITH AN 88% PREVALENCE OF FGM, THE DREAM PROJECT HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ATTITUDES OF YOUTH, THEIR PARENTS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS.**

**Right:** Young women from our DREAM project.





# REALISING THE DREAM

## ■ INCREASED PROFILE OF PARTNERS

Partners AMNet awarded 'Local NGO of the Year 2017' by the Coalition of Sierra Leone's Chief Executives.

## ■ CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS ENFORCED

In Lumpa community (Freetown), Soweis (cutters) are now required to seek permission from the Tribal Heads to ensure those cut are above 18.

## ■ SOWEI ATTITUDES TRANSFORMED

A Sowe (cutter) has started working with our DREAM partners against FGM after receiving educational sessions on the health effects of FGM and the functionality of the clitoris.

## ■ YOUNG PEOPLE EMPOWERED

7 sexual harassment cases in schools were managed by the leadership of the youths.



As a young woman my intention was to go through FGM so I can be like the others but I wanted to wait until I am 21 years. But in one of the meetings with G2G and parents early this year, I came to understand the harm FGM can cause to a woman, I made up my mind not to be initiated.

Young woman, Freetown



# DREAM IN NUMBERS

I thank God for my presence here today, I have a 16-year-old girl who is in JSS3, our plan was to have her initiated this summer after taking her BECE exams, now that I know what girls and women go through, from this meeting I am going to engage my wife and our families to stop this practice.

Father from a Brook Fields community meeting held by G2G.

**2908** young people benefited from trainings, advocacy action and network meetings.

**162** frontline professionals received training on FGM, harmful traditional practices (HTP's) and advocacy actions.

**170** Children Forum Network members received transport and stationary support to conduct school-based and community outreach.

**299** Male and female community members attended awareness sessions run by girls and young women from the project.

**159** Network member's families undertook house to house awareness sessions in their communities.







# TRANSFORMING AFRICAN YOUNG WOMEN INTO LEADERS IN KENYA, TANZANIA AND UGANDA

FORWARD's TuWezeshe Akina Dada Project staff spent the first few weeks in July 2017 in Uganda and Kenya, where we rolled out the first in a series of leadership trainings. The training was facilitated with our local partners Akina Mama Wa Afrika and the Young Women's Leadership Institute.

**36** young women received training on a range of topics including understanding legal frameworks and human rights. Following the training the young women have been allocated grants to implement social action in their communities. Each young woman will be supported in the campaign by a female TuWezeshe mentor.

"We want to be a movement, we want to do great things. Women are greater than the gender roles and ridiculous limits society set for them."

TuWezeshe fellow.

"My mentor has been encouraging and kind. Her willingness to share her own experience and wisdom while listening closely are all the qualities that I've learned from her. Beyond that as a mentor, she has always tried to help me a better version of myself. For instance, I used to be shy, but now I am confident, and a better public speaker through her connecting me to a public speaking coach."

Nakabugo Happiness,  
TuWezeshe Fellow, Uganda.







# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH AFRICAN DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

"The African diaspora in the UK are significant contributors to social change in Africa but their work is often overlooked by funders, non-governmental organisations, governments and the business sector."

Kekeli Kpognon, Diaspora Programme Manager, FORWARD



# AFRICAN DIASPORA WOMEN'S NETWORK

Together with Make Every Woman Count we brought together 14 diaspora organisations and 10 consultants for a roundtable discussion on how diaspora organisations can implement the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls). Together we decided to establish the African Diaspora Women's Network, a space for African diaspora women's rights organisations and activists to connect, share and develop strategies so that our voices are heard and shape the various international agendas affecting African women and girls. FORWARD is the secretariat for the Network and facilitates quarterly meetings.

## AFRICAN DIASPORA DOING DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The African Diaspora Doing Development event with AFFORD, the African Technology Business Network and iSpace saw 80 leading diaspora and development organisations brought together for interactive workshops and talks covering a diversity of topics from women, technology and innovation in Africa to Partnership work with diaspora organisations. It was a much needed opportunity for African diaspora organisations who have long been committed to the economic, social and gender development of the continent, to network, showcase their expertise and enhance their visibility.







## SIERRA LEONE UK DIASPORA: AN OPPORTUNITY TO DREAM

'An Opportunity to DREAM' was the first FORWARD event exclusively targeting the Sierra Leonean diaspora in the UK. Held in partnership with Project Acei (founded by award winning FGM campaigner Alimatu Dimonekene), the event shared insights from our DREAM project in Sierra Leone and encouraged the diaspora, especially youth and men to mobilise for the end of violence against Sierra Leonean women and girls.

## AFRICAN DIASPORA WOMEN'S FORUM:

**A CONVERSATION ON CULTURE, SEX AND SOCIETY**

This event provided a safe space for intimate conversations between three generations of African diaspora women on how their cultures and diverse experiences have impacted their sexuality in private and public spaces. Women discussed sex, patriarchy, harmful traditional practices and their acts of resistance.

"I loved the cross section of ages, faiths, backgrounds and more. Not just one perspective being pushed."

Participant

"I loved the Q&A where we got a chance to hear from so many other women."

Participant





"We need the different generations to come together to take a stand against FGM."

Participant



"Fab facilitator! And interactive and fun."

Participant



# ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES IN THE UK



# LOOKING BACK ON 10 YEARS OF PIONEERING WORK WITH COMMUNITIES IN BRISTOL

In September 2017, FORWARD marked 10 years of community engagement using the **Bristol Model** to end FGM which is now nationally as a best practice approach. Developed in partnership with partners Refugee Women of Bristol, the model focuses on safeguarding girls at risk through a coordinated multi-agency approach – through traditional channels, social media, young people and men. An integral part of the model is the empowerment of FGM affected communities, who are rightly recognised as having an active role in ending the practice in one generation. The report '**A Big Wake Up Call**' tracks our work in the decade. We launched the report in Bristol to a room of professional and community members.

"The more we address this issue the more the community feel empowered and not like victims."

Somali woman (PEER Summary report 2017)

The Somali community's attitude towards FGM has changed dramatically over the years, mostly for the better. Our community is acknowledging that FGM is harmful, abusive and a violation of human rights. More people know that FGM is cultural and doesn't benefit anyone.

PEER Study participant, 2017, Bristol.





# COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS LEADING CHANGE IN AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ACROSS HOUNSLOW

We recruited two community champions of Sudanese and Somali heritage, speaking three additional languages, who assisted us with our outreach work across Hounslow borough. Together we achieved the following:

- 2** FGM awareness sessions held with 67 Somali and Egyptian community members.
- 35** women reached in collaboration with the United Somali Community Organisation.
- 33** men and women reached through 6 FGM sessions held at Bridge Link.
- 86** women received one to one information and advice in the community.

**FORWARD** in partnership with Hounslow council, Westminster and Chelsea Trust set up a specialist midwife clinic in West Middlesex Hospital.

**43** women received one to one emotional and informational support at the FGM Clinic, West Middlesex Hospital through working with the specialist FGM midwife.





# FILM SCREENING OF THE CUT IN HOUNSLOW

We held a film screening of Al Jazeera's *The Cut: Exploring FGM* to the community including an after film panel discussion.

**Below:** Panel discussion at The Cut Film Screening 2018. Left to right: Toks Okeniyi, FORWARD, Angela Muruli, FORWARD, Keryn Jalli, Hounslow Council Community Safety Officer (VAWG & Hate Crime) and Councillor Candice Atterton.







# KEEPING OUR GIRLS SAFE

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS IN SUDANESE SCHOOL

We held our first event at a Sudanese Supplementary Saturday School, based in London, this was attended by both Sudanese men and women. We had a panel who discussed topics including health, the UK law and safeguarding in the UK. The dialogue with the community and professionals was very positive; some women revealed that they had been affected by FGM and need support with dealing with the resulting issues. 88% felt the event was informative, engaging and useful. At least 80% understood that FGM is child abuse, harmful and illegal in the UK and felt more confident sharing their experiences with other people.

"I want to express my respect and I am with others very grateful of the service you do and the effort you make thanks again"

Attendee

Right: The Done from Tahour Triptych by Farida Makki







# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



**Above:** Participants at the film screening of *Uncomfortable Conversations: A Letter To My Husband*

**Left:** FORWARD hold a stall and do outreach work at Kenya in the Park, London.

**Below:** Participants at our Hounslow film screening of *'The Cut: Exploring FGM'*.

**Below:** Participants at an outreach session we delivered to community members at Streatham Library for International Day of the Girl 2017.





**Right:** FORWARD at Senegambia in the Park 2017 doing outreach with Senegalese and Gambian communities in London.

**Below:** Participants at the film screening of Uncomfortable Conversations: A Letter To My Husband



**Right:** Participants at an outreach session we delivered to community members at Streatham Library for International Day of the Girl 2017.





# COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND WOMEN'S HEALTH IN CROYDON

In collaboration with Mussibhe Rewbhe UK we delivered FGM leadership training sessions to community women in Croydon. Together, we explored topics including confidence building, self-care, healthy relationships, community engagement, and how to navigate taboo subjects when speaking with their peers and within their communities. Following the training, our graduates planned and delivered a workshop for women, utilising the knowledge and skills they gained.

10 women from Sierra Leone, Gambia, Senegal and Guinean heritage graduated from the training course. They then reached out to a further 14 women.



"The session was very interactive."

Attendee

"I've learnt how to approach the FGM affected communities without upsetting them."

Trainee

"I'm very happy to learn about women's health issues, now I can talk about it in my community."

Attendee

"Listening to other community champions has given me more confidence and I can go out and deliver."

Trainee

Left: Women from the training with FORWARD staff.



# WOMEN'S COFFEE MORNINGS

**59** women reached  
from communities  
from Sudan, Sierra Leone,  
Algeria and Egypt.

We hold regular coffee mornings for women from FGM affected communities to come to a safe space, share stories and be heard. This year our coffee morning topics have been directed by attendees. We covered safeguarding, the law and FGM, women's health and wellbeing, domestic violence, sexual health and relationships. We incorporated film, debate, guest speakers and specialist support from reproductive and mental health care professionals.







From April 2016-April 2017 there has been a 74% fall in the number of people receiving legal aid in civil and family cases, from 575,000 to 145,000. Consequently our legal advice clinic offers an increasingly vital service to vulnerable families.

# SUPPORT SERVICES



This year we expanded our support services to include free one-to-one counselling from a trained psychologist, and a free Legal Advice Clinic run in collaboration with Garden Court Chambers, inFrimGeMent, and University College London law students. Clients receive advice on matters ranging from FGM, Family and Immigration Law and violence against women and girls. Clinics run every six weeks.

"This week, I appeared at the High Court in London and was granted an FGM Protection Order to protect my daughter who is at serious risk of becoming a victim of FGM. She was abducted to Nigeria with her brother, by their mother. I can't thank you enough for seeing me at your legal clinic and putting me in touch with the family law barrister, whose advice I used to obtain the FGM order for my daughter. I intend to get this FGM prevention order reciprocated in Nigeria."

**Legal Advice Clinic client,  
father of 'at risk' girl.**



"When looking to partner with an organisation to set up a bespoke legal advice clinic – for women from FGM practising communities – FORWARD was the obvious choice. Their expertise in safeguarding women and young girls is second to none. FORWARD's staff and volunteers are some of the most committed advocates and I have found working with them to be extremely rewarding and a true pleasure.

I believe that FORWARD and iFrinGeMent have created a strong multi-agency approach, which will help to tackle FGM in the UK. Without FORWARD we wouldn't have been able to create situations where some of the most vulnerable in our society are able to access free, confidential, safe legal advice."

Sanjit Nagi, Co-Founder & Project Coordinator, iFrinGeMent



"I'd like to say thanks for the counselling support and financial support and for how you met me warmly, with smiles as if I was part of the family. A special thanks to my counsellor Dr Eiman Hussein for her care and support as a sister."

Counselling client

"From start to finish, there has been a high level of compassion, diligence and excellent customer service that reflects brilliantly on FORWARD's mission statement."

Counselling client





# TRAINING FOR ACTION

Informed by our extensive experience engaging with affected communities, our training programmes are designed to support frontline professionals responding to FGM and other forms of violence against women and girls. Using a participatory approach, the training raises awareness of the context these harmful practices occur; the physical, emotional and psychosocial impact on women and girls; and builds professionals' skills and confidence to effectively identify, respond to, safeguard and support at-risk individuals or groups.

This year saw the completion of a two-year Department of Education and Skills (DfES) funded project aimed at empowering professionals, front line staff and communities, with not just knowledge of their statutory duties, but also how to respond sensitively to cases of FGM.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 01** We are the only Open College Network (OCN) accredited course provider offering FGM training to professionals and frontline staff in the community.
- 02** Our OCN accredited course, open to both staff and external clients is Continuous Professional Development (CPD) certified.
- 03** In recognition of our expertise in the field, our team were invited by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to help develop FGM resources for the UK legal profession.
- 04** We presented our report 'Developing Progressive and sustainable Child Help lines to protect young people in Africa' at the Child Helpline Conference in Zimbabwe, hosted by Child Help Zimbabwe.

THIS YEAR WE HAVE TRAINED  
**1067** PROFESSIONALS  
OUTSIDE OF  
OUR SCHOOLS TRAININGS





**Below:** Our Training & Development Coordinator Yvette Robbin Cocker is greeted as she arrives to Zimbabwe for the Child Help Zimbabwe Conference.



"Thank you -It was lovely meeting you and collaborating with yourself and Mary. The day went well and it was a pleasure to have FORWARD deliver to local professionals."

Tina Simbo  
The Angelou Centre Dec 2017

"I am writing to say thank you personally and on behalf of the RCPH for your hard work in the development and delivery yesterday's FGM course. Initial feedback has been extremely positive."

Chris Nelson, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Nov 2017

"In over 26 years in the police that was one of the best training inputs I've had. You both handled the subject in a sensitive and very informative manner, and kept it light and relaxed, whilst getting across the vital importance of this work."

Michael Donaghy Detective

## UNITED TO END FGM (UEFGM) EUROPEAN KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM

In collaboration with the Bar Human Rights Committee of England we hosted the UK launch of The United to END FGM (UEFGM) European Knowledge Platform; a free-of charge online platform offering information and practical advice to professionals on female genital mutilation (FGM). The knowledge sharing platform includes: an e-learning course (covering Health, Asylum, Law Enforcement Police and Judicial, Social and Child Protection, Education and the role of the media). Available in nine languages, this country-specific information covering 11 EU member states,

as well as 'live knowledge' also includes webinars and an online discussion forum.

Access the platform at [www.uefgm.org](http://www.uefgm.org)





# **ARTISTS UNITE TO END FGM: ARTISTS & ACTIVISTS TAKING ACTION TO SHAPE CHANGE**

In 2017-2018, we diversified our methods of social change communication by harnessing the power of film, music, art, photography and drama; allowing us to engage in an interactive exchange with FGM affected communities – who both inspired and contributed to our creative expressions. We have expanded our Artists Unite to End FGM Project to create a wider network of socially conscious visual artists committed to spreading awareness of FGM; and we have secured Arts Council England funding to expand on our Musicians Unite to End FGM (MUTEFGM) project. We will continue to work with talented and passionate musicians to reach and engage with new audiences.

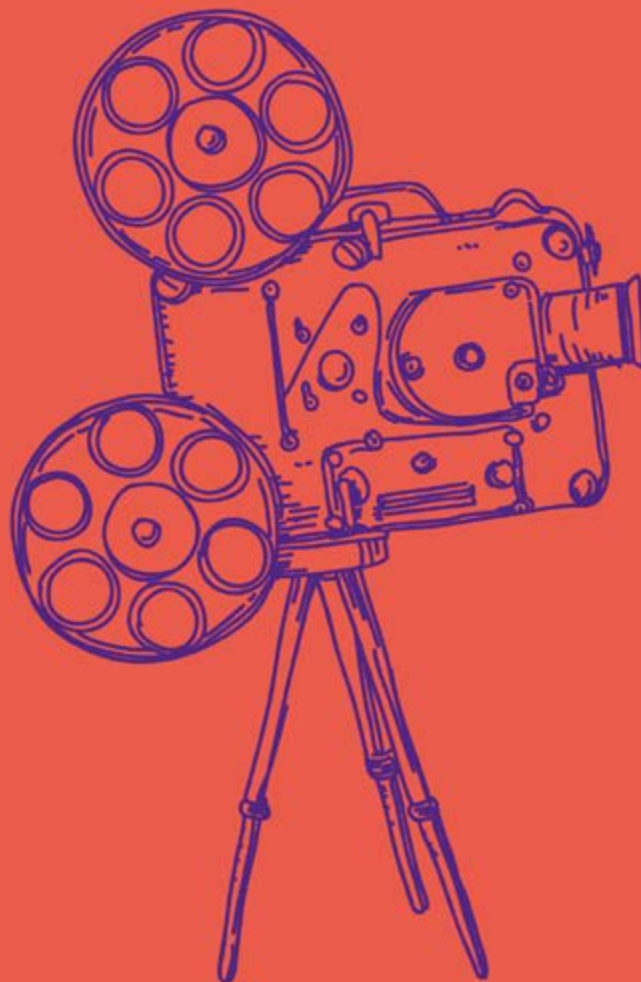


# FILM

We have used documentary and feature length film in our outreach work for many years. We support African film makers and encourage our supporters to attend our film screenings to learn about the issues we work on. We follow all film screenings with expert panel discussions – including teams involved in the making of the films, youth activists, medical and other frontline professional – and many more. We believe that creating a safe space for audiences to speak out and be heard is integral to shaping social change.

This year we held two stand-out screenings: *The Blood of Women* and *Uncomfortable Conversations: A letter to my husband*.

## THE BLOOD OF WOMEN



Directed by Christian Lajoumard, this film is a thought-provoking, stark, but beautifully observed narrative of Pokot women, doctors and social workers in Kenya as they experience the challenges and consequences of FGM: and ultimately their resolute commitment to the fight for the end to FGM.





"I have researched FGM for 2 years but nothing brings to life the reality of the situation than listening to young girls and women discuss it."

Attendee



"The film and panel discussion were super interesting. Loved the fact that there were mostly African women on the panel."

Attendee



**The after film panellist:** Left to right- Christianne Williamson, The Girl Generation, Israa Siddig, Doctor, Angela Muruli, FORWARD, Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse, FORWARD



**Our host for the evening:** Leyla Hussein, Activist & Founder Of Dahlia Project/Co-Founder of Daughter Of Eve



# UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS: A LETTER TO MY HUSBAND

A short film written and directed by **Kabung Lomolong**, FORWARD's Programme Support Officer as part of an AIDOS led project which saw Kabung travelling to Uganda to learn filmmaking skills. It follows the story of Sara, who pregnant with a daughter she wants to protect must now confront the impact FGM has had on the intimate relationship with her husband. Having been developed through focus groups, Sara's story resonated with African audiences because it was not just her own but theirs also.


The film aimed to engage with men from FGM affected communities and the screening event did just that, the audience was both men and women from the African diaspora community and the film started conversations that had mostly not been had previously, it was also met with a standing ovation! We will continue to use the film to raise awareness with men of how FGM affects the women in their lives.

**FORWARD** FORWARD invites you to celebrate organisations and community members who build across and young men in conversations about culture, women's rights and freedom from harmful practices

**Uncomfortable Conversations:  
IT'S MY ISSUE TOO**

**Friday 2nd February 2018, 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

Featuring an exclusive screening of *Uncomfortable Conversations: A Letter to My Husband*, a new short film directed by **Kabung Lomolong**  
Followed by panel discussion with the cast and director



**Venue:** PADDINGTON ARTS  
32 WOODFIELD ROAD,  
LONDON W9 2BE

**FREE ENTRY**  
Drinks and light refreshments provided

Please email: [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk) if you wish to attend and for more information.  
Tel: 020 8960 4000 Twitter: @forwarduk www.forwarduk.org.uk  
Sponsored by: The Wellcome Trust - Harrogate & City and Guilds, Royal College of Surgeons in Education



The project was led by AIDOS – Italian Association for Women in Development, in partnership with AMSOPT (Mali), Equipop (France), GAMS Belgique (Belgium), Mwangaza Action (Burkina Faso) and UMWA (Uganda) with the support of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on female genital mutilation/cutting and FORWARD was one of the participating organisations developing films.





**Right:** Kabung, our Programme Support Officer and short film Director!

"The movie brings back memories."

**Attendee**







# HIDDEN SCARS EXHIBITION

In December 2017, FORWARD's Artists Unite to End FGM project presented the hugely successful **Hidden Scars Art Exhibition** to mark the UN's **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**. Featuring paintings and sculptures from nine female artists, our vision for the exhibition was to create a space that elicited a sense of inclusion, understanding and respect for survivors; and furthermore, the urgency and need to end violence against African women and girls.

The opening night was launched with performances and addresses from Ethio-jazz singer **Hanisha Solomon**, Spoken Word Artist and former FORWARD youth advocate **Cherelle Salmon**, and FORWARD ambassador and author **Gavin Weston**.

**HIDDEN SCARS EXHIBITION**  
Opening night: Friday 1st December 6.30pm-9pm

FORWARD's Artists Unite to End FGM project's annual Hidden Scars exhibition featuring the work of African and African-British artists, presents a vital female-led initiative and raises awareness of the global issue of FGM.

The exhibition aims to highlight the physical and mental trauma suffered by many women due to these practices, the role of the media, the role of the church and the role of the state in the perpetuation of violence against women and girls.

The opening night on Friday 1st December 6.30pm-9pm will feature **ethiojazz music** by the incredible **Hanisha Solomon** (pictured right), **spoken word** from **Cherelle Salmon** (former FORWARD Youth Advocate) and discussion. Speakers include **Gavin Weston**, author of *Homeless*, FORWARD Ambassador and co-creator of this exhibition.

Support is offered on a case-by-case basis.  
For more information  
contact [info@forwarduk.org](mailto:info@forwarduk.org)  
Tel: 020 8660 4000

**VENUE: DARNLEY GALLERY**  
The Venue 108-110 Finchley Road, London NW11 6AA  
[www.forwarduk.org.uk/](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/) [www.artistsunitefgm.com](http://www.artistsunitefgm.com)  
#HIDDENSCARS17 @FORWARDUK



"A very enlightening exhibition  
wonderful to see charities and  
artists working together like this."

Kathryn

"Such a beautiful exhibition and  
an incredible experience. Loved  
the spoken word and musical  
performances. Thank you."

Betty



**Below:** Spoken word artist  
and former FORWARD youth  
advocate Cherelle.



**8 WORKS SOLD  
TO SUPPORT  
FORWARD'S  
COMMUNITY-BASED  
INITIATIVES**



**Right:** Hanisha Solomon brings  
ethio-jazz to the audience





**Right:** Artist Aga Tamiola's  
'Safe Place in Pieces'.

"I believe that art is not only an essential therapeutic tool, but that it also has the power to effectively communicate what it means to be a compassionate human being. As an artist and educator who is passionate about using my talent to help enrich the lives of others, I jumped at the opportunity to support the work of FORWARD through contributing to this Hidden Scars Exhibition."

**Linette Kamala, featured Artist**

"Thank you for being the beginning of a bigger movement towards real change for giving so many unheard voices a stage and for the blessing of ethio-jazz – it was a pleasure, good luck and keep on going."

**Faizah**



"Powerful art, amazing to see the voice of girls and women who have been shamed because of what was imposed on them have a place for dignity, value and worth on the wall."

**Rosie**

**Left:** Artist Farida Makki with her work.





Left: Philippa Weaver's  
'I Claw Away My Skin'.

"Art can give the viewer a space to contemplate, a place where all senses are brought to bear and emotions are unbounded. I use the space to question society's imposed constraint that women should be accepting of emotional and physical pain. I believe that to see that pain imagined is cathartic. The art becomes a crucible of experience that can be shared."

Philippa Weaver, featured Artist





# MUSIC

# M.U.T.E FGM

Our Arts Council England funded programme Musicians Unite to End FGM (MUTEFGM) has gone from strength to strength. We've trained musicians to be advocates for ending FGM and organised events to reach out to new and unexpected audiences. This year, we were honoured to work with the following artists:





# RASHA

## SUDANESE SINGER HIGHLIGHTS FORWARD'S WORK AT MAYOR OF LONDON'S EID CELEBRATION- TRAFALGAR SQUARE

As part of our Musicians Unite to End FGM (MUTEFGM) project, we partnered with Shubbak Festival (a biennial contemporary Arab Culture festival) and UK Arab music promotion company MARSM to bring the acclaimed Sudanese singer Rasha to London. She performed at the Mayor of London's Eid celebration in Trafalgar Square and spread the word about FORWARD's work to thousands of spectators and joined audience members in solidarity with those affected by the attack in Finsbury Park and the Grenfell Tower fire. The same evening Rasha performed on the same stage as Egypt's Hawidro band at Bush Hall where FORWARD had an information stall, allowing us to engage with many Egyptian and Sudanese audience members on the issue of FGM.



Left: Rasha discussing her commitment to end FGM with Winkball.



# HIDDEN SCARS

## EVENT FOR SUDANESE WOMEN

### USING MUSIC AS THERAPY

In July 2017 we held our second in the series of Uncomfortable Conversations events; a mostly Sudanese diaspora, women-only event focused on creating a safe space for dialogue and exchange around taboo topics and experiences; such as trauma and support, and discussing creative and engaging approaches to therapy, such as music. We were very grateful to be joined by Sudanese artist Rasha, a committed advocate and member of FORWARD's Musicians Unite to End FGM (MUTEFGM) initiative. She won over the audience with songs from home, with the women singing along. Many of the attendees shared that this was their Eid celebration; due to the Grenfell fire most of the Eid celebrations in surrounding communities had been put on hold as they grieved for their loved ones.



"Being in an open environment with women was good. Everything about today was good, the culture, importance of expressing your feelings and the importance of being well. I learnt about body responses to trauma, about sexual expression and about cultural differences and similarities in seeking help."

Attendee



FORWARD  
independent rights & dignity

UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS

## HIDDEN SCARS

with special guest RASHA SHEKH EL-DIN

MONDAY 3RD JULY 2017  
10:30AM - 2:00PM

HADDINGTON ARTS CENTRE  
32 WOODFIELD RD, LONDON W9 2DE

Uncomfortable Conversations is a FORWARD project that explores conversations on the difficult topics that often surround us. It is a safe space for women to discuss in particular, harmful traditional practices. As part of the project, FORWARD is hosting a series of events focusing on dealing with trauma, mental health and music in therapy. We will be joined by special guest Sudanese artist Rasha Sheikh El-Din.

Please register your interest by Friday 30th June by emailing [Naheed@forwardinstitute.org.uk](mailto:Naheed@forwardinstitute.org.uk) or [www.forwardinstitute.org.uk](http://www.forwardinstitute.org.uk)





**Above:** Habib takes a selfie with FORWARD staff!

"Music is universal, I'm a world musician, people from everywhere can listen to the message in my music, I sing in London, Mexico, Sydney, India, Japan, Mali everywhere and for this reason music is one of the best ways for me to support FORWARD to sensitize my fans. My message right now especially in parts of the world where they excise girls and give them to marry older men, please let girls and women live a normal healthy life."

**Habib Koite**

# MALIAN MUSIC STAR HABIB KOITE

In October 2017, **Habib Koite** a renowned Malian musician and UNICEF Ambassador supported FORWARD's Musicians Unite to end FGM (**MUTEFGM**) programme. Habib is a highly regarded and globally renowned artist from an FGM affected community and is in a unique position as with all the musicians we work with, to act as a role model for other men and to influence his listeners to help shift social and normative harmful practices. FORWARD had the pleasure of interviewing Habib and to have an information stall at his London concert, where we managed to reach out to many in the audience – many of whom are from FGM affected communities.

**Below:** Habib Koite's Bamada band with FORWARD staff after the gig.





# THE POWER OF MUSIC REACHING NEW AUDIENCES WITH BLUES AND HIP HOP

In March 2018 FORWARD's Musicians Unite to End FGM (MUTEFGM) programme presented a four-date UK tour featuring legendary blues artist Corey Harris. On International Women's Day we presented The Power of Music: Artists Using Conversation and Music for Social Change featuring NKA1 of Congolese Hip Hop collective Lopanga Ya Banka and British rapper Shama Cane. The musicians meaningfully engaged with issues of advocacy, justice and female empowerment posed by the FORWARD Ambassador Ade Daramy and spectators.



"I am standing with FORWARD's Musicians Unite to End FGM project to say LISTEN my brothers, my brothers the world over, in all societies, REMEMBER where you came from, remember that women are the ones working hard to progress our great continent Africa, whilst still suffering unnecessary abuses such as child marriages and FGM. If our girls are to reach their full potential these harmful practices must end! We should respect women as they deserve and lift them up not try to keep them down. We men need to stand with women not against them."

NKA1, Lopanga ya Banka





"Emperor Haile Selassie declared long ago that, "Africa awaits its creators, those at home and abroad." While it is our obligation to pay homage to the best of our traditions, we must also have the bravery to confront practices which have been accepted as traditional, but which have proven to be much to the detriment of the people. So, I am honoured to take part in FORWARD's Musicians Unite to End FGM project and join the very important fight against female genital mutilation. Let us together create a brighter future for the generations to come, one in which young girls will be free of the painful and destructive legacy that is FGM."

Corey Harris

Above: Corey Harris on stage at Nell's Jazz and Blues in London.

Left: Shama Cane on stage at The Power of Music event.

Right: The panel at The Power of Music event. L-R Corey Harris, Shama Cane, Nka1 and Ade Daramy.

Below: Nka1 performing at our Power of Music event.



"I had a superb time. It was a great night out - the music was fantastic. I'd heard about FGM but didn't know too much about- it was really eye opening- and nice to see so many people out together and supporting the fight to end it."

Sami, Nell's Jazz and Blues Attendee



# RESEARCH

## THE POWER OF PEER

Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER) is a research methodology FORWARD uses to develop its programmes. This unique approach generates insights into the lives of women and girls experiencing or having experienced multiple forms of violence and taboo issues (such as FGM) whilst taking into consideration the wider context of their lives and experiences. By doing so, PEER has been an effective tool to inform FORWARD's impactful and engaging intervention programmes and initiatives.

In Tanzania and the UK our PEER researcher's shared rich and real insights into how women and girls affected by FGM, child marriage and child motherhood view their world, and how these inform how they make decisions on key issues, they also shared their recommendations for helping to support them and their communities.

**Right:** PEER researchers, Mpwapwa, Tanzania



"PEER research increased my ability to educate my fellow young women in my village about the impact of teenage pregnancy and they shared the causes of their pregnancies at a young age with me. I have also managed to give them hope that getting pregnant at a young age is not the end of their life, they need to focus on helping their children and to engage in different activities including farming so that they can help themselves and their children instead of waiting for their parents to take care of them."

Happy, 17 PEER Researcher, Mpwapwa, Tanzania





# PUBLICATIONS



## **“I HAVE NO IDEA HOW I GOT PREGNANT”**

Participatory Study on Teenage Pregnancy and Child Motherhood in Mpwapwa District, Tanzania

This PEER report shows the results of research conducted with partners CDF, to ascertain the situation of teenage pregnancy and child motherhood in Mpwapwa District, Tanzania.

“The interviewees said that they had not seen any girl who got pregnant and managed to return to school, almost all are raising their children and hoping that things change soon.”

PEER Study respondent, 2018

“I need to go back to school, so in the future I can have a good career, being a young mother should not bring an end to my dream.”

PEER Study respondent, 2018



## **“A BIG WAKE UP CALL”**

Participatory Study on Shifts in Attitudes towards FGM among Community Women in Bristol

This research report conducted with partners Refugee Women of Bristol highlights the impact of our joint ten year project developing the Bristol Model on FGM. A nationally recognised best-practice model, which is based on multi-agency collaboration to deliver a holistic programme of responses to FGM.

“The attitude towards FGM has changed dramatically over the years, mostly for the better. This is because we have been educated about the health risks of the procedure and live in a western country where FGM is not seen as part of the culture but as a crime.”

Somali woman



# STOP FGM T-SHIRT

Our anti-FGM campaigners t-shirt packs a powerful and simple message: Stop FGM. The unisex t-shirt is EarthPositive, made with organic cotton and environmentally friendly inks. It is available in sizes XS-S-M-L-XL. Buy yours from our online shop!



## VIDEOS MUSICIANS UNITE TO END FGM PRESENTS THE COREY HARRIS BAND AT NELL'S JAZZ & BLUES

The Corey Harris Band perform at famed London venue Nell's Jazz and Blues to a rapt audience. The night also featured our film Raising Our Voices on FGM and a presentation by Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse our Head of Global Advocacy and Partnerships.

## THE POWER OF MUSIC: MUSICIANS UNITE TO END FGM (MUTEFGM) FEAT. COREY HARRIS, NKA1, SHARNA CANE

This night was one of the most dynamic held by FORWARD, presenting sharp social commentary on women's rights from audience and artists alike, the wit of FORWARD Ambassador and journalist Ade Daramy, and rousing performances from the three artists.

All publications and videos can be found on our website in our Information Hub:

[www.forwarduk.org.uk/information-hub](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/information-hub)



**OUR** FORWARD would like to offer our sincere thanks to all the people who dedicated their time and effort to fundraise for FORWARD this year.

# FUNDRAISERS THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

ALEX TOWLER

ALICE LESTER

ELISABETH ATUNES

EMMA SCOTT

JADE MACAW

JESUSA RICOY-OLARIAGA

LAURA HARPER

LAUREN MOSES

LUCY OVERS

LYDIA BUCKINGHAM

RUTH WOOD

SASHA SKINNER

BRIGHTON AND HOVE HIGH SCHOOL

RAISED FUNDS THROUGH A FASHION SHOW

GUMELY HOUSE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

DEDICATED THEIR "FIRST GIVE" DONATIONS TO FORWARD

WIMBLEDON HIGH SCHOOL

BATTLE OF THE BANDS





"As a feminist, an activist, a mother of a daughter and a childbirth educator it was very important to me that our wedding after 20 years together could be a feminist wedding. I decided to use my wedding also to raise awareness on the issues that FORWARD campaigns for, because to us, thinking about the privilege of getting married freely and with maturity remind us of the many girls who are forced into marriage as children, the horror that entails and the unfairness of the situation. As parents to imagine our little girl having to do that feels like a nightmare. When I discovered FORWARD through an online search it felt natural for me to support your work."

Jesusa Ricoy dedicated her Wedding gifts to us

"When I first found out about FGM and child marriage I was dumbstruck that these things were happening in the world. As a mother of two young children the thought of the pain and terror they would experience in these circumstances pushed me to want to help by raising money, and FORWARD appeared to be the charity doing the most to support for women and children who needed them in this way. I feel humbled by their support of my fundraising and because of them I have been able to educate my family and friends about the issues raised. I have no doubt that they will continue to do great work"

Laura Harper completed the Great Run



"As a mixed race (white English & Somali) woman, FGM is a very sad and real part of my life. Although I live in a multicultural town there is a lack of understanding of FGM. So I decided to do something about it through awareness raising, myth busting and fundraising. After googling, I choose FORWARD as you stood out for your work in Africa, UK & Europe and the fact that you are the leading Africa diaspora women's campaign. I ran the 10k race and have been giving speeches to schools and the youth council (which is part of our local council). My local MP Nic Dakin has been supporting me after I wrote to him. I strongly believe education is the way forward to put an end to this!"

Sasha Skinner ran the Doncaster Trail



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2017/18

## INCOMING RESOURCES

Donations	£54,500
Grants Receivable	£1,461,632
Other Income	£18,010
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,534,142</b>

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## EXPENDITURE

Fundraising	£13,503
Charitable expenses	£1,374,445
Governance	£6,371
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,394,319</b>
Net Incoming Resources	£139,823

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## RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS

Total funds brought forward 01.04.17	£662,166
Total funds carried forward 31.03.18	£801,989



# BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2018

Total Assets	£930,603
Less Liabilities	-£128,614
Total Net Assests	£801,989

Represented by:	
Restricted Funds	£417,835
Unrestricted Funds	£384,154
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>	<b>£801,989</b>

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Other - 1.17%      Donations - 3.55%



Grants - 95.27%

Governance - 0.46%      Fundraising - 0.97%



Charitable Expenses - 98.57%



# OUR PARTNERS

## UK & EUROPE

End FGM European network

[www.endfgm.eu](http://www.endfgm.eu)

The Girl Generation

[www.thegirlgeneration.org](http://www.thegirlgeneration.org)

Girls Not Brides

[www.girlsnotbrides.org](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org)

Angelou Centre

[www.angelou-centre.org.uk](http://www.angelou-centre.org.uk)

Refugee Women of Bristol

[www.refugeewomenofbristol.org.uk](http://www.refugeewomenofbristol.org.uk)

Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel (SSAP)

[www.ssap.org.uk](http://www.ssap.org.uk)

Muslim Women's Network

[www.mwnuk.co.uk](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk)

New Step for African Communities

[www.nestec.org](http://www.nestec.org)

## AFRICA

AMNet- Advocacy Movement Network

[www.amnet-online.org](http://www.amnet-online.org)

Akina Mama wa Afrika

[www.akinamamawaafrika.org](http://www.akinamamawaafrika.org)

Childrens Dignity Forum (CDF)

[www.cdftz.org/cdf](http://www.cdftz.org/cdf)

Girl2Girl Empowerment Movement (G2G)

[www.girl2girlngo.org](http://www.girl2girlngo.org)

Purim African Youth Development  
Platform (PAYDP)

[www.paydp.org](http://www.paydp.org)

Chamma cha Uzazi na Malezi

Bora Tanzania (UMATI)

[www.umati.or.tz](http://www.umati.or.tz)

Wadada Centre for Solution

Focused Approach (Wadada)

[www.envaya.org/wadada\\_centre2014](http://www.envaya.org/wadada_centre2014)

Somaliland Nursing and

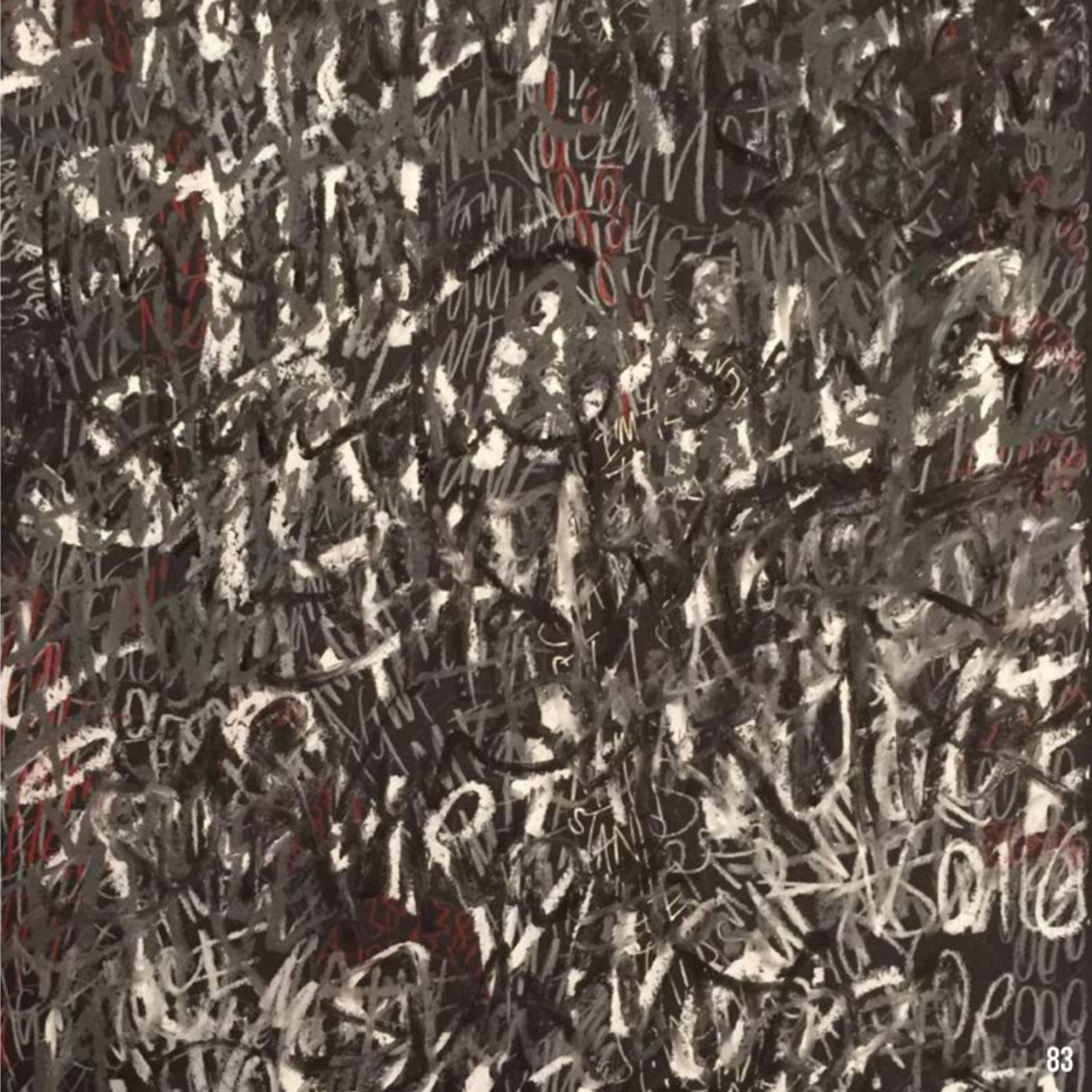
Midwifery Association (SLMA)

[www.ippf.org/about-us/member-associations/somaliland](http://www.ippf.org/about-us/member-associations/somaliland)

Right: 'Still Standing' by Linett Kamala Part of our Hidden Scars Exhibition. The piece is based on notes made in her sketchbook following a visit to an exhibition on FGM and also Linett's first-hand experience of having to support a pregnant student who had undergone FGM as a senior leader at a school.

The repeated script represents the unheard voices and hidden scars of FGM, but moving from victim to survivor. A voice which defiantly states "I'm still here standing". The numbers refer to the estimated number 38.9 per 1000 girls in Brent, the borough the artist lives and work in, who have undergone FGM.





# OUR TEAM

## PATRONS & MATRONS

Baroness Gould • Don Boyd • Karon Monaghan QC

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Dr Sohier Elneil – **Chair** • Dr Lisa Smith – **Treasurer** • Anna Nsubuga • Deborah Hodes  
Kim Croucher • Muna Dol • Priti Dave Sen • Dr Yunes Teinaz • Zainab Noor

## AMBASSADORS

Ade Daramy • Gavin Weston

## STAFF

Adwoa Kwateng-Klavitse – **Head of Global Advocacy and Partnerships**  
Angela Muruli – **Africa Programme Assistant**  
Bintu Sarah Sakor – **Research and Fundraising Intern**  
Caroline Walker – **Fundraising and Communications Officer (Until January 2018)**  
Christina Fonthes – **Youth programme Officer (Until December 2017)**  
Damaris Villanueva – **Senior Admin & HR Officer**  
Ellie Townend – **Africa Programme Officer**  
Fosdicka Crankson – **Finance Manager**  
Jennifer Vaughan – **Senior Campaigns and Advocacy officer (Until January 2018)**  
Justina Ogunseitan – **Africa Programme Assistant (Until October 2017)**  
Kabung Lomodong – **Programme Support Officer**  
Kekeli Kpognon – **Diaspora Programme Manager**  
Mahasin Abu – **Community Support Worker**  
Mamusu Kallon – **Communications Intern**  
Mary Otuko – **UK Programme Manager**  
Naana Otoo-Oyortey MBE – **Executive Director**  
Naima Ibrahim – **Community Development Officer**  
Naomi Reid – **Communications & Events Manager**  
Rasha Farah – **Interim Youth Programme Lead**



Rita Janani – Finance Assistant  
Seble Belay – Africa Programme Officer  
Toks Okeniyi – Head of UK Programmes and Operations  
Wangu Mureithi – Youth Programme Officer  
Wossenyelesh Kifle – Africa Programme Manager  
Yvette Robbin-Coker – Training & Development Coordinator  
Zara Mahdi – Programme Officer

Below: Some FORWARD staff and one of our newest members, baby Ruth.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS

Amna Iftikadr • Aniesha Obuobie • Dimple Doshi • Jesudunni Adefulu • Mama Sylla  
Nasro Mohamoud • Victoria Oakley

"Volunteering with FORWARD has provided me with a better understanding of FGM and the legal issues surrounding it. It has also helped develop my existing professional skills. As I am currently studying a law conversion course, the knowledge will enhance my future career prospects and enable me to gain an accreditation."  
Dimple Doshi

"I believe that through FORWARD my voice has been heard and I have been able to reach more people within my community and beyond. The best of all is that at FORWARD I feel at home because it is a family. I feel listened to and supported without been judged and that is a great feeling."  
Mama Sylla



# THANK YOU

Thank you to all those who have donated, fundraised, volunteered, attended events and more to support and contribute to FORWARD's mission.

From telling a friend about FORWARD, to having an awareness of the issues, all contributions are valuable. Together, we can continue the momentum to move positive social change forward and safeguard the rights and dignity of African girls and women.

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU GOES TO OUR FUNDERS, WITHOUT WHOM OUR WORK WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE.

Arts Council England

Baillie Gifford

Bristol PCT

Comic Relief - Common Ground Initiative

Daphne - GAMS

Department of Education (DFE)

Department of Education and Skills (DfES)

Department for International  
Development (DFID)/Options

Esmée Fairbairn

London Councils

Mariammarina Foundation

London Borough of Hounslow

The Sigrid Rausing Trust

Mayor of London Office for  
Policy and Crime (MOPAC)

ROSA



# SUPPORTING FORWARD

Amazing supporters like you are changing the future for African girls and women across 8 countries including here in the UK.

With your continued support, we can continue to work with our partners to provide income generation opportunities to support child mothers, legal advice to affected communities in the UK, mentorship and leadership training for future leaders and much more.

Your donation means we can continue to campaign for African women and girls rights where they are free from fear of violence and harmful practices like FGM.

Go to our website [www.forwarduk.org.uk/get-involved/donate](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk/get-involved/donate) to support our work, or donate right now by texting **FWRD30 £5 (or other amount)** to **70070**. Please email us at: [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk) for more information.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT





FORWARD, Suite 4.7, Chandelier Building, 8 Scrubs Lane, London NW10 6RB  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 8960 4000 Email: [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk) Website: [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk)

 @FORWARDUK and @FORWARD\_Youth  FORWARDUK and FORWARD.YPSO  
FORWARD is a UK registered Charity. Registration number: 292403 Company Number: 01921508

The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of a person's hand. The hand is holding a white cloth or paper that has been covered in various colorful markers. At the bottom of the hand, the words "STOP FGM" are written in large, bold, black capital letters. Above this, there are many smaller, overlapping words and symbols in red, orange, and green, some of which are partially legible, such as "STOP", "FGM", and "WRONG".

**STOP FGM**