



Building bridges between relevant actors to End FGM

*Meeting of the Donor Working Group on FGM/C
November 2014*

The recently formed END FGM European Network is engaged in reflection to gain a better understanding of what it means to build bridges and work with Diaspora.

Our first step has been to define building bridges as:

the creation of synergies to develop, share and coordinate actions, policies and legal frameworks to end FGM in countries of residence and of origin.

The Network sees such coordination as essential in ending FGM and sees also the role that the EU can be playing in ending FGM globally. Given that the practice can have a cross-border element, measures for the prevention, protection and prosecution of FGM needs to take this element into account.

1. The European Union as a key actor in the global mobilisation to END FGM.

FGM impacts negatively on the **development agenda**, on the achievement of the millennium development goals and on the future sustainable development goals. The EU and its member states are the biggest **aid donors** in the world and therefore need to be closely associated with the global movement to curb this practice. Recently, the EU has committed to devote 100 million Euros for gender equality and children's well-being under the EU Global Challenges Program, which will finance programs in countries with high FGM prevalence.

The EU can also play **a political role** and committed to raising FGM and child marriage in political and human rights dialogues and global diplomatic outreach. In addition, the European Commission has adopted a Communication to end FGM¹ which places an emphasis on prevention and work with communities both in Europe and globally.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards the elimination of FGM" COM(2013) 833 final accessible online at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/131125_fgm_communication_en.pdf

2. The END FGM Network as European focal point in the global movement

The development of a European transnational network of organizations feeds into and complements the development of the platform working against FGM world-wide. It has vocation to be the European focal point in the global movement to end FGM and to collaborate with other programs such as the Girl Generation. The network monitors developments following the Girls summit and aims at becoming a key interlocutor of the Donor Working on FGM/C.

Already, the platform created by the Campaign has facilitated **cross-border cooperation and engagement in the international mobilization on FGM**. It has also allowed for European funds to be available in the development cooperation field and also at national level to support states and CSOs. In addition, the Network provides a space for knowledge and skills sharing amongst actors involved in activities towards ending FGM which can benefit the global movement to end FGM.

In the future, the Network is keen on collaborating with a group of funders interested in supporting advocacy work and movement development at European level and supporting **work to build bridges** between countries of destination and countries of origin. This group could be part of the existing Donor Working Group on FGM/C and ensure inclusion of projects on migration and cross-border activities. A first step could be to finance a baseline study for potential action.

The END FGM Network is currently mapping existing initiatives in the area of building bridges and the impact of the work conducted by member organisations in this area. We are currently looking into funding to expand this area of work which constitutes a strategic priority for the Network and have identified actions that the Network can take to support the **coordination of action in Europe and beyond**.

To achieve this, we will:

- Advocate for and support the implementation of the EC Commission towards the elimination of FGM including its action plan, the UNGA Resolution on FGM and the joint comment/recommendation by CRC and CEDAW on harmful practices
- Monitor and advocate for the integration of FGM in the EU external and development cooperation action
- Encourage the EU to take position in various platforms, UN fora and to raise the issue of FGM in its political and human rights dialogue with countries where FGM is prevalent
- Position the network as the European focal point in the global movement to end FGM