

YOUNG AMBASSADOR BIO



NAME

Alya Harding

AGE

20

MEMBER ORGANISATION

FORWARD

WHAT DO YOU STUDY?

BA International Development Studies at the University of Portsmouth

COUNTRY WHERE I LIVE

United-Kingdom

WHY AM I COMMITTED IN FIGHTING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION?

My ethnical and cultural background is in communities that are directly affected by VAWG issues i.e FGM, yet the women in my life are the most powerful and resilient people I know. How much more powerful could they have been if they had been given resources and been afforded the opportunity to be educated and empowered about their rights? Fortunately, I have been.

FGM is seen as an 'African problem' and I am committed to changing the narrative while raising awareness so that we - as a global community - can affect change, empowering women and young girls while removing the stigma associated with FGM in the western world. The single and most important driver for me is that..... this could have happened to me!

WHAT DO I LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING AN ACTIVIST?

I feel a sense of purpose when I am participating in shaping and advancing the dialogue on issues that are most important to me and my community. I enjoy the challenge, acknowledging the importance and relevance of education and spreading awareness to

those who are bound by traditional views. It is hugely rewarding to see a woman's growth and development when she is supported and 'seen' by her peers.

I enjoy being part of a sisterhood of activists that share the same views and that I can rely on when I am in doubt or bounce-of ideas with. It is hugely rewarding knowing that I have made a positive impact on real issues that affect us all.

WHAT DO I DREAM OF FOR GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN THE FUTURE?

I envisage a time where women and girls become their own agents for change, are equipped and encouraged to make their own decisions concerning their own future and lives. A place where they are not confined to social norms and traditional roles but given the freedom to explore their identity and power. Ultimately I want young girls to be empowered and encouraged to wear their individuality and walk in their purpose and truth, free from judgement and filled with love and enthusiasm.